

Management response

PIMS 4855: Improving sustainability of the PA system in desert ecosystems through promotion of biodiversity-compatible livelihoods in and around PAs

UNDP Management response template

Final evaluation dates: **May 2018 (mission to the country); August 2018 (main data and recommendations); September 2018 (draft and final version of the report)**

Prepared: **Kerteshev T.S.**

Position: **Project Manager**

Unit/Bureau:

Approved: **Ustemirov K.Zh.**



Position: **National Project Director,
Chairman of the Project Management
Committee**

Unit/Bureau:

Input into and update in ERC:

Position:

Evaluation recommendation or issue 1

Recommendation 1:

Preparing an exit plan that describes actions that require follow-up actions after the project is closed, including time frames and responsibilities. Several issues that should be monitored after the closure of the project include, but are not limited to, the following: (a) management of the second stage of the Eco-Damu microcredit scheme; b) introduction into action of a wildlife corridor; (c) outreach efforts for scale expansion of experimental interventions and payments pattern for ecosystem services (PES); (d) putting into service of KZ-METT; (e) expanding the scope and further management of the information management systems biodata.kz and geomonitoring.kz; and (f) outreach efforts to complete the approval of the issue of expanding the Barsakelmes State Natural Reserve, proposed expansion of the Ustyurt State Natural Reserve and creation of a state reserve zone in the Mangystau region (PLU).

Management response: Comment 1

The project manager prepared the exit (closure) strategy of the project. In order to finalize the project results in June-July 2018, the project conducted a series of final events for the closure of the project in 3 pilot regions with the participation of key partners at the local level. The project, together with partners and beneficiaries, developed key measures to ensure the sustainability of the project results after its closure. In addition to it, in July present year a final meeting of the PMU was held, at which the project presented a number of recommendations to national partners (Committee for Forestry and Wildlife of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan (MOA RK), akimats of the Kyzylorda, Almaty and Mangystau regions, the Fund of Financial Support of Agriculture, etc.) to ensure the sustainability of the project results. These recommendations were sent to all national partners.

Key action (-s)	Time frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Note	Status
Preparation of the Project Exit Strategy, which includes recommendations for national partners on taking further practical measures and actions to ensure the sustainability of the project results after the closure of the project.	Through the end of the project	Project manager, project experts	-	-
Evaluation recommendation or issue 2				
Recommendation 2:				
Preparing instructions for updating the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP) and National Action Plan (NAP) on desertification control, contributing to the project results in desert ecosystems. Prepare a guide containing the recommended strategic directions for including into the updated versions of the NBSAP and the NAP on desertification control (PIU, Committee for Forestry and Wildlife MOA RK).				
Management response: Comment 2				
<p>In order to assist the Republic of Kazakhstan in updating the NBSAP for the conservation of biodiversity in 2012-2014. The UNDP project "Planning the conservation of biological diversity at the national level to support the implementation of the CBD strategic plan in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011–2020" was implemented, which was directly aimed at updating and developing the National Strategy on the Biodiversity in accordance with the goals and objectives of Aichi 2010.</p> <p>The project was a part of the UNDP biodiversity project portfolio. The result of this project was the preparation of a concept (strategy) for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Kazakhstan until 2030 and an action plan for it.</p> <p>The work on the promotion of the approval of the biodiversity Strategy at the national level was continued within the framework of the UNDP portfolio of projects on biodiversity, as well as within the framework of the Desert Project. The project team together with the UNDP and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan worked at all levels on the approval of the NBSAP, which included a number of events on the matter with the participation of the Parliament of the country.</p> <p>Currently, within the framework of the BIOFIN regional project, the activities carry on for the renewal as well as approval of the NBSAP until 2030.</p> <p>At the same time, the delay in approval of the NBSAP is associated with several factors, such as the reorganization of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the country's policy on crisis recovery, etc. Despite this, the main activities and strategic actions to preserve the biodiversity of Kazakhstan in whole were included in the Agro-Industrial Complex Development State Program for 2017-2021. The subprogram of investment (resource) programs includes the sections on forestry and development of PAs, as well as on the development of hunting and fisheries.</p>				
Key action (-s)	Time frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Note	Status
Work on updating the draft Strategy (Concept) and the Action Plan for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity until 2030.	4 quarter 2018 – 2019	Committee for Forestry and Wildlife of the MOA RK,	-	in process

Evaluation recommendation or issues3

UNDP, BIOFIN project

Recommendation 3:
Revising the agreement with the Fund for Financial Support of Agriculture concerning the use of the GEF funds after the second stage of the Eco-Damu microcredit scheme. Revising the agreement with the FFSA on the continuation (or completion) of the Eco-Damu microcredit scheme. If the parties agree to continue this program beyond the second stage of loan repayment, it is important, for example, to ensure a reserve of the provided GEF funds for the conservation of biodiversity or restoration of degraded lands, preference should be given to women and other vulnerable groups (PIU, Committee for Forestry and Wildlife MOA RK, FFSA).

Management response: Comment 3

The first stage of the Eco-Damu program was implemented in 3 project areas and the allocated program fund (0.5 million - GEF, 1.0 million - FFSA) was implemented in a short span of time. The results of the implementation of the first stage made positive changes in both ecological and economic situation of the three project areas. At the same time, there are no other similar programs in Kazakhstan for financing and supporting the initiatives of the local population living around the PAs. The implementation of the 2nd phase of the Eco-Damu program will make it possible to create a sustainable basis for supporting alternative activities, which will make a tangible contribution to the development of 28 PAs and the population living around them.

It is expected that the Committee for Forestry and Wildlife MOA RK will conduct negotiations with the management of the KazAgro JSC and the FFSA on collaborative planning and budget financing of the 2nd stage of the Eco-Damu microcredit scheme in the amount of 2.7 billion tenge.

Key action (-s)	Time frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Note	Status
Conducting negotiations by the Forestry and Wildlife Committee MOA RK with the management of of KazAgro JSC and the Fund for Financial Support of Agriculture on collaborative planning and budget financing of the second stage of the Eco-Damu microcredit scheme (2020-2024) in accordance with the terms of the Agreement between the CFW MOA RK and FFSA as of October 27, 2014.	4 quarter 2018 – 2019	Committee for Forestry and Wildlife MOA RK	-	in process

Evaluation recommendations for the project or issue 4.

Recommendation 4:

Full collection of information on the received co-financing and identification of ongoing governmental and non-governmental initiatives in the three targeted landscapes as a guide for scale expansion. It would be advisable to complete the co-financing analysis, documenting the contributions made by all co-financing partners, and outline current and planned initiatives in the three target landscapes; it would be a useful tool to facilitate the scaling.

Management response: Comment 4

The project team took into account this recommendation and completed the collection of information on the co-financing received from all national key partners. The project team will take into account for future reference as a lesson learned the implementation of regular monitoring of co-financing within the framework of new project initiatives

Key action (-s)	Time frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Note	Status
Completing the collection of the received co-financing with documentary evidence of contributions made by all co-financing partners	Before August 30, 2018	Project Manager, project experts	-	Completed

Evaluation recommendations for the project or issue 5.

Recommendation 5:

Conducting a comparative assessment of the management efficiency of the Altyrn-Emel National Park, Barsakelmes and Ustyurt state nature reserves using the KZ-METT tool and the METT version GEF-5. Conducting a parallel assessment of the management efficiency of the three existing PAs using the METT version adapted for Kazakhstan; no proof of trial application. This would provide useful guidance for checking and updating the KZ-METT (PIU, Committee for Forestry and Wildlife MOA RK).

Management response: Comment 5

The project carried out work on the analysis of existing METT techniques and international practice. The METT methodology developed by the project was tested on the example of the Altyrn-Emel National Park. In July 2018, the project assessed the management effectiveness of 15 PAs, including the pilot PAs in accordance with the Kazakhstani METT methodology. The work on the further implementation of the Kazakhstani METT methodology will continue under the new Forest Project based on the new 10 PAs.

Key action (-s)	Time frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Note	Status
Completing assessment of the management efficiency of 3 pilot PAs (Barsakelmes and Ustyurt reserves, Altyrn Emel National Park) in accordance with the METT methodology with the provision of assessment tables to the Committee for Forestry and Wildlife.	Before August 30, 2018	Project manager, PA expert	-	Completed

Evaluation recommendations for the project or issue 6.

Recommendation 6

Ensuring the transfer of equipment, completed infrastructure and other assets financed by the project to the specified owners. Project assets financed under service contracts and subsidy agreements are not included into the asset register; it would be advisable to ensure that all project assets are properly transferred before the project closure (PIU, Committee for Forestry and Wildlife MOA RK).

Management response: Comment 6

The project took into account this recommendation. The project carried out measures for the transfer of project equipment prior to the closure of the project in accordance with the decision of the final meeting of the PMC as of July 04, 2018. At the same time, we explain that, in accordance with the UNDP rules, the services provided or supported by the project were not included into the project assets register. In addition, the equipment purchased by NGOs under the Grant Agreements was not included into the project's assets, since the equipment was purchased by the NGO itself in accordance with the requirements of the national procurement legislation. Alongside this the project kept records of the equipment purchased by NGOs under the grant agreement on the ongoing basis and the PMC provided for the subsequent transfer of this equipment to the beneficiaries of the pilot projects.

As of August 30, 2018, all assets were transferred to the pilot PAs and partners according to the decision of the PMC dated July 04, 2017.

Key action (-s)	Time frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Note	Status
Performing arrangements for the transfer of project equipment and project assets to the beneficiaries and project partners.	Before August 30, 2018	Project manager, project team	-	Completed

Evaluation recommendations for the project or issue 7.

Рекомендация 7:

Scaling up the joint PA management activities with local communities. It would be advisable to expand the scope of joint agreements of PAs with local communities, for example, including joint monitoring and patrolling, concession agreements on tourism, etc. (PA Authority, Committee for Forestry and Wildlife MOA RK).

Management response: Comment 7

The project and the Committee for Forestry and Wildlife MOA RK agree with this proposal. CFW will take into account the experience, approaches of the project in the creation of Public Councils at the pilot PAs (Barsakelmes State Nature Reserve, Ustyurt State Nature Reserve and Altyr Emel National Park), and include in the work plan arrangements aimed at ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of the activities of the Public (Coordination) Councils affiliated with PAs.

Besides, within the framework of a new project on the conservation of forest ecosystems, it is planned to introduce the mechanisms for joint management and monitoring of forest resources and components of biodiversity, as well as the prevention of forest fires.

Key action (-s)	Time frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Note	Status
Inclusion into the work plan of the Committee for Forestry and Wildlife of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan of arrangements aimed at ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of the activities of the Public Councils under Pas.	2019 - 2020	Committee for Forestry and Wildlife of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan	-	

Evaluation recommendations for the project or issue 8.

Recommendation 8:

Strengthening the microcredit scheme by providing an integrated package of services. Considering an integrated package of services, rather than just giving out microcredits; for example, offering insurance, enterprise development (in terms of management training, marketing support), and social welfare services (for example, gender training). (Committee for Forestry and Wildlife MOA RK, Fund for Financial Support of Agriculture).

Management response: Comment 8

The project thanks for the recommendation. The project, together with Committee for Forestry and Wildlife MOA RK, developed guidelines for the preparation of applications in accordance with the priorities of the Eco-Damu microcredit scheme. CFW takes into account this proposal, and as a part of the implementation of the second stage of the Eco-Damu, together with the FFSA, the issues of training, business planning and marketing support for applicants will be more widely considered.

Key action (-s)	Time frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Note	Status
Development of an integrated package of services for microcrediting, including issues of training, monitoring, marketing support, business planning, etc.	2019 - 2020	Committee for Forestry and Wildlife MOA RK, FFSA	-	-
Evaluation recommendations for the project or issue 9.				
<u>Recommendation 9:</u>				
Developing an additional project focused on the adaptation of desert-based ecosystems. Strengthening the supportive environment associated with biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management provides a strong core capacity for ecosystem-based adaptation in the target desert ecosystems. (Committee for Forestry and Wildlife MOA RK, UNDP).				
Management response: Comment 9				
The project team together with UNDP and the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan will conduct negotiations on the preparation of a similar application and the introduction of the mechanisms of adaptation to climate change and desertification.				
Key action (-s)	Time frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
Negotiations with the Ministry of Energy and Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the development of a new project to demonstrate the mechanisms of adaptation to climate change on the example of the desert regions of the country.	4 quarter 2018- 1 quarter 2019	UNDP, Committee for Forestry and Wildlife of the MOA RK	Note	Status
			-	In process

Evaluation recommendations for the project or issue 10.

Recommendation 10:

The project completed an economic assessment of the feasibility of allocating the Mangystau nature reserve a wildlife sanctuary of 2,676,262 hectares in the Mangystau region, but the development of this specially protected natural area has not been implemented.

Management response: Comment 10

This project initiative has been completed; the delay in the creation of the Mangystau nature reserve was due to the lack of funding from the Government. The corresponding technical documentation has been prepared (ENO and feasibility studies). At the same time, the Committee for Forestry and Wildlife of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan included the costs of creating the Mangystau nature reserve in the Work Plan for 2019-2020.

Key action (-s)	Time frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Note	Status
Completion of the creation of the Mangystau State Nature Reserve	2019 - 2020	Committee for Forestry and Wildlife of the MOA RK	-	In process
Evaluation recommendations for the project or issue 11.				
<u>Recommendation 11:</u>				
Expansion of the Barsakelmes State Nature Reserve by 2,300 hectares was approved by the resolution of the Akimat of the Aral region dated June 22, 2017, and on October 10, 2017 - by the akimat of the Kyzylorda region. Approval at the national level is pending. Another feasibility study might be needed.				
Management response: Comment 11				
The project team explains that the following land management project for the expansion of the territory of the Barsakelmes State Natural Reserve was agreed and approved at all levels. Plots of land for the expansion of the reserve were allocated locally. Currently, the Committee for Forestry and Wildlife of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan is working on the preparation and launch of a draft decree of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the expansion of the Barsakelmes Nature Reserve. The completion of work by the Expansion Committee is expected by the end of this year.				
Key action (-s)	Time frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
Completing the measures to expand the territory of the Barsakelmes State Natural Reserve, in particular, works on the preparation and approval of a draft resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the expansion of the reserve in accordance with the procedure established by law.	4 quarter 2018 - 1 quarter 2019	Committee for Forestry and Wildlife of the MOA RK	-	In process

Evaluation recommendations for the project or issue 12.

Recommendation 12:

Kazakhstan continues to implement the PA rating system developed several years ago. Based on the observations during the mission on the final assessment, PA administrations were familiar with the earlier rating system, but were somewhat confused about the recently developed management effectiveness assessment tool. It will take some time to implement these two systems concurrently, or perhaps to decide on the termination of one of them, if this requires an unnecessarily large amount of time or excessively high costs from PA administrations.

Management response: Comment 12

The project team is grateful for the comments and explains that the Committee for Forestry and Wildlife of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan has decided to implement the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) by including it as a section of the PA Management Plan. At the stage of preparation / revision of PAs' management plans, this will allow an impartial assessment of the effectiveness of PAs management, identify weaknesses and strengths, gaps in the activities and management of PAs, develop appropriate actions or measures to reduce them in the framework of PAs management plans. Approval of the changes and additions to the existing Rules for the Development of Management Plans for PAs is expected until the end of 2018.

Key action (-s)	Time frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Note	Status
Making amendments to the Rules for the Development of PAs Management Plans on the inclusion of the assessment of the effectiveness of PAs management into the PAs Management Plan	4 quarter 2018 - 1 quarter 2019	Committee for Forestry and Wildlife of the MOA RK	-	In process

Evaluation recommendations for the project or issue 13.

Recommendation 13:

The ecological corridor "Kapshagay-Balkhash" is located on the territory of 5 administrative districts. It is very important that local authorities and land-use stakeholders coordinate and cooperate in the operation process of the corridor. There is no data on the corridor management plan, including specific objectives, management problems, roles and responsibilities.

Management response: Comment 13

The project thanks for the comments and just would like to add that the Project developed the Regulation on the management of the eco-corridor "Kapshagay-Balkhash". In August 2018, the Project held discussions on the Regulation on the eco-corridor with the participation of the Committee for Forestry and Wildlife MOA RK, local authorities of 5 administrative districts, the Institute of Zoology, the Altyrn Emel National Park and the Ile-Balkhashs nature reserve. The finalized Regulation was by sent standard operation procedure to the Akimat of the Almaty Region for approval. The provision was taken into account by local akimats, the executive agency and other concerned parties.

Key action (-s)	Time frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Note	Status
Development and approval of the Regulation on the ecological corridor "Kapshagay-Balkhash". Development and approval of the Passport of the ecological corridor "Kapshagay-Balkhash"	3-4 quarter 2018 - 1 quarter 2019	Committee for Forestry and Wildlife of the MOA RK, the akimat of the Almaty Region	-	In process

Evaluation recommendations for the project or issue 14.

Recommendation 14:

It will be necessary to conduct regular training, stay on top of technological advances and take into account the staff turnover. Data on all PAs at the national level will need to be introduced into the information management systems, and the management and update of the systems will require the necessary funding.

Management response: Comment 14

The project notes that the introduction of sustainable use of informational technologies in the field of ecosystems and biodiversity monitoring requires continuous training and capacity building. The project paid great attention to the issue of enhancing the capacity of pilot PAs and other partners in this area; in total, more than 10 training sessions were conducted, where more than 100 employees of pilot PAs and other organizations were trained. Currently, the Biodiversity Monitoring Information System covers 7 national PAs. The Committee for Forestry and Wildlife is highly interested in expanding the Information the Biodiversity Monitoring System and including all PAs of Kazakhstan in it.

Key action (-s)	Time frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Note	Status
Consideration and inclusion of measures to expand the Information System for monitoring the biodiversity of Kazakhstan into the budget plan of the Committee for Forestry and Wildlife of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2019-2021	2019 - 2021	Committee for Forestry and Wildlife of the MOA RK	-	-