

# Closure Stage Quality Assurance Report

Overall Project Rating: **Highly Satisfactory**

Project Number : 00073767

Project Title : Improving sustainability of the Protected Area system in desert ecosystems through promotion of biodiversity-compatible livelihoods in and around Protected Areas

Project Date : 01-Aug-2013

## Strategic

Quality Rating: **Highly Satisfactory**

### 1. Did the project pro-actively take advantage of new opportunities and adapt its theory of change to respond to changes in the development context, including changing national priorities? (select the option from 1-3 which best reflects this project)

- 3: *The project team regularly completed and documented a comprehensive horizon scanning exercise to identify new opportunities and changes in the development context that required adjustments in the theory of change. There is clear evidence that the project board considered the scanning and its implications, and documented changes to the project's RRF, partnerships, etc. made in response, as appropriate. (both must be true to select this option)*
- 2: The project team has undertaken some horizon scanning over the life of the project to identify new opportunities and changes in the development context. The project board discussed the scanning and its implications for the project, as reflected in the board minutes. There is some evidence that the project took action as a result, but changes may not have been fully integrated in the project's theory of change, RRF, partnerships, etc. (all must be true to select this option)
- 1: The project team may have considered new opportunities and changes in the development context since implementation began, but this has not been discussed in the project board. There is limited to no evidence that the project team has considered changes to the project as a result. This option should also be selected if no horizon scanning took place during project implementation.

#### Evidence

Twice a year the project held SC meetings presenting the project results for the reporting period to the beneficiaries and project partners. The meetings were aimed to also make horizon scanning exercise. Possible risks were identified, proposals for new initiatives and opportunities of the Project that ensure the achievement of results and indicators were made and considered in a timely manner. At the final meeting of the SC, the project results for the entire implementation period were presented. The project partners and beneficiaries noted the positive effect of the project results. Also at the wrap-up meeting, recommendations were presented on ensuring the sustainability of project initiatives and activities.  
Attachment 1-1. SC protocol dated January 31, 2018  
Attachment 1-2. SC protocol dated July 04, 2018

### 2. Was the project aligned with the thematic focus of the Strategic Plan? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: The project responded to one of the three areas of development [work](#) as specified in the Strategic Plan. It addressed at least one of the proposed new and emerging [areas](#) and implementation was consistent with the issues-based analysis incorporated into the project. The project's RRF included all the relevant SP output indicators. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: *The project responded to one of the three areas of development [work](#) as specified in the Strategic Plan. The project's RRF included at least one SP output indicator, if relevant. (both must be true to select this option)*
- 1: While the project may have responded to one of the three areas of development [work](#) as specified in the Strategic Plan, it was based on a sectoral approach without addressing the complexity of the development issue. None of the relevant SP indicators were included in the project's RRF. This option is also selected if the project did not respond to any of the three SP areas of development work.

#### Evidence

The project corresponded to SP Output 1.4.1 " Solutions scaled up for sustainable management of natural resources, including sustainable commodities and green and inclusive value chains".

The project RRF fully contributed to SP Indicator 1.4.1.2 "Natural resources that are managed under a sustainable use, conservation, access and benefit-sharing regime".

### 3. Evidence generated through the project was explicitly used to confirm or adjust the programme/CPD's theory of change during implementation.

- Yes
- No

#### Evidence

The project confirmed the CPD Theory of Change during its implementation having developed the recommendations to the national partners aimed at preserving biodiversity and ecosystems, as well as improving the well-being of all key parties at both local and regional levels.

#### Relevant

Quality Rating: Highly Satisfactory

### 4. Were the project's targeted groups systematically identified and engaged, with a priority focus on the excluded and marginalized, to ensure the project remained relevant for them? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: *Systematic and structured feedback was collected regularly from a representative sample of beneficiaries, with a priority focus on the excluded and marginalized, as part of the project's monitoring system. Representatives from the targeted group were active members of the project's governance mechanism (i.e., project board or equivalent) and there is credible evidence that their feedback informed decision making. (all must be true to select this option)*
- 2: Targeted groups were engaged in implementation and monitoring, with a priority focus on the excluded and marginalized. Beneficiary feedback, which may be anecdotal, was collected regularly to ensure the project addressed local priorities. This information was used to inform project decision making. (all must be true to select this option)
- 1: Some beneficiary feedback may have been collected, but this information did not inform project decision making. This option should also be selected if no beneficiary feedback was collected.
- Not Applicable

#### Evidence

The project involved representatives of target groups and beneficiaries in its activities, incl. representatives of vulnerable groups of the population, both in the implementation and monitoring of project activities. Based on the socio-economic studies conducted in the 3 project areas, all vulnerable groups were identified. So the most vulnerable identified are: unemployed women and children. The Eco-Damu microcredit program allowed the creation of new jobs for rural women through the provision of concessional loans for the development of their business at the lowest percentage in Kazakhstan. Special conditions of the program are to support the development of such types of business as ecotourism, national handicrafts, fish farming, etc., which unfortunately still remain a low-funded sector and are not supported by the government and other financial institutions. Within the framework of the Eco-Damu Microcredit Program the project together with the Forestry and Wildlife Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Fund for Financial Support of Agriculture implemented 83 projects in the Kyzylorda, Almaty and Mangystau regions, created 209 new jobs.

Attachment 4. Final Project Progress Report

### 5. Did the project generate knowledge, particularly lessons learned (i.e., what has worked and what has not) – and has this knowledge informed management decisions and changes/course corrections to ensure the continued relevance of the project towards its stated objectives, the quality of its outputs and the management of risk? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: Knowledge and lessons learned (gained, for example, from Peer Assists, After Action Reviews or Lessons Learned Workshops) backed by credible evidence from evaluation, analysis and monitoring were regularly discussed in project board meetings and reflected in the minutes. There is clear evidence that the project's theory of change was adjusted, as needed, and changes were made to the project to ensure its continued relevance. (both must be true to select this option)
- 2: Knowledge and lessons learned backed by relatively limited evidence, drawn mainly from within the project, were considered by the project team. There is some evidence that changes were made to the project as a result to ensure its continued relevance. (both must be true to select this option)
- 1: There is limited or no evidence that knowledge and lessons learned were collected by the project team. There is little or no evidence that this informed project decision making.

### Evidence

Recommendations and comments voiced by the participants and representatives of the target groups following the results of the meeting, meetings, trainings and round tables were taken into account and discussed by the project team. Depending on the relevance of the issues, changes are made to the Project Work Plan and are submitted to the SC for consideration. Each question / lesson learned was analyzed, actions to improve the situation / mitigate the consequences and improve performance are determined.

Attachment 5-1. SC protocol dated January 31, 2018

Attachment 5-2. SC protocol dated July 04, 2018

### 6. Were the project's special measures (through outputs, activities, indicators) to address gender inequalities and empower women relevant and produce the intended effect? If not, were evidence-based adjustments and changes made? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: The project team systematically gathered data and evidence on the relevance of the special measures in addressing gender inequalities and empowering women. Analysis of data and evidence were used to inform adjustments and changes, as appropriate. (both must be true to select this option)
- 2: The project team had some data and evidence on the relevance of the special measures in addressing gender inequalities and empowering women. There is evidence that at least some adjustments made, as appropriate. (both must be true to select this option)
- 1: The project team had limited or no evidence on the relevance of the special measures in addressing gender inequalities and empowering women. No evidence that adjustments and/or changes were made, as appropriate. This option should also be selected if the project had no special measures in addressing gender inequalities and empowering women relevant to project results and activities.

### Evidence

The project created conditions for the equal participation of women in project activities, and also continuously records data on the involvement of women in project activities.

Women have become key partners, they more actively express their opinions during informal events (polls, interviews, meetings), which allows taking into account their interests and needs in the overall work of the project.

Thus, women were obligatorily included in the Public Councils created under the auspices of the project at the Barsakelmes, Ustyurt reserves and the Altyn Emel national park.

The Eco-Damu microcredit program also provides for equal conditions for the participation of both men and women in obtaining microcredit funds for the development of an environmentally oriented business.

In general, according to the Eco-Damu program, - 30 projects out of 83 funded ones are implemented by rural women, as a result, 73 women and girls are provided with jobs and regular income.

A gender consultant was also involved in the UNDP project portfolio. The consultant carried out a gender analysis of current country documents, biodiversity programs for equal access of men and women to biological resources, analysis of the consequences of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation on the behavior pattern of men and women, analysis of equal participation of men and women in the use of bioresources and distribution of socio-economic benefits. Recommendations were also made to reduce the risk of gender imbalance in conservation and sustainable biodiversity and ecosystem policies and practices.

Attachment 6-1: Ecodamu Project Summary List.

Attachment 6-2. Recommendations on ensuring equal participation of women and men in the development of "gree" financing and the introduction of new economic mechanisms for the rational use of natural (biological) resources and the conservation of biodiversity

Attachment 6-3: Program and List of Participants of the "GENDER AND BIODIVERSITY" Workshop

**7. Was the project sufficiently at scale, or is there potential to scale up in the future, to meaningfully contribute to development change? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)**

- 3: *There is credible evidence that the project reached a sufficient number of beneficiaries (either directly through significant coverage of target groups, or indirectly, through policy change) to meaningfully contribute to development change.*
- 2: While the project was not considered at scale, there are explicit plans in place to scale up the initiative in the future (e.g. by extending its coverage in a second phase or using project results to advocate for policy change).
- 1: The project was not at scale, and there are no plans currently to scale up the initiative in the future.

#### Evidence

The project was implemented in accordance with the Project Document in full both in the project areas and at the national level. A number of project activities were introduced and implemented both at the national and local levels. The changes and additions to the current legislation allowed ensuring the financial stability of the management plans developed by the PA, so the Management Plan is now a long-term planning tool and financial instrument. In order to mobilize budget funding for PAs, to improve the quality of financial planning in PAs, in 2018 a draft of the updated Methodology for the development of a Management Plan for PAs was prepared. In the run-up to the renewal of the Management Plans of environmental institutions (PAs) for the next 5 years, the potential of 62 employees of 28 PAs was enhanced in the framework of the training seminar "Enhancing the PAs Potential for Effective Management and Fundraising".

Attachment 7. Draft Methodology for the Development of a Management Plan of Protected Protected Areas (2018)

#### Social & Environmental Standards

Quality Rating: Exemplary

**8. Did the project seek to further the realization of human rights using a human rights-based approach? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)**

- 3: *There is credible evidence that the project aimed to further the realization of human rights, on the basis of applying a human rights based approach. Any potential adverse impacts on enjoyment of human rights were actively identified, managed and mitigated through the project's management of risks. (all must be true to select this option)*
- 2: There is some evidence that the project aimed to further the realization of human rights. Potential adverse impacts on the enjoyment of human rights were identified and adequately mitigated through the project's management of risks. (both must be true to select this option)
- 1: There is no evidence that the project aimed to further the realization of human rights. There is limited to no evidence that potential adverse impacts on the enjoyment of human rights were managed.

#### Evidence

Human rights are taken into account at all stages of the implementation of activities from planning to the transfer of experience / replication of the project. In order to take into account the interests of the residents of the Ustyurt project territory and the conservation of biodiversity of the Ustyurt reserve, a concept of biodiversity offsets was developed as a mechanism to prevent disturbance and restore ecosystems. The mechanism allowing taking into account the interests of both local residents and environmental institutions during the extraction of the Kansu gas field was adopted by the Akimat of the Mangystau region and the Kaztransgaz JSC. Also, women were in a mandatory manner part of the Public Councils created under the auspices of the project at the Barsakelmes, Ustyurt reserves and the Altyn Emel national park.

The Eco-Damu microcredit program also provides for equal conditions for the participation of both men and women in obtaining microcredit funds for the development of an environmentally oriented business.

In general, according to the Eco-Damu program, - 30 projects out of 83 funded ones are implemented by rural women, as a result, 73 women and girls are provided with jobs and regular income.

In 2018, a gender analysis was carried out of current country documents, biodiversity programs for equal access of men and women to biological resources, analysis of the consequences of biodiversity loss of ecosystem degradation on the behavior pattern of men and women, analysis of equal participation of men and women in the use of biological resources and the distribution of socio-economic benefits. Recommendations were also made to reduce the risk of gender imbalance in conservation and sustainable biodiversity and ecosystem policies and practices.

Attachment 8-1. Record of the Kansu meeting

Attachment 8-2. Recommendations on ensuring equal participation of women and men in the development of “green” financing and the introduction of new economic mechanisms for the rational use of natural (biological) resources and the preservation of biodiversity

**9. Were social and environmental impacts and risks (including those related to human rights, gender and environment) successfully managed and monitored in accordance with the project document and relevant action plans? (for projects that have no social and environmental risks the answer is “Yes”)**

- Yes
- No

**Evidence**

The project document clearly outlined the threats to biodiversity, analysis of risks. Social and environmental risks were analyzed at the stage of research aimed to reduce and mitigate the consequences of existing threats.  
Attachment 9: risks analysis (from prodoc)

**10. Were any unanticipated social and environmental issues or grievances that arose during implementation assessed and adequately managed, with relevant management plans updated? (for projects that did not experience unanticipated social and environmental risks or grievances the answer is “Yes”)**

- Yes
- No

**Evidence**

The project carried out a number of measures to reduce the degree of the social and environmental risk identified during the expansion of the Ustyurt reserve. Development of the Kansu gas field, which is strategic for the socio-economic situation of the local population, has begun on the expanding territory. However, the development of this field can cause serious damage to biodiversity and ecosystems. As a solution, the project proposed an offsetting mechanism for biodiversity loss. An agreement was reached with local executive organizations and the Kaztransgaz JSC  
Appendix 10: Record of the Kansu meeting

**Management & Monitoring**

**Quality Rating: Exemplary**

**11. Was the project’s M&E Plan adequately implemented? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)**

- 3: Progress data against indicators in the project’s RRF was reported regularly using highly credible data sources and collected according to the frequency stated in the project’s M&E plan, including sex disaggregated data as relevant. Evaluations, if conducted, fully met decentralized evaluation standards, including gender UNEG standards, and management responses were fully implemented. Lessons learned, including during evaluations, were used to take corrective actions when necessary. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: Progress data against indicators in the project’s RRF was collected on a regular basis, although there may have been some slippage in following the frequency stated in the project’s M&E plan and data sources were not always reliable. Any evaluations conducted meet most decentralized evaluation standards; management responses were fully implemented to the extent possible. Lessons learned have been captured but not used to take collective actions. (all must be true to select this option)
- 1: Progress data either was not collected against the indicators in the project’s RRF, or limited data was collected but not regularly; evaluations did not meet decentralized evaluation standards; and/or lessons learned were rarely captured and used.

**Evidence**

The annual work plan was drawn up with due regard for the project document and the Action Plan taking into account the costs. Results and expenses were monitored on a quarterly basis.

Statistical and analytical data are reflected in annual reports and PIR. Also in May 2018, the final evaluation of the project implementation was carried out, and based on the results, the project realization was assessed as satisfactory.

Attachment 11-1: PIR 2017 Report

Attachment 11-2: Final Assessment Report

**12. Did the project's governance mechanism (i.e., the project board or equivalent) function as intended? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)**

*The project's governance mechanism operated very well, and is a model for other projects. It met in the agreed frequency stated in the project document and the minutes of the meetings are all on file. There was regular (at least annual) progress reporting to the project board or equivalent on results, risks and opportunities. It is clear that the project board explicitly reviewed and used evidence, including progress data, knowledge, lessons and evaluations, as the basis for informing management decisions (e.g., change in strategy, approach, work plan.) (all must be true to select this option)*

The project's governance mechanism met in the agreed frequency and minutes of the meeting are on file. A project progress report was submitted to the project board or equivalent at least once per year, covering results, risks and opportunities. (both must be true to select this option)

The project's governance mechanism did not meet in the frequency stated in the project document, and/or the project board or equivalent did not function as a decision making body for the project as intended.

**Evidence**

The project project board functioned well during the reporting period. In 2018, 2 scheduled meetings of the project board were held. At the scheduled meeting of the project board (Q1), a work plan was approved, reports of the project manager and experts on the project progress were heard, and proposals on the sustainability of the project activity and new opportunities were made. Project activity reports were sent in advance to the project board for review. In 2018, the final meeting of the project board was organized in Astana with the participation of all project partners and beneficiaries. At the same time, the implementation mechanism within the framework of the project portfolio makes it possible to effectively plan activities and enhance synergies both between projects and planned activities.

**13. Were risks to the project adequately monitored and managed? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)**

*3: The project actively monitored risks every quarter including consulting with key stakeholders at least annually to identify continuing and emerging risks to project implementation and to assess if the main assumptions remain valid. There is clear evidence that relevant management plans and mitigating measures were fully implemented to address each key project risk, and some evidence that risk mitigation has benefitted performance. (all must be true to select this option)*

2: The project monitored risks every quarter, as evidenced by a regularly updated risk log. Some updates were made to management plans and mitigation measures. (both must be true to select this option)

1: The risk log was not updated every quarter as required. There may be some evidence that the project monitored risks that could have affected the project's achievement of results, but there is no explicit evidence that management actions were taken to mitigate risks. The project's performance was disrupted by factors that could have been anticipated or managed.

**Evidence**

The project document identified the main risks of the project, in addition to this, on a quarterly basis, risks are monitored, including consultation with key stakeholders. Due to the delay in expanding the territory of the Ustyurt Nature Reserve, in order to preserve globally significant ecosystems, the Ustyurt Plateau the project together with the Forestry and Wildlife Committee and the CADI project (<http://cadi.uni-greifswald.de/ru/pro-cadi/rabochie-paketi/#tab-id-3>) developed an Action Plan to further promote the expansion of the reserve and the creation of a new protected area "Kaplankyr" of 600 thousand hectares.

**Efficient**

**Quality Rating: Exemplary**

**14. Adequate resources were mobilized to achieve intended results. If not, management decisions were taken to adjust expected results in the project's results framework.**

- Yes
- No

**Evidence**

In accordance with the project document the project has mobilized adequate resources from GEF, UNDP and FWC to achieve intended results.

**15. Were project inputs procured and delivered on time to efficiently contribute to results? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)**

- 3: *The project had a procurement plan and kept it updated. Implementation of the plan was generally on or ahead of schedule. On a quarterly basis, the project reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner and addressed them through appropriate management actions. (all must be true to select this option)*
- 2: The project had a procurement plan and kept it updated. The project annually reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner and addressed them through appropriate management actions. (all must be true to select this option)
- 1: The project did not have an updated procurement plan. The project team may have reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs regularly, however management actions were not taken to address them. This option is also selected if operational bottlenecks were not reviewed during the project in a timely manner.

**Evidence**

The project had a procurement plan, which is updated on a regular basis. The project reviews operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner.

Attachment 15: the 2018 procurement plan

**16. Was there regular monitoring and recording of cost efficiencies, taking into account the expected quality of results? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)**

- 3: *There is evidence that the project regularly reviewed costs against relevant comparators (e.g., other projects or country offices) or industry benchmarks to ensure the project maximized results delivered with given resources. The project actively coordinated with other relevant ongoing projects and initiatives (UNDP or other) to ensure complementarity and sought efficiencies wherever possible (e.g. joint activities.) (both must be true to select this option)*
- 2: The project monitored its own costs and gave anecdotal examples of cost efficiencies (e.g., spending less to get the same result,) but there was no systematic analysis of costs and no link to the expected quality of results delivered. The project communicated with a few other projects to coordinate activities. (both must be true to select this option)
- 1: There is little or no evidence that the project monitored its own costs and considered ways to save money beyond following standard procurement rules. It is not clear that the link between cost savings and quality of results was made.

**Evidence**

The project was implemented as part of the biodiversity projects portfolio. This helped to optimise and reduce administrative costs (a manager, an assistant, a procurement specialist, a PR specialist). The project monitored its own costs and utilization of the planned funds every quarter according to the project workplan through delivery of internal meetings of the project team. In order to enhance cost-efficiency the project adhered to the principle of synergy, thus planning joint workshops and trainings with other UNDP-supported projects.

**Effective**

**Quality Rating: Exemplary**

**17. Is there evidence that project outputs contributed to the achievement of programme outcomes?**

- Yes
- No

**Evidence**

The project successfully achieved its goal to improve sustainability of protected areas and semi-desert ecosystems of global significance by expanding their geographic coverage, promoting landscape approach and supporting biodiversity -compatible livelihoods in and around PAs.

**18. The project delivered its expected outputs.**

- Yes
- No

**Evidence**

The project successfully delivered its planned results

**19. Were there regular reviews of the work plan to ensure that the project was on track to achieve the desired results, and to inform course corrections if needed? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)**

- 3: *Quarterly progress data informed regular reviews of the project work plan to ensure that the activities implemented were most likely to achieve the desired results. There is evidence that data and lessons learned (including from evaluations) were used to inform course corrections, as needed. (both must be true to select this option)*
- 2: There was at least one review of the work plan each year with a view to assessing if project activities were on track to achieving the desired development results (i.e., outputs.) There is no evidence that data or lessons learned were used to inform the review(s).
- 1: While the project team may have reviewed the work plan at least once per year to ensure outputs were delivered on time, no link was made to the delivery of desired development results. Select this option also if no regular review of the work plan by management took place.

**Evidence**

The project made one annual review of the work plan to ensure the full alignment of the project results and planned costs. The review was made in consultations with the national project partner.

**20. Were the intended targeted groups systematically identified and engaged, prioritizing the marginalized and excluded, to ensure results were achieved as expected? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)**

- 3: *Targeted groups were systematically identified using credible data sources on their capacity needs, deprivation and/or exclusion from development opportunities relevant to the project's area of work. There is clear evidence to confirm that targeted groups were reached as intended. The project engaged regularly with targeted groups to assess whether they benefitted as expected and adjustments were made if necessary to refine targeting. (all must be true to select this option)*
- 2: The project targeted specific groups and/or geographic areas, based on some evidence of their capacity needs, deprivation and/or exclusion from development opportunities relevant to the project's area of work. Some evidence is provided to confirm that project beneficiaries were members of the targeted groups. There was some engagement with beneficiaries to assess whether they benefitted as expected. (all must be true to select this option)



- 1: The project did not report on specific targeted groups, or there is no evidence to confirm that project beneficiaries have capacity needs or are populations deprived and/or excluded from development opportunities relevant to the project's area of work. There may have been some engagement with beneficiaries to assess whether they benefitted as expected, but not regularly.
- Not Applicable

### Evidence

All project activities were developed with engagement of all targeted groups and taking into consideration their needs. Representatives of targeted groups were included in the project board and public committees, all project activities were developed taking into account project targets and interests of local communities and targeted groups.

## 21. Were at least 40 per cent of the personnel hired by the project, regardless of contract type, female?

- Yes
- No

### Evidence

12 people work at project, including 9 women (75%) and 3 men (25%).

## Sustainability & National Ownership

Quality Rating: Satisfactory

## 22. Were stakeholders and partners fully engaged in the decision-making, implementation and monitoring of the project? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: Only national systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluation, etc.) were to fully implement and monitor the project. All relevant stakeholders and partners were fully and actively engaged in the process, playing a lead role in project decision-making, implementation and monitoring. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: *National systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluation, etc.) were used in combination with other support (such as country office support or project systems) to implement and monitor the project, as needed. All relevant stakeholders and partners were actively engaged in the process, playing an active role in project decision-making, implementation and monitoring. (both must be true to select this option)*
- 1: There was relatively limited or no engagement with national stakeholders and partners in the decision-making, implementation and/or monitoring of the project.
- Not Applicable

### Evidence

The project involved representatives of target groups and beneficiaries in its activities, incl. representatives of vulnerable groups of the population, both in the implementation and monitoring of project activities. Based on the socio-economic studies conducted in the 3 project areas, all vulnerable groups were identified. So the most vulnerable identified are: unempoyed women and children. The Eco-Damu microcredit program allowed the creation of new jobs for rural women through the provision of concessional loans for the development of their business at the lowest percentage in Kazakhstan. Special conditions of the program are to support the development of such types of business as ecotourism, national handicrafts, fish farming, etc., which unfortunately still remain a low-funded sector and are not supported by the state and other financial institutions. Within the framework of the Eco-Damu Microcredit Program the project together with the Forestry and Wildlife Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Fund for Financial Support of Agriculture implemented 83 projects in the Kyzylorda, Almaty and Mangystau regions, created 209 new jobs.

**23. Were there regular monitoring of changes in capacities and performance of institutions and systems, and were the implementation arrangements adjusted according to changes in partner capacities? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)**

- 3: Changes in capacities and performance of national institutions and systems were regularly and comprehensively assessed/monitored using clear indicators, rigorous methods of data collection and credible data sources. There is clear evidence that capacities and performance of national institutions and systems improved by the end of the project, if applicable. Implementation arrangements were formally reviewed and adjusted, if needed, in agreement with partners according to changes in partner capacities. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: *Aspects of changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems were monitored by the project using indicators and reasonably credible data sources. There is limited evidence that capacities and performance of national institutions and systems improved by the end of the project, if applicable. Some adjustment was made to implementation arrangements if needed to reflect changes in partner capacities. (all must be true to select this option)*
- 1: Some aspects of changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems may have been monitored by the project, however changes to implementation arrangements were not considered. Also select this option if changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems were not monitored by the project.
- Not Applicable

#### Evidence

The project had a national implementation modality where UNDP stands the implementing agent delivering UNDP support services in line with the Letter of Agreement made between the Ministry and UNDP within the framework of the project.

As per the project arrangements, UNDP was an implementing agent responsible and accountable for managing a project, including the monitoring and evaluation of project interventions, achieving the project outputs and ensuring the effective use of the project resources.

The national partner was an implementing partner will provide the strategic oversight and holds the entire national ownership of the project ensuring the sustainability of the project results.

No change in the implementation modality was made during the project cycle.

**24. Were the transition and phase-out arrangements implemented as planned by the end of the project, taking into account any adjustments made to the plan during implementation? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)**

- 3: The project's governance mechanism regularly reviewed the project's sustainability plan, including arrangements for transition and phase-out, to ensure the project remained on track in meeting the requirements set out by the plan. The plan was implemented as planned by the end of the project, taking into account any adjustments made during implementation. (both must be true to select this option)
- 2: *There was a review of the project's sustainability plan, including arrangements for transition and phase-out, to ensure the project remained on track in meeting the requirements set out by the plan. The plan was implemented by the end of the project, taking into account any adjustments made during implementation. (both must be true to select this option)*
- 1: The project may have had a sustainability plan that specified arrangements for transition and phase-out, but there was no review of this strategy after it was developed. Also select this option if the project did not have a sustainability strategy.

#### Evidence

The project transferred achieved results to the national partner as agreed with the partner. The final results of the projects were presented and approved by the key stakeholders.

**25. Please upload the final lessons learned report that was produced for this project.**

### Summary/Final Project Board Comments:

The final Project Board endorsed the project completion as successful achieved its objectives and targets.