

SIGNATURE PAGE

Country: Turkmenistan

UNDAF Outcome(s)/Indicator(s):
(Link to UNDAF outcome., If no UNDAF, leave blank)

UNDAF Outcome 4: By the end of 2009 a comprehensive approach to environmentally sustainable principles and practices is integrated into policies at all levels and into community development to improve social well-being
Country Programme (CP) outcome 1: Environmental policies and their implementation are aligned with international principles and standards
CP Output 4.1.3 Improved institutional and legal framework for environmental management and enforcement
CP Output 4.1.5 Core staff of the MNP and The State Commission are better able to implement global environmental agreements and environmental policies

Expected Outcome(s)/Indicator (s):
(CP outcomes linked to the SRF/MYFF goal and service line)

Expected Output(s)/Indicator(s):
(CP outputs)

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DATE

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UNDP Project Document

Turkmenistan
United Nations Development Programme

PIMS 3961

Atlas Award ID: 00057539

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3961 Strengthening the management effectiveness of the protected area system of Turkmenistan

Brief description

The globally significant biodiversity of Turkmenistan is partially protected through a system of protected areas covering nearly 4% of the territory. Under current conditions, the Protected Area System (PAS) of Turkmenistan is however not effectively safeguarding the country's unique biodiversity because: (i) a number of natural ecosystem processes, habitats and species are not adequately represented in the existing PAS; (ii) the capacity of the institutions responsible for the planning management of the protected areas is under-developed, particularly in respect of the mainstreaming of protected areas to better align with local and regional socio-economic priorities.

The **long-term solution** proposed by this project is a reconfigured system of protected areas that is designed to protect a representative sample of Turkmenistan's biodiversity under an effective and adaptive management regime. Grant funding is thus sought to help the state of Turkmenistan to consolidate and physically link a number of proximate fragments of different categories of protected areas with high biodiversity significance, into a single, more cohesive management unit - a national park.

Funding will be used to develop a policy, planning and operational framework for the establishment and management of a network of national parks as part of an integrated national system of protected areas in Turkmenistan. Project activities will include: (i) the establishment of national norms and standards, operational guidelines and financing mechanisms for the PAS of Turkmenistan to guide and direct the establishment and administration of national parks; (ii) the updating and reform of the legislative and regulatory framework to support the establishment and management of national parks; (iii) the piloting of national park establishment processes in the South-West Kopetdag; (iv) the development of institutional and financing mechanisms for national parks; and (v) the development of national park planning and management skills within the MNP.

The increment of the project in terms of **global environmental benefits** is represented by: including 100,000 ha of desert and mountain landscapes under protection; increasing the management effectiveness at the PA level (from a METT baseline of 29-32% to a METT target of >40% for the eight territories of the SNR's, including IUCN Category I and III PAs); strengthening the overall PA institutional capacity (from baseline of 52%, 44% and 33% for the systemic, institutional and individual capacity in the Capacity Assessment Scorecard to 76%, 72% and 54% respectively); and an increase in the financial sustainability of the PAS (from baseline of 31% in the Financial Scorecard to a score of >48%). In the long-term (by 2015 and beyond) the threats to biodiversity - such as the cutting of woodlands and forests for commercial and fuelwood needs, clearing of land for agriculture and afforestation, drainage of water meadows, overgrazing by domestic livestock and over-exploitation of individual species - will be contained at the level of the entire expanded PA system of the country, covering an area of at least 2,050,000 ha..

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ACRONYMS

APR	Annual Project Report
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BD	Biodiversity
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
CBD	Convention on Biodiversity
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CO	UNDP Country Office
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
EA	Executing Agency
FFPD	Fauna and Flora Protection Department (of the MNP)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HDI	Human Development Index
IA	Implementing Agency
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
IBA	International Bird Area
IR	(Project) Inception Report
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IW	Inception Workshop
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MA	Ministry of Agriculture
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MNP	Ministry of Nature Protection
MST	Ministry of Sport and Tourism
MWI	Ministry of Water Industry
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NEAP	National Environment Action Plan
NEX	National Execution
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NIDFF	National Institute of Desert Fauna and Flora
NP	National Park
PA	Protected Area
PAS	Protected Area System
PASP	Protected Area System Plan
PEWG	Park Establishment Working Group
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
PoWPA	Programme of Work on Protected Areas
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PTR	Project Technical Report
RCU	UNDP-GEF Regional Coordination Unit
RSBP	The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SBAA	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement
SMP	Strategic Management Plan
SO	Strategic Objective
SOE	State of Environment
SR/SNR	State Reserve/ State Nature Reserve (Strict Nature Reserve)
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

TBD	To be determined
TBWP	Total Budget and Work Plan
TNPS	Turkmen Nature Protection Society
TOR	Terms of Reference
TSHF	Turkmen Society of Hunters and Fishermen
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WWF	World Wild Fund for Nature

SECTION I: Elaboration of the Narrative

PART I: Situation Analysis

1.1. Context and global significance

Environmental context

1. Located in the western part of Central Asia, Turkmenistan covers an area of some 491,200 km². In the north, Turkmenistan borders the Republic of Kazakhstan; in the east and northeast, Uzbekistan; in the south, Iran; and in the southeast, Afghanistan. The natural boundaries of Turkmenistan are formed by the lower and middle courses of the Amudarya River in the east, the Caspian Sea in the west (from Garabogaz to the foothills of the Astrabad Mountains), the southern part of the Ustyurt Plateau in the north and the Kopetdagh in the south. The majority of the country (~80%) comprises sandy desert with dunes. In the south, low to medium mountains are located along the border with Iran (Kopetdagh) and Uzbekistan (Kugitang). The elevation varies from -92 m (Akhchakaya depression) to 3,139 m (Mt. Aiyrbaba in the Kugitang range). Average annual precipitation is less than 150 mm over most of the country, except the mountains of Kopetdagh and Kugitang. The river network in Turkmenistan is poorly developed. The lower parts of the Murghab and Tedjen rivers are lost in the Karakum Desert, and only the large Amudarya River at times reaches its delta.

2. Turkmenistan's biodiversity is both globally and regionally important as a result of its bio-geographical location between the European, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and Asian floral and faunal regions. Three floristic provinces – Kopetdagh-Khorasan, Mountainous Central-Asian and Turan – overlap in the territory of Turkmenistan. The country consequently has a very high level of species and genetic diversity. A broad range of natural ecosystems currently exists in the country covering various types of deserts, riparian wetlands, lakes, mountain forests, and the Caspian Sea and its shores. There are approximately 3,000 known flowering plants (828 genera and 118 families) of which 493 species are endemics, the majority of which are concentrated in the mountainous areas. The Red Data Book of Turkmenistan (1999) includes 109 species of plants, a large proportion of which (64 species) are endemic. Approximately 718 vertebrate species have been identified including 104 mammals, 376 birds and 82 reptile species. Although far from complete, the inventory of invertebrates includes some 8000 insect species (it is estimated that there may be more than 18,000 invertebrate species), of which 44 are listed in the Red Data Book. Turkmenistan has a particularly significant reptile fauna - ten species are national endemics and 25 regional endemics. A number of other fauna species and sub-species are regional endemics and some (e.g. Bukhara deer, North Persian leopard, white-headed duck and small Amu-Dar shovelnose sturgeon) are globally threatened. The Caspian Sea is noted for a great number of endemic fish species. Most of these endemics belong to the herring and bullhead families of which seven species and subspecies of sturgeon are of economic importance. There are 115 species of fish, of which a number are anadromous and migrate from the Caspian up the rivers to spawn.

3. The territory of Turkmenistan falls within one of the WWF Global 200 ecoregions (palearctic deserts and xeric shrublands) and two of the Global Biodiversity Hotspots (Mountains of Central Asia and Irano-Anatolian). The Kopetdagh Mountain Range, which straddles the border between Turkmenistan and Iran, forms an extension of the Irano-Anatolian biodiversity hotspot reaching far into the dryer steppes of Central Asia. This 'peninsula' of species richness and endemism, combined with the mainly subtropical climate of southern Turkmenistan, provides the conditions for a significant overlap of Mediterranean, Central Asian and Turanian bio-geographical regions. The western part of Turkmenistan lies along one of the main corridors for migrating birds between the western Palearctic and Africa. Within the Caspian Sea the shoreline of Turkmenistan is an internationally important staging post and wintering area for waterfowl migrating from the breeding grounds of the Volga Delta and areas further north. The Turkmen coast of the Caspian is also an important feeding area for several threatened species of sturgeon. Turkmenistan falls within one of the eight global centers of plant crop diversity, Asia Minor (Vavilov, 1935). It harbors significant populations of wild relatives of important crop plants including pistachio, grapes, figs, apples, pears, cherries, plums and almonds.

Protected area system

4. As part of an integrated strategy to respond to these threats, Turkmenistan has established a system of protected areas (PAs) to conserve its globally significant biodiversity. Currently the protected area system (PAS) covers 1,934,200 ha, approximately 4% of the country's territory. The PAS encompasses: eight Strict Nature Reserves or *Zapovedniks* or State reserves (equivalent to IUCN management category I) covering 820,024 ha; 17 Natural Monuments (IUCN management category III) covering 20,200ha; 14 Reserves or *Zakazniks* (IUCN management category IV) covering 1,061,206ha; and the protected zones of the *Zapovedniks* (IUCN management category V) covering 63,600 ha.

5. Several strategic priority actions for improving the coverage and effectiveness of the protected area system (with spatial recommendations for the localities of consolidated, rationalised or new PAs) in Turkmenistan have been described in the State of the Environment report for Turkmenistan (SOE, 1998), the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP, 2002) and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP, 2002). These include: (i) developing a 'functional network' of protected areas; (ii) expanding and rationalising the Strict Nature Reserves; (iii) reviewing the conservation status of the current PAs; (iv) establishing new national parks and (v) establishing new PAs in under-represented habitats. In response to these strategic priorities, the Ministry of Nature Protection (MNP) has drafted a package of project proposals to direct the rationalization and expansion of the PAS (Draft *Main Trends of Development of Protected Area System up to 2030*, 2009). The MNP have specifically proposed the establishment of 4 consolidated strict nature reserves (Big Balkhan, Prikarabogaz and South West Ustyurt, West Uzboy, Karabil), 6 National Parks (Central Karakum, Magtymguli, Balkan, Koytendag, Serhetabad, Archabil), more than 10 Reserves and nearly 100 Natural Monuments within the next 20 years. This complements the preliminary proposals made by WWF/UNDP for the siting of protected areas forming part of the proposed ECONET for Turkmenistan (*Designing of ECONET for Long-term Biodiversity Conservation in Central Asia*, 2005). With the support of the Succow Foundation, the MNP are currently in the process of completing feasibility assessments for the creation of a number of national parks and/or reserves, notably in the Sumbar river valley in South-West Kopetdagh, the central Kopetdagh, the Central Karakum and the central Balkhan.

6. A more comprehensive overview of the system of protected areas in Turkmenistan, and an assessment of their representivity, is attached as a separate report.

Socio-economic context:

7. Turkmenistan is divided into five provinces or *welayatlar* (singular *welayat*) and one capital city district. The provinces are subdivided into districts (*etraplar*, singular *etrap*), which may be either counties or cities. According to the Constitution of Turkmenistan (Article 16 in the 2008 Constitution), some cities may have the status of *welayat* (province) or *etrap* (district).

Table 1. Administrative division of Turkmenistan

Division	Capital city	Area	Population (2005)
Ashgabat City	Ashgabat	470 km ² (180 sq mi)	871,500
Ahal Province	Anau	97,160 km ² (37,510 sq mi)	939,700
Balkan Province	Balkanabat	139,270 km ² (53,770 sq mi)	553,500
Daşoguz Province	Daşoguz	73,430 km ² (28,350 sq mi)	1,370,400
Lebap Province	Türkmenabat	93,730 km ² (36,190 sq mi)	1,334,500
Mary Province	Mary	87,150 km ² (33,650 sq mi)	1,480,400

8. Turkmenistan is largely a desert country with intensive agriculture in irrigated oases and sizeable gas and oil resources. One-half of its irrigated land is planted in cotton; formerly it was the world's 10th-largest producer. Poor harvests in recent years have led to an almost 50% decline in cotton exports. It possesses the world's fifth-

largest reserves of natural gas and substantial oil resources. With an authoritarian ex-Communist regime in power and a tribally-based social structure, Turkmenistan has taken a cautious approach to economic reform, hoping to use gas and cotton sales to sustain its inefficient economy. Privatization goals remain limited. From 1998-2005, Turkmenistan suffered from the continued lack of adequate export routes for natural gas and from obligations on extensive short-term external debt. At the same time, however, total exports rose by an average of roughly 15% per year from 2003-08, largely because of higher international oil and gas prices. A new pipeline to China, set to come online in late 2009 or early 2010, will give Turkmenistan an additional export route for its gas. Overall prospects in the near future are discouraging because of widespread internal poverty, a poor educational system and a reluctance to adopt market-oriented reforms. Although foreign investment is encouraged, numerous bureaucratic obstacles remain. Turkmenistan has taken a cautious approach to economic reform, hoping to use gas and cotton sales to sustain its economy. Privatization goals remain limited. Between 1998 and 2002, Turkmenistan suffered from the continued lack of adequate export routes for natural gas and from obligations on extensive short-term external debt. At the same time, however, the value of total exports has risen sharply because of increases in international oil and gas prices. Economic prospects in the near future are discouraging because of widespread internal poverty, the burden of foreign debt, the decrease in oil prices and the general downturn in the global economy.

9. Turkmenistan has defined its development goals in the following national programmes: *Strategy of Socio-economic Transformation of Turkmenistan in the Period up to 2010* and *Strategy of Economic and Political and Cultural Development of Turkmenistan up to 2020*. In early 2007, the Government of Turkmenistan, under the leadership of the new President, announced an economic and social reform agenda known as the *New Revival*. In 2008, as part of this agenda, the Government prepared the *National Strategy on Economic Revival and Reform up to 2030*, which identifies priority directions for social and economic development. These strategic programmes encompass all social spheres and sectors of the economy and are fully compliant with the MDGs.

10. Recent years have seen impressive economic growth (PPP GDP of ~29,65 billion US\$, and a growth rate of ~10%, in 2008), largely as a result of high international energy prices. Yet a moderate rise in per-capita income (GDP per capita in 2008 was estimated at US\$6,100) masks continued income inequalities and significant sub-regional social disparities. In 2004, the unemployment rate was estimated to be 60% and the percentage of the population living below the poverty line was estimated at 58%. To address social disparities and unemployment, the Government adopted the *National Programme on improvement of living conditions of the people in villages, settlements, district cities and district centres up to 2020*. Turkmenistan has made some progress in a number of social indicators. The HDI for Turkmenistan of 0.713 currently gives the country a rank of 109th out of 177 countries with data (UNDP 2007/8 Human Development Report). Successful programmes have recently been implemented in the health sector, with very positive and steady trends in the reduction of maternal and child mortality rates. Immunization coverage has been maintained at an average of 95 percent for several years, and the country was certified polio-free in 2002. The country has also sought to improve the education systems, unified the country's dual currency exchange rate, ordered the redenomination of the *manat*, reduced state subsidies for gasoline, increased internet access both in schools and internet cafes, ordered an independent audit of Turkmenistan's gas resources, and created a special tourism zone on the Caspian Sea.

Institutional context:

11. The Ministry of Nature Protection (MNP) is the main overall executive body responsible for natural resource protection and sustainable management in Turkmenistan. Within the MNP, the Flora and Fauna Protection Department (FFPD) has the overall responsible authority for, *inter alia*: natural resource management, hunting management, legislative compliance, issue of import/export licenses, and trade in biodiversity products. It coordinates research work undertaken in protected areas, coordinates planning for the protected area system, maintains databases on flora and fauna and updates the Red Book of Turkmenistan. The FFPD is staffed by a small core of 5 persons: the head, a deputy head and 3 specialist staff. The operational management unit for the protected areas is the territory of the Strict Nature Reserve (SNR or *Zapovednik*). Each of the eight SNR's is

headed up by a Director and Deputy Director, is staffed with administrative, inspectorate, scientific and labor personnel, and has its own infrastructure and equipment. The Reserves (*Zakazniks*) and Natural Monuments located within the territory of each SNR fall under the operational management authority of that SNR, and are also financed from the budget of the SNR. In 2008, the total staff complement of the eight SNRs comprised 391 people (176 administrative and financial management staff, 173 enforcement and compliance staff and 42 scientific staff). The SNRs are primarily funded from the State Budget, through the Ministry of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan, with supplementary income from fines and levies and a limited number of economic activities. The total wage, operating and capital budget for the SNRs in 2008 was 14141, 7 million Manat¹. The National Institute of Deserts, Flora and Fauna (NIDFF) also falls under the Ministry of Nature Protection and, together with the State University, constitutes the currently existing research expertise on biodiversity and conservation in Turkmenistan. Research work of the National Institute of Deserts, Flora and Fauna is conducted within the framework of the Program of the President of Turkmenistan, 'Basic Directions' of *The strategy of economic, political and cultural development of Turkmenistan till 2020*. The Institute's staff complement consists of 101 persons ((58 researchers, 20 technical staff and 23 maintenance staff) with 9 specialized scientific disciplines, including biodiversity in protected areas, and one administrative and managerial section. The Ministry of Sport and Tourism (MST) is the *de facto* management authority for Natural Monuments where these fall outside the territories of the SNRs, although little or no conservation works are undertaken in these PAs. A number of national NGOs actively participate in the sphere of nature protection. The largest of them, with representations in velayats, etraps, towns, enterprises and organizations, are the Turkmen Nature Protection Society (TNPS) and the Turkmen Society of Hunters and Fishermen (TSHF). A more comprehensive and detailed description of the different protected area institutions in Turkmenistan, and an analysis of their capacity, is attached as a separate report.

Legislative context

12. Article 36 of the Constitution of Turkmenistan provides the enabling national policy framework for environmental legislation. Since gaining independence in 1991 the country has adopted key national legislation to guide and direct the use and management of its biodiversity, the most important of which include the Law on Nature Protection (1991); the Law on State Protected Areas (1992); the Law on Protection and Rational Use of Flora (1993); and the Law on Protection and Rational Use of Fauna (1993). The implementation of this legislation is, in turn, guided by normative regulations, including but not limited to those relating to: State Reserves (1995); State Reserve Protected Areas (1995); State Sanctuaries and Natural Monuments (1995); Natural Monuments (1995); State Nurseries of Rare and Endangered Flora and Fauna Species (1995); the Red Book of Turkmenistan (1997, as amended); and the Ministry of Nature Protection (2000). The use of individual species and/or individual sites is also directed by a range of different policies, legislation, regulations, measures and norms and standards. Examples of these include the: Law on Hunting and Hunting Management (1998); Rational Use of Poisonous Snakes, Poisonous Arthropods and Products of their Life Activity (1992); Measures for Protection of Wild Licorice, Poisonous Snakes and Products of their Life Activity (1992); Measures for Conservation and Use of Karlyuk Caves and Other Flora Natural Monuments of Kugitang Mountains of Charshangin etrap of Lebap velayat (1992); Regulations on Fish Stocks Protection and Fishery Management in Territorial Waters and Internal Ponds of Turkmenistan; and Standards for Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) (2000). Turkmenistan is also a signatory to a wide range of international conventions, including the CBD, UNCCD and the UNFCCC.

1.2. Threats, causes and impacts

13. The ecological integrity of Turkmenistan's globally significant biodiversity is under pressure from a number of **threats**. The *first* threat is the incremental loss or degradation of habitat as a result of the conversion or unsustainable exploitation of natural ecosystems. The cutting of woodlands and forests for commercial and fuelwood needs, as well as the clearing of land for agriculture and afforestation, has resulted in the incremental

¹ US\$1 = 14274 Manat

loss of natural habitats. Particularly affected have been the desert-adapted Saxaul (*Haloxylon* spp) woodlands, the riparian *Tugai* forests, and the mountain forests. Rich water meadows have increasingly been drained, resulting in loss of species diversity and wholesale reduction of important reed bed habitats. Fragile desert, semi-desert and wetland areas have suffered severely from overgrazing by domestic livestock, resulting in natural pastures being replaced by more weedy species unsuitable as forage. Unsustainable irrigation and afforestation schemes have resulted in desiccation of forest and wetland habitats, alteration of local hydrological regimes and salinisation of ground water. The water ecosystems are also particularly vulnerable to water-borne industrial and agricultural pollutants. The *second* threat is the over-exploitation of individual species due to the poorly regulated hunting and fishing industry. Populations of Gazelle, Argali (Wild Sheep) and Wild Goat have decreased significantly. In some arid areas of the country a number of endangered species such as the Argali, Asiatic Wild Donkey, Pheasant, See-See Partridge, Black Francolin and Leopard are already locally extinct. Private interests in the caviar trade have promoted the overfishing of sturgeon stocks in the Caspian Sea. Collection of birds of prey for the falconry trade, particularly to the Arab states, has increased, as has collection of threatened reptiles, such as Horsfield's tortoise, for the burgeoning pet trade.

1.3. Long-term solution and barriers to achieving the solution

14. The long-term solution proposed by this project is a reconfigured system of protected areas that is designed to protect a representative sample of Turkmenistan's biodiversity under an effective and adaptive management regime. This ideal solution requires that PA agencies have adequate systemic, institutional and individual capacity to: (i) identify, prioritize and target gaps in representation that can be filled through PA expansion efforts; (ii) plan and resource the management of the expanded PAS; (iii) mitigate the threats to, and pressures on, the unique biodiversity contained within the PAS; (iv) better align PAs with local and regional socio-economic development priorities; and (v) respond effectively to the needs of, and meaningfully involve, local communities living in and around PAs without compromising the ecological integrity of those PAs.

15. The main barriers to realizing this solution are:

Barrier 1. Inadequate size, representation and management objectives of PAs: Although Turkmenistan's current system of protected areas adequately conserves 9 of the 17 major ecosystems in the country and 80% of its faunal and floral diversity (>85% of the Red Data Book species), a number of important habitats are still poorly represented. The majority of the protected areas are situated in mountains, forests and wetland ecosystems, while desert ecosystems are inadequately represented. The Karakum desert, which covers some 80% of the country, is currently represented by only two PAs - Repetek in South-Eastern Karakum and Gaplanyr in North Karakum. A number of unique ecosystems in the Central Karakum desert and the Balkhan region are inadequately protected. The West Uzboy desert freshwater lake ecosystems (e.g. Yazkhan, Topiyatan and Karategelek) that are inhabited by relictual invertebrate, fish and aquatic reptile species are also not effectively conserved within the current PAS. The existing PAS is also too small and fragmented both in terms of coverage, and in terms of the size of individual protected sites to ensure adequate protection of species, and the integrity and viability of ecological processes. In terms of PA management objectives, the system is heavily biased towards strict nature reserves (IUCN management category I) which are managed for scientific research only, and completely preclude access by the public for recreation or tourism purposes, and any form of sustainable use by local communities. This strict protection approach is no longer considered appropriate in the new political and socio-economic context of Turkmenistan. To address this, the government of Turkmenistan is planning to introduce the "National Park" as a new PA management category, but currently there are no national parks in the country or dedicated institutions capacitated to administer and manage national parks.

Barrier 2. Poor systemic, institutional and individual capacities for protected areas planning, management and financing: The enabling legislative, regulatory, policy and planning framework for protected areas (including the Law on Nature Protection, 1991; the Law on State Protected Areas, 1992; the Law on Protection and Rational Use of Flora, 1993; the Law on Protection and Rational Use of Fauna, 1997; and a number of *ad hoc* provisions regulating certain aspects of biodiversity management) requires some modernization to better align it with

international conventions and new innovations in PA planning and management. Areas requiring specific attention include the need to: (a) re-align the classification of, and nomenclature for, protected area categories with regional (Central Asia) and international best practice; (b) develop or strengthen the economic incentives and instruments that support the establishment and management of protected areas; (c) better harmonize the protected area legislation with other national land use planning and management legislation and policies (e.g. Forestry Code, Water Code, Land Code); (d) better align the activities of protected area with local and regional socio-economic priority needs; (e) reforms and standardize the approach to the establishment, planning, management and performance monitoring of the different categories of PAs; (f) develop mechanisms to ‘mainstream’ biodiversity and PA management into the planning and management of other productive sectors; (g) create a more enabling legislative, planning and institutional environment for effective trans-boundary collaboration and cooperation; and (h) develop better protocols for the early detection, rapid response and eradication/control and management of invasive alien species. The establishment, planning and management costs of the protected area system in Turkmenistan are almost exclusively funded by the state. This annual grant allocation is administered by the different departments of the MNP, and implemented by the respective administrations of the Special Nature Reserves. Although budget allocations from the state have remained steady over the last three years, there are still inherent inefficiencies in funding flows and *in situ* expenditures (notably in capital expenditure), with the result that approved budgets are often under-spent. Long bureaucratic budget approval processes, slow payment of suppliers, lack of contractors for specialized services and equipment, weak financial planning abilities and limited financial management skills at PA level have been suggested as causes for this under-spend. There also are currently no financial mechanisms and instruments in place for generating and retaining revenue streams, so there are no incentives for PA managers to innovate alternative income generating income from PAs. There are also no incentives mechanisms (financial or otherwise) to offset the impacts of PAs on local communities living in and around the PAs. There is a notable lack of coordinated involvement of different stakeholder groups in the establishment, planning, management and monitoring of PAs. There is also a limited capacity for optimizing opportunities for increased cooperation and collaboration with neighboring countries in trans-boundary PA management. This is further exacerbated by the limited specialised protected area technical, operational and management skills in protected area planning and operational management staff (e.g. strategic planning, co-management, conflict resolution and community participation).

1.4. Stakeholder analysis

16. The Department for Fauna and Flora Protection, the National Institute of Desert Fauna and Flora and the territories of the eight Strict Nature Reserves, the overall direct supervision of the *Ministry of Nature Protection* (MNP), will be the main departments/institutions within the MNP responsible for different aspects of the project development process. They will work in close cooperation with other affected public institutions, including: Ministry of Sport and Tourism (State Committee for Tourism and Sport), Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Industry; and the affected *Welayat*'s and *Etrap*'s. The project will focus stakeholder engagement at two levels of intervention: (i) working with national and local public institutions and agencies in order to strengthen their capacity to consolidate, expand and effectively manage the PAS and to align project activities with government's strategic priorities; and (ii) working directly with civil society organizations, formal and informal use rights holders, and individuals to mitigate impacts and optimize benefits of project activities. Table 2 below describes the major categories of stakeholders and their involvement in the project.

Table 2: Key stakeholders and roles and responsibilities

Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities
Ministry of Nature Protection	MNP will, primarily through the Deputy Minister and the department for flora and fauna protection, be responsible for the overall coordination of the project. It will also be a primary beneficiary of project activities. The MNP will chair the Project Steering Committee (PSC)
National Institute of Desert Fauna and Flora	NIDFF will work in close cooperation with the MNP. It will contribute to the project through: technical and scientific support to the design of a

Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities
	representative system of protected areas; scientific support to the preparation of feasibility assessments) for the four priority areas; specialist inputs into legal reform processes; scientific support to the establishment of the Sumbar NP. The NIDFF will be a member of the PSC.
Territories of the Strict Nature Reserves	The SNRs are an important partner in, and beneficiary of, the project – notably the Syunt-Hasardag SNR and the SNR’s forming part of the priority areas for feasibility assessments. They will be involved in the project through: technical inputs into the development of the PASP; direct support to, and involvement in, the feasibility assessments of the priority areas and the establishment of Sumbar NP; review of management and governance options for NP’s, including the option of expanding the SNP mandate to include NP’s; technical inputs into the legal reform processes; technical inputs into the financial sustainability planning for NP’s; and involvement of staff in the skills development and training programs for national park staff. The territories of the SNRs will be represented on the PSC.
Ministry of Sport and Tourism	The MST, through the State Committee for Tourism and Sport, is an important partner in the project. It will actively participate in the review of management and governance options for NP’s and the development of the PASP. It will be directly involved in the feasibility assessments for the four priority areas, and the establishment process for the Sumbar NP, notably in respect of the administration of natural monuments and development of nature-based tourism enterprises. The MST will be a member of the PSC.
Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Water Industry	The MA and MWI will be actively involved in the project through its inputs to the feasibility assessments of the four priority areas and the establishment processes for the Sumbar NP.
Provincial (<i>welayat’s</i>) and Local (<i>etrap</i>) Government	The affected provincial and local municipalities are important project partners. Where relevant, they will actively participate in; the feasibility assessments for four priority areas; and the planning and establishment process for the Sumbar NP. The <i>etraps</i> and <i>welayats</i> will be represented on the PSC.
National and regional NGOs	Relevant national NGOs such as the TNPS and the TSHF will be encouraged to take active role in implementing project activities, notably in the involvement and beneficitation of local communities in Sumbar NP. National and local NGOs will actively participate in the stakeholder engagement processes for all project activities. A representative from the national NGOs will be a member of the PSC.
Academic and research institutes	Relevant national and regional academic and research institutes will contribute to the project through, for example, local scientific surveys and specialist mapping.
Representatives of local communities	Inhabitants of the villages or settlements in and around the planning domain for Sumbar NP and the four targeted priority areas for PA expansion will be made aware of the issues and invited to take part in the decision making process. They will be represented in the local working committees and actively involved in the project activities relating to the feasibility assessments and the establishment of Sumbar NP. Their cooperation will be sought in implementing project activities including resource protection, alternative income development (e.g. nature-based tourism), awareness raising, etc.
National and local press and media	The project will cooperate with national and local press and media on public awareness issues.
UNDP-Turkmenistan	The roles and responsibilities of UNDP-Turkmenistan will include: Ensuring professional and timely implementation of the activities and

Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities
	delivery of the reports and other outputs identified in the project document; Coordination and supervision of the activities; Assisting and supporting MNP in organizing coordinating and where necessary hosting all project meetings; Contracting of and contract administration for qualified project team members; Manage and be responsible of all financial administration to realize the targets envisioned in consultation with MNP; and Establishing an effective networking between project stakeholders, specialized international organizations and the donor community. The UNDP will be a member of the Steering Committee

1.5. Baseline analysis

17. Turkmenistan is facing considerable challenges in the ongoing socio-economic development of the country, and the construction and maintenance of the requisite infrastructure and services to support this. Government resource allocations are thus prioritised at addressing these fundamental needs. In the light of this, budget commitments to support the protected area system will – at least in the short to intermediate term - continue to be modest.

18. Under the ‘**business-as-usual**’ scenario, the Government of Turkmenistan will continue to commit adequate financial resources to sustain the basic administrative and operational needs of the protected areas, and will provide limited technical, research and professional capacity to support the planning and expansion of the protected area system. Despite a strong political commitment to create a network of national parks as a mechanism to consolidate the spatially fragmented *Zapovedniks*, *Zakazniks* and Natural Monuments in Turkmenistan, the extent of the protected area system will continue to remain largely static due to: (i) the absence of a common approach to national park establishment; (ii) a weak enabling legislative framework for the establishment of national parks; (iii) limited knowledge of, and experience in, national park establishment and management processes; (iv) limited incentives to encourage use rights holders to incorporate land into a national park; (v) ongoing disagreements between stakeholder institutions and land use rights holders; and (vi) a lack of clarity about the institutional arrangements for, and financing of, national parks.

19. Under the **baseline scenario² for project component 1** (‘expanding the PAS to improve representivity and coverage’), the network of protected areas would remain highly fragmented over the short-term, with critical areas of under-represented habitats (e.g. Central Karakum desert, freshwater desert lakes) continuing to remain outside the formal protected area estate and key ecological processes (such as water catchments) still poorly protected. Although the MNP will formalise and adopt the *Main Trends of Development of the Protected Area System up to 2030* (US\$10,000), it will probably not have adequate capacity or resources to finance its implementation in the short-term. The Succow Foundation will provide ongoing technical support to the MNP in the assessment and planning of two national parks in the South-West (i.e. Sumbar) and Central Kopetdagh regions (US\$150,000), but the lack of an enabling national policy, legislative, regulatory and institutional framework for national park establishment will seriously hamper park establishment efforts. Ongoing research and inventory efforts in and around protected areas by the NIDFF (US\$351,765), supplemented by information from the International Bird Areas project (US\$105,000), will continue to provide an important repository of knowledge on the state of the biodiversity of Turkmenistan and the identification of priority areas and species for conservation action. Research into the distribution, early identification and control of locust outbreaks in Kopetdag, Kugitang and Garagum desert (US\$50,000) will support the mitigation of threats to the biodiversity of protected areas in these regions.

20. Under the **baseline scenario for project component 2** (‘strengthening the institutional and individual capacity to manage the PAS’), the institutional resources and capacity for the management of the existing

² The cost estimates for the baseline scenario are total baseline costs projected over the three years of the GEF project

protected areas will remain focused on maintaining and strengthening, wherever possible, the management effectiveness of the *Zapovedniks*, the 'buffer zones' of the *Zapovedniks*, the *Zakazniks* and the Natural Monuments (US\$7,500,000). The operational management focus will however remain on the eight *Zapovedniks*, with the management activities in the remaining protected areas directed at mitigating the threats to, and impacts on, these areas primarily through compliance and enforcement activities. Despite this effort, the ecological integrity of the *Zakazniks*, and 'buffer zones' will continue to be diminished through illegal, unsustainable or inappropriate uses in and around these protected areas such as intensive and extensive agricultural activities, illegal hunting and afforestation. Financing for protected areas will continue to be sourced almost exclusively from the state budget, with limited incentives or opportunities to raise income from other sources. Efforts to reform the Law on Nature Protection, Law on State Protected Areas and Laws on the Rational Use of Flora and Rational Use of Fauna (US\$60,000) will progress slowly, and will not be properly aligned with initiatives to establish national parks. Institutional and individual capacities will continue to be developed in the Amudarya, Badkhyz, Kopetdag and Syunt-Khasardag Reserves under the WWF project 'Conservation of Rare Species of Animals at Specially Protected Natural Territories' (US\$97,300). Systemic, institutional and individual capacity of the Khazar Nature Reserve will be strengthened under the GEF/UNDP project 'Conservation and Sustainable Use of Globally Significant Biological Diversity in Khazar Nature Reserve on the Caspian Sea Coast' (US\$1,706,600). The Michael Succow Foundation will support capacity building activities (experiential training visits for 6-7 staff to German national parks, bursary scheme for 4 staff to study in German universities) for MNP staff (US\$80,000), with a specific focus on the planning and management of national parks. However, the skills and capacity of PA staff to plan and manage national parks will remain under-developed. Further, in the absence of the successful establishment of national parks, the knowledge will remain largely academic and not applied in practice. Public and institutional resistance to the expansion of the current protected areas will continue due to their perceived lack of relevance to the socio-economic and recreational needs of the populace. The conservation management status of the different categories of protected areas in the PAS for the baseline scenario over the short-term may be summarized as follows:

Table 3. Conservation management status of the different categories of protected areas

PA Category (IUCN-equivalent)	Responsible Institution	Institutional capacity	<i>In situ</i> staff complement	Management infrastructure and equipment	Financing	Management Plan
Ib. <i>Zapovednik</i>	MNP – territory of State Nature Reserve	GOOD	YES (138 staff)	GOOD	~US\$2,5 million per annum	LIMITED (3 completed to date)
III. Natural monuments	MNP – territory of State Nature Reserve	LIMITED	NONE (staff of territory of State Nature Reserve)	LIMITED (use infrastructure and equipment of the territory of State Nature Reserve)	Budget covered by Territory of State Nature Reserve budget	NONE
	Ministry of Sport and Tourism	LIMITED	NONE	LIMITED (use infrastructure and equipment of the territory of State Nature Reserve)	No dedicated allocation of funds	NONE
IV. <i>Zakazniks</i>	MNP – territory of State Nature Reserve	LIMITED	NONE (staff of territory of State Nature Reserve)	LIMITED (use infrastructure and equipment of the territory of State Nature Reserve)	Budget covered by Territory of State Nature Reserve budget	NONE
V. Buffer zone of <i>Zapovedniks</i>	MNP – territory of State Nature	LIMITED	NONE (staff of territory of	NONE (use infrastructure and equipment of the	Budget covered by Territory of State Nature	NONE

PA Category (IUCN-equivalent)	Responsible Institution	Institutional capacity	<i>In situ</i> staff complement	Management infrastructure and equipment	Financing	Management Plan
	Reserve		State Nature Reserve)	territory of State Nature Reserve)	Reserve budget	

Part II: Strategy

2.1 Project Rationale and Policy Conformity

Fit with the GEF Focal Area Strategy and Strategic Programme

21. The project is aligned with GEF's Strategic Objective (SO) 1 of the Biodiversity focal area, 'Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Areas Systems'. The project is consistent with Strategic Programme (SP) 3 of SO 1, 'Strengthening Terrestrial Protected Area Networks'. The project aims to enhance the coverage and management effectiveness of the protected area system by piloting - within the broader framework of a more representative system of terrestrial protected areas - the establishment of the first National Park in Turkmenistan, and by strengthening the capacities at the systemic, institutional and individual levels to establish and manage a future network of national parks across the country. The project will contribute to the achievement of GEF's main indicators under this priority programming area as follows:

Table 4. Project contribution to GEF-4 BD Indicators

Relevant GEF-4 BD Strategic Program (SO)	Expected outcomes	Relevant GEF-4 BD Indicators	Project contribution to GEF-4 BD Indicators
Strengthened Terrestrial Protected Area Networks	<p>Improved ecosystem coverage of under-represented terrestrial ecosystems areas as part of national protected area system</p> <p>Improved management of terrestrial protected areas</p>	<p>Terrestrial ecosystem coverage in national protected area systems</p> <p>Protected area management effectiveness as measured by individual protected area scorecards</p>	<p>Grounds prepared to extend the protected area system by app. 300,000 ha</p> <p>Protected area system coverage increase from a baseline of 4% to 4.2% of the terrestrial surface area of Turkmenistan</p> <p>The eight territories of the Strict Nature Reserves increase their METT scores from a baseline of 29-32% to all >40%</p> <p>Financial sustainability scorecard increases from 31% to >48%</p> <p>Capacity development scorecard increases from a baseline of 52%, 44% and 33% to 76%, 72% and 54% for the systemic, institutional and individual capacity scores respectively</p>

2.2 Project Goal, Objective, Outcomes and Outputs/activities

22. To complement the government's efforts in expanding and strengthening the PAS in Turkmenistan, and in responding to the above barriers, the project has the **objective** of 'creating an enabling environment for the establishment of a functional, effective and ecologically coherent system of protected areas in Turkmenistan'. The project has two **components** – along with their associated outcomes, outputs and activities - which will contribute towards achieving the project objective. These are: Component 1. Expanded Protected Area System (PAS) to improve PA representation and coverage; and Component 2. Adequate institutional and individual capacity is in place for the management of the PAS. The project will focus activities at two levels of intervention: (i) the national level, through working with public institutions and agencies in order to develop the capacity to consolidate, expand and effectively manage the PAS; and (ii) the local level, through working directly with the target groups and local communities in order to establish the first National Park in Turkmenistan in the Sumbar river valley in the SW Kopetdagh mountains.

Component 1: Expanded PAS to improve PA representation and coverage.
The project will have 3 outputs under component 1:

Output 1.1: A Protected Area System Plan (PASP) is prepared as a comprehensive foundation for a representative PA system. Work under this output is focused on supporting the Fauna and Flora Protection Department (FFPD) of the MNP in preparing a Protected Area System Plan (PASP) for Turkmenistan. The PASP will outline a strategic national approach to making quantifiable progress towards the establishment and management of a comprehensive, adequate and representative terrestrial protected area system. The development of the PASP will include:

- (i) Describing the current protected area system context in Turkmenistan, and briefly summarizing global reviews of best practice in protected area establishment, planning and management.
- (ii) Defining the policy framework for the PAS of Turkmenistan, including inter alia the: vision, guiding principles and values.
- (iii) Developing a common approach to the application of the different IUCN protected area categories in the classification of PAs in Turkmenistan. This will include drafting a minimum set of criteria and management objectives for the different categories of protected areas, including national parks.
- (iv) Establishing explicit short- and long term spatial targets for a representative protected area network design³ that: (a) aims to contain samples of all ecosystems at the appropriate scale; (b) aims to contain areas which are refugia or centers of species richness or endemism; (c) considers the ecological requirements of rare or threatened species, communities or habitats; and (d) takes account of special groups of organisms (e.g. ranging or migratory species).
- (v) Developing a standardized approach to the establishment of protected areas. This will include guidelines on: (a) technical requirements for feasibility assessments; (b) stakeholder participative processes; (c) requirements for formal agreements from directly affected stakeholder groups; (d) mechanisms for the delineation of protected areas; (e) requirements for ongoing communication with different stakeholder groups; and (f) formal proclamation procedures.
- (vi) Preparing objectives and guidelines for the operations planning and management of different categories of protected areas. This may include the requirements for: management plans; responses to common biological management issues such as locust outbreaks, fire, invasive alien species control, rehabilitation/restoration and wildlife management; applied research and monitoring; enforcement and compliance; 'mainstreaming into local/regional development; neighbor relations; tourism/recreational facilities and services; natural resource use; stakeholder engagement; and co-operative governance.
- (vii) Identifying the broad options for the sustainable financing of the different categories of protected areas.
- (viii) Identifying the role of the private and NGO sector in recreational and tourism enterprise development opportunities in protected areas.

³ Biodiversity conservation planning methodologies may be used to support the optimal configuration design for the PAS

- (ix) Identifying the reporting requirements to monitor management effectiveness of protected areas and the protected area system.
- (x) Identifying the institutional roles and responsibilities in protected area planning, management and monitoring.

A national working group comprising senior representatives of the MNP, FFPD, SNRs, NIDFF, Ministry of Sport and Tourism, other affected Ministries, NGOs, research institutions and funding agencies will be constituted by the Project Management Unit (PMU) to oversee the development of the PASP. The technical preparatory work for the PASP will be undertaken directly by an international protected area consultant and a national counterpart, under the guidance of the Project Management Unit (PMU). A participative process will be undertaken by the service providers in the iterative drafting of the directions, including focal issue-based workshops with research institutions, university faculties, provincial Velayats, district etraps, other ministries, State Corporation of Tourism and Sport, NGOs and/or individual scientific specialists. The international and national consultants will also be required to develop and implement a mentoring programme for key counterpart staff in the SNRs, NIDFF and FFPD during the iterative development of the PASP.

Output 1.2: Feasibility assessments are completed for 4 priority areas. Work under this output is focused on supporting the FFPD of the MNP in preparing feasibility assessments for four priority areas targeted for protected area expansion: the Central Kopetdagh; Khugitang; Central Karakun; and Balkhan. The objective of the feasibility assessments is to determine the social, ecological, economic, institutional and political feasibility of rationalising existing protected areas to form a consolidated National Park, or the establishment of a new National Park, Zapovednik or Reserve (Zakaznik), in these four priority areas. A key question that the feasibility studies will address is how to integrate local economic development with the conservation goals for the protected areas, while establishing a balance of benefits that can be supported by all stakeholders. For each priority area, the activities under this output are directed at, inter alia:

- (i) Defining a planning domain for each priority area
- (ii) Describing the biodiversity characteristics, socio-economic situation and heritage features of the planning domain
- (iii) Describing the legal, institutional and political context of the planning domain
- (iv) Mapping the biodiversity elements (species, habitats, ecological processes), land uses (protected areas, settlements, agriculture, etc.) and threats (outbreaks of locusts, IAS, overgrazing, erosion, etc.) within the planning domain
- (v) Identifying different PA establishment options within the planning domain
- (vi) Assessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) of each PA establishment option and selecting a preferred option
- (vii) Undertaking a detailed cost-benefit analysis of the preferred PA establishment option
- (viii) Identifying the key actions required to initiate the establishment processes for the preferred option, including an estimate of the costs, indicative timelines and institutional roles and responsibilities for each of the actions
- (ix) Outlining a plan for the mobilisation of resources (including identification of funding and partnership opportunities) to support the PA establishment process
- (x) Developing a strategy for the consultation and participation of different stakeholder groups in the PA establishment process
- (xi) Consolidating the information from activities (i) – (ix) into a ‘feasibility assessment report’ for approval and adoption by the MNP

The Michael Succow Foundation for Protection of Nature will, in partnership with MNP and the PMU and co-financed by GEF funding, fund and implement the feasibility assessments for the PA expansion areas. A critical component of each feasibility assessment will be the ongoing communications with stakeholders and active participation of affected institutions, organizations and individuals. It is envisaged that a working group, representing the different interest groups, be constituted and maintained as a reference group during the course of

each feasibility assessment process. This will be supplemented by bilateral discussions and negotiations with each of the key stakeholders to address specific issues of concern. The feasibility assessments will be technically supported by relevant staff of the NIDFF.

Output 1.3: Sumbar National Park is established. Work under this output will focus on supporting the MNP in establishing the first national park in Turkmenistan. The preliminary planning domain for the proposed park is the Sumbar river valley of the South-west Kopetdagh and includes an area of some 150,000ha (see preliminary map below – Succow Foundation, 2009⁴). The planning domain falls within the Makhtumkuli etrap district. It includes within its limits a number of existing, but spatially fragmented, protected areas: (a) three discrete sites – Serdar (2,807ha), Bakharly (2,093ha) and Makthumkuli (21,561ha) – comprising the territory of the Syunt-Hasardag Strict Nature Reserve; (b) the Syunt-Khasardag Zakaznik (3,800ha); and (c) ten Monuments of Nature. The planning domain is located within the Irano-Anatolian biodiversity hotspot. Approximately half of all species of plants known in Turkmenistan grow in the region, 38% of which are considered ‘narrow endemics’. Of the 138 animal species documented in the Red Data Book of Turkmenistan (1999), 62 (46%) occur in the region. The planning domain for the park also has an extensive range of well preserved archaeological, cultural and historical settlements, dating back to the New Stone Age (~6,000 B.C). Potential tourist attractions include the: Pomegranate gardens in Shihbedire, Tutlykala; the waterfalls in Koshtemir; and the healing springs in the Parkhaey region.



The selection of the South-west Kopetdagh as the preferred site for testing the efficacy of national park establishment processes corresponds closely with the priorities identified in the National Biodiversity Strategy

⁴ The final planning domain for the park will be available at the end of April, 2009

and Action Plan (2002), the National Environmental Action Plan (2002), the ECONET project (2005) and, more recently, the Main Trends of Development of the Protected Area System up to 2030 (2008). Further, the Order of the Ministry of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan (No 36 of April 29, 2003), on implementation of the Decree of the President “On National Environmental Action Plan of President of Turkmenistan Saparmurat Turkmenbashi” (No. 6007 of December 2, 2002), requires that a National Park in the Makhtumkuli etrap must be established within the period 2003-2010.

Two detailed feasibility studies for the Sumbar National Park, prepared by the Wildlife Protection Center Fund (2006) and the Succow Foundation (in prep. 2009), will support and focus the implementation of activities under this output. The activities under this output are directed at:

- (i) Developing and producing a range of communication materials and media about the intent to establish national parks across the country, and specifically to pilot this in the Sumbar valley. This would include, but is not limited to, information on: the planning domain for the park; the objectives of the national park; the proposed institutional and governance arrangements for the park; the consultation processes to be undertaken in park establishment; the proposed zonation of uses in the park; the impacts of the park on land tenure rights; the opportunities and benefits of park establishment; conflict resolution mechanisms; contact details; and proposed timelines for implementation.
- (ii) Implementing a national broad-based communication and awareness programme about the intent to establish national parks, and their benefits
- (iii) Implementing a focused consultation process with individuals and communities with land tenure and use rights in and around the area targeted for the park, to address key issues and concerns and to agree on the boundaries and zonation of the park
- (iv) Implementing a focused consultation and negotiation process with affected institutional stakeholders (e.g. Makhtumkuli etrap, Hyakimlik of Akhal Velayat, Hunting Union, NIDFF, etc.) to address key issues and concerns and agree on the boundaries of the park
- (v) Securing letters of approval from affected institutions, and securing in principle agreements from local communities and affected individuals, to proceed with park proclamation
- (vi) Preparing a comprehensive 5-year strategic management plan (SMP) and a detailed annual plan of operations (APO) for the first year of operation, for the park. The SMP may include:
 - a. Location, boundaries and extent
 - b. Policy, legislative and regulatory framework
 - c. Contextual framework (e.g. archaeological, historic, climatological, bio-physical, socio-economic, infrastructure, services)
 - d. Management objectives framework (e.g. purpose, principles, vision, goals, key result areas)
 - e. Use zoning framework
 - f. Strategic implementation framework (e.g. actions, priorities, deliverables, indicators, responsibilities, etc.)
 - g. Institutional and governance framework (management authority, cooperative governance arrangements, co-management structure, etc.)
 - h. Monitoring and evaluation framework
- (vii) Submitting the management plan and letters of approval to the Cabinet of Ministers for recommendation on a Presidential Decree on designation of Sumbar as a national park
- (viii) Facilitating the establishment of the management structure for the park (e.g. organogram, secondments, new staffing appointments)
- (ix) Establishing a cooperative governance structure to oversee the implementation of the management plan (securing representation, clarifying terms of reference, establishing a constitution, identification of office bearers, etc.)
- (x) Supporting the acquisition of key administrative and operational infrastructure and equipment required for park start-up (e.g. office equipment, park vehicles, park communications infrastructure and equipment, computer hardware and software, fencing, survey beacons, park signage)

A small Park Establishment Working Group (PEWG) will be constituted by the MNP - with representation from the PMU, the NIDFF, the FFPD, the Makhtumkuli etrap and the Director of the Syunt-Hasardag Strict Nature Reserve - to drive the park establishment processes. Once identified, a representative of the future park management authority will also be co-opted onto the PEWG. GEF funding will be used to finance the administrative functioning of this PEWG, and the appointment of ad hoc administrative, technical and legal support services. The following consultants will be contracted by the PMU to support the work of the PEWG: (a) a national communications service provider to develop the communications media and materials and implement a communications and awareness programme; (b) a national independent mediator to facilitate and mediate the discussions and negotiations between the MNP and local communities, land tenure and use rights holders and different state institutions; and (c) an international, and counterpart national, protected area consultant to prepare the park management plan and annual plan of operations.

Component 2: Adequate institutional and individual capacity is in place for the management of the PAS. The project will have 4 outputs under component 2:

Output 2.1: The relevant PA legislation is updated and reformed. Work under this output will seek to assist the MNP in updating its legislative and regulatory framework for biodiversity conservation, with specific reference to the modernization of the legal and regulatory framework for protected areas. The project will focus activities under this output on supporting the reform of four key pieces of biodiversity conservation legislation in Turkmenistan: Law on State Protected Areas; Law on Nature Protection; Law on the Rational Use of Fauna; and the Law on the Rational Use of Flora. The PASP prepared in Output 1.1 will also be used to guide and direct the legal reform requirements. Activities are specifically directed at:

- (i) Supporting the establishment and functioning of a legal working committee on nature protection, and a sub-committee on protected area planning and management.
- (ii) Making explicit recommendations - based the results of a rapid analysis undertaken during the preparation stage - for legislative reform. These recommendations would ensure that the following issues are adequately addressed in the enabling legislation:
 - a. Creation of a new PA category – national park
 - b. Criteria for the different categories of protected areas, and their management objectives
 - c. Establishment procedures for the different categories of protected areas
 - d. Institutional roles and responsibilities for the management of the different categories of protected areas
 - e. Compliance and enforcement regimes for the different categories of protected areas
 - f. Incentives, and compensatory mechanisms, that could support the establishment and management of the different categories of protected areas
 - g. Co-operative governance arrangements between different organs of state
 - h. Alignment with the provision of other legislation such as the Land Water Codes
- (iii) Presenting the recommendations to the working committees for discussion and adoption.
- (iv) Drafting specific amendments to the legislation to address the recommendations adopted by the working committees
- (v) Supporting the participation and consultation processes in the broad stakeholder review of proposed legal reforms, and re-drafting amendments as and where required.
- (vi) Supporting the procedural steps required for adoption of legislation by Cabinet of Ministers and by Presidential Decree

A national working group will be constituted by the MNP to oversee the ongoing legal reform processes for environmental legislation in Turkmenistan. It is envisaged that a small sub-committee of this national working group would be tasked to address the components of this legislation that relate to the planning and management of the protected area system. The PMU will then provide logistical and administrative support to the functioning of this sub-committee. An international, and counterpart national, specialist in environmental law will be contracted by the PMU to provide technical and specialist legal advisory support to the sub-committee.

Output 2.2: Management and governance options for the PAS are reviewed. Work under this output will focus on supporting the MNP in identifying the most cost-effective institutional and governance arrangements for national parks in Turkmenistan. An assessment of the efficacy of different cooperative governance scenarios will be undertaken and a model for cooperative governance developed. This governance model will then be piloted in the Sumbar National Park (see Output 1.3). A cost-benefit analysis of different management options for national parks will be implemented under this output and the results used to guide the designation of the management authority for, and organisational structure of, the PA agency responsible for the administration of the Sumbar National park (see Output 1.3) Information generated from this output will also be integrated into the products from Outputs 1.1 (Protected Area System Plan) and 2.1 (Legislative and regulatory reform).

Activities in this output are specifically directed at:

- (i) Reviewing international and regional best practice in the governance of national parks, and their efficacy in the Turkmenistan context.
- (ii) Developing a governance model for national parks.
- (iii) Reviewing international and regional best practice in the institutional structuring of public national park institutions.
- (iv) Identifying alternative institutional options for the administration and management of national parks. These may include: each national park established as a separate legal public entity; establishing a separate national parks institution within the MNP; and expanding the management mandate of each Strict Nature Reserves to include National Parks.
- (v) Undertaking a cost-benefit analysis of the different institutional options and selecting a preferred institutional scenario.
- (vi) Preparing an institutional development plan for the preferred institutional scenario, including: enabling policy and legislation requirements, resource requirements (infrastructure, funding, staffing), management functions, structural considerations, etc.
- (vii) Facilitating the implementation of the institutional development plan, with a focus on putting in place the institutional and governance arrangements for Sumbar National Park (see Output 1.3).

Work under this output will be done under the supervision of the MNP, and technically supported by the PMU and a national institutional development specialist. The international protected area consultant contracted under Output 1.1 and 1.4 will provide technical support to the national specialist, as required. The national institutional development specialist will, with support from the international expert, then: review international and regional best practice; develop a cooperative governance model for national parks; identify alternative institutional models; review the cost-effectiveness of different institutional models; assess the feasibility of the preferred institutional model and develop an implementation plan to guide the restructuring processes. The PMU will facilitate and support technical discussions with the different institutional stakeholders, and host stakeholder consultation meetings to review the cooperative governance model and the alternative institutional options for government protected area agencies. The MNP will ensure that institutional reforms and cooperative governance models are supported at the level of central government and will amend/ update the enabling policy and legal framework as required (see Output 2.1).

Output 2.3: Approach to sustainable business planning demonstration - a sustainable financial plan for the national park is developed, and piloted in Sumbar NP. Work under this output is designed to provide the national parks authority (see Output 2.2) with the requisite tools to identify and implement a range of affordable and sustainable financing options and mechanisms that could fund the planning and management of the future network of national parks in Turkmenistan. The activities under this output are directed at:

- (i) Reviewing international and regional best practice in sustainable financing of protected areas, and specifically of national parks;
- (ii) Identifying the current financing mechanisms for protected areas (Zapovedniks, Zakazniks and Nature Monuments), and lessons learnt from their implementation;
- (iii) Identifying possible financing mechanisms for national parks, and analyzing each financing mechanism in terms of, inter alia:

- a. A general description (what is it, how does it work)
 - b. The affected stakeholders (who pays, who receives)
 - c. Regulatory requirements (enabling legal requirements)
 - d. Structural considerations (institutional arrangements and controls for collection and distribution of benefit flows)
 - e. Optimal pricing and payment systems
 - f. Projected costs of implementation versus the anticipated income flows
 - g. Likelihood of acceptance of mechanism (risks, willingness-to-pay, political support)
 - h. Possible mitigation measures to overcome low probability of implementation or acceptance of mechanism;
- (iv) Development of a broad sustainable financing plan for the national parks network, and a detailed financing plan for the pilot site, Sumbar National Park (see Output 1.3);
 - (v) Identifying specific financing projects that could be developed, piloted and tested in other newly established national parks to support the ongoing refinement of the financing plan for the national parks system;
 - (vi) Collating the information into an 'Assessment of financing mechanisms for a system of National Parks in Turkmenistan' report; and
 - (vii) Facilitating the drafting of any secondary legislation required to implement key financing mechanisms (see Output 2.1)

The work will be undertaken by an international environmental economics specialist contracted to the PMU, with technical and information support from the national and international protected area management service consultants contracted under Outputs 1.1, 1.3 and 2.2. The specialist will liaise on an ongoing basis directly with the MNP, FFPD, NIDFF, the National Park authority, the PEWG for Sumbar National Park, and other relevant ministries.

Output 2.4: Skills of national parks staff developed. To complement and support the ongoing restructuring of the government agency responsible for the management and administration of national parks (see Output 2.2), work under this output is designed to develop the individual skills and competencies of the planning and operational staff of national parks and support staff (managerial, professional, administrative, technical and scientific) from the relevant departments in the MNP. The activities under this output are directed at:

- (i) Identifying the desired skills and competence standards required for effective planning and management of national parks at the different occupational levels;
- (ii) Assessing the current skills base and competence levels of professional staff in the MNP and operational staff in the Syunt-Hasardag territory, and identifying the critical 'gaps' for the different occupational levels;
- (iii) Assessing and identifying options for human resource development and training programs in order to address these critical gaps in skills and raise competence standards;
- (iv) Collaborating with partner institutions (such as the Succow Foundation for Protection of Nature), in facilitating access to, or the design and development of, short-course, undergraduate and post-graduate training and development programmes for professional, technical, administrative and operational staff responsible for the planning and management of national parks; and
- (v) Implementing short-course training and professional development programmes for at least 30 individuals in different aspects of national park planning and management, including: strategic and business planning; financial management; participative management; enforcement and compliance; CBNRM; restoration and rehabilitation works; IAS control; recreational and tourism management; and knowledge management.

An international protected area training service provider, with support from an accredited national training service provider, will: (a) develop the skills and competence standards for protected areas; (b) assess the current skills base and competence of protected area agency staff; (c) identify the critical skills and competence gaps; and (d)

implement a training and development programs. The MNP will select the appropriate staff to attend the relevant training and development programs.

2.3 Project Indicators, Risks and Assumptions

23. The project indicators are detailed in the Strategic Results Framework – which is attached in Section II, Annex A of this Project Document. Project risks and risk mitigation measures are described in Table 4 below.

Table 5: Risks facing the project and the risk mitigation strategy

Risk	Rating	Mitigation Measures
The legal reform processes become prolonged and drawn out, resulting in delays to the Sumbar national park proclamation.	H	The project will facilitate the establishment and functioning of a national working group (the ‘Environmental Law Reform Working Group’) to oversee the ongoing legal reform processes for environmental legislation in Turkmenistan. The project will then actively support the work of a small sub-committee of this national working group to address the components of the legislation that relate to the planning and management of the protected area system. Key stakeholder institutions, including the Ministry of Justice, will be co-opted onto both the working group and sub-committee to ensure cooperative problem-solving in the iterative drafting of legislative and regulatory amendments. The project will contract an international, and counterpart national, specialist in environmental law to provide technical and specialist legal advisory support to the sub-committee. The project will also support capacity development in the MNP to lead the legislative reform proposals through the Cabinet of Ministers approval process requirements. The formal park proclamation will be targeted for year 3 of the project to provide sufficient time for the legal reform processes to be completed by the end of year 2 of the project.
The Government does not commit sufficient financial support to national park planning and operations. The national parks are unable to finance the subsequent shortfalls in the short- to medium-term.	M	The project will identify the most cost-effective institutional arrangement for the administration of national parks. It will seek to optimise the resources and capacity already available within the existing protected areas that would form part of a consolidated national park. The project will broadly assess the financing mechanisms and projected income streams for national parks, with a specific long-term focus on attaining a level of financial autonomy for national park institutions and limiting their dependency on an annual grant allocation of government funding. The project will test the implementation requirements for these financial mechanisms at the level of the piloted establishment of the Sumbar National Park, with lessons learnt directing the roll-out of other National Park establishment processes. The project will support the national park institution in sourcing grant funding support from donor and other agencies to co-finance national park start-up costs. The project will specifically seek to negotiate increased financial commitments from government to support national parks, with this financial commitment being phased out over time as the PA network develops its own income streams and reaches an agreed level of financial sustainability.
The Ministry of Nature Protection conflicts with other productive sectors (e.g. forestry, gas and oil, agriculture), local tenure and use rights holders (e.g. agriculture, grazing) and local <i>etraps</i> over the designation of land for the Sumbar national park. These conflicts cannot be timeously addressed and	M	The implementation of a comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan will underpin the national park establishment and planning processes. A small Park Establishment Working Group (PEWG) will also be constituted - with representation from at least the PMU, the NIDFF, the FFPD the Director of the Syunt-Hasardag Strict Nature Reserve, the Makhtumkuli <i>etrap</i> and the future management authority for national parks - to guide the park establishment processes, and to identify mechanisms to resolve any conflicts that may arise from time to time. Conflict-resolution tools and procedures will be developed by the project to support the PEWG. The project will employ a national independent mediator to facilitate bilateral discussions and negotiations between the MNP and local communities, land tenure and use rights holders and different state institutions. The Project Steering Committee will function as a high level

Risk	Rating	Mitigation Measures
resolved.		cooperative governance mechanism to resolve any outstanding conflicts, but it is envisaged that this should not be required.
The effects of climate change will further degrade the existing patches of natural areas targeted for incorporation into the PA system, and increase the costs of their rehabilitation	L	The development of a protected area consolidation and expansion strategy for Turkmenistan will seek to integrate the protected area system into the country's evolving climate change adaptation strategy, particularly in terms of its important role as a buffer to the economically important agricultural industry. In the design of the protected area system, the project will ensure that alternative spatial scenarios to achieve the representivity targets for the PAS are developed. This then allows for adjusting spatial priorities, where land has become so degraded that it loses its conservation value. The project approach of piloting the consolidation of small, fragmented patches of existing protected areas into a larger national park will seek to increase the resilience of the PAS to the impacts of climate change.

2.4 Expected national and global benefits

24. In the **GEF alternative**, grant funding is sought to help the state of Turkmenistan to consolidate and physically link a number of proximate fragments of different categories of protected areas with high biodiversity significance, into a single, more cohesive management unit - a national park. Funding will be used to develop a policy, planning and operational framework for the establishment and management of a network of national parks as part of an integrated national system of protected areas in Turkmenistan. This project will contribute to increasing the extent of protected areas in Turkmenistan, and to more effectively conserve globally unique habitats and the ecosystem processes that sustain them. The long-term solution that the project seeks to engineer is characterized by: (i) the establishment of national norms and standards, operational guidelines and financing mechanisms for the PAS of Turkmenistan to guide and direct the establishment and administration of national parks; (ii) the updating and reform of the legislative and regulatory framework to support the establishment and management of national parks; (iii) the piloting of national park establishment processes in the South-West Kopetdag; (iv) the development of institutional and financing mechanisms for national parks; and (v) the development of national park planning and management skills within the MNP. Opportunities to link the national parks with the country's socio-economic development priorities will, wherever possible, be developed to strengthen the long-term political sustainability of the institutions responsible for the PAS.

25. The increment of the project in terms of **global environmental benefits** is represented by: including 100,000 ha of desert and mountain landscapes under protection; increasing the management effectiveness at the PA level (from a METT baseline of 29-32% to a METT target of >40% for the eight territories of the SNR's, including IUCN Category I and III PAs); strengthening the overall PA institutional capacity (from baseline of 52%, 44% and 33% for the systemic, institutional and individual capacity in the Capacity Assessment Scorecard to 76%, 72% and 54% respectively); and an increase in the financial sustainability of the PAS (from baseline of 31% in the Financial Scorecard to a score of >48%). In the long-term (by 2015 and beyond) the threats to biodiversity - such as the cutting of woodlands and forests for commercial and fuelwood needs, clearing of land for agriculture and afforestation, drainage of water meadows, overgrazing by domestic livestock and over-exploitation of individual species - will be contained at the level of the entire expanded PA system of the country, covering an area of at least 2,050,000 ha. Implementation of the CBD PoWPA by Turkmenistan will be facilitated by the project, especially Goals 1.1, 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4.

2.5 Country Ownership: Country Eligibility and Country Drivenness

26. The political framework for national environmental policies and strategies in Turkmenistan is underpinned by the recent article included into the Constitution of Turkmenistan (2008) which provides for 'The State (to) exercise control of (the) rational use of natural resources for the purpose of protection and improvement of living conditions as well as the environment preservation and restoration'. This project then seeks to strengthen the capacity of the responsible state agencies to conserve, and sustainably use, representative examples of the country's unique biodiversity within the context of an effectively managed system of protected areas. The project is consistent with the priority objectives of two key national strategy documents, the *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan* (NBSAP, 2002) and the *National Environmental Action Plan* (NEAP, 2002), as well as with the plan for implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas. Project activities proposed for GEF funding specifically align with the NBSAP Strategic Actions: A1 (activities A1.1 and A1.2); A2 (activities A2.1, A2.3 and A2.4); A4 (activities A4.1, A4.2 and A4.3); and A8 (activities A8.1, A8.2 and A8.3) of the NBSAP. The project activities will also support the implementation of Action 29 and Action 31 of the NEAP. The project conforms to Goal 1 (strategic focus 1.1 and 1.3) and Goal 5 (strategic focus 5.1) of the *Turkmenistan: Capacity Building Strategy to implement the UN Global Environment Conventions* (2007). The MNP's commitment to the expansion and strengthening of the national system of PAs, and specifically the establishment of a system of National Parks, is contained in the *Main Trends of Development of Protected Area System up to 2030*, (2009). The project activities complement and support the environmental protection policies reflected in the *National Action Program to Combat Desertification in Turkmenistan* (NAPCD, 1997); the *Strategy of Socio-economic Reforms in Turkmenistan for the period to 2010* and the national *Strategy of Economic, Political and Cultural Development of Turkmenistan until 2020*.

27. As a party to the CBD, Turkmenistan is committed to implement the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (POWPA). Prior to the preparation of this proposal the country implemented an analysis of gaps in its implementation of the POWPA. Several PoWPA Goals stood out as high priorities, including Goal 1.1 Action 1.1.6 (designating new PAs); Goal 1.4 site-based participatory planning, Goal 2.2. involvement of local communities, Goal 3.1 Economic valuation, positive incentives and enabling environment, Goal 3.4 Financial Sustainability, Goal 3.2 (Building capacities for establishing and managing PAs). Some of these goals are being supported by diverse projects (including a small PoWPA grant from the GEF PoWPA Country Action Grants programme, which supports Goal 3.1). However, a number of PoWPA Goals and Activities require major attention, over and above the current national and international assistance. They currently impede the ability of the protected area system to conserve biodiversity effectively, and mostly relate to PoWPA Goals 1.1 and 3.2.

2.6 Sustainability

28. The project has been carefully designed to optimize prospects for achieving the sustainability of the protected area network in four areas: environmental, institutional, social and financial.

29. Environmental sustainability will be promoted in the project through the design of a protected area system for Turkmenistan that would more effectively conserve species, habitats and ecological processes. The project will specifically assess the feasibility of expanding the national protected area system into four priority areas of high biodiversity significance, and test the efficacy of the protected area category 'National Park' as an appropriate and relevant mechanism for nature based tourism, recreation and the mainstreaming of protected areas into regional socio-economic development. If successful, these interventions would then support the future establishment of a wider network of national parks that could incrementally contribute to the overall environmental sustainability of the protected area system in Turkmenistan.

30. Institutional sustainability will be enhanced in the project through: (i) reforming and updating the enabling strategic, policy, legal and regulatory framework for protected area planning and management; (ii) clarifying the institutional roles and responsibilities for protected areas to avoid institutional duplication and overlaps and effective deployment of resources and capacity; (iii) describing the co-operative governance arrangements for both the protected area system, and different categories of protected areas; (iv) identifying opportunities and institutional mechanisms for co-management of, and partnerships in, protected areas; and (v) identifying the most

cost-efficient (social-environmental-financial) institution/s to manage the operations of national parks. The project will specifically seek to strengthen the competence, skills levels and occupational standards of the responsible institution/s for national parks. At the national level, resources will be allocated to build the systemic and institutional capacity of the MNP (FFPD), NIDFF and the SNR's to provide the enabling financial, legal, planning and decision-support framework for the future system of national parks. The project will specifically provide resources to develop and implement training and skills development programs for staff of the designated national park authority.

31. Social sustainability will be enhanced through the implementation of a number of individual stakeholder engagement processes developed for each of the project activities both at the macro level of the protected area system and network of national parks, and at the local level of the individual pilot national park and the four priority sites identified for PA expansion. Robust stakeholder engagement plans for the respective project activities will be drafted to direct broad-based stakeholder involvement in all aspects of protected area system planning and development. These stakeholder engagement plans will also make strong provision for conflict management. The project will further identify mechanisms for the ongoing constructive engagement of communities and the NGO sector in protected area planning, development and operations, notably through partnerships, co-management and co-operative governance. Mechanisms for optimizing the beneficiation of local communities will be identified at the level of the Sumbar National Park and the four priority areas for protected area expansion. A focused communication and awareness program will be developed and implemented in and around the Sumbar region to support and complement the national park establishment processes.

32. Financial sustainability will be strengthened through the development of a broad institutional financing plan for the management authority responsible for the future network of national parks in Turkmenistan. At a local level, the project will provide resources to identify the medium-term expenditure requirements for the Sumbar National Park, and to then program the testing of the appropriate financing mechanisms to generate the income streams needed to meet these anticipated costs. The project will support the improvement of the financial planning and financial management capacity and skills of the national park authority. A key element for securing financial sustainability within the project will be to secure the commitment of the government to increase its annual resource allocation to the management of its protected area system, specifically to financially contribute to national parks, and to identify alternative sources of co-financing for project activities.

2.7 Replicability

33. Replication will be achieved through the direct replication of selected project elements and practices and methods, as well as the scaling up of experiences. The project will develop and use a knowledge management system to ensure the effective collation and dissemination of experiences and information gained in the course of the project's implementation. This knowledge management system will be designed to ensure that information and data formats and flows are directed at the most relevant stakeholder groups to support decision-making processes. The project will provide support to the Government in designing a protected area system that would achieve the objectives for representivity, adequateness and comprehensiveness in the marine and terrestrial areas of the country. GEF funding will then be used to support the Government in the preparation of medium-term strategic and action plans that would guide and direct the development of this expansion of protected areas. These strategic and action plans will provide the framework for the replication of project lessons in the ongoing expansion of the protected area system.

34. The following project elements stand out as being most amenable to replication: (i) knowledge of stakeholder consultation processes required to address issues of concern during feasibility assessments of areas identified for PA expansion; (ii) experience of stakeholder negotiation processes required to support national park establishment processes (iii) identification of innovative co-management arrangements and multi-stakeholder governance structures for national parks; (iv) strategic, operational, logistical, institutional and financial planning requirements for national parks in Turkmenistan; (v) efficacy of different financing mechanisms for national

parks, and other PAs; (vi) tools to identify the competence levels and skills required to effectively administer and manage national parks, and training programmes to address gaps; and (vii) implementation of sustainable alternative livelihoods projects in national parks to support biodiversity conservation objectives.

35. By year 3, it is anticipated that PA establishment processes will be at varying stages of replication in Turkmenistan, as follows: (a) two priority areas for national park establishment; and (b) one priority area for Reserve establishment.

PART III: Management Arrangements

36. The project will be implemented over a period of three years. The Ministry of Nature Protection (MNP) is the government institution responsible for the implementation of the project and will act as the Executing Agency (EA). UNDP is the Implementing Agency (IA) for the project. The project is nationally executed (NEX), in line with the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA, 1993) and the Country Programme Action Plan 2005-2009 (CPAP, June 2005) between the UNDP and the Government of Turkmenistan.

37. The MNP will take overall responsibility for the project implementation, and the timely and verifiable attainment of project objectives and outcomes. It will provide support to, and inputs for, the implementation of all project activities. The MNP will nominate a high level official who will serve as the National Project Director (NPD) for the project implementation. The NPD will chair the Project Steering Committee (PSC), and be responsible for providing government oversight and guidance to the project implementation. The NPD will not be paid from the project funds, but will represent a Government in kind contribution to the Project.

38. Working closely with the MNP, the UNDP Country Office (CO) will be responsible for: (i) providing financial and audit services to the project; (ii) recruitment of project staff and contracting of consultants and service providers; (iii) overseeing financial expenditures against project budgets approved by PSC; (iv) appointment of independent financial auditors and evaluators; and (v) ensuring that all activities including procurement and financial services are carried out in strict compliance with UNDP/GEF procedures. A UNDP staff member will be assigned with the responsibility for the day-to-day management and control over project finances.

39. A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be convened by the MNP, and will serve as the project's coordination and decision-making body. The PSC meetings will be chaired by the NPD. It will meet according to the necessity, but not less than once in 6 months, to review project progress, approve project work plans and approve major project deliverables. The PSC is responsible for ensuring that the project remains on course to deliver products of the required quality to meet the outcomes defined in the project document. The PSC's role will include: (i) overseeing project implementation; (ii) approving all project work plans and budgets, at the proposal of the Project Manager (PM), for submission to UNDP Regional Center in Bratislava and GEF Unit in New York; (iii) approving any major changes in project plans or programs; (iv) providing technical input and advice; (v) approving major project deliverables; (vi) ensuring commitment of resources to support project implementation; (vii) arbitrating any conflicts within the project and/or negotiating solutions between the project and any parties beyond the scope of the project; and (ix) overall project evaluation. The PSC may include in its composition representation of the following stakeholders: MNP (FFPD, NIDFF, SPNT, Environmental Service *Caspekontrol*); UNDP; Makhtumkuli *etrap*; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Economy and Finance; Ministry of Agriculture; State Committee on Tourism and Sports; Turkmen Union of Hunters and Fishers Society; Succow Foundation; and WWF.

40. The day-to-day administration of the project will be carried out by a Project Manager (PM) and Project Assistant (PA), who will be located within the NIDFF offices. The project staff will be recruited using standard UNDP recruitment procedures. The PM will, with the support of the PA, manage the implementation of all project activities, including: preparation/updates of project work and budget plans, record keeping, accounting and reporting; drafting of terms of reference, technical specifications and other documents as necessary; identification, proposal of project consultants to be approved by the PSC, coordination and supervision of

consultants and suppliers; organisation of duty travel, seminars, public outreach activities and other project events; and maintaining working contacts with project partners at the central and local levels. The Project Manager will liaise and work closely with all partner institutions to link the project with complementary national programs and initiatives. The PM is accountable to the MNP and the PSC for the quality, timeliness and effectiveness of the activities carried out, as well as for the use of funds. The PM will produce Annual Work and Budget Plans (AWP&ABP) to be approved by the PSC at the beginning of each year. These plans will provide the basis for allocating resources to planned activities. Once the PSC approves the Annual Work Plan this will be sent to the UNDP Regional Technical Advisor for Biodiversity at UNDP Regional Centre for Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States in Bratislava for revision and approval. Once the Annual Working Plan and Budget is approved by the Regional Centre it will be sent to the UNDP/GEF Unit in New York for final approval and release of the funding. The PM will further produce quarterly operational reports and Annual Progress Reports (APR) to the PSC, or any other reports at the request of the PSC. Like in the case for the Annual Work Plan these reports are sent for approval and clearance to the UNDP Regional Centre in Bratislava. These reports will summarize the progress made by the project versus the expected results, explain any significant variances, detail the necessary adjustments and be the main reporting mechanism for monitoring project activities. The PM will be technically supported by contracted national and international service providers. Recruitment of specialist services for the project will be done by the PM, in consultation with the UNDP and MNP.

PART IV: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Budget

Monitoring responsibilities and events

41. A detailed schedule of project review meetings will be developed by the project management team, in consultation with project implementation partners and stakeholder representatives and incorporated in the Project Inception Report. Such a schedule will include: (i) tentative time frames for Project Steering Committee meetings and (ii) project related Monitoring and Evaluation activities. Day-to-day monitoring of implementation progress will be the responsibility of the Project Manager based on the project's Annual Work Plan and its indicators. The Project Manager will inform the UNDP-CO of any delays or difficulties faced during implementation so that the appropriate support or corrective measures can be adopted in a timely and remedial fashion. The Project Manager will fine-tune the progress and performance/impact indicators of the project in consultation with the full project team at the Inception Workshop with support from UNDP-CO and assisted by the UNDP-GEF Regional Coordinating Unit. Specific targets for the first year implementation progress indicators together with their means of verification will be developed at this Inception Workshop. These will be used to assess whether implementation is proceeding at the intended pace and in the right direction and will form part of the Annual Work Plan. Targets and indicators for subsequent years would be defined annually as part of the internal evaluation and planning processes undertaken by the project team.

42. Measurement of impact indicators related to global biodiversity benefits will occur according to the schedules defined in the Inception Workshop. The measurement of these will be undertaken through subcontracts or retainers with relevant institutions. Periodic monitoring of implementation progress will be undertaken by the UNDP-CO through quarterly meetings with the Implementing Partner, or more frequently as deemed necessary. This will allow parties to take stock and to troubleshoot any problems pertaining to the project in a timely fashion to ensure smooth implementation of project activities.

Learning and Knowledge Sharing

43. Results from the project will be disseminated within and beyond the project intervention zone through a number of existing information sharing networks and forums. In addition, the project will participate, as relevant and appropriate, in UNDP/GEF sponsored networks, organized for Senior Personnel working on projects that share common characteristics. The project will identify and participate, as relevant and appropriate, in scientific, policy-based and/or any other networks, which may be of benefit to project implementation though lessons learned. The project will identify, analyze, and share lessons learned that might be beneficial in the design and implementation of similar future projects. Identify and analyzing lessons learned is an on- going process, and the

need to communicate such lessons as one of the project's central contributions is a requirement to be delivered not less frequently than once every 12 months. UNDP/GEF shall provide a format and assist the project team in categorizing, documenting and reporting on lessons learned. To this end a percentage of project resources will need to be allocated for these activities.

SECTION II: STRATEGIC RESULTS FRAMEWORK (SRF)

Project Strategy and purpose	Indicator	Objectively verifiable indicators		Risks and Assumptions	
		Baseline	Target by EOP	Sources of verification	
Objective: To create an enabling environment for the establishment of a functional, effective and ecologically coherent system of protected areas	Coverage (ha) of the protected area system	1,934,200 ha	2,050,000 ha	National protected area register	Assumptions: - The government commits to an incremental growth in the grant funding allocation to finance the national parks added to the protected area system - Existing protected area skills and competencies are retained in the MNP Risks: - National economic priorities shift away from financial support for protected area activities - Other ministries and public agencies do not cooperate to align strategies, plans and projects
	Total operational budget (including HR and capital budget) allocation (US\$) for protected area management	~US\$2.5m/ annum	>US\$4.0m/ annum	Annual Financial Report of the MNP	
Outcome 1: Expanded Protected Area System (PAS) to improve PA representation and coverage	Financial sustainability scorecard for national systems of protected areas	31%	>48%	Annual Financial Sustainability Scorecard	Assumptions: - Areas proposed for PA expansion retain some biodiversity or heritage conservation potential - The Law on State Protected Areas, and other complementary legislation, provides the enabling regulatory framework for the establishment of national parks Risks: - Some areas proposed for expansion become so degraded that they no longer make a contribution to national biodiversity conservation targets - Irreconcilable conflicts arise during the national park feasibility and establishment processes
	Capacity development indicator score for protected area system	Systemic: 52% Institutional: 44% Individual: 33%	Systemic: 76% Institutional: 72% Individual: 54%	Annual Capacity Development Indicator Scorecard	
	Extent (ha) of additional areas of under-represented habitat types formally incorporated into the system of protected areas	22,185ha 127,815ha	>24,000ha >175,000ha	Annual Report of the MNP NIDFF inventory	
	Extent (ha) of formally proclaimed IUCN Category II National Park	0ha	>100,000 ha	National Protected Area register	
	Number of individual protected areas consolidated into, and under the rationalised management of, National Parks	3	>12	National Protected Area register	
Outcome 2: Adequate institutional and individual capacity in place for the management of the PAS	Percentage of income from other sources (i.e. excluding state budget allocation) that finances the recurrent expenditure costs of national parks	<5	>10%	Annual Report of the MNP	Assumptions: - Any institutional restructuring processes required for national parks are actively supported by the Government of Turkmenistan - The MNP maintains a clear mandate and unequivocal authority to fulfil oversight and management obligations for the protected area system - Stakeholder institutions constructively engage in the identification of the most cost-effective institutional and financing arrangements for national parks Risks:
	Number of IUCN Category I and II protected areas exceeding a METT score of 35	Territories: Repetek: 29% Badkhoz: 29% Kopetdag: 30% Syunt Khasardag:	>40%	METT Annual Review	

Project Strategy and purpose	Indicator	Objectively verifiable indicators		Risks and Assumptions
		Baseline	Target by EOP	
		29% Kaplankyr: 30% Amadurya: 31% Koyetendag: 30%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders cannot agree on the preferred cooperative governance and institutional arrangements for national parks Staff completing training and skills development programs are not retained by PA institutions Resistance to the introduction of new financing mechanisms for national parks reduces their financial sustainability
	Number of planning support and operational national park staff completing specialised training and/or skills development programs	0	>30	Annual Report of the MNP

SECTION III, PART I: Stakeholder Involvement Plan

1. Stakeholder identification

During the project preparation stage, a stakeholder analysis was undertaken in order to identify key stakeholders, assess their interests in the project and define their roles and responsibilities in project implementation. Table 1 describes the major categories of stakeholders identified, and the level of involvement envisaged in the project.

Table 1: Key stakeholders and roles and responsibilities

Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities
Ministry of Nature Protection	MNP will, primarily through the Deputy Minister and the department for flora and fauna protection, be responsible for the overall coordination of the project. It will also be a primary beneficiary of project activities. The MNP will chair the Project Steering Committee (PSC)
National Institute of Desert Fauna and Flora	NIDFF will work in close cooperation with the MNP. It will contribute to the project through: technical and scientific support to the design of a representative system of protected areas; scientific support to the preparation of feasibility assessments) for the four priority areas; specialist inputs into legal reform processes; scientific support to the establishment of the Sumbar NP. The NIDFF will be a member of the PSC.
Territories of the Strict Nature Reserves	The SNRs are an important partner in, and beneficiary of, the project – notably the Syunt-Hasardag SNR and the SNR's forming part of the priority areas for feasibility assessments. They will be involved in the project through: technical inputs into the development of the PASP; direct support to, and involvement in, the feasibility assessments of the priority areas and the establishment of Sumbar NP; review of management and governance options for NP's, including the option of expanding the SNP mandate to include NP's; technical inputs into the legal reform processes; technical inputs into the financial sustainability planning for NP's; and involvement of staff in the skills development and training programs for national park staff. The territories of the SNRs will be represented on the PSC.
Ministry of Sport and Tourism	The MST, through the State Committee for Tourism and Sport, is an important partner in the project. It will actively participate in the review of management and governance options for NP's and the development of the PASP. It will be directly involved in the feasibility assessments for the four priority areas, and the establishment process for the Sumbar NP, notably in respect of the administration of natural monuments and development of nature-based tourism enterprises. The MST will be a member of the PSC.
Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Water Industry	The MA and MWI will be actively involved in the project through its inputs to the feasibility assessments of the four priority areas and the establishment processes for the Sumbar NP.
Provincial (<i>welayat's</i>) and Local (<i>etrap</i>) Government	Te affected provincial and local municipalities are important project partners. Where relevant, they will actively participate in; the feasibility assessments for four priority areas; and the planning and establishment process for the Sumbar NP. The <i>etraps</i> and <i>welayats</i> will be represented on the PSC.
National and regional NGOs	Relevant national NGOs such as the TNPS and the TSHF will be encouraged to take active role in implementing project activities, notably in the involvement and beneficiation of local communities in Sumbar

Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities
	NP. National and local NGOs will actively participate in the stakeholder engagement processes for all project activities. A representative from the national NGOs will be a member of the PSC.
Academic and research institutes	Relevant national and regional academic and research institutes will contribute to the project through, for example, local scientific surveys and specialist mapping.
Representatives of local communities	Inhabitants of the villages or settlements in and around the planning domain for Sumbar NP and the four targeted priority areas for PA expansion will be made aware of the issues and invited to take part in the decision making process. They will be represented in the local working committees and actively involved in the project activities relating to the feasibility assessments and the establishment of Sumbar NP. Their cooperation will be sought in implementing project activities including resource protection, alternative income development (e.g. nature-based tourism), awareness raising, etc.
National and local press and media	The project will cooperate with national and local press and media on public awareness issues.
UNDP-Turkmenistan	The roles and responsibilities of UNDP-Turkmenistan will include: Ensuring professional and timely implementation of the activities and delivery of the reports and other outputs identified in the project document; Coordination and supervision of the activities; Assisting and supporting MNP in organizing coordinating and where necessary hosting all project meetings; Contracting of and contract administration for qualified project team members; Manage and be responsible of all financial administration to realize the targets envisioned in consultation with MNP; and Establishing an effective networking between project stakeholders, specialized international organizations and the donor community. The UNDP will be a member of the Steering Committee

2. Information dissemination, consultation, and similar activities that took place during the PPG

Throughout the project's development, very close contact was maintained with all stakeholders at the national level. All affected national government institutions were directly involved in project development, as were research and academic institutions and NGO's. Numerous consultations occurred with all of the above stakeholders to discuss different aspects of project design. These consultations included: bilateral discussions; site visits to pilot sites; consolidated workshops and electronic communications. A working group, with representation of all key national stakeholders, was constituted by the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Nature Protection to oversee the project preparation phase. The final project activities was presented to stakeholders at a working group meeting for review and discussions, and a final draft of the project brief was presented to a follow-up working group meeting for approval and endorsement.

3. Approach to stakeholder participation

The projects approach to stakeholder involvement and participation is premised on the principles outlined in **Table 2** below.

Table 2: Stakeholder participation principles

Principle	Stakeholder participation will:
Value Adding	be an essential means of adding value to the project
Inclusivity	include all relevant stakeholders
Accessibility and Access	be accessible and promote access to the process
Transparency	be based on transparency and fair access to information; main provisions of the

Principle	Stakeholder participation will:
	project's plans and results will be published in local mass-media
Fairness	ensure that all stakeholders are treated in a fair and unbiased way
Accountability	be based on a commitment to accountability by all stakeholders
Constructive	Seek to manage conflict and promote the public interest
Redressing	Seek to redress inequity and injustice
Capacitating	Seek to develop the capacity of all stakeholders
Needs Based	be based on the needs of all stakeholders
Flexible	be flexibly designed and implemented
Rational and Coordinated	be rationally planned and coordinated, and not be ad hoc
Excellence	be subject to ongoing reflection and improvement

The project will focus stakeholder engagement at two levels of intervention: (i) working with national and local public institutions and agencies in order to strengthen their capacity to consolidate, expand and effectively manage the PAS and to align project activities with government's strategic priorities; and (ii) working directly with civil society organizations, formal and informal use rights holders, private landowners and individuals to mitigate impacts and optimize benefits of project activities.

4. Stakeholder involvement plan

The project's design incorporates several features to ensure ongoing and effective stakeholder participation in the project's implementation. The mechanisms to facilitate involvement and active participation of different stakeholder in project implementation will comprise a number of different components:

1. Project inception workshop

The project will be launched by a multi-stakeholder workshop. This workshop will provide an opportunity to provide all stakeholders with the most updated information on the project, the work plan, and will establish a basis for further consultation as the project's implementation commences.

2. Constitution of Project Steering Committee

A Project Steering Committee's constituency will be constituted to ensure broad representation of all key interests throughout the project's implementation. The representation, and broad terms of reference, of the PSC are described in the Management Arrangements in Part III of the Project Document.

3. Establishment of the Project Management Unit

The Project Management Unit will take direct operational responsibility for facilitating stakeholder involvement and ensuring increased local ownership of the project and its results. The PMU will be located in the NIDFF or MNP offices in Ashgabat to ensure coordination among key stakeholder organizations at the national level during the project period.

4. Establishment of local working groups

At the activity level, local or specialist working groups (i.e. Park Establishment Working Group for Sumbar NP, Legal Sub-Committee for legal reform; National Working Group for PASP and Stakeholder Reference Groups for feasibility assessments) will be established, as required, to facilitate the active participation of affected institutions, organisations and individuals in the implementation of the respective project activities. Different stakeholder groups may take the lead in each of the working groups, depending on their respective mandates.

5. Project communications

The project will develop, implement and maintain a communications strategy to ensure that all stakeholders are informed on an ongoing basis about: the project's objectives; the projects activities;

overall project progress; and the opportunities for involvement in various aspects of the project's implementation.

6. Implementation arrangements

A number of project activities have specifically been designed to directly involve local stakeholders in the implementation of, and beneficiation from, these activities. These include: the development of opportunities for sustainable livelihood options and natural resource uses for local communities in the feasibility assessment studies; the development of financial incentives for local communities to benefit from PA expansion; and the implementation of opportunities for the beneficiation of local communities in the Sumbar region.

7. Formalising cooperative governance structures

The project will actively seek to formalise cooperative governance structures at the level of the protected areas to ensure the ongoing participation of local stakeholders in the planning and management of individual NPs.

8. Capacity building

All project activities are strategically very focused on building the capacity – at systemic, institutional and individual level – of the key national stakeholder groups to ensure sustainability of initial project investments. The project will also seek to build the capacity of organizations operating at the community level to enable them to actively participate in both the negotiation and implementation of management agreements.

The Department for Fauna and Flora Protection, the National Institute of Desert Fauna and Flora and the territories of the eight Strict Nature Reserves, the overall direct supervision of the *Ministry of Nature Protection* (MNP), will be the main departments/institutions within the MNP responsible for different aspects of the project development process. They will work in close cooperation with other affected public institutions, including: Ministry of Sport and Tourism (State Committee for Tourism and Sport), Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Industry; and the affected *Welayat's* and *Etrap's*. The project will focus stakeholder engagement at two levels of intervention: (i) working with national and local public institutions and agencies in order to strengthen their capacity to consolidate, expand and effectively manage the PAS and to align project activities with government's strategic priorities; and (ii) working directly with civil society organizations, formal and informal use rights holders, and individuals to mitigate impacts and optimize benefits of project activities. Table 2 below describes the major categories of stakeholders and their involvement in the project.

