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# Seventh Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Kazakhstan

## Final Project Report

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

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## Acronyms

*(Note: it should be arranged in alphabetical order)*

| | |
|---|---|
| RBEC | Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |

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# I. Executive Summary

The Seventh Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP-7) in Kazakhstan was implemented during 7 July 2022 – 30 June 2026 to support community-based environmental action, sustainable land management, climate change mitigation and sustainable livelihoods in target landscapes. The programme addressed locally identified environmental challenges through small grants to civil society organizations, community groups and local partners, while strengthening participatory governance, knowledge exchange and replication of practical solutions. The portfolio was implemented across the target landscapes of Akmola, Almaty/Zhetysu, Karaganda/Ulytau, Kyzylorda, Turkestan, East Kazakhstan/Abai and Kostanay oblasts, with activities adapted to the ecological, social and livelihood context of each landscape.

Over the reporting period, the programme developed a diversified grant portfolio consisting of 27 projects: 25 grant projects implemented by civil society organizations and local partners to address land degradation and climate change priorities, one capacity-development grant, and one strategic grant focused on knowledge management, replication and scaling-up of successful practices. The total GEF grant value of the portfolio reached USD 1,163,784.31. Grantees mobilized significant co-financing, amounting to USD 1,652,336.40, while the UNDP Country Office provided additional co-financing of USD 477,227.24. This brought the combined GEF, grantee and UNDP CO contribution reflected in the portfolio summary to USD 3,293,347.95, subject to reconciliation with final certified financial records.

The programme achieved substantial progress against its core environmental and socio-economic indicators. Cumulatively, SGP-7 supported the restoration of 87,704.31 hectares of land and brought 124,355.75 hectares of landscapes under improved practices. Climate change mitigation results reached an estimated 23,182.3 tCO2e. The programme directly benefited 25,891 people, including 9,294 women, 8,695 men and 7,930 youth. In addition, 3,245 households adopted sustainable agroecological practices and sustainable land management schemes, including 1,255 women-led and 1,986 men-led households. A total of 126 organizations in target landscapes benefited from renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies and solutions for productive use.

The grant portfolio combined demonstration, capacity-building, participatory planning and knowledge-sharing approaches. Land-related initiatives demonstrated pasture restoration, sustainable use of agricultural land, water-saving practices, agroecological field schools, organic fertilizers, vermicomposting, green manure crops, cover crops, micro-nurseries, hydroponic fodder production, sapropel use and restoration of degraded lands. Climate-related initiatives introduced or demonstrated renewable energy,

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energy-efficient heating and hot-water systems, energy efficiency in social and public facilities, school climate clubs, seedling nurseries and community-based climate awareness measures. The strategic project supported documentation, dissemination and replication of SGP practices, while the capacity-development grant helped strengthen the ability of prospective grantees and partners to design and implement community-based environmental projects.

The programme also contributed to governance and replication results. Multi-stakeholder dialogue processes engaged 85 local CBOs and stakeholders, including 32 women-led community organizations. Seven landscape strategies or action plans were developed or updated through participatory consultation and implemented by multi-stakeholder groups. Seven SGP technologies, practices or approaches were successfully replicated or upscaled in and beyond the target landscapes. Knowledge-management outputs included 15 lessons learned and 7 case studies for experience sharing, replication and scaling.

Key implementation challenges included the need to support a large and geographically dispersed portfolio within a limited implementation period, variations in grantee capacity, logistical constraints in remote landscapes, seasonality of field activities, and the need to harmonize community-level data collection across diverse types of interventions. These challenges were mitigated through targeted capacity-building, close coordination with grantees, field monitoring, regular follow-up on indicators and deliverables, and the use of strategic partnerships to document, validate and disseminate results. The main recommendation for future programming is to maintain the community-based grant modality while investing earlier and more systematically in grantee capacity development, harmonized indicator guidance, landscape-level coordination and structured replication pathways.

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## II. Introduction / Background

The Seventh Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Kazakhstan builds on more than two decades of SGP support to community-based environmental action, sustainable natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods. OP7 was designed to consolidate and scale up results achieved under previous SGP phases, particularly OP6, with a focus on vulnerable steppe, semi-desert and desert landscapes.

The official project implementation period was 7 July 2022 to 6 July 2026. The programme's operational start-up, including inception and launch activities, took place on 25 July 2023, after which outreach, grant selection, portfolio development and implementation support were advanced within a compressed operational timeframe.

The project objective is to empower local communities and organizations to take integrated and adaptive actions for socio-ecological resilience and sustainable livelihoods in the seven target landscapes for local and global environmental benefits. The project addresses barriers related to land degradation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable land and water management, renewable energy and energy-efficiency solutions, and replication of successful local practices.

OP7 contributes to UNSDCF Outcome 3.2 / CPD Outcome 4 and is aligned with Kazakhstan's priorities on green economy transition, climate resilience, sustainable agriculture, land degradation neutrality and sustainable rural development. The project was structured around three components: resilient rural and peri-urban landscapes; participatory governance, knowledge management and upscaling; and monitoring and evaluation.

The project targeted seven landscapes embedded in the administrative regions of Akmola, East Kazakhstan/Abai, Karaganda/Ulytau, Kostanay, Almaty/Zhetysu, Kyzylorda and Turkestan. It was implemented by UNOPS as the GEF Executing Entity, with support from UNDP Kazakhstan Country Office and strategic guidance from the SGP National Steering Committee. Grant projects were implemented by civil society organizations and local partners.

Monitoring and evaluation were carried out through grantee reporting, field visits, regular follow-up with grantees, review of deliverables, indicator tracking, PIR reporting, gender and safeguards monitoring, targeted data collection and the Terminal Evaluation process initiated toward project closure.

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# III. Progress Review: Key Activities and Results, <specify reporting period>

## Section 1: Analysis of Theory of Change

The project's Theory of Change remained valid throughout implementation. The core assumption was that local communities, civil society organizations and landscape-level stakeholders can contribute to socio-ecological resilience when they have access to technical knowledge, small grant financing, participatory planning mechanisms and practical models for sustainable land management, climate-adaptive production systems, renewable energy and energy-efficiency solutions.

The project confirmed the relevance of the landscape-based approach. Following the inception workshop in July 2023, the project team conducted stakeholder consultations across 10 regions covering the seven target landscapes, which informed the update of seven landscape strategies. These strategies were subsequently reviewed and approved by the National Steering Committee in January 2024. The consultation process also helped establish a practical foundation for grant-making, stakeholder engagement and future multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms.

The main implementation constraint affecting the early stage of the Theory of Change was the delayed operational start caused by late hiring of the project team. This required the project team to complete several critical start-up tasks within a short timeframe, including the inception workshop, inception report, formation of the National Steering Committee, stakeholder consultations and update of landscape strategies. The most time-consuming task was organizing stakeholder meetings across 10 regions covering the seven target landscapes. To mitigate this, the project team organized the meetings internally rather than contracting an external partner, which helped save several months.

This adaptive management approach allowed the project to accelerate implementation and move back on track. Despite initial delays, a significant number of project milestones had been achieved, and subsequent implementation proceeded as planned. Close coordination with the UNDP Country Office and the Regional Technical Advisor, including regular coordination calls and performance reviews, was important in managing the compressed start-up period and maintaining implementation momentum.

The project also validated the assumption that durable results require more than individual grant demonstrations. Capacity development, gender-sensitive support, technical mentoring, knowledge exchange, multi-stakeholder dialogue and replication-oriented knowledge management were necessary to

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translate local initiatives into broader landscape-level results. The selection of SCF "ZUBR" for capacity-building support and PF "Decenta" for knowledge management, dissemination and replication helped operationalize this part of the Theory of Change.

No fundamental change to the Theory of Change is proposed. However, the OP7 experience suggests that future phases should ensure timely recruitment and operational start-up, early launch of stakeholder consultations and grant selection, continued capacity support for CSOs, and sufficient time for consolidation, evidence generation, replication and sustainability planning.

## Section 2: Overall progress against outcomes

Overall, the project achieved strong progress against its intended outcomes. The programme developed a diversified grant portfolio consisting of 27 projects: 25 grant projects addressing land degradation and climate change priorities, one capacity-development grant, and one strategic grant focused on knowledge management, replication and scaling-up of successful practices.

**Under Outcome 1:** Enhanced resilience of production landscapes through improved community-led management practices and production systems and adaptation of appropriate low emission, efficient and clean technologies and solutions, the project supported practical measures in sustainable land management, pasture restoration, soil fertility improvement, climate-adaptive agriculture, water-saving technologies, renewable energy and energy-efficiency. These interventions contributed to 87,704.31 ha of land restored, 124,355.75 ha of landscapes under improved practices, and 23,182.3 $tCO_2e$ of lifetime direct GHG mitigation. The project also reached 25,891 direct beneficiaries, including 9,294 women, 8,695 men and 7,930 youth, and supported 3,245 households adopting sustainable practices, including 1,255 women-led and 1,986 men-led households.

**Under Outcome 2:** Participatory policy dialogue strengthened for landscape governance to enhance socio-ecological resilience, the project maintained and strengthened the landscape approach by engaging CSOs, local partners, public institutions, farmers, experts and other stakeholders in planning, implementation, monitoring and knowledge exchange. In total, 85 local CBOs and stakeholders participated in multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms across the target landscapes, including 32 women-led community organizations and stakeholders, exceeding the end-of-project target of 56 participants, including 21 women-led organizations/stakeholders. These platforms and consultations supported dialogue around sustainable land use, climate resilience, renewable energy, energy efficiency and replication of tested local solutions.

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**Under Outcome 3:** Strengthened capacities and systems for upscaling of successful community initiatives, the project supported capacity development, knowledge management, experience exchange and dissemination of good practices. The capacity-development grant strengthened CSO and grantee capacities in project design, implementation, gender mainstreaming, monitoring and reporting. The strategic knowledge-management and replication grant supported the documentation and dissemination of successful practices, including lessons learned, case studies and knowledge products aimed at broader replication.

**Under Outcome 4:** Sustainability of project results enhanced through participatory monitoring and evaluation, the project applied regular monitoring, grantee reporting, field visits, indicator tracking, gender and safeguards monitoring, PIR reporting, targeted data collection and Terminal Evaluation preparations. Monitoring data were consolidated to assess progress against GEF core indicators and project-level targets.

## Section 3: Monitoring and Evaluation[1] of activities.

Monitoring and evaluation activities were carried out throughout the operational implementation period from 2023 to 2026 and covered the grant portfolio across the seven target landscapes: Akmola, East Kazakhstan/Abai, Karaganda/Ulytau, Kostanay, Almaty/Zhetysu, Kyzylorda and Turkestan. Given the size, thematic diversity and geographic spread of the portfolio, which included 27 projects, M&E was organized at portfolio level rather than as a separate narrative record of each individual monitoring visit.

M&E activities included regular grantee reporting, review of technical and financial deliverables, field monitoring visits to selected project sites, online and in-person consultations, indicator tracking, gender and safeguards monitoring, PIR reporting, targeted data collection and preparation for the Terminal Evaluation. Monitoring involved CSO grantees, local partners, farmers, public and social institutions, technical experts, community members, women and youth beneficiaries, and other local stakeholders involved in project implementation.

Monitoring visits and follow-up consultations focused on verifying progress against approved grant agreements, reviewing implementation challenges, checking the use of grant-supported equipment and technologies, documenting achieved results, and collecting evidence on land restoration, landscapes under improved practices, renewable energy and energy-efficiency solutions, beneficiary outreach and replication potential.

[1] The later if applicable.

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During the reporting period, the project consolidated portfolio-level indicator data through regular communication with grantees, review of progress reports and targeted data collection. A grantee indicator survey conducted by PF "Decenta" in 2026, under the strategic knowledge-management and replication grant, supported the verification of beneficiary outreach, household-level adoption of sustainable practices, gender-disaggregated results, youth participation and other project-level indicators.

The PIR process served as an annual performance assessment tool, allowing the project to review implementation progress, risks, indicator achievements, gender and safeguards considerations, and overall project performance. The M&E approach was also aligned with the project's participatory monitoring and evaluation component, which aimed to enhance the sustainability of project results through results tracking, learning and stakeholder engagement.

The key outcomes of M&E activities included improved quality of grantee reporting, timely identification and resolution of implementation bottlenecks, verification of indicator achievements, consolidation of gender-disaggregated data, documentation of good practices and lessons learned, and improved evidence for final reporting, knowledge management and future replication. Toward project closure, the Terminal Evaluation process was initiated in line with UNDP and GEF requirements.

## Section 4: Progress against each output

| **Project Output 1: Resilient rural and peri-urban landscapes of steppe and desert ecosystems for sustainable development and global environmental benefits** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Output indicators** | **Targets** | **Progress against targets** |
| 1.1 Increased area of land restored, hectares | Baseline: 0 End-of-project target: 15,000 ha | Reporting period / cumulative result: 87,704.31 ha of land restored, exceeding the end-of-project target. |
| 1.2 Area of landscapes under improved practices, excluding protected areas, hectares | Baseline: 0 End-of-project target: 10,000 ha | Reporting period / cumulative result: 124,355.75 ha of landscapes under improved practices, exceeding the end-of-project target. |
| 1.3 Greenhouse gas emissions mitigated, $tCO_2e$ lifetime direct | Baseline: 0 End-of-project target: 5,064 $tCO_2e$ | Reporting period / cumulative result: 23,182.3 $tCO_2e$ lifetime direct GHG mitigation, exceeding the end-of-project target. |
| 1.4 Number of households adopting sustainable agroecological practices and sustainable land management schemes, disaggregated by gender | Baseline: 0 End-of-project target: at least 150 households, disaggregated by female-led and male-led households | Reporting period / cumulative result: 3,245 households adopted sustainable agroecological practices and sustainable land management schemes, including 1,255 women-led and 1,986 men-led households. |
| 1.5 Number of organizations in target landscapes that benefited from renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies and solutions | Baseline: 0 End-of-project target: at least 35 organizations | Reporting period / cumulative result: 126 organizations benefited from renewable energy and/or energy-efficiency technologies and solutions, exceeding the end-of-project target. |

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| Project Output 2: Enhancing landscape sustainability through participatory governance and upscaling of best practices | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2.1 Number of local CBOs and stakeholders in each landscape participating in multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms, with disaggregation by women-led community organizations | Baseline: 0 End-of-project target: at least 8 in each multi-stakeholder dialogue group, including at least 3 women-led or women-focused organizations | Reporting period / cumulative result: 85 local CBOs and stakeholders participated in multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms across the seven landscapes, including 32 women-led community organizations/stakeholders, exceeding the end-of-project target. |
| 2.2 Number of landscape strategies updated and landscape action plans developed through participatory consultation and implemented by multi-stakeholder groups in each target landscape | Baseline: 0 End-of-project target: 7 landscape strategies and management action plans under implementation and evaluated at end of project | Reporting period / cumulative result: 7 landscape strategies were updated and approved, and 7 landscape action plans were developed/advanced through multi-stakeholder processes. |
| 2.3 Number of SGP technologies, practices or approaches successfully replicated and up-scaled in and beyond the target landscapes | Baseline: 0 End-of-project target: at least 5 technologies, practices or approaches replicated or up-scaled | Reporting period / cumulative result: 7 technologies, practices or approaches were replicated or up-scaled in and beyond the target landscapes, exceeding the end-of-project target. |
| 2.4 Number of knowledge management products produced and distributed in the target landscapes and outside for experience-sharing, replication and up-scaling | Baseline: 0 End-of-project target: at least 15 lessons learned and at least 7 case studies | Reporting period / cumulative result: 15 lessons learned and 7 case studies were documented and disseminated. Additional knowledge products and communications materials were produced through SGP/UNDP channels, grantee networks, local events and social media. |

**Key Activities:**

**Project Output 1:** Resilient rural and peri-urban landscapes of steppe and desert ecosystems for sustainable development and global environmental benefits

During the reporting period, activities under this output focused on completing and consolidating grant interventions aimed at improving land productivity, ecosystem resilience, sustainable natural resource management and climate mitigation across the seven target landscapes. Activities were implemented through grant projects addressing land degradation and climate change priorities and were supported through technical backstopping, grantee follow-up, field monitoring and portfolio-level coordination.



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Key activities included restoration of degraded land and pastures, sustainable grazing and pasture management, introduction of agroecological practices, soil fertility improvement, vermicomposting, organic fertilizer production, drought-resistant and cover crops, water-saving technologies, drip irrigation, hydroponic feed production, saxaul and native seedling nurseries, agroecology field schools and practical demonstrations for farmers, households and local partners.

In parallel, grantees implemented renewable energy and energy-efficiency solutions in rural, public, social and institutional settings. These included solar energy systems, solar-powered irrigation and water purification, solar water heating, energy-efficient heating and hot water systems, heat pumps, improved energy use in public and social facilities, and other locally adapted low-emission technologies.

**Project Output 2:** Enhancing landscape sustainability through participatory governance and upscaling of best practices

Activities under this output focused on strengthening inclusive landscape governance, knowledge management, capacity development and replication of successful SGP practices. Stakeholder consultations were conducted across the seven target landscapes to inform local partners about OP7 priorities, grant-making procedures and landscape-level challenges, and to support the update of landscape strategies and action plans.



The programme facilitated multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms involving CSOs, women-led organizations, local authorities, farmers, public institutions, academic institutions, experts and other local stakeholders. These platforms supported coordination, experience-sharing, participatory planning and local ownership of sustainable landscape management approaches.

Knowledge management and replication activities were implemented with the support of PF "Decenta", including documentation of lessons learned, preparation of case studies, collection of field evidence, dissemination of good practices and support to replication and upscaling. Capacity-building support was also provided to grantees and potential applicants to strengthen project design, implementation, gender mainstreaming, monitoring, reporting and sustainability planning.

**Key Results:**

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**Project Output 1:** Resilient rural and peri-urban landscapes of steppe and desert ecosystems for sustainable development and global environmental benefits

The project achieved substantial environmental and climate results across the seven target landscapes. A total of 87,704.31 ha of land were restored, exceeding the end-of-project target of 15,000 ha. In addition, 124,355.75 ha of landscapes were brought under improved practices, significantly exceeding the end-of-project target of 10,000 ha.

Climate mitigation results also exceeded expectations, with 23,182.3 $tCO_2e$ of lifetime direct greenhouse gas emissions mitigated against the end-of-project target of 5,064 $tCO_2e$. These results were generated through renewable energy, energy-efficiency, sustainable land management, soil restoration, organic fertilizer production, improved pasture management and other climate-relevant interventions.

The project also generated strong socio-economic and institutional co-benefits. A total of 3,245 households adopted sustainable agroecological practices and sustainable land management schemes, including 1,255 women-led and 1,986 men-led households. In addition, 126 organizations benefited from renewable energy and/or energy-efficiency technologies and solutions, demonstrating the practical value of small-scale climate solutions for rural communities, public institutions, CSOs and local partners.

**Project Output 2:** Enhancing landscape sustainability through participatory governance and upscaling of best practices

The project strengthened participatory governance and landscape-level coordination through multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms across all seven target landscapes. A total of 85 local CBOs and stakeholders participated in these platforms, including 32 women-led community organizations/stakeholders, exceeding the end-of-project participation targets.

The project also updated seven landscape strategies and advanced seven landscape action plans through participatory consultation and multi-stakeholder processes. These strategies and action plans helped align grant interventions with landscape-level priorities and provided a practical basis for future replication and sustainability planning.

Knowledge management and replication results were also achieved. The project documented and disseminated 15 lessons learned and 7 case studies, and supported the replication or upscaling of 7 technologies, practices or approaches in and beyond the target landscapes. These results demonstrate

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that the project moved beyond individual grant implementation by generating practical knowledge, strengthening local ownership and creating pathways for broader uptake of successful community-based solutions.

## Section 5: Cross-Cutting Integration

**Human and Social Context:**

- **Leave No One Behind**

The project contributed to the Leave No One Behind principle by supporting rural communities, farmers, women, youth, social institutions and vulnerable groups across seven environmentally vulnerable landscapes of Kazakhstan. The programme reached communities facing land degradation, pasture pressure, water scarcity, climate risks and limited access to practical environmental technologies.
Several projects generated direct social co-benefits for groups that are often less visible in environmental programming. For example, the project implemented by the Karaganda Regional Ecological Museum improved energy efficiency in a women's correctional facility through solar panels, insulation and energy-efficient lighting. This improved living and learning conditions for women inmates while reducing energy consumption and coal-related emissions.
The project also supported youth engagement through environmental education and climate awareness activities. The Climate School and school climate clubs in the Korgalzhyn area introduced young people to practical climate action, renewable energy, energy saving and sustainable resource management. These activities helped build environmental knowledge and skills among youth while linking education with practical community-level climate solutions.

- **Human Rights**

The project applied a participatory approach by enabling local CSOs, communities, farmers, women-led organizations, educational institutions and social facilities to identify local environmental problems and implement solutions adapted to their needs. Stakeholder consultations, grant proposal development, multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms, field monitoring and knowledge exchange activities created space for local actors to participate in decision-making related to land, water, energy and climate resilience.
This approach supported access to information, participation and local ownership. Rather than imposing standard technical solutions, the programme financed initiatives designed and implemented by civil society organizations and local partners, with communities directly involved in restoration, training, awareness raising and technology demonstration activities.

- **Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

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Gender equality and women's empowerment were integrated into project design, grant selection, capacity building, implementation, monitoring and knowledge management. Women were supported not only as beneficiaries, but also as implementers, leaders and decision-makers in local environmental action. Women led 14 out of 25 supported grant projects, representing 56% of the grant portfolio. Gender-responsive support was provided from the early stages of grant development. A dedicated Gender Expert reviewed and provided feedback on 25 project proposals, advising applicants on strengthening gender components, applying inclusive targeting and using gender-sensitive indicators. Capacity-building activities for prospective grantees also included dedicated gender equality sessions, practical exercises and case studies. These trainings reached 157 participants, including 107 women (68%).

Women were actively represented in participatory governance mechanisms. Across the seven multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms, 32 of 85 participating organizations (38%) were women-led or women-focused, and women accounted for 48 of 98 participants (49%) in discussions on landscape strategies and action plans. This helped ensure that women's perspectives were reflected in landscape-level planning, coordination and knowledge exchange.

A strong example of gender-responsive impact was the project implemented by the Karaganda Regional Ecological Museum in a women's correctional facility. The project introduced energy-efficiency measures, including solar panels, insulation and energy-efficient lighting, improving living and learning conditions for women inmates while reducing energy consumption and coal-related emissions. This demonstrated how climate mitigation interventions can also generate direct social benefits for women in vulnerable settings.

Another relevant example was the Zher-Ana Astana project in the Akmola landscape, which supported women farmers through agroecological training and practical demonstrations on crop rotation, organic fertilizers, drip irrigation and sustainable water use. The project contributed to women's practical engagement in sustainable agriculture and strengthened their role in applying and disseminating climate-resilient land management practices at household and community levels.

These measures contributed to both gender equality and environmental outcomes. Women's leadership and participation strengthened household-level uptake of agroecological practices, water-saving measures, renewable energy and energy-efficiency solutions, reinforcing the sustainability of project results.

- **Disability Inclusion**

Although the project was not designed specifically as a disability inclusion intervention, several activities benefited people with disabilities and social institutions. In the Karaganda region, the project implemented by PRO ECO installed an energy-efficient hot water supply system using renewable energy sources at the Center for Special Social Services No. 1 in Abay district. The intervention improved access

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to hot water and living conditions for **75 people with disabilities**, while also contributing to energy efficiency and $CO_2$ emission reductions.
This example shows that small-scale renewable energy and energy-efficiency solutions can directly improve the quality of services in social institutions, especially where vulnerable groups depend on reliable heating, hot water and basic infrastructure.

- **Cultural Heritage**

The project contributed to cultural heritage mainly through the use of locally adapted and traditional ecological knowledge in land and pasture management. For example, pasture restoration and water management activities in Turkestan built on local knowledge of dryland ecosystems, seasonal grazing, native vegetation and water retention. The restoration of degraded pastures in Khantagy by TORANGY included planting native trees and shrubs and improving water availability for pasture use and livestock watering.
In the Aral region, projects related to saxaul micro-nurseries and restoration of degraded lands also reflected the cultural and ecological importance of native vegetation in protecting communities from sand, salt and dust storms. By combining local knowledge with modern restoration, water-saving and renewable energy technologies, the project helped strengthen community ownership and the long-term relevance of supported practices.

**Interactions between Social and Environmental Factors:**

- **Sustainability and Resilience**

The project strengthened sustainability and resilience by linking environmental restoration with practical social and livelihood benefits for rural communities, farmers, public institutions and local partners. Grant activities were designed not only to address land degradation and climate change, but also to demonstrate solutions that can be maintained and replicated by communities after project completion.

A key contribution was the promotion of sustainable land and water management practices in vulnerable steppe, semi-desert and desert landscapes. Supported projects introduced pasture restoration, water-saving technologies, drought-resistant and cover crops, organic fertilizers, vermicomposting, hydroponic feed production, saxaul micro-nurseries and agroecological field demonstrations. These practices helped reduce pressure on degraded lands, improve soil fertility, support more sustainable livestock and crop production, and strengthen the adaptive capacity of households and farmers.

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The project also improved resilience through renewable energy and energy-efficiency solutions. Solar systems, heat pumps, energy-efficient lighting, insulation and other low-emission technologies were applied in social institutions, public facilities, protected areas and local project sites. These interventions reduced energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, while also improving service conditions and reducing operating costs for beneficiary organizations.

Sustainability was further supported through capacity development, multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms and knowledge exchange. The project updated seven landscape strategies, advanced seven landscape action plans, engaged 85 local CBOs and stakeholders in dialogue platforms, and documented lessons learned and case studies for replication. This combination of field-level results, local ownership, institutional engagement and knowledge management created a foundation for sustaining and scaling up successful practices beyond the grant implementation period.

**Natural Environment:**

- **Biodiversity Conservation**

The project contributed to biodiversity conservation mainly through restoration of degraded lands, pastures and native vegetation in steppe, semi-desert and desert ecosystems. Several grant projects supported rehabilitation of degraded pasturelands, planting of native trees and shrubs, restoration of vegetation cover and reduction of pressure on fragile ecosystems.

In the Aral region, projects related to saxaul micro-nurseries and native seedling production supported restoration of degraded and vulnerable landscapes affected by desertification, sand movement and salt-dust storms. These activities contributed to the protection of local ecosystems by promoting native vegetation and strengthening the role of communities in landscape restoration. In Turkestan, pasture restoration activities, including planting of native trees and shrubs and improved water retention, helped restore ecological functions in degraded dryland areas.

The project also supported biodiversity-relevant interventions in protected and natural areas. For example, activities in Karkaraly National Park promoted sustainable development of specially protected natural areas in the context of climate change, including renewable energy solutions for remote facilities and restoration activities that reduced pressure on natural ecosystems.

- **Sustainable Natural Resource Management**

Sustainable natural resource management was one of the central areas of the project. Grant projects supported practical measures for improving land, water, pasture and soil management across all seven

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target landscapes. These included sustainable pasture management, restoration of degraded lands, water-saving technologies, rehabilitation of springs and water infrastructure, drip irrigation, organic fertilizers, vermicomposting, hydroponic feed production, cover crops and drought-resistant crops.

As a result, the project contributed to more than 87,000 ha of restored land and more than 124,000 ha of landscapes under improved practices. These results demonstrate that community-level interventions can generate landscape-level benefits when they are linked to local needs, technical support and participatory planning.

The project also promoted more efficient use of local resources. For example, vermicomposting and organic fertilizer production converted livestock and organic waste into soil improvement inputs, reducing reliance on synthetic fertilizers. Hydroponic feed production helped reduce pressure on overgrazed pastures, while water-saving and wastewater reuse technologies supported more sustainable use of scarce water resources in arid areas.

- **Climate Change**

ecosystems. The project contributed to climate change mitigation and adaptation through both land-based and energy-related interventions. Climate mitigation results were achieved through renewable energy, energy efficiency, improved heating systems, solar energy solutions, organic waste processing, composting, vermicomposting and improved land management practices that reduce emissions and support carbon sequestration.

The project contributed to **more than 23,000 $tCO_2e$** of lifetime direct greenhouse gas emission reductions. Renewable energy and energy-efficiency solutions were introduced in public, social and community-relevant facilities, including schools, social institutions, protected area facilities and project demonstration sites. These interventions reduced dependence on conventional energy sources and demonstrated practical low-emission solutions for rural and remote settings.

The project also supported climate adaptation by promoting drought-resistant crops, cover crops, pasture restoration, water-saving technologies, agroecological practices and climate education. These measures helped farmers, households and communities adapt to increasing aridity, water scarcity, land degradation and climate-related risks affecting rural livelihoods.

- **Disaster Risks**

The project contributed to disaster risk reduction by addressing environmental factors that increase vulnerability to climate-related hazards, including land degradation, soil erosion, desertification, pasture degradation, water scarcity and salt-dust storms. Restoration of degraded lands, planting of native vegetation, improved pasture management and water retention measures helped reduce exposure to erosion, dust movement and further degradation.

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In the Aral region, saxaul micro-nurseries and restoration activities supported efforts to stabilize degraded landscapes and reduce the risks associated with sand, salt and dust storms. In Turkestan and other dryland landscapes, pasture restoration, water catchment measures and planting of native vegetation helped improve ecosystem resilience and reduce vulnerability to drought and land degradation.

By combining ecosystem restoration, sustainable land management, water-saving practices and community capacity development, the project strengthened the ability of local communities and institutions to manage environmental risks and respond to climate-related pressures.

## IV. Partnerships and Sustainability

### Partnerships

Partnerships were central to the implementation and results of the seventh operational phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Kazakhstan. The project worked with national and local stakeholders, including government institutions, UNDP Kazakhstan Country Office, UNOPS, the National Steering Committee, civil society organizations, local communities, farmers, social institutions, academia, media, technical experts and strategic partners.

At the national level, the project benefited from strategic cooperation with the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, UNDP Kazakhstan and the National Steering Committee. The National Steering Committee provided overall guidance on programme priorities, grant selection, review of landscape strategies and key implementation decisions. Its composition, which included government representatives, UNDP, civil society and technical experts, helped ensure that grant-making was aligned with national environmental priorities, GEF objectives and local needs.

Civil society organizations were the main implementing partners of the grant portfolio. Over the reporting period, the programme supported 27 projects, including 25 grant projects addressing land degradation and climate change priorities, one capacity-development grant and one strategic knowledge-management and replication grant. CSO grantees worked directly with local communities, farmers, schools, kindergartens, social institutions, protected areas, women’s groups, youth, local authorities and private actors depending on the specific project context. These partnerships enabled practical field-level

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implementation across the seven target landscapes and helped translate programme objectives into tangible local results.

The project also strengthened cooperation with strategic partners. The capacity-development partner supported potential and selected grantees through training, consultations and technical guidance on project design, implementation, gender mainstreaming, sustainability and reporting. The strategic knowledge-management and replication partner, PF "Decenta", supported documentation of lessons learned, case studies, exchange visits, grantee indicator surveys, knowledge dissemination and identification of replication pathways. These partnerships contributed directly to improved quality of grant implementation, stronger evidence generation and broader dissemination of successful practices.

Local authorities, academic institutions, technical experts and community representatives were engaged through stakeholder consultations, multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms, field-level cooperation and knowledge exchange. The project engaged 85 local CBOs and stakeholders in multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms across the seven landscapes, including 32 women-led community organizations/stakeholders. These platforms strengthened coordination, supported participatory planning and helped connect community-based initiatives with landscape-level priorities.

Stakeholders and local communities were engaged throughout the project cycle. During the start-up phase, consultations across the target landscapes informed the update of seven landscape strategies. During implementation, grantees worked with beneficiaries and local partners to design and implement solutions adapted to local environmental and socio-economic conditions. During monitoring and evaluation, grantee reports, field visits, consultations and the PF "Decenta" indicator survey helped verify progress, collect evidence and document lessons learned. This participatory approach strengthened ownership and improved the sustainability prospects of project results.

The project also created visibility for knowledge and lessons learned through case studies, lessons learned documents, exchange visits, multi-stakeholder meetings, media materials, project stories, social media and UNDP/SGP communication channels. The final conference and knowledge fair in Korgalzhyn further supported visibility by bringing together government representatives, UNDP, the National Steering Committee, grantees, NGOs, media and local communities to present results, demonstrate technologies and discuss opportunities for replication.

## Sustainability

*Briefly describe the transition arrangements carried out to scale up or sustain the project results.*

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Sustainability was embedded in the project through local ownership, capacity development, practical technology demonstration, participatory governance and knowledge management. The project supported solutions that were technically feasible, locally relevant and capable of being maintained by communities, CSOs, farmers, public institutions and local partners beyond the grant implementation period.

A key sustainability measure was the strengthening of local capacities. Grantees and beneficiaries received technical support on sustainable land management, agroecology, renewable energy, energy efficiency, monitoring, reporting, gender mainstreaming and sustainability planning. This helped ensure that supported practices were not limited to one-time grant activities but could continue through local knowledge, skills and institutional ownership.

The project also supported sustainability through landscape-level governance. Seven landscape strategies were updated and seven landscape action plans were advanced through participatory processes. Multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms created a mechanism for continued coordination among CSOs, local authorities, farmers, women-led organizations, experts and other stakeholders. These platforms can continue to serve as spaces for knowledge exchange, partnership-building and promotion of successful practices after project closure.

Replication and upscaling were addressed through the strategic knowledge-management grant. The project documented 15 lessons learned and 7 case studies, and supported replication or upscaling of 7 technologies, practices or approaches. Knowledge products, exchange visits and final dissemination events helped identify which solutions could be adopted by other communities, schools, social institutions, farms and local organizations.

Transition arrangements also included final reporting, consolidation of indicator data, documentation of good practices, preparation for the Terminal Evaluation and handover of remaining project information to UNDP CO and relevant partners. The final conference and knowledge fair served as an important closure and transition mechanism by presenting results, strengthening partnerships and promoting the continued use and replication of successful practices at local and national levels.

## V. Update on risks and mitigation measures

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During the reporting period, the overall project risk level remained manageable. No major fiduciary, environmental, social or safeguard risks materialized during implementation. The main risk affecting the project was operational: the delayed start-up caused by late hiring of the project team, which compressed the time available for inception activities, stakeholder consultations, grant selection, implementation support, monitoring and reporting. To mitigate this risk, the project team applied adaptive management and completed several critical start-up tasks within a short timeframe, including the inception workshop, preparation of the inception report, formation of the National Steering Committee, consultations across 10 regions covering the seven target landscapes, and updating of landscape strategies. To avoid further delays, stakeholder meetings were organized directly by the project team rather than through an external service provider, which helped save time and bring implementation back on track.

During portfolio implementation, several emerging issues were monitored, including limited implementation capacity of some CSO grantees, logistical constraints in remote landscapes, seasonal/weather-related risks affecting field activities, and delays in the submission of technical and financial reports by some grantees. These risks were mitigated through regular communication with grantees, technical backstopping, flexible scheduling of monitoring visits and project activities, review of deliverables, targeted guidance on reporting requirements, and continued support through capacity-building and knowledge-management partners.

Climate and environmental risks were also considered during project implementation. Several grant projects operated in landscapes affected by drought, water scarcity, pasture degradation, soil erosion, desertification and climate variability. The project mitigated these risks by supporting locally adapted approaches, including drought-resistant crops, water-saving technologies, pasture restoration, native vegetation planting, renewable energy and energy-efficiency solutions, and sustainable land and water management practices.

Toward project closure, key residual risks relate to timely completion of final reporting, consolidation of end-of-project evidence, finalization of the Terminal Evaluation, and transition of project results to local partners and stakeholders. Mitigation measures include close follow-up with remaining grantees, consolidation of indicator data, preparation of knowledge products and case studies, organization of the final conference and knowledge fair, and coordination with UNDP CO on closure requirements. The updated risk log is included in Annex II.

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## VI. Key Challenges, Lessons Learned and Recommendations

**Challenges:**

Challenge 1: Delayed operational start and compressed implementation period

The main challenge during implementation was the delayed operational start of the project, caused by late recruitment of the project team. This compressed the time available for inception activities, formation of the National Steering Committee, stakeholder consultations, updating of landscape strategies, capacity-building, grant selection, implementation support, monitoring and reporting. The compressed timeframe increased pressure on the project team and grantees, particularly during the initial phase of portfolio development.

The project addressed this challenge through adaptive management and accelerated implementation planning. Stakeholder consultations across 10 regions covering the seven target landscapes were organized directly by the project team, rather than through an external service provider, which helped save time and move the project forward. Close coordination with UNDP CO, UNOPS, the Regional Technical Advisor and the National Steering Committee also helped ensure timely review of key documents, grant selection and implementation decisions.

Recommendation: Future SGP phases should ensure timely recruitment and operational start-up, with sufficient time allocated for inception, stakeholder engagement and grant selection. Where delays occur, a compressed but realistic acceleration plan should be agreed early with clear milestones, responsibilities and monitoring arrangements.

Challenge 2: Different levels of capacity among CSO grantees

The grant portfolio included organizations with different levels of experience in project management, financial reporting, gender mainstreaming, monitoring and evidence-based reporting. Some grantees required additional support to formulate indicators, document results, calculate achievements and

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prepare quality technical and financial reports. This affected the pace and quality of reporting, particularly during the final consolidation of results.

The project mitigated this challenge through capacity-building, regular follow-up, review of draft reports, field monitoring and targeted technical guidance. Strategic partners supported grantees through training, consultations, knowledge management and indicator data collection. The grantee indicator survey also helped consolidate beneficiary, household, gender-disaggregated and other results data across the portfolio.

Recommendation: Future grant cycles should include stronger reporting and M&E support from the proposal stage onward. Templates, indicator guidance, reporting checklists and evidence requirements should be introduced early, with practical training for grantees on results-based reporting, gender-disaggregated data, co-financing documentation and verification of environmental indicators.

Challenge 3: Geographic spread and logistical complexity

The project covered seven landscapes across 10 regions of Kazakhstan, including remote rural areas, protected areas, social institutions and environmentally vulnerable territories. This created logistical challenges for monitoring visits, exchange visits, stakeholder engagement and timely collection of evidence from project sites. Seasonal and weather-related constraints also affected access to some locations.

The project addressed this challenge by combining field monitoring with regular online follow-up, direct communication with grantees, use of landscape-level networks, WhatsApp groups and strategic partner support. Multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms also helped maintain coordination and information exchange at landscape level.

Recommendation: Future programmes should maintain a hybrid monitoring model combining field visits, digital communication tools, structured grantee reporting and local focal points. For geographically dispersed portfolios, monitoring plans should prioritize risk-based visits, cluster projects by landscape and use local partners to support evidence collection.

**Lessons Learned:**

Lesson Learned 1: Early capacity development improves project quality and implementation performance

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The project demonstrated that early capacity development is critical for the quality of grant proposals and subsequent implementation. Training and consultations helped prospective and selected grantees better understand GEF priorities, sustainable land management, renewable energy and energy efficiency, gender mainstreaming, sustainability planning, monitoring and reporting requirements.

The project incorporated this learning by providing capacity-building support before and during grant implementation. This helped improve proposal quality and supported grantees during implementation and reporting.

Recommendation: Capacity development should remain a core part of future SGP programming. It should not be limited to one-time training, but structured as continuous support covering proposal development, implementation, monitoring, reporting, knowledge management and sustainability planning.

Lesson Learned 2: Multi-stakeholder platforms strengthen ownership and sustainability

The establishment of multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms helped connect CSOs, local authorities, women-led organizations, farmers, academic institutions, experts and other stakeholders around landscape-level priorities. These platforms supported coordination, knowledge exchange, participatory planning and replication of successful practices.

The project incorporated this learning by using dialogue platforms and stakeholder consultations to support landscape strategy updates, action planning, knowledge exchange and sustainability discussions.

Recommendation: Multi-stakeholder platforms should remain a core mechanism for landscape-based programming. Their role should be defined clearly, with practical links to grant implementation, local development priorities, replication opportunities and sustainability planning.

Lesson Learned 3: Knowledge management is most effective when combined with practical peer learning

The project confirmed that successful practices are more likely to be replicated when they are documented and also demonstrated in practice. Lessons learned, case studies, exchange visits, grantee meetings and the final knowledge fair helped make results visible and accessible to other communities and partners.

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The project incorporated this learning through the strategic knowledge-management and replication grant, which supported documentation of lessons learned, case studies, exchange visits, grantee indicator survey and dissemination of successful practices.

Recommendation: Future programmes should combine written knowledge products with practical demonstrations, exchange visits, videos, field days and peer-to-peer learning. Replication should be planned from the start of grant implementation, not only at the closing stage.

Lesson Learned 4: Indicators and data collection need to reflect portfolio diversity

The project portfolio included diverse interventions, ranging from pasture restoration and agroecology to renewable energy, energy efficiency, wastewater treatment, saxaul micro-nurseries, hydroponic feed and climate education. This diversity created challenges for consistent measurement and aggregation of results across projects.

The project addressed this by consolidating data through grantee reporting, field verification, targeted indicator surveys and final portfolio-level analysis. However, future programmes would benefit from clearer indicator guidance and standardized data collection tools from the beginning.

Recommendation: Future projects should maintain the existing GEF core indicators, but provide clearer guidance to grantees on how to measure and report against them. Baselines, targets and data collection methods should be agreed at grant approval stage, including definitions of beneficiaries, households, land restored, landscapes under improved practices, GHG mitigation and replication. This would improve consistency, reduce reporting burden and strengthen evidence quality.

Way Forward

To sustain project results, future efforts should focus on continued use of the updated landscape strategies and action plans, strengthening of multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms, dissemination of lessons learned and case studies, and replication of successful technologies and practices through CSOs, local authorities, farmers, schools, social institutions and community partners.

The final conference and knowledge fair should serve as a transition platform to present results, promote practical solutions and connect grantees with potential partners for further scaling. Terminal Evaluation findings should also inform future SGP programming, including OP8 design, with particular attention to

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timely start-up, early capacity development, stronger indicator guidance, gender-responsive implementation, knowledge management and sustainability of local partnerships.

## VII. Financial Summary[2]

***Notes**:*
*Please insert the Atlas generated "Interim Financial Donor Report (IDR)" and/or "the Cumulative Financial Donor Report". If both do not meet what is agreed by each project with their respective donors, you may use the format below.*

*Some flexibility can be accommodated but it should be in consultation with the donor and IRH management.*

*Unless specified in the contribution agreement, all figures should be reported in United States Dollars. ,*

**Table 1: Overview of available resources for the project duration**

*(Total funds received from different donors for the year of the AWP; please follow this format)*

| *Donor* | *Opening Balance* | *Contribution Received* | *Available Resources* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *A* | *100* | *250* | *350* |
| *B* | *50* | *-* | *50* |
| *Total* | *150* | *250* | *400* |

**Table 2: Overview of allocation and utilization[3] per output**

*For multi-donor projects, show the cumulative total*

| *Output* | *Donor A* | | *Donor B* | | *Total Budget* | *Total Utilization* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Budget* | *Utilization* | *Budget* | *Utilization* | | |
| *1.1. xxxxx* | *10* | *8* | *15* | *10* | *25* | *18* |
| *1.2. xxxxx* | *15* | *10* | *0* | *0* | *15* | *10* |
| *1.3. xxxxx* | *25* | *20* | *10* | *10* | *35* | *30* |

2 Disclaimer 1: Data contained in this financial report section is an extract of UNDP financial records. All financial provided above is provisional. Certified financial statements will be provided on <indicate date (30 June of the following year)>.

3 Disclaimer 2: Of the USD xxxxx presented above, USD xxxx corresponds to eligible expenses (as per IPSAS terminology), and USD xxxx corresponds to legal commitments in force between UNDP and third parties for the reporting period.

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| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Total* | *50* | *38* | *25* | *20* | *75* | *58* |

*Include the two disclaimers as shown in the below footnotes.*

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# VIII. Annexes

## Annex I: Progress Review: detailed matrix of activities and results

| Output 1 | Indicators | Baseline / Target | Progress / Milestone |
|---|---|---|---|
| Resilient rural and peri-urban landscapes of steppe and desert ecosystems for sustainable development and global environmental benefits<br><br>Budget: [to be completed based on final financial report]<br>Expenditure to date: [to be completed based on final financial report] | Increased area of land restored, hectares | Baseline: 0<br>End-of-project target: 15,000 ha | Reporting period / cumulative result: 87,704.31 ha of land restored, exceeding the end-of-project target. |
| | Area of landscapes under improved practices, excluding protected areas, hectares | Baseline: 0<br>End-of-project target: 10,000 ha | Reporting period / cumulative result: 124,355.75 ha of landscapes under improved practices, exceeding the end-of-project target. |
| | Greenhouse gas emissions mitigated, tCO2e lifetime direct | Baseline: 0<br>End-of-project target: 5,064 tCO2e | Reporting period / cumulative result: 23,182.3 tCO2e lifetime direct greenhouse gas mitigation, exceeding the end-of-project target. |
| | Number of direct project beneficiaries, disaggregated by gender and youth | Baseline: 0<br>End-of-project target: 15,000 individuals | Reporting period / cumulative result: 25,891 direct beneficiaries reached, including 9,294 women, 8,695 men and 7,930 youth. |
| | Number of households adopting sustainable agroecological practices and sustainable land management schemes, disaggregated by gender | Baseline: 0<br>End-of-project target: at least 150 households, disaggregated by female-led and male-led households | Reporting period / cumulative result: 3,245 households adopted sustainable agroecological practices and sustainable land management schemes, including 1,255 women-led and 1,986 men-led households. |
| | Number of organizations in target landscapes that benefited from renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies and solutions | Baseline: 0<br>End-of-project target: at least 35 organizations | Reporting period / cumulative result: 126 organizations benefited from renewable energy and/or energy-efficiency technologies and solutions. |

| Activities | Results |
|---|---|
| Activity 1: Implementation of 25 grant projects addressing land degradation and climate change priorities across the seven target landscapes. | Grant portfolio implemented across Akmola, East Kazakhstan/Abai, Karaganda/Ulytau, Kostanay, Almaty/Zhetysu, Kyzylorda and Turkestan landscapes, generating measurable environmental, climate and social results. |
| 1.1 Restoration of degraded lands and pastures through pasture rehabilitation, water retention, native trees and shrubs, saxaul and other native seedling nurseries, and soil restoration measures. | 87,704.31 ha of land restored; improved ecological functions, vegetation cover and resilience of degraded steppe, semi-desert and desert landscapes. |
| 1.2 Introduction of sustainable agroecological practices and sustainable land management schemes, including crop rotation, cover crops, organic | 124,355.75 ha of landscapes brought under improved practices; 3,245 households adopted sustainable agroecological and land management practices. |

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| | |
|---|---|
| fertilizers, vermicomposting, drip irrigation, hydroponic feed production and agroecology field demonstrations. | |
| 1.3 Demonstration and application of renewable energy and energy-efficiency technologies, including solar systems, heat pumps, solar-powered irrigation and water purification, energy-efficient lighting, insulation and improved heating/hot water systems. | 23,182.3 tCO2e lifetime direct GHG mitigation achieved; 126 organizations benefited from renewable energy and/or energy-efficiency solutions. |
| 1.4 Beneficiary training, practical demonstrations, technical backstopping and field-level support to households, farmers, CSOs, social institutions and local partners. | 25,891 direct beneficiaries reached; strengthened local capacities to maintain and replicate sustainable land management, renewable energy and energy-efficiency practices. |

| Output 2 | Indicators | Baseline / Target | Progress / Milestone |
|---|---|---|---|
| Enhancing landscape sustainability through participatory governance and upscaling of best practices<br><br>Budget: [to be completed based on final financial report]<br>Expenditure to date: [to be completed based on final financial report] | Number of local CBOs and stakeholders in each landscape participating in multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms, with disaggregation by women-led community organizations | Baseline: 0<br>End-of-project target: at least 8 in each multi-stakeholder dialogue group, including at least 3 women-led or women-focused organizations | Reporting period / cumulative result: 85 local CBOs and stakeholders participated in multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms, including 32 women-led community organizations/stakeholders. |
| | Number of landscape strategies updated and landscape action plans developed through participatory consultation and implemented by multi-stakeholder groups in each target landscape | Baseline: 0<br>End-of-project target: 7 landscape strategies and management action plans under implementation and evaluated at end of project | Reporting period / cumulative result: 7 landscape strategies were updated and approved, and 7 landscape action plans were developed/advanced through multi-stakeholder processes. |
| | Number of SGP technologies, practices or approaches successfully replicated and up-scaled in and beyond the target landscapes | Baseline: 0<br>End-of-project target: at least 5 technologies, practices or approaches replicated or up-scaled | Reporting period / cumulative result: 7 technologies, practices or approaches were replicated or up-scaled in and beyond the target landscapes. |
| | Number of knowledge management products produced and distributed in the target landscapes and outside for experience-sharing, replication and up-scaling | Baseline: 0<br>End-of-project target: at least 15 lessons learned and at least 7 case studies | Reporting period / cumulative result: 15 lessons learned and 7 case studies were documented and disseminated. Additional knowledge products and communications materials were produced through SGP/UNDP channels, grantee networks, local events and social media. |
| | Number of exchange visits and knowledge-sharing events supported to promote peer learning and replication | Baseline: 0<br>End-of-project target: exchange visits and knowledge-sharing events | Reporting period / cumulative result: exchange visits, multi-stakeholder meetings and knowledge-sharing activities were organized to support peer |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | organized to support replication and upscaling | learning, dissemination and replication of successful practices. |

| **Activities** | **Results** |
|---|---|
| Activity 2: Updating of landscape strategies and action plans and strengthening of participatory governance mechanisms across the seven target landscapes. | 7 landscape strategies updated and approved; 7 landscape action plans developed/advanced; landscape-level priorities used to guide grant implementation and sustainability planning. |
| 2.1 Facilitation of multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms involving CSOs, women-led organizations, local authorities, farmers, public institutions, academia, experts and other stakeholders. | 85 local CBOs and stakeholders engaged, including 32 women-led community organizations/stakeholders; improved coordination, participatory planning, local ownership and knowledge exchange. |
| 2.2 Capacity development and technical guidance for prospective and selected grantees, including support on project design, gender mainstreaming, sustainability, monitoring and reporting. | Improved quality of grant proposals and implementation; strengthened grantee capacity for results-based management, reporting and sustainability planning. |
| 2.3 Knowledge management and replication support, including documentation of lessons learned, case studies, communication materials, exchange visits and dissemination of successful practices. | 15 lessons learned and 7 case studies documented and disseminated; 7 technologies, practices or approaches replicated or up-scaled; successful models made visible for wider application. |
| 2.4 Portfolio-level data consolidation, grantee indicator survey and collection of evidence for learning, replication and final reporting. | Beneficiary, household, gender-disaggregated, land restoration, GHG mitigation and replication data consolidated; evidence base strengthened for final reporting, knowledge management and Terminal Evaluation. |

***Note: Monitoring and evaluation activities are described in the main report under Section 3. They supported both outputs through grantee reporting, field monitoring, PIR reporting, risk monitoring, gender and safeguards monitoring, portfolio-level data consolidation, the PF "Decenta" grantee indicator survey and initiation of the Terminal Evaluation process.***

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## Annex II: Updated Risk Log

*(Refer to project risk log and include it here to show any updates and mitigation measures)*

| # | Description | Date Identified | Type | Impact & Probability | Counter-measures / Mngt response | Owner | Last Update | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Delayed operational start due to late recruitment of the project team, resulting in a compressed timeframe for inception, stakeholder consultations, grant selection, implementation support, monitoring and reporting. | July 2023 | Operational / Organizational | Potential delay in project milestones and reduced time for grant implementation and consolidation.<br>P = 3<br>I = 3 | Adaptive management applied; critical start-up tasks completed within a short timeframe; stakeholder consultations across 10 regions organized directly by the project team; close coordination maintained with UNDP CO, UNOPS, RTA and NSC; grant selection and follow-up accelerated. | National Coordinator / UNDP CO | June 2026 | Reducing |
| 2 | Different levels of project management, financial reporting, monitoring and evidence-generation capacity among CSO grantees. | January 2024 | Operational / Organizational | Risk of delayed reporting, inconsistent indicator data and weaker evidence for final results reporting.<br>P = 3<br>I = 3 | Capacity-building, templates and technical guidance provided; regular follow-up with grantees maintained; draft reports and deliverables reviewed; field monitoring conducted; strategic partner support and grantee indicator survey used to consolidate results. | National Coordinator / UNDP CO | June 2026 | Reducing |
| 3 | Geographic spread of the portfolio across seven landscapes and 10 regions, including remote rural areas, protected areas and environmentally vulnerable sites. | September 2023 | Operational / Environmental | Logistical constraints could affect monitoring visits, exchange visits, stakeholder engagement and timely evidence collection.<br>P = 3<br>I = 2 | Hybrid monitoring model used, combining field visits and online follow-up; flexible scheduling applied; direct communication with grantees maintained; landscape-level networks, WhatsApp groups and strategic partner support used for coordination and evidence collection. | National Coordinator / UNDP CO | June 2026 | No change |
| 4 | Timely completion of final reporting, Terminal Evaluation inputs, evidence consolidation and project closure actions. | December 2025 | Operational / Strategic | Risk of incomplete closure documentation, delays in final reporting or insufficient evidence for end-of-project assessment.<br>P = 3<br>I = 3 | Portfolio-level indicator data consolidated; final grantee reports and evidence requested; closure requirements coordinated with UNDP CO; Terminal Evaluation process supported; final report, knowledge products and final conference/knowledge fair prepared for dissemination and transition. | National Coordinator / UNDP CO | June 2026 | Reducing |

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## **Annex III:** Annual Work Plan for (next year)

Not applicable. The project is closing in 2026; therefore, no Annual Work Plan for the following year is prepared.

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## **Annex IV:** Assets List.

The current assets list for items above USD 300, subject to global-level handover from UNOPS to UNDP, is presented below. The list reflects assets recorded at the time of preparation of this report. Final verification, reconciliation and handover will be completed by UNDP CO/UNOPS as part of project closure procedures.

| # | Country | Asset Description | Asset Tag Number | Asset Group | Asset Condition | Acquisition Date | Acquisition Method | Currency | Purchase Price | Est. Current Value (USD) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Kazakhstan | Vehicle Toyota Land Cruiser Prado 150 | SGPKAZ004 | Vehicles | Available and Functional | 18/07/2018 | Procured and paid outside of oneUNOPS | USD | 46153 | 46153 |
| 2 | Kazakhstan | Laptop HP ProBook 440G5 | SGPKAZ002 | Communications and IT Equip | Available and Functional | 22/11/2018 | Procured and paid outside of oneUNOPS | USD | 1043 | 1043 |
| 3 | Kazakhstan | Laptop HP N1L54EA | SGP 2-21 | Communications and IT Equip | Available and Functional | 18/12/2015 | Procured and paid outside of oneUNOPS | USD | 902 | 902 |
| 4 | Kazakhstan | Laptop Asus Expert Book B1400CEAE | SGPKAZ005 | Communications and IT Equip | Available and Functional | 12/07/2023 | Other | KZT | 449990 | 869 |
| 5 | Kazakhstan | Laptop Dell Vostro 3520 | SGPKAZ006 | Communications and IT Equip | Available and Functional | 12/07/2023 | Other | KZT | 494990 | 956 |

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## **Annex V:** Knowledge Generation

The project generated knowledge through systematic monitoring, documentation of implementation experience, peer learning among grantees, exchange visits, multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms, field monitoring, grantee reporting and analytical work conducted under the strategic knowledge-management and replication grant. Knowledge generation was integrated into project implementation, monitoring, adaptive management and replication planning.

Project insights were actively used to improve technical support to grantees, strengthen reporting quality, identify scalable practices and inform discussions within multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms. Findings from grantee reports, field monitoring, indicator surveys, case studies and lessons learned were used to refine technical backstopping, support final results consolidation and guide dissemination of successful approaches across the seven target landscapes.

The project documented and disseminated practical knowledge on sustainable land management, agroecology, pasture restoration, drought-resistant and cover crops, vermicomposting, organic fertilizer production, saxaul micro-nurseries, hydroponic feed production, renewable energy, energy efficiency, climate education and community-based approaches to landscape resilience. This helped demonstrate how small-scale local initiatives can generate environmental, climate and social co-benefits and how successful practices can be replicated in other communities and regions.

Knowledge management and dissemination activities included the preparation of lessons learned documents, case studies, exchange visits, stakeholder meetings, grantee consultations, media materials, project stories and final dissemination events. The project documented 15 lessons learned and 7 case studies, and supported the replication or upscaling of 7 technologies, practices or approaches. Knowledge products and activities were shared through SGP/UNDP channels, grantee networks, multi-stakeholder platforms, local events, social media and the final conference and knowledge fair.

The strategic partner PF "Decenta" played a central role in knowledge management and replication. Its work included collecting project results, supporting indicator verification, conducting the grantee indicator survey, preparing knowledge products, documenting successful practices and supporting exchange and dissemination activities. These efforts contributed to evidence-based reporting and strengthened the basis for future replication and scaling-up.

The final conference and knowledge fair in Korgalzhyn served as a key knowledge-sharing and transition event. The event was designed to present results of the seventh phase, demonstrate effective technologies and approaches used by grantees, facilitate exchange among government institutions, NGOs, media and international partners, and create a basis for scaling up best practices at the national level.

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## Knowledge products and activities

| Knowledge product / activity | Description / status |
|---|---|
| Lessons learned documents | 15 lessons learned documented from grant implementation experience across the target landscapes. |
| Case studies | 7 case studies prepared to document successful practices and replication potential. |
| Grantee indicator survey | Survey conducted by PF “Decenta” to support verification of beneficiaries, household adoption, gender-disaggregated results, youth participation and other project-level indicators. |
| Exchange visits | Exchange visits organized among grantees to support peer learning and replication of successful practices. |
| Multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms | Seven landscape-level dialogue platforms supported knowledge exchange, participatory planning and dissemination of practical solutions. |
| Final conference and knowledge fair | Closing event in Korgalzhyn to present results, demonstrate technologies and support replication of successful approaches. |
| Climate School practical session | Practical educational session demonstrating climate awareness, adaptation and environmental education approaches. |
| UNDP / SGP project stories and media materials | Articles, stories, videos, social media posts and other visibility materials developed to share project results. |
| Knowledge products by grantees | Project-level materials, presentations, demonstrations and products developed by grantees. |