



FINAL REPORT

**United Nations Development Programme
Kazakhstan**

**“Conservation and Sustainable Management of Key Globally Important
Ecosystems for Multiple Benefits”, 00101043
(28 October 2024)**



Photo: Aleksey Malchenko

Reporting Period	2024
Donor	Global Environment Facility
Country	Kazakhstan
Project Title	Conservation and Sustainable Management of Key Globally Important Ecosystems for Multiple Benefits
Project ID Quantum Award ID Outputs Strategic Plan and/or CPD Outcomes	00101043 00097224 Contributing Outcome (CPD 2021-2025): 3.2. By 2025, all people in Kazakhstan, in particular the most vulnerable, benefit from increased climate resilience, sustainable management of environment and clean energy, and sustainable rural and urban development. CPD Output 4.1: Solutions developed, and resources mobilized for more sustainable use of ecosystems for the improvement of the well-being of local communities and nature
Implementing Partner(s)	Forestry and Wildlife Committee of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the RK
Project Start Date	April 16, 2018
Project End Date	October 28, 2024
Revenue received	GEF - \$8,069,178 USD
Focal Point	Ms. Bibigul Izbair, project manager Подписант: Bibigul Izbair 72E300A85DB342D... Ms. Assel Nurbekova, Head of EE unit/Programme Analyst, assel.nurbekova@undp.org DocuSigned by: Assel Nurbekova 8FD5500A85DB342D...

Project Information Table

Project Title:	Conservation and Sustainable Management of Key Globally Important Ecosystems for Multiple Benefits.		
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	5696	PIF Approval Date:	June 9, 2016
GEF Project ID (PMIS #):	9193	CEO Endorsement Date:	May 13, 2018
Award ID:	00097224	Project Document Signature Date (date project began):	April 28, 2018
Country:	Kazakhstan	Date project manager hired:	September 2018
Region:	CIS	Inception Workshop date:	May 10, 2018
Focal Area:	Biodiversity & Land Degradation	Midterm Review date:	July – November 2020
GEF-6 Strategic Programs:	BD-1 – Program 2 LD-3 – Program 4 SFM-1 & SFM-2	Originally Planned closing date:	April 28, 2023
Trust Fund:	GEF-6	If revised, proposed closing date:	October 2024
		Terminal Evaluation completion date:	Sept. .2024
Executing Agency:	Forestry and Wildlife Committee of the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources		
Project Financing	at CEO endorse ment (USD)	at Midterm Review (USD)	At EoP (USD)
(1) GEF financing:	8,069,178	8,069,178	8,069,178
(2) UNDP contribution:	200,000	200,000	132,135
(3) Forest Wildlife Committee:	70,510,507	70,510,507	95,640,815
(4) Others:	16,085,169	16,085,169	29,750,388
(5) Total co-financing [2+3+4]:	86,795,676	86,795,676	125,523.342

Project Total Cost [1+5]:	94,864,854	94,864,854	133,718,039
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I. Background

The Project aimed to improve the conservation and management of forest resources and adjacent grassland, floodplain, and desert ecosystems, which are valuable for biodiversity conservation, land resources, and the welfare of local communities. The Project also focused on promoting gender equality and women empowerment as relevant as possible within the Project. In this direction, the Project addressed the challenges of sustainable use of natural resources by promoting innovative gender-responsible solutions based on improved capacity, new knowledge, new opportunities, and increased participation of women in the development and implementation of effective methods and approaches of sustainable forest and rangeland management, etc.

The project strategy was to comprehensively address the issues of conservation and sustainable use of forest ecosystems in Kazakhstan by improving management approaches both within the system of protected areas (hereinafter - PAs) and in adjacent landscapes with a view to sustainable use of high conservation value forests (hereinafter - HCVFs).

To achieve the abovementioned goals, the project was structured in three components:

Component 1: Increasing the representativeness of globally important forest ecosystem biodiversity in the network of protected areas and improving the efficiency of management of protected areas

Component 2: Promoting the integration of forest protected areas in the landscape context by creating conditions for the effective regulation and management of globally important ecosystems.

Component 3: International cooperation and knowledge management.

The project covered 14 specially protected natural areas (PAs), 8 forestry institutions, 12 rural districts, 4 villages and 7 districts in 6 administrative regions of the country: Abay, Almaty, East Kazakhstan, Zhambyl, Zhetisu and Turkestan. During the project implementation, sustainable results were noted in reforestation, sustainable landscape management, strengthening professional and technical capacity of PAs and forestries, biodiversity conservation, development of eco-tourism and support for local communities.

II. Progress Review

Progress of the Project indicators is given in Annex 1

Component 1: Increasing the representativeness of globally important forest ecosystem biodiversity in the network of protected areas and improving the efficiency of management of protected areas, including high conservation value forests

To preserve biodiversity and key ecosystems and high conservation value forests:

- The Ile-Balkhash State Nature Reserve and the Tarbagatai State Nature Park with a total area of 558,714.7 hectares were established by Resolution No. 381 of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated June 27, 2018;
- On November 29, 2018, the 6th meeting of the Joint Kazakh-Russian Commission on the implementation of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Russian Federation on the establishment of the Altai transboundary reserve was held in Astana, where the outcomes of the 2018 Action Plan implementation were summarized. As a result of the discussion, the Action Plan for 2019 was elaborated and approved; recommendations on the creation of temporary state border crossing points within the boundaries of Transboundary reserve “Altai” were developed; a unified biodiversity monitoring program and organization of field schools for young specialists were proposed. As a result, the Minutes of the 6th meeting were adopted and signed.
- Within the framework of the implementation of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Russian Federation on the establishment of the transboundary reserve “Altai”, the UNDP project, the Committee of Forestry and Wildlife, Katon-Karagai SNPP, and Katun Biosphere Reserve prepared a joint activity plan for 2019. Activities on updating Management Plans, training sessions on transboundary protection of the territory, environmental monitoring, etc. were envisaged;
- To increase the coverage of forest ecosystems by protected areas in two project areas, natural science and feasibility study projects were prepared to expand the territory of 3 pilot PAs (Kolsai Kolderi SNNP, Zhongar-Alatau SNNP, Karatau State Nature Reserve) and create a new PA (Merke regional park) with a total estimated coverage of 270,988 ha. Work on the creation of 5 new target protected areas has been completed, namely 3 new wildlife sanctuaries (Usek, Koksu and Ketmen) and 2 protected areas (Tereskei and Saur-Manyrak) with an estimated coverage of 1,524,521 hectares.
- To consider inclusion of the pilot PAs in the Green List, the Project held discussions with the IUCN Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. A draft Joint Work Plan and a Strategy for Improving the Management Efficiency of Kazakhstan's PAs for the implementation of the Green List Certification Standards in Kazakhstan have been prepared;
- Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool for Protected Areas (METT) assessment of 14 pilot PAs and 6 emerging PAs with participation of UNDP, management of pilot PAs, researchers and independent experts was carried out in June 2020. The results of the METT were included in the outcome of the terminal evaluation of the Project;

- Within the framework of cooperation with IUCN, the project updated data of PA system in World Database on Protected Areas from 2006 to 2020, analyzed the potential of PAs in Kazakhstan, and provided information on the progress of the PA system in Kazakhstan for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) report.

To improve biodiversity monitoring, conservation of forest ecosystems and high conservation value forests:

- Measures were taken to update the maps of the ecological network and specially protected natural areas of Kazakhstan, taking into account the planned for the creation and expansion of protected areas until 2030.
- Maps of ecosystems, desertification and land degradation, landscapes, anthropogenic disturbance of landscapes and forest fund were published on the UNDP, UNEP and CBD Secretariat geoportal “UN Biodiversity Lab” for geo-information support.
- The map of the ecological network and the map of specially protected natural territories of Kazakhstan were updated, taking into account the planned for creation and expansion of protected areas until 2030. The cartographic material was placed on the international geoportal of the Convention on Biological Diversity <https://www.unbiodiversitylab.org/>;
- During the period from July 5 to August 12 scientific experts (geobotanist-florist, ornithologist and theriologist) carried out field studies in the project area “Altai and Saur-Tarbagatai”. As a result, the biodiversity monitoring programs for the Katon-Karagai and Tarbagatai SNPP, Markakol and West Altai State Nature Reserves were developed;
- Assessment of the current state of biodiversity, flora, plant communities, therio- and avifauna of the pilot PAs of the project area “Altai and Saur-Tarbagatai” was completed. Integrated biodiversity monitoring programs were developed for Katon-Karagai, Tarbagatai National Parks, Markakol and West Altai reserves. Atlases of key forest species of Altai, Northern Tien-Shan, Western Tien-Shan (higher plants and vertebrates) were developed;
- To address the issues of biodiversity conservation of coastal and aquatorial ecosystems of the Markakol reserve due to a sharp increase in the number of the great cormorant, the project worked on introducing the norm in the Law “On Specially Protected Natural Areas” the Government Decree of April 30, 2021 № 34-VII allowing the regulation of the number of animals on the basis of biological justification in the presence of a positive conclusion of the state environmental expertise.

To improve the planning and management of environmental organizations:

- To improve the management and efficiency of PAs in 2019-2021, a draft methodology on the development and structure of the PA Management Plan has been developed, taking into account the introduction of co-management mechanisms (public and coordination councils under PAs) and attracting additional funding. To discuss the structure and rules for the development of the Management Plan of PAs, regional seminars were organized in pilot regions;

- Management plans of 8 pilot PAs were updated and approved for 2019-2023 (Almaty, Karatau, Aksu-Zhabagly, West Altai and Markakol state nature reserves; Kolsai Kolderi, Sairam-Ugam and Katon-Karagai SNPPs). Management plans for these PAs were approved by order of the Committee of Forestry and Wildlife and will serve as a basis for sustainable planning and management of more than 2.0 million forest ecosystems. A norm was introduced into the Law on Protected Areas, which obliges to consider Management Plans as the main document for financial planning;
- Management Plans for the newly established PAs - Ile-Balkhash Reserve and Tarbagatai National Park for 2019-2023 - were finalized;
- To increase the capacity of PAs, ensure compliance of the pilot PAs with global standards for assessing the effectiveness of PA management and the implementation of the IUCN Green List Standard in Kazakhstan, the formation of an expert group was initiated and a joint Work Plan for 2019-2020 was developed;
- To create effective and long-term financial plans for PA management plans, the Integrated Budget Planning Software for Protected Areas (FinPlan) was developed and presented with wide participation of partners and beneficiaries of the project. The software was tested on the basis of pilot PAs, and a series of trainings and webinars were conducted with the participation of staff from 26 PAs;
- With a working group of independent expert consultants (theriologist, ornithologist, botanist, economist, ecotourism and eco-education specialists) and PA staff, the project analyzed the effectiveness of the implementation of management and financing plans of 14 pilot PAs for 2016-2020;
- Draft documents regulating the procedure for establishing protection zones and water protection strips on water bodies, carrying out tourist and recreational activities, and revising the amounts and tariffs for services provided by specially protected natural areas have been developed.

To improve the natural complexes conservation and increase the capacity of the pilot PAs:

- To assess the potential of the pilot PAs in 2018, work was carried out to prepare an analytical report to determine the needs of the pilot PAs;
- To increase the capacity of pilot PAs and improve the material and technical base, 635 units of radios, 7 cross-country vehicles, and computer equipment were purchased and transferred.
- To preserve fish resources and strengthen the counteraction to poaching, 2 KazBoat-42 boats with a trailer and boat motors were provided to Markakol Reserve. As a result, more than 40.0 thousand hectares of the reserved lake Markakol was provided with stationary protection, monitoring and control;
- Material and technical equipment of 8 pilot PAs (national parks: "Kolsai Kolderi", Katon-Karagai, Sairam-Ugam, Ile-Alatau, Charyn; Karatau, Almaty and Aksu-Zhabagly reserves) was strengthened as a result of purchase of 9 high cross-country patrol vehicles. This will contribute to the improvement of conservation activities and the quality of biodiversity monitoring in the pilot PAs;

- 22 Mavic 2 Pro quadcopters with additional accessories were purchased for 14 pilot PAs and 8 forestry institutions, which will be used for remote monitoring and protection of forest ecosystems and biodiversity. A training course on aerial surveys was conducted for the staff of the West Altai Reserve, Pikhtovsky and Ridder leskhoz;
- To strengthen the logistical and technical equipment of the ecosystems and biodiversity monitoring and protection system in the pilot PAs and the State Enterprise “Kazakh Forest Inventory Enterprise”, the following IT equipment was purchased and transferred: laptops, monitors, SLR cameras, external batteries (Power banks), smartphones, large-format plotter and scanner. To strengthen the technical capacity of ecosystem and biodiversity monitoring systems, 14 pilot PAs were equipped with laptops (17 pcs.), monitors (15 pcs.) and MS Office 2019 software (32 pcs);
- Trainings for 40 staff of 11 PAs and 3 forestry institutions on aerial photography using Mavic 2 Pro quadcopter were conducted in Almaty, Shymkent and Ust-Kamenogorsk. These trainings enabled PAs to use quadcopters for planning and implementation of activities aimed at reducing degradation of ecosystems and biodiversity, remote monitoring and protection;
- Virtual tours were developed along the tourist routes of 5 pilot PAs (Katon-Karagai, Kolsai-Kolderi, Tarbagatay and Sairam-Ugam SNPPs; West Altai SNR) to popularize eco-tourism using modern information technologies.
- An installation of 28 wind-solar panels in pilot areas for inspectors living in remote cordons was completed;
- To strengthen the material and technical equipment of the biodiversity monitoring and protection system in the project areas, rechargeable batteries for camera traps (1,880 pcs.) with chargers (14 pcs.) were transferred to 14 pilot PAs.
- To strengthen the logistical equipment of the biodiversity monitoring and protection system in the project areas, 14 pilot PAs were equipped with the following: radios (89 car radios with ICOM IC-F5013H antennas, 229 Hytera TC-508 wearable radios), HP ProBook 450 G10 laptops (36 pcs.), Oukitel WP5 Pro field smartphones (45 pcs.) with accessories (Xiaomi Redmi external batteries - 26 pcs.), Hoco car chargers for smartphones - 17 pcs.), thermal imagers (19 pcs.).
- To strengthen the logistical and technical equipment of the fire-fighting service of the Semey Ormany Nature Reserve, the following radios were purchased and transferred to the balance: car radios with ICOM IC-F5013H antennas - 110 pcs. and Hytera TC-508 portable radios - 220 pcs.).

Environmental education, tourism and community outreach:

- To prepare an analysis and recommendations to promote gender equality, empowerment of women within the framework of the project implementation, an international expert on gender issues was hired. During the expert’s field visits, working meetings and trainings were held with the management and staff of the regional departments of natural resources and environmental management, forestry and wildlife management organizations, pilot protected areas, forest protection institutions to explain gender issues and empowerment of women.

- To introduce effective mechanisms for cooperation with local communities and involvement in PA management planning processes, the composition of coordination councils at pilot PAs was revised and approved, with the inclusion of stakeholders (representatives of environmental organizations, akimats, etc.) and women in the councils. As a result, Coordination Councils were established in national parks (Zhongar-Alatau, Tarbagatay, Sairam-Ugam) and nature reserves (Aksu-Zhabagly, Karatau, Markakol, Almaty, West-Altai), with the share of women in the Councils ranging from 30 to 50%;
- To raise awareness of target groups, environmental education and development of ecotourism, Concepts, architectural and artistic design and construction plans for the creation of Visit Centers on the basis of the Charyn and Katon-Karagai National Parks have been prepared.

Component 2. Promoting the integration of forest protected areas in the landscape context by creating conditions for the effective regulation and management of globally important ecosystems

- One of the project tasks was to promote better/optimal approaches to forest management. From 2003 onwards, no comprehensive analysis and assessment of forest management effectiveness has been carried out in Kazakhstan. To make recommendations on improved forest management to the Government of Kazakhstan, the Project has engaged Wolfs, an international company, to carry out an assessment of the national forest management system using the TSA methodology. TSA is an innovative analytical approach of forecasting several possible variants of the situation development, which implies elaboration of 2 scenarios of forestry development in the long term. Based on the results of TSA, two scenarios of forest management were defined: the conventional scenario, business-as-usual (BAU) and the sustainable ecosystems management (SEM). The TSA provided insights into the environmental, socio-economic and financial benefits for achieving the goal of increasing the forest cover of Kazakhstan from 4.7% to 5% by 2030. The TSA recommendations were presented and approved by the Round Table at the level of the Ministry of Ecology and the Committee of Forestry and Wildlife;
- The project provided expert support and active participation in the development of the National Strategic Document “Zhasyl Kazakhstan” (Green Kazakhstan) for 2021-2025. This Country document was developed by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources on behalf of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and was the basis for implementation of the state policy in the field of sustainable environmental development of the country for the next 5 years. Together with the Ministry of Ecology, key indicators, tasks, activities and budget for the conservation of forests, wildlife and protected areas have been developed, which were included in the relevant section “Tabigat” of the National Project “Zhasyl Kazakhstan”;
- For the first time for Kazakhstan the work on approbation of the approach of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) was carried out. The following activities were implemented:

- approaches to designation, management and monitoring of high conservation value forests were studied, barriers and opportunities for implementation of this approach in Kazakhstan were identified. A review of international experience and successful practices of HCVF, preliminary ranking of forests in Kazakhstan according to the international classification of HCVF and draft HCVF Concept for Kazakhstan were prepared;
 - a study tour to Italy and Switzerland on experience exchange in the field of identification, conservation and management of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) was conducted to study the possibility of applying this approach in Kazakhstan;
 - a practical guide on HCVF identification and assessment for the Republic of Kazakhstan was developed and approved by the Scientific and Technical Council of the Committee;
 - under the coordination of an international expert, activities on identification and zoning of HCVF and key biodiversity points were implemented on a total area of more than 2 million ha, covering the territory of 8 pilot leskhoz in Almaty, Zhetysay and East Kazakhstan oblasts. Identification of HCVF was carried out with fixation of their areas and mapping;
 - recommendations on HCVF management were developed for each leskhoz and integrated into Leskhoz Management Plans. 2 training seminars on HCVF were conducted for employees of 8 leskhoz, as a result 45 employees (38 men and 7 women) were trained;
 - application of HCVF method in forestry will allow maintaining high conservation status of forests and will contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Identification, assessment and management of HCVF play an essential role in the standards of voluntary forest certification (FSC), which has promising prospects for development in Kazakhstan;
 - to inform and replicate the HCVF approach, a publication of the HCVF Manual in Russian and Kazakh languages was prepared and printed. 50 copies of the Manual were distributed among stakeholders;
- Assessment of the ecological condition of floodplain forests of the Syrdarya, Sharyn, Ile rivers and saxaul forests of Almaty oblast was carried out. In September 2019, a working discussion was organized with the participation of representatives of Moynak HPP JSC, Charyn SNPP, Uygur and Kegen forestry institutions. Based on the results of the work, recommendations and action plans for the conservation and restoration of floodplain and saxaul forests were prepared. Priority measures on regulation of environmental water releases on the Sharyn River were developed with Moynak HPP JSC;
 - A methodology for monitoring the impact of climate change on the forests of Katon-Karagai, Ile-Alatau, Zhongar-Alatau and Sairam-Ugam National Parks was developed and presented in October 2020 with the participation of experts from the Committee of Forestry and Wildlife, pilot PAs, research institutes and project companies. The received methodology contains an overview of international practices on the organization of the system of monitoring the impact of climate change on forests, presents models and indicators of climate change on the

forests of pilot PAs. The methodology will be useful for the staff of protected areas, forestry institutions, teachers, students and other specialists in the field of monitoring the impact of climate change on forests;

- A methodological guide on forest fire monitoring based on remote sensing data was developed and presented online for the staff of pilot forestry enterprises and protected areas. The manual shows examples of detection and monitoring of forest fires using Terra, Aqua, Suomi, Landsat and Sentinel satellite images, contains methods of determining the coordinates of fire centers and obtaining relevant data for decision-making on fire suppression methods, assessment of access to transportation infrastructure. The methodological guide will be useful for workers of protected areas and forestry institutions, as well as teachers, students of higher and secondary educational institutions and other specialists in the field of forest fire monitoring;
- For the first time in Kazakhstan, 5-year management plans have been developed for two pilot forestry farms in Almaty and East Kazakhstan oblasts. Currently, forestry farms do not have a basis for medium-term planning and are guided by forest inventory materials developed once every 10 years. Management plans will serve for effective budget planning;
- A training program and thematic modules have been developed to ensure sustainability of knowledge sharing and capacity building of forestry staff. The program covers the issues of sustainable management, forest protection and conservation, reforestation, forest management, climate change, monitoring, etc., it is designed taking into account the ranking and grouping of specialists by position and knowledge level, includes 18 training modules in 12 areas. The Program and modules were approved at the meeting of the Scientific and Technical Council of the Committee of Forestry and Wildlife. In October-December 2021, the training program was tested through the organization of a series of training seminars, where 60 employees of 8 pilot forestry institutions of East Kazakhstan (Ridder, Pikhtovsky, Zaisan leskhoz) and Almaty (Bakanas, Zhongar, Zharkent, Karadala, Narynkol leskhoz) regions improved their capacity and gained new knowledge;
- A genetic bank of seeds of especially valuable tree species was created on the basis of the Republican Forest Breeding and Seed Center (Burabai village). Support was provided for the establishment of long-term and short-term storage chambers for seeds of coniferous and deciduous species through the purchase and installation of refrigeration equipment and laboratory dishes;
- Model projects for the establishment of private forest plantations were developed: 4 model projects of private forest plantations of poplar, birch, willow and spruce for the East Kazakhstan region and 3 model projects of private forest plantations of poplar, paulownia and walnut for the Southern region;
- On the territory of 10 forest protection institutions of the East Kazakhstan region, studies were carried out to assess 8 species of economically valuable medicinal plant species to determine the operational and biological reserves, as well as to develop practical recommendations for their sustainable use. Also ecological assessment of the current state of 5 species of rare plants was carried out and recommendations on their conservation were given. Illustrated catalog of medicinal plants of Kazakhstan Altai was developed and published;
- Assistance was provided to Iliyskiy forest nursery (Zharkent leskhoz of Zhetysu oblast) and Medvedskiy forest nursery (Katon-Karagay SNPP of East Kazakhstan oblast) in improving conditions for growing forest crops by purchasing and transferring 2 sets of drip irrigation systems, 2 motor pumps and 1 disk and 1 tooth harrow. Forest nurseries specialize in the cultivation of coniferous and deciduous species, for the

planting of greenery in settlements and afforestation of state forest fund within the framework of the President's message to plant 2 billion trees;

- A planter for sowing saxaul seeds SVS-01 was developed and field pilot tests were conducted. In August 2022, the planter was put into pilot operation on the basis of Bakanas leskhoz. The developer company (Tree Energy LLP) received a certificate of compliance with TR TS 010/2011, copyright certificate and patent for invention. Within the framework of the Forest Project to assist in the fall sowing of saxaul, 2 seeders were developed and transferred to Bakanas (Almaty region) and Zharkent (Zhetysu region) forestry farms. Also the developer company received and fulfilled the order of the Republican Forest Breeding and Seed Center for 20 sets of seeders;
- To implement Article 8 of the Land Code of the RK, functional zoning schemes covering a total area of 5,732,439 ha have been developed by the project and approved for 7 pilot districts of Almaty and Zhetysu regions. Functional zones of productive landscapes for agriculture, forestry, hunting, tourism and recreation have been defined. Measures for sustainable land use have been developed for each zone. The experts prepared more than 200 thematic maps of the database, which contains information on climate, socio-economic conditions, demography, agriculture, and biodiversity of the pilot areas. As a result of the integral assessment, potential ecological corridors for the protection of habitats and migration routes of key animal species (gazelle, snow leopard, Turkestan lynx, brown bear) were identified with a total area of 684,160 hectares. Workshops with stakeholders were held in the district centers to agree on the Zoning Schemes and explain the principles and importance of functional zoning. The schemes were agreed upon by district Akimats. In April 2022 in Taldykorgan (regional center) Zoning Schemes were presented at the regional level with wide participation of key local partners. 685,025 people, including 331,459 men and 326,566 women, living in the 7 pilot districts benefited indirectly from the implementation of landscape planning approaches.
- To improve the pasture condition, pilot projects on introduction of sustainable pasture rotation and distant pasture farming system were implemented in four pilot districts “Koksaray”, “Kaskasu”, “Belkaragay” and “Sumbe”. Pasture management plans have been developed and approved, Public Pasture Councils have been established in each rural district from local residents, farmers and akims of the districts. To reduce the load on near-village pastures, the decisions of the Public Councils organized the withdrawal of more than 7,000 conditional heads of livestock to distant summer pastures (zhailau). As a result, 81,680 hectares of pastures, including 16,945 hectares of grasslands and 64,736 hectares of forest (distant) pastures, are under sustainable management. Much attention was paid to increasing the level of knowledge of rural residents on pasture management issues. Explanatory seminars were held in each district and 144 people were informed, of which 94 were men and 50 women. In total, 15,834 rural residents of Belkaragay, Sumbe, Koksaray and Cascasu rural districts, including 7,722 men and 8,112 women, benefited indirectly from the implementation of sustainable pasture management activities. According to the results of visual monitoring conducted by the Kazakh Research Institute of livestock and fodder production at all pilot sites, there is a decrease in the degree of degradation of vegetation and soil by 3-7% from the baseline condition;
- On the territory of Bakanas leskhoz and Ile-Balkhash reserve measures on arrangement of 5 watering points for providing water for livestock and wild animals were realized. Thus, on the territory of Bakanas leskhoz on the basis of 2 farms “TamshyBulak” and “Yesenshora Yernar” as demonstration sites, watering points for livestock were arranged by installing a pump and solar panel on the existing mine wells. The new technology allowed more than 500 cattle to have access to water, as previously farmers used a gasoline generator to pump water. On the

territory of the “Ile-Balkhash” State Nature Reserve in remote desert areas, 3 watering holes for wild animals using renewable energy sources were also constructed using the same technology.

- In the sphere of strategic planning and based on the analysis of international practices, development strategies and management plan of ecological tourism in the territory of three pilot national parks: Sairam-Ugam, Katon-Karagay and Kolsai Kolderi were developed. As a result of this work the vision of ecotourism development in national parks, strategic directions, goals, objectives and annual plans of activities, budget taking into account the potential and interests of the park were defined in general.
- Methodological recommendations for calculating norms of recreational loads on tourist routes and trails of SPNA were developed. The document was approved by the Scientific and Technical Council of the Committee of Forestry and Wildlife and as a result of its testing the calculation of norms of recreational loads on 27 tourist routes in four national parks, such as Katon-Karagai, Sairam-Ugam, Charyn, Kolsai Kolderi and Syrdarya-Turkestan Regional Nature Park.
- Work was carried out on the arrangement of 3 pilot routes of tourist routes in Katon-Karagai, Sairam-Ugam and Kolsai Kolderi national parks, taking into account the terrain features and its corporate style. Entrance groups, information signs, observation platforms, resting places, thematic plaques containing key information on biodiversity of the pilot PAs were installed on the routes. A presentation of equipped tour routes in Katon-Karagai National Nature Park and National Park “Kolsai Kolderi” was held with the participation of Vice-Minister of Ecology, geologists, management of the Committee of Forestry and Wildlife, protected areas, leading tour operators. Indicative arrangement of alternative tour routes is aimed at reducing the current recreational load on popular destinations in national parks;
- Pocket tourist maps of the Sairam-Ugam State National Nature Park (4500 copies) and the State National Nature Park “Kolsai Kolderi” (4500 copies) were issued. The maps contain information on tourist routes, historical and natural sites, guesthouses and other important infrastructure. The maps have been distributed to all stakeholders;
- The project organized training with the participation of experienced trainers for rural entrepreneurs of Katon-Karagai district (East Kazakhstan) on improving the quality of catering and tourism services. As a result, 9 owners of catering outlets in Katon-Karagai district improved their knowledge and practical skills;
- To enhance the souvenir aspect of ecotourism and support the development of local communities, 15 artisans were selected from the local population near the five pilot protected areas, including 10 woodworkers, 2 patchwork masters, and 3 felt artisans and trained in Almaty at the qazaq-oner Center for Crafts Development in the production of souvenir items made of wood, felt and patchwork. The knowledge gained allowed people to improve their skills, many of them opened their own workshops and continue to work on making souvenirs for tourists. The most active masters were provided with necessary equipment (carpentry machines, milling machines, etc.).
- A pilot project on development and implementation of additional environmental education program was implemented in 3 regions, covering about 100 schools in East Kazakhstan, Turkestan and Almaty oblasts. In 6 pilot schools ecological rooms have been decorated, where projectors, furniture, laptops and cameras, book stock have been installed. 60 digital lessons-presentations in Kazakh and Russian languages were developed for 6-8 grades with visual materials on flora and fauna, natural ecosystems of 3 pilot regions: Northern Tien Shan

and Zhetysu Alatau, Western Tien Shan and Kazakh Altai. Each lesson has a methodical manual for teachers. 137 teachers of natural disciplines, 96 of them women, were trained under this program;

- The project implemented the II Phase of the Eco-Damu Loan Program. JSC “Fund for Financial Support of Agriculture” financed 39 business projects for the amount of 483.4 thousand USD, including 14 projects - “Eco-Damu”. Out of these, 14 projects were women's projects. Distribution: 10 projects on creation of guest houses (71.0 mln. tenge), 10 projects on poultry farming (61.0 mln. tenge), 9 projects on beekeeping (51.0 mln. tenge), 2 projects on sewing of national clothes (10.0 mln. tenge), 2 projects on manufacturing of national clothes (10.0 mln. tenge), 2 projects on manufacturing of poultry (61.0 mln. tenge). tenge), 2 projects on manufacturing souvenirs (12.0 million tenge), 4 projects on restoration of pastures (17.0 million tenge) and 2 projects on cultivation of seedlings of fruit trees (5.0 million tenge). The largest utilization of credit funds was made in Almaty, Akmola, Karaganda and Kyzylorda regions.”. According to the interim results of the Program, 43 jobs were opened, 23 of which are “women's” jobs. In July-August 2023, joint monitoring of the financed projects was conducted, which showed the sustainability of the projects;
- An assessment of the existing system of forest inventory, forest inventory and monitoring in Kazakhstan was conducted, as a result of which, in order to improve the system of forest inventory and increase the professional level of employees of the State Enterprise “Kazakh Forest Inventory Enterprise”, 6 laptops, 10 tablets, DJI Matrice 300 RTK industrial drone with a camera with a lidar (laser) sensor and DJI Mavic 3 multispectral camera multispektral drone were purchased and transferred to the balance. Employees of the Kazakh Forest Survey Enterprise can remotely survey hard-to-reach forest areas using the drone. The use of the drone increases the quality of measurement and assessment of trees, as well as reduces the cost of taxation and shortens its time;
- Equipment for monitoring the internal condition of trees (RESISTOGRAPH R650-EA and LINTAB LTM06-P) was purchased for the East Kazakhstan branch of Kazakh Research Institute of Forestry and Agroforestry Reclamation, which allows to identify the volume and location of hidden rots, decay zones and internal trunk cracks, to measure the width of annual rings on wood samples for dendrochronological purposes;
- To strengthen the material and technical equipment of the system of monitoring and protection of biodiversity in the project areas, laptops (6 pcs.), MS Office 2021 software (6 licenses), tablets (10 pcs.) and industrial drone DJI Matrice 300 RT with laser sensor ZL1 (1 pc.), as well as software PP Terra Pro Overseas Permanent (3 licenses) were purchased and transferred to the balance of the State Enterprise “Kazakh Forestry Inventory Enterprise”.
- The project conducted training courses on drone piloting, as well as on the application of airborne laser scanning and aerial photo survey data for the purposes of forest inventory, accounting and taxation were conducted for the staff of the State Enterprise “Kazakh Forest Inventory Enterprise”.
- As part of the project’s work on developing the hunting regulations to fully incorporate biodiversity considerations and economic benefits to local communities, and implement strengthened monitoring and enforcement capacity, the following activities were supported:
 - Atlas of types of hunting grounds of mountain ecosystems was created.

- Cartographic material of the typology of hunting grounds taking into account vertical belt: Western Tien-Shan, Altai, Northern Tien-Shan, Saur-Tarbagatai was prepared;
- Improvement of the methodology of wildlife accounting for mountain ecosystems was prepared;
- Recommendations for amendments to the regulatory and legal framework on on-farm hunting management were prepared.
- Improvement of hunting regulations in forest ecosystems
- Training sessions were held with gamekeepers' staff on the use of unified accounting methods in the East Kazakhstan region
- Training modules were developed in the following areas: hunting management, monitoring and accounting in hunting farms, hunting protection system.
- In the period from 17 to 22 May 2021, 40 (forty) employees of hunting farms and SPNAs were trained in person under the program of capacity building of employees of hunting farms and SPNAs

Component 3. International cooperation and knowledge management

Results of the Snow Leopard Project activities

The snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*) is one of the rarest large carnivores in Kazakhstan. Thanks to ongoing conservation activities, as well as the opportunity to conduct annual monitoring, in-depth studies, the number of snow leopards in Kazakhstan since 2018 has received a steady trend to recovery and growth. Now the number of snow leopards in Kazakhstan has reached 152-189 individuals.

The project has conducted a series of large-scale works on the study and conservation of snow leopard, in the period from 2018 to 2024, with the support of the Committee of Forestry and Wildlife of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan (hereinafter - FWC), Specially Protected Natural Areas (hereinafter - SPNA), with the participation of the Institute of Zoology of the Ministry of Higher Education and Science:

- The project in the period from 2019 to 2022 conducted large-scale scientific research of the Kazakhstan population of snow leopard, studying 5 mountain complexes of Kazakhstan, these are - Altai-Saur, Western Tien Shan, Northern and Central Tien Shan, Zhongar Alatau. During these years three stages of field studies were conducted, including fall-winter and spring-summer seasons on the territory of Almaty, Zhetysu, East Kazakhstan, Zhambyl, Turkestan regions. Reliable accounting of the species was carried out. Threats, risks to the conservation of the species were studied, the area of distribution of the species was determined;

- The key habitat areas were surveyed annually with the use of camera traps. Thanks to the work of the Project, the coverage of snow leopard fixation was ensured by camera traps, which were purchased for protected areas with snow leopard in the amount of 294 units. 4 units of thermal imagers, 9 drones and field equipment were also purchased and successfully used in monitoring;
- In addition to the traditionally accepted methods on tracks and excrement, data obtained with the help of camera traps were used to estimate the numbers. Scientists created ID-passports for fixed individuals. Sex, age and other biological parameters of the species have been determined for most of the identified animals, and the work is being carried out within the framework of all available projects;
- An important progress in the study of snow leopard in 2021 was the creation of a multiscale SDM model of snow leopard distribution and assessment of the quality of the species' habitats according to the degree of suitability - high, medium and low. In addition, on the basis of the obtained model with the use of simulation scenarios and artificial intelligence, the paths of possible dispersal and migration of the snow leopard both within Kazakhstan and in neighboring countries were simulated. Application of these results in conservation practice will ensure reliable protection of snow leopard habitats and its migration routes, including transboundary ones, which will be a guarantee of sustainable existence of this rare species;
- An annual national report on the assessment of the snow leopard population has been supported since 2019;
- The National Action Plan for Snow Leopard Conservation has been developed in 2020 and updated in 2024;
- With the support of UNDP for the first time in Kazakhstan in 2021, work on satellite telemetry of the snow leopard was carried out. This work was carried out in Kazakhstan by leading international experts who trained Kazakhstani scientists. Currently, by 2024, 11 individuals of snow leopard in Kazakhstan have been tagged with satellite collars on the territory of Altyn-Emel and Ile-Alatau National Parks. In the future, this work will be expanded to cover other regions of Kazakhstan that are important for the conservation of the species;
- Satellite telemetry showed large-scale movements of the snow leopard from Kazakhstan to China and back to Kazakhstan. This was revealed by the movement paths of two individuals of leopards in different years.
- The project together with the Institute of Zoology of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Ministry of Higher Education of Kazakhstan prepared a report on the snow leopard for submission to the Global Snow Leopard Ecosystems Research Program (GSLEP);
- In 2022, for the first time for Kazakhstan, a cryobank of snow leopard germoplasm was created. In the course of this work, fibroblasts were isolated from skin explants of three individuals (two males and one female) and primary in vitro cultures of somatic cells were obtained. Experimental studies on the survival rate of snow leopard somatic cells after cryopreservation (ex situ in vitro preservation) were initiated. Also from the selected blood samples of animals serological studies for diagnostics of possible diseases of snow leopard by studying the interaction of antigens with antibodies in blood serum have been started. We would like to emphasize that the work related to genetic studies has gone

far ahead of what was planned in the project document. Such progress was of course due to the successful introduction of snow leopard telemetry. Because it helped to collect material from the species. And the initial project work on cryoconservation of snow leopard cells led to further development of this area, which was manifested in the allocation of public funds for scientific research and the allocation of the state scientific grant of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Project AP23488891 “Study of fundamental aspects of interspecific transfer of somatic cell nuclei of the snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*) for the conservation of biological diversity”).

- The Project supported the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation between the State National Nature Parks “Ile-Alatau”, “Kolsai Kolderi”, Almaty State Nature Reserve of the FWC MENR RK and State Nature Park “Chon-Kemin” of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic on conservation of globally important species - snow leopard and its habitats. This Memorandum will allow the above-mentioned PAs to coordinate joint actions and share experience in studying the species, improving the protection and monitoring of the snow leopard, and maintaining the population in a stable state.
- During the reporting period, more than 100 informational publications were issued through mass media, including social media. Among them it is possible to note information campaigns held at the republican level (International Snow Leopard Day up to 6-8 thousand people).
- It should be noted that the Project participated in 5 out of 8 meetings of the GSLEP Steering Committee. Such International meetings were regularly attended by 12 countries with snow leopard habitats, as well as global conservation organizations. Every year the delegation of Kazakhstan presented the reports on the current status of the snow leopard population and proposed new ways of sustainable development of the population;
- Overall, the efforts related to snow leopards have resulted in a significant breakthrough not only at the state and scientific levels in Kazakhstan but also sparked widespread public interest across the country. Today, many citizens are aware of the snow leopards, thanks to the informative work presented in the media and shared by protected areas and scientific initiatives. Kazakhstan has emerged as a key player in the international community for the study and conservation of snow leopards.
- The SMART patrol system: the SMART patrol system has been successfully introduced in 8 pilot nature conservation institutions (national parks: Zhongar-Alatau, Tarbagatai, Kolsay-Kolderi, Altyn-Emel, nature reserves: Markakol, Aksu-Zhabagly and Karatau, Merke forestry enterprise). Training sessions on the use of this system in security and monitoring activities were conducted for 300 employees. To strengthen security measures, 156 field smartphones with accessories within the SMART patrol system and 21 laptops were purchased.

I. Project Risks and Issues

a. Updated project risks and actions

At the stage of preparation of the Project Document, the risks were identified. During the project implementation, risks were re-evaluated, and measures were taken to mitigate them. Project risk monitoring was carried out quarterly or at the request of the GEF.

SES risks were carefully considered by the project team during the creation and expansion of PAs. Local-level stakeholders, including landowners and residents affected by the establishment of PAs, were duly consulted as required by PA legislation in Kazakhstan, and their views were incorporated into the designation and management system of the PAs.

b. Issues/Challenges

The project worked on expanding the ecological network in the Western Tien Shan and Northern and Central Tien Shan regions. That involved coordinating technical and economic feasibility studies and land management projects with local executive bodies. Stakeholders have been informed about the significance and value of the expansion areas and PA creation. The projected area for the new regional park 'Merke' and expanded PAs was 284,091 hectares.

However, challenges from natural resource users, forestry agencies, and hunting farms caused delays in the completion of PA expansions/creations by the project's end. Throughout the reporting period, the project conducted meetings and consultations regarding the expansion of existing PAs and the creation of the 'Merke' regional park, involving representatives from forestry and wildlife committees, regional akimats, local executive bodies, research institutes, NGOs, forestry agencies, and hunting farms. All issues were resolved during these meetings.

Moreover, due to the absence of a specific biodiversity conservation and PA expansion strategy at this stage at the national level, the PA expansion may be postponed. However, all related work has been submitted for review and approval to the Forestry and Wildlife Committee and will be included in Kazakhstan's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy up to 2035, which is currently under development.

The project faced the following problems associated with the expansion of the network of protected areas:

- absence of a separate national strategy or program for biodiversity conservation and creation of an ecological network.

- lack of available land for expansion of protected areas.
- refusal of local executive bodies to allocate land for the expansion of protected areas.
- high population density in areas for expansion/creation of protected areas, which are mainly occupied in agriculture and livestock farming;
- the presence of forestry and hunting farms in adjacent areas or areas for creation/expansion of protected areas;
- the presence of nature users and industrial enterprises that make a significant economic and social contribution to the development of regions;
- lack of funding for expanding the staff of inspectors and building infrastructure facilities in created/expanded areas.

The problematic issues were addressed by the project through conducting a series of meetings involving all relevant stakeholders. Additionally, the Forestry and Wildlife Committee is currently working to incorporate the project's efforts to expand the network of protected areas into strategic documents.

II. Gender-Related Activities

During project implementation, serious efforts were made to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Among other things, the Project promoted involvement of women in natural resource management, biodiversity conservation, development of women's entrepreneurial potential in various activities such as ecotourism, handicrafts, guest services, as well as improvement of living conditions of women living in remote cordons.

The main gender activities of the project were:

1. The project has made significant efforts to integrate gender aspects into PA management. In order to create effective mechanisms of interaction with local communities and improve gender equality, work was done to revise the composition of coordination councils at the pilot PAs. This allowed increasing the share of women in the councils to 30-50%, which promotes more equal participation of women and men in natural resource management processes.

In addition, the Project Management Committee (PMC) structure ensured women's participation at 28%. The PMC was responsible for coordinating and managing the project, including achieving its goals and objectives. Despite frequent staff changes, the project team consistently strived to maintain women's participation at a minimum of 30%, emphasizing the project's commitment to gender equality in management structures.

2. In November 2019, an International Conference on Gender and Biodiversity was held on the role of women in biodiversity conservation. The participants discussed gender aspects in conservation activities and shared their experience on inclusion of women in natural resource management processes. During the project implementation a set of gender trainings was conducted for 237 participants (85 women and 150 men) in all pilot regions. These trainings helped participants to recognize gender differences in natural resource management and facilitated further integration of gender mainstreaming into their activities. Moreover, during project implementation, when organizing thematic trainings or training programs, the project team sought to include female PA staff in the number of participants, which contributed to a more equal distribution of training and development opportunities among both men and women.

3. The project focused significant efforts on supporting women's entrepreneurship, promoting women's economic development in rural areas and increasing their role in sustainable natural resource management. Key activities implemented under the project:

i. Eco-Damu Loan Program: In 2021, under the Eco-Damu Loan Program, 13 rural women received 84.0 million tenge in financial support to implement their business projects. Thanks to this support, the women were able to open guest houses, sewing shops, as well as develop beekeeping and poultry farming. These projects have not only provided sustainable income for the women themselves and their families, but have also created new jobs in rural areas, which contributes to the sustainable development of local communities and the conservation of natural resources.

ii. Handicraft development: The project supported two women artisans from Turkestan and East Kazakhstan oblasts. In particular, they were provided with the necessary tools and equipment to expand their businesses. For example, Aisulu Sadykova received a lathe for woodworking and Meruert Trusbayeva from Katon-Karagai village received sewing equipment. This allowed them not only to expand their product range, but also made their business more sustainable and competitive in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The additional assistance also contributed to the development of their entrepreneurial skills and improved economic conditions in rural areas.

iii. Ecotourism training sessions: In response to identified tourism development needs, the project supported 9 rural women entrepreneurs from Katon-Karagai district to attend training sessions on tourism business development, catering and hospitality. These trainings were organized in November 2021 and aimed at improving the quality of services for tourists. As a result, the women were able to significantly improve the service in their cafes and guesthouses, thus attracting more tourists to the region.

iv. Supporting rural women in entrepreneurship and handicrafts: In 2022, the project organized a series of workshops and business trainings aimed at developing entrepreneurial skills among rural women. Special attention was paid to support craftsmanship and the development of tourism services. The participants were able not only to gain theoretical knowledge but also to apply it in practice, which allowed them to improve their businesses and increase their income.

v. Trainings on financial planning and marketing for women entrepreneurs: In 2024, trainings on financial planning and marketing were organized for women entrepreneurs working in the field of ecotourism in Almaty, East Kazakhstan oblasts and Shymkent city. The trainings were attended by 76 women who improved their knowledge and skills in financial management, marketing and customer relations. The knowledge and skills gained helped women to improve their business processes, improve the quality of tourism services and increase their income.

Activities aimed at supporting women's entrepreneurship contributed significantly to improving the economic conditions of women in rural areas, enhancing their economic opportunities and improving the quality of life of their families.

4. The installation of wind-solar power plants in remote PA cordons has significantly improved the living conditions of 20 women and girls, giving them permanent access to electricity and improved radio communications.

5. Recommendations were made to the draft national strategic document in the field of biodiversity - Concept on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity of the RK on inclusion of gender equality issues and on the role of women in biodiversity conservation.

III. Cross-Cutting Themes

The initiatives on snow leopard monitoring and conservation implemented by the project will be integrated into the biodiversity conservation concept for sustainability and further promotion at the national level. The biodiversity conservation concept is currently being developed by the MENR RK. The project also proposed to incorporate other project results into the concept such as SMART patrolling system, Management Plans for forestries, HCVF, TSA, functional zoning and PA expansion/creation. This will ensure that the project results are incorporated into the national strategic document, which will serve as a foundation/reference for scaling up the results, ensuring their sustainability, national ownership, and securing further funding.

The project has also focused on exploring ways to upscale the achieved results. This has been done through collaboration with other UNDP projects, such as the Turan Tiger and FOLUR initiatives. These collaborations include the implementation of a SMART patrolling system for the Turan tiger in the Ile-Balkhash Reserve and Ulytau National Park, conducting functional zoning of five pilot districts in Ulytau, Akmola, Kostanay, and North-Kazakhstan regions in digital format, and developing an environmental education program for schools in the regions. The project has generated a significant number of best practices in sustainable pasture management and has created a platform for replicating these practices in the pilot districts.

IV. Lessons Learned

A lesson learned from the expansion and establishment of protected areas is that the ProDoc's development did not consider the importance of having a distinct strategic document specifically focused on expanding the network of protected areas and promoting biodiversity conservation.

Under the Outcome Indicator 11 “Area outside PAs with enhanced conservation management (PA corridors and buffer zones identified in district integrated management plans), an important lesson learned from the experience of functional zoning in Kazakhstan is the absence of an established legal mechanism for developing, approving, and implementing targeted land zoning schemes. The land zoning regulation outlined in Article 8 of the Land Code of Kazakhstan is not fully implemented and remains largely declarative in nature. To ensure the sustainability and further replication of landscape planning results, it is necessary to conduct a detailed comparative legal analysis and develop proposals and amendments to the current land legislation.

The **Terminal Evaluation** drew three lessons from the project’s implementation:

1. Project Design and M&E needs to incorporate a realistic awareness of the time that legislative and institutional processes occur: One major issue facing the project in terms of meeting the targets and expectations in the project document was the assumption that the project has the direct possibility to complete all many processes (such as PA legal establishment). Clearly this is not the case, and though projects can do much to ensure the conditions/ circumstances for such processes are in place, and provide follow up while the project lasts, there will always be a risk that they will take longer to complete than expected or will fail for reasons beyond the project control. This reality needs to be better recognized in the design of Outputs and activities and in the formulation of M&E indicators and targets.
2. Make the most efficient use of international technical support: International technical support, particularly for initiatives new to the country, needs to be brought on board at the earliest stages possible to facilitate “getting off on the right foot” i.e, to ensure the wider experience

can be applied at the start of implementation to plan in detail what are the priorities and approaches best suited to achieve the expected impact. A frequent problem the TE Team has observed is that projects often attempt to develop international consultant TORs based on an imperfect understanding of what needs to be done which then leads to inefficiency of practical implementation. Apart from helping to ensure planned implementation is strengthened and project team understanding is built, such early assistance then allows the project to identify more clearly and systematically what further support they will need during implementation and thus ensure TORs for international (and national) consultants are based on the real needs.

3. Ensure greater emphasis in future on supporting beneficiaries' financial sustainability post project. One major lesson learned from the interviews was the beneficiaries' lack of planning for sustainability. Most participants were heavily reliant on ongoing external support and had not considered how to fund their activities independently. This suggests a critical need for training on financial sustainability, resource mobilisation, and long-term planning. Future projects should ensure that beneficiaries are equipped to maintain operations after the project concludes, reducing dependency on external actors.

According to the Terminal Evaluation experts, some new approaches promoted by the project such as the Targeted Scenario Analysis were attempting to do too much and too soon given the limited level and capacity in Kazakhstan regarding such new approaches. Certainly, the project target of having a regulation related to TSA being in place (at either the national or regional level) by EoP was not realistic. In the opinion of the Terminal Evaluation experts, the priority should have been given to building national awareness, understanding and capacity of the concept and approach of TSA (and other approaches to adequately incorporating ecosystem service values into policy and planning systems) so that there is then a more system level acceptance and knowledge for its application.

V. Conclusions and Way Forward

The project was extremely relevant and pertinent to the needs of Kazakhstan and directly addressed priority national policy issues. The relevance and political recognition and commitment to the forestry sector significantly increased during the project development and implementation evidenced by attention given in high level political statements and increased financial support to the forestry sector.

The project has achieved an impressive set of results and the scope and extent of these were fully recognized by the TE Team. Undoubtably the project has had a very significant impact on the process to increase forest protected area estate in Kazakhstan and on ensuring a secure basis for snow leopard monitoring and conservation.

In terms of impact outside of protected areas it has made very significant contributions to the evolution of more effective approaches to state and non-state forest management and to district level methodologies/approaches to more integrated planning that better recognize forestry and natural resource use issues within the larger landscape context (and integrate their consideration with other socio-economic issues). The successful piloting in 7 districts of integrated land use planning approaches (zoning) was specifically highlighted by the TE Team to be extremely important achievement by the project with very wide-ranging potential benefits in the future.

The project has contributed significantly to the conceptualization of “eco-tourism” in protected areas and the initial introduction of methods to manage and regulate such activities in a way that is compatible with the objectives of PAs. The project has replicated important natural resource management approaches in the “buffer areas” (such as the pilot pasture sites, Eco-DAMU loans, etc.) from which additional experience has been gained that can contribute to these initiatives being refined and strengthened in the future.

Stakeholders and beneficiaries were well engaged in the implementation of the project, particularly at the local level. There was also a strong link to share knowledge between policy makers, researchers, practitioners and beneficiaries.

Through its activities the project has introduced new innovative concepts, methods, approaches, etc. such as the introduction of the HCVF concept, TSA methodology, Green Listing standard, SMART patrol system, a more comprehensive approach to develop management plans for PAs and forests, and a more integrated landscape management planning approach applied to district level areas.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the implementation of project activities leading to a slowdown in progress. However, the project management team effectively adapted to the new circumstances, allowing project activities to continue.

As a way forward, the following is recommended:

- Conduct a thorough evaluation and analysis of the new and innovative approaches and mechanisms introduced by the project to clearly identify their real-world application and usefulness. This should include capturing lessons learned and supporting future replication, if warranted, specifically regarding forestry management plans, functional zoning, private forestry models, and the TSA method.

- Ensure to provide future follow-up and support to the Forestry and Wildlife Committee concerning various legal adjustments, protected area establishment processes, and pilot forest management plans, aiming to minimize sustainability risks in these areas.

Ensure that when future projects aim to test or demonstrate new approaches or management systems, appropriate international technical assistance is integrated during the planning stage to provide guidance on the overall technical direction of these initiatives. Ideally, this input should occur during the inception phase.

Ensure regular consultations are held with the Forestry and Wildlife Committee and other relevant key partners to establish a long-term cooperation framework. This framework will guide future systematic project development, maximizing continuity and synergy towards global and national targets.

Gender-related recommendations:

It is recommended that when starting a project, more time should be spent on preliminary analysis of the current situation and development of a separate plan for gender mainstreaming with continuous monitoring and evaluation of implementation. This will allow for more structured consideration and analysis of the impact of the project on women and men, as well as the development of activities for further institutionalization of the implemented actions.

For a more accurate analysis of gender aspects, it is recommended to collect more detailed socio-demographic data on beneficiaries and participants of activities, as well as to keep records of allocated resources for gender initiatives.

It is recommended to conduct regular trainings for project staff on gender-responsive budgeting and gender mainstreaming in order to improve their ability to take into account gender aspects at all stages of the project, it is also recommended to consider the possibility of allocating a separate unit for a group of projects on gender-responsive activities.

A gender component has been taken into account in the project documentation. Gender equality was recorded as a significant objective, which contributed to the implementation of a large number of activities for women's empowerment. The Project has implemented a significant number of gender-sensitive activities, but their implementation has not always been systematic. It is important to note the success of the Project in the area of women's entrepreneurship and improvement of women's living conditions in remote areas. In the course of project implementation, gender disaggregated data was collected in accordance with indicator #16, but it is necessary to strengthen monitoring of gender impact for more detailed analysis of results and achievement of gender objectives of the project. Thus, the project has demonstrated a positive impact on women's empowerment, but further efforts should focus on strengthening the systemic and institutionalization and replication of successful interventions.

Financial Status

The total budget amount was \$8,069,178 with \$7,997,907.63 (99,12%) spent. The remaining balance is \$71,270.37

The table shows information on the delivery budget SFM project by 2018-2024.

Component	Budget (USD)	2018	2019	2020	Total at MTR (USD)	% MTR	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total at TE USD	% TE
1	2,547,067	147,238	509,932	296,791	953,961	37.5%	362,183.52	165,560.67	250,348.31	601,255.39	504,330.10	2,540,847.99	99.76
2	4,017,000	74,836	754,308	128,578	957,722	23.8%	492,662.60	651,037.76	674,415.83	747,772.50	538,157.05	3,933,189.74	97.91
3	1,120,865	54,079	340,242	33,665	427,985	38.2%	128,980.57	219,764.07	158,964.41	129,358.87	88,698.12	1,120,087.04	99.93
Project management	384,246	45,515	81,410	28,015	154,940	40.3%	65,699.94	49,782.79	39,927.43	59,923.89	61,523.81	403,782.86	105.08
TOTAL	8,069,178	321,668	1,685,891	487,049	2,494,608	30.9%	1,049,526	1,086,145.29	1,123,655.98	1,538,310.65	1,192,709.08	7,997,907.63	99.12

Annex 1**Progress of Project indicators, according to PIR report, as of 30.06.2024**

Description					
Objective					
Improve conservation status and management of key forest and associated grassland, riparian and arid ecosystems important for conservation of biodiversity, land resources and provision of livelihoods for local communities					
Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Midterm target level	End of project target level	Level at Jun 30, 2023	Cumulative progress since project start as of Jun 30, 2024
Area of critical ecosystems with improved management, including tugai, saxaul, and mountain forests, and associated grasslands	N/A (zero hectares improved)	4,000,000	9,127,071 hectares	6,142,164 ha The indicator is on track. To date, 67% of the end of project target level has been achieved. The progress of 1.27 million hectares was made due to the completion of works on identification of HCVF on the territory of 8	14,576,147 hectares The cumulative progress for the reporting period (2018–2024) totals 14,576,147 hectares through improved conservation systems and sustainable management of significant ecosystems.

			pilot forestry enterprises of Almaty, Zhetysu and East Kazakhstan regions. The total area of targeted PAs is 7,225,877 ha, of which: • existing protected areas - 5,130,042 ha; • PAs to be created: 2,095,835 ha. (A) Measures have been implemented to improve the management of protected and adjacent areas. The updated structure of Management Plans for Specially Protected Natural Areas, as well as the methodological recommendations for their development, have been approved by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR). The new methodology of the Management Plan is based on the assessment of key values and risk analysis. It involves activity planning based on indicators, against which the effectiveness	The indicator is achieved through: - improved management effectiveness in pilot PAs (5,648,357 ha); - expansion of the PA network (1,840,928 ha); - completion of functional zoning (5,732,439 ha) and demonstration of sustainable pasture management projects (81,681 ha); - identification of HCVF on the territory of 8 pilot forestry enterprises (1,272,742 ha). The total area of targeted under Project Protected Areas (PAs) 7,489,285 hectares, including: - existing pilot PAs: 5,648,357 hectares; - expanded and newly created PAs: 1,840,928 hectares. (A) By the end of the reporting period (2024), five-year Management Plans for 35 specially protected natural territories have been updated, and management plans for 7 PAs have been reviewed and approved.
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				of the Management Plan's implementation is evaluated at the end of the 5-year period. Evidence 1-1. Rules for the development of PA management plans approved by the order of the MENR RK. (B) In order to introduce the new methodology for the development of the Management Plan, a series of training sessions were conducted for managers and employees of protected areas. These sessions involved the participation of the Forestry and Wildlife Committee (FWC) and research institutes. Currently, all 35 protected areas in the country have commenced the development of new 5-year management plans, following the new structure. They are at various stages of the planning process. Evidence 1-2. Letter from FWC on the development of management plans for protected areas.	Evidence 1-1: Orders approving Management Plans for 2024-2028. (B) Natural-science justification has been completed for the creation of 5 new PAs, including Important Bird Areas (IBAs) and habitats of globally significant species, covering a total area of 1,556,837 hectares. Scientific justifications for the creation of the Koksu, Usek, Ketmen, and Teriskey-Saur-Manyrak PAs have been submitted for review by the authorized body. Evidence 1-2: Projects for the creation of 5 new PAs. (C) The project continues the implementation of the second phase for expanding the ecological network in the Western Tien Shan and Northern and Central Tien Shan regions. This involves coordinating technical and economic feasibility studies and land management projects with local executive bodies. Stakeholders have been informed
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				(C) The work to expand the ecological network in the three project areas, namely "Western Tien Shan," "Northern and Central Tien Shan," and "Altai and Saur-Tarbagatai," is ongoing. To preserve the unique coniferous forests and fir boreal forest in the Altai region of Kazakhstan, work on the first stage (scientific justification) for the creation of a new protected area "Rudny Altai" has been initiated. The estimated area for this future protected area is over 300,000 hectares. Additionally, an area spanning over 72,000 hectares has been set aside for the creation of the Merke Regional Park, further emphasizing the commitment to conserve and protect natural resources in the region. Evidence 1-3. Decree of Akim of Zhambyl region on land reservation.	about the significance and value of the expansion areas and PA creation. The projected area for the new regional park 'Merke' and expanded PAs is 284,091 hectares. However, challenges from natural resource users, forestry agencies, and hunting farms may delay the completion of PA expansions/creations by the project's end. Throughout the reporting period, the project has conducted meetings and consultations regarding the expansion of existing PAs and the creation of the 'Merke' regional park, involving representatives from forestry and wildlife committees, regional akimats, local executive bodies, research institutes, NGOs, forestry agencies, and hunting farms. All issues were resolved during these meetings. Moreover, due to the absence of a specific biodiversity conservation and PA expansion strategy at this stage at the national level, the PA expansion may be postponed. However, all related work has been submitted for review and approval to the Forestry and Wildlife Committee and will be included in Kazakhstan's Biodiversity Conservation
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			Source of information: draft scientific justifications for the creation/expansion of 4 protected areas. (C) The following activities have been successfully implemented, focusing on functional zoning, sustainable pasture management, and the identification and zoning of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF): 1) Local representative authorities (maslikhats) have approved functional zoning schemes at the local level for seven pilot districts in the Almaty region, covering a total area of 5,732,439 hectares. This important step ensures the appropriate allocation of land for different functions and purposes within these districts. In addition, during this process, four eco-corridors have been identified to safeguard habitats and migration routes for key animal species. These eco-corridors cover a total area of 648,160	Strategy up to 2035, which is currently under development. Evidence 1-3-1: Projects for the creation/expansion of 4 PAs. At the same time, the project faces certain problems associated with the expansion of the network of protected areas: - absence of a separate national strategy or program for biodiversity conservation and creation of an ecological network. - lack of available land for expansion of protected areas. - refusal of local executive bodies to allocate land for the expansion of protected areas. - high population density in areas for expansion/creation of protected areas, which are mainly occupied in agriculture and livestock farming;
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			hectares, providing vital protection and connectivity for wildlife in the region. Evidence 1-4. Decision of maslikhats of Uigur, Raiymbek and Panfilov regions on the approval of Schemes for functional zoning of lands. 2) The management of 81,680 hectares of pastures, including village and distant pastures, has been significantly enhanced through the successful implementation of four (4) pilot projects focused on sustainable pasture management. As part of these initiatives, comprehensive pasture management plans have been developed and approved. Grazing standards and acceptable pasture rotation patterns have been established ensuring the sustainable utilization of pasture resources. Furthermore, considerable improvements have been made to pasture infrastructure and watering conditions in the pilot areas, facilitating better access to water and enhancing the overall grazing environment.	- the presence of forestry and hunting farms in adjacent areas or areas for creation/expansion of protected areas; - the presence of nature users and industrial enterprises that make a significant economic and social contribution to the development of regions; - lack of funding for expanding the staff of inspectors and building infrastructure facilities in created/expanded areas. The problematic issues were addressed by the project through conducting a series of meetings involving all relevant stakeholders. Additionally, the Forestry and Wildlife Committee is working to incorporate the project's efforts to expand the network of protected areas into strategic documents. Evidence 1-3-5. Program and list of participants of the Round Table on the expansion of the network of protected areas and the impact of expansion (February 2024)
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			In addition, the establishment of four (4) public pasture councils has played a crucial role in involving local communities in decision-making processes and promoting participatory management approaches at the local level. These councils have provided a platform for dialogue and cooperation between stakeholders, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and the implementation of sustainable practices. Importantly, the project has also prioritized capacity building. Through targeted training and educational initiatives, the knowledge and skills of 144 pasture users, consisting of 94 men and 50 women, have been significantly improved. This investment in building relevant competencies and knowledge transfer ensures the long-term success and sustainability of the project's pasture management efforts. Overall, these pilot projects have demonstrated tangible improvements in pasture management, fostering sustainable practices, community	Evidence 1-3-6. Program and list of participants of the Round Table on the expansion of the network of protected areas (May 2024) (D) Activities related to functional zoning, sustainable pasture management, identification and zoning of HCVF were implemented as follows: 1) functional zoning schemes for 7 pilot districts of Almaty oblast, covering a total area of 5,732,439 ha, were approved at the local level. As part of this work, 4 ecological corridors were identified for protection of habitats and migration routes of key animal species, covering a total area of 648,160 ha. During the reporting period, the project worked with local representative authorities (Maslikhats) and got the functional zoning schemes approved . 2) management of 81,681 ha of pastures (including both countryside and distant pastures) was improved through the
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			engagement, and knowledge enhancement among pasture users. The project plans to continue its work on improving the condition of pastures during 2023–2024; activities are planned to irrigate desert pastures in the Ile-Balkhash region. Evidence 1-5. Publication on the results of pasture pilot projects. 3) The work on identifying High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) within eight (8) pilot forestry enterprises located in the Almaty, Zhetysu, and East Kazakhstan regions has been successfully completed. The total area covered by this assessment is 1,247,242 hectares. A summary of key completed activities and achievements: -comprehensive guidelines for the management of HCVF have been	implementation of 4 pilot projects on sustainable pasture management. The project implemented watering activities on desert pastures in the Ile-Balkhash region by equipping 5 pilot wells for livestock (2) and wild animals (3). 3) The work on identifying High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) within eight (8) pilot forestry enterprises located in the Almaty, Zhetysu, and East Kazakhstan regions has been successfully completed. The total area covered by this assessment is 1,247,242 hectares. Evidence 1-4. Act of inspection of works_of 5 pilot wells Evidence 1-5. Evidence 1-5. Documents on the approval of the Functional Zoning Scheme Evidence 1-6. Final report of JSC NC Kazastangaryshsapary on the results of the work of the HCVF
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			developed and subsequently approved by the Scientific and Technical Council of the Committee for Forestry and Wildlife (CFW). These guidelines serve as a valuable resource to ensure effective management and conservation of the identified HCVF areas. -To further support the implementation of HCVF management, handbooks focusing on the identification, management, and monitoring of HCVF within the eight forestries have been created. These handbooks provide practical guidance and technical expertise to facilitate proper stewardship of the HCVF sites. -In order to enhance the capacity of the forestry enterprise employees in HCVF management, two training seminars specifically dedicated to HCVF were conducted. A total of 45 individuals, including 38 men and 7 women, participated in these seminars, gaining valuable knowledge and skills. -The results of the HCVF identification work have been shared with the national partners. Presentations were made to the	(E) To preserve the ecosystems of the protected areas and adjacent areas (protection zone), develop ecotourism, and improve protected area management, the project has completed the following tasks during the reporting period: Analyzing and developing amendments and additions regarding: - the establishment of protection zones of PAs and water protection strips on water bodies within PAs, - revision of tariffs for services provided by PAs, - drafting a document regulating the procedure for tourist and recreational activities in state national natural parks. As a result of these efforts, amendments and additions were made to a number of laws and by-laws in the field of environmental protection and tourism development. These changes are currently at the coordination stage with the authorized bodies. The amendments aim to:
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			Executive Agency, as well as to representatives from two regions (East Kazakhstan and Almaty region), effectively disseminating the findings and raising awareness about the importance of HCVF conservation. Evidence 1-6. Final report on HCVF. 4) Extensive work has been conducted to assess the resources of eight economically valuable species of medicinal plants within ten (10) pilot forestry enterprises located in the East Kazakhstan region and the Katon-Karagai National Park. As a result of these efforts, the Illustrated Catalog of Medicinal Plants of Kazakhstan's Altai has been published. This comprehensive undertaking enables forest protection institutions to effectively regulate the sustainable management and utilization of medicinal plants within the forest resources at the local level. This work contributes to the preservation of biodiversity, the conservation of	- regulate the procedure for tourism and recreational activities in state nature reserves. - establish provisions for the payment of rates for tland users of allocated plots; - introduce a differentiated approach to calculating the cost of renting 1 hectare of land; - ensure transparency in the process of land plot allocation; - streamline the existing procedure for land plot allocation; - regulate the procedure for allocating protection zones, water protection zones and strips in protected areas. Evidence 1-7-1. Normative legal acts analysis Evidence 1-7-2. Normative legal acts_tourism Evidence 1-7-3. Normative legal acts_buffer zone
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			important medicinal plant species, and the promotion of local economic development through the sustainable utilization of forest resources. Evidence 1-7. Catalog of medicinal plants of Kazakhstan Altai. It is also worth noting that the activities related to biodiversity conservation, expansion of the network of protected areas, development of forestry and increase of forest cover are included into the National Project “Green Kazakhstan”. This makes project initiatives and activities fully complementary with the objectives of the National Project “Green Kazakhstan” and will help the Government to achieve a significant part of the indicators related to increasing the area of protected areas to 2.8%, increasing the forest coverage to 5%, introduction of the training material on ecology into the secondary school’s curriculum, provision of access to best green practices and technologies.	
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Forest area in Kazakhstan under indirectly improved management	N/A (zero hectares indirectly improved)	N/A (zero hectares indirectly improved) (achievement of result not expected at mid-point)	Forests managed by 120 forestry entities = 12,652,400 ha of forest landscapes	0+ The progress towards the indicator is on track. The project maintains an active momentum towards the goal of enhancing forest management at the national level. The project activities are built around the improvement of the regulatory framework governing forest reproduction, afforestation, and forest protection issues. (A) In October 2022, the Scientific and Technical Council of the Forestry and Wildlife Committee approved a set of recommendations developed by the Project. These recommendations cover the following areas: -Changes in rules and standards of technological infrastructure to combat forest fires. -Amendments and supplements to the laws and regulations regarding forest reproduction, afforestation, and protection.	The project indicator has been achieved. All activities implemented under the project related to sustainable forest management directly or indirectly contributed to the achievement of the area indicator of 12,652,400 ha of forest landscapes. In particular, this was achieved through the following project activities: (1) The project has been working on strengthening the institutional framework through updating norms and standards in the field of forest conservation and protection. (a) In July 2023, standards for equipping forest fire service workers with personal protective equipment were updated at the legislative level, which made it possible to improve funding in the fight against forest fires. Evidence 2-1. Copy of the Order
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				Building upon these recommendations, the Forestry and Wildlife Committee (FWC) initiated amendments to the Standards in various aspects: -Availability of machinery and equipment for forest protection. -Availability of satellite navigation equipment and instrumentation. -Number of employees at forest fire stations. -Equipping forest fire stations with tools, protective equipment, and fire-fighting clothing. -Aircraft protection of forest resources. These amendments aim to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of forest protection measures. Evidence 2-1. Minutes of the meeting of the STC Council of the Forestry and Wildlife Committee dated 11.10.2022. Evidence 2-2. Comparative table on amendments and supplements to the	(b) During the reporting period at the request of the Forestry and Wildlife Committee, following a large forest fire in the Abay region of Kazakhstan and the President's instruction to develop comprehensive systematic measures for the use of digital systems for the prevention and timely detection of fires in forest areas, the Project has worked on updating the Natural Norms and prepared calculations of financial requirements, indicating funding sources and justification of financial costs for 156 environmental institutions in Kazakhstan (forestries and PAs). These documents are under consideration of the Ministry of Finance. Updating these norms and standards will allow for more efficient resource use, improved emergency response ,and reliable forest protection from fires and other threats at the national level and will affect all environmental institutions in Kazakhstan. Evidence 2-2. Table of financial calculations requirements for updating in-kind norms for PAs and local executive bodies.
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				Standards for the protection of forests from fires. (B) The project continues to work on the development of plans to manage forest protection institutions. Currently, forestry enterprises do not have a basis for medium-term planning and are guided by the forest stand-level inventory and forest planning, developed once every 10 years. Forest management plans will serve as a useful tool for effective financial/budget planning. This type of work is carried out in Kazakhstan for the first time, today only PAs have management plans. With the guidance and inputs of an international expert, a Methodology for the development of management plans for forestry institutions in Kazakhstan was prepared, which was agreed upon by key national partners in this sector. Evidence 2-3. Methodology for developing forest management plans.	(c) The procedure, timing and methods of forest felling in areas of the state forest fund depend on forest conditions, species composition and category of the state forest fund and are regulated by the Forest Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Forest Felling Rules, which have not been updated since 2015. With the development of scientific research, new data on the impact of logging on forest ecosystems and biodiversity have become available. It was necessary to update the rules to consider this data and ensure more effective forest management. During the reporting period, the project assessed existing practices and regulatory frameworks for regulating logging for various purposes and prepared proposals for amendments to the order. Evidence 2-3. Comparative table to the draft order of June 30, 2015 No. 18-02/596 "On Approval of the Rules of forest felling in state forest fund areas.
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				The Project is currently working on procuring a company to develop Management Plans for the two pilot forestry enterprises: Ridderskoe in the East Kazakhstan region and Karadalinskoe in the Almaty region. A competition has been announced among national companies for this work. Evidence 2-4. Terms of Reference for development of Forest Management Plans.	(2) The project also worked on the introduction of new approaches to medium-term forest planning and management. All tested forest management approaches based on international experience were proposed for inclusion in the national strategy on biodiversity conservation. (a) For the first time, more than 1.2 million hectares of HCVF have been identified for Kazakhstan. (b) During the reporting period, the project completed the development of Management Plans for Karadala and Ridder Forest Institutions. The Management Plans define key goals, objectives, as well as a set of activities and budget calculations required to achieve the set goals of the institutions over a 5-year period. Implementing the Management Plans will ensure a continuous process that makes the management of the institutions effective, efficient, and adaptive over time. The developed Management Plans have been presented to stakeholders and agreed at the level of Natural Resources and Nature Management Departments of East Kazakhstan and Almaty oblasts.
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					To introduce the Management Plans of forest institutions into the forestry system, proposals for amendments and additions to the current legislation were prepared and sent to the MENR. Evidence 2-4. Management plan of Ridder forestry. Evidence 2-5. Copies of protocols on MPs approval with the Departments of Natural Resources and Environmental Regulation of pilot provinces; Evidence 2-6. Comparative table on introduction of amendments and additions to the Forest Code on the implementation of the forest institution's management plan. (3) For the first time in Kazakhstan, the international TSA methodology was used to
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					assess the country's forest management system and to develop a scenario for sustainable ecosystem management. (4) The project worked on strengthening 8 forest nurseries by introducing water-saving technologies (drip irrigation), improving sowing methods (saxaul seed drill) and improving agro-technical works (tractors, plows, harrows, cultivators, etc.). (5) The project systematically worked on strengthening the technical capacity of 8 pilot leskhozses. Thus, over 12 units of machinery, more than 400 units of equipment and more than 150 radio stations were purchased during the entire project period. (6) For the first time for Kazakhstan to improve the technological process of forest inventory works, an industrial drone was purchased, which allows to conduct airborne laser scanning and aerial photography for forest inventory, accounting and taxation.
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					During the reporting period, training on detection and monitoring of forest fires using remote sensing data was conducted for 54 employees of 14 protected areas and 8 forestry enterprises. Additionally,, 20 employees of a Kazakh forest inventory enterprise were trained on the use of the QGIS geographic information system in forest management and forest monitoring. Evidence 2-7. Programs and lists of training participants. Thus, all the implemented measures have directly or indirectly improved the management of 12 million hectares.
. # direct project beneficiaries b. # of PA staff with enhanced	N/A (zero beneficiaries)	a. Total: ~1,100 : b. PA staff: >1,000 PA staff with	a. Total: ~41,000 : b. PA staff: >2,000 PA staff with enhanced capacity	a. Total: 18,700 (cumulative progress over 5,5 years, 9,735 men and 8,965 women) or 46% of EoP target. b. PA employees: 1,631 employees (1,138 men and 493 women) with improved capacity or 81,5% of EoP target.	The indicator is achieved. a) Total: 676,958 (cumulative progress for 2018-2024, 341,318 men and 335,640

individual capacity		enhanced capacity	c. Forestry staff: 457 leskhoz staff	c. State Forestry Department employees: 607 employees (488 men and 119 women) with improved capacity or 132% of EoP target.	women). This exceeds the EoP target for this indicator by a factor of 16.
c. # of forestry staff with enhanced individual capacity		c. Forestry staff: 100 leskhoz staff	d. Local resource users: Total: 38,753 (19,382 men; 19,371 women) (figures official from 2009 census)	d. Local natural resource users: 16 462 villagers and natural resource users from 3 project areas (8 109 men and 8 353 women) or approx. 43 % of EoP target.	b) PA staff: 1,701 employees (1,185 men and 516 women) with improved potential, constituting 85% of the EoP target.
d. # of local resource users with improved sustainability of livelihoods		d. Local resource users: Total: 0 (0 men; 0 women) (achievement of result not expected at mid-point)		Overall, the indicator is on track. The project is still lagging on the end target for local natural resources users, which directly impacts the achievement of the envisage total number of direct beneficiaries. As mentioned in the 2022 PIR, the target of 41,000 direct beneficiaries may not be achieved due to initially high target level. Nonetheless, in the remaining time (16 months) the project will strive to reach as many local land users in the pilot districts as possible, relevant activities are planned for the next reporting period.	During the project implementation, a number of trainings/internships and seminars were held for senior management and staff of pilot protected areas on the management approaches of environmental institutions, scientific research, protection of the territory, development of ecotourism, environmental education, and biodiversity monitoring, etc. At the same time, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions, some of these capacity-building events were held online. During the reporting period, seminars on METT assessment and forest fire detection and monitoring using remote sensing data

				As of for the PA staff EoP target, it will be met by the end of the project. Details on progress observed for each category: b. The new structure of the Management Plan for environmental institutions has been approved. As part of the project's efforts to introduce the new methodology at the national level, a series of trainings were initiated and conducted for employees of protected areas (PAs). The training sessions aimed to enhance the capacity of pilot PAs employees in planning, ecosystem management, budget request preparation, and the adoption of new technologies for protecting and monitoring ecosystems and natural complexes. Throughout the reporting period, eight trainings were organized for the staff of 34 pilot PAs. These trainings covered	were conducted to enhance the potential of staff in pilot PA sites. These seminars involved 70 employees from pilot PAs, including 23 women and 47 men. Evidence 3-1. Agenda and list of participants c) Forestry staff: 641 (514 men, 127 women) – EoP target achieved. During the reporting period, workshops on Management Plans were held with participation of representatives from the Departments of Natural Resources and Nature Management Regulation of two pilot forestries - Ridder Forestry and Karadala Forestry; 34 people were trained, 26 of them were men and 8 women. Evidence 3-2. Confirming materials of seminars (programs, lists, photo material). Evidence 3-2: Program and list of training participants.
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			topics such as management plan development, the utilization of SMART systems and drones in natural complex protection, and wildlife monitoring, using social media marketing (SMM) and mobilography for awareness raising purposes. In total, 229 employees of PAs underwent training during the reporting period, with 97 women (42%) and 132 men (57%) participating in the capacity-building initiatives. Evidence 3-1. Seminar agendas and list of PA participants. c. A training module for forestry workers has been released, providing valuable educational resources for target groups. The module includes a thematic lesson plan and comprehensive educational materials covering key topics such as reforestation and afforestation, forest fire prevention and protection, as well as forest pest and disease management. As a result, 76 employees and trainers from 8 forest enterprises were trained. Fifty (50)	d) Local resource users: Total: 674 616 (339 619 men; 334 997 women), including local communities who benefitted from the improved pastures management, landscape planning and capacity building initiatives. EoP target achieved and exceeded. Thus, over the entire period of implementation, the benefits from the implementation of project activities on sustainable land management were received by: - 15,834 beneficiaries (including 7,722 men and 8,112 women) of 4 pilot rural districts (Belkaragay, Kaskasu, Koksaray, Sumbe), where pilot projects on sustainable pasture management were implemented between 2021 and 2022. - 757 beneficiaries (including 438 men and 319 women), among local nature users who underwent trainings with the project's support during 2019-2024; farmers, akimat employees, women, etc., who underwent trainings on sustainable land use, ecotourism development, and landscape planning;
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			hard copies of the module were distributed to interested parties, Evidence 3-2. The copy of the Capacity Building Program for the State Forestry Department employees. During the reporting period: -2 HCVF training seminars were conducted for employees of eight forestries, training a total of 41 participants, including 32 men and 9 women. -a training session on the presentation of a prototype saxaul seeder was provided for forestry enterprise employees in the Almaty, Zhetysu, Zhambyl, and Kyzylorda regions. Twenty-four (24) workers from forestry institutions participated in the training, including 2 women and 22 men. -5 employees (all men) from Kazlesproekt received training on collection and processing of field data using ground-based cameras equipped with a laser sensor, with the assistance of trainers from the Czech Republic.	- 658,025 beneficiaries (including 331,459 men and 326,566 women) of 7 pilot districts of Almaty and Zhetysu regions, where landscape planning activities were implemented and Functional Zoning Schemes were developed during 2021-2022. Functional Zoning Schemes serve as a basis for local authorities to plan sustainable land use.
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				Evidence 3-3. Supporting materials of seminars on forestry enterprises (programs, lists, photos). d. The monitoring of sustainable pasture management activities in the 4 pilot rural districts (Koksaray, Sumbe, Kaskasu, and Belkaragai) demonstrated the sustainability of the results. Through pasture improvement initiatives, the well-being of 15,834 inhabitants in the 4 rural districts improved significantly, comprising 7,722 males and 8,112 females. Furthermore, during the reporting period, the Project conducted various information and training activities aimed at other target groups: - conference on environmental education for teachers of pilot districts, where 42 teachers (39 women and 3 men) were informed about the new program of additional environmental education;	
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				- an informational tour for guides and tour operators of the Turkestan region on the presentation of an updated tour route in the Sairam-Ugam National Natural Park, where 43 individuals (26 men and 17 women) were informed . Evidence 3-4. Supporting materials of seminars on eco-education and ecotourism (programs, lists, photos). Evidence 3-5. Table on the population of the pilot rural districts.	
Population trends for globally significant species, such as snow leopard, argali, goitered gazelle, and other threatened species within the expanded	Please see GEF-6 BD Tracking Tool METT scorecards for all PAs, cells C38 and C39 Alpine forest and associated	Flora: N/A (project activities will not affect ecological status by midpoint) Fauna: N/A (project activities will not affect	Flora: Non-deterioration of baseline status Fauna: Increase relative to baseline	The indicator is being successfully implemented and is progressing as planned. Throughout the 5-year project implementation, no significant deviations in numerical data for globally important species have been observed compared to the initial levels. Every year, positive population trends are consistently recorded, supported by reliable data from pilot protected areas. The number of indicator species shows stability when compared to the baseline, and for certain key species, there is a	EoP flora and fauna related targets for this indicator has been achieved, with increasing population trends observed in most key species. EoP target: Flora: Non-deterioration of baseline status. Key indicators of mountain, riparian, and saxaul forests correspond to target values. For several indicator species, there has been

target PA estate:	ecosystems, flora:	ecological status by midpoint)		positive trend indicating an increase in their population. This conclusion is based on reliable recorded data obtained from the pilot protected areas.	an increase in population numbers and an improvement in condition compared to the baseline.
Alpine forest and associated ecosystems, flora:	- Picea schrenkiana - 65,321			While most species indicators remain at the baseline level, there has been noticeable growth in some globally significant species.	While most species indicators remain at the baseline level, there has been noticeable growth in some globally significant species.
- Picea schrenkiana	- Malus sieversii - 5,100			- Picea schrenkiana – 69,679 ha (an increase of 4.358 ha (6.3%) from baseline)	Alpine forest and associated ecosystems, flora:
- Malus sieversii	- Malus niedzwetzkyana - no data			- Malus sieversii – 13,991 ha (an increase of 8,891 ha (63,5 %) from baseline)	- Picea schrenkiana – 69,679 ha (an increase of 4.358 ha (6.3%) from baseline)
- Malus niedzwetzkyana	- Juniperus sp. (turkestanica, semiglobosa)			- Juniperus sp. (turkestanica, semiglobosa, seravschanica) - 63,893 ha (an increase of 56,321 ha (743 %) from baseline)	- Malus sieversii – 13,991 ha (an increase of 8,891 ha (63,5 %) from baseline)
- Juniperus sp. (turkestanica, semiglobosa, seravschanica)	- Juniperus sp. (turkestanica, semiglobosa, seravschanica) - 7,572			- Crataegus turkestanica – 5,531 ha (an increase of 4,431 ha (402 %) from baseline)	- Juniperus sp. (turkestanica, semiglobosa, seravschanica) - 63,893 ha (an increase of 56,321 ha (743 %) from baseline)
- Betula tianschanica	- Betula tianschanica - 1,522			Alpine forest and associated ecosystems, fauna:	- Crataegus turkestanica – 5,531 ha (an increase of 4,431 ha (402 %) from baseline)
- Populus tremula L.				- Uncia uncia – 141 - 183	Alpine forest and associated ecosystems, fauna:

- Abies siberica - Crataegus turkestanica - Picea obovata Alpine forest and associated ecosystems, fauna: - Uncia uncia - Ursus arctos (incl. ssp isabellinus) - Ovis ammon ssp (karelini, nigrimontana) - Capra sibirica - Cervus elaphus	- Populus tremula L. - 4,788 - Abies siberica - 76,859 - Crataegus turkestanica - 1,100 - Picea obovata - 18,580 Alpine forest and associated ecosystems, fauna: - Uncia uncia - 110-130 - Ursus arctos (incl. ssp			- Ursus arctos (incl. ssp isabellinus) - 665 (an increase of 158 individuals (23.8%) compared to the baseline); - Ovis ammon ssp (karelini, nigrimontana) – 685 - Capra sibirica - 6,039 - Cervus elaphus - 3,306 - Capreolus pygargus – 7,072 (an increase of 984 individuals (12,2 %) compared to the baseline - Canis lupus – 1,076 (an increase of 515 individuals (47.9%) compared to baseline); - Marmota sp. (baibacina, caudate, menzbieri) – 34,371 (an increase of 13,326 individuals (38.8%) from baseline); Floodplain (tugai) forest and associated ecosystems, flora: - Populus pruinosa – 186 (up by 14 ha (7.5%) from baseline) - Ulmus sp. – 300 (an increase of 20 ha (6.7%) from baseline)	- Uncia uncia – 141 - 183 - Ursus arctos (incl. ssp isabellinus) – 755 (an increase of 248 individuals (48.9 %) compared to the baseline); - Ovis ammon ssp (karelini, nigrimontana) – 685 - Capra sibirica – 7,404 (an increase of 1 365 individuals (22.6 %) compared to the baseline); - Cervus elaphus - 3,759 (an increase of 453 individuals (13.7 %) compared to the baseline); - Capreolus pygargus – 8,447 (an increase of 1, 375 individuals (19.4 %) compared to the baseline) - Canis lupus – 1,037 (an increase of 476 individuals (84.8 %) compared to baseline); - Marmota sp. (baibacina, caudate, menzbieri) – 36,403 (an increase of 15,358 individuals (72.9 %) from baseline); Floodplain (tugai) forest and associated ecosystems, flora:
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- Capreolus pygargus - Canis lupus - Marmota sp. (baibacina, caudate, menzbieri)	- isabellinus) - 507 - Ovis ammon ssp (karelini, nigrimontana) - 685 - Capra sibirica - 6,039 - Cervus elaphus - 3,306 - Capreolus pygargus – 7,072 - Canis lupus - 561 - Marmota sp. (baibacina, caudate, menzbieri) – 21,045			- Fraxinus sogdiana – 2555 (an increase of 1.081 ha (42.3%) from baseline) - Elaeagnus oxycarpa – 475 ha - Tamarix ramosissima – 21,158 ha Floodplain (tugai) forest and associated ecosystems, fauna: - Capreolus pygargus - >68 - Sus scrofa - >241 - Cervus elaphus bactrianus - 126 - Hemiechinus auritus - unknown - Columba eversmanni - >518 - Falco cherrug - 24 - Aegypius monachus - 4 Saxaul forest and associated ecosystems, flora: - Populus pruinosa Schrenk – 20 487 ha - Haloxylon aphyllum, H. persicum - > 177,311 ha (an increase of 176.864 ha (99.7%) from baseline)	- Populus pruinosa – 186 (up by 14 ha (7.5%) from baseline) - Ulmus sp. – 300 (an increase of 20 ha (6.7%) from baseline) - Fraxinus sogdiana – 2555 (an increase of 1.081 ha (42.3%) from baseline) - Elaeagnus oxycarpa – 475 ha - Tamarix ramosissima – 21,158 ha Floodplain (tugai) forest and associated ecosystems, fauna: - Capreolus pygargus – 181 (an increase of 113 individuals (166.1 %) compared to the baseline) - Sus scrofa – 487 (an increase of 246 individuals (102 %) compared to the baseline) - Cervus elaphus bactrianus – 226 (an increase of 100 individuals (79.3 %) compared to the baseline) - Hemiechinus auritus - 160
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Floodplain (tugai) forest and associated ecosystems, fauna: - Capreolus pygargus - Sus scrofa - Cervus elaphus bactrianus - Hemiechinus auritus - Columba eversmanni - Falco cherrug - Aegypius monachus Saxaul forest and associated	Floodplain (tugai) forest and associated ecosystems, flora: - Populus pruinosa - 172 - Ulmus sp. - 280 - Fraxinus sogdiana - 1474 - Elaeagnus oxycarpa - unknown - Tamarix ramosissima - unknown		- Lonicera iliensis Pojark – 1,939 ha - Tamarix ramosissima – 34,530 ha Saxaul forest and associated ecosystems, fauna: - Gazella subgutturosa – 305 (an increase of 144 individuals (47.2%) compared to the baseline); - Aquila rapax - 7 - Aquila chrysaetos - 16 - Lepus tolai - 472 In 2022, forest inventories were conducted in the Almaty, Zhetysu, and Turkestan regions. For the first time forest inventories had been carried out in the Ile-Balkhash Reserve and the Tarbagatai National Park. These efforts aimed to accurately determine the forest areas for various species, resulting in Increased areas of growth for Eli Shrenk (6.3%), Sievers apple tree (63.5%), juniper (88.1%), and Turkestan hawthorn (80.1%).	- Columba eversmanni – 1035 (an increase of 517 individuals (99.8 %) compared to the baseline) - Falco cherrug - 24 - Aegypius monachus – 12 (an increase of 8 individuals (200 %) compared to the baseline) Saxaul forest and associated ecosystems, flora: - Populus pruinosa Schrenk – 20 487 ha - Haloxylon aphyllum, H. persicum - > 177,311 ha (an increase of 176.864 ha (99.7%) from baseline) - Lonicera iliensis Pojark – 1,939 ha - Tamarix ramosissima – 34,530 ha Saxaul forest and associated ecosystems, fauna: - Gazella subgutturosa – 510 (an increase of 349 individuals (216.7 %) compared to the baseline); - Capreolus capreolus - 54
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ecosystems, flora: - Populus pruinosa Schrenk - Elaeagnus oxycarpa - Haloxylon aphyllum, H. persicum - Berberis iliensis M. Pop - Lonicera iliensis Pojark - Tamarix ramosissima Saxaul forest and associated ecosystems, fauna:	Floodplain (tugai) forest and associated ecosystems, fauna: - Capreolus pygargus - >68 - Sus scrofa - >241 - Cervus elaphus bactrianus - 126 - Hemiechinus auritus - unknown - Columba eversmanni - >518 - Falco cherrug - 24		Forest inventories also resulted in adjustment of the ash (Fraxinus) growth area in the Karatau Reserve and the Sairam-Ugam National Park. Furthermore, the tamarisk growth area expanded significantly with the inclusion of the Syrdarya-Turkestan Regional Park. Substantial areas of black saxaul (Haloxylon) and tamarisk were identified in the newly established "Ile-Balkhash" reserve and the Syrdarya-Turkestan Regional Park. Data on accounting and monitoring of the wildlife also demonstrates a consistent increase in species numbers. The creation of favorable conditions in the newly established protected areas has contributed to the rise in animal populations. Notably, the brown bear population has increased by 23.8%, followed by roe deer (12.2%) and marmot (38.8%). The wolf and wild boar populations have been progressively growing across the	- Aquila rapax - 20 (an increase of 13 individuals (185.7 %) compared to the baseline); - Aquila chrysaetos – 18 (an increase of 2 individuals (12.5 %) compared to the baseline); - Lepus tolai – 774 (an increase of 302 individuals (63.9 %) compared to the baseline); Completion of forest inventory work in two project areas (Zhetysu Alatau and Western Tien Shan) made it possible to specify the following quantitative data on rare, key and indicator species: - Nedzvetsky apple, juniper, Turkestan hawthorn in mountain ecosystems; - Narrow-leaved oleaster and branched tamarisk in floodplain forests. - Blue poplar, narrow-leaved oleaster, Ili honeysuckle and branched tamarisk in saxaul forests.
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- Gazella subgutturosa - Capreolus capreolus - Aquila rapax - Aquila chrysaetos - Lepus tolai	- Aegypius monachus - 4 Saxaul forest and associated ecosystems, flora: - Populus pruinosa Schrenk - unknown - Elaeagnus oxycarpa - unknown - Haloxylon aphyllum, H. persicum - >447 - Berberis iliensis M. Pop - unknown			country in recent years, largely due to the implementation of a hunting moratorium in protected areas. Evidence 4-1. Materials of forest inventory of pilot protected areas. Evidence 4-2. Materials for accounting and monitoring of wildlife of pilot protected areas	Fauna: Increase relative to baseline A positive trend is also noted in the population of rare and indicator species of fauna, for example: - Snow leopard, brown bear, Menzbier's marmot in mountain ecosystems; - Siberian roe deer, wild boar, brown pigeon, black vulture in floodplain ecosystems; - goitered gazelle, steppe eagle, tolai hare in saxaul forests . During the project implementation period, a series of trainings were conducted for staff in pilot PAs on scientific research and monitoring, alongside the introduction of new technologies such as the SMART system. Improvements in monitoring and data collection were further facilitated through the provision of camera traps, drones, collars,
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	- Lonicera iliensis Pojark - unknown - Tamarix ramosissima - unknown Saxaul forest and associated ecosystems, fauna: - Gazella subgutturosa - 161 - Capreolus capreolus - unknown - Aquila rapax - 7				thermal imagers, and equipment for research work. From 10 to 14 March 2024, the project experts and pilot PA (Sayram-Ugam National Park) took part in the 1st World Congress on the SMART patrolling system in Windhoek (Namibia). The congress was attended by more than 350 participants from 50 countries where the SMART system is implemented. The project experts made a presentation on SMART system implementation in Kazakhstan. Biodiversity monitoring programs were implemented in pilot PAs, which improved biodiversity and habitat monitoring. Additionally, the conducted trainings enhanced the qualifications of staff in pilot PAs. The creation of the "Kapshagay-Balkhash" eco-corridor facilitated an increase in the population of saiga antelope, ensuring safe
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	- Aquila chrysaetos - 16 - Lepus tolai - 472				migration from Altyn-Emel National Park to Ile-Balkhash Reserve. Additionally, measures such as the reconstruction of the watering points in the reserve also contributed to the population growth.
The progress of the objective/outcome can be described as:	Progress not set				
Evidence uploaded:	NO				
Outcome 1					
Component 1. Improved representation of globally important forest biodiversity and improved management of protected conservation-important forests					
Outcome 1.1: Prevention of loss of conservation important forest and associated non-forest ecosystems and their biodiversity					
Outcome 1.2: Improved management of protected conservation important forests, through HCVF-specific management measures in PA forests					

Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Midterm target level	End of project target level	Level at Jun 30, 2023	Cumulative progress since project start as of Jun 30, 2024
5. Incremental area under conservation management through establishment of new PAs	N/A (only existing PAs)	N/A (only existing PAs)	1,729,485 ha net new hectares under protection	The indicator remains on track. The project is actively engaged in efforts to achieve this indicator, including the creation of 7 new protected areas and expansion of 4 existing protected areas. The initial phase of creating 5 new protected areas has been successfully completed within the reporting period. The creation of the sixth protected area "Rudny Altai" has been initiated (field research, scientific justification). The Merke Regional Park establishment process is at the final stage, an environmental impact assessment report and feasibility study submitted to the authorities. The estimated area for seven new protected area is over 1.8 million hectares, the area of expansion- 257,187.6 ha Evidence 5-1, a decree confirming the reservation of land for the creation of the regional park Merke.	Progress: 1,840,928 hectares. The indicator has been achieved. Overall, the project aimed to expand the network of protected areas, including high conservation value forests (HCVFs), snow leopard habitats, and other globally significant complexes, covering an area of 1.883 million hectares. During the reporting period, the project was actively working towards achieving this indicator. According to the project document, the feasibility study for creation of two new PAs (Tarbagatay National Park and Ile-Balkhash Nature Reserve) was prepared by the project and agreed with all authorized ministries. The project also assisted in preparing the draft Government Resolution on creation of new PAs. In 2018, by Government Resolution, the two abovementioned new PAs were

				It is important to note that the processes PA creation or expansion is not directly controlled by the project. Nevertheless, the project will undertake the necessary steps to develop and present all required justifications to the authorized body for the creation and expansion of protected areas with total area not less than EoP target. Detailed information is provided below: During the reporting period, efforts to expand the ecological network in three project areas "Western Tien Shan", "Northern and Central Tien Shan", "Altai and Saur-Tarbagatai" continued. (A) expansion of protected areas (256,288 ha): - National parks "Kolsai Kolderi" (110,000 ha) and "Zhongar Alatau" (64,091.4 ha) in the Northern and Central Tien Shan;	established with a total area of 655,164.2 hectares, creating 283 jobs. To achieve this indicator and in line with the MTE's revised means of verification (scientific background reports and feasibility studies on the expansion/creation of new PAs were developed and approved by the authorized body) for this target, the project has also developed scientific rationale and feasibility studies for the expansion of three existing PAs and the creation of six new PAs: • Karatau Reserve – 30,000 hectares (expansion); • Kolsai Koldery National Park – 120,000 hectares (expansion); • Zhongar-Alatau National Park – 64,091 hectares (expansion); • Merke Regional Park – 70,000 hectares (establishment), initiated in 2019; • Koksus Reserve – 586,796 hectares (establishment);
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			- Karatau Reserve (22,096.6 ha) and Syrdarya-Turkestan Regional Park in the Western Tien Shan (60,100 ha); Mandatory documents and works for the 1st stage, which include field studies and the development of natural scientific justifications, have been successfully completed for the expansion of all 4 protected areas. The 2nd stage will involve the development of feasibility studies. (B) creation of new protected areas (1,839,547 ha): - Merke Regional Park (72,710 ha) in the Zhambyl region (Western Tien Shan); - Koksusky reserve (586,796 ha), - Ketminsky Reserve (218,474 ha), - Usek Reserve (140,000 ha), - Terskey Reserve Zone (189,407 ha) in the Northern and Central Tien Shan;	• Usek Reserve – 230,000 hectares (establishment); • Ketmen Reserve – 218,474 hectares (establishment); • Terskei Wildlife Sanctuary – 189,407 hectares (establishment); • Saur-Manyrak Wildlife Sanctuary – 332,160 hectares (establishment); The initial stage of creating five new protected areas has been successfully completed during the reporting period, including the development of the scientific rationale. The UNDP country office and the project have conducted a series of meetings with local executive bodies, involving the Forestry and Wildlife Committee, Natural Resources and Nature Use Regulation Departments, research institutes, forestry enterprises, hunting farms, natural resource users, and local communities to conduct explanatory work and discuss the boundaries of the PAs being created or expanded. During these meetings, agreements were reached, and several issues regarding boundaries with
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			- Saur-Manyra protected area (332,160 ha) in the project area "Altai and Saur-Tarbagatai" Field studies and development of natural scientific justifications for the establishment of the territory of 5 above mentioned protected areas have been successfully completed. The establishment process of the regional park "Merke" is at the next stage of implementation with the draft feasibility study undergone public hearings and submitted for environmental expertise. Rudniy Altai (300,000 ha): In order to preserve the unique fir boreal coniferous forest (taiga) of the Kazakh part of the Altai, based on the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan request the development of the natural scientific justification initiated to create a new protected area with a total area of 300,000 hectares.	hunting and forestry enterprises were resolved. The total area of the six new PAs being created is 1,626,837 hectares. Comprehensive scientific research has been conducted in pilot areas for these PAs, and desk studies and analyses of ecosystem and key species conditions have been completed. Natural science and feasibility surveys have been developed, public hearings and state environmental assessments have been conducted, and adjustments to the configuration of boundaries and expansion areas have been made based on meeting outcomes and discussions. The area of expansion for three PAs is 214,091 hectares. It is important to note that the processes of creating or expanding PAs are conducted in accordance with approved rules and fully comply with these rules and requirements. Moreover, the coordination of PA boundaries and areas is fully overseen by local executive bodies and land management authorities, agriculture, and natural resource
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				The indicator is currently progressing and remains on track. In total, the project aims to expand the network of protected areas, including High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF), snow leopard habitats, and other globally significant complexes, covering an area of 1.8 million hectares. However, due to the administrative division of the Almaty region, there have been challenges in progressing with expansion and creation of protected areas. To address these issues, the UNDP country office and the project team have organized several meetings at the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources level, as well as with regional akimats. The project experts conducted meetings with the Department of Natural Resources of Almaty, Turkestan, East Kazakhstan and Zhambyl oblasts. High-level meetings were held with the Akim of Zhambyl oblast and Deputy Akim of Turkestan oblast at the UNDP management level.	management departments of regional and district akimats. Frequently, the refusal to expand boundaries for PAs comes from insufficient land available to meet local needs and the restrictions imposed by PA. Detailed information is provided below: During the reporting period, the project continued working on expanding the ecological network in three project areas: Western Tien Shan, Northern and Central Tien Shan, and Altai and Saur-Tarbagatai. (A) Expansion of protected areas (214,091 hectares): - Kolsai Kolderi National Park (120,000 hectares) and Zhongar Alatau National Park (64,091.4 hectares) in Northern and Central Tien Shan; - Karatau Reserve (30,000 hectares) in Western Tien Shan;
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				During these meetings, the parties discussed the configuration of the boundaries of the expanded/created protected areas, taking into account the interests of all stakeholders (local population, hunting farms in terms of cattle routes, places intended for arable land and cattle grazing). It was also agreed that the allocation of funds for the financing and maintenance of the created regional park will be provided by the Akimat of Zhambyl region. According to the legislation on protected areas, it is obligatory that during all stages of development of the natural-scientific and feasibility study in the expansion/creation of PAs, the meetings of the Scientific and Technical Council of the FWC (including research institutes and other experts) and open public hearings are conducted where all interested parties can take part in the discussions. At each of these stages, all stakeholders, including	(B) Creation of new protected areas (1,626,837 hectares): - Merke Regional Park (70,000 hectares) in Zhambyl Region (Western Tien Shan); - Koksus Reserve (586,796 hectares), - Ketmen Reserve (218,474 hectares), - Usek Reserve (230,000 hectares), - Teriskey-Saur-Manyrak Reserve (189,407 hectares) in Northern and Central Tien Shan; - Saur-Manyrak Reserve (332,160 hectares) in the project area of Altay and Saur-Tarbagatay. The Forestry and Wildlife Committee has acknowledged receipt of the documents (scientific background reports and feasibility studies) regarding the expansion or creation of new PAs. They will review the possibility of incorporating the PA expansion/creation into the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2035.
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			nature and hunting enterprises, the local population and NGOs express their opinion which is documented in the minutes of the meetings. After passing these procedures, the project is sent for environmental impact assessment. All of the above requirements have been duly implemented in the project and the views of all stakeholders have been taken into account. Currently, the project is working on the below follow-up actions: - re-agreement of the boundaries of a regional park with no protection zone; - submission of the feasibility study project for creation of the regional park "Merke" for consideration of the Department of Ecology of Zhambyl region's akimat; - conducting public hearings on the feasibility study project for the creation of	Evidence 5-1: Letter from Forestry and Wildlife Committee Evidence 5-2. Evidence 5-2 MTR-Kazakhstan-Report-FINAL Evidence 5-3 Annex 13_Evaluation Report Clearance Form Evidence 5-4 Managment_response_MTE_Forest_Final_29.12.2020_eng Evidence 5-5 PB minutes_26.01.2021_SFM_rus_eng
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				the regional park "Merke" on the main boundaries without protection zone.	
6. Forest PA management effectiveness	Baseline METT Scores: Alpine forest ecosystems: Almaty Zapovednik: 67 Ile-Alatau NP: 66 Kolsay Kolderi NP: 80 Kolsay Kolderi NP Expansion: 24	Increase in METT Score: Alpine forest ecosystems: Almaty Zapovednik: 68 Ile-Alatau NP: 67 Kolsay Kolderi NP: 81 Kolsay Kolderi NP Expansion: 25	30% improvement in score gap ((1 – METT value)*0.3) over baseline Target METT Scores: Alpine forest ecosystems: Almaty Zapovednik: 77 Ile-Alatau NP: 76 Kolsay Kolderi NP: 86	For the reporting period, METT scores for existing protected areas remained at the mid-term level. The midterm METT assessment of target forest PAs will be updated during the next reporting period for the TE (July 2024). The midterm METT scores of target forest protected areas are presented below. Alpine forest ecosystems: • Almaty Zapovednik: 68; • Ile-Alatau NP: 67; • Kolsay Kolderi NP: 82; • Kolsay Kolderi NP Expansion (new): 24; • Zhongar Alatau NP: 60;	A final METT assessment of existing PAs was carried out between March and June 2024, the assessment showed the achievement of METT targets, i.e. 30% improvement in score gap over baseline METT scores for target forest PAs. Alpine forest ecosystems: • Almaty Zapovednik: 78; • Ile-Alatau NP: 78; • Kolsay Kolderi NP: 87; • Kolsay Kolderi NP Expansion (new): 24; • Zhongar Alatau NP: 71; • Zhongar Alatau NP Expansion (new): 27;

	Zhongar Alatau NP: 59 Zhongar Alatau NP Expansion: 27 SW Zhongar Alatau ("Koksu Reserve") (proposed): 23 Sairam-Ugam NP: 71 Aksu-Jabagly Zapovednik: 81 Karatau NP: 81 Karatau NP Expansion: 17	Zhongar Alatau NP: 60 Zhongar Alatau NP Expansion: 28 SW Zhongar Alatau ("Koksu Reserve") (proposed): 24 Sairam-Ugam NP: 72 Aksu-Jabagly Zapovednik: 82 Karatau NP: 82	Kolsay Kolderi NP Expansion: 47 Zhongar Alatau NP: 71 Zhongar Alatau NP Expansion: 49 SW Zhongar Alatau ("Koksu Reserve") (proposed): 46 Sairam-Ugam NP: 80 Aksu-Jabagly Zapovednik: 87 Karatau NP: 87 Karatau NP Expansion: 42 Katon Karagay NP: 44	• Zhongar Alatau NP Expansion (new): 27; • SW Koksu Alatau ("Koksu Reserve") (new): 23; • Sairam-Ugam NP: 73; • Aksu-Zhabagly Zapovednik: 81; • Karatau Reserve: 87; • Karatau Reserve Expansion (new): 17; • Katon Karagay NP: 63; • Markakol Resere: 48; • Zapadno-Altay Reserve: 78; • Ketmen Wildlife Sanctuary (new): 21; • Terskey Conservation Area (new): 21; • Merke Regional Nature Park (new): 21; • Terskey Conservation Area (new): 21; • Merke Regional Nature Park (new): 21; • Saur-Manrak Conservation Area (new): 17; • Tarbagatay NP (new): 41 (130 %); • Floodplain and saxaul forests: • Charyn Canyon NP: 78;	• SW Koksu Alatau ("Koksu Reserve") (new): 23; • Sairam-Ugam NP: 80; • Aksu-Zhabagly Zapovednik: 88; • Karatau Reserve: 87; • Karatau Reserve Expansion (new): 17; • Katon Karagay NP: 78; • Markakol Resere: 64; • Zapadno-Altay Reserve: 85; • Ketmen Wildlife Sanctuary (new): 21; • Terskey Conservation Area (new): 21; • Merke Regional Nature Park (new): 18; • Saur-Manrak Conservation Area (new): 17; • Tarbagatay NP (new): 41 (130 %); • Floodplain and saxaul forests: • Charyn Canyon NP: 78;
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	Katon Karagay NP: 20 Markakol Reserve: 48 Zapadno-Altay Reserve: 77 Ketmen Reserve (proposed): 21 Terskey Reserve (proposed): 21 Merke Reserve (proposed): 18 Saur-Manrak Reserve (proposed): 17	Karatau NP Expansion: 25 Katon Karagay NP: 21 Markakol Reserve: 49 Zapadno-Altay Reserve: 78 Ketmen Reserve (proposed): 22 Terskey Reserve (proposed): 22 Merke Reserve (proposed): 19	Markakol Reserve: 64 Zapadno-Altay Reserve: 84 Ketmen Reserve (proposed): 45 Terskey Reserve (proposed): 45 Merke Reserve (proposed): 43 Saur-Manrak Reserve (proposed): 42 Tarbagatai NP (proposed): 43 Floodplain (tugai) and saxaul forest:	• Tarbagatay NP (new): 41 (130 %); • Floodplain and saxaul forests: • Charyn Canyon NP: 69; • Syr Darya-Turkestan Regional Nature Park: 74; • Ile-Balkhash State National Wildlife Sanctuary (new): 36 (140 %); • Ussek Wildlife Sanctuary (new, instead of National Reserve “Ili River Delta”): 16 The following project completed activities and achieved results are expected to have a positive impact on final METT scores of involved PAs: A) To enhance the effectiveness of forest management in protected areas, the project initiated and successfully completed the revision of the Management Plan structure. The process involved a collaborative effort with	• SyrDarya-Turkestan Regional Nature Park: 82; • Ile-Balkhash State National Wildlife Sanctuary (new):46; • Ussek Wildlife Sanctuary (new, instead of National Reserve “Ili River Delta”): 16 The following factors influenced the improvement of target PAs management effectiveness: - Advanced training courses, seminars and internships for senior managers and staff of pilot PAs; - Upgraded equipment capacity of the pilot PAs (vehicles, drones, office equipment, etc.); - introduction of new technologies in monitoring and protection processes (SMART system, camera traps, collars, GPS, thermal imagers, etc.);
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	Tarbagatai NP (proposed): 18 Floodplain (tugai) and saxaul forest: Charyn Canyon NP: 68 Syr Darya-Turkestan Reserve: 73 Ile-Balkhash Reserve (proposed): 15 Ile Floodplain Reserve (proposed): 16	Saur-Manrak Reserve (proposed): 18 Tarbagatai NP (proposed): 19 Floodplain (tugai) and saxaul forest: Charyn Canyon NP: 69 Syr Darya-Turkestan Reserve: 74 Ile-Balkhash Reserve (proposed): 16	Charyn Canyon NP: 78 Syr Darya-Turkestan Reserve: 81 Ile-Balkhash Reserve (proposed): 41 Ile Floodplain Reserve (proposed): 41	representatives from the Department of Forests and Protected Areas of the FWC, scientists, and protected area employees to update the methodology for developing management plans. The new planning mechanism adopts a goal-oriented and indicator-based approach. Work activities are planned effectively for both short and long-term periods by conducting comprehensive risk analysis and considering available resources, relevance, and urgency. Additionally, a new component for evaluating implementation effectiveness and using METT assessment at the beginning and end of the 5-year Management Plan has been introduced into the methodology. The updated structure and methodology of the Management Plan were officially approved by the order of the Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR). As per the Committee for Forestry and Wildlife's letter, all protected areas in the country have begun developing a	- Development of Biodiversity Monitoring Programs for pilot PAs; - Updating the structure of PA Management Plans and actively assisting in the development of new Management Plans for the pilot PAs; - Improved financial planning of activities and mobilization of additional funds; - Improving conditions for ecotourism development; - Establishment of coordination councils at PAs; - Involvement of stakeholders in planning and decision-making processes. During the reporting period, several training sessions were conducted to improve the skills of the staff of the pilot PAs. These sessions focused on topics such as the development of Management Plans, the use of SMART system and drones for ecosystem protection and monitoring.
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		Ile Floodplain Reserve (proposed): 17	Management Plan using the updated structure. The project is completing work on the development of a monitoring program for 14 pilot PAs, which will be submitted for consideration of the Scientific National Committee and included in the monitoring database. Based on the results of a comprehensive field scientific research in the project areas of Almaty and East Kazakhstan regions, an assessment of the biodiversity status of 5 newly established protected areas (PAs) has been completed. Furthermore, an analysis of the current state of biodiversity within the created territories was conducted. The created PAs Coordinating Councils have proven to be an effective tool for participatory management and continue to operate successfully. They regularly address and discuss various issues concerning the functioning of PAs,	Evidence 6-1. Programs and photographs of seminars and trainings
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				interaction with the local population, and the utilization of adjacent territories. Evidence 6-1. Rules for the development of management plans for protected areas, approved by order of the MENR RK Evidence 6-2. Letter from the Forestry and Wildlife Committee on the development of MPs by environmental institutions. B) In order to enhance the capacity of the pilot PAs staff, several training sessions were conducted. These sessions focused on topics such as the development of a Management Plan, utilizing the SMART system and drones for ecosystem protection and monitoring, and information and SMM. Improvement in the quality of living and working conditions directly influences the quality of services provided by PA employees and affects the turnover and attraction of highly qualified experts in this field. To create more comfortable working conditions for inspectors stationed in remote cordons, 22 wind-	
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			solar panels were installed in 13 pilot protected areas. This initiative significantly improved the living conditions for inspectors, especially those living with families and children, by providing them with access to electricity and means of communication for timely information transmission. In 2023, the salaries of employees in environmental institutions doubled, It is expected that this change will stop the issue of frequent staff turnover in the sector and enhance the overall quality of work within the protected areas, including in the pilot PAs. Evidence 6-3. Photos of installed wind-solar panels in pilot protected areas and forestries. C) To provide essential information support for spatial planning aimed at conserving ecosystems and biodiversity in Kazakhstan, an atlas of protected areas is currently being developed. This atlas comprises approximately 100 cartographic representations that contain general	
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			information about the locations of protected areas. Moreover, it includes crucial data regarding the natural value of these areas and their utilization for economic purposes. Evidence 6-4. Atlas of protected areas. D) To promote ecological tourism, virtual tours have been developed using modern information technologies along the tourist routes of 5 pilot protected areas: • West Altai Reserve; • Katon-Karagai National Park; • National Park "Kolsai-Kolderi"; • Tarbagatai National Park; • Sairam-Ugam National Park. Evidence 6-5. Report of completed works on virtual tours: • SNNP Kolsai: https://kolsai-koldery.kz/	
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				• West Altai SNR: http://www.zagpz.kz/ • Tarbagatay SNNP: https://tarbagatay-gnpp.kz/ru/ • Katon-Karagay SNNP: http://br.katonkaragai.kz/katonkaragay/ • Sairam-Ugam SNNP: http://www.sugnpp.kz/images/ugam/	
7. Level of achievement of Kazakhstan's forest PAs in securing their biodiversity and other associated values	No forest PAs in Kazakhstan have achieved "Green List" certification	Green List certification assessment process initiated	At least 1 forest PA has had a preliminary Green List assessment. Modified version of the target level according to MTE recommendations (2020): Submit a feasibility study to the government	In this reporting period, work has commenced on possible implementation of the new IUCN Green List certification tool in Kazakhstan. In particular, the project commissioned a comprehensive analysis to assess the applicability of this tool suitability in the country, its alignment with national legislative frameworks, and alignment with the priorities set by the FWC to enhance management effectiveness of protected areas. Upon completion of the analysis, a detailed report with recommendations for necessary institutional changes to existing government documents will be presented.	The work to achieve the target indicator is in progress. During the reporting period, the project continued efforts towards the possible introduction of the IUCN Green List certification tool in Kazakhstan. An analysis is currently being prepared to assess the applicability of this tool in the country, its consistency with the national legal framework, and its alignment with the priorities set by the FWC to improve the effectiveness of protected area management.

			and support the government to review and decide to proceed or not with the “Green List” standard	Ehis work is expected to be finalized by the end of 2023.	Upon completion of the analysis, a detailed report will be presented with recommendations on necessary institutional changes to the current Law on Protected Areas and other normative legal acts. The report will be submitted to the Forestry and Wildlife Committee in October 2024.
The progress of the objective/outcome can be described as:	On track				
Evidence uploaded:	YES				
Outcome 2					
Component 2. Better integration of forest PAs in wider landscape, including enabling environment for sustainable management of conservation-important ecosystems					
Outcome 2.1: Improved management of high conservation value forests and pastures in forest PA landscapes with direct community benefits					

Outcome 2.2: Strengthened enabling environment to support SFM objectives through updated national policies, regulations, and knowledge management systems supporting improved management of 12,652,400 ha of national forest territory					
Outcome 2.3: Integrated economic and environmental valuation of ecosystem services and SFM criteria and indicators embedded in decision making in natural resource management, through piloting of innovative sustainable economic development planning mechanisms					
Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Midterm target level	End of project target level	Level at Jun 30, 2023	Cumulative progress since project start as of Jun 30, 2024
8. Change in area of sustainably managed forest in forest ecosystems bordering protected areas	N/A	N/A (achievement of result not expected at mid-point)	>1,000,000 ha, as indicated by adoption of improved HCVF management practices in 6 targeted leskhozoes	The indicator has been achieved. Activities for identifying HCVF in the territory of 8 pilot forestry enterprises have been successfully completed, with 1,272,742 hectares of areas recognized as HCVF, accounting for 54% of the total area of pilot forestry enterprises. During the reporting period, various measures were taken to introduce improved HCVF management practices:	1,272,742 hectares The indicator has been achieved. As reported in the 2023 PIR, activities for identifying HCVF in the territory of 8 pilot forestry enterprises have been successfully completed, with 1,272,742 hectares recognized as HCVF. (a) Since 2020, a group of national experts, coordinated by an international expert, has been working on testing the HCVF approach in the forestry sector of Kazakhstan. The first

				(A) Field visits were conducted to selectively verify the identified HCVFs, identifying threats and risks for each site. A final list of HCVF sites with areal indicators was compiled, and maps were finalized. A practical guide on HCVF was completed and received approval from the Scientific and Technical Council of the Forestry and Wildlife Committee. Recommendations for HCVF management were developed for each leskhoz and are set to be integrated into planning documents (management plans, forest materials) during 2023-2024. Based on reported information above, forestry management plans (to be developed with project support) will contribute to the effective management of HCVF in forestries.	stage (2020-2022) of this work was the adaptation of the existing international concept and development of the HCVF Guidelines for Kazakhstan, taking into account the existing forest inventory and accounting system. The guidelines were issued in a printed publication and disseminated among all key partners. (b) The second stage (2022-2023) was the direct identification of HCVF on the territory of 8 pilot forestries with different forest types (saxaul, mountain, floodplain). As a result, HCVF were identified on the area of 1.2 million ha out of the total area of more than 2.3 million ha of forestries. Recommendations on their management and monitoring were developed for each of the forestries. (c) The third phase of work (2023) was dedicated to capacity building of both the implementing team itself and the staff of the pilot forestries on HCVF.
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				Illustrated HCVF guides were created for each forestry enterprise as training materials. Looking ahead to 2023-2024, a training module on identifying HCVFs is planned to be developed. The application of the HCVF approach in forestry will help preserve the high conservation status of forests and facilitate the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services. The identification, assessment and management of HCVF play a crucial role in the voluntary forest certification (FSC) standards, which holds promising prospects for development in Kazakhstan. Evidence 8-1. Guidelines for the identification, assessment and management of HCVF in the Republic of Kazakhstan Evidence 8–2. Recommendations for the management of HCVF on the example of the Narynkol forestry	(d) During the reporting period the project has developed a training module on HCVF designed to be integrated into university curricula for forestry specialists. The training module has been integrated and is now being used in Toraigyrov University. The HCVF approach enabled the consideration of conservation management and the monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystem services, which the existing forest inventory system does not address. (e) In addition, the developed HCVF management measures were integrated into the management plans of the pilot leskhozoes Ridder and Karadala. Evidence 8-1. HCVF Guidelines;
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				Evidence 8-3. Handbook on HCVF on the example of Zhongar forestry. B) Work was conducted to assess the resources of eight economically valuable species of medicinal plants within ten pilot forestries of the East Kazakhstan region and the Katon-Karagai National Park. An illustrated catalog of medicinal plants in the Kazakh Altai has been published as a result of this study. This initiative will enable forest authorities to regulate the rational management and usage of medicinal plants in the forest reserve at the local level. Evidence 8-4. Presentation on the results of the resource assessment of medicinal herbs on the territory of 10 forestry enterprises and the Katon-Karagai National Park.	Evidence 8-2. Textbook for colleges and universities; Evidence 8-3. Minutes of the meeting of the educational and medical council with a recommendation for the inclusion of a manual in the educational process and an approved syllabus with the inclusion of HCVF. Evidence 8-4. Management Plan of Ridder Forestry.
9. Reduction in degraded and deforested	11,305.60 ha Leskhoz: degraded	No net degradation	>5% improvement over baseline	The indicator is on track, progress towards the EoP target remains at the mid-term level. This means there has been no	Progress on the indicator has been achieved.

area in targeted forestry territories bordering protected areas	ha, deforested ha Bakanas: (no data for degraded area, lack of monitoring capacity), 7,104 ha Narynkol: 70.6 ha, 67 ha Uygur: 986.4 ha, 3.2 ha Zaysan: 786 ha, 1646 ha Zharkent: 453.4 ha, 189 ha Zhongar: No data, lack of monitoring capacity.	area beyond baseline		deviation or increase in the level of forest degradation from the baseline at the pilot sites. In the next reporting period, closer to project end , a comparative analysis of changes in the degraded areas will be conducted and final reduction results reported. During the reporting period, the following activities were implemented to contribute to the reduction of degraded forest and deforested areas: (A) The work to strengthen fire prevention measures within the territory of the pilot forestry enterprises continued. Notably, for the Karadalinsky forestry enterprise, 11 sets of firefighter combat clothing and 14 backpack forest fire extinguishers were provided. Evidence 9-1. Photographic evidence depicts the knapsack fire extinguishers and firefighter combat clothing.	From the baseline of 11,305.60 ha (for the period of 2016), the degraded forest area was reduced by 7,696.8 ha. At the time of the reporting period, according to reports from forest institutions and data from the forest fund, the total degraded area of the forest fund was 3,614.8 hectares. Bakanas: 459.3 ha Narynkol: 0 ha, 3 ha Karadala (Uygur): 0 ha, 13 ha Zaysan: 598.56 ha, 1716 ha Zharkent: 324.9 ha, 500.04 ha Zhongar: 0 Evidence 9-1. Calculation of degraded area and forestry data; Data on degraded forestry area.
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			B) On March 30, 2023, an environmental action was held in Almaty region dedicated to the International Day of Forests, wherein the ash of Sogdian was planted. The event, named "Plant Your Ash Tree," saw the successful planting of over 2,000 seedlings on the premises of the forest protection establishment "Karadala." Evidence 9-2 Photo visual materials for the action "Plant Ash Tree." C) The effort to create a sustainable foundation for afforestation within the pilot forestry enterprises is currently in progress. Notably, in the Mezhdurechensky forest nursery, 300,000 black saxaul seedlings were grown in 2022. Subsequently, these seedlings were planted on 200 hectares in the Koskuduk forestry enterprise, located in the Zhambyl region. Evidence 9-3 Photographic evidence documents the harvesting of saxaul seedlings to be transferred to the forestry.	An improvement of almost 70% compared to the base level, achieved as a result of the following joint activities of the project with forestry institutions: (A) Capacity building of pilot PAs to fight forest fires continued. The project purchased and transferred the following equipment to 8 pilot forestries and 1 PA of Zhetysu, Almaty and East Kazakhstan regions: 370 pcs. backpack forest fire extinguishers, 21 pcs. incendiaries, 19 pcs. motor pumps, 38 pcs. chainsaws. Evidence 9-2. Photo material. (B) Work on creating a sustainable basis for afforestation continued. Black saxaul seedlings, totaling 300 thousand, grown in Mezhdurechensk forest nursery were transferred and planted over 200
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				D) The forest nursery of the Zhongarsky forestry enterprise has been enclosed with a fence, serving to protect crops and plantings of forest cultures from livestock. This nursery specializes in the cultivation of coniferous and deciduous species. Visual evidence (Evidence 9-4) displays the nets and fences used for this purpose. E) Mechanization of the process of planting and sowing is particularly crucial for silvicultural work. An analysis of existing methods of growing saxaul in three pilot regions revealed that manual or home-made equipment was employed by forestry enterprises for sowing and planting, resulting in a time-consuming and inefficient process. Thanks to the Project support, a prototype saxaul seeder was developed, tested, and put into trial. Two seeders were purchased for the Karadalinsky and Zharkent forestry enterprises, facilitating the sowing of saxaul on an area of 3240 hectares during the fall of 2022. Furthermore, the	hectares in the fall of 2023 in Koskuduk and Moyinkum forestries of Zhambyl oblast. Evidence 9-3. Photo material of digging up seedlings at the forest nursery. (C) Assistance was provided to the Iliyskiy forest nursery (Zharkent forestry of Zhetysu province) and Medvedskiy forest nursery (Katon-Karagay SNPP of the East Kazakhstan oblast) to improve conditions for growing forest crops. This included purchasing and transferring 2 sets of drip irrigation systems, 2 motor pumps, 1 disk and 1 tooth harrow, and a water tank. These forest nurseries specialize in growing coniferous and deciduous species for planting greenery in settlements and afforestation of the State Forest Fund as part of the President's message to plant 2 billion trees. Evidence 9-4. Photo material of the equipment
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				Republican Forest Selection and Seed Center procured 20 seeders for sowing saxaul on the drained bottom of the Aral Sea within the framework of the state order. Evidence 9-5 A photo captures the seeders in action. F) Technical capacity of Kazlesproekt has been upgraded through the acquisition of 6 laptops, 10 tablets, an industrial drone equipped with an additional camera featuring a laser sensor, and the Terra Pro Overseas Permanent software. This institution plays a significant role in several areas, including development of measures aimed at ensuring rational forestry and hunting economy, reproduction of forest and hunting resources, and implementation of scientific and technical policies in forestry, hunting, and specially protected natural areas. Additionally, Kazlesproekt conducts important forest and hunting inventories and does mapping.	(D) To strengthen the technical capacity of 9 pilot forestry farms in Almaty, Zhetysu, East Kazakhstan and Zhambyl regions to carry out agroforestry works, 10 wheeled tractors MTZ-82.1 (2 units) and Belarus 920 (8 units) were purchased and handed over. Evidence 9-5. Photo material of equipment transfer The technical capacity of Kazakh Forest Inventory enterprise and Kazakh Research Institute of Forestry and Agromelioration has been upgraded through the acquisition of devices for diagnosing the internal condition of trees (IML Power Drill PD 500) and measuring annual rings of trees (IML Measuring Table). Training sessions on the use of these devices were conducted for 15 employees. These institutions play a significant role in the development of measures aimed at ensuring rational forestry and hunting economy, reproduction of forest and hunting resources, and implementation
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				Evidence 9-6: Photographs of equipment donated by Kazlesproekt. Evidence 9-6. equipment transfer acts To improve the technical capacity of the pilot PAs and forestries in the ecosystem and biodiversity monitoring, the project purchased the following equipment - laptops (19 pcs.), drones (4 pcs.), thermal imagers (9 pcs.), radio stations (202 pcs.), radio stations (202 pcs.) Evidence 9-7: equipment transfer acts	of scientific and technical policies in forestry, hunting, and specially protected natural areas. Additionally, they conduct important forest and hunting inventories and mapping.
10. Change in area of degradation in pasture and forest pasture landscapes	Total: 0 ha with reduced degradation out of 73,000	N/A (achievement of result not)	Total: 73,000 ha with reduced degradation	81,680 hectares of pastures have shown signs of reversed degradation, achieving 111% of the EoP target. This change in area of degradation has been reported in the 2022 PIR and remains unchanged.	81,681 ha of pastures with signs of reversed degradation. This indicator is fully achieved, 111% of the EoP target.

bordering protected areas	degraded ha of pastureland	expected at mid-point)		The pilot projects conducted between 2021-2022 have successfully encompassed 81,680 hectares of pastures under sustainable management. Among these, 16,945 hectares are near-village pastures, and 64,736 hectares are forest (distant) pastures. Here are the area-specific data of pilot plots: - Kaskasu (mountain pastures of the Western Tien Shan): village – 1463 ha, distant forest: 12,000 ha; - Koksaray (pasture ecosystems of flood-plain forest of the Syrdarya River): village – 8,320 ha, forest – 15,000 ha; - Belkaragai (pasture ecosystems of the Altai forests: village – 3,300 ha, forest – 11,000 ha; - Sumbe (pasture ecosystems of the flood-plain forests of the Charyn River): village – 3,862 ha, forest – 26,736 ha.	Pilot projects implemented in 2021-2022 covered 81,681 ha of pastures with sustainable management, including 16,945 ha of grasslands and 64,736 ha of forest (distant pastures). The area data by sites are as follows: - Kaskasu (mountain pastures of the Western Tien-Shan): grasslands - 1,463 ha, distant forest pastures: 12,000 ha; - Koksarai (pasture ecosystems of riparian forests of the Syrdarya River): countryside pastures - 8,320 ha, distant forest pastures - 15,000 ha; - Belkaragai (pasture ecosystems of Altai forests): countryside pastures - 3,300 ha, distant forest pastures - 11,000 ha; - Sumbe (pasture ecosystems of riparian forests of the Charyn River): countryside pastures - 3,862 ha, distant forest pastures- 26,736 ha.
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			The 2022 PIR report included a detailed list of activities carried out for sustainable pasture management. The results of the pilot projects are sustained in the reporting period, with continued efforts from the Public Pasture Councils. Moreover, the remote areas are effectively utilized for summer pastures. Additionally, a publication has been released, addressing the needs of a wide range of partners. The project intends to continue implementing measures to improve pasture management in other pilot sites. For the 2023-2024 period, the project plans to implement a pilot program for watering desert and semi-desert pastures in the floodplain and saxaul forests of the Balkhash region. This will be achieved through the establishment of watering places based on existing wells, utilizing renewable energy sources. In 2023, the scope of work has been defined, and the Terms of Reference (ToR)	The previous PIR report for 2022-2023 detailed sustainable pasture management activities. The results of the pilot projects are sustainable, Community Pasture Councils continue to operate, and allotments are used for summer pastures. A publication has been produced for a wide range of partners. In 2023-2024, the project developed shaft wells in two farms in the Balkhash district of the Almaty region by installing a pump, automatic control system, and solar panels. This new technology allowed to provide water for more than 500 heads of livestock, as farmers previously used gasoline generators. Using the same technology, three wells were re-constructed in the Ile-Balkhash State Nature Reserve to provide water for wild animals in desert conditions. Evidence 10-1. Act of inspection of works for 5 pilot wells
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				for experts and companies have been developed. Tender procedures have been initiated in accordance with the UNDP procurement rules. Evidence 10. Publication of the results of pasture pilot projects.	
11. Area outside PAs with enhanced conservation management (PA corridors and buffer zones identified in district integrated management plans)	N/A (no conservation measures planned in targeted districts)	N/A (achievement of result not expected at mid-point)	350,000 ha	This indicator has been fully achieved by bringing 648,160 ha (total area of potential ecologic corridors identified based on functional zoning) under enhanced conservation (185% of the EoP target), as reported in the 2022 PIR. The project achieved the indicator by implementing landscape planning activities in 7 districts of the Almaty region: Kegensky, Eskeldinsky Raiymbeksky, Panfilovsky, Uigursky, Enbshikazakhsky, Kerbulaksky. The work was carried out over a span of 2 years, from October 2020 to May 2022. A comprehensive account of implemented	This indicator has been fully achieved by bringing 648,160 ha (total area of potential ecologic corridors identified based on functional zoning) under enhanced conservation (185% of the EoP target), as reported in the 2022 PIR. The project achieved this indicator by implementing landscape planning activities in 7 districts of Almaty region: Kegensky, Yeskeldinsky Raiymbeksky, Panfilovsky, Uigursky, Enbshikazakhsky, Kerbulaksky. The work was carried out over two years, from October 2020 to May 2022. A detailed

				zoning activities can be found in the PIR report for 2022. Functional zoning schemes have been successfully agreed upon with the akimats of the pilot districts and further approved by the district maslikhats. Looking ahead to the 2023-2024 period, the Project aims to develop Guidelines for the development of Functional Zoning Schemes. In 2023, the scope of work has already been defined, and the Terms of Reference (ToR) for companies have been developed. Evidence 11. Decision of maslikhats of Uigur, Raiymbek and Panfilov districts on the approval of functional zoning schemes.	description of the implemented zoning activities is noted in the 2023 PIR. The functional zoning schemes have been agreed with the akimats of the pilot districts and approved by the district maslikhats. The approved Functional Zoning Schemes are the basis for planning and management of land resources at the level of each rural district taking into account the landscape approach. The Project intends to replicate the experience, approaches and knowledge on landscape planning in other UNDP projects on biodiversity conservation. For scaling up and for widespread application of landscape planning at the national level, the Project has developed ToR for: - elaboration and amendment of environmental and land legislation to expand land zoning regulation;
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					- integration of landscape planning approach in the national strategic document on biodiversity conservation; - elaboration of methodological recommendations for the development of functional zoning schemes based on international experience, i.e. guidelines for land relations departments on how to organize and carry out zoning works. This will help in ensuring the sustainability of the project results, developing a methodological framework and incorporating landscape planning approaches into legislation and strategic planning for biodiversity conservation. Evidence 11-1. ToR for the development of Methodological Recommendations on Functional Zoning Evidence 11-2. Resolutions of Maslikhats on approval of Zoning Schemes
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12. Number of good practice models for private afforestation established in Kazakhstan	N/A (no models yet established by project)	Afforestation initiated in four pilot models with identified key partners	Two functional and replicable models demonstrated as feasible to meet key gaps in private afforestation regulatory framework: One private-sector based, and one community-based. Modified version of the target level according to MTE recommendations (2020): Model projects of private forest plantations are	Indicator is in progress and on track. To achieve this indicator, the Project now focuses on the development of Model Business Projects for the creation of private forest plantations for pilot areas. During the reporting period: Four (4) model projects for the creation of private forest plantations for the Eastern region of the country were developed: 1) creation of a birch plantation for growing commercial timber; 2) creation of a spruce plantation for growing commercial timber; 3) creation of a willow plantation for growing wood for energy purposes	This indicator has been achieved. To meet this indicator, the project has finalized the development of model private forest plantation projects for the Southern region: 1) Pyramidal Poplar plantation project for business timber production; 2) Project for establishing a forest plantation from Pavlovnia felota for business timber production; 3) Walnut plantation project for fruit (nut) production. Evidence 12-1. Final report of the expert including 3 model forest plantation projects. In May 2024, the project organized a round table with experts, business and government representatives to discuss the current

			developed taking into account natural and climatic conditions and results/lessons learned from implemented pilots.	4) creation of a poplar plantation for growing commercial timber. Three (3) draft model projects for the Southern region were developed and are under discussion with the stakeholders: 1) creation of a plantation of pyramidal poplar for growing business timber; 2) creation of a plantation of paulownia felt for planting material for landscaping; 3) creation of a plantation of New Year coniferous trees (blue spruce). Evidence 12. The final report of the expert including 4 standard projects for the creation of forest plantations.	situation in the development of private afforestation in Kazakhstan, identify problematic aspects, and develop measures to address them. Developed model projects for creating private forest plantations were also presented at the round table. Evidence 12-2. Program, list, photos of the Round Table.
13. Degree to which policy and regulatory context for managing	No methodology for considering full cost-	One TSA initiated	At least one regulation adopted at provincial or national level	Indicator is in progress and on track. (A) The project, throughout its entire implementation period, had one pilot	The indicator is in progress and on track.

natural resources incorporates ecosystem services	benefit of ecosystem services incorporated in natural resource management policy and regulatory framework		that recognizes and incorporates TSA methodology	project dedicated to assessing the national forestry system using the TSA (Total System of Assessment) methodology. The outcomes of this assessment were widely disseminated to numerous stakeholders, ranging from the FWC to the deputies of the Mazhilis of the Parliament. During the reporting period, the project team followed recommendations of engaged TSA adviser, Marlon Flores, and conducted consultations with national partners. As a result, an agreement was reached on integrating ecosystem services, in accordance with the TSA methodology, into policy level document (such as the Green Economy Concept and NBSAP) or the regulatory framework governing natural resource management. Simultaneously, the project plans to undertake efforts in publishing TSA Recommendations adapted specifically for Kazakhstan. These recommendations will serve as valuable educational material for training environmental economists.	During the reporting period, the project has worked towards achieving this indicator. To introduce the TSA approach into long-term development planning in Kazakhstan, guidelines on the use of target scenario analysis tools at the provincial/local level are being developed and integrated into natural resource management planning and sustainable sector development policies. Also, to practically apply the TSA approach, efforts are underway to strengthen the national capacity to conduct economic and environmental assessments by developing a training module covering the 5-step approach of the methodology and testing it through training sessions. To meet the indicator, the project team will focus on incorporating the TSA methodology approach into the biodiversity conservation concept currently under development by the
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				(B) In addition to its primary focus, the project also prioritized the testing of various financial mechanisms to support forest conservation. Among these mechanisms, payments for ecosystem services (PES) gained significant attention. In 2022, the project successfully identified ecosystem services in the Karadaly and Ridder forestries, and subsequently developed two potential PES schemes for implementation. Moreover, guidelines for effective implementation of the PES mechanism have been prepared, based on the experience of the aforementioned forestry enterprises. Evidence 13. Final report on PES schemes.	MENR RK, with a draft expected by October 2024. International and national consultants have been hired by the project to carry out this work. Evidence 13-1. Copies of contracts and ToR.
The progress of the objective/outcome can be described as:	Progress not set				

Evidence uploaded:	NO				
Outcome 3					
Component 3. International cooperation and knowledge management					
Outcome 3.1 Increased capacities of Kazakhstan to monitor its wildlife, ensure law enforcement and share knowledge.					
Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Midterm target level	End of project target level	Level at Jun 30, 2023	Cumulative progress since project start as of Jun 30, 2024
14. Quality and coverage (75% of habitat) of snow leopard monitoring data in Kazakhstan as indicated by estimated accuracy and timeliness of national snow leopard	Latest population estimate 15 years prior (2001) with a 91% confidence level (lowest possible estimated population / highest possible estimated population,	Updated snow leopard population estimate for 2019	Publishing of annual population estimates with a 95% or greater confidence level	The target has been successfully achieved. The project has played a crucial role in obtaining reliable data on the snow leopard population in Kazakhstan in the reporting period. In 2023, the snow leopard population data was updated based on extensive field and cameral work. Scientific expeditions revealed that the number of snow leopards has increased to a range of 141-183 individuals since 2022. The data's reliability, with a confidence level of 95%, is supported by information obtained from camera traps and scientific research conducted in the Altai, Zhetysu	The target has been successfully achieved. The Project has played a crucial role in establishing an annual reporting system on the snow leopard population in Kazakhstan. Since the start of the Project, National reports on the status of the snow leopard have been prepared annually from 2019 to 2023. These national reports form a basis for essential monitoring information on the

population estimate	i.e. 100/110 = 91%)			Alatau, Northern and Western Tien Shan mountains. Evidence 14-1. Annual National Snow Leopard Population Assessment Report (2022) Moving forward, the project continues integrating the SMART system into the operations of protected areas in Kazakhstan and forestry institutions. Building on the progress made with the first eight PAs, two more protected areas, the national parks "Altyn-Emel" and Charyn, have been included in the system. To facilitate this process, electronic forms of patrols and maps of inspectors' routes have been downloaded on 45 smartphones, which were purchased with Project support. Furthermore, an annual national report on the snow leopard has been prepared to document the current state of efforts	population both at national and international levels. The 2023 data on the number of snow leopard in Kazakhstan indicate a population of 152-189 individuals. This represents a 26% increase from 2019 when the leopard population was roughly estimated at 130-150 individuals. The data's reliability at a 95% confidence level is supported by information gathered from camera traps and scientific studies conducted in the Altai Mountains, Zhetysu Alatau, Northern and Western Tien Shan. Evidence 14-1: Annual National Snow Leopard Population Assessment Report (2023)
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				related to the conservation of this magnificent species. Evidence 14-2. Seminar program, photos of SMRT Patrol and GIS trainings. Evidence 14-1. Annual National Snow Leopard Population Assessment Report (2022) For 2022, the number of snow leopard is as follows: - Western Tien-Shan: 17-23 individuals; - Northern Tien-Shan: 60-74 individuals; - Zhetysu Alatau: 60-77 individuals; - Altay: 3-6 individuals; - Saur-Tarbagatai: 1-3 individuals; The project continued its efforts in satellite tagging of snow leopards. As part of this initiative, telemetry collars (6 units) were purchased from Vectronic Aerospace (Germany). The VERTEX Lite Collar model	For 2023, the number of snow leopards is as follows: -Western Tien-Shan: 17-23 individuals; -Northern Tien Shan: 60-74 individuals; -Zhetysu Alatau: 71-83 individuals; -Altai: 3-6 individuals; -Saur-Tarbagatai: 1-3 individuals. The Project actively continued its work on satellite tagging of snow leopards. Since 2021, the Project has successfully implemented a telemetry system for snow leopards in Kazakhstan. The Project organized the delivery of special capture equipment , navigation equipment, and training, allowing Kazakhstani scientists to gain extensive experience in the successful capture of snow leopards and the installation of telemetry collars. Since the beginning of the project, 11 satellite telemetry collars have been installed on snow
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				was selected for this purpose, along with all the necessary preparations for safe immobilizing of animals during the tagging process.	leopards in the mountains of the Northern and Central Tien Shan. The obtained telemetry data revealed the movement paths of snow leopards, both within Kazakhstan and across its border. For example, there is a reliable migration path of snow leopards to China and Kyrgyzstan, recorded on migration maps. In February 2024, the project showcased all achieved results on snow leopard conservation to the management and representatives of the Global Environment Facility in PAs. During this reporting period, progress on implementation of this indicator is as follows: (1) In February 2024, the project participated in an international conference on snow leopard conservation organized by GSLEP in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, within the framework of CMS 2024.
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					During this event, the project, as part of the Kazakh delegation led by the Vice-Minister of Ecology of Kazakhstan, presented a report on the work carried out on the study and sustainable conservation of the snow leopard,. This event enhanced the visibility of the project's results at the international level. (2) The project continued to monitor the successful SMART patrolling activities in protected areas and forestries for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development of PAs.
15. Level of international cooperation and coordination with Kazakhstan border countries regarding illegal wildlife	No formal international agreement between Kazakhstan and neighboring countries related to snow	At least one regional meeting held related to cooperation and coordination for snow leopard	International agreement between Kazakhstan and at least one bordering country under implementation regarding at least one of	Indicator is on track and progressing as planned. (A) In the fall of 2022, the project participated in the international conference on snow leopard conservation organized by GSLP in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. During this event, the project provided support to the Kazakh delegation led by the Vice Minister of Ecology. The Project	The indicator is on track and progressing as planned. In Spring 2024, the Project team held discussions with representatives of the Department of Biodiversity and Protected Areas of the Ministry of Ecology and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic and representatives of Chon-Kemin State

trade, biodiversity management in borderland protected areas, and snow leopard monitoring	leopard conservation	conservation	the below issues: - Cooperation on law enforcement at border points regarding illegal wildlife trade - Illegal hunting by border guards - Data sharing on snow leopard monitoring	and the Committee on Forestry and Wildlife raised the important issue of signing the Intergovernmental Agreement on the snow leopard. However, due to structural changes in the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, including a change of the Minister and Vice Minister, the draft Intergovernmental Memorandum on the Conservation of the Snow Leopard had to be re-submitted for approval at the ministry level and is being reviewed now. https://www.undp.org/kyrgyzstan/press-releases/kyrgyzstan-hosted-steering-committee-meeting-global-snow-leopard-and-ecosystem-protection-program To fully meet envisaged indicators under Outcome 3, the Project will work on finalizing the MoU which has to be approved by various ministries from 4 Central Asian countries on trans-boundary cooperation and obtain an endorsement for its implementation plan.	Nature Park (Kyrgyzstan), and representatives of three PAs in Kazakhstan. Currently, the Project is coordinating the signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the State National Nature Parks "Ile-Alatau", "Kolsai Kolderi", Almaty State Nature Reserve of the Committee of Forestry and Wildlife of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the State Nature Park "Chon-Kemin" of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic on the conservation of globally significant species - snow leopard and its habitats. This Memorandum will enable the above-mentioned protected areas to coordinate joint actions and share experiences in studying the species, improving the protection and monitoring of the snow leopard, and maintaining the population in a stable state.
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				(B) The project is actively collaborating with government agencies to combat illegal wildlife trade. To this end, the Identification Guide for animals included in the CITES list is being updated after conducting offline meetings with a representative of the CITES convention in Astana. This guide will serve as a valuable resource for all interested parties. Regarding illegal hunting, the project is currently implementing SMART patrolling in protected areas and forestry enterprises to address this issue.	The GSLEP program is facilitating the discussion. The project has developed a draft Memorandum with the interested parties and sent it to the signatories for agreement. It is expected that the Memorandum will be signed in October 2024. Evidence 15-1. Draft Memorandum Evidence 15-2. Letter to Forestry and Wildlife Committee. Evidence 15-3. Letter to GSLEP.
The progress of the objective/outcome can be described as:	On track				
Evidence uploaded:	YES				
Outcome 4					

Cross-cutting: Gender mainstreaming during implementation					
Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Midterm target level	End of project target level	Level at Jun 30, 2023	Cumulative progress since project start as of Jun 30, 2024
16. Consistency of project gender mainstreaming approach with project plans	N/A – Project not under implementation; project design includes multiple elements designed to mainstream gender	Project gender mainstreaming action plan completed by end of 1st year of project implementation	Gender mainstreaming carried out during project implementation, as indicated by: a. Project Board and local stakeholder working groups have gender balance and/or include a gender expert; b. Policies, laws, and regulations developed	Indicator is in progress and on track. The project continues to actively promote gender issues in the project areas. (A) While developing the project's annual work plan, a gender perspective and guidelines are taken into account across the activities. The AWP is also reviewed and agreed upon with the country office gender specialist. The project applies gender mainstreaming wherever possible. The composition of the Project Board and the observers maintains a gender balance. The coordination councils under the pilot PAs sustainably work and ensure that women constitute 30 % of their composition. It enables transparent and inclusive decision-making on environmental issues.	The indicator is in progress and on track. The project continues to actively promote gender issues in the project areas. (A) While developing the project's annual work plan (AWP), a gender perspective is taken into account across the activities. The AWP is also reviewed and agreed upon with the country office gender specialist. The project applies gender mainstreaming wherever possible. The composition of the Project Board and the observers maintains a gender balance. The coordination councils under the pilot PAs ensure that women constitute 30% of their composition, enabling transparent and inclusive decision-making on environmental issues.

			with project support include gender perspectives, as relevant c. Project events and activities (e.g. trainings) promote gender balance among invited participants, as feasible d. Project education and awareness activities are developed and carried out incorporating gender perspectives, as relevant	(B) During the reporting period, the focus was on the improvement of living conditions for women and their families residing in remote cordons and sites within protected areas and forestry enterprises. State inspectors live in these cordons year-round, with their families , and often the inspectors' spouses also work in protected areas. Unfortunately, due to the shortage of electricity, the inspectors and their families had to endure days without access to electricity and lighting. To address this critical issue, modern wind-solar power systems were installed in 13 pilot protected areas and 5 forestries at remote cordons in the beginning of 2023. In total, the project installed 28 sets of wind-solar systems with a capacity of 2 kW each.	(B) A gender impact assessment of the project outcomes is currently in progress, which will lead to the development of recommendations aimed at improving policies to better support women and vulnerable populations working or living near protected areas. The recommendations will be incorporated into the National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. (C) During the reporting period, the focus was on building capacity of women entrepreneurs engaged in ecotourism activities in Almaty, East Kazakhstan oblasts and Shymkent city. A series of trainings on financial planning and marketing were organized, increasing participants' capacity and knowledge in these areas. During the training, the UNDP CO's Gender specialist also conducted an on-line session on gender equality to raise awareness of gender equality, existing biases, and gender stereotypes. Overall, 76 entrepreneurs were trained, including 58 women working in the tourism sector. The
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			The installation of these power systems has significantly improved the living conditions of 20 women and girls who reside with their families and work in protected areas. They now have round-the-clock access to electricity and lighting, enabling them to use televisions and most importantly, have a stable radio connection. Additionally, the wind-solar system allows for a continuous energy supply, regardless of weather conditions. Evidence 16-1. Photos of installed renewable energy sources at cordons. Evidence 16-2. Article on UNDP Kazakhstan website. https://www.undp.org/kazakhstan/stories/renewable-energy-and-biodiversity-conservation-kazakhstan During the training on Management Plans for pilot protected areas and Nature Reserves in March, 2023, the project involved a gender specialist who familiarized the participants on applying gender approach and using gender	activity increased the skills of local women on ways of generating income from ecotourism activities and improving the competitiveness of their tourism products and services. Evidence 16-1. Agenda (D) The project continues to focus on enhancing the capacity of women from various target groups, including those in protected areas, forestries, teachers, and more. Throughout the reporting period, 109 women underwent training to enhance their knowledge in various fields, including protected area management, sustainable forest management, ecotourism, eco-education, and monitoring.
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				analysis when designing and implementing management plans. (C) 7 rural women from pilot territories received preferential loans with a low interest rate (6%) from the project-supported Eco-Damu Lending Program for the implementation of their business projects, such as guest houses, beekeeping, and sewing workshops. (D) The project continues to focus on enhancing the capacity of women from various target groups, including those in protected areas, forestries, teachers, and more. Throughout the reporting period, 164 women underwent training to enhance their knowledge in various fields, including protected area management, forestry, SMM (Social Media Management), ecotourism, eco-education, and monitoring.	
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The progress of the objective/outcome can be described as:	On track				
Evidence uploaded:	YES				