



UNDP/GEF Project
"Conservation and sustainable management of land resources and ecosystems of high natural value in the Aral Sea Basin for multiple benefits"



Minutes of the first Project Board

Date: 12 April, 2023

Place: UN Conference Hall (room 106)

Time: 09:15 – 13:00

The purpose of the Project Board meeting is to present the Annual Work Plan for 2023 and discuss the overall strategy of the project, as well as, if necessary, take corrective actions necessary to ensure that the project achieves the desired results

Mr. Rovshen Nurmehammedov, Head of the UNDP Program Department in Turkmenistan opened the Project Board and welcomed the participants.

Mr. Mergen Yusupov, Deputy Head of the Department for Coordination of International Environmental Cooperation and Projects of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan greeted the participants with a wish for success and a call for cooperation.

Ms. Gozel Atamuradova, The UNDP project manager briefed the council members on the goals and objectives of the workshop, and introduced the participants. Further, she made a presentation of the Annual Work Plan for 2023 and the overall strategy of the project "Conservation and sustainable management of land resources and ecosystems of high natural value in the Aral Sea Basin for multiple benefits".

Also, the Project Manager acquainted the participants of the meeting with the main activities planned under Component 2, according to which the project actively cooperates with the reserves of the Lebap and Dashoguz regions.

The presentation was followed by a discussion in which the following questions were asked:

Question from a representative of the Parliament: were there any negotiations with hyakimliks regarding the allotment of land plots for the implementation of project activities?

Manager's response: Yes, there have been negotiations. At the very beginning of the project implementation, official meetings were organized with the velayat hyakimliks with the support of the main partner the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection. Further, meetings were organized at the level of etrap hyakimliks, and active work is currently underway with the local community.

Proposal from the representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan: The Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection is also ready to provide support in this matter, if necessary.

Question from a representative of the Lebap velayat: Are all selected areas for the purpose of reforestation a forestry sites?

Manager's response: Basically, in the Lebap velayat, within the framework of cooperation with the Forestry, reforestation work is planned both along the Amudarya River in order to restore tugai forests, and along irrigated fields - in order to create forest protection belts.

This was followed by a proposal from the NPC, a representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan, according to which the importance of reforestation activities was emphasized. For the successful implementation of plans in this area, it was proposed to establish cooperation with the Korean Forest Service, with which the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection has a memorandum of cooperation, in the form of organizing visits, trainings, attracting their experts, exchanging experience, etc. It is also possible to develop cooperation with the Asian Pacific Forest Cooperation, of which Turkmenistan is a member.

Question from a representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan: According to the presented plan, active cooperation with public organizations is planned. What joint activities are specifically planned to be done within the framework of this project?

Manager's response: within the framework of cooperation with NGOs, activities are mainly aimed at raising awareness among civil society on environmental issues, biodiversity conservation, drought and desertification, including the participation of NGO specialists in project trainings as facilitators. It is also planned to attract NGOs to conduct various contests, competitions and environmental events. Participation of NGOs in grant programs is also welcome.

This explanation was followed by a proposal from the representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan (NPC) invite SDG Young Ambassadors to project events and trainings, as they are very active and interested representatives of the youth of our country.

Manager's response: within the framework of the project, a number of activities within the framework of the SDGs are envisaged in cooperation with the UN office and with the Young Ambassadors of the SDGs, which is included in the annual plan.

Also, a proposal was received from the representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan (NPC) hold round tables with representatives of state organizations and with local authorities in a narrower format to identify their needs and priorities. In this case, the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection is ready to assist.

Next, the National Project Coordinator (NPC) asked a question regarding the grant program: does the project plan to launch a grant program this year?

Manager's response: The development and discussion of the Grant Program is envisaged for the next project council, since this year the program will not be implemented.

Also, regarding the grant program, a question was received from a representative of the Society of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan: Grants for communities only or for NGOs too?

Manager's response: The grant program is designed for both NGOs, the private sector and project beneficiaries. For this, a general concept will be developed, which includes the main criteria, according to which the program will be implemented in the future.

Further, the program of the meeting was continued by the Project Analyst on the Water Resources, Mr. Gurbanmurat Ovezmyradov, who made a presentation on the topic “Strategy for the implementation of Component 1 of the project “Promoting Land Degradation Neutrality””. The project analyst noted that the main work for this year will be to identify needs and conduct an assessment in order to identify threats, conditions, actions and responses in order to adapt to climate change: reduction of water resources.

As a result of the presentation, a question was received from the representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan, regarding limiting water resources in the Darganata etrap: was there irrigation water before on the current degraded lands in Darganata?

Water Resources Analyst's response: Yes, once there was and the main water intake came from the Amudarya by raising water by 700 meters or more with pipes with a diameter of 600 mm. But at present, over the years of operation, the pipes have leaked, the pumps require major repairs, and in general, the entire irrigation network has become unusable, as a result of which there is a shortage of water resources in this etrap for irrigation.

Further, a proposal was received from the representative of the Society for Nature Protection of Turkmenistan, which emphasized the importance of training local qualified specialists in SLM, and therefore it is more rational to direct the funds allocated for attracting international experts to education and training at the local level.

This proposal was commented by the NPC, noting the relevance of the proposal. It was also brought to the attention of the participants that within the framework of the project it is planned to create a resource center on the basis of the Kaplankyr reserve in Dashoguz, within which it will be possible to train specialists from related organizations. Perhaps in the future, the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection will be able to certify specialists.

Further, according to the program Mr. Akmurad Yazhanov, The Project Analyst on Land Resources continued the meeting with the presentation “Strategy for Implementation of Component 1 of the Project

“Promoting Land Degradation Neutrality””. The project analyst briefly described the main project areas in 4 key etraps, describing the selection criteria and planned activities for each. In terms of activities for the rational use of pasture resources, given the limited funds, it was proposed to create one demonstration site in each velayat, which will allow for more comprehensive work, covering larger areas to demonstrate the effectiveness of the work being done. It was also noted that from the experience of past projects, it is not advisable to build wells at random, in connection with which the project turned to representatives of local khyakimliks to assist in providing reliable information based on a hydrogeological study indicating the locations of water suitable for watering livestock.

As a result of the presentation, a proposal was received from the representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan with a recommendation for the project, in part, to establish close cooperation with the State Committee for Water Management to determine their priorities and long-term tasks in which the project can contribute, as well as to hold regular meetings with representatives of the land service resources of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection for discussing planned activities.

Question from a representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan: The Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection is ready to assist in obtaining maps with information about wells in pasture areas. A question was also asked regarding the possibilities of the project in the construction of new wells.

Answer of the SCWR representative: In Lebap, the situation with the availability of groundwater suitable for watering livestock is better than in the Dashoguz region, where groundwater is highly saline.

Further, a question was asked from a representative of the Center for Technology of the Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan: Strong salinity is how much?

Manager's response: according to the monitoring within the framework of the last project, in the Dashoguz velayat, mineralization varies from 8-14 grams per 1 liter and above.

Further from the representative of the Center of Technology of the Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan was made a comment about the readiness to cooperate in terms of providing various services for SLM: soil analysis, production of filters for water purification, water analysis, testing of various energy efficient technologies, etc. It was also proposed to organize a round table for a more detailed discussion.

Manager's response: The project is ready to cooperate with all interested parties and will schedule a meeting for the second half of the year, taking into account the need to coordinate such meetings. It was also noted that today the project has a number of plans for joint cooperation with NGOs and related international initiatives.

Further, continuing the meeting, Mr. Batyr Mammadov, The Project Analyst on Knowledge Management made a presentation on the topic “Strategy for the implementation of Component 3 of the project “Development of cooperation in the Aral Sea basin region and exchange of knowledge on the international platform”. The analyst briefly described the main tasks of the component, which is aimed at expanding the cooperation of the project with partners, strengthening the activities and participation of IFAS at the regional level, as well as creating a platform for knowledge sharing and activities aimed at raising awareness and capacity of various focus groups.

Following the presentation, a question was asked by a representative of the University of Agricultur named after S. Turkmenbashi: What opportunities does the project provide in order to use the existing developments made within the framework of this project to introduce them into the curriculum to increase the capacity of both teachers and students?

Manager's response: The project has developments with which it is ready to share, and it is also planned to print and widely disseminate experience in all areas within the framework of the established resource centers on the basis of which it is planned to create a database of all the developments of UNDP projects, as well as disseminate experience within the framework of various educational events by printing, making films, broadcasting, etc.

Question was asked by a representative of the University of Agricultur named after S. Turkmenbashi: are there any grant projects on your topic for teaching students and teachers abroad?

Knowledge Management Analyst's response: this area does not envisage such activities, but the project will contribute to the dissemination of available information about existing study abroad programs.

The next session was devoted to discussing the existing risks that the project may face in the course of its implementation. This presentation was made by Gozel Atamuradova, "Project Risk Management and Discussion of Mitigation Strategy". During the presentation, new identified risks of the project were presented regarding the reorganization of daikhan associations, the adoption of by-laws, a land plot for tugai, possible changes in prices and inflation, as well as a new GEF mechanism related to the implementation of partial project activities by the National Responsible Party and the transition of UNDP to work on the new Quantum+ platform. In addition to the risks identified at the project development stage, the project team at the project introduction stage identified 5 new important risks, the consideration and timely response to which will positively affect the successful implementation of the project as a whole. All participants unanimously agreed on the importance of identifying these risks, and mitigation measures were edited in joint discussion. At the same time, Risk 13 (Small-scale agro-meliorative land works of the project may pose a safety hazard to community members) was recognized by the members of the Project Board as insignificant and weak due to the fact that the activities planned under the project are carried out along second-order canals and on a small scale. For these works, technical engineers who are familiar with the safety regulations when carrying out the relevant work will be involved; Risk 14 (Demonstration activities carried out by the project may be unintentionally implemented in/near important sites of cultural and historical significance) was considered by the members of the Project Board as insignificant and weak due to the fact that no historical objects were found in the selected pilot sites. The entire cultural heritage of the Dashoguz and Lebab velayats is a place of pilgrimage for the population and is well known to everyone. Target communities will be alerted and appropriate action will be taken if artifacts or objects of cultural heritage are found.

Accepting subsequent reporting requirements, the project team proposed to group the risks into blocks that have a certain focus. As a result, the following groups of risks were identified: risks related to human rights; the risks posed by the pandemic; risks affecting the environment; social risks; political risks; as well as a group of strategic and financial risks.

Based on the results of the presentations and discussions, the participants proceeded to the preparation of the adopted decisions and their signing/acceptance by the participants. It took into account and included all the issues and positions of the parties that were discussed (took place) during the meeting of the Project Board.

Mr. Mergen Yusupov, thanked all those present for their active participation and suggested proceeding to the signing of the Decisions Protocol.



DRAFT DECISIONS

1st meeting of the Steering Committee of the project "Conservation and sustainable management of land resources and ecosystems of high natural value in the Aral Sea Basin for multiple benefits"

12.04.2023


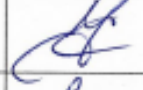




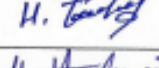
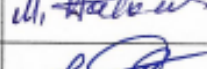

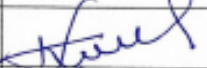

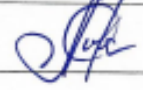


c. Ashgabat



- 1) The project activities completed for the first half of the year (11/10/2022 - 04/12/2023) and proposed activities for 2023 were heard and approved by the members of the Project Board.
- 2) To take note that since 2023, a new Quantum system has been introduced in UNDP operational planning and its adaptation to the project workflow had consequences for the timing of the conclusion of contracts and the implementation of activities (purchases).
- 3) Regarding resource centers:
 - Instruct the project to consider the possibility of opening a resource center in Dashoguz to support project activities and provide advisory services, taking into account the fact that the Dashoguz velayat occupies the main territory in the Turkmen part of the Aral Sea region and the Dashoguz branch of EC IFAS is located here;
 - Instruct the project to consider the possibility of opening a training center in Turkmenabat to support project activities and provide advisory services, including on working with banks and microcredit.
- 4) In order to optimize the costs of the project, it is recommended to equip one demonstration pasture plot in each velayat, while ensuring that the experience is documented and scaled up with the involvement of resource and training centers. In agreement with local authorities, consider the construction of new wells in pasture areas, subject to the provision of up-to-date information on underground water sources.
- 5) Ensure that, when the project transfers equipment and machinery, all further operating costs are covered by the beneficiary (recipient), as well as compliance with its safety and careful operation in accordance with technical requirements.
- 6) Approve the Action Plan for work with structural divisions of IFAS in Turkmenistan.
- 7) Hold the next meeting of the Project Board in November 2023 to summarize the work for 2023 and discuss plans for the next half year.

- 8) Recommend that the project take into account the newly identified risks and agree on possible actions to eliminate and mitigate them, and take note of risk definitions 15 and 16 as “insignificant” / “weak”. At the same time, it is recommended to take them into account in the further implementation of project activities.

Signatures:

Подписи:

№	Gurama/Edara	Familiýasy, ady Işleýän wezipesi	Goly
1	Türkmenistanyň Oba hojalyk we daşky gurşawy goramak ministrligi	Ýusupow Mergen, Halkara ekologiýa hyzmatdaşlygyny we taslamalary utgaşdyrmak müdirliginiň başlygynyň orunbasary	
2	Türkmenistanyň Suw hojalygy baradaky döwlet komiteti	Nurgeldiýew Tirkış, Suw ulanyş bölüminiň başlygy	
3		Gurbannyýazow Aşyr, Suw ulanyş bölüminiň baş hünärmeni	
4	Türkmenistanyň Ykdysadyýet we maliýe ministrligi	Annagulyýew Tirkış, Ykdysadyýetiň pudaklarynyň ösüşi we maliýesi müdirliginiň Agrosenagat toplumynyň maliýesini seljeriş bölüminiň baş hünärmeni	
5	Türkmenistanyň Statistika baradaky döwlet komiteti	Çaryýewa Enejan, Oba hojalygynyň statistikasi we seljerişi müdirliginiň Oba hojalygynyň statistikasi bölüminiň esasy hünärmeni	
6		Nepesowa Gülşirin, Durmyş statistikasi müdirliginiň Ýaşayyş infrastrukturasyň statistikasi bölüminiň esasy hünärmeni	
7	Türkmenistanyň Mejlisi	Babakulow Merdan	
8	Daşoguz weýat häkimligi	Babayew Serdar, Oba hojalyk önümlerini ondürmek we gaýtadan işlemek bölüminiň baş hünärmeni	
9	Lebap weýat häkimligi	Baltaýew Nyzam, Oba hojalygynda özgertmeler we täze tehnologiýalary ornaşdyrmak bölüminiň müdiri	
10	Ruhubelent etrap häkimligi	Halow Muhammet, Oba hojalygynda özgertmeler we täze tehnologiýalary ornaşdyrmak bölüminiň müdiri	
11	S. Türkmenbaşy ad. etrap häkimligi	Jumamuradow Döwletmyrad, Oba hojalyk önümlerini ondürmek we gaýtadan işlemek bölüminiň baş hünärmeni	
12	Darganata etrap häkimligi	Atajanow Döwlet, Ykdysadyýet we sarp ediş toplumu bölüminiň baş hünärmeni	
13	Dänew etrap häkimligi	Narkulyýewa Sabina, Ykdysadyýet we sarp ediş toplumu bölüminiň esasy hünärmeni	
14	“Halkbank” Paýdarlar täjirçilik banky	Orazsähadow Mergen, Karzlaşdyryş müdirliginiň başlygynyň orunbasary, Karzlaşdyryş bölüminiň başlygy	
15	“Daýhanbank” Döwlet täjirçilik banky	Dädekow Tahyr, Gurluşygy meýilleşdiriş we inžener-tehniki gözegçilik bölüminiň başlygy <i>Döwlet Myradow</i>	
16	Türkmenistanyň Ylymlar akademyýasynyň Tehnologiýa merkezi	Rozyýew Serdar, Geografiki maglumat ulgamlary barlaghanasynyň müdiri <i>Gurbannyýazow Aşyr</i> <i>К.Т.Н. зав. каб. «Экология»</i>	
17	Araly halas etmegiň Halkara gaznsynyň Ýerine ýeteriji komitetiniň Daşoguz şahamçasy	Rejepow Batyr, Direktoryň orunbasary	

18	Araly halas etmegiň Halkara gaznsynyň Ýerine ýeteriji komitetiniň Daşoguz şahamçasynyň agentligi	Taňrygulyýew Muhammet, Direktor	
18	“Amyderýa howdan suw hojalyk” Birleşiginiň “Orta derýa dolandyryş edarasy”	Ýagmurow Farhat, 1-nji derejeli Inžener-operator	
20	S.A. Nyýazow adyndaky Türkmen oba hojalyk uniwersiteti	Durdyýew Orazmuhammet, Oba hojalyk meliorasiýalary kafedrasynyň uly mugallymy	
21	Türkmen oba hojalyk instituty	Şatlyk Pygamow, Oba hojalyk meliorasiýalary kafedrasynyň müdiri	
22	Türkmenistanyň Telekeçiler we öndürjiler birleşigi	<i>Garynhammet Akjezow</i>	
23	“Ekodurmuş” Jemgyýetçilik birleşigi	Jumayev Kasym, Technical Assistant	
24	“Ýaşyl Şöhle” Jemgyýetçilik birleşigi	Güljamal Nurmuhammedowa, Birleşigiň başlygy	
25	“Tebigy kuwwat” Jemgyýetçilik birleşiginiň kärhanasy	Kepbanow Ýolbars, hukuk meseleler boýynça geňeşçisi	
26	Türkmenistanyň Adalat ministrligi	<i>Saryyewa dezi</i>	
27	Türkmenistanyň Tebigaty gorayyş jemgyýeti	Merdan Arazmetow	

AGENDA

09.15 – 10.00	Registration of participants, Welcome coffee
10.00 – 10.20	Opening speech <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rovshen Nurmuhammedov, Head of UNDP Program Department in Turkmenistan - Mergen Yusupov, Deputy Head of the Department for Coordination of International Environmental Cooperation and Projects of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan, National Project Coordinator
10.20 – 10.30	Goals and objectives of the workshop and introduction of participants Gozel Atamuradova, Project Manager
10.30 – 11.00	Presentation of the Annual Work Plan for 2023 and the overall strategy of the project "Conservation and sustainable management of land resources and ecosystems of high natural value in the Aral Sea Basin for multiple benefits" Gozel Atamuradova, Project Manager
11.00 – 11.20	Implementation strategy for Component 1 of the project "Promoting Land Degradation Neutrality" Gurbanmyrat Ovezmyradov, Project Water Analyst Akmyrat Yazhanov, Project Land Resources Analyst
11.20 – 11.40	Implementation strategy for Component 2 of the project "Conservation of critical ecosystems for the development of biodiversity and ecosystem services" Gozel Atamuradova, Project Manager
11.40 – 12.00	Implementation strategy for Component 3 of the project "Development of cooperation in the Aral Sea basin region and exchange of knowledge on the international platform" Batyr Mammedov, Project Knowledge Management Analyst
12:00 – 12:30	Manage project risks and discuss mitigation strategies Gozel Atamuradova, Project Manager
12:30 – 12:50	Discussion, questions and answers / Signing of the Protocol-Decision All seminar participants
12:50 – 13:00	Summing up and closing remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rovshen Nurmuhammedov, Head of UNDP Program Department in Turkmenistan - Mergen Yusupov, Deputy Head of the Department for Coordination of International Environmental Cooperation and Projects of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan, National Project Coordinator
13:00	Lunch