

Land Degradation Offset and Mitigation in Western Mongolia project

MINUTES OF THE 6th MEETING OF THE PROJECT EXECUTIVE BOARD

19 April 2019

Ulaanbaatar city, Tuushin hotel

Chair of the meeting: Ts.Tsengel, State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, and Head of the Project Executive Board

Mr.Ts.Tsengel: I would like to thank all members and representatives from local areas for attending the final executive board meeting of the project implemented by the UNDP. We will focus on following 3 key points: 1). activities had been implemented in the scope of the projects and results; 2). ensuring sustainability of the project outcomes and planning; and 3). the results of the project final evaluation. UN Resident Representative Ms. Ms.Beate Trankmann is present and let us continue the meeting according to the agenda, after her speech.

Ms.Beate Trankmann: Dear Mr. Ts.Tsengel and board members, and representatives from provinces, I thank you all for your participation in the final meeting of the project board. I, in the scope of the project, took part in unforgettable nice field trip to Durvuljin soum of Zavkhan province to get familiar with local conditions which was a great experience. As State Secretary Mr. Ts.Tsengel mentioned, we will hear outcomes of the Land Degradation Offset and Mitigation project. Among them, I understand there are many points such as, assistance delivered by the project in terms of supporting policy paper dedicated to local development and implementation of offset basic principles and improving land utilization management. Also we will hear results of the project external evaluation and go through project sustainability plan. Here, I would like to thank MET, Green Gold and ALAMGAC for being key support for the project outcomes namely, regional ecological assessment and designing of soum local development plan, ensuring participation of mining companies.

Mr.Ts.Tsengel: All board members are present here today, except for representation from the Ministry of Finance. I invite everyone to introduce themselves. */Introduction/*

Mr.P.Tsogtsaikhan: Brief summary of activities implemented during 2016-2019 */presentation/*

S.Enkh-Erdene: Land offset conservation reflected in land policy documents and activities implemented cooperatively. */Илтгэл/*

Mr.Ts.Tsengel: Thank you S.Enkh-Erdene, if you have any questions related to the presentation, please ask him. The meeting agenda has been changed slightly. Opening of the meeting started as it was scheduled, and director P.Tsogtsaikhan and Enkh-Erdene have presented their updates. Now Yo.Onon will deliver a presentation and after that we will be presented with initial report of the project evaluation team. After this, we will have discussion. At the end, we will officially close the final meeting of the board. In between, we will grant recognition to several people who made a big efforts to ensure this project was implemented effectively. Now, let us invite Yo.Onon to present.

Ms.Yo.Onon: Project outcomes and fulfillment of the indicators. *(presentation)*

Ms.G.Erdenebayasgalan: We had sent you all the meeting discussion points, project sustainability plan both in English and Mongolian by e-mail in line with agreed process. I hope you all had reviewed them and assume that we will focus on project phasing out /sustainability plan by making our comments and recommendations. In terms of the meeting agenda, we have to shrink as our chair of the meeting has to leave earlier due to urgent matters.

An important issue that any project funded by international donors pays attention is how to localise the outcomes of the project, and how to ensure that local stakeholders such as, local communities, NGOs and government organisations continue the outcomes sustainably. From previously presented briefings, you might have got clear understanding on what outcomes have been achieved as a result of the project. This project sustainability/phasing out plan is based on the outcomes. The phasing out/sustainability plan has 3 key components such as, identifying outcomes, achievements and strengthened capacity; developing a plan to conform these outcomes, achievements and strengthened capacity; and defining rights, responsibilities and functions of the stakeholders. With an aim to ensure the sustainability of the plan, it was designed in compliance with action plans of the standing committees of the Parliament, main priority areas defined by the Government, and action plan of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. We had the plan reviewed by respective project stakeholders, institutions and ministries that cooperated with us and had their comments. The phasing out/sustainability plan has following sections where all actions related to conforming strengthened capacity and sustaining project outcomes are classified as below.

1. Research on improving legislative framework that support mitigation of land degradation and negative impact of developments, and offset conservation; draft laws and regulations; validation of the draft law bills and documents
2. Activities by the target groups that have increased capacity in the fields of land degradation and development impact mitigation, offset conservation, and restoration, and
3. Advanced practices and innovation activities in the area of restoration.

Your feedbacks and recommendations re these suggestions are welcome, and please provide your additional comments and recommendations after getting introduced with presentation by the consultant team.

Ms.Beate Trankmann: The presentations confirms that quite significant achievements have been reached as a result of the project. Thank you all for your presentation. From the presentations discussed, it can be seen that the project sustainability plan/phasing out plan is quite straight forward for the board members. However, there is still some challenges that we have been facing in terms of mobilizing participation of respective professional institutions in implementing offset conservation and land planning; and ensuring local mining companies invest sustainably in these measures.

We are confident that the outcomes achieved during the projects will be maintained by the stakeholders in the future. Also, the outcomes from the project can be replicated by the organizations that execute similar activities nationwide.

Now, let us have question and answer session for a while, and after that we will have coffee break.

Mr.A.Enkhat: It is very crucial that such recommendations are being developed. Also, I understand that these recommendations shall be part of the responsibilities of the provincial governors. In terms of the content, the target is clear. However, the importance basis for sustainability is to indicate the timeline and responsible subject for each action. Also, I believe that the project external evaluation report will provide more comprehensive suggestions on this matter. I am quite satisfied with the result of the project. I would like to highlight that the project played an important role in introducing or raising awareness on offset conservation concept to us. From the previous presentations, we have understood the project unit cooperated with TNC agency in effective way in order to localize this concept by supporting land

conservation planning properly, and increased the size of locally protected areas significantly. I believe also that additional information will be provided after the presentation by the consultant team.

Ms.D.Ariuntuya: My feedback is related to human resources. I mean whether there will be any recommendation or strategy about training or ensuring succession? Would be appreciated if there would be such clear recommendations about this matter.

Mr.Z.Ganbold: As a person who has been part of the project since its very beginning, I confirm the outcomes of the project. At provincial level, awareness level has been raised and both participating government organizations and local coordinators managed to take vital measures on this. At first, we had no clear idea about offset conservation plan, now we have knowledge and trying to implement this outcomes at mining sites, which I conclude was an important achievement.

Ms.G.Erdenebayasgalan: We faced and had to overcome a number of challenges to implement this project. The key for successful implementation of the project was that we had a strong team. We accept the comment from Mr. A.Enkhbat on indicating the responsible bodies for the activities listed in the plan. To respond to Ms. D.Ariuntuya`s question, through the project we have facilitated that offset conservation subject has been included in university curriculum, and now it is already 3rd. year. We will improve the phasing out plan properly in relation to this feedback. We will reflect all the comments and feedbacks you provided. Also, in relation to what was said by specialist Mr. Z.Ganbold from Uvs province, I would like to thank government and administrations of all 3 provinces for their cooperation and support.

Ms.Zabina Schmitz: An initial introduction to the preliminary results of the project final external evaluation /presentation/ was presented.

Mr.A.Enkhbat: I have 3 questions or suggestions, first, what the challenges faced by entities to implement offset were, and if they have any feedback; second, reflect the outcomes from the project into the final report in a simple way; and third, I would like to check if there is a possibility for the project unit to formulate and reflect the strategic issues into the plan.

T.Nyamsambuu: There are several environment projects being implemented in our province. Offset conservation project was quite successful in our province. Local project coordinator made a big effort to ensure the partnership and cooperation of entities and local administration was increased to implement the project successfully. Thanks to all such efforts, now we have solid outcomes from the projects. As we have

laid such a strong foundation, we are ready to continue the efforts from the local administration perspective.

Director of Finance and State Fund Divisions of Zavkhan province: Offset conservation project was quite successful in our province. In my opinion, the outcomes of the project should be encouraged by the local administration and certain budget should be allocated, plus correlation among environment protection organizations should be improved, and the concept of offset conservation should be in the center of the focus not only by mining companies but by all other stakeholders. I understand that our province should reflect certain funding to our annual budget in order to maintain the outcomes of the project.

Ms. M.Sarantuya from Bayan-Airag Company: We have been part of the project since its beginning. To comment for the last part of the presentation by the consultant team, although it is challenging that our offset conservation site is overlapped with an exploration site of another company, we are planning to cooperate with that company. I think, to maintain the sustainability plan and outcomes achieved during the projects, we have to co-work with local people, because mining activity is not continuous and it cover only certain limited period.

B.Munkhchuluun, WWF: I have a suggestion. Our organization has been in cooperation with the project on protected area issues. As per draft laws about protected areas, it would be more effective to promote that the law draft was developed by UNDP instead of by the project. I suggest the law draft should be submitted as a consolidated recommendation by UNDP. Also, in Uvs province, at the same time when this project was implemented, WWF also executed a small project on community participation in making decisions on mining and improved knowledge and awareness of local communities. The results of the both projects should be compiled together and a consolidated recommendations can be designed.

Mr. Gantumur, Director of Development Policy Department of Khovd province: I have been recently appointed to this position. The project outcome is widely appreciated by the project stakeholders. As offset conservation shall be executed based on exploration and exploitation license conditions, it would be useful that respective recommendations are sent to the provinces to clarify this. In our province, land degradation and water related issues are becoming vital, so that we should pay more attention on it.

Ms.Zabina Schmitz: Delivered a briefing on initial draft of the project final evaluation.

- Regional ecological assessment was carried out in western region successfully. On the basis of this assessment, land management plan design was revised and new design was made.
- The size of locally protected areas was increased. Registration activity was carried out and trained specialists.
- In the scope of the project, through small restoration projects, livelihoods of the local communities were supported and their income increased.
- In order to strengthen legal framework for offset conservation, respective studies were carried out to fill the gaps and remove overlaps in the relevant legislations, and draft laws and regulations were developed and handed over to relevant departments and divisions of the MET officially.
- Offset conservation plan of the project target mining company was designed and developed along with budget plan and conservation costs. The budget for Environment Management Plan of these entities was increased by 10% to 7 times compared to the pre-project budget amount.
- As part of the project, local project technical committees were established in the areas where the project was implemented and this committee was key part of the project activities. This was an good example of cooperation mechanism model that can be replicated by other projects.
- Additional activities to improve knowledge and awareness of local people need to be implemented in cooperation with NGOs and civil society organizations.
- The measures to increase the size of locally protected areas, regularize registering data into Cadaster Division of the Minerals and Oils Department, and promote the importance of these measures should be implemented.

We exchanged views with local people and organizations on ensuring sustainability of the project. There were number of attractive new ideas raised, for example, non-government organizations and civil society organizations can be mobilized to implement initiatives to improve livelihoods of local people or monitoring of the project outcome maintenance in the future. I believe, WFF has also some clear ideas on this subject. Our team members suggest that a project closing meeting be organized in each province and the phasing out plan be handed over to them officially.

Ms.Ya.Narangerel: During our field visits, we were repeatedly told by various people that the project units at soum, province and Ulaanbaatar were very effective. Also, we have witnessed that so much activities were executed within a short period of 2, 5 year. From our side, we would like to encourage the recommendation of that project closing meeting be organized in each province and believe it would bring good benefits.

Ms.G.Erdenebayasgalan: We accept your feedbacks and recommendations let me answer the questions from representatives from Uvs and Khovd provinces. When we started the project, first we made a list of areas to be protected in those 3 provinces on the basis of regional ecological assessment and made a suggestion to submit this list to the Minerals and Oil Department. The provinces that implemented this suggestion will less likely to have problem of overlapping with licenses.

Ms.A.Uyange, Officer, TNC: Our organization can be a part to implement the specific activities addressed in the phasing out plan, such as, training specialists from the western region on geo-information database, offset conservation methodologies and their application; defining scope of protection and offset conservation activities by mining entities and planning necessary steps; providing capacity building trainings on locally protected areas; and facilitating cadaster information exchange.

Mrs.A.Sainbayar, Senior Officer, MET: Once the activities are reflected into the phasing out plan, it would allow the respective departments and divisions of the MET will implement the activities in their respective fields.

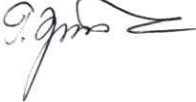
S.Enkh-Erdene, Officer, ALAMGAC: Our agency is willing to promote the capacity building activities for our land managers on land degradation and step by step mitigation, avoiding from negative impact, planning restoration and offset measures. We had cooperation with this project unit for last 3 years and had a manual published.

Ms.Beate Trankmann: Now our meeting is coming to its end. We really welcomed your feedback and comments related to the presentation. The project phasing out/sustainability plan will be updated with your comments and feedbacks and will send to you all within 14 days for your comments. Also, the report of the project final evaluation team will be shared with you all for your review within 10 days and it shall be responsibility of the project unit to follow up this decision.

Decision: In relation to the project closure, the equipment and materials such as, computers and furniture purchased with funding from donor organization shall be

handed over to the MET and local environmental offices in compliance with respective property and assets transfer policy.

Decision: Based on Board Members supporting feedbacks, it is deemed to be appropriate to solve additional financing and make clarification in the respective budget in regards with water pond extension and its maintenance work to be executed in Gurvan Jigertei bagsh of Bukhmurun soum of Uvs province and restoration and thinning measures to be held in seabuckthorn bushes in the territory of Janchiv PUG of Durvuljin soum, Zavkhan province.

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