

## Final Project Review Report

(to be reviewed and finalized by the Project Board during  
the Final Review meeting)

**Project title:** Project: Conservation of Tugai Forests and Strengthening of Protected Areas System in the Amudarya Delta of Karakalpakstan

**Award ID:** 00040973

**Project ID:** 00046600

**Implementing partner:**

**Period covered in this report:** August 2005 – December 2011

**Date of last Annual Report:** 30 June 2010

**Date of the last Project Board meeting:** 3 August 2011

### Project Performance

1. Please state the expected Output of the Project, set indicators and corresponding CP Outcome (as per the project document/AWP):

**Expected Output:** To strengthen the Karakalpakstan system of protected areas through the enhanced enabling environment and establishment of a multi-zoned National Park which demonstrates the collaborative conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Amu Darya Delta and provides lessons and best practices replicable throughout the national protected areas system.

#### Project targets for Y 2007:

- 1) Boundaries and functional zones of the Tugay BR finalized and agreed with interested parties;
- 2) Decisions are made with local khakimiyats on allotment of land for BR;
- 3) Prepared document for decision making of Council of Ministers of RK;
- 4) All structural and legal parts of the Management Plan for the biosphere reserve finalized;
- 5) Project Action Plan on all sustainable resource use components finalized and on-the-ground activities (forestry, energy efficiency, conservation agriculture, livestock management, and tourism started.

#### Project targets for Y 2008:

- 1) A new mixed use protected area established and fully incorporated into the Karakalpakstan protected areas system. The new protected area encompassed a mosaic of Tugai conservation and sustainable use zones.
- 2) Legal and regulatory framework improved, institutions, farmers and other stakeholders managed the protected areas system in a sustainable manner
- 3) New viable co-management approaches and sustainable land use practices within NP/BR buffer zone demonstrated and documented for further replication. Local communities benefited from the

more efficient land use

4) Local and regional government institutions and NGOs obtained capacity to effectively manage the NP/BR and support sustainable resource utilization.

5) Lessons and best practices on biodiversity conservation in Tugai protected area replicated throughout the protected areas system in Karakalpakstan and in Uzbekistan as a whole

6) Learning, evaluation and adaptive management increased

**Project targets for Y 2009:**

1) Package of documents for the legal establishment of the LASBR finalized and submitted to CabMin of Uzbekistan

2) Discussions with the Ministry of Finance on financing issues of the future LASBR held

3) Draft of the LASBR management plan developed

4) Initial discussions with involvement of stakeholders on the management aspects carried out

5) Afforestation and reforestation processes with participation of local communities continued

6) Marketing eco-tourism products with the main tourist agencies continued

7) Testing the energy conservation methods and techniques continued

8) Education programs for target groups prepared

**Project targets for Y 2010:**

1) Management Plan for LASBR finalized and legalized

2) Additional state funding for LASBR by approval of the Ministry of Finance legalized

3) Establishment of Low-Amudaria State Biologic Reserve (LASBR) by decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan drafted

4) Capacity of Visitor and Information centers' personnel improved, who raised awareness of people on importance of Bukharian Deers by training and providing with relevant equipment;

5) Bukharian Deers habitat area improved by conducting afforestation and reforestation activities with participation of local communities

6) Fund raising conducted for improving Bukharian Deers habitat area by development of eco-tourism

7) Anthropogenic burden on Tugai forests leading to forest defragmentation reduced by using energy conservation methods in households

8) Capacity improved and awareness of target groups on importance of Tugai forests raised through development of bulletins, educational programs and seminars.

**Project targets for Y 2011:**

1) Establishment of Low-Amudaria State Biologic Reserve (LASBR) legalized by decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan

2) Capacity of Visitor and Information centers' personnel improved, who raised awareness of people on importance of Bukharian Deers by training and providing with relevant equipment;

3) Bukharian Deers habitat area improved by conducting afforestation and reforestation activities with participation of local communities

4) Fund raising conducted for improving Bukharian Deers habitat area by development of eco-tourism

5) Anthropogenic burden on Tugai forests leading to forest defragmentation reduced by using energy conservation methods in households

6) Capacity improved and awareness of target groups on importance of Tugai forests raised through development of bulletins, educational programs and seminars.

a) Were the indicators and output achieved? Yes  No  Partially

b) if no or partially, please explain why?

## 2. Progress Reporting

a) Please summarize the main achievements during the project cycle:

### 1. A new protected area Biosphere Reserve established

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted resolution # 243 "On the organization of the Lower Amu Darya State Biosphere Reserve of the Main Forestry Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan" Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan adopted resolution # 203 "On realization of the resolution #243 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan". Cost related to land allocation for Biosphere Reserve has been estimated.

### 2. An improved legal and regulatory framework

Regulation on Lower Amu Darya State Biosphere Reserve (LASBR) was approved by the resolution #243. Norms on sustainable use of resources of biodiversity, which did not exist previously, were identified in the resolution. System of community forestry was established which identifies co-management approaches of tugai forest resources by local communities and state owned forestry departments (Leshoz).

### 3. New viable co-management approaches and sustainable land use practices within NP/BR buffer zone are demonstrated

Total number of players engaged – 119;  
21 households in forestry on 91 hectares;  
2 farmers in sustainable livestock management;  
3 owners of veterinarian stations, in sustainable livestock management;  
4 households in efficient use of energy and 86 households, 1 school, 1 kindergarten use natural gas instead of firewood;  
1 farmer agreed to participate in the sustainable use of land and water resources;  
1 private company "Berdakhenergосervis" was established.

### 4. Local and regional government institutions and NGOs have the capacity to effectively manage the NP/BR and support sustainable approaches to natural resource utilization

Conducted trainings on capacity building for seven target groups around 300 people were trained during project period. The project worked with State Committee for Nature Protection and Leshoz Authority, making sure at least 90% of employees of these agencies are sufficiently competent. At district level, Village Community Council (VCC) located in project area participated in discussion and adoption of proposals on preservation of tugai forests. Therefore, at least 90% of VCC is sufficiently competent. Lower level employees at State

Committee for Nature Protection and Forestry Department also have a certain competence, but due to their limited knowledge it did not exceed 80% of the total. Level 1 - 90%; Level 2 - 90%; Level 3 - 90%; Level 4 - 90%; Level 5 - 80%.

**5 Lessons and best practices on biodiversity conservation in Tugai protected area are replicated throughout the protected areas system in Karakalpakstan and in Uzbekistan as a whole.**

Lessons learned are presented in the materials of science and practical conference on Protection and Use of Biodiversity and passed through to all PAs in Uzbekistan. Also lessons published in International Conference on Biosphere Reserves (Kyrgyz Republic) and distributed in PAs in Central Asia. Lessons on sustainable agriculture published in the materials of the conference held in Russia and became available to all PAs of CIS. Materials on sustainable land use were presented and published on the materials of the 5th International Congress on Sustainable Farming (September Australia). Project final seminar held, where lessons learned and best practices were presented.

### 3. Issues

- a) *Please specify the issues and challenges that were raised during the reporting period to the attention of the Project Board. Describe the steps taken to solve those (Management response in ATLAS).*

Process of establishment of Biosphere Reserve took very long time due to the unawareness and limited knowledge of respective governmental organizations. Project developed whole package of documents related to Biosphere Reserve establishment and it was very challenging to promote it and provide all required additional information in details to respective ministries and state organizations as well as obtain all approvals from them. Thanks to that Resolution #243 "On the organization of the Lower Amu Darya State Biosphere Reserve of the Main Forestry Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan" of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan was adopted in 26 August 2011.

### 4. Project risks

- a) Please report on any changes with regard to the raised risks within the project cycle (e.g. risk occurred; no change and etc.). Specify the responses taken for each of those.

Lack of adequate water resources in the Amu Darya River to maintain or improve tugai coverage and quality, major droughts. - --Though poorly enforced, the Government has standards of minimum water supply allocations for the ecological purposes. WB project reconstructed channel infrastructure that may improve the situation to a certain extent in Baday-Tugay Reserve. The project provided the sites of community forestry with pipe welling for watering of wood plantings and purchased 13 water pumps for Leshoz and community forestry tenants. Work on defining the critical sites was continued and they all were supplied with water. Project analyzed necessity of additional pumps and collected opinions of local population. As a result after the analysis, 3 additional pumps were procured for community forestry tenants, thus to some degree the risk of water lack was reduced.

The Government of Uzbekistan did not support legal establishment of a BR – High risk within acceptable limits.

-- Project actively worked (in close cooperation) with all respective ministries and agencies and obtained all required approvals on package of documents on Biosphere Reserve establishment. After submission of the package of documents to the Cabinet of Ministers of

the Republic of Uzbekistan, former Project Manager Kh. Sherimbetov was in close contact with respective specialists of the Cabinet of Ministers and continuously provided necessary information required and promoted. As a result Cabinet of Ministers of the republic of Uzbekistan adopted resolution #243.

## 5. Lessons learned and follow-up steps (if applicable)

a) Please provide the lessons learned and further steps after the project's closure.

- 1) One lesson learned during the project implementation period – continuation of work in this direction, even serious obstacles exist. Each obstacle can be overcome by finding a suitable method and mechanism of action. In the project case, this was done to change the opinion of the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Karakalpakstan which was against the establishment of Biosphere Reserve. The project could not directly affect the Minister of Justice to change the opinion, but did involve higher level of the governmental organizations into resolving this issue and obtained support from them which in turn affected Minister of Justice to change the opinion. This mechanism worked.
- 2) Another lesson learned –obtaining special written commitment from the Government at the beginning stage of the project which clearly states that Government has a liability to establish Protected Area (or any other targets) during the project period. This can ensure effective implementation of the project and obtain project goal.

## 6. Transfer of Assets or other related matter

a) Please state on any past or future transfer of assets made within the project cycle (Attach list of equipment, cooperation frameworks with beneficiaries, etc.)

Project assets were transferred to the following beneficiaries in accordance with decisions of the Project 8<sup>th</sup> steering committee and Terminal Project Review meeting:

- 1) Lower Amudarya State Biosphere Reserve
- 2) State Committee for Nature Protection of the Republic of Karakalpakstan
- 3) Leshoz of the Republic of Karakalpakstan
- 4) Zoovetservice
- 5) Leshoz tenants
- 6) Community forestry tenants

For detailed information please, see attachment "Transfer document".

## 7. Financial management

Total approved budget:	<u>\$ 1,227,464</u>
Total expenditure (broken down by donor)	<u>\$ 1,213,329</u>
	<u>\$ 962,285.12 (GEF)</u>
	<u>\$ 230,945.32 (UNDP)</u>
	<u>\$ 13,734.19 (WWF)</u>
	<u>\$ 6,364 (British Embassy)</u>

Delivery rate: 98.8 %

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Endorsed by the Project Board:

[Signature] Parakhat Aytmuratov, National Project Coordinator, Chairman of the State Committee for Nature Protection of the Republic of Karakalpakstan

[Signature] Jaco Cilliers UNDP (RR/DRR)

**Checklist to be completed by the Programme focal point:**

Before completing this checklist, programme focal point has to visit the Executive Snapshot/Programme & Project Management > Overview of Awards > Select Award ID > Click on "View the Progress Report for this Award."

- Yes**  **No** Annual targets reporting is finalized in ATLAS
- Yes**  **No** Risk/issue/monitoring logs are updated in ATLAS by Project Manager and management response is updated by Programme Officer / programme focal point
- Yes**  **No** Transfer of Assets is made
- Yes**  **No** signed CDR for each implementation year is available.
- Yes**  **No** Project files are handed over by the PM and all other pending issues are settled by the PM prior to the operational closure.

*If for some boxes, "No" was checked, please provide justification:*