



UNDP/GEF Project
“Conservation and sustainable management of land resources and ecosystems of high natural value in the Aral Sea basin to obtain multiple benefits”



2nd Meeting of the Project Board
MINUTES

Date: December 15, 2023

Venue: UNDP

Time: 09:15 – 13:00

The Project Board meets for the presentation of the results of the activity conducted in 2023 within the framework of the project and the discussion of the Annual Work Plan for the upcoming 2024 year.

Mr. Farhat Orunov, UNDP Programme Analyst for Environmental Portfolio in Turkmenistan opened the meeting, welcomed the participants and encouraged everyone to actively participate in the discussion.

Mr. Dovran Yagmurov, Head of the Department of Environmental Protection of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan welcomed the participants with wishes of success and a call for fruitful cooperation.

Mr. Azat Seydibayev, representative of the Mejlis of Turkmenistan also wished everyone fruitful work.

Ms. Gozel Atamuradova, Project Manager greeted the participants, introduced the goals and objectives of the Project Board meeting, and introduced the participants.

The project manager introduced new members of the Project Board and briefly explained the responsibilities and competencies of the Project Board. In the etrap of S. Turkmenbashi Dashoguz velayat, an employee of the hyakimlik originally appointed as the focal point for project work was transferred to another position, and now another specialist was assigned to sit on the Project Board. Because of the division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection into two separate authorities, a representative from the Ministry of Agriculture was nominated to the Project Board. The new members of the Project Council were provided with the Project Board TOR.

Gozel Atamuradova presented the results of the project's work in 2023, aimed at promoting the achievement of LDN targets, restoration and improvement of land and water resources utilization in the Amu Darya River Basin of the Turkmen part of the Aral Sea, enhancing the resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change of local communities and globally significant ecosystems. The Project Manager emphasized that 2023 was more of a set-up year as the project implementation was delayed. She briefly outlined the project components and highlighted the achieved results for each component.

Component 1: Regular missions to pilot regions were dedicated to the selection of pilots for demonstration of sustainable practices for irrigated areas and pasture lands, as well as for the implementation of other planned activities. A Terms of Reference (ToR) was developed for the LDN working group (WG), and a mechanism for the further functioning of the WG was defined. Two Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) sets were purchased to support LDN-related activities. With the support of GIZ, an International Consultant on LDN was hired to develop a roadmap for the implementation of LDN activities set in the Project Document. Demonstration sites for irrigated areas and pasture lands were identified, and mapping of key activities in pilot regions was carried out based on monitoring and evaluation. A series of seminars, trainings, roundtable discussions were conducted to enhance capacity building, gather, analyze, and evaluate technical, planning-investment, and other relevant data and materials related to land use in the country.

Component 2: To strengthen control over illegal activities on the territory of the Amu-Darya Nature Reserve, two motors for boats and two vehicles have been procured. Telecommunication equipment has been purchased to increase the technical capacities of the reserve, and funds have been allocated for repair work to create a training center at the Amu-Darya Nature Reserve. In the Gaplanyr Reserve, construction materials have been purchased for the construction of a wildlife enclosure for wild animals, pheasants, and waterfowl. Field work has been carried out with a due account of all relevant project indicators. The Amu-Darya Nature Reserve and its surroundings have been selected as a pilot project for the development of eco-tourism. Active work is being carried out with the rural population to raise awareness of rare plants and animals that may be

found on agricultural lands along buffer zones. To preserve and reproduce endangered and rare plants, as well as to expand the capabilities of the reserves to contribute to the implementation of the National Forest Program, new and existing nurseries are planned within the reserves. The project initiated the procurement of equipment to improve the monitoring system of the reserves. Within the framework of this component, support has been provided to a Working Group established to develop the justification for new PAs; a project specialist participates in the WG. Seminars and roundtables have been held to increase the potential of both reserve staff and border guard staff; the project focal area and the reserves are located in the border zone, and cooperation with border guard staff is very important for the project and is currently very productive.

G. Atamuradova reported that within the framework of the Component 2, four trainings were conducted to raise preparedness for the upcoming micro-grant program in all 4 pilot etraps (districts) of Dashoguz and Lebap velayats. Representatives of all partners, including representatives of local communities of pilot districts, private sector representatives, and local NGOs, participated in these seminars. The micro-grant program aims to assist in obtaining alternative sources of income for the local community to enhance their livelihoods. The main goal is to increase the interest of the local population in implementing technologies and methods aimed at the rational use of land and water resources.

The Component 3 focuses on knowledge management and expanding cooperation with the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) at both regional and national levels. Within this component, the project supported the organization of two regional seminars on water diplomacy in partnership with IFAS, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in collaboration with the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) and experts from the State Committee for Water Management, NGOs of Dashoguz and Lebap velayats. The first seminar was held in Dashoguz city, and the second in Lebap velayat. A Regional seminar at the Central Asian level is planned to be held in Ashgabat in 2024.

An environmental contest and a brain-ring were held in Dashoguz city. The aim of these events was to raise awareness about environmental issues in the region. The main focus areas were identified, including land reclamation issues, the Aral Sea crisis, and international environmental conventions. Subsequently, topics were disseminated among beneficiaries in advance so that participants could prepare. The team from the agricultural college won the brain-ring competition by defeating a team of teachers/trainers. In their interview, the winners mentioned that they had read and studied over 50 titles of relevant literature within 2 months.

Two radio broadcasts on environmental topics were produced jointly with the editorial team of the "Ecology" magazine. Within this project component, a PR campaign is being conducted, and partnerships are being strengthened with NGOs, private sector entities, government structures, and other national and international initiatives. In total, 45 events were conducted during the reporting period within the project. The total number of beneficiaries participating in these events was 1243, including 572 employees from the public sector. The percentage of women participating in these project activities approached 30%.

In this way, the delivery of planned activities within the first component is 81.12%, the second component is 84.87%, and the third component is 80.06%. All adjacent costs, including trips, costs for planned activities, expert fees, and equipment purchases, are included in these percentages.

During the presentation, a discussion took place, during which the following questions were asked:

Question from a representative of the Ministry of Environmental Protection: Are there representatives of hakimliks present at the meeting? What is the relationship between the project's specialists and hakimliks?

Answer from the Project Manager: Thank you for your question. I would like to say that we have the closest relationship with hakimliks. Representatives of local authorities participate in all stages of project implementation, take part in joint activities with nature reserves. They are also members of the Local Steering Committee, and all local-level activities are discussed with hakimliks. For example, if there are planned activities related to cleaning the sewage system, building hydropower plants, installing transformers, or power lines, the project-technical documentation is usually taken over by the hakimlik, which then assigns the execution to appropriate organizations. After receiving the project-technical documentation, the tendering process is initiated. In the case of purchasing the necessary equipment, the specification is discussed with the hakimlik specialists, taking into account the existing potential and capabilities.

During the meeting, a proposal was made by the Ministry of Water Management to provide assistance in cleaning irrigation channels and sewers by including this volume of work in the state plan for the next year, and to redirect the released funds to the purchase of equipment for automating water supply for monitoring the level of water supply and reducing filtration. It was agreed to continue this discussion in more detail at round tables with representatives of the GKVH and local hakimliks.

The issue of support from local hakimliks for more effective project implementation was discussed. From the side of the representatives of the velayat hakimliks, it was announced that hakimliks are ready to provide comprehensive assistance, including the provision of heavy machinery for the purchase of a laser planning machine, the provision of a room for consultations at the local level, ensuring internet connectivity, and so on.

Question from a representative of the Ministry of Environmental Protection: Does the project plan to conduct monitoring of degraded bog and areas?

Answer from the Project Manager: At the moment, the work has not started, but soil analysis will be carried out. In fact, all our areas are abandoned lands that have been taken out of circulation, and the project's goal is to carry out activities using various technologies to restore degraded lands. The project also analyzes measures aimed at returning abandoned lands to agricultural use, mainly due to the lack of irrigation water. For example, in the case of the project region of Dargan-Ata, it is planned to purchase the necessary equipment for providing water, which will allow more than 300 ha of land to be returned to agricultural use.

Question from a representative of the Ministry of Environmental Protection: Taking into account that there is no possibility for dakhn associations to purchase a pump for draining sewage water, secondary degradation of lands/salinization occurs, which affects the reduction in crop yields. What measures does the project plan to apply in this regard?

Answer from the Project Manager: using the experience of previous projects, within the Aral Sea project, it is planned to apply a comprehensive approach, which includes a range of measures, including planning land use on large territories. For example, the project does not see the point in draining drainage waters in one place, while in another place there is intensive irrigation without taking into account the irrigation regime and other agro-meliorative measures. As one of the measures aimed at sustainable management of land resources through the introduction of integrated water resource management, within the project, a group of water users (WUG) was created in the Lebap velayat, the purpose of which is that land and water users use a common irrigation system, the canal Berzan, and jointly make decisions on its exploitation. It is worth noting that the group is active, and a leader was chosen, several meetings were held, and regular training is conducted.

The project manager added that it is planned to combine efforts with the BVO "Amudarya" in the implementation of digital technologies for water accounting on the canal Berzan, and, in case of good results, the experience will be extended to other regions.

The Project Manager then moved on to the next presentation - **Discussion of project risks**. During the presentation, all risks were presented for discussion, including the actions taken to mitigate them. A risk identified during the project inception and added as Risk 20 «By-laws to the Land Code and the Law on Pastures, etc., scheduled for development within the framework of the project, may not be adopted or changed / revised during the period of the project» has been reviewed and revisited. As a result, this risk is no longer a separate one but forms a part of Risk 16 «Conflicting government priorities relating to agricultural production and sustainable land use could lead to limited progress in achieving the project's intended outcomes and limited results in the conservation and restoration of degraded lands, and the protection of critical habitats for the long-term maintenance of ecosystem services necessary to support sustainable livelihoods.» As a result, there are four new risks appeared during project inception and not five.

The Project Board discussed the Risk 13 «The project's small scale, on-the-ground works may pose safety risks to community members» and Risk 14 «The project supported demonstration activities may inadvertently be implemented at/in proximity of significant cultural and historical significance sites», which were re-classified as "low" instead of "moderate".

The Project Board agreed on formulating the four new risks as follows:

---Intensive reclamation of forest fund lands (tugai forests in Lebap velayat) for agriculture, priority for local hakimliks in order to fulfill plans for the state order for the cultivation of cotton and wheat.

To read: Intensive reclamation of forest fund lands (tugai forests in Lebap velayat) for agriculture, priority for local hakimliks in order to fulfill plans for the state order for the cultivation of cotton and wheat.

-- Price changes and inflation can lead to inefficient use of financial resources

To read: The cost estimations for a number of project activities made during project development become invalid with the changing financial climate and rising inflation rates.

-- Lack of a clear mechanism for cooperation between UNDP and a third party (Responsible Party) in order to implement the project

To read: The project is likely to face significant operational delays in delivering the originally planned outputs as the new implementation modality (assisted NIM with the engagement of the Responsible Party) is applied for the first time in the country

The Project Implementing Partner (MAEP) raised a question about the risk related to the responsible party, specifically describing the current situation and when the project will begin to hire national experts and service providers (companies). The Project Manager clarified that, at present, the project cannot perform procurement in local currency, including engagement of national and local experts, but a company has been hired that will assess the local market and provide an screening of potential Responsible Parties with the appropriate potential.

The Project Manager called for a discussion of the risk "Valuable forest ecosystems in the focus of the project are at risk as the intensive reclamation of forest fund lands (tugai forests in Lebap velayat) for agriculture, becomes a growing priority for local hakimliks in order to fulfill plans for the state order for the cultivation of cotton and wheat." The members of the Project Board were informed that, in April 2023, during a high-level visit by UNDP CO RR, a meeting was organized with the Hakim of the velayat, during which this issue was discussed. As a result of the meeting, it was agreed that the project would take into account the views of local management and replace the designated area in the etrap of Darganata with an alternative pilot. In this regard, the manager asked the partners to provide an alternative pilot area for the demo, to which the Ministry of Nature Protection replied that according to the Forestry Administration of the Lebap Velayat, there are areas that have entered the afforestation program, and the project can carry out its activities there.

The **Workplan for 2024** was then presented for discussion. The following points were discussed:

Establishing a resource center in Dashoguz Velayat based on the Kaplankyr State Reserve, which will enhance the reserve's potential and expand its technical capacities, especially considering its UNESCO nomination. This activity can be funded by the unused funds for aerial monitoring of the reserve's territories. The Ministry of Environment and Protection (MOEP) reported that the aerial monitoring was conducted in 2023 as part of the 3rd edition of Turkmenistan's Red Book preparation and they are willing to share the data.

Regarding the rental of a laser leveler, council members from the velayat representatives stated that there are no such equipment at the etrap level, suggesting it would be more feasible to purchase two levelers using the allocated rental funds, which will be used on pilot project sites until project completion.

Additionally, velayat representatives recommended initiating a micro-grant program in 2024 through project efforts, despite not being able to engage local experts. This was justified by the seasonal nature of agricultural work and most applications being related to acquiring equipment for demonstrating innovative technologies (precision farming methods, zero tillage practices, etc.), which is planned to be implemented in autumn 2024.

Question from the Ministry of Environment representative: Is it possible to include excavators in the procurement plan?

Project Manager's Response: Unfortunately, the project does envisage purchasing machinery. Only attachments/additional tools can be procured, such as laser levelers, disc harrows, and precision seeders that attach to tractors.

Farhat Orunov noted that procuring two vehicles for was approved as an exception, and the justification was associated with numerous challenges.

Project Manager's Comment: Based on past experience, the project can support repairing existing machinery through micro-grant programs. Continuing this topic, the manager mentioned that a meeting with "CLASS" company was organized at Dashoguz Hyakimlik's request, whose equipment is used in the field. An inspection was conducted on broken tractors, concluding that most existing machinery unfortunately cannot be restored. During discussions, the PB members agreed that there is no sustainability in supporting this initiative further.

2. Presentation by B. Mamedov, Knowledge Management Analyst, Component 3 planned activities for 2024: The work within this component is aimed at a broader synergy and aspects of regional cooperation of the project with the IFAS. Although the project will be fully implemented within the national borders of

Turkmenistan, it will not be carried out in isolation from the regional landscape of the Amu Darya and the wider Aral Sea basin. Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan are countries located downstream of the Amu Darya, whose headwaters are in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Afghanistan. Considering that over 90% of water resources are generated outside the country, it is crucial for Turkmenistan to actively participate in regional efforts related to the restoration of the Aral Sea basin, including efficient use and management of the waters of the Amu Darya river.

Furthermore, the analyst highlighted indicators of the 3rd component and completed activities. Specifically, Indicator 28 "Number of activities aimed at strengthening national capacity to participate in regional cooperation programs in the Aral Sea basin." The analyst emphasized that a seminar on water diplomacy at a regional level is planned for next year, with participation from representatives of Central Asian countries.

Under Indicator 29 "Range of national priorities included in IFAS programs and initiatives supported by the project," 2 national priorities embedded in regional initiatives put forth by Turkmenistan are supported by the project. It was noted that by the end of the project, the ultimate goal is to address 5 national priorities laid out in international and regional initiatives proposed by Turkmenistan to address issues in the Aral Sea basin.

Regarding Indicator 30 "Number of awareness-raising activities and target products on water issues, land degradation, and biodiversity in the Aral Sea basin," a communication plan has been developed taking into account the needs of key stakeholders. Ten awareness-raising events have been conducted in pilot regions, along with two radio broadcasts on ecological issues. Educational and informational materials on nature conservation/protected areas/biodiversity are available.

B. Mamedov then discussed the activities of IFAS in Turkmenistan and its branches in Ashgabat, Dashoguz, and Lebap regions. According to a decision by the Heads of State of Central Asian countries - founders of IFAS following a Summit in Dushanbe (15.09.2023), Kazakhstan assumed presidency at IFAS as of January 1st, 2024, with K.-J. K. Tokayev becoming President of IFAS. A Turkmen delegation participated in this summit with support from the project. The summit's resolution included an appeal proposed by members of the Turkmen delegation:

“For financial institutions, international organizations, donor countries, and other development partners, to provide comprehensive support including financial, technical, technological assistance to Central Asian countries for achieving sustainable development goals especially in rural areas by implementing by 2030 Action Program to assist countries in Aral Sea basin (PBAAM-4) and Regional Environmental Protection Program for Sustainable Development in Central Asia (REPSDCA)”.

The speaker discussed synergy between PBAAM-4, REPSDCA, UN Conventions, and project components. He then elaborated on planned activities for Component 3 in 2024:

- Establishing a platform for expanding collaboration with IFAS and exchanging information on environmental issues and water resources.
- Continuing project specialist's participation IFAS re-organisation working group.
- Hosting a Regional seminar on water diplomacy in Ashgabat with IFAS representatives from Central Asia.
- Involvement of IFAS in project activities including membership on Project Board.
- Selection and approval of the priorities embedded in regional initiatives for project support.
- Supporting Turkmen delegation's participation at IFAS regional platform in Kazakhstan.
- Coordinating with other projects and IFAS to enhance awareness at regional level.
- Disseminating project experience through IFAS platforms and various other knowledge management platforms.
- Supporting stakeholder participation in conferences for sharing experiences, best practices, and lessons learned in biodiversity conservation and nature reserve management/water resource management.

There were no questions regarding this presentation; council members thanked Mr. Mamedov for its informative content.

The presentation of A.Yazhnov, an analyst for land resources, focused on **Component 1** - Supporting LDN. Mr.Yazhnov discussed the main outcomes of this component, which involves the development of an integrated sustainable land management plan for target production landscapes aimed at achieving LDN targets in the Türkmenbaşy Region through the implementation of sustainable and innovative land and water management practices. He also mentioned planned activities for 2024, including the development of a comprehensive plan for pilot irrigated areas, which includes addressing water supply issues by cleaning and repairing irrigation and drainage channels, conducting agrochemical soil studies on demonstration and

adjacent areas, and taking soil samples before the start of work to track the evolution of degraded land. Additionally, farmland preparation work, including laser leveling, and the use of organic and mineral fertilizers are planned. After the preparatory work, the intention is to plant several types of salt-tolerant and drought-resistant crops using crop rotation. The care of the planted crops will be carried out in accordance with agrotechnical norms and expert recommendations. Monitoring of crop growth, soil water levels, and crop yields will also be conducted on a regular basis. Furthermore, educational and practical training, as well as the dissemination of best practices, are planned.

For afforestation, support will be provided to forest nurseries in the Daşoguz and Lebap regions for the cultivation of drought-resistant tree species for the creation of protective forest strips on agricultural lands and for the restoration of existing or the creation of new forest plantations. Additionally, there are plans for public environmental awareness campaigns, the development of leaflets, brochures, video materials, radio broadcasts, and articles in periodicals. These activities will be carried out in close cooperation with regional hakims and local NGOs within the framework of the forest program.

For pastures, the compilation of maps and schemes of pasture areas in pilot regions using GIS technologies is planned for the development of pasture management plans. A pilot area has been selected in each region for sustainable pasture management, and the construction and repair of sardobs and wells are also planned. There is a need to organize and conduct training for pasture users on the concept of pasture capacity, rotational grazing, and other related topics. Additionally, there is a plan to reform the legislation.

G.Atamuradova mentioned that the project encountered difficulties in selecting a pilot pasture area in the Daşoguz region. According to the project requirements, the area should be located on the border of buffer zones of protected areas. However, the previously selected area in the buffer zone of the Göplangyr State Natural Reserve is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. As a result, the project faces the challenge of selecting and coordinating a new pilot pasture area.

A representative from the Ministry of Environmental Protection asked about the planned activities for improving pastures. Mr.Yazhnov responded that the project is currently collaborating with NIPRZhM and the Ministry of Agriculture and their subordinate organizations, as well as with the Turkmen State Agricultural University and the Institute.

G.Atamuradova added that regular roundtables and meetings are held with all mentioned partners. The project plans to combine efforts with FAO projects operating in the Daşoguz region and NIPRZhM in the area of pasture inventory.

A representative from the Ministry of Environmental Protection recommended including the provision for the improvement of legislation in the project's technical specifications.

A representative from the Majlis commented that the legislative recommendations should first be presented in the Majlis. The project is recommended to apply the practice of creating a working group of relevant departments and specialists, which will function throughout the project lifetime.

The project manager stated that all recommendations will be taken into account and that a representative of the Ministry of Justice has been included in the Project Board, with the intent of productive collaboration.

A representative from the Ministry of Environmental Protection asked about the situation with forest plantations in the Betendag area of the Daşoguz region and about the project's intentions in this regard.

Mr.Yazhnov responded that the main issue for the utilization of this area is the problem of water supply. The project plans to take certain measures to demonstrate alternative water sources for irrigation.

Presentation of biodiversity analytics by J. Saparmuradov on the project **Component 2** began with mentioning that 3 reserves in the country, including the Gaplanyr Reserve, have been recently assigned the UNESCO WH status. The Aral project on the Component 2 works with two reserves, the Amudarya in Lebap Velayat and Gaplanyr in Dashoguz Velayat. The reporter presented a plan of activities for 2024:

Support will be provided in developing a five-year management plan for the Amudarya State Nature Reserve and its subsidiary "Kelif" refuge. An example will be used from the five-year management plan for the Gaplanyr State Nature Reserve developed under the CADI project.

A comprehensive analysis of flora and fauna species in the Amudarya and Gaplanyr reserves will be conducted based on existing and newly collected data, and an electronic database of collected data will be created. In the future, the experience of creating such an electronic biodiversity database will be replicated in other reserves in Turkmenistan.

Necessary work will be carried out to create protective or buffer zones around the Amudarya and Gaplanyr reserves, as well as their subsidiaries.

The project will contribute to improving water supply for wild animals in the territory of the Gaplanyr Reserve. One new well will be constructed, and one well and one reservoir will be reconstructed and repaired.

Support will be provided to enhance the capacity for conducting scientific and conservation activities in the two reserves (Amudarya and Gaplanyr). Various technical equipment will be procured, including IT equipment (computer, laptop, printer), field monitoring equipment (binoculars, cameras, communication devices - radios, GPS navigators), power banks and batteries, field clothing, etc.

Support will be provided to the Amudarya and Gaplanyr reserves for exchanging experiences with neighboring reserves of neighboring countries. A delegation consisting of employees from these reserves will organize a business trip to one of the neighboring countries (Uzbekistan or Kazakhstan) to exchange experiences. Additionally, relevant experts will be invited to participate in the upcoming Conference of Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (Bonn Convention) scheduled to take place in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, in February 2024.

Training sessions will be conducted to enhance the educational and professional level of staff in scientific conservation departments of the Amudarya and Gaplanyr reserves, as well as relevant specialists from local authorities. Out of the planned 15 seminars, 2 have been conducted this year. Management recommendations from the International Union for Conservation of Nature on managing protected natural areas will be translated into Turkmen language and distributed among the reserves.

The project will contribute to creating new PAs, establishing buffer zones, and mapping these territories.

Support will be provided within the project to establish a resource center at the "Amudarya" reserve and an educational-consultation center at the "Gaplanyr" reserve, with all necessary equipment and resources.

There were no questions regarding this presentation, and council members thanked the reporter for its informative content.

Following the presentation, a discussion ensued during which the following recommendations were given:

From a representative of the Ministry of Environmental Protection: it is recommended to conduct seminars and round tables jointly with scientific departments of the reserves.

From a representative of the Ministry of Education: a UNESCO classroom has been opened at the Pedagogical Institute; it is recommended to collaborate with them.

From E. Kepbanov: according to law, protected (buffer) zones are created only around reserves but not around subsidiaries. In this case, it is proposed that work should include amending legislation on PAs.

At the end of the meeting, the UNDP Program Analyst informed participants that a regional project is being implemented by UNDP on developing an action plan for biodiversity conservation. The goals and objectives of this project largely align with those of Component 2 of this project. Therefore, it was suggested to use this council's platform as a project council for the NAP project which was approved by the PB members.

The Project Manager thanked all participants and proposed moving on to drafting and signing PB meeting minutes.

Agenda

09.15 – 09.45	Registration participants, informal discussions
09.45 – 10.00	Opening remarks _ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNDP Program Department in Turkmenistan - Representative of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan
10.00 – 10.15	Goals and objectives of the meeting and introduction of participants Gozel Atamuradova , Project Manager
10.15 – 11.00	Presentation of the results of activities carried out in 2023. Gozel Atamuradova , Project Manager Project specialists
11:00 – 11:20	Questions and discussions
11.20 – 11.50	Presentation of the Annual Work Plan for 2024 Gozel Atamuradova , Project Manager
11:50 – 12:10	Questions and discussions
12:10 – 12:30	Discussion of PB Minutes and decisions
12:30 – 12:40	Signing the Minutes
12:40 – 13:00	Summing up and closing words <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDP Program Department in Turkmenistan Representative of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan
13:00 – 14:00	Dinner



Unofficial translation

DRAFT RESOLUTION

2nd Project Board Meeting

“Conservation and sustainable management of land resources and ecosystems of high natural value in the Aral Sea basin to obtain multiple benefits Project”

15.12.2023 .

Ashgabat

- 1) The Project Board acknowledges the project reporting on activities completed in the reporting year 2023 and the planned activities for the year 2024;
- 2) Due to the re-organisation of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan and the establishment of the Ministry of Agriculture of Turkmenistan (MoA) and the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan (MoEP), MoA is designated as the second principal "development partner" in terms of project cooperation with the national stakeholders. The functions of the Project Implementing Partner are carried out by MoEP;
- 3) Include representatives from MoA and the Scientific-Information Center of the Inter-State Coordination Water Commission (SIC ICWC) in the Project Board and request these key partners to nominate their representatives;
- 4) Approve the decision to move the Mid-Term Project Evaluation to February-March 2025, due to the delay in the actual project implementation start and issues with its operationalization (contracting of the Responsible Party);
- 5) Recommend the project not to consider the COVID 19 associated risks in further project implementation due to their irrelevance;
- 6) Pay attention to the fact that it is advisable to swap the first two indicators of achieving the Project Objective for future reporting, as they reflect the achievement of the GEF Core Indicators for Components 1 and 2, respectively.
- 7) Accept and confirm the participation of the following personal nominations as members of the Project Board:

Allamyradova Hodjamyrada instead of previously nominated Jumamuradov Dovletmyrad, as the representative of the etrap Turkmenbashi, Dashoguz Velayat;
Gaipova Zohre instead of previously nominated Atadzhanov Dovlet, as the representative of the etrap Darganat, Lebap Velayat;
Bagtyyarova Azata instead of previously nominated Narkulyyeva Sabina, as the representative of the etrap Diane, Lebap Velayat;

Gurbanyazova Meredurdy instead of the previously nominated representative of the Center of Technologies of the Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan.

- 8) Due to the inability to conclude an agreement with the previously selected Responsible Party for hiring national experts and conducting subcontracting with payments in national currency, the Implementing Partner (MOEP) and the UNDP Country Office will continue consultations to identify candidates for the Responsible Party role; the UNDP office and the project implementation team will explore alternative options to implement the project workplans.
- 9) Include the discussion of questions related to the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) early action support in the next Project Board meeting and use the PB as the governing committee for this Global Program.

10) **Component 1:**

- To successfully implement project activities in pilot areas for irrigated agriculture, it is necessary to coordinate the cleaning of irrigation and collector channels with local water management organizations. The saved project funds should be used to purchase the necessary measuring and other equipment for digitizing the accounting of irrigation water at one of the pilot sites.
- Due to the inclusion of the territory of Gaplanyr State Nature Reserve and its subordinate refuges in the UNESCO World Heritage List (20.09.2023), the project team is tasked with identifying and coordinating with local authorities new demonstration sites for the project on pasture territories, in accordance with selection criteria, as previously identified sites fall within the Shasenem refuge area (UNESCO World Heritage).
- Reallocate funds allocated for contracting soil planning work using a laser leveler to purchase two sets (one for each region) of laser levelers, which is a more sustainable solution.

11) **Component 2:**



- Agree to the proposal to hire an international company/expert for drafting and analyzing the environmental flow requirements for IBAs, instead of the previously planned national expert-economist for micro-grant management, or consider other funding options;
- Agree to the proposal of the project team to hire an expert for preparing the justification for the creation of the Tallymerdjen reserve;
- Assess feasibility of drafting a regulatory act on the status of IBAs;
- Allocate funding for the establishment of a training center for employees of reserves and local communities in the Gaplanyr reserve using the savings initially allocated for the PA aerial survey;
- Recognize the links in the project document to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan and the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan as outdated, as no Memorandum currently exists;

- Considering the lack of water resources to support the life activities of migratory birds, pay attention to the expert assessments regarding the loss of value of the "Muskina" territory as an IBA and prepare a justification for its exclusion from the IBA list of Turkmenistan.

12) **Component 3:**

- Recognizing the particular importance for the project of cooperation within Component 3 with the structures of the MFSA in Turkmenistan, instruct the project to intensify activities aimed at enhancing the technical capacity of the Dashoguz branch of the Executive Committee of the MFSA and its Agency, the Scientific Information Center of the MKUR, and the Srednedaryinsky section of the Amudarya BVO;
- Expand the list of key beneficiaries of the project by including the MFSA Agency in Ashgabat and the NGO "Eco-Durmus" in Dashoguz, acknowledging the importance of strategic partnership and the required capacity building. Fulfill partners' request for the purchase of minimal office equipment (laptop and printer) at the NGO "Eco-Durmus," where the project office is based in Dashoguz, and at the MFSA Agency in Ashgabat (laptop and printer), which is planned to serve as the platform for exchanging experiences and knowledge. The purchase of office equipment for partners (15 items) is included in the Project Document budget.

Signatures:

№	Gurama/Edara	Familiýasy, ady Eýeleýän wezipesi	Goly
1.	Türkmenistanyň Daşky gurşawy goramak ministrligi	Mergen Yusupow, Taslamanyň milli koordinatory	
2.		Dowran Ýagmurow, Daşky gurşawy goramak bölümiň başlygy	
3.	Türkmenistanyň Oba hojalyk ministrligi	Gowşut Şadurdyýew, Türkmenistanyň oba hojalyk ministrligi, Ýer serişdeleri gullugy, Ýer kadastry we geomaglumat tehnologiýalar ulgamyny dolandyryş bölüminiň başlygy	

4.	Türkmenistanyň Suw hojalygy baradaky döwlet komiteti	/Nurgeldiýew Tirkiş, Suw ulanyş bölüminiň başlygy	
5.	Türkmenistanyň Statistika baradaky döwlet komiteti	Çaryýewa Enejan, Oba hojalygynyň statistikasi we seljerişi müdirliginiň Oba hojalygynyň statistikasi bölüminiň esasy hünärmeni	
6.	Türkmenistanyň Mejlisi	Seýdibaýew Azat, Türkmenistanyň Mejlisi Ekologiya we agrar komitetyň deputaty	
7.	Daşoguz weýat häkimligi	Babaýew Serdar, Oba hojalyk önümlerini ondürmek we gaýtadan işlemek bölüminiň baş hünärmeni	
8.	Lebap weýat häkimligi	Baltaýew Nyzam, Oba hojalygynda özgertmeler we täze tehnologiýalary ornaşdyrmak bölüminiň müdiri	
9.	Ruhybelent etrap häkimligi	Halow Muhammet, Oba hojalygynda özgertmeler we täze tehnologiýalary ornaşdyrmak bölüminiň müdiri	
10.	S. Türkmenbaşy ad. etrap häkimligi	Allamuradow Hojamyrat, S. Türkmenbaşy etrap häkimligiň baş hünärmeni	
11.	Darganata etrap häkimligi	Gaýipowa Zöhre, İşleri dolandyryş müdirliginiň baş hünärmeni	
12.	Dänew etrap häkimligi	Bagtyýarow Ayat, Lebap welaýatynyň Dänew etrap häkimliginiň baş hünärmeni	
13.	“Halkbank” Paýdarlar täjirçilik banky	Orazsähedow Mergen, Karzlaşdyryş müdirliginiň başlygynyň orunbasary, Karzlaşdyryş bölüminiň başlygy	
14.	“Daýhanbank” Döwlet täjirçilik banky	Myradow Döwletmyrat, Gurluşygy meýilleşdiriş we inžener-tehniki gözegçilik bölüminiň başlygy	
15.	Türkmenistanyň Senagatçylar we Telekeçiler birleşmesi	Atajanow Çarymuhammet, Oba senagat toplumy we balykçylyk bölümi	
16.	Türkmenistanyň Ylymlar akademyýasynyň Tehnologiýa merkezi	Gurbanýazow Meretdurdy, Türkmenistanyň oba hojalyk ministrligi yer serişde gullugynyň baş hünärmeni	

17.	Araly halas etmegiň Halkara gaznsynyň Ýerine ýeteriji komitetiniň Daşoguz şahamçasynyň agentligi	Taňrygulyýew Muhammet, Halkara Araly halas etmek gaznasynyň Daşoguz welaýat agentliginiň direktory	
18.	S.A. Nyýazow adyndaky Türkmen oba hojalyk uniwersiteti	Durdyýew Orazmuhammet, Oba hojalyk meliorasiýalary kafedrasynyň uly mugallymy Penamuhammet Işangulyýew, Ýer serişdeler kafedra müdiri	Онлайн 
19.	Türkmen oba hojalyk instituty	Şatlyk Pygamow, Oba hojalyk meliorasiýalary kafedrasynyň müdiri	Онлайн
20.	“Ekodurmuş” Jemgyýetçilik birleşigi	Jumayev Kasym, tehniki ylmy assistent	
21.	“Tebigy Kuwwat”	Kerbanov Yolbars, hukuk meseleler boýunça genceçisi	
22.	“Ynanch Wepa”	Guljermal Nurmuhamedova, direktor	
23.	Türkmenistanyň Ykdysadyýet we maliýe ministrligi	Annagulyýew Tirkeş, Ykdysadyýetiň pudaklarynyň ösüşi we maliýesi nädirliginiň Agrosenagat toplumynyň maliýesini seljeriş böliminiň baş hünärmeni	
24.	Türkmenistanyň Adalat ministrligi		