



**INITIATION PLAN**  
**FOR A GEF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)**

**Project Title:** Conservation and sustainable management of key globally important ecosystems for multiple benefits

**Country:** KAZAKHSTAN

**Expected CP Outcome(s)/Indicator (s):** Outcome 1.3: Ecosystems and natural resources are protected and sustainably used, and human settlements are resilient to natural and human-induced disasters and climate change.

**Initiation Plan Start Date:** 15th June 2016

**Initiation Plan End Date:** 15th August 2017

**CPAP Programme Component:** Natural resources are protected, accounted for and integrated in national and/or sub-national development planning

**ATLAS Project Award ID:** 00096173

**ATLAS Project ID:** 00100163

**PIMS Project ID:** 5696

**Duration:** 14 months

**Management Arrangement:** DIM

**Total budget:** \$ 150,000

**Allocated resources:** \$ 150,000

○ GEF \$150,000

**AGREED BY UNDP:**

*Munkhtuya Altangerel,*  
*Deputy Resident Representative*

*Munk Altangerel*  
Signature

22/6/16  
Date: day/month/year

## A. Brief Description of Initiation Plan

During the initiation plan period, a number of studies and stakeholder consultations will be undertaken with the view to further develop the approved project concept (see GEF PIF attached in Annex 1) into a fully formulated project document. The final output of the initiation plan will be a UNDP-GEF project document and GEF CEO endorsement template ready for submission to UNDP and GEF.

The overall goal of the full-sized project is to improve conservation status and management of key forest, grassland, riparian and arid ecosystems important for conservation of biodiversity, land resources and provision of livelihoods for local communities.

This project will focus on conservation and sustainable management of three threatened ecosystems, which are outstanding for their biodiversity values, role in protecting land and water resources and services to local communities. These are (1) mountain forests and grasslands of Altai, Saur, Dzungaria, Ala-Tau and Tian Shan, (2) Riparian/Tugai forests and river floodplain ecosystems of the Charyn, Ile and Syr Daria river deltas, and (3) Saxaul shrubs and deserts of Balkhash Lake district. Building on strong national baseline economic development program and co-financing, the project concentrates on addressing the suite of key root-causes of degradation of the conservation-important ecosystems, such as: gaps in the representation of the protected area system with respect to coverage of habitat of globally important species (including Snow Leopard), under-estimated valuation of ecosystem services, disengagement of the private sector and local communities from ecosystem management and restoration. The project is coordinated and complementary to the current and planned activities of the World Bank, GIZ and other stakeholders working on relevant programs in Kazakhstan. In line with STAP comments, the focus and planned outputs of the project may be modified in the course of the PPG implementation.

This objective will be achieved through the following outcomes:

- (i) Improved representation globally important biodiversity and better integration of PAs in wider landscape
- (ii) Enabling environment for sustainable management of conservation-important ecosystems in wider landscape
- (iii) Enhanced enforcement capacities and trans-boundary cooperation for global biodiversity of Altai ecosystems

The PPG Atlas budget is presented in the Section C. "Total Budget and Work Plan".

The project preparatory grant (PPG) is to prepare make sure that a full size project document is prepared in line with professional standards of UNDP GEF.

The work under the PPG will be conducted by a team of short-term national and international consultants hired and supervised by UNDP Kazakhstan, with advice from IRH and funded by GEF. In addition, the Governments, UNDP and other donor programs, listed below will provide in-kind contribution to the PPG in the form of ensuring access to necessary expertise, documents and facilities.

During the first month of the PPG respective UNDP programme staff will develop a detailed terms of reference for team of consultants, based on PPG request document and tentative Terms of Reference found in the annex. Afterwards, advertisement and recruitment process will be conducted and the work will be undertaken by selected experts in accordance with the agreed time schedule. Last four months of the PPG UNDP together with the Governments will work on compilation of all materials, drafting of medium-sized project proposal and submission of the project document to GEF.

## **B. Project preparation activities:**

The FSP document will include a detailed budget, GEF incremental cost analysis and log frame analysis that defines the project goal, objective, outcomes, outputs, including verifiable performance and output indicators and targets, means of verification. The PPG will also complete Necessary GEF Tracking Tools.

The PPG will start in April 2016 and last until the end of May 2017. The major output of the PPG will be the developed full-sized project document, which will be attained through implementing five components as outlined further.

## **A. COMPONENT 1: TECHNICAL REVIEW: IDENTIFICATION, DESIGN AND CONSENSUS ON PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

The PPG phase will support the background preparatory work needed to gather more detailed information in order to refine the design of the project activities and to identify the requirements for their implementation. This includes

*For Component I. Improved representation globally important biodiversity and better integration of PAs in wider landscape*

*For Output 1.1.1. Ecosystems with globally important biodiversity and valuable SLM functions (Saxaul, Tugai, and Mountain forests and grasslands) put under effective protection (PAs established, with zoning arrangements, management and business plans for financial sustainability, and forest management / community co-management plans modified):*

### PPG Activities:

- Clearly justify the linkages between the different target areas of the project in line with concerns expressed by the German Council Member about the scope of the project (Annex 2, comment 2)
- Clearly identified areas where new protected areas will be established under this Output. The total area must approximate 1,890,000 ha as stated in the PIF. The newly established PAs must cover representatively mountain forests and grasslands, Tugai, and Saxaul ecosystems.
- Clarify how many new protected areas will be established.
- Develop low resolution maps of newly proposed PAs, to be annexed to the Full Project Document
- Develop brief ecological and social economic descriptions for each new PA.
- Identify areas of potential conflict or co-management with local communities.
- Develop METT for each new PA, identifying 2-3 globally important/endemic/indicator species that will be used as measure of ecological progress under this project's Output.
- Describe in detail activities that the Full Size project will undertake, clarifying who and how will implement the zoning, management plan preparation, how communities will be involved and what financial mechanisms will be put in place in each PA to support conservation activities.
- The project will have to deal with smaller and more dispersed patterns, so the capacity issues of designing, planning and managing such areas will be address within the PPG scope. Although such activities are more relevant for the full-sized project implementation stage, PPG team will look at the capacity gaps and recommend appropriate capacity building

activities both at the national and local levels. This will help address the following comment of STAP:

- The project might consider using the practical development of a protected area (or a small number of protected areas) to build the capacity of the protected area agency, strengthen guidelines, policy, and legislation on protected areas)

*For Output 1.1.2.* Integrated landscape-level management plans delivered and implemented for six districts surrounding the newly established PAs (app. 4 mln ha) in land areas heavily exposed to land and forest degradation:

- Full biodiversity, soil and landscape diversity inventories,
- Areas of potential conflict between biodiversity, SLM and production activities identified;
- Species and habitat maintenance plans for buffer areas and corridors developed;
- Territorial plans finalized and set for enforcement

#### PPG Activities:

- Apply remote sensing and spectral analysis of satellite images of targeted districts.
- Develop GIS layers (economic uses, soil condition, species distribution and threats) will be produced for each district.
- Next, areas of potential conflict between biodiversity and production activities will be identified.
- Based on this, initial outlines of species and habitat maintenance plans will be designed as well as proposals for buffer areas and corridors developed.
- Develop a procedure for changing the district territorial plans at the Full Size State to comply with the biodiversity requirements as identified in the previous mapping activities
- Consult with land and nature users / local communities on the proposed land based activities in each district,
- Consider in more details the successful practices that engage not only alternative livelihoods approach but rather a complex of potential opportunities, including co-management of limited resources, inputs and benefits sharing, engagement in conservation etc.
- Review the latest data available from the Snow Leopard monitoring initiatives that are being active over the last 5 years. Based on the trends in species and habitat status, threats-causes-consequences analysis will be completed and the results will recommend the field level initiatives that would comply with needs, interests, and capacities of the local stakeholders. This will help address the following comments from STAP:
  - Consider developing a pilot community land use project in the buffer zones of these protected areas, using an on-ground process to develop national guidelines and capacities. It is likely that Kazakhstan could quickly adopt and adapt a well-tested approach, such as the Namibian CBNRM initiative which combines tourism and hunting to incentivize local communities to rehabilitate habitat and protect wildlife, including endangered species;
  - Developing a snow leopard conservation program that is linked to the above. In this way, the project develops communities-of-practice that learn by doing at field level, but are sufficiently connected at the national level to unlock barriers and institutionalize lessons and capacities. This approach might have more impact - start small and use pilot initiatives to identify and address root causes, barriers and opportunities.)

*For Component II.* Enabling environment for sustainable management of conservation-important ecosystems in wider landscape

For *Output 2.1.1*. Methodology and guidance for the integrated economic and environmental valuation of mountain forests and grasslands, Tugai and Saxaul ecosystems, are in place and integrated in national budget planning.

PPG Activities

- Take UNDP Targeted Scenario Analysis ([http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/environment-energy/environmental\\_finance/targeted-scenario-analysis.html](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/environment-energy/environmental_finance/targeted-scenario-analysis.html)), and develop a strategy of how it can be applied in the full size project, adapting it to the context of Kazakhstan.

*Output 2.1.2*. The above methodology is tested in 3 types of conservation important ecosystems (mountain forests and grasslands, Tugai, and Saxaul).

PPG Activities:

- Identify the 3 areas where the targeted scenario analysis will be tested at the full stage and develop a strategy / set of activities to carry it out at the full stage.

*Output 2.1.3*. Economic valuation methods are integrated into capacity development and professional training courses.

PPG Activity

- Define which academic institution will host the training course;
- Develop the outline of the training module.

*Output 2.1.4*. SFM and SLM principles, criteria, & indicators for each key ecosystem type in Kazakhstan are designed, based on

- Task forces for key types of conservation-important ecosystems in Kazakhstan;
- Data collection and analysis system, methodological, and technical standards, standards on monitoring of conservation-important ecosystems.

PPG Activities:

- As Part of the Targeted Scenario Analysis define which SLM and SFM indicators in the context of Kazakhstan will need to be developed and integrated into national capital accounting;
- Develop protocols for data collection and analysis system, methodological, and technical standards, standards on monitoring of conservation-important ecosystems.

*For Output 2.2.2*. Enabling environment for community / private investments into ecosystem restoration and sustainable management through:

PPG Activities:

- Participatory consultations held and initial agreements documented between communities, private sector and state on: reforming land tenure, improved pasture management, assessing demand for developing timber and non-timber forest product markets, achieving equitable revenue sharing; forest and husbandry subsidies, taxation and revenue collection systems.
- Market demand studies attached to Full Size Project for:
  - (1) sustainable grassland management (e.g. rotational grazing or perennial grasses or fodder crops);
  - (2) sustainable collection of non-timber resources;
  - (3) Private forestry.

*Output 2.2.3. Incentive-based Ecosystem Management Partnership* implemented in 3 districts to demonstrate and test the communal / private management / co-management arrangement, practices, operations, procedures, cost and revenue sharing

PPG Activities:

- Feasibility Study for the Partnership design;
- Which private and/or banking institution will be the partner;
- In which districts would it work;
- What service lines will be offered and under what conditions;
- Procedures for disbursement of incentive, collection, etc.

For Output: *Output 3.1.1. Enhanced enforcement capacities of wildlife protection agencies through:* (i) improved effectiveness of monitoring, apprehending, and prosecution of illegal activities; (ii) training materials developed and rolled out for wildlife protection agencies.

PPG Activities:

- Review and propose improvement of the existing patrolling and law enforcement systems and practices to define the major systemic gaps and restrictions caused by outdated patrolling standards and training needs. Study existing international experience in applying SMART (spatial monitoring and reporting tool) and associated benefits and troubleshooting;
- Define concretely which activities and by whom will be implemented at the full size stage.

*Output 3.1.2. Tourism loads and hunting practices and policies reviewed to release pressure on species.*

PPG Activities:

- Conduct initial analysis of tourism loads and hunting practices making a clear case about whether or not (and how) they damage biodiversity.
- Analyzes experience of Tajikistan and Namibia in the area of sustainable hunting and conservation of ungulates and prepares a justification for similar activities in the project. The conservation of ungulates through sustainable hunting and the inclusion of forest users should be explicitly addressed in the final project document as well as the direct involvement of local communities in the management and use of game species as well as the illegal trade in Saxaul.

*Output 3.1.3. System for long-term regular monitoring of Snow Leopard in Kazakhstan put in place applying internationally certified quality standards (GIS-based).*

PPG Activity:

- Connecting with The Global Snow Leopard Project (managed from Bishkek) and learning from similar activities of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan develop protocols for the monitoring system and a plan for its rollout at the full size stage.
- Verify and describe, and map the project areas for project interventions to ensure that the key ecological functions and important biodiversity values are embroidered to enable optimal landscape patterns subject to conservation and production activities. These will include PAs, production landscapes, water and soil protection areas, watersheds, consumers of ecological products and services etc. Such integrated spatial planning will help to address all three targets listed in the comment above.
- Carry out complex social and economic study and mapping within the project areas, that will include data on local communities, businesses, industries, land tenure, pasture management, timber consumption, forest products market, economic indexes of the areas, relevant institutional arrangements, all types of risks, threats, and opportunities associated with natural resources use within the project areas. This will help to address the following STAP comments:
  - For all three components, it will be important to describe in detail the social, economic, and biophysical aspects. This will determine the social-ecological structure and function

of the target areas which will be important to integrating protected areas into the wider landscape (Component 1); identifying areas of potential conflict between biodiversity conservation and agricultural/livestock production activities (Component 1); enabling and engaging communities in ecosystem restoration activities such as reforming land tenure, timber and non-timber markets, improved pasture management (Component 2); and revise hunting and tourism practices (Component 3), and will guide the identification of which of these many proposed interventions are the highest priority.

- Additionally, STAP recommends defining the spatial scale of each intervention (e.g. community) and their relationships with the scales above (e.g. watershed); and below (e.g. household) to understand the full effect of the intervention. For example, the project intends to modify, or put in place, an enabling environment to engage widely communities and the private sector in ecosystem management in the wider landscape (Component 2). Understanding the links between scales will assist in analyzing the full effect of legislative and regulatory instruments and how they need to be modified in order to achieve the intended outcome.)

**PPG Activities related to other sections of the full documentation:**

- a. To corroborate and expand the description of threats to biodiversity and barrier description outlined in the PIF. This will need to be done together with addressing the following comment of the Council and STAP:
  - Describe in detail how the project is linked to Snow Leopard Conservation.
  - 1. STAP recommends strengthening the links between the activities, outputs, outcomes and the objective. For example, the problem statement (drivers and root causes of degradation) mixes minor issues (e.g. no census of snow leopards), with symptoms (e.g. land conversion) and causes (highly centralized governance, lack of property rights, economic growth); therefore, the concept does not provide a coherent cause-effect logic for how these are related. Similarly, the pathways whereby SFM/SLM indicators and data will be translated into ecosystem outcomes need to be developed “ in addition to the pathways linking protected areas, landscape management and snow leopard conservation that are needed to reach the objective.
- Prepare the LD PMAT Tracking Tool.
- Prepare the METTs for the protected areas
- Prepare the SFM Tracking tool
- Develop Capacity Development Scorecard to measure success of Component III.
- Finalize the logical framework using the indicators from the above tracking tools and adding other indicators are relevant, using as a basis the indicators outlined in the approved PIF (pages 1 and 2 of PIF and the Table on global incremental benefits).
  - b. To collect the baseline data for indicators where needed by tracking tools, log frame indicators or other relevant project activities.
  - c. Confirm IUCN Status of species used in the project as indicators. Make sure the project focuses on conservation of IUCN species with threatened status.
  - d. To go through the STAP comments (Annex 4) and make sure that all of them have been addressed.
- I. Studies to address any opportunities/risks identified during an environmental and social screening of the project proposal.
- II. Complete the Social and Environmental Screening Tool and have it signed by CO management.

- III. Mobilize and engage stakeholders during project design. Negotiate partnerships with on-going projects to align their activities and the project to build synergies. Document these consultations.

## **B. COMPONENT 2: INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The outputs of Component 1 will be used as technical input to Component 2 for the formulation of the UNDP-GEF project document.

- I. Finalization of project results and resource framework: Further define the results and resource framework with appropriate objective-level and outcome-level quantitative and qualitative SMART indicators, and end-of-project targets. The result framework indicators should include: (i) state indicators (e.g. spatial coverage, ecosystems quality, species populations or degree of land degradation); (ii) pressure indicators (threats and drivers); and (iii) response indicators. For SFM project this should include carbon estimates. Baseline values for indicators should be quantified.
- II. Conduct full gender assessment and develop a project gender mainstreaming plan that specifies gender mainstreaming actions for different components of the project and provides gender specific indicators.
- III. Prepare community involvement plan for each project component.
- IV. Definition of monitoring and evaluation (M&E): A detailed M&E work plan will be developed, including clear identification of responsibilities and accountabilities, as well as an appropriate M&E budget. The plan will be based on the standard template provided in the UNDP-GEF project document template that reflects the mandatory requirements of the GEF M&E Policy.
- V. Define sustainability plan: The sustainability plan will outline the principles and guidelines for ensuring the long-term sustainability of project achievements. It will also outline an exit strategy, seeking the continuation of key activities/achievements without the need of long-term international financing.
- VI. Definition of management arrangements: The organisational structure governing the project will be decided. This will include identification of the project board.
- VII. Stakeholder consultations during Component B: Involve key agencies in the development of the project strategy to ensure a strong national ownership. In close collaboration with key government representatives and other stakeholders ensure full participation in the development of the project results framework and ensure agreement on the project objectives and outcomes. Undertake consultations to secure agreement(s) on project implementation arrangements, including roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities of lead and partner agencies. Document these consultations.

## **C. COMPONENT 3: FINANCIAL PLANNING AND CO-FINANCING INVESTMENTS:**

- I. Prepare a detailed multi-year budget following the standard template provided in the UNDP-GEF project document template that reflects the mandatory requirements of the GEF M&E Policy.
- II. Explore multilateral and bilateral co-financing opportunities: Undertake series of consultations meetings with partners to ensure a coherent and sustainable financing package for the project including post- GEF grant phase.
- III. Explain in sufficient detail the envisaged co-financing of the proposed GEF-project by the Government of Kazakhstan in its additionality to funding of ongoing programs as well as its feasibility in the light of the status of relevant programs and the overall budgetary situation.
- IV. Ensure completion of required official endorsement letters: Co-financing letters will be collected from participating government institutions, bilateral development partners, multilateral development partners and NGOs who wish to provide cash or in kind contributions to the project.



- V. Stakeholder consultations during Component 3: Identify and engage stakeholders during project design. Negotiate partnerships with plans to align their activities and the project to build synergies and resource mobilization. Involve key national partners in the development of the state strategy to ensure achievements of project goals. Document these consultations.

**D. COMPONENT 4: VALIDATION WORKSHOP:**

- I. A validation workshop will gather representatives from all relevant stakeholders to present, discuss and validate the final draft project document.

**E. COMPONENT 5: COMPLETION OF FINAL DOCUMENTATION:**

- I. Consolidation of all technical and consultation inputs into a clearly written UNDP Prodoc document with all relevant sections and annexes
- II. Completion of a CEO endorsement request form

**A. Total Budget and Work Plan:**

<b>Award ID:</b>	00096173
<b>Award Title:</b>	Conservation and sustainable forests management
<b>Business Unit:</b>	KAZ10
<b>Project Title:</b>	Conservation and sustainable management of key globally important ecosystems for multiple benefits
<b>Project ID:</b>	00100163
<b>Implementing Partner (Executing Agency)</b>	UNDP

GEF Outcome/Atlas Activity	Responsible Party/	Fund ID	Donor Name	Atlas Budgetary Account Code	ATLAS Budget Description	Year 2016	Year 2017	Total (USD)	Budget notes
Project preparation grant to finalize the UNDP-GEF project document for project "Conservation and sustainable management of key globally important ecosystems for multiple benefits"	UNDP	62000	GEF TRUSTEE	71200	International consultants	18,000	22,000	40,000	1
				71300	Local Consultants	35,000	39,000	74,000	2
				71600	Travel	12,000	6,000	18,000	3
				74200	Translation cost	2,000	3,000	5,000	4
				74500	Miscellaneous Expenses	1,500	1,500	3,000	5
				75700	Workshops	5,000	5,000	10,000	6
					<b>PROJECT TOTAL</b>	<b>73,500</b>	<b>76,500</b>	<b>150,000</b>	

**BUDGET NOTES:**

- 1. International Consultant to provide expertise and technical assistance in project development by mobilizing and leading the team of national experts for planning and effectively undertaking the required surveys and preparatory field work, establishing dialogue and a working relationship with stakeholders. Total amount also includes travel costs of international consultant.*
- 2. Local Consultants (6) to provide expertise, technical assistance and inputs to the project proposal. Total amount also includes travel costs of the consultants.*
- 3. Travel costs associated with international and local consultants traveling in the field to gather the necessary data and coordinate project activities with local stakeholders.*
- 4. The budget will support the costs for a translator to provide translations services for meetings to be held with international experts, and to provide translation of draft preparation documents, strategies, agendas, to share with stakeholders. The budget will also support translation of the final project document in line with national requirements.*
- 5. Miscellaneous expenses such as bank charges, insurance.*
- 6. Costs of workshops and roundtables and associated charges*

## Annex 1: GEF CEO PIF approval letter



**GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY**  
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

**Naoko Ishii**  
CEO and Chairperson

March 11, 2016

Ms. Adriana Dinu  
GEF Executive Coordinator  
United Nations Development Programme  
One United Nations Plaza  
304 East 45th St  
PF Bldg., 10th floor  
New York, NY 10017

Dear Ms. Dinu,

I am pleased to inform you that I have cleared the project concept detailed below for inclusion in the upcoming work program. I have also approved your request for project preparation grant.

Decision Sought	Project Identification Form (PIF) Clearance for Work Program Inclusion and Project Preparation Grant (PPG) Approval
GEF SEC ID:	9193
Agency(ies)	UNDP
Agency ID:	5696 (UNDP)
Focal Area:	Multi Focal Area
Project Type	Full Size Project
Country(ies):	Kazakhstan
Name of Project	Conservation and Sustainable Management of Key Globally Important Ecosystems for Multiple Benefits
Indicative GEF Project Grant:	\$8,069,178
Indicative Agency Fee:	\$766,572
PPG Grant:	\$150,000
PPG Agency Fee:	\$14,250
Funding Source	GEF Trust Fund

Break-down of Indicative Agency Fee				
Agency	Trust Fund	40% Fees to be committed at Council Approval	Fees to be committed at CEO Endorsement	Total (US\$)
UNDP	GEF	\$306,629	\$459,943	\$766,572

This PIF clearance and PPG approval is subject to the comments made by the GEF Secretariat in the attached project review document. It is also based on the understanding that the project is in conformity with

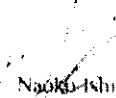
Ms. Adriana Dima

- 2 -

March 11, 2016

GEF local areas strategies and in line with GEF policies and procedures. Please ensure that your final project document, with all Secretariat and Council comments fully addressed, is submitted such that CEO endorsement can be provided within 18 months of Council approval of the work program.

Sincerely,



Naoko Ishii  
Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson

Attachment: GEF SEC Project Review Document  
Copies to: Country Operational Local Point, GEF Agencies, STAP, Trustee

**Annex 2: Terms of References for key consultants**

Type of Consultant	Titles and brief profiles:	\$/Person Week <sup>1</sup>	Estimated PWs <sup>2</sup>	Specific deliverables, tasks to be performed and links to PIF/UNDP ProDoc/CEO Request
International	<p><b><i>International Landscape Ecosystem Policy and Project Development Specialist</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5 years' experience in successful GEF project development</li> <li>- Fluency in spoken and written English essential</li> <li>- Biodiversity/natural resource management background</li> <li>- Working experience in Europe and CIS</li> </ul>	2,500	16	<p>S/he guides the work of the national consultants, in cooperation with UNDP Country office and GEF RTA, and is responsible for quality control and delivery of the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reviews baseline information delivered by the local experts, and provides feedback on the quality of data and further information required;</li> <li>- Compiles and shares with the national PPG team and stakeholders the international best experience in policy development, legal and regulatory frameworks and enforcement systems for protected area management and connectivity instruments, such as buffer zones and corridors; as well as integration of biodiversity into territorial planning</li> <li>- Develop Capacity Development Scorecard to measure success of Component III.</li> <li>- Provides support and guidance to the national team leader in planning and management of the PPG implementation,</li> <li>- Based on the inputs from national experts and in close cooperation with the key national stakeholders compiles final baseline/situational analysis for the FSP. This will include a precise definition of baseline projects, activities, budgets, goals and co-financial links to GEF outcomes; definition of GEF incremental value per outcome and output; presentation of results of the incremental cost-analysis in matrices.</li> <li>- Based on the inputs from national experts and the best international practice, prepares a quantified assessment of global environmental benefits for biodiversity, land resources and forests.</li> <li>- Based on the international experience, assists in reconfirming/specifying the project strategy, finalizing project sections on: (a) An assessment of the social, economic and financial</li> </ul>

				<p>sustainability of proposed project activities; (b) Assessment of alternatives to the project strategy and establishing the cost effectiveness of the preferred strategy and suite of activities; (c) A replication strategy for project activities; (d) Assessment of the risks to the proposed project activities and identifying measure to mitigate these risks; (e) incremental cost analysis;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Based on national experts inputs, develops project monitoring and evaluation system for the FSP including the completed tracking tool, including a set of indicators, baselines and targets.</li> <li>- Elaborates a Logical Framework of the project. Leads the workshop for the logical framework analysis;</li> <li>- Prepares M&amp;E plan and budget;</li> <li>- Analysis of the training, public awareness raising and other capacity building needs and finalizing the project's capacity training strategy and activities;</li> <li>- Based on national experts input, elaborates Stakeholder Involvement and Public Participation plans, along with an action plan for incorporation of the gender aspects in the project.</li> <li>- Based on inputs of local experts, prepares the draft of the quantified description of the global environmental benefits of the project;</li> <li>- Prepares METTs for the project target sites; LD PMAT and SFM Tracking Tool,</li> <li>- Assists in addressing comments of STAP, Council and GEF Secretariat.</li> <li>- The lead consultant would work with the Country Office to select an indicator for one of the outcomes of the IRRF.</li> <li>- The lead consultant should prepare an indicative procurement plan for the project for smooth transition to the implementation phase.</li> </ul>
Local	<p><b><i>Biodiversity expert and team Leader</i></b></p> <p>At least 10 years' experience in research and applied</p>	600	70	<p>S/he will coordinate the implementation of PPG activities ensuring inclusive, cost effective and high quality working process and results are in place. He/she is fully responsible for the following assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clearly justify the linkages between the different target areas of the project in line</li> </ul>

	<p>conservation activities in Kazakhstan          Good English language          Familiarity with the project target areas          Proven managerial skills</p>		<p>with concerns expressed by the German Council Member about the scope of the project (Annex 2, comment 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develops, with the support of the international landscape ecosystems policy and project development specialist the full sized project proposal, including an overall workplan and detailed TORs and workplans for all local consultants</li> <li>- Coordinates project preparation with all partners engaged (co-financiers, local authorities, Government).</li> <li>- Guides the work of consultants and subcontractors and oversee compliance with the agreed work plan;</li> <li>- Develops a risk analysis table, and development of risk mitigation strategy for the project to be reviewed by the international expert.</li> <li>- Arranges for the production of project maps.</li> <li>- Develops a plan for the replication of project activities, assisted by the international expert.</li> <li>- Designs project monitoring and evaluation plan, and budget, building on information from all national experts, and jointly with the international expert.</li> <li>- Analyzes institutional issues underlying the potential for village collective action needed for the project</li> <li>- Develops a costing table for all expected project outcomes and outputs,</li> <li>- Finalizes the project logical framework, with particular emphasis on ecological indicators, bird &amp; mammals. Establishes exact indicators, targets and baselines for globally importance species mentioned in Output 2.1.</li> <li>- Monitors PPG expenditures, commitments and balance of funds under the project budget lines, and draft project budget revisions;</li> <li>- Liaises with project partners to ensure their co-financing contributions are provided within the agreed terms;</li> <li>- Prepares explanation in detail the envisaged co-financing of the proposed GEF-project by the Government of Kazakhstan in its additionality to funding of ongoing programs as well as its</li> </ul>
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				<p>feasibility in the light of the status of relevant programs and the overall budgetary situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drafts an initial Action plan for incorporation of gender aspects in the project, with quantifiable baseline and target indicators, as per GEF and UNDP guidance.</li> <li>- Addresses STAP, GEF Sec and Council comments on the project.</li> <li>- Describe in detail how the project is linked to Snow Leopard Conservation.</li> <li>- Identifies of causes of retaliatory killings (one of the key threats to Snow Leopard) and ways for the project to address them.</li> <li>- Defines and describes activities needed to implement Output 3.1.3 System for long-term regular monitoring of Snow Leopard in Kazakhstan put in place applying internationally certified quality standards (GIS-based).</li> <li>- Efficient crime information exchange and law enforcement system: MIST/SMART model for information exchange for border guard and police units</li> </ul>
Local	<p><b><i>Specialist on Protected Areas planning and management</i></b>  -At least 7 years of direct contribution to research and practical engagement in protected area management in Kazakhstan</p>	400	23	<p>S/he will work in a team of experts and will be responsible for the delivery of the following outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Describes the protected areas that will be targeted by the project.</li> <li>- Prepares baseline review and maps of new areas, steps to establish them, involvement of communities, and management regimes at a landscape level;</li> <li>- Prepares action plan for appropriate PA management improvements taking into account the relevant comment of Germany;</li> <li>- Prepares baseline METT scoring for all PAs;</li> <li>- Prepares action plan for strengthened patrolling, and law enforcement systems;</li> <li>- Prepares action plan for PA and landscape zoning;</li> <li>- Prepares activities for involvement of communities in protected area management,</li> <li>- Drafts the capacity building plan for PA staff and other relevant stakeholders;</li> <li>- Defines the action plan to support transboundary initiatives.</li> </ul>

Local	<p><b>Expert on agricultural and land use management</b>          -At least 7 years' experience in developing practical solutions in the area of sustainable grassland management in Kazakhstan</p>	400	16	<p>S/he will work in a team of experts and will be responsible for the delivery of the following outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prepares a generic inventory and map of all types of land use in the project sites;</li> <li>- Prepares economic, demographic and ecological description of each district and suggestions to integrate environmental issues into economic development in these areas;</li> <li>- Defines training needs for Government and local stakeholders on integration of biodiversity into territorial planning at the target districts;</li> <li>- Defines the key land and water use practices that present current and potential threats and risks to ecological functions and biodiversity values;</li> <li>- Analyses the causes and risks of the main land and water use conflicts within project areas</li> <li>- Assist in defining and describing threats to species stemming from unsustainable use of grasslands</li> <li>- Assesses consequences for soil quality, vegetation cover and groundwater table as a result of overgrazing</li> <li>- Together with the expert on economic incentives prepares action plan and budget to involvement communities in the restoration of agricultural pasture lands and small scale livestock management infrastructure</li> <li>- Assists in preparing actions and budgets for the introduction of buffer zones and corridors for protected areas with respect to grassland use regimes</li> <li>- Provides recommendations for legal and regulatory amendments to enable introduction of buffer zones and corridors and how local communities will be affected by buffer zones and corridors</li> <li>- Works with team leader and international consultants to complete tracking tools</li> </ul>
Local	<p><b>Forestry expert</b>          -At least 7 years' experience in developing practical solutions</p>	400	24	<p>S/he will work in a team of experts and will be responsible for the delivery of the following outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides overview of the current forest</li> </ul>

	in the area of sustainable forest management in Kazakhstan			<p>management systems and standards, runs gaps analysis and provides recommendations on improvements based on international standards;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Together with the Expert on the Economic Incentives defines project activities aiming at the collaborative forest partnership with local communities</li> <li>- Assess the status of the critically threatened forests within the project areas and defines the emergency actions to restore;</li> <li>- Assists the experts and international consultant in completing the SFM and METT Tracking Tools;</li> <li>- Develop baseline and target indicators for forest management</li> </ul>
Local	<p><b><i>Economic expert</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Academic background in finance / economics and/or market-based enterprises</li> <li>- At least 5 years of previous experience in development of financial schemes with engagement of local communities in the area of natural resource management</li> </ul>	400	16	<p>S/he will work in a team of experts and will be responsible for the delivery of the following outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completes integrated social-economic study of the project areas;</li> <li>- Implements a feasibility study for the Incentive-based model of natural resource use. This will be based on analysis of relevant experience of Tajikistan and Namibia in the area of sustainable hunting. A plan for similar activities in Kaz project will be prepared.</li> <li>- Prepares overview of the progress in natural resources economic valuation theory and practice in Kazakhstan, defines gaps and propose actions;</li> </ul>
Local	<p><b><i>Project Gender Specialist</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and sustainable development;</li> <li>- at least 7 years of practical working</li> </ul>	400	10	<p>Working in collaboration with other relevant experts (i.e. the economic expert and the consultants who develop the SESP), the gender specialist will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Draft a gender strategy for the project and ensure that gender considerations are mainstreamed into all relevant components of the project document. The strategy should include a gender action plan with indicators, targets and time</li> </ul>

	<p>experience in gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment and sustainable development in Kazakhstan</p>		<p>bound outputs to advance women's empowerment and promote gender equality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a participatory gender analysis examining the different needs, roles, access to and control over resources of women and men impacted by the project within the local context; collect gender responsive baseline data relevant to project planning and monitoring; identify the share of female and male direct beneficiaries.</li> <li>- Incorporate the findings of the gender analysis into the project results framework: develop gender-responsive outcomes, baselines, targets, and indicators for the project results framework. Ensure that all applicable indicators are disaggregated by sex and other relevant, intersecting forms of identity.</li> <li>- Provide inputs to the UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure including assessing potential negative impacts of the project on gender equality and specific activities to mitigate and/or minimize them.</li> <li>- Assist the project development team in identifying and developing partnerships with local women's NGOs/CSOs and relevant national stakeholders.</li> <li>- Guide the project development team in using participatory techniques that involve both women and men in assessments and discussions; assist in organizing gender responsive stakeholder consultation sessions in order to solicit inputs and ensure both male and female stakeholder involvement and buy-in to the project.</li> <li>- As requested by the project development team, assist with capacity building and other aspects of project preparation to ensure gender considerations are mainstreamed into the project document.</li> </ul>
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### Annex 3: STAP Comments.

STAP provided comments to this project. UNDP provided initial responses. Using the initial UNDP responses as a basis, at the PPG stage the International and National consultants will work to address all comments in detail and revise the final project document accordingly or provided detailed justification for retaining the project elements as there in the PIF.

#### Initial Response to Comments of STAP

*Comment: STAP acknowledges UNDP's proposal on "Conservation and sustainable management of key globally important ecosystems for multiple benefits" in Kazakhstan. The project seeks to improve the status and management of key ecosystems in arid, riparian, forest and grassland areas which are threatened due to several reasons. A wide range of activities are proposed, including landscape management, integrating economic and environmental evaluation into national planning, creating an enabling environment for improved local management of resources, and enhanced enforcement of wildlife. STAP appreciates that the proposal seeks to address the root causes of ecosystem degradation, however it will be essential to improve on the logic and other design aspects so the project outcomes are realistic and better linked to its parent program Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Conservation Program.*

**Response:** The proponents will use the time and resources available at the PPG stage to improve the logic and other design aspects of the outcomes. We adjusted the project description at this stage to clarify that the project's overall philosophy is not about any particular region or any particular species but rather about improving the status and management of key conservation important forests and woodlands. One of them includes the landscapes of the Snow Leopard, which is why there is a formal link to the parent program. This will be further elaborated in the full size project documentation.

*Comment 1. STAP recommends strengthening the links between the activities, outputs, outcomes and the objective. For example, the problem statement (drivers and root causes of degradation) mixes minor issues (e.g. no census of snow leopards), with symptoms (e.g. land conversion) and causes (highly centralized governance, lack of property rights, economic growth); therefore, the concept does not provide a coherent cause-effect logic for how these are related. Similarly, the pathways whereby SFM/SLM indicators and data will be translated into ecosystem outcomes need to be developed in addition to the pathways linking protected areas, landscape management and snow leopard conservation that are needed to reach the objective.*

*Articulating a theory of change in the project design can help address this issue, and strengthen the likelihood of achieving the proposed global environmental benefits. When developing the theory of change, the following issues should be addressed: i) involve stakeholders in the development of the theory of change; ii) explore whether the objective can be achieved through incremental changes (adaptation) to the social-ecological system, or whether transforming the system will be required; iii) develop impact pathways that are needed to achieve the changes required to meet the objective (step ii); and, iv) adjust the theory of change to capture learning, including learning that evolves through adaptive management.*

*UNDP might consider using the Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Assessment (RAPTA) to develop the theory of change, and identify options for adaptive management. RAPTA will be soon available at [www.stapgef.org](http://www.stapgef.org), or by writing to the STAP Secretary, Thomas Hammond: [Thomas.Hammond@unep.org](mailto:Thomas.Hammond@unep.org)*

**Response:** Bearing in mind the overall forest and woodland focus of the project, we have tentatively revisited the section on drivers and root-causes of degradation to outline some of the linkages. As has normally been the case within the GEF cycle, a proper root-cause analysis will be based on investment of time and resources at the PPG stage. As advised by STAP, we are going to use the theory of change and will consider employing specific instruments such as RAPTA. The PPG team will get in touch with the STAP for advice in planning and carrying out this analysis.

*Comment 2. STAP suggests reducing significantly the scope of the project initially, and expanding as experience is gained. For instance, the project might focus on:*

- *using the practical development of a protected area (or a small number of protected areas) to build the capacity of the protected area agency, strengthen guidelines, policy, and legislation on protected areas;*
- *developing a pilot community land use project in the buffer zones of these protected areas, using an on-ground process to develop national guidelines and capacities. It is likely that Kazakhstan could quickly adopt and adapt a well-tested approach, such as the Namibian CBNRM initiative which combines tourism and hunting to incentivize local communities to rehabilitate habitat and protect wildlife, including endangered species;*
- *developing a snow leopard conservation program that is linked to the above.*

*In this way, the project develops communities-of-practice that learn by doing at field level, but are sufficiently connected at the national level to unlock barriers and institutionalize lessons and capacities. This approach might have more impact - start small and use pilot initiatives to identify and address root causes, barriers and opportunities.*

**Response:** We would like to clarify that the focus of the project is not on any single area or species. It focuses, in a system way, on biodiversity important forests, woodland and associated riparian and grassland ecosystems. The project focus stems from the “systemic” approach (vs. site-based) and the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) philosophy advocated by the GEF 6 Biodiversity Strategy, and has been designed in line with Program 2 of the GEF Biodiversity Focal Area, as well as with corresponding focal area strategies of the Land Degradation and Sustainable Forest Management Focal Areas. The project concentrates on addressing the suite of key root-causes of degradation common to all important forest and woodlands, namely: gaps in the representation of the protected area system with respect to coverage of habitat of globally important species; under-estimated valuation of ecosystem services which does not allow to make right decisions on sustainable resource use; and disengagement of local communities from ecosystem management and restoration. Considering significant level of forest and pasture ecosystem degradation not only within just the Altai or Tian Shan mountains but equally also in the riparian and saxaul forests, considering that the issues of detachment of communities from forest use are similar in all three types of ecosystems, considering that the issues of unsustainable use of forest and non-timber resources are common in all important forests, considering that all forests are falling under the jurisdiction of the Committee of Forestry and Hunting (and therefore the institutional solution base also allows to work on them effectively), considering the total funding (GEF + co-financing), proponents believe the proposed focus to be ecologically justified, cost effective, institutionally wise and doable within the context of Kazakhstan. The ecosystem approach employed in the project is similar to previous GEF projects in Kazakhstan, when the focus on wetlands, for example, included work in three different geographic areas in different parts of the country, and the focus of the deserts project similarly included two different

geographic regions. Those projects have achieved remarkable success with respect to improving the status of the targeted ecosystems and their management

At the same time, the proponents agree with the main argument of STAP on the importance of firstly showing how things work on the ground in order to show case how this can be replicated further. Partly this is already reflected in the PIF as there are practical activities at the community and site-level in Outputs 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 2.2.2 and 2.2.3. We take note of concrete advice of STAP with respect to learning from other countries in the areas of organizing sustainable hunting or tourism. At the PPG stage, proponents will do careful feasibility studies for all proposed on the ground activities and will be able to analyze site specific threats, related root-causes, as well as document intended activities and their impacts in scientifically proved way.

*Comment 3. STAP recommends researching what similar conservation/integrated economic and environment management approaches have worked elsewhere, particular in Central Asia. Learning from past, or on-going, projects (including other projects in the parent program) will strengthen the evidence used to design the project and underpin the sustainability of the proposed activities. For example, the project developers might look into the lessons and successes on creating an enabling environment for community and private investments (output 2.2.2) in South Africa and Namibia, two countries with extensive experience on these issues. Additionally, STAP recommends drawing on best practice of community rhino/wildlife management in Namibia for output 3.*

**Response:** Thank you for the comment, we take note of this and will consider the mentioned experience when conducting relevant feasibility studies at the PPG stage.

*Comment 4. For the activities on ecosystem restoration and ecosystem valuation (Component 2), more information, and analyses, will be needed. Specifically, it will be important to detail how ecosystem valuations will translate into land use incentives, and outcomes in Kazakhstan.*

**Response:** The project plans to employ UNDP Targeted Scenario Analysis ([http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/environment-energy/environmental\\_finance/targeted-scenario-analysis.html](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/environment-energy/environmental_finance/targeted-scenario-analysis.html)). This tool is designed to help the Government and communities decide on the best model of forest / ecosystem use in each of the targeted ecosystems. The targeted scenario analysis incorporate ecological as well as economic values, and once it is conducted, decisions will be made by either community or Government (depending on who has the jurisdiction over the area in question) on modifying the forest use plan so that it fits the results of the targeted scenario analysis. A properly conducted Targeted Scenario analysis will bring the most sustainable decision, which in term is the way to ensure that forests in question are managed sustainably in the long run. The details of the Targeted Scenario Analysis can be found on the link above, and a detailed plan of conducting it and building its results into updated forest use plans was going to be constructed at the PPG stage.

*Comment 5. Additionally, for component 2 the project developers could consult the following paper that characterizes the socioeconomic and agro-environmental challenges on recultivating abandoned croplands. The paper also focuses on the trade-offs between carbon stocks and biodiversity conservation, which might be useful information for designing the project. Meyfroidt, P., et al. "Drivers, constraints and trade-offs associated with recultivating abandoned cropland in Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan". Global Environmental Change 37 (2016) 1-15.*

**Response:** Thank you, this is noted and will be taken into account at the PPG stage.

*Comment 6. Component 3 as it stands is currently very broad, seeking to achieve outcomes on law enforcement, tourism and hunting management, ecological monitoring, and cross-border participation. A less ambitious focus is more likely to be successful.*

**Response:** The PIF currently indeed lists activities that address the underlying problems. The main idea of housing them in a separate component is that unlike the two previous components, Component 3 requires most of the international cooperation. International cooperation in the area of wildlife management or protection of signature species, or models of sustainable hunting, require a lot of learning. Our intention is to use the PPF phase to establish relevant partnerships with international organizations with experience in these areas. As PPG studies are completed, we refine the list of activities, group them better and supply corresponding budget tags for them.

*Comment 7. STAP recommends defining a multi-stakeholder plan that is built on a stakeholder analysis. This will be important because the project will work across sectors and scales, which increases the chances that diverse knowledge and governance arrangements will exist. Accounting for these issues is important for achieving the project outcomes that focus on strengthening landscape approaches for ecosystem management.*

*Additionally, the stakeholder analysis and plan will assist with understanding which stakeholders should be engaged, at what stage and for what purpose(s) (e.g. to achieve what outputs and outcomes). A well-functioning stakeholder plan will also be important to deliver knowledge among stakeholders and to establish a learning framework for the project. Currently, this information is not described in the PIF.*

**Response:** Thank you. Thorough stakeholder analysis and setting up of the implementation partnership is a standard important activity of the PPG stage, and we will duly take note of the STAP advice when conducting it.

*Comment 8. For all three components, it will be important to describe in detail the social, economic, and biophysical aspects. This will determine the social-ecological structure and function of the target areas which will be important to integrating protected areas into the wider landscape (Component 1); identifying areas of potential conflict between biodiversity conservation and agricultural/livestock production activities (Component 1); enabling and engaging communities in ecosystem restoration activities such as reforming land tenure, timber and non-timber markets, improved pasture management (Component 2); and revise hunting and tourism practices (Component 3), and will guide the identification of which of these many proposed interventions are the highest priority.*

**Response:** We agree, this will be duly taken into account when developing a detailed project design at the PPG stage.

*Comment 9. Additionally, STAP recommends defining the spatial scale of each intervention (e.g. community) and their relationships with the scales above (e.g. watershed); and below (e.g. household) to understand the full effect of the intervention. For example, the project intends to modify, or put in place, an enabling environment to engage widely communities and the private sector in ecosystem management in the wider landscape (Component 2). Understanding the links*



*between scales will assist in analyzing the full effect of legislative and regulatory instruments and how they need to be modified in order to achieve the intended outcome.*

*Analyzing cross scale interactions also will enable the project outcomes to be better linked to its parent program "Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Conservation Program".*

**Response:** We appreciate the comment on the definition of the spatial scales, and will duly take into account when designing detailed project activities at the PPG stage.

*Comment 10. STAP recommends building a knowledge management and learning component into the project, or linking it to the program learning. It can benefit the monitoring and assessment of the project and program.*

**Response:** Thank you for this comment. In UNDP Implementation, knowledge management and learning are default activities that we sometimes miss to specifically include in the project. We have made a note in the PIF and will consider the most appropriate place for such activities and will describe them in detail at the PPG stage.

*Comments from Germany Council Member to be addressed at the PPG stage*

Germany Council Member provided comments to this project. UNDP provided initial responses. Germany revised their comments accordingly. Using the initial UNDP responses as a basis, at the PPG stage the International and National consultants will work to address all comments in detail and revise the final project document accordingly or provided detailed justification for retaining the project elements as there in the PIF.

The first set of comments from Germany and Responses provided by UNDP and Government:

**Response to Comments from GEF Council (Germany)**

UNDP obtained a set of comments from GEF Council on the above mentioned project on 19 April 2016. UNDP shared the comments with key country stakeholders in Kazakhstan involved in the design and ownership of the project. Below is a joint response of the Government, research community and UNDP to the comments of the GEF Council.

*Comment 1: As the co-financing both by CSO and the state seems highly unrealistic, inter alia due to the current economic situation in KAZ, and the status of mentioned state programs is unclear (new phase of Zhasyl Damu program has not been confirmed, the availability of funds envisaged by the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Agriculture for 2014-2018 is unclear and the Strategy for Protected Areas System Expansion until 2030 became inoperative in 2010), Germany requests that the final proposal realistically assesses the co-financing and cooperation potentials and reflect these accordingly.*

**Response 1:** Two programs, (1) The Forestry Development Sub-Program of the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Agriculture and (2) presently developed national long term forest sector development programme – 2030, are intended to replace the “ZHASYL DAMU” program which was completed in 2014. In particular, the first programme has passed through a technical and scientific council of the Committee of Forestry and Wildlife of the Ministry of Agriculture and is subject to be further officially submitted to the consideration of the Parliament of Kazakhstan in 2016. It is expected that the Parliament will enact it by the middle of 2016. The Forestry Development Sub-Program of the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Agriculture stipulates allocation of budgetary resources exceeding US\$ 113.4 for forest and protected areas system. This is confirmed by the Government Resolution #449, 15 October 2015 issued by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan. While this is the key program related to the project, there is a number of other related ongoing inter-ministerial programs expected to be implemented between 2017 and 2022 with total amount of KZT 8.1 bln (USD 24 mln) directly related to supporting the forest and protected area systems in the targeted ecosystems. Possible co-financing from other partners and NGOs is certainly going to be pursued at the PPG stage, should the PIF be approved. A conservative estimate which sums only Government and local stakeholder initial co-funding for this project, is presented in annex table below.

Budget line	Amount, thousand USD						Total:
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
<b>Strategic Plan of Ministry of Agriculture of RK approved by Resolution of Government of RK (period of implementation 2017-2022)</b>							

1	Establishment of Tarbagatai National Park		529,4	582,2	582,2	582,2	291,1	2567,1
2	Nature conservation activities of Zhungar Alatau National Park	403,8	836,9	851,4	851,4	851,4	425,7	4220,6
3	Nature conservation activities of "Kolsai kolderi" National Park	273,5	550,5	553,8	553,8	553,8	276,9	2762,3
4	Nature conservation activities of Almaty Reserve	119,3	240,08	241,6	241,6	241,6	120,8	1204,98
5	Nature conservation activities of Charyn National park	149,8	301,3	303,1	303,1	303,1	151,5	1511,9
6	Aviation forest protection	7461,5	14923,1	14923,1	14923,1	14923,1	7461,5	74615,4
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>8407,9</b>	<b>17381,28</b>	<b>17455,2</b>	<b>17455,2</b>	<b>17455,2</b>	<b>8727,5</b>	<b>86882,28</b>
<b>Local budget of the Akimat of Almaty region</b>								
7	Nature conservation activities of Taldykorgan forest protection institution	119,8	244,1	245,5	248,5	250	125,7	1233,6
8	Nature conservation activities of Kaskelen forest protection institution	69,2	141,1	144,3	144,9	146,4	73,9	719,8
9	Nature conservation activities of Bakanas forest protection institution	111,5	226,0	229,3	230,8	232,2	116,8	1146,6
10	Pasture improvement in Kerbulak,	284,0	568	568	568	-	-	1988

	Uyгур and Balkhash regions of Almaty oblast							
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>584,5</b>	<b>1179,2</b>	<b>1187,1</b>	<b>1192,2</b>	<b>628,6</b>	<b>316,4</b>	<b>5088</b>	
<b>GRAND TOTAL:</b>	<b>8992,4</b>	<b>18560,48</b>	<b>18642,3</b>	<b>18647,4</b>	<b>18083,8</b>	<b>9043,9</b>	<b>91970,28</b>	

*Comment 2: The project addresses very different ecosystems, spread over a large geographic area, partly poorly defined in geographic terms. Intervention areas should be clearly defined and conservation values, threats and expected project impact be clearly geographically linked. As the Snow Leopard (SL) only inhabits mountain grasslands the PIF's link to the parent program is unclear, please provide further clarity. Germany hence suggests that there should be either a focus only on mountain ecosystems or the focus on SL should be given up.*

**Response 2:** The project is focusing on critical forest ecosystems. It does not intend to focus on a geographic area or one species. The project focus stems from the “systemic” approach (vs. site-based) and the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) philosophy advocated by the GEF 6 Biodiversity Strategy, and has been designed in line with Program 2 of the GEF Biodiversity Focal Area, as well as with corresponding focal area strategies of the Land Degradation and Sustainable Forest Management Focal Areas. The project concentrates on addressing the suite of key root-causes of degradation common to all important forest and woodlands, namely: gaps in the representation of the protected area system with respect to coverage of habitat of globally important species; underestimated valuation of ecosystem services which does not allow to make right decisions on sustainable resource use; and disengagement of local communities from ecosystem management and restoration. Considering significant level of forest and pasture ecosystem degradation not only within just the Altai or Tian Shan mountains but equally also in the riparian and Saxaul forests, considering that the issues of detachment of communities from forest use are similar in all three types of ecosystems, considering that the issues of unsustainable use of forest and non-timber resources are common in all important forests, considering that all forests are falling under the jurisdiction of the Committee of Forestry and Hunting (and therefore the institutional solution base also allows to work on them effectively), considering the total funding (GEF + co-financing), proponents believe the proposed focus to be ecologically justified, cost effective, institutionally wise and doable within the context of Kazakhstan.

The ecosystem approach employed in the project is similar to previous GEF projects in Kazakhstan, when the focus on wetlands, for example, included work in three different geographic areas in different parts of the country, and the focus of the deserts project similarly included two different geographic regions. Those projects have achieved remarkable success with respect to improving the status of the targeted ecosystems and their management.

With respect to even further refining the areas of intervention, at the PIF stage the following areas have been identified. As has been the case within the GEF cycle, these will be confirmed at the PPG stage, whereby for each site conservation values, site-based threats, and indicator species are going to be provided:

Targeted areas	IBA Codes	Ramsar site codes
Mountain forests and grasslands (Snow Leopard Habitat): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ South-West Slope of Zhetysu Ala-Tau</li> <li>○ Saur range</li> <li>○ Kyrgyz range</li> <li>○ Tarbagatai</li> </ul>	Kz 068, Kz 069, Kz 071, Kz 072, Kz 073, Kz 074, Kz 075, Kz 076, Kz 077, Kz 078, Kz 079, Kz 098, Kz 099, Kz 100, Kz 102 ( <a href="http://database.acbk.kz/iba_view.php">http://database.acbk.kz/iba_view.php</a> )	

Tugai/Riparian ecosystems in Syrdarya, Charyn and Ile river basins	Kz 044, Kz 090, Kz 091, Kz 092, Kz 093, Kz 094, Kz 095, Kz 096, Kz 103	Ili River Delta and South Lake Balkhash,  Lesser Aral Sea and Delta of the Syrdarya River
Saxaul ecosystems in Balkhash Lake region		Ili River Delta and South Lake Balkhash,

We would like to clarify that the link to the Snow Leopard parent program is in place since the project does include work in the mountain ecosystems of Altai and Tian Shan where the Snow Leopard is present, part of the project activities naturally are focusing on addressing threats related to this important species as well as to participation in the international cooperation related to Snow Leopard Protection.

*Comment 3: Section A.1.1 contains factual errors and misinterpretations that affect the justification of the project based on global environmental values (esp. the status of threatened species). Some “indicator species” are generalists that are not suitable for measuring project impact. Germany strongly recommends to review this section thoroughly for factual errors and to adjust it accordingly.*

**Response 3:** We have revisited Section A.1.1 and adjusted the text for any errors with respect to the status of threatened species; however we not noticed any significant errors or misinterpretations. This section of the PIF was developed and verified by a group of highly qualified scientists (ornithologist, V. Kovshar, Phd., mammologist, K. Plakhov, Phd., Florist, Dr. B. Sultanova and Florist, Academician N. Ogar.) and conservation specialists, using the latest data available in Kazakhstan. The intention of Section A.1.1 is to provide overall description of the biodiversity values of the targeted ecosystems. With respect to concrete sites, as outlined in the project site table above, the pre-selected sites within each of the three ecosystems, are indeed globally important and meet one or more KBA criteria (either Ramsar site or IBA). As further discussed in Annex 1 of the PIF, they may contain “generalist” species which can be indicative of the overall health of the ecosystem, but they certain contain globally important species as part of their KBA designation. A more profound description of biodiversity values of the sites as well as final selection of the biodiversity indicators (including baseline and target population values or threat reduction values) requires further investment of time and resources and is normally carried out at the PPG stage.

*Comment 4. The PIF describes the insufficiencies of PA management and enforcement, but the aimed increase of area coverage would exacerbate this problem. Assumptions about unsustainable legal hunting quotas are poorly justified, while actual and potential benefits of well-regulated hunting are not mentioned. Serious conflicts (e.g. between forest users and PAs in the Altai region) are not mentioned. Private financing bears the risk of exploitation through influential and wealthy groups. These factors can lead to the alienation of current land users, and the reassignment of land-use rights to third parties. The viability of intended PA expansion and the associated risks for conservation and livelihoods need to be carefully assessed.*

**Response 4:** Expansion of the Protected Area system in Kazakhstan is one of the country’s priorities in the implementation of the Aichi Targets. There are problems and deficiencies in the PA management system, but they are not so critical as to hinder work to expand the PA coverage for under-represented species. Compared to other countries in Central Asia, the investment of state finance in conservation is almost ten times higher than any Central Asian countries. The

project stems from the baseline fact that Government of Kazakhstan has a national plan to proceed with expanding its protected areas system as confirmed by the Government Resolution #449, 15 October 2015 signed by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The GEF funding would allow for the expanded PA system to improve its efficiency and better integrate communities. With GEF support in the past projects, the Government expanded its PA estate in wetland, steppe and desert ecosystems, whereby not only the management of those newly created PAs has improved, but also those projects had positive repercussions in the form of raising the central government understanding and skills in the area of PA management and providing alternative financial schemes for engagement of communities in sustainable resource management at the boundaries or within the PAs.

We have added emphasis in the PIF to the issue of unsustainable hunting quotas. At the PPG stage we are also going to study experience of other countries in the area organizing sustainable hunting and depending on the results of this feasibility analysis, this activity will then be elaborated in the project.

The proponents admit existence of the certain conflicts between forest users and forest agencies (Leskhos) due to inadequate forest land management plans for areas adjacent to the protected area. This is precisely where this project could be instrumental. By private forest ownership the proponents do not mean transfer of forests to “influential and wealthy” groups; rather it is about allowing community ownership of forests. The legal basis for this exists, and also in the 23rd article of the forest code of the Republic of Kazakhstan it addresses the potential conflicts of interest. With this project the proponents are looking to review this legal base to allow for full and effective community engagement and avoidance of conflicts. We understand that as we work on proposing expansion of PA estate in forests, all these issues need to be carefully considered and worked on, and the project does intend to have a system and balanced strategy on resolving existing and potential land use conflicts as it proposes PA expansion. This is a matter of thorough project strategy building at the PPG stage.

*Comment 5. The conservation of ungulates through sustainable hunting and the inclusion of forest users are only vaguely addressed in the PIF and the direct involvement of local communities in the management and use of game species as well as the illegal trade in Saxaul is not mentioned at all. In line with the STAP review, we recommend adopting and adapting “a well-tested approach, such as the Namibian CBNRM initiative”, including pilot projects for community-based wildlife management based on experiences by GIZ and Panthera in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Pakistan.*

**Response 5:** With respect to directly involving communities in sustainable hunting or sustainable Saxaul management schemes, the proponents plan to carefully study relevant examples from other countries, learning from international experience before proposing a Kazakhstan tailored scheme. We would welcome any support, advice and partnership with any organization with experience in this area and will be happy to work together at the PPG stage.

*Comment 6: Germany seeks clarification on how planned activities will lead to intended project impacts, especially regarding how the valuation and integration of ecosystem services will be included in decision making and how the development of land use plans translates into sustainable pasture management.*

**Response 6:** The project plans to employ UNDP Targeted Scenario Analysis (<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/environment->

[energy/environmental\\_finance/targeted-scenario-analysis.html](#)). This tool is designed to help the Government and communities decide on the best model of forest / ecosystem use in each of the targeted ecosystems. The targeted scenario analysis incorporate ecological as well as economic values, and once it is conducted, decisions will be made by either community or Government (depending on who has the jurisdiction over the area in question) on modifying the forest use plan so that it fits the results of the targeted scenario analysis. A properly conducted Targeted Scenario analysis will bring the most sustainable decision, which in term is the way to ensure that forests in question are managed sustainably in the long run. The details of the Targeted Scenario Analysis can be found on the link above, and a detailed plan of conducting it and building its results into updated forest use plans was going to be constructed at the PPG stage.

The land use plans in those districts where grasslands/pastures dominate will be designed with direct engagement of ecologists on the one hand and communities on the other. Once the updated land use plans are in place, and specific conditions for pasture use (areas, rotation, fertilization, cattle density, fodder, etc.), community pasture management schemes will be agreed formally within the project and launched. Rich experience from previous and parallel GEF projects from other ecosystems where cattle management was involved (semi deserts or wetlands) as well as experience from other Central Asia countries will be studied in depth, and detailed actions plans for these activities are going to be developed at the PPG stage.

*Comment 7: The actual situation regarding the Green Economy process in KAZ should be reflected in the proposal and there should be cooperation with sectorial agencies responsible for infrastructure to reduce threats for species.*

**Response 7:** The project proponents are closely following the political developments in the country and will certainly provide the latest information on each and every relevant program at the time of its submission. The Government would like to stress that that despite all the difficulties, sustainable natural ecosystem conservation remains one of the key directions in the Green Economy Concept approved by the Government of RK in May 2013. The project team will insure cross-ministerial cooperation, as has always been the case under GEF projects. The proponents understand that implementation of all principles of NBSAP calls for effective inter-ministerial coordination and cooperation and allows to reduce the burden of loss of biodiversity, and this principle will be translated into the project partnership strategy to be developed at the PPG stage.

*Comment 8: Using DNA markers for the SL monitoring program by at least 4 research institutions and 1 laboratory is unrealistic given the technical requirements and costs and comparably small population of the species in the country. Germany strongly suggests to consider collaborating with established and experienced foreign research institutions instead, which would far more realistically allow for technical quality and cost efficiency.*

**Response 8.** The proponents would like to stress the importance of using national capacities (and improving them) as a basis for such activities. At the same time, the team is prepared to discuss with any international experts the setup of the monitoring system to make sure that it fits within the national biodiversity monitoring system on the one hand, while is also cost-effective.

The Second Set of comments received from Germany (detailed responses to be prepared at the PPG stage):

1. Germany believes it is a necessary precondition for successful implementation of the proposed project to have a realistic estimation of the possible level of co-financing and scope of the project. The final project document should therefore explain in sufficient detail the envisaged co-financing of the proposed GEF-project by the Government of Kazakhstan in its additionality to funding of ongoing programs as well as its feasibility in the light of the status of relevant programs and the overall budgetary situation.
2. Our analysis yields the impression that the project, as detailed in the PIF, is focusing on three very different and not directly interlinked complexes of ecosystems in five large mountain systems, three river deltas and one desert region, i.e. nine large project regions. Therefore, Germany recommends, in line with the STP comment, considering possible increases in terms of effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed project by limiting the project intervention on fewer ecosystem types and project regions.
3. Germany is skeptical at this point in time that the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Conservation Program could be parent programs. According to our information the Snow Leopard (SL) only inhabits mountain grasslands. The final project document should therefore elaborate on the interlinkage between the components focusing on forest and woodland ecosystem types and the Component III focusing on snow leopard which remains not fully coherent in the PIF.
4. Germany requests a revision of the data and information presented in the preparation of the final project document. For sake of clarification we list a few items to illustrate our concerns: The PIF mentions a number of species listed on the IUCN Red List. A cross-check of the conservation status of these species should be undertaken to focus activities on rare and threatened species. It should be verified if the mentioned species' habitats do match with the project regions.
5. Germany would like to underline the importance of increasing the quality of protected area management and governance for achieving positive impacts on biodiversity conservation. We consider this an extremely important dimension of Aichi Target 11. We therefore request that the final project document builds upon a thorough analysis of these issues and elaborates clearly on envisaged improvements of management quality of protected areas.
6. The conservation of ungulates through sustainable hunting and the inclusion of forest users should be explicitly addressed in the final project document as well as the direct involvement of local communities in the management and use of game species as well as the illegal trade in Saxaul. In line with the STAP review, we recommend adopting and adapting "a well-tested approach, such as the Namibian CBNRM initiative", including pilot projects for community-based wildlife management. Experiences from German Development Cooperation in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Pakistan could inform this process.
7. The use of DNA markers for the SL monitoring program by at least 4 research institutions and 1 laboratory should be reconsidered in the light of possible cooperation with already established and experienced research institutions.



Germany recommends to carefully evaluating alternative, cost effective solutions in the further development of this project.