



United Nations Environment Programme

**Terminal Evaluation on the project GF/2328-2712-4627 and 4630
Development of a Wetland Site and Flyway Network
for Conservation of the Siberian Crane and Other
Migratory Waterbirds in Asia**



Photos © Phillip J. Edwards

Evaluation Office

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Dr. Phillip Edwards

Acknowledgements

This is not really the work of the Terminal Evaluator but that of all the staff and people connected with the Siberian Crane Wetlands Project who gave freely of their time and ideas to make the evaluation process a success. There are far too many people to mention by name – and hopefully everyone who contributed is included in the lists of names annexed to this report – but special mention must be made of the Project Director, Claire Mirande, and the International Technical Adviser, Crawford Prentice, who gave unstintingly of their time to help me track down answers to, or point me in the right direction for, every question I asked and to discuss the points I took every opportunity to raise.

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Following completion of the Draft Report on 28th November 2011, review comments were received from UNEP, from the ICF/RCU and NCUs in consolidated form, and the UNEP Evaluation Office on 23rd January 2012. These comments have either been included into the revised text where these related to factual inaccuracies in the draft, or have been reproduced in full and unedited as footnotes to the appropriate text to ensure a fair hearing for all parties' views. The Evaluator has made responses to some of these comments. I thank each of the reviewers sincerely for their efforts and insights and their considerable time which have undoubtedly improved this final report.

The views expressed in this report are intended to offer an overview of, and some of the lessons learned from, the Siberian Crane Wetland Project as it comes to its conclusion. I have tried to balance my thoughts and to offer fair perspectives of what was observed and learned from people far more knowledgeable about the Project and its context than I will ever be. Furthermore, in a complex project where there are many parties, and where some views are counterposed, it is impossible to find a form of words that would be acceptable to all in all cases. Nonetheless, I offer my sincere apologies in advance if anyone should take anything written to be anything other than constructive criticism.

And finally, one of the delights of this sort of work remains that of visiting new and extremely welcoming countries and going home again having made new friends (and in this case renewing some old ones), seen new things, and witnessed with great admiration the dedication and enthusiasm that so many people bring to their work in conserving the important places of the world. I would like to thank them and wish them every success in their continuing endeavours.

Phillip Edwards
Stuart, Somerset
England

29th February 2012

ACRONYMS AND TERMS

Exchange rates current at the time of the evaluation were:

China	6.4 RMB	= US\$ 1
Kazakhstan	128.6 KZT	= US\$ 1
Iran.....	12,550.0 IR	= US\$ 1
Russia	26.2 RUR	= US\$ 1

AEWA	African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement
c.	circa (about)
CAF	Central Asian Flyway
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
COP	Conference of Parties
CWGE	Crane Working Group of Eurasia
DBR	Department of Biological Resources, Yakutian Provincial Government
DoE	Department of Environment (Iran)
EAAFP	East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FHC	Forestry and Hunting Committee (Kazakhstan)
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ha	Hectare(s)
IPM	Integrated pest management
IR	Iranian Rial (currency)
ITA	International Technical Advisor
IWC	International Waterfowl Census
KZT	Kazakhstan Tenge (currency)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
MoWR	Ministry of Water Resources (China)
MTR	Mid-term review
NCU	National Coordination Unit
NEACSN	North-east Asian Crane Site Network
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NNR	National nature reserve
NPD	National Project Director
NPM	National Project Manager
NPSC	National Project Steering Committee
PA	Protected Area
PAG	Project Advisory Group
PATT	Protected Area Tracking Tool (sometimes alternatively known as PAMETT = Protected Areas Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool)
PDF-B	Project Development Facility – Block B
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PSO	Project Site Office
PTT	Platform Terminal Transmitter (satellite transmitter)
RCU	Regional Coordination Unit
RMB	Renminbi (Yuan – Chinese currency)
ROtI	Review of Outcomes to Impacts
RUR	Russian Rouble (currency)
SAR	Semi-annual Report

SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SCFC	Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator
SCM	Steering Committee Meeting
SCWP	Siberian Crane Wetland Project
SFA	State Forestry Administration (China)
SGP	Small Grants Programme
STAR	System for Transparent Allocation of Resources
SWRC	Songliao Water Resources Commission (NE China)
TE	Terminal evaluation/evaluator
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
US\$	United States Dollar
WCASN	Western/Central Asia Site Network
WOW	Wings Over Wetlands (Enhancing Conservation of the Critical Network of Sites required by Migratory Waterbirds on the African/Eurasian Flyways Project)
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key successes – the designation of new protected areas and upgrades to the legal status of existing ones was attained for 814,583 ha of wetlands; and extensions were made to existing protected areas of an additional 1,674,323 ha – total 2,488,906 ha; twelve of the 16 Project sites were also officially designated as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention while nomination documentation was prepared for the remaining four sites; Naurzum Zapovednik now forms part of the World Heritage Site – Saryarka Steppe and Lakes of Northern Kazakhstan (450,344ha), which was inscribed on 12th July 2008; water management agreements and wetland restoration activities approved, funded, and implemented at four NNRs in NE China and a Basin Agreement signed by stakeholders at Naurzum, Kazakhstan; management plans have been developed for 13¹ Project sites and approved for 11² of these; national wetland management planning guidelines were developed for Russia; progressive improvements in management effectiveness were made at most individual protected areas as measured by Protected Area Tracking Tool with a few showing significant gains; improved capacity for waterbird monitoring resulted in development of flyway monitoring network in China and development of consistent annual waterbird counts across Poyang Lake Basin, expansion of long-term surveys of breeding birds and development of migration monitoring in Yakutia, aerial surveys of breeding birds in western Siberia, migration surveys of waterbirds in northern Kazakhstan, and development of systematic waterbird monitoring at project sites in Iran; establishment of a regional database to store and share data and to support publications on Siberian Cranes and other species; unquantifiable development of capacity at site and provincial level through training, technical assistance and provision of equipment, considered by many to be the Project’s most important achievement; significant levels of applied research conducted to inform management decisions, e.g. studies to determine numbers and distribution of Siberian Cranes in relation to water levels and the occurrence of the plant *Vallisneria spiralis*, satellite tracking of Siberian Cranes to categorically determine migration routes, and guidelines for the reduction of avian influenza risks at wetlands of importance were included as part of Ramsar Resolution X.21 and published as a SCWP Technical Brief; and a huge range of public awareness-raising activities completed that were estimated to have reached over 30,000 people in Kazakhstan alone.

Key problem areas – low initial capacity in project management in all countries except Kazakhstan, exacerbated by conflicting demands on project managers’ time, again in all countries except Kazakhstan; chronic late reporting at national level in Russia, resulting in financial delays and knock-on problems for all other countries because of UNEP (or UN system) ideally requiring full reports from all prior to further release of funds to any, although some flexibility was shown to try to overcome this; requirement of UNEP (or UN system) for submission of combined as opposed to separate country quarterly budgets and work plans prior to next quarter’s release of funds; extremely low baseline capacity, especially at project sites; no country buy-in in Russia at the federal level; slow responsiveness during and after the Project by the DoE, Iran; and national project steering committees facilitated little inter-sectoral cooperation and provided little if any oversight.

The terminal evaluation (TE) of the Project was conducted over a period of 48 days between 12th July and 28th November 2011 by a single international consultant. It was carried out some 18 months after the closure of the Project’s programme for practical reasons – communication commenced in September 2010 but since the project sites would not have been accessible during the northern winter months it was decided that the evaluation would take place early in summer 2011. The TE then experienced considerable time-lags in getting visas meaning visits were delayed until the autumn. The Evaluation’s ToR is given in [Annex I](#), its itinerary in [Annex II](#) and the list of people interviewed in [Annex III](#). A list of the Project’s indicators, their end of Project achievement level, together with performance rating is given in [Annex IV](#). The draft report was submitted on 28th November and was finalised on 29th February 2012 after receipt of all comments by 24th January 2012 and subsequent clarifications and iterations in February.

¹ [China](#): Keerqin, Momoge, Nanjishan, Poyang Lake, Xianghai, and Zhalong NNRs; [Iran](#): Bujagh NP and Fereydoon Kenar NSA; [Kazakhstan](#): Naurzum Lakes and Zharsor and Urkash Lakes; [Russia](#): Kunovat, Kytalyk RR, and Middle Aldan.

² Plans for the two Iranian sites not yet approved.

RESULTS

Output 1.1: Appropriate legal protection, clear regulations and identified enforcement responsibilities in place at selected project sites – Highly Satisfactory. Increased protection status for almost 2.5 million ha of land; 12 of 16 sites officially designated as Ramsar sites with documentation prepared for four others.

Output 1.2: Participatory management plans for the conservation of selected project sites developed and implemented – Satisfactory. Developed participatory management plans and increased the management capacity for 11 PAs although markedly different levels of participation and implementation between countries.

Output 1.3: External threats to sites reduced through off-site activities – Highly Satisfactory. Development of water management plans for all four Project sites in NE China; a buffer zone was established at Naurzum, Kazakhstan, to safeguard lakes and wetlands from degradation by controlling the numbers of livestock and other human activities; and in Russia the Zuravliny Division of the Synsko-Voykarsky Natural Park was established as a buffer around existing Kunovat Zakaznik.

Output 1.4: Implementation of site management plans is supported by application of results of applied field studies – Highly Satisfactory. Applied research and ecological monitoring undertaken at a number of Project sites including a long-term study of bird distribution, plants, and water levels at Poyang Lake, China; pilot integrated pest management projects at Fereydoon Kenar, Iran; expansion of long-term breeding studies of Siberian Cranes in Kytalyk Resource Reserve, Russia; and production regional guidelines for the reduction of highly pathogenic avian influenza risks at wetlands of importance for waterbirds.

Output 1.5: Sustainable, alternative livelihood projects developed with local communities in and around selected project sites – Marginally Satisfactory. Alternative livelihoods and economic practices were demonstrated at a range of villages in China, Iran, and Kazakhstan including intensive farming to replace extensive grazing, use of biogas to reduce requirement for firewood, micro-credit schemes, and training on a wide variety of subjects such as creation of NGOs, business planning, and running guest houses. Some showed success, some did not, and measures for replication were generally poor or absent.

Output 1.6: Capacity of staff of relevant agencies strengthened to ensure effective implementation of site management plans – Highly Satisfactory. The Project contributed to the development of the management capacity at the Project sites through significant numbers of diverse training courses, technical assistance, and the provision of substantial levels of equipment, including vehicles, boats, communications equipment, computers, optics, and GPS. Training included two international courses on data management and site management planning followed up by more in-depth training and consultancy support at national and site levels. New conservation approaches (e.g. community co-management, coordinated surveys) were introduced in China, Iran and Kazakhstan.

Output 1.7: Awareness of wetland biodiversity values raised among stakeholders – Highly Satisfactory. Extensive communication and awareness-raising activities were held across all four countries reaching a huge audience of all ages. It is estimated that films shown during Crane Festivals reached 30,000 people in Kazakhstan alone.

Output 2.1: Improvements made to national and sectoral legislation, policies, plans, and financial mechanisms in support of the conservation of migratory waterbirds and wetland biodiversity – Highly Satisfactory for China; Marginally Unsatisfactory for Iran, Kazakhstan, and Russia. Sustained financing of water management plans and wetland restoration by state, provincial and municipal sources achieved for four reserves in NE China. Only token measures in other three countries.

Output 2.2: Wetland biodiversity input to provincial land use planning, water resource management and coastal zone management through baseline surveys, monitoring and improved inter-sectoral cooperation – Highly Satisfactory for China and Kazakhstan; Highly Unsatisfactory for Iran and Russia. In China, water management plans now incorporated into regional long-range water distribution plans for the Songliao River Basin, providing a mechanism for secure water supply to meet ecological needs. Support of relevant agencies gained has resulted in detailed implementation arrangements for water delivery. Funding secured in 2.1 above. In Kazakhstan, agreement over water use around Naurzum formalised through a Basin Agreement between the stakeholders drawn up through a Basin Council. This was supported by new legislation in the field of water resource use. No substantive results in Iran or Russia.

Output 2.3: Monitoring programme implemented on distribution and movements of the Siberian Crane and other globally significant migratory waterbirds – Highly Satisfactory. Significant enhancements made to monitoring programmes through increased organisation (especially in China where 158 locations were included within the monitoring plan, and the flyway was divided into four sections each with a coordinator) and training. A regional database has been established to store and share data.

Output 2.4: Measures undertaken at national level to enhance international cooperation – Satisfactory. In addition to activities under 1.1 and 3.1 which have strong links to this output, technical assistance was provided to support the accession of Iran and Kazakhstan to the CMS, and accession of Kazakhstan to the Ramsar Convention. China also made some progress towards CMS membership and attended CMS COP9 as an observer.

Output 2.5: Training programme implemented to enhance national capacity for wetland and waterbird management – Highly Satisfactory. National training programmes were developed based on a training needs assessment and training plan, and covered a wide range of subjects including wetland assessment, monitoring and integrated management, species management, water resource management, sustainable utilisation of wetland resources, community-based management, conflict resolution, visitor management, environmental education methods, basic computer skills, and GIS use.

Output 2.6: Environmental education and public awareness measures undertaken at national level – Satisfactory. Hard to separate from activities described in Output 1.7 and site level CEPA activities more supported at a sub-national level than at a fully national level. In Kazakhstan, systematic development of an environmental education programme for the school system in Kostanay Oblast was exemplary and by the end of the programme more than 1,000 teachers had taken part and taken away copies of the training materials.

Output 3.1: Regional flyway networks developed in Western/Central Asia and Eastern Asia, and a programme of regional activities undertaken within the framework of adopted conservation plans for cranes – Highly Satisfactory. Extensive work undertaken, key amongst which was development and launch of the Western/Central Asia Site Network for Siberian Cranes and other Migratory Waterbirds under auspices of CMS, initially comprising ten sites in five countries (India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) with two more added in Pakistan in 2010; and support for the development of the North East Asian Crane Site Network under the emerging East Asian Australian Flyway Partnership supported by China and Russia.

Output 3.2: Results of project disseminated for the benefit of the global conservation community – Highly Satisfactory. Extensive dissemination of results and lessons learned through international meetings, publications, electronic media, and other means. Project outputs including national and site level technical reports, fact sheets and technical briefs, and an image database have been archived by ICF and are available on CD, through the ICF Library, and the CMS MoU website (www.sibeflyway.org).

KEY ISSUES

The Siberian Crane Wetlands Project has been well-managed and implemented. It has used the flagship species approach successfully at three mutually-reinforcing levels (regional, national and site) to undertake a wide range of actions that have made significant contributions to site-, national-, and regional-level wetland conservation needs along two major Asian flyways, acting in a fully integrated and concerted way to demonstrate the full range of benefits and added value that a flyway-scale approach can bring to the conservation of migratory ecological systems. Although it had to overcome initial low management capacity at both national and site level in most countries, it did this through an astute mixture of training courses and additional recruitment. Russia provided a hatful of problems. Government re-organisation had left the federal zakazniki in a vacuum with all staff laid-off and no funding; the Ministry of Natural Resources reluctant to engage with the Project in any meaningful way; and senior scientists short of time and out of their depth with project management issues. Nonetheless, through clever and often innovative adaptive management, and through considerable skill and dedication of those involved, it has, with the exception of work in western Siberia³, attained most of its objectives. The Project Steering Committee appears to have worked effectively throughout and has not been averse to taking strategic decisions opportunely to facilitate progress and adapt the Project to changing circumstances. This, together with very active and heavily involved UNEP Task Managers, a highly capable Regional Coordination Unit, and the close and active

³ Long **RCU comment** and response – reproduced in Annex XI.

engagement of a large number of stakeholders that the Project has worked with throughout, has been vital to fulfilling its achievements. While not everything has been achieved to the level originally envisaged, the Project has been extremely important in introducing, and in places establishing, a number of new concepts, such as participatory management planning. The Project has undertaken a very large amount of training, and the increased capacity of department- and reserve-level staff was widely reported as one of the most important achievements of the SCWP. Importantly, the Project was designed within the framework provided by the CMS Siberian Crane MoU and guided by the requirements of the Conservation Plans drawn up under that agreement. As a result it was preceded by considerable amounts of other work that provided a solid platform on which to build its achievements and, perhaps even more importantly, it has structures in place to support those achievements after its end. Consequently, not only has the SCWP achieved a great deal, those achievements are set to last well into the future and perhaps act as the foundation upon which to set the next building blocks.

Recommendations and Lessons Learned are listed on pages 99 et seq., the two most important ones being that the GEF should consolidate, promote, and expand flyway conservation efforts on a global scale; and that designing a project to be part of a much longer and wider process generates huge benefits for sustainability, and through the synergies developed provides the intervention with much greater effectiveness than that which can be achieved by stand-alone projects.

OVERALL RATINGS TABLE

Criterion	Evaluator's Summary Comments	Evaluator's Rating
A. Attainment of project objectives and results (overall rating) Sub criteria (below)	At the site level, the Project has increased the protection status of almost 2.5 million ha of land, developed management plans and increased the management capacity for 11 PAs, developed, financed, and implemented water management plans for four sites, introduced community development schemes and undertaken widespread awareness-raising activities. It has linked these achievements through national-level interventions including the enhancement of monitoring systems, and through regional-level activities to enhance flyway-level conservation of waterbirds. Of its 15 Outputs, 9.75 (65%) are rated Highly Satisfactory, and 3 (20%) as Satisfactory, while only 1.25 (8%) are rated with any form of Unsatisfactory. A perusal of Annex IV will show that of the 126 combinations that it is possible to evaluate, 94 (75%) show complete success and 19 (15%) show near success at the Project's end with only 13 (10%) deemed as not having been achieved – an extremely good result. Furthermore, 110 (87%) are adjudged to be Marginally Satisfactory or better (HS: 43, S: 49, MS 17) with only 16 (13%) Marginally Unsatisfactory or worse (MU: 5, U: 5, HU: 6).	HS
A. 1. Effectiveness - overall likelihood of impact achievement (ROTI rating)	Of the 29 combination assessed – seven outcomes by four countries plus a single regional combination – 20 (65%) are rated as Moderately Likely or above with only nine (35%) rated as Moderately Unlikely or below. Modal values have been used to rate individual countries' performance with China (AA: 7) rated AA – Highly Likely; Kazakhstan (AA:1, AB: 3, BB:1, C: 2) rated AB – Highly Likely; Iran (AA:3, BC:1, C:3) rated AA/C Highly Likely/Unlikely; and Russia (AA:1, AC:1, BC:1, C:1, D:3) rated D Highly Unlikely.	S AA to D – Highly Likely to Highly Unlikely
A. 2. Relevance	The Project has used the flagship species approach to implement a wide range of actions that have made significant contributions to site-, national-, and regional-level wetland conservation needs along two major Asian flyways, acting in a fully integrated and concerted way to demonstrate the full range of benefits and added value that a flyway-scale approach can bring to the conservation of migratory ecological systems.	HS
A. 3. Cost-effectiveness	Project management costs were trimmed to 67% of those originally budgeted, and the RCU and NCUs have worked with cost-effectiveness amongst their priorities, with actions to make the money work hard evident. That, combined with significant levels of catalytic financing leveraged by the Project's activities, means the overall cost-effectiveness of the Project has been extremely high.	HS

Criterion	Evaluator's Summary Comments	Evaluator's Rating
B. Sustainability of Project outcomes (overall rating) Sub criteria (below)	Regional evaluation limited to Outcome 3.1. National evaluations in this row have been made using the modal values of the "overall ratings" of all the elements of sustainability for each outcome (see Table 15). National evaluations of each individual element in the rows below have been made using the modal values of the individual ratings of each element across each outcome (again, see Table 15). One cannot derive the ratings in this row from the ratings in the rows below.	Regional: L China: L Iran: MU Kazakhstan: ML Russia: L/MU
B. 1. Financial	Regional: strong financial backing from the ICF, the CMS, and other bodies. The sustainability in <u>China</u> to be Likely with good financing of most outputs; in <u>Iran</u> to be very mixed but mostly Moderately Likely; in <u>Kazakhstan</u> to be having real difficulties with onward financing and most outputs Moderately Unlikely; and in <u>Russia</u> to be very mixed with Federal Government not really financing outputs but the provincial governments and scientific community financing some, hence Likely or Moderately Unlikely.	Regional: L China: L Iran: ML Kazakhstan: MU Russia: L/MU
B. 2. Socio-political	Regional: strong political support since Project viewed as one element of a continuing process. The sustainability in <u>China</u> to be Likely with very strong political support of most outputs; in <u>Iran</u> generally good if slow political support for most outputs so Likely or Moderately Likely; in <u>Kazakhstan</u> to be Likely with very strong political support of most outputs; and in <u>Russia</u> to be very mixed with no support from Federal Government but with good support from provincial governments and the scientific community, hence Likely or Moderately Unlikely.	Regional: L China: L Iran: L/ML Kazakhstan: L Russia: L/MU
B. 3. Institutional framework and governance	Regional: strong institutional framework surrounding continuing process, including through arrangements under CMS. The sustainability in <u>China</u> to be Likely with a very strong institutional framework in place for all outputs; in <u>Iran</u> generally good undermined in places by slow post-project responses but for most outputs Likely; in <u>Kazakhstan</u> to be Likely with a very strong institutional framework for most outputs; and in <u>Russia</u> to be again very mixed with the Federal structures having to be replaced by provincial or scientific ones, yet Likely.	Regional: L China: L Iran: L Kazakhstan: L Russia: L
B. 4. Environmental	Regional: n/a. The sustainability across the board is Likely, with just a small few risks posed by possible drought to one or two outputs in NE China and in Kazakhstan.	Regional: L China: L Iran: L Kazakhstan: L Russia: L
C. Catalytic Role	As the first flyway-scale site-based project to be implemented through the GEF, it has displayed high levels of innovation and ability for replication, with significant catalytic financing leveraged for water management, but at the sites themselves actions to promote replication have been less successful.	S
D. Stakeholders involvement	The Project has worked closely with a large number of stakeholders throughout and the active engagement of stakeholders has been vital to fulfilling its achievements.	HS
E. Country ownership / driven-ness	Country driven-ness and coordination is largely irrelevant to a project driven at a supra-national level through the CMS and led by very competent international NGO, the ICF. Nonetheless, full engagement of countries' central authorities, even in a supportive rather than leading role, apparently makes a huge difference – the results from Kazakhstan and China being particularly praiseworthy, while those from Iran have been more modest, and those from Russia attributable more to the dedication of the scientists involved rather than to any government involvement, although provincial government assistance particularly in Yakutia has compensated for a lack of central level support.	S (but Russia HU)
F. Achievement of outputs and activities	At the site level, the Project has increased the protection status of almost 2.5 million ha of land, developed management plans and increased the management capacity for 11 PAs, developed, financed, and implemented water management plans for four sites, introduced community development schemes and undertaken widespread awareness-raising activities. It has linked these achievements through national-level interventions including the enhancement of monitoring systems, and through regional-level activities to enhance flyway-level conservation of waterbirds. Of its 15 Outputs, 9.75 (65%) are rated Highly Satisfactory, and 3 (20%) as Satisfactory, while only 1.25 (8%) are rated with any form of Unsatisfactory.	HS

Criterion	Evaluator's Summary Comments	Evaluator's Rating
G. Preparation and readiness	At the regional level, the ICF as the international executing agency, was fully prepared for the commencement of the Project and displayed high levels of readiness, but this could not be matched by the four countries who through inexperience (China and Iran), bad timing of incidental events (Kazakhstan), and indifferent political will (Russia) meant that implementation on the ground suffered various problems in the early stages.	S
H. Implementation approach	The Project has been well-organised and well-managed throughout providing products of the highest technical quality while responding effectively to a range of internal and external challenges through excellent adaptive management. Only in Russia, where there have been significant and chronic management problems in the national and western Siberian coordination units, has implementation been less than acceptable on a GEF Project ⁴ . Only because these problems, which should have been solved long before they were, cannot be overlooked has the implementation approach not been assessed more highly.	S
I. Financial planning	Financial planning and management has been extremely effective throughout and the Project has displayed great ability in obtaining additional co-financing to that originally pledged. Accounting and reporting has been thorough and of the highest order, enabling sound decision-making to be made.	HS
J. Monitoring and Evaluation (overall rating) Sub criteria (below)	M&E design was of a standard commensurate with the design period, and despite the lack of a defined budget allocation, adequate funds have enabled extensive M&E activities throughout. Outstanding progress monitoring through reporting and strong internal activity monitoring by the RCU has not been matched by internal activity or impact monitoring by the NCU where neither has been fed-back into decision-making. Strong responses to the mid-term review and the risk assessments have helped offset this to a large degree.	S
E. 1. M&E Design	The design of M&E was of a standard commensurate with the design period, and while no plan as such was included, the Project Document covered all the various M&E steps including the allocation of responsibilities. The absence of a clearly defined budget allocation in the design is a concern, but it appears to have been included within other categories.	S
E. 2. M&E Plan Implementation (use for adaptive management)	M&E implementation has been mixed, with excellent progress monitoring and strong internal activity monitoring by the RCU, but that this has been depreciated by less good internal activity monitoring by the NCUs and poor or absent impact monitoring, and importantly neither of the latter two being fed back to influence management decisions. Strong responses to the mid-term review and the risk assessments have helped offset this to a large degree.	S
E. 3. Budgeting and Funding for M&E activities	The lack of an allocated budget for M&E within the project has to be viewed as unsatisfactory, but this has been taken into account under M&E "design" and has not been found to have affected M&E implementation in any way. M&E activities have been extensive and all have been fully-funded throughout.	S
K. UNEP Supervision and backstopping	UNEP have provided a very high level of backstopping and supervision to this Project, and its performance has benefitted as a direct result. Given that it is difficult for the TE to see how this could have been improved, it is considered as "good practice".	HS

* Note: HS = Highly satisfactory; S = Satisfactory; MS = Marginally satisfactory; MU= Marginally unsatisfactory; U = Unsatisfactory; HU = Highly unsatisfactory; L = Likely; ML = Moderately likely.

⁴ **UNEP comment:** Main reason for this – afterwards speaking is a faulty project implementation design for RF – where the MNR was not officially hosting the project as it may have been needed.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

1. The Monitoring and Evaluation Policy at the project level in UNEP/GEF has two overarching objectives, namely to promote accountability for the achievement of GEF objectives through the assessment of results, effectiveness, processes and performance of the partners involved in GEF activities; and to promote learning, feedback and knowledge sharing on results and lessons learned among the GEF and its partners, as basis for decision-making on policies, strategies, programme management, and projects and to improve knowledge and performance. With this in mind, this Terminal Evaluation (TE) was initiated by the Evaluation Office of UNEP as the GEF Implementation Agency for the project entitled *Development of a Wetland Site and Flyway Network for Conservation of the Siberian Crane and Other Migratory Waterbirds in Asia*, more commonly known as, and hereinafter referred to as, the *Siberian Crane Wetland Project (SCWP)*, to assess the actual performance and results of the Project against the planned project activities and outputs, at the regional, national, and local levels.

2. The TE was conducted over a period of 48 days between 12th July and 28th November 2011 by a single international consultant. It was carried out some 18 months after the closure of the Project's programme for practical reasons – communication commenced in September 2010 but since the project sites would not have been accessible during the northern winter months it was decided that the evaluation would take place early in summer 2011. The TE then experienced considerable time-lags in getting visas meaning visits were delayed until the autumn. The approach was determined by the terms of reference ([Annex I](#)) and focuses on ten key questions (see page 4 of the TOR) and the six-year implementation period, but includes an assessment of the Project's design, and makes recommendations related to the Project's post-implementation period. A detailed itinerary is given in [Annex II](#). The report was finalised on 29th February 2012 after receipt of final comments on 24th January 2012 and subsequent clarifications and iterations in February. The text has been revised to correct factual inaccuracies in the draft or to include additional information, while other comments have either been reproduced in full and unedited as footnotes to the appropriate text where short, or included into Annex XI where longer, to ensure a fair hearing to all parties. The Evaluator has made responses to some of these comments.

3. The Evaluation was conducted through the following participatory approach:

- extensive face-to-face, skype, and telephone interviews with the project management and technical support staff, including some members of the Project Steering Committee (PSC), the Project's Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) and National Coordination Units (NCUs), staff of the participating governments' agencies, and various consultants. Throughout the evaluation, particular attention was paid to explaining carefully the importance of listening to stakeholders' views and in reassuring staff and stakeholders that the purpose of the evaluation was not to judge performance in order to apportion credit or blame but to measure the relative success of implementation and to determine lessons for the wider GEF context. The confidentiality of all interviews was stressed. Wherever possible, information collected was cross-checked between various sources to ascertain its veracity, but in some cases time limited this. A full list of people interviewed is given in [Annex III](#).
- face-to-face interviews with national and local stakeholders, particularly the beneficiaries, at some of the field sites;
- a thorough review of project documents and other relevant texts, including the project documents, outputs, monitoring reports, such as progress and financial reports to UNEP and GEF annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIR) reports, relevant correspondence, other project-related material produced by the project staff or partners, and relevant material available on the Project's website (<http://www.scwp.info>);
- field visits to five of the field sites, namely Keerqin, Momoge, Poyang Lake, Xianghai, and Zhalong National Nature Reserves in China; Naurzum Zapovednik in Kazakhstan; and Fereydoon Kenar in Iran. None of the field sites in Russia could be visited because of their remoteness, although a visit was made to Yakutsk to talk with the Yakutian Coordination Unit.

4. Wherever possible the TE has tried to evaluate issues according to the criteria listed in the *GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy*, namely:

- A. Attainment of project objectives and results
 - A. 1. Effectiveness - overall likelihood of impact achievement (ROtI rating)
 - A. 2. Relevance
 - A. 3. Efficiency
- B. Sustainability of Project outcomes
 - B. 1. Financial
 - B. 2. Socio Political
 - B. 3. Institutional framework and governance
 - B. 4. Environmental
- C. Catalytic Role and Replication
- D. Stakeholders involvement
- E. Country ownership/driven-ness
- F. Achievement of outputs and activities
- G. Preparation and readiness
- H. Implementation approach
- I. Monitoring and Evaluation
 - I. 1. M&E Design
 - I. 2. M&E Plan Implementation (use for adaptive management)
 - I. 3. Budgeting and Funding for M&E activities
- J. Financial planning
- K. UNEP Supervision and backstopping
- L. Complementarity with UNEP Medium Term Strategy and Programme of Work

Lessons learned have been placed in boxes and cross-referenced with a number hyperlinked to the “*Lessons Learned*” section where further discussion can be found.

5. The TE has evaluated the Project’s performance against these according to the current six-point evaluation scale provided to it by the GEF. This is reproduced in Table 1 for clarity.

TABLE 1: SCALE USED TO EVALUATE THE PROJECT BY THE TERMINAL EVALUATION

Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Project is expected to achieve or exceed all its major global environmental objectives, and yield substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
Satisfactory (S)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings.
Marginally Satisfactory (MS)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve some of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits.
Marginally Unsatisfactory (MU)	Project is expected to achieve some of its major global environmental objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to achieve only some of its major global environmental benefits.
Unsatisfactory (U)	Project is expected not to achieve most of its major global environment objectives or to yield any satisfactory global environmental benefits.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, any of its major global environment objectives with no worthwhile benefits.

In addition, other scales have been used to cover sustainability (Table 2), monitoring and evaluation, and to assess impacts. The Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) method also requires ratings to be made for outcomes achieved by the project and the progress made towards the ‘intermediate states’ at the time of the evaluation. The rating scale is given in Table 3 while Table 4 shows how the two letter ratings for “*achievement of outcomes*” and “*progress towards intermediate states*” translate into ratings for the “*overall likelihood of impact achievement*” on a six-point scale. A rating is given a ‘+’ notation if there is evidence of impacts accruing within the life of the project which moves the double letter rating up one space in the six-point scale.

TABLE 2: SCALE USED TO EVALUATE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT

Likely (L)	There are no risks affecting this dimension of sustainability.
Moderately Likely (ML)	There are moderate risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.
Moderately Unlikely (MU)	There are significant risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.
Unlikely (U)	There are severe risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.

TABLE 3: RATING SCALE FOR OUTCOMES AND PROGRESS TOWARDS “INTERMEDIATE STATES”

Outcome Rating	Rating on progress toward Intermediate States
D: The project’s intended outcomes were not delivered	D: No measures taken to move towards intermediate states.
C: The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, but were not designed to feed into a continuing process after project funding	C: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced results.
B: The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, but with no prior allocation of responsibilities after project funding	B: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which give no indication that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.
A: The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, with specific allocation of responsibilities after project funding.	A: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which clearly indicate that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.

TABLE 4: RATING SCALE FOR THE “OVERALL LIKELIHOOD OF IMPACT ACHIEVEMENT”.

Highly Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Moderately Unlikely	Unlikely	Highly Unlikely
AA AB BA CA BB+ CB+ DA+ DB+	BB CB DA DB AC+ BC+	AC BC CC+ DC+	CC DC AD+ BD+	AD BD CD+ DD+	CD DD

6. This Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) methodology is still relatively new to the GEF, and in an earlier evaluation, the TE discovered a flaw in its logic when trying to apply it. This appears still not to have been corrected. The table showing the ratings scale for the overall likelihood of impact achievement (Table 4) assumes a two-letter coding running from AA to DD with all possible combinations in between. However, while the explanation of these letter codes (Table 3) suggests that all two letter codes are possible, a perusal of the examples given in Annex 7 of the TE’s TOR (attached in full with complete annexes in Annex I of this evaluation report) shows this not to be possible since under the application of codes D and C it states:

“Funds were spent, outputs were produced, but nothing in terms of outcomes was achieved. People attended training courses but there is no evidence of increased capacity. A website was developed, but no one used it. (Score – D)”

Outcomes achieved but are dead ends; no forward linkages to intermediary stages in the future. People attended training courses, increased their capacities, but all left for other jobs shortly after; or were not given opportunities to apply their new skills. A website was developed and was used, but achieved little or nothing of what was intended because intended end users had no access to computers. People had meetings that led nowhere. Outcomes hypothesized or achieved, but either insignificant and/or no evident linkages forward to intermediary stages leading towards impacts. (Score – C)”

From these, it is clear that if there are no linkages forwards to an intermediary stage, then it is not possible to then continue forwards and apply a coding to that intermediary stage; and indeed the example paragraph goes on to state:

“Outcomes” scored C or D. If the outcomes above scored C or D, there is no need to continue forward to score intermediate stages given that achievement of such is then not possible.”

As a result, the TE has dispensed with any two letter combination for any component assessed as C or D in relation to its outputs and has simply called C as Unlikely, and D as Highly Unlikely (although again he concedes that logically “Impossible” would be a better term since if the outcomes were not achieved he cannot see an intermediary stage ever being achievable).

7. Throughout, the four countries involved in the Project have been listed in alphabetical order, and geographical rather than political names preferred for conciseness and ease of reading, thus:

- the People’s Republic of China is referred to as China;
- the Islamic Republic of Iran is referred to as Iran;
- the Republic of Kazakhstan is referred to as Kazakhstan; and
- the Russian Federation is referred to as Russia.

In addition, the old Soviet name of Yakutia has been retained over the newer (or actually older) name of the Sakha Republic in view of its greater familiarity with the likely readership of this report. Finally, the numbers of the “Lessons Learned” (in boxes) in the text are not sequential; they are cross-references to the order in the Lessons Learned section starting on page 98.

PROJECT PREPARATION

BACKGROUND

8. The concept for the Project arose from a meeting held at Ramsar in Iran in 1998, of the members of the Siberian Crane MoU. This *Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane*⁵ was the first instrument of its kind to be developed under the Convention of Migratory Species (CMS) and was designed to stimulate practical cooperation among the 11 range states of the Siberian Crane⁶. As a result of the perceived need for more substantial resources to conserve and manage the critical wetlands upon which the Siberian Crane (*Grus leucogeranus*) depended, the ICF and CMS had approached the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) about a project using the Siberian Crane as the flagship for protecting a network of wetland sites of international importance to migratory waterbirds and other biodiversity. Such a project would address one of the two major types of threat identified through the conservation plans developed under the MoU, namely loss and degradation of habitat required by Siberian Cranes along their flyways. Other work under the CMS MoU concerning hunting, and the development of reintroduction methods to bolster the remnant flocks in central and west Asia would continue in parallel.

9. The PDF-B became operational in late 2000, and the documents were submitted to UNEP-GEF in January 2002. Unfortunately, shortly afterwards, the GEF underwent a funding crisis and a request was made to split the project into two phases. These revisions were completed and were submitted to the GEF Secretariat on 6th February 2003. GEF CEO endorsement was received, on 26th February 2003 as a six-year Full-sized Project under Operational Programme #2 – Coastal, Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems and as part of Biodiversity Strategic Priorities “I. Catalyzing sustainability of Protected Areas” and “II. Mainstreaming biodiversity in production landscapes and sectors”. UNEP-GEF signed the Project Document on 7th March 2003, thereby commencing the Project. Project endorsement from the participating Governments was reflected in their endorsement letters of 2001 thereby negating the need for them to sign the Project Document. First disbursements were made on 13th March 2003. A Mid-term Review was undertaken and reported initially in August 2006. The initial end date was March 2009, but a nine-month

⁵ Signed on 16th June 1993 in Kushiro, Japan.

⁶ Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

extension was granted to all involved except Russia, where continuing difficulties with correct financial reporting and concerns over value for money resulted in UNEP not giving approval. The official end date for the other countries' and regional activities therefore became 31st December 2009 but additional leeway was allowed to complete reporting and accounts only until March 2010.

CONCEPT AND DESIGN

10. This Project is one of the first two (the other being the *Wings Over Wetlands* (WOW) Project) to address the conservation of migratory species at a flyway scale hence is to be congratulated on its innovation. It was designed to respond to the continued loss and degradation of wetland sites along the key Asian Flyways that threatens the survival of many waterbird species. The Project Document is lucidly written, well-structured, and largely cogently argued, but is immensely long. At 392 pages it is reputedly the biggest ever submitted to GEF and the TE wonders whether such an in-depth analysis was really necessary. It would seem that the UNEP Task Manager of the time was overly zealous in his requirements. The project document for the UNDP-GEF *Mekong River Basin Wetland Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Project*, a four-country regional project designed at the same time as the SCWP, and in whose design the TE was involved, was far shorter yet covered a much greater diversity of species and activities. As an example, it was not found necessary to construct logical frameworks for each of the countries involved as well as for the project as a whole. The TE questions the value that these have played in the SCWP's implementation and, even if important, these could have been constructed during the inception period of the Project itself and used as a capacity-building exercise for the NCUs in each country. However, despite the great length of its documentation, the Project is not deemed to have been overly ambitious – a common fault – but realistic in what it set out to achieve within an equally realistic six-year timescale. Furthermore, unlike WOW, it did not have a difficult gestation period and the organisational arrangements and budgeting are simple but realistic. Even though the international executing agency was identified as an international NGO without previous experience of GEF, the International Crane Foundation had a successful track record in the conservation of cranes and extensive scientific experience of working in the geographic areas targeted by the Project.

Design Logic

11. The logic behind the design is sound and very simple. The main idea is to use the Siberian Crane as a “flagship species” as the Project Document states:

“in the same way that other charismatic species have been used to attract public attention on conservation issues – for instance, the Giant Panda (WWF logo), the Tiger (for forest conservation), gorillas and whales.”

Since the crane shares the wetlands that it uses during its annual migration cycle with a wide range of other migratory waterbird species, of which the Project Document claims 32 to be of global significance, enhancing the conservation of these sites will benefit them all and safeguard the,

“considerable socio-economic and cultural importance of the wetlands which ... support the livelihoods of local communities, as well as contributing to regional and national economic development”.

Unlike the WOW Project, the SCWP is designed from the site-level upwards, not the regional-level downwards, so the emphasis is very different and, as a result, the site-based interventions are not only the main focus but the interventions form a much more coherent whole – see paragraph 110. These interventions were designed to

“address the management of globally significant flyway wetlands through legal protection, management plans, stakeholder participation, capacity building, public awareness programmes and alternative livelihood projects”

and were supported in turn,

“by national measures to strengthen legislation, policies and plans; biodiversity input to regional planning; monitoring; capacity building for international cooperation; training; and education and public awareness programmes”

while the,

“regional component focuses on the development of wetland site networks using the Siberian Crane as a “flagship species” for wetland and migratory waterbird conservation, based on the qualities that lend it both popular appeal and cultural importance in the regions where it occurs”.

These qualities are cited thus:

“The Siberian Crane is a charismatic bird, with dramatic courtship and territorial displays, and acts as an international ambassador, traversing long, difficult migration routes through diverse countries. It is revered as a symbol in many cultures of long life, good marriage and as a spirit guide. It is globally endangered. These qualities, and its large size and beauty, make it an excellent flagship species to focus peoples’ attention on the conservation of its main habitat requirement – large open wetlands.”

The TE fully concurs with this and cannot think of another species which could act as effectively as a flagship for the conservation of largely inland wetlands in Asia, a point that provides a little difficulty for its replication – see paragraph 118. As one interviewee indicated, *“its ecological and cultural importance brought together partners that otherwise would not have sat around the same table”*. However, the TE would also add that it has two other extremely important properties – a) ease of recognition and with it ease to caricature, and b) it acts as an excellent umbrella species.

12. Perhaps the biggest strength of the Project’s design is actually largely hidden from view, since nowhere is it overtly expressed. True, the Project Document makes frequent reference to existing regional initiatives, has a large annex (9H) called *“Links to Related Projects, Programmes, NBSAPs and other Initiatives”*, and states that it will work closely with these to form an integrated programme, while under paragraph 4 it refers to the CMS *Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane*. Yet such statements are commonplace in most GEF Project Documents where *“Linkages to other projects”* and *“International strategic and policy context”* or similar are required sections. Sadly, very often these are taken as just *“hoops”* GEF requires designers to jump through and either the designers or more frequently the implementers regard them as just that. However, in this case, what these references never fully express, is the fact that the design of this Project was always seen as a step within an existing process, not a stand alone project but one that was always designed to provide a large monetary boost to conservation actions that had a long history and to a process to which the ICF (and the CMS) has a huge future commitment. This has important implications for sustainability (see paragraph 114).

13. One of the most difficult decisions for the designers was what to leave out. The Siberian Crane actually has three major flyways, but to include all of these would lead to the involvement of 11 countries; too big and far too complicated for a single project to contemplate. However, it was clear during the design that the central flyway was no longer viable (in fact the last remaining birds died out before the Project began) so efforts were focussed on the eastern and western flyways (see [Annex VIII](#)). Furthermore, the designers decided that they could not address the severe hunting threats along the flyways together with all of the other issues so work concerning this, and the development of reintroduction methods to bolster the populations in western and central Asia would continue in parallel through other means. That left one final problem. There were a considerable number of wetland sites important to the cranes and other waterbirds on the western flyway in Azerbaijan; but Azerbaijan was not a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity so could not be considered for GEF financing. Regrettably the country was excluded from the design but as the designers indicated in their response to the STAP Review, it was included in a suite of other activities under the CMS Siberian Crane MoU permitting its

“participation in flyway-level conservation activities under this project, and provid[ing] a channel for communication of information on lessons learned through the project”

In all cases, the designers displayed a pragmatic approach to overcome these issues while basing their decisions on sound logic. The result is a project that was both manageable in size while still including a wide range of site types and differing management regimes.

14. While the macro design has been very good, inevitably there were some areas where it was less successful. These all appear to be at the level of micro design. While these are generally small points, e.g. a number of people in Kazakhstan indicated that the issues relating to the water shortages at Naurzum, purportedly due to the local communities’ dams, were in fact known to be really natural water cycles and that

including activities to address this in the Project was actually “a waste of time” (see paragraph 48), one is of much more significance. In Iran, too little (if any) cognisance was taken of the fact that there was “no such thing as a management plan”, i.e. there was and is “no administrative context” for such a vehicle and “no legal framework to put it into action”⁷. Furthermore, the mainly western concept of an integrated approach is also absent – everything is carried out on a single sector basis with disagreements commonplace. A project does not have the ability to enforce the degree of cooperation that is necessary – cooperation that is dependent upon very high-level connections far above the level of even a Project Director⁸. Finally, Government acts very slowly while the project acts very fast in order to meet its deadlines. Failure to fully understand and incorporate these issues and to design activities accordingly has resulted in an unfortunate legacy in that most of the results in Iran have not been able to be implemented fully or effectively or, where they have been, not to be fully integrated into the country’s administrative framework thereby making them unsustainable.

#5

Lesson learned: It is important that a project’s design takes real account of national constraints.

Logical Framework

15. By common consent, the logframe has been considered to be too complicated with 45 indicators, too many in the TE’s view to maintain proper oversight. The MTR expressed the following view with which the TE can only concur:

“The Project Log-frame is too long and complicated, with too many indicators, requiring an impractical amount of project effort to “assess the baseline situation” and too much work for regular monitoring reports – both for the reporter and the reviewer. Whilst individual country logframes may be just about manageable, the combined Project Log-frame is cumbersome and inadequate to monitor the overall project performance”.

It went on to make this recommendation:

“Streamline and establish an Integrated Project Log-frame for all components and countries; as well as consolidate the number of indicators to Objectives and Outcomes only, to reduce the emphasis on extensive and expensive monitoring”

With which the Project complied, the International Technical Adviser and the UNEP Task Manager taking joint responsibility for a new logframe that was approved by the Project Steering Committee at its fifth meeting in Moscow in September 2006. This captured the key high-level indicators and addressed the immediate objective and outcome levels only. At the same time, the logframe tracking form used for the progress reports was simplified and first applied to the semi-annual progress report for the period July-December 2006. This was first circulated by email to all the PSC members for their review and comment prior to it being submitted to UNEP in January 2007. Project outputs continued to be reported separately in the progress reports but overlap was avoided.

16. The approach to indicators in the original Project Document was weak but understandable. GEF’s requirement for quantitative indicators was still really new and designers were struggling to understand what was needed while having no experience to draw on. Therefore, as an example, indicators for site-level output:

“Appropriate legal protection, clear regulations and identified enforcement responsibilities in place at selected project sites”

included

“% increase in annual number of prosecutions for offences of nature protection legislation at project sites over baseline by Year 6”

and

⁷ **RCU comment:** While this is the case for the unique situation of FDK, where nearly all of the site is in private ownership, in fact DOE does have a management plan programme for its other protected areas that are completely within its control (including Bujagh NP). The effectiveness of this programme is questionable, but that is a separate matter.

⁸ **RCU comment:** Yes, this was a significant issue – in fact in all four countries.

“% reduction in annual number of waterbirds illegally killed at project sites over baseline by Year 6”,

the first of which inherently expects a decrease but does not allow for the likely initial increase in number resulting from increased vigilance and so the results are hard to apply in any meaningful way; and the latter which is unlikely to be practical to measure. Similarly, national project personnel pointed out the difficulties of indicators within the national logframes, e.g. in Kazakhstan, one of the indicators for output 1.3

“External threats to sites reduced through off-site activities”

reads

“Naurzum Lake System: Frequency of occurrence of fires inside the protected area reduced by 60% over Year 1 baseline by Year 6”

which is pretty obviously outside of the Project’s control but which nonetheless gave the NCU much concern as to how to deal with it. As another interviewee remarked, the designers were dealing with *“total fantasy”*. The TE cannot quite concur, since it is apparent that they had done their best, but he can sympathise with the frustrations experienced when trying to deal with these issues on a practical basis. Unfortunately, the difficulties of dealing with the design or simplification of logframes is fairly pervasive, and even the simplification process is not without error. Perusal of [Annex IV](#) will show that for a large number of cases, the indicator and the target have the same wording; a pedantic point, maybe, but they should be different: a very simple example using indicator and target for O3.2.1 which read:

“At least 20 papers describing project results published in scientific journals and conference and workshop proceedings by end of Year 6”

Should be separated so that the indicator is the *“Number of papers published describing project results”* while the target is *“At least 20 papers published in scientific journals and conference and workshop proceedings by end of Year 6”*. Furthermore, while most of the indicators are effectively SMART, there are difficulties in the baseline definitions and reporting of final measurements. One example: Indicator I.1 in [Annex IV](#) reads:

“Hydrological monitoring in final year of project indicates that conditions at project sites meet minimum requirements for maintaining wetland functions, according to parameters to be specified in the site management plans. Long term monitoring confirms this. Indicative parameters include: water level measurements, surface discharge into wetlands, local precipitation, local evaporation, outflows from the wetland, storage volume”

and its target, thus:

“Values of indicator parameters fall within limits of acceptable change specified in site management plans”.

However, this ends up making the target of one indicator dependent upon the successful conclusion of a separate activity and hence is fraught with difficulties, e.g. if a management plan has not been prepared or approved and hence there are no defined values for parameters, does that automatically mean failure of that indicator even if the real situation on the ground is acceptable? Such mixing of targets with separate products of the Project should be avoided.

UNEP Programming Context

17. At the time of its design, the SCWP was deemed to be congruent with the strategic objective: *“... promoting multi-country cooperation directed to achieving global environmental benefits”* detailed in the *“Action Plan on Complementarity Between the Activities Undertaken by UNEP under the GEF and its Programme of Work (1999)”* by proposing to improve international cooperation mechanisms for the conservation of a network of globally important wetlands in Asia required for the survival of migratory waterbirds including a number of globally endangered species. It is also linked to the strategic objective *“...relating national and regional priorities to global environmental objectives”* through proposing to build the capacity for flyway conservation at national and sub-regional levels and by directing resources towards project activities that will achieve global benefits (such as conservation of internationally important wetlands and threatened waterbird species). Even though the start of its design preceded the *UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS)/Programme of Work 2010/11* by ten years, the Project’s Outcomes are still complementary

with, and will actively promote, two of the “*Expected Accomplishments*” articulated under the focal area of Ecosystem Management, namely:

- (a) *“That countries and regions increasingly integrate an ecosystem management approach into development and planning processes; and*
- (b) *That countries and regions have capacity to utilize ecosystem management tools”.*

While the efficacy of these contributions is not yet clear, the initial signs are positive – a site-based approach has focussed on increased protective and management measures of wetlands, known through monitoring work, to be linked along the same flyways for a wide variety of globally-threatened species; and that this has been complemented at national and international levels by appropriate actions to build capacities and improve coordination and recognition.

18. The Outcomes of the Project are also complementary with two of the Objectives (and two sub-objectives) of the Bali Strategic Plan, namely:

- (a) *“To strengthen the capacity of Governments of developing countries as well as of countries with economies in transition, at all levels:*
 - (iii) *To comply with international agreements and implement their obligations at the national level;*
 - (vi) *To develop national research, monitoring and assessment capacity to support national institutions in data collection, analysis and monitoring of environmental trends and in establishing infrastructure for scientific development and environmental management, in order to ensure sustainability of capacity-building efforts; and*
- (c) *To provide a framework for capacity-building to ensure the effective participation of developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition in negotiations concerning multilateral environmental agreements;”*

while the involvement of four Asian countries in collecting, sharing, and using data to a common purpose, provides excellent examples of South-South cooperation.

Objectives and Components

19. As indicated in paragraph 13, following the Mid-term Review, the Project’s logical framework was revised and simplified to help improve its practicality as a management tool for monitoring and evaluation, to provide a more coherent view of progress, and to reduce the cost in terms of time and money spent in collecting the information to measure the indicators. This logframe, approved by the SWCP Steering Committee in September 2006 at its 5th Meeting in Moscow, with three Components, 15 Outputs, and 19 indicators has been used throughout as the basis for this evaluation (see [Annex IV](#)). While each country also had a national logframe, these have not been used in this evaluation as the level of detail was considered too great. The following are the key objectives formulated for the Project:

Goal (Development Objective)

- *To conserve globally significant wetlands and migratory waterbirds in Asia.*

Objective (Intermediate Objective)

- *Improved ecological integrity and viability of the network of critical wetlands needed by the Siberian Crane, migratory waterbirds and other globally significant wetland biodiversity.*

Site Level Outcomes

- *Enhanced legal protection through clear regulations and identified enforcement responsibilities at selected project sites.*
- *Sustained biodiversity protection through participatory and effective site management*

National Level Outcomes

- *Enhanced conservation of wetland biodiversity through national and sectoral legislation, as well as supporting policies, plans, and financial mechanisms*

- *Strengthened conservation of wetland biodiversity through provincial land use planning, water resource management and coastal zone management*
- *Strengthened flyway conservation efforts through functional national monitoring programmes for the Siberian Crane and other migratory waterbirds*
- *Enhanced implementation of international conventions and agreements on the conservation of (wetland & waterbird) biodiversity*

International Level Outcomes

- *Improved crane conservation through development and implementation of regional flyway networks and adopted crane conservation plans in Western/Central Asia and Eastern Asia*
- *Strengthened understanding, support and effective action towards flyway conservation through dissemination of information and experience between sites, countries, related experts and organizations and the interested public*

READINESS

20. In marked contrast with its sister flyway WOW Project, this Project was clearly ready from the outset and hit the ground running. This difference is in no little part due to the fact that only one organisation, the ICF, was involved in implementation, that the Project was seen as simply another step on an already existing programme of crane conservation underway through the ICF and CMS (see paragraph 114), and that events between the PDF-B and the start of the Project, although involving phasing of the activities and a re-write of the documentation, were very much less traumatic than those surrounding the WOW project. Furthermore, the UNEP Task Manager kept the ICF closely abreast of the decision-making process and its likely timetable which was seen by all as particularly helpful. With this level of information, ICF had permanent staff already on stand-by and had held the International Technical Advisor on a contract in Cambodia while awaiting the go-ahead to commence the Project. Thus all key staff were already effectively in place. Top management of the ICF, steeped as they were in Siberian Crane issues, were also keen to lend support and this was yet further enhanced by the fact that this Project was seen as a flagship for the ICF making them highly visible on the international stage. An indication of this high state of readiness is reflected in the fact that the Project inception workshop (something which WOW never held) was initially planned to be held in China in May 2003, within two months of the Project's start, but the outbreak of SARS⁹ in China at that time meant that everything was shut down within the country and travel to and from it severely curtailed. Instead, smaller inception workshops were held at a national level in each country thus:

- Iran: 12th August 2003 in Tehran
- China: 14-16th August 2003 in Harbin
- Russia: 25th September 2003 in Moscow
- Kazakhstan: 21st April 2005 in Astana.

#11	Lesson learned: The inception period is very valuable – allow sufficient time.
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21. In one area, the Project found itself rather unready, and that was the degree of accounting and reporting that a GEF project demands. As with most international NGOs, ICF's own systems are professionally-based to meet international standards, but even so combining these with the Project's reporting requirements while giving sufficient leeway for each country's NCU's procedures was no easy feat, particularly since there was no standard UNEP/GEF manual available at the start of the Project. To tackle this, they hired Paul McVey, and immensely experienced project manager, as the initial Operations Manger to initialise the Project and to produce a Project Operations Manual to act as a point of reference for all four countries. UNEP invested a substantial amount of time in providing input to the Manual and reviewing it a number of times. This 125-page manual, which became an organic document through incremental changes during the Project's lifetime, covered all aspects of managing a project from financial guidelines to example terms of reference, and from procurement standards to work plan development, and includes a range of *pro formas*. It is seen as of such high quality and such a practical nature by the TE that

⁹ Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome

perhaps UNEP could adopt it as a standard (perhaps altering it as and where necessary) for issuance to all its GEF projects during their inception phase for adaptation to their specific needs. Its table of contents has been appended to this report as [Annex IX](#) to provide an indication of its depth and breadth of coverage.

#10	Lesson learned: It helps if projects could have guidance from GEF or the GEF Implementing Agency on how to manage a big project.
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22. On the financial front, the Project was adequately budgeted during its design – again in marked contrast to its sister project; WOW. Indeed, the initial budgets contained within the Project Document appear somewhat overly optimistic with co-financing of some US\$ 23 million committed, and while indeed some of this did fail to be realised, most notably cash grants from Momoge NNR (US\$ 1.3 million), the Inner Mongolia Environmental Protection Bureau (US\$ 390,000), and Qi-Da (US\$ 300,000), all China; and in-kind contributions from the All Russian Research Institute for Nature Protection (US\$ 104,000), the Institute of Biological Problems of the Cryolithozone (US\$ 80,000) and six of the seven original NGOs that pledged support (totalling US\$ 329,000) including the Sterkh Foundation, WWF-Kazakhstan and WWF-Russia, and Wetlands International-Russia (see Table 10); very significant additional monies were subsequently generated, primarily through China, such that the co-financing total actually climbed still further by a net amount of US\$ 9.57 million to US\$ 32.7 million. No details have been obtained (indeed were they kept?) of the effects on the Project of the substantial weakening of the US dollar¹⁰ during the period from November 2003 to June 2006 when it suffered an 8% devaluation (US\$ 1 = € 0.863 to US\$ 1 = € 0.794 respectively, and again in 2007/8 troughing in mid-April 2008 at US\$ 1 = € 0.623, a 28% devaluation. The TE ventures to suggest that a) because of generally fixed exchange rates for the countries concerned, and b) because the Project found itself cash-rich, these effects were minimal for this Project, again in stark contrast to the WOW Project.

Countries

23. It is fair to say that the Project's constituent countries did not find themselves in the same degree of preparedness as the ICF when the Project commenced.

- China: established a good project management team and fairly quickly set up arrangements for the Project Site Offices (PSO) at the local level with the first phase sites at Xianghai and Zhalong National Nature Reserves and at Poyang Lake through the Jiangxi Provincial Management Bureau of Wild Fauna and Flora Conservation. Although the NCU had poor office accommodation for much of the Project, this was eventually alleviated in November 2006 by a new building for the National Bird Banding Centre, but the main initial problem related to the financing modality where the NCU was viewed as being too integrated within the State Forestry Administration and administrative procedures of the SFA did not match with those of GEF, hence some difficult separation was required. Furthermore, the sheer number of contracts let (60) meant that reporting was inevitably slow and eventually the National Project Steering Committee was given a role to oversee these and report quarterly. Some of the PSOs reported problems early on since for most it was their first international project. Inevitably, they found management requirements difficult, particularly the number of budget lines, and although the Project provided them with a training course, they reported that it took time for them to learn and adapt, especially the accounting.
- Iran: decided on continuity by appointing a National Project Manager who had been heavily involved in Iran during the PDF-B and this proved to be particularly helpful, but he was given only basic administrative support until March 2005 when a National Technical Officer was appointed, to be followed later still by a Financial and Technical Assistant. Since the NPM was largely inexperienced in implementing GEF projects, there was a plan to appoint a short-term international consultant during the early part of the Project to help get things started and build the NPM's capacity¹¹, but this failed to happen when the chosen person fell sick. Consequently a lot of time was lost. Furthermore, there was little capacity available both at the provincial level and in the form of technical consultants, and it was

¹⁰ **RCU comment:** The impact of dollar devaluation was discussed in annual budget planning among national governments, RCU, and UNEP and at the SCM meetings. Total budgets could not be changed, however adjustments were made to project budget lines as possible to ensure staff inputs and achievement of priority activities with approval of UNEP. The main impact was on staff salaries. There was also a concern in China towards end of project re RMB strengthening against the USD.

¹¹ Long **NCU comment** and response – reproduced in Annex XI.

not until early 2006 that two Provincial Coordinators were appointed to improve the links between the NCU and the stakeholder groups at the two remaining sites.

- Kazakhstan: was unready at the start because between the PDF-B and commencement of the Project, the Government undertook a major ministerial re-organisation which was continuing. The National Executing Agency in Kazakhstan, the Forest and Hunting Committee was originally under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, but this was split into a new Ministry of Environmental Protection which dealt with environmental quality issues and international conventions, while the FHC, dealing with nature reserves and species protection, was hived off under the Ministry of Agriculture while simultaneously physically moving offices from Kokshetau to Astana. This also impinged upon the execution arrangements for the flow of funds, and although eventually a standard framework was established for moving monies directly from the ICF to the FHC, all of these extremely time-consuming activities meant that the SWCP could not start its activities in Kazakhstan until January 2005, some 21 months after the Project as a whole commenced. Once started, however, there is common consent that the country proved very ready and the NCU established a sound relationship with the FHC, developed good communications with the project sites and strong partnerships with the stakeholders in Kostanay Oblast. A group of competent and professional consultants were quickly recruited whose technical work was of a relatively high standard, and reports were produced and disseminated in a timely manner. Despite the late start, the MTR commended the performance of the NCU staff and project consultants in Kazakhstan during Phase 1.
- Russia: proved relatively ready for the Project since as with Iran the NPM had been heavily involved in the PDF-B. The institutional base in the All Russia Research Institute for Nature Protection was quickly established and, as can be seen from Table 14 and Figure 4, monies were rapidly disbursed. However it was reported to the TE that although a contract was drafted between the ICF and ARRINP, it was never signed; nor was a contract ever signed between the ICF and the NPM. However, the MTR reported that:

“During the inception phase of the SCWP, an agreement was signed by ICF and ARRINP, witnessed by Mr. Amirkhan Amirkhanov (Deputy Head, Department of State Policy, MNR and GEF Focal Point for RF) – at the time this was sufficient to enable ad interim NPD and NPSC to be established.”

(note, “agreement” not “contract” which may be the source of the possible confusion) and that

“At the time of the MTR (19-24 June 2006) a new “Ministerial Order”, required under RF Law to establish an international project, had yet to be signed. The Ministerial Order will clearly identify and define the roles and responsibilities of the National Executing Agency, the National Project Director and the National Project Steering Committee”.

It appears that this Order was never signed. Communications between ARRINP and the RCU were plagued by poor phone lines making internet links difficult, and this was exacerbated by what is reported as the “*bad attitude*” of the NCU, particularly that of “*wanting to do things their own way and not wanting to tell anyone what was going on*”. Furthermore, the NCU struggled with GEF requirements over finances, terms of references, workplans, and general reporting (see paragraph 70).

At the regional level, the ICF as the international executing agency, was fully prepared for the commencement of the Project and displayed high levels of readiness, but this could not be matched by the four countries who through inexperience (China and Iran), bad timing of incidental events (Kazakhstan), and indifferent political will¹² (Russia) meant that implementation on the ground suffered various problems in the early stages, hence preparation and readiness have been evaluated as Satisfactory.

¹² **RCU comment:** *Also inexperience / lack of capacity to adequately manage a GEF project as indicated above. One of the reasons of lack of experience was that our scientific/technical colleagues from the CMS MOU led on early management efforts. A lesson learned is that it is essential to include project management and financial skills in the NCU from the outset. The reviewer covers this later in the report.*

PROJECT RESULTS

ATTAINMENT OF OBJECTIVES

Summary of Achievements

24. The SCWP is a complex project that has been well- managed and implemented. Although it had to overcome initial low management capacity at both national and site level in most countries, it did this through an astute mixture of training courses and additional recruitment. Russia provided a hatful of problems. Government re-organisation had left the federal zakazniki in a vacuum with all staff laid-off and no funding; the MNR reluctant to engage with the Project in any meaningful way; and senior scientists short of time and out of their depth with project management issues. Nonetheless, through clever and often innovative adaptive management, and through considerable skill and dedication of those involved, it has with the exception of work in western Siberia, attained most of its objectives. Annex IV shows a detailed evaluation of all the indicators by each country or site as applicable. Of the 126 possible combinations evaluated¹³, 94 (75%) show complete success and 19 (15%) show near success at the Project's end with only 13 (10%) deemed as not having been achieved – an extremely good result. Furthermore, 110 (87%) are adjudged to be Marginally Satisfactory or better (HS: 43, S: 49, MS 17) with only 16 (13%) Marginally Unsatisfactory or worse (MU: 5, U: 5, HU: 6).

Overall, the Project has achieved most of its major relevant objectives and yielded satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings, and hence its attainment of objectives and results is evaluated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

25. Key Project achievements include:

- the designation of new protected areas and upgrades to the legal status of existing ones was attained for 814,583 ha of wetlands; and extensions were made to existing protected areas of an additional 1,674,323 ha – total 2,488,906 ha;
- twelve of the 16 Project sites were also officially designated as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention while nomination documentation was prepared for the remaining four sites;
- Naurzum Zapovednik now forms part of the World Heritage Site – Saryarka Steppe and Lakes of Northern Kazakhstan (450,344ha), which was inscribed on 12th July 2008;
- water management agreements and wetland restoration activities approved, funded, and implemented at four NNRs in NE China and a Basin Agreement signed by stakeholders at Naurzum, Kazakhstan;
- management plans have been developed for 13¹⁴ Project sites and approved for 11¹⁵ of these;
- national wetland management planning guidelines were developed for Russia;
- progressive improvements in management effectiveness were made at most individual protected areas as measured by Protected Area Tracking Tool with a few showing significant gains;
- improved capacity for waterbird monitoring resulted in development of flyway monitoring network in China and development of consistent annual waterbird counts across Poyang Lake Basin, expansion of long-term surveys of breeding birds and development of migration monitoring in Yakutia, aerial surveys of breeding birds in western Siberia, migration surveys of waterbirds in northern Kazakhstan, and development of systematic waterbird monitoring at project sites in Iran;
- establishment of a regional database to store and share data and to support publications on Siberian Cranes and other species;

¹³ Eight were not possible to evaluate because of insufficient data.

¹⁴ China: Keerqin, Momoge, Nanjishan, Poyang Lake, Xianghai, and Zhalong NNRs; Iran: Bujagh NP and Fereydoon Kenar NSA; Kazakhstan: Naurzum Lakes and Zharsor and Urkash Lakes; Russia: Kunovat, Kytalyk RR, and Middle Aldan.

¹⁵ Plans for the two Iranian sites not yet approved.

- unquantifiable development of capacity at site and provincial level through training, technical assistance and provision of equipment, considered by many to be the Project's most important achievement;
- significant levels of applied research conducted to inform management decisions, e.g. studies to determine numbers and distribution of Siberian Cranes in relation to water levels and the occurrence of the plant *Vallisneria spiralis*, satellite tracking of Siberian Cranes to categorically determine migration routes, and guidelines for the reduction of avian influenza risks at wetlands of importance were included as part of Ramsar Resolution X.21 and published as a SCWP Technical Brief; and
- a huge range of public awareness-raising activities completed that were estimated to have reached over 30,000 people in Kazakhstan alone.

26. The main problem areas identified by the TE are:

- low initial capacity in project management in all countries except Kazakhstan, exacerbated by conflicting demands on project managers' time, again in all countries except Kazakhstan;
- chronic late reporting at national level in Russia, resulting in financial delays and knock-on problems for all other countries because of UNEP (or UN system) ideally requiring full reports from all prior to further release of funds to any, although some flexibility was shown to try to overcome this;
- requirement of UNEP (or UN system) for submission of combined as opposed to separate country quarterly budgets and work plans prior to next quarter's release of funds;
- extremely low baseline capacity, especially at project sites;
- no country buy-in in Russia at the federal level¹⁶;
- slow responsiveness during and after the Project by the DoE, Iran; and
- national project steering committees facilitated little inter-sectoral cooperation and provided little if any oversight.

27. A Review of Outcomes to Impacts is given in Table 5 and a summary evaluation by Project Output is given in Table 6. A more detailed evaluation of the level of achievements made against the indicators of success contained in the logframe is given in [Annex IV](#). A description of Project achievements is given below by Project Outcome while key sectoral and cross-cutting issues are discussed in the ensuing sections.

Development Objective Indicators

28. In line with advice received during the Project from the GEF Evaluation Office in Washington to focus on measuring impact at outcome levels (but not objectives since this should be done independently of the project and at portfolio level), development objective indicators were actively removed from the logframe when it underwent a simplification process. The TE agrees with this since although the project will *contribute towards* objectives, these they are not expected to be achievable within the lifetime of the project and measurement of such indicators is usually difficult and adds to complexity – particularly for an already complex project in which the capacity for reporting had been shown to be an issue. However, the Project did maintain measurement of the Immediate Objective because several indicators were combined with those of Outcome level.

Immediate Objective Indicators

29. The Immediate Objective is something that the project is trying to achieve in its lifetime or shortly thereafter, and is a key element in the M&E framework because it defines the project's target. In the case of the SCWP, there are four of these indicators (some a little verbose and have been simplified here, but see [Annex IV](#)) of which target levels for three have been achieved in general terms, while in the fourth the data reported in the final Logframe Tracking Tool contained in the PIR for 2010 is adequate to make an assessment only for sites in China.

¹⁶ **UNEP comment:** *Was a project design fault – as it was not build in the project to have MNR host the project fully.*

- Hydrological monitoring in final year of project indicates that conditions at project sites meet minimum requirements for maintaining wetland functions, according to parameters to be specified in the site management plans.
 - The target requires values of indicator parameters to fall within limits of acceptable change specified in site management plans, but this has become a little complicated in the absence of management plans for some sites. In China and Kazakhstan, this indicator has been fully achieved, while in Iran and Russia no active management is being undertaken but supply of water to the sites is not considered a problem, hence the target has been met.

The indicator is very good since the hydrological condition of the sites is perhaps the key criterion of wetland health, but linking it to the management plans complicates the issue since if management plans have not been produced or approved, how should the indicator be interpreted? The TE has evaluated this on the known hydrological condition of the sites, and no problems have been reported.

- Monitoring in final year of project indicates that the total areas of wetland habitats at project sites (ha) have not declined beyond baseline determined for site management plans (no net loss).
 - The target requires there to have been no decline in the area of wetland habitats at the Project sites and this appears to have been achieved across the board – a very good result.

In some cases the seasonal variation in the area of wetlands at Project sites has complicated the issue and actual areas are not completely known, e.g. both sites in Iran, while at others, e.g. Poyang Lake Basin, the area has been taken as the area protected which has risen. Despite these issues, the indicator is a good measure of habitat available to migratory waterbirds at each site.

- Status of globally threatened species and globally significant concentrations of waterbirds remain within limits of acceptable change specified in site management plans
 - The target requires that annual trends in the status of globally threatened species and globally significant concentrations of waterbirds using the project sites are stable (0% change) or increasing by up to 10% by final year of project, based on 3 year means. This has been achieved for all sites in China, Kazakhstan, and Iran; and while it may have been achieved in Russia, the data reported in the final Logframe Tracking Form are wholly irrelevant to the indicator making an assessment impossible.

Normally, an indicator of this type is of limited value since it tends to apply to a single site where numbers can be (and usually are) significantly affected by conditions outside of the site (e.g. good breeding seasons or poor conditions on wintering grounds). In this case, the effect of external variables has been sharply reduced through the flyway approach. While a closed system has been achieved only really for the Siberian Crane on the Eastern Flyway (and perhaps some other species there) and the wintering grounds of most of the species using the Western Flyway have not been included (especially for geese), the indicator can still provide a fairly accurate assessment of Project performance.

- Status of selected wetland indicator species to be identified in site management plans remain within specified limits of acceptable change for each site by Year 6.
 - Status of selected wetland indicator species identified in site management plans remain within specified limits of acceptable change for each site. In China, this has been achieved to varying levels at all Project sites (e.g. Siberian Crane numbers have declined at Zhalong NNR but increased by the same (or greater) at Momoge NNR suggesting a shift in preference rather than a decline in numbers); but the data reported in the final Logframe Tracking Form for Kazakhstan, Iran, and Russia are all wholly irrelevant to the indicator again making an assessment impossible.

This has proved to be the weakest of the immediate objective indicators for reasons that are unclear. Perhaps there was misunderstanding about what data needed to be provided, but in one case (Keerqin) a non-wetland species was selected as an indicator species (great bustard)¹⁷. While in some cases management plans have

¹⁷ **RCU comment:** *Our understanding on why Keerqin chose the great bustard as one of their indicators is: (1) Keerqin is a semi-desert/wetland reserve; (2) Great Bustard is one of key species for the reserve; (3) the bustard and Demoiselle are using the same or*

not yet been approved, the information supplied alludes to indicator species being identified within these documents and even monitoring taking place, but no data on population levels and trends. The TE does not understand why this was not corrected by RCU or why it was accepted by UNEP at the time of reporting¹⁸.

Effectiveness

Review of Outcomes to Impacts

30. Figure 1 illustrates the Theory of Change. Table 5 provides a review of the likelihood of outcomes being translated into intended impacts using the recently-introduced methodology described in paragraph 5, with alterations because of logical gaps described in paragraph 6.

TABLE 5: REVIEW OF OUTCOMES TO IMPACTS AT THE END OF PROJECT SITUATION

Component	Findings	Review of Outcomes to Impacts ¹⁹
Site Level Outcomes		
Outcome 1.1: Enhanced legal protection through clear regulations and identified enforcement responsibilities at selected project sites	China: Poyang Lake, Xianghai and Zhalong NNRs already Ramsar sites. Ramsar nomination documents have been prepared for Keerqin and Momoge NNRs. Waterbird protection and management regulations have been approved for Keerqin and Poyang Lake NNRs, while those for Xianghai, and Zhalong NNRs are still awaiting approval from the relevant provincial Peoples' Congress – see Annex IV). Regulations for Momoge are still being developed. Management activities evident during TE's visit and financing committed.	AA: Highly Likely
	Iran: Fereydoon Kenar established as a Ramsar Site and as a Non-Shooting Area. End-of-season shootout banned at Fereydoon Kenar. Entire area of Bujagh National Park also now a Ramsar Site. However, management plans not yet approved and process has stalled. Local guards at FK unsure about their future. ²⁰	BC: Moderately Likely
	Kazakhstan: Significant extensions to Naurzum Zapovednik (103,687 ha plus 116,726 ha buffer) and inclusion of whole in new Saryaka Steppe and Lakes of Northern Kazakhstan UNESCO World Heritage Site has enhanced legal protection of site and enforcement is active if limited. Urkash-Zharsor Zakaznik also created and included under jurisdiction of Naurzum, and two inspectors posted. Tontegir-Zhansura and Lake Kulykol remain unprotected, although a zoning report for each has been prepared and delivered to the administration of Naurzum.	AB: Highly Likely

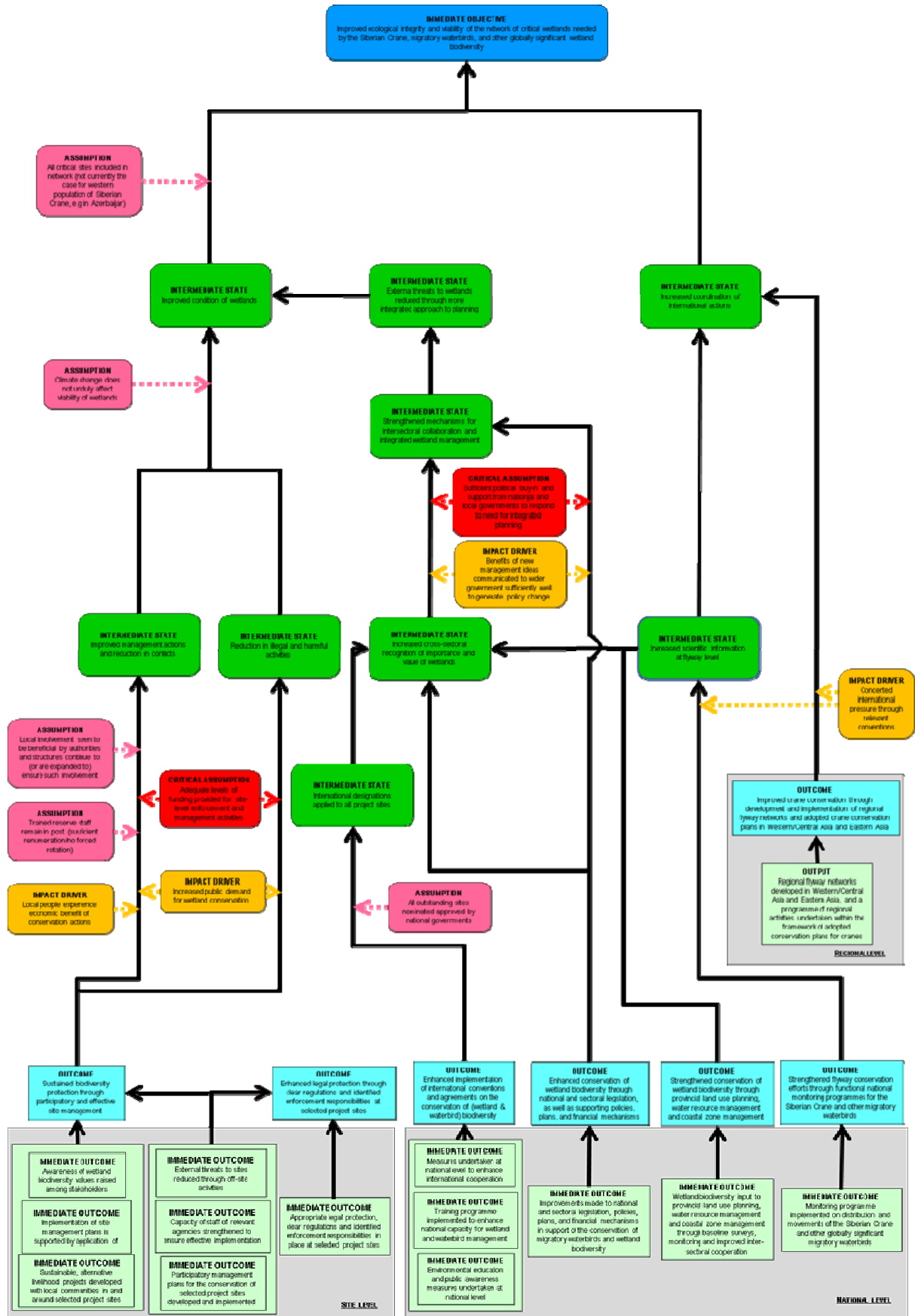
similar habitats. **TE response:** This certainly provides some insight, but then the TE would question why the Demoiselle Crane was not selected as the indicator for the Project.

¹⁸ Long **RCU comment** – reproduced in Annex XI.

¹⁹ See Appendix 7 of TOR in Annex I.

²⁰ NCU reported in January 2012 that guard stations at Fereydoon Kenar and Bujagh are functional.

FIGURE 1 : THEORY OF CHANGE DIAGRAM FOR THE SIBERIAN CRANE WETLANDS PROJECT



Component	Findings	Review of Outcomes to Impacts ²¹
	<p>Russia: System of provincial PAs established to provide buffer function around Kunovat Federal Zakaznik; management plan prepared, approved by Russian MNR. Optimised normative acts under Sakha Republic (Yakutia) legislation approved for Kytalyk. Management plan approved and published; documents for designation as UNESCO Biosphere Reserve prepared. Proposals on change of current status of the core zone to Strict Reserve made to MNP-SR & MNR. Management plan approved and published for PAs in Middle Aldan, documentation for Ramsar designation prepared and passed to MNP-SR & MNR. Further progress on Kunovat, Kytalyk, and Middle Aldan all unclear because of mixed messages and shortage of funds. Improved protection for remaining two project sites in western Siberia abandoned because of changes to external working environment.</p>	BC: Moderately Likely
<p>Outcome 1.2: Sustained biodiversity protection through participatory and effective site management</p>	<p>China: Implementation of management plans current at each site, with commendable water plans available at Momoge, Xianghai, and Zhalong NNRs; all financed by State, provincial, and/or local governments. Local people have been involved in Project activities agreeing to take up alternative activities in return for changed behaviour towards nature reserves, but this always limited to 1-2 villages when up to 40 may be present in any single reserve. The TE saw no direct evidence of any participatory site management committees, although recognises that there must be mechanism to agree and implement the water plans. All but one site show increased PATT scores, though some of these are only small.</p>	AA: Highly Likely
	<p>Iran: Management plan for Fereydoon Kenar is not yet approved and may not be completed. Local people still distrustful over DoE's intentions. Site cooperatives formed but no participatory site management committee active at time of TE visit. At Bujagh National Park, management plan not yet complete and apparently no participatory site management committee active.</p>	C: Unlikely
	<p>Kazakhstan: Management plan prepared for Naurzum being implemented on the ground, although shortage of financing, which the FHC recognises needs to be increased, suggests that long-term intended impact may not be achieved. Urkash-Zharsor Zakaznik also created and included in Naurzum management plan, but the same shortcomings apply. Clear evidence that fully participatory site management committee is still operative. Large increases in PATT scores. Tontegir-Zhansura and Lake Kulykol remain unprotected, although a zoning report for each has been prepared and delivered to the administration of Naurzum in line with Project's target.</p>	AB: Highly Likely
	<p>Russia: Changed circumstances with regard to federal zakazniki (see paragraphs 24 and 34) meant that work at most western Siberian sites could not progress. Nonetheless, management plan published and approved for Kunovat. In Yakutia, management plans prepared, approved and published, but there is no evidence that they are being implemented or financed. No participatory site committees are operating. PATT scores show large increase at three of four sites.</p>	C: Unlikely

²¹ See Appendix 7 of TOR in Annex I.

Component	Findings	Review of Outcomes to Impacts ²¹
National Level Outcomes		
<p>Outcome 2.1: Enhanced conservation of wetland biodiversity through national and sectoral legislation, as well as supporting policies, plans, and financial mechanisms</p>	<p>China: The China Waterbirds Conservation Action Plan is included as one part of the China Wetlands Conservation Action Plan approved by the State Council of China in 2004. This provides a long-term framework to continue project activities with specific responsibilities allocated. It is reported that wildlife conservation has been improving since the Wildlife Protection Law was approved by the National People's Congress in August 2004, and there is evidence of increased levels of financing towards this.</p>	AA: Highly Likely
	<p>Iran: Very limited progress in narrow area. Penalty for killing a Siberian Crane raised to US\$ 12,400. Study on duck catches and formation of registered Trapper's Associations are first steps towards improvements to local legislation on duck trapping and use of aerial nets, but no further progress made. Current DoE regulations mean any development proposal within a Non Shooting Area (Fereydoon Kenar) has to be reviewed and approved by DoE.</p>	C: Unlikely
	<p>Kazakhstan: No legislation enhanced, but <i>Plan of Measures for Implementation of CMS and Ramsar Convention for 2006-2008</i> contained recommendations for improvement to wetland legislation. There is no evidence that this has, or will be, acted upon.</p>	C: Unlikely
	<p>Russia: Apparently achieved nothing substantive towards enhancing legislation or policy, although it is claimed that analytical review on <i>Ecotourism in Yakutia</i> will be incorporated into the planning framework by local and regional authorities.</p>	D: Highly Unlikely
<p>Outcome 2.2: Strengthened conservation of wetland biodiversity through provincial land use planning, water resource management and coastal zone management</p>	<p>China: Water management plans including delivery and financial mechanisms have been established by the Project for Xianghai, Momoge, and Zhalong NNRs. Finance from state, provincial, and/or local sources appears to be indefinite. By the time of the TE's visit in October 2011, all three were receiving water on a regular basis. Data supplied by Project is being used to counter provincial proposals to dam the outlet to Poyang Lake (see paragraph 74).</p>	AA: Highly Likely
	<p>Iran: Hydrological studies undertaken at Fereydoon Kenar and report sent to the Mazandaran Provincial DoE. Winter water provided to Fereydoon Kenar through annual negotiations between DoE and Provincial Water Authorities. Provincial DoE excluded Fereydoon Kenar excluded from Integrated Rice Paddies Plan. A permanent Provincial Coordination Council has been established to review any development proposals for Fereydoon Kenar.</p>	AA: Highly Likely
	<p>Kazakhstan: A new Basin Agreement signed under auspices of a Basin Council, supported by appropriate legislation, whereby existing dams retained and decayed dams allowed to deteriorate further, i.e. status quo maintained. Agreement has removed conflict between local population and zapovednik staff. Project facilitated formation of local NGO through which UNDP-GEF SGP has approved further funding for work on dams, so definite and explicit forward linkages evident.</p>	AB: Highly Likely
	<p>Russia: Nothing substantive achieved.</p>	D: Highly Unlikely

Component	Findings	Review of Outcomes to Impacts ²¹
<p>Outcome 2.3: Strengthened flyway conservation efforts through functional national monitoring programmes for the Siberian Crane and other migratory waterbirds</p>	<p>China: Flyway monitoring network was developed comprising 18 partners in ten provinces. A total of 158 locations were included within the monitoring plan, divided into four sections. Aerial surveys also conducted of wintering birds at Poyang Lake and breeding birds on Songnen Plain. Co-financing was committed to conduct monitoring and/or study programmes in 2009 for 18 NEACSN sites of China. While Evidence from TE suggests that this monitoring is now considered a central plank of Chinese ornithological science and is being funded by the state. Aerial surveys of Poyang Lake are being discussed for 2012²².</p>	AA: Highly Likely
	<p>Iran: IWC January waterfowl count data for Iran provided to IWC coordinator. National database being improved by adding information from all seasons and also developing a ringing database. Monitoring of waterbirds improved for the South Caspian Region through national trainings. TE found that DoE appears to back continued monitoring work and is likely to finance it.</p>	AA: Highly Likely
	<p>Kazakhstan: Waterbird monitoring conducted by Kazakh and international ornithologists from autumn 2005 to autumn 2009 covering more than 40 water bodies along a route of over 600 km. Young ornithologists were trained to be involved in conducting these counts and studies in the future. An analytical report on waterbird monitoring for 2005-2008 was prepared. TE found that although activities were designed to feed into a continuing process, there was no prior allocation of responsibilities²³. Future funding has not been committed.</p>	BB: Likely
	<p>Russia: Monitoring actively in progress in Yakutia and West Siberia; results shared with SCFC. Long-term survey work of Siberian Cranes and other globally-threatened species on their breeding grounds in Kytalyk was expanded. Joint studies on spring monitoring of waterbird species at potential / historic Siberian Crane migratory stopover sites were conducted with Project colleagues in Kazakhstan. <i>Analytical Review on Siberian Cranes and their Habitats</i> published and disseminated. Monitoring of two PTTs placed in 2008 continued until they stopped transmitting. The TE found that the monitoring work was central to the Russian scientific programme and was funded by various sources, particularly the Russian Academy of Science.</p>	AA: Highly Likely
<p>Outcome 2.4: Enhanced implementation of international conventions and agreements on the conservation of (wetland & waterbird) biodiversity</p>	<p>China: Three sites – Poyang Lake, Xianghai and Zhalong – exist as Ramsar sites. The Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region Government has submitted the application for Keerqin to the Ramsar Convention Implementation Office of SFA. Application documents for Momoge have been prepared.</p>	AA : Highly Likely
	<p>Iran: Fereydoon Kenar designated as Ramsar site in 2003. All of Bujagh National Park designated as Ramsar site in December 2009; previously having been a Non-hunting Area covering only half of the Sefid Rud delta. Iran joined the CMS and participated in CMS COP9.</p>	AA: Highly Likely
	<p>Kazakhstan: All four project sites – Naurzum lake system, Zharsor – Urkash Lakes, Koibagar-Tyuntuyugur and Kulykol-Taldykol lakes were designated as Ramsar sites in 2009. Kazakhstan acceded to CMS and gave a presentation on SCWP achievements at CMS COP 9.</p>	AA: Highly Likely

²² **RCU comment:** A crane and large waterbird survey took place on 18 December 2011 and will be followed up by another in January 2012.

²³ **RCU comment:** In the last years of the project, it was recognized that it would not be possible to support such large scale surveys of remote areas on a sustainable basis (it really needs external funding), so the emphasis was directed towards training reserve staff to conduct counts at the sites. Continued interest in Lesser White-fronted Geese under CMS might help to support future surveys in this area.

Component	Findings	Review of Outcomes to Impacts ²¹
	Russia: Nominations are being prepared for Kytalyk and Middle Aldan Resource Reserves in Yakutia. Kunovat and Tyumen-Kurgan Transboundary Territories are existing Ramsar Sites. A proposal to join to CMS was prepared and adopted by the MNR which is agreeing designation process with other ministries and Government.	AC: Moderately Likely
International Level Outcomes		
Outcome 3.1: Improved crane conservation through development and implementation of regional flyway networks and adopted crane conservation plans in Western/Central Asia and Eastern Asia	Regional: Project has worked closely with CMS throughout and intended outcome was delivered and designed to feed into a continuing process – one of the strengths of the Project (see paragraph 114) – with specific allocation of responsibilities. See indicators O3.1.1 and O3.1.2 in <u>Annex IV</u> for a list of key activities supporting international conventions and conservation initiatives. Regional database available to support implementation of the CMS MoU on the Siberian Crane.	AA: Highly Likely
	China: Currently 20 reserves have been designated as EAAFP waterbird network sites, including 12 sites on Crane Network, 15 sites on Shorebird Network, and two sites on Anatidae Network (some overlap of these networks). New candidate sites are nominated by the local authorities and more reserves are encouraged to join the waterbird site network under EAAFP.	AA: Highly Likely
	Iran: Designated both Project sites under WCASN, but no indication that anything further will be done.	C: Unlikely
	Kazakhstan: Designated five sites under WCASN – all four Project sites plus Delta of the Ural River/Coastal Zone of the Caspian Sea. No indication that this will be increased in the near future.	C: Unlikely
	Russia: Designated four out of target of 12 sites for NEACSN/ EAAFP. No indication that this will be increased in the near future.	D: Highly Unlikely
Outcome 3.2: Strengthened understanding, support and effective action towards flyway conservation through dissemination of information and experience between sites, countries, related experts and organizations and the interested public	Regional: Cumulatively all components have far surpassed the target of 100 articles in national and international media. This Outcome is not really open to ROTI analysis since it was in part limited by Project activities and funding. There is some indication that in all four countries material accruing from the Project will continue to be published through suitable vehicles, but that much of this will be in the form of scientific findings related to research and theses initiated under the Project. These will dry up from this source with the passage of time.	N/a

31. Table 6 provides a summary of the review of outcomes to impacts and provides average (modal) values for each outcome and each country. A mean value would be inappropriate because the data is not ratio scale, and a median value is not possible since the values are not in any obvious linear relationship (see Table 4). This shows the following results:

- China: seven scores of AA. Modal value shows achievement of impacts as Highly Likely.
- Iran: two scores each of AA and D, one of BC, one of C. Modal value shows achievement of impacts split between Highly Likely and Highly Unlikely.
- Kazakhstan: two scores each of AB and BB with one each of AA and C. Modal value shows achievement of impacts split between Highly Likely and Likely.
- Russia: two scores of D and one each of AA, AC, BC, and C. Modal value shows achievement of impacts as Unlikely.

TABLE 6: SUMMARY OF REVIEW OF OUTCOMES TO IMPACTS AT THE END OF PROJECT SITUATION BY COUNTRY

Outcome	China	Iran	Kazakhstan	Russia	Mode
1.1	AA	BC	AB	BC	BC
1.2	AA	C	AB	C	C
2.1	AA	C	C	D	C
2.2	AA	AA	AB	D	D
2.3	AA	AA	BB	AA	AA
2.4	AA	AA	AA	AC	AA
3.1	AA	C	C	D	C
Range	AA	AA – D	AA – C	AA – D	
Mode	AA Highly Likely	AA/C Highly Likely / Unlikely	AB Highly Likely	D Highly Unlikely	

As a result of the review of outcomes to impacts (ROTI), the overall likelihood of impacts being achieved is 19 (65%) cases of Moderately Likely or above compared to ten (35%) of Moderately Unlikely or below, hence the Project is expected to achieve most of its major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings, and its effectiveness is evaluated as Satisfactory.

ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES

32. This section provides an overview of the main achievements of the Project. It is not intended to be a comprehensive account. The following paragraphs are a heavily edited version of material very kindly supplied by the Project Director – Claire Mirande – and the ITA – Crawford Prentice – in response to a request from the TE for a summary of activities undertaken, and of material taken from the beautifully written and exquisitely produced Terminal Project Report – *Safe Flyways for the Siberian Crane: A flyway approach conserves some of Asia’s most beautiful wetlands and waterbirds*, and from various papers from the Project Completion Workshop held in Harbin, China on 14-15th October 2009. The TE acknowledges the work of all involved and thanks them and the ICF for their kind assistance.

TABLE 7: EVALUATION OF THE END OF PROJECT SITUATION AS PER THE LOGFRAME

Component	Evaluation*					
	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
Output 1.1 <u>Appropriate legal protection, clear regulations and identified enforcement responsibilities in place at selected project sites</u>						
Output 1.2 <u>Participatory management plans for the conservation of selected project sites developed and implemented</u>						
Output 1.3 <u>External threats to sites reduced through off-site activities</u>						
Output 1.4 <u>Implementation of site management plans is supported by application of results of applied field studies</u>						
Output 1.5 <u>Sustainable, alternative livelihood projects developed with local communities in and around selected project sites</u>						
Output 1.6 <u>Capacity of staff of relevant agencies strengthened to ensure effective implementation of site management plans</u>						
Output 1.7 <u>Awareness of wetland biodiversity values raised among stakeholders</u>						
Output 2.1 <u>Improvements made to national and sectoral legislation, policies, plans, and financial mechanisms in support of the conservation of migratory waterbirds and wetland biodiversity</u>	China			Iran/Kazak. Russia		
Output 2.2 <u>Wetland biodiversity input to provincial land use planning, water resource management and coastal zone management through baseline surveys, monitoring and improved inter-sectoral cooperation</u>	China Kazakhstan		Iran			Russia

Component	Evaluation*					
	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
Output 2.3 Monitoring programme implemented on distribution and movements of the Siberian Crane and other globally significant migratory waterbirds	■					
Output 2.4 Measures undertaken at national level to enhance international cooperation		■				
Output 2.5 Training programme implemented to enhance national capacity for wetland and waterbird management	■					
Output 2.6 Environmental education and public awareness measures undertaken at national level		■				
Output 3.1 Regional flyway networks developed in Western/Central Asia and Eastern Asia, and a programme of regional activities undertaken within the framework of adopted conservation plans for cranes	■					
Output 3.2 Results of project disseminated for the benefit of the global conservation community	■					

* Note: HS = Highly satisfactory; S = Satisfactory; MS = Marginally satisfactory; MU= Marginally unsatisfactory; U = Unsatisfactory; HU = Highly unsatisfactory. Components are hyperlinked to relevant section.

At the site level, the Project has increased the protection status of almost 2.5 million ha of land, developed management plans and increased the management capacity for 11 PAs, developed, financed, and implemented water management plans for four sites, introduced community development schemes and undertaken widespread awareness-raising activities. It has linked these achievements through national-level interventions including the enhancement of monitoring systems, and through regional-level activities to enhance flyway-level conservation of waterbirds. Since 9.75 (65%) of its Outputs are rated Highly Satisfactory, and 3 (20%) as Satisfactory, while only 1.25 (8%) are rated with any form of Unsatisfactory, the achievement of outputs and activities is evaluated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

Component 1: Conservation of globally significant wetland biodiversity at the project sites

Outcome 1: Enhanced legal protection through clear regulations and identified enforcement responsibilities at selected project sites

OUTPUT 1.1: APPROPRIATE LEGAL PROTECTION, CLEAR REGULATIONS AND IDENTIFIED ENFORCEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES IN PLACE AT SELECTED PROJECT SITES

33. The Project facilitated a significant increase in the levels of protection and recognition in the targeted sites and neighbouring areas. A total of 814,583 ha of new or upgraded protection was achieved (see Table 8), while an additional 1,674,323 ha was added to existing protected areas (see Table 9). Twelve of the sixteen Project sites were also either existing, or officially designated during the Project as, Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention, while the Project helped with the preparation of nominations for the remaining four sites – in [China](#), nomination documents have been prepared for Keerqin and Momoge National Nature Reserves; and in [Russia](#), nominations are being prepared for Kytalyk and Middle Aldan Resource Reserves in Yakutia. In [Iran](#), the Ramsar Site at Bujagh was extended to cover the whole area of the National Park in December 2009, itself upgraded from a Non-hunting Area; while in [Kazakhstan](#), all four project sites have been designated as well as the Ural River Delta and adjacent Caspian Sea coast on the Siberian Crane’s western migration route. In addition, Naurzum Zapovednik now forms part of the World Heritage Site – Saryarka Steppe and Lakes of Northern Kazakhstan (450,344ha), which was inscribed on 12th July 2008.

TABLE 8: CHANGES IN LEGAL STATUS OF PROTECTED AREAS AT SCWP PROJECT SITES

Site Name	New or Upgraded Protected Areas	Area (ha)
China		
Poyang Lake Basin	Nanjishan Provincial Nature Reserve upgraded to National Nature Reserve	33,300
	Duchang County Nature Reserve upgraded to Provincial Nature Reserve	41,100
	HeXi County Nature Reserve established	4,000
Iran		
Fereydoon Kenar, Ezbaran, and Sorkhe Rud Damgahs	Fereydoon Kenar Non- Shooting Area established	5,427
Bujagh / Sefid Rud Delta	Bujagh Non-shooting Area upgraded to Bujagh National Park	3,276
Kazakhstan		
Zharsor and Urkash Lakes, Kazakhstan	Zharsor-Urkash State Zakaznik designated	53,350
Russia		
Kunovat River Basin Wetlands, Russia	Zuravliny Division of Synsko-Voykarsky Natural Park established as a buffer around existing Kunovat Zakaznik	317,100
	Sobty-Yugansky regional-level Zakaznik established	217,030
	Poluisky regional-level Zakaznik established	48,260
	Verkne-Poluisky regional-level Zakaznik established	92,040
Total		814,583

TABLE 9: CHANGES IN SIZE OF PROTECTED AREAS AT SCWP PROJECT SITES

Site Name	Area ha (2002)	Area ha (2009)	Additional area
Iran			
Bujagh Non-hunting Area / National Park	2,000	3,276	1,276
Kazakhstan			
Naurzum Nature Reserve ²⁴	60,694	191,381, plus new buffer zone of 116,726	130,687 + 116,726
Russia			
Kytalyk Resource Reserve	1,607,000 (plus 1,037,960 ha of contiguous local level reserves)	2,598,590 (plus 1,472,004 ha of contiguous local level reserves)	991,590 + 434,044
Total			1,674,323

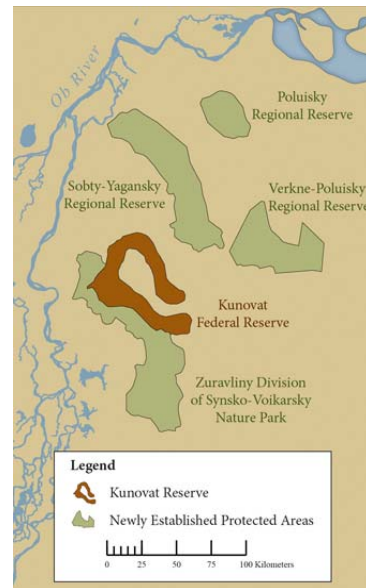
34. The creation of the provincial level Synsko-Voykarsky Natural Park was a particularly innovative approach to solving unforeseen problems, typical of the Project. At around the time the Project commenced, the Ministry of Agriculture divested itself of its responsibilities for all of the federal level zakazniki (two of which, Belozersky and Kunovat, in western Siberia were Project sites) without making any formal transfer of jurisdiction for these to another body, thereby creating a vacuum. While on paper they still existed, all funding for these federal nature reserves was stopped and the staff dismissed indefinitely. In addition, monitoring indicated that Siberian Cranes were no longer breeding within the Kunovat Federal Zakaznik, although regular sightings came from nearby unprotected areas. Since Project staff had long-standing cooperation, preceding the SCWP, with the local NGO Sterkh²⁵ Foundation which was acting as the West

²⁴ The TE encountered a claim that he could not verify that the extension of Naurzum Reserve in fact happened on 26th January 2004, i.e. prior to the Project and without its help.

²⁵ *Sterkh* is the Russian word for Siberian Crane.

Siberian Coordination Unit, and with the Administration of Yamalo-Nenetsky Autonomous Region, several important measures were successfully implemented to secure the protection of this area. Additional territory was added to the planned regional Synsko-Voikarsky Nature Park, located along the Kunovat Federal Zakaznik boundary (see Figure 1) to function as a protective buffer for the reserve. When the Nature Park was established in 2008, the local Administration was able to monitor and effectively protect the Kunovat Federal Zakaznik through management of the new park and by linking the management of the three new regional zakazniki created to protect the most important and promising sites near Kunovat, including the areas with regular sightings of Siberian Cranes. With the support of the Yamalo-Nenetsky Autonomous Region, a habitat selection model was developed for the Siberian Crane that helped to guide proposals to optimise the protected area boundaries, and again with the local Administration, a management plan for the Kunovat project site was developed and subsequently approved by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

FIGURE 1: NEW PROTECTED AREAS IN WESTERN SIBERIA



35. Additional activities included under this Output included:

- China: established regulations for waterbird protection at some nature reserves.
- Iran: Site boundaries and zones were demarcated at Fereydoon Kenar and Bujagh National Park. Enforcement was improved through hiring local guards at Fereydoon Kenar to assist in conflict management between DoE and the trappers.
- Kazakhstan: Site boundaries and zones were demarcated at Naurzum and Urkash-Zharsor Lakes.
- Russia: Russia tracked down and convicted a man who shot four Siberian Cranes that had just been released into the wild.

This output has achieved all its major objectives, and yielded substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The output can be presented as “good practice”, hence is evaluated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

Outcome 1.2: Sustained biodiversity protection through participatory and effective site management

OUTPUT 1.2: PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR THE CONSERVATION OF SELECTED PROJECT SITES DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED

36. Management plans have been developed for most project sites, following the Ramsar Convention’s approach to participatory, science-based management. Few of these are in English, but those that the TE has seen, or which some level of translation was available, have shown them to be of international standard, e.g. Xianghai (China), Fereydoon Kenar (Iran), Naurzum (Kazakhstan), and Kytalyk (Russia). Some of these management plans were developed during the first phase of the Project, but the majority were developed, and implementation initiated, during the second phase following the development of guidelines and an international training workshop held at Poyang in 2006. Information was gathered to promote effective site management including survey, monitoring, and data management activities. Results were incorporated into the management plans as well as the documentation for Ramsar site designations, and an “*Atlas for Key Sites for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds in Western/Central Asia*” was produced – a quality book the TE believes to be highly informative for decision-makers and networkers providing maps, population data, and miscellaneous information. National wetland management planning guidelines were developed for Russia. However, despite claims in the Logframe Tracking Form presented in the final PIR in 2010 and to the Final Project Report *Safe Flyways*, that the site management plans were being implemented, the TE found this to be incontrovertibly true only in China, and with considerable evidence to the contrary elsewhere.

- China – It appears that only here are the management plans being actively implemented, but in the north-east project sites it proved largely impossible for the TE to tease apart the implementation of the management plans for these reserves from the water management plans there. Certainly, the latter are the key achievements for these reserves. Only at Keerqin was information readily available. Here, as a result of the SCWP and the increased “*fame and influence*” of the reserve, 29 million RMB (US\$ 4.531 million) had been leveraged from the SFA in 2005 to fund both the “*hardware*” (buildings, equipment) and the “*software*” (staff numbers and capacity); 26 million RMB (US\$ 4.062 million) to implement the wetland protection programme; and in 2008 another 6 million RMB (US\$ 0.938 million) to undertake wetland restoration. At Poyang Lake, the management plan was approved by the SFA in March 2006 to cover the period 2006-2015 and as a result 18 million RMB (US\$ 2.813 million) had been leveraged from the SFA to pay for capital projects in the plan as well as 3 million RMB (US\$ 468,750) per year from Jiangxi Provincial Government to pay for the implementation of operational costs, due to rise to 3.5 million RMB (US\$ 546,875) in 2012.
- Iran – At Fereydoon Kenar, it became apparent that the Wildlife Department, DoE, had not yet approved the management plan; indeed the local people who had participated in its development had not yet been shown nor agreed a final copy that could be put forward for such approval, and this 18 months after the end of the Project. At Bujagh National Park, although some fencing has been undertaken to control grazing, the game guard station is still incomplete²⁶, and the management plan remains under development by the DoE²⁷, despite inputs made by the Project.
- Kazakhstan – In Naurzum, implementation of the management plan started in January 2007 but has proceeded only very slowly. Certain activities that should be funded by the Government have not been, notably under the Law the Zapovednik should have nine fire appliances but still currently has only two, and still lacks the hydoposts necessary to undertake basic monitoring of water levels. No special staff are envisaged for Zharsor-Urkash Lakes Zakaznik. Nonetheless, development of the next management plan has started and “*anything not done in the first plan will be carried over into the second*”. A (Water) Basin Council was established to solve water supply issues (see paragraph 48) and although it still meets appears to play no role in the management of the Zapovednik.
- Russia – National wetland management planning guidelines were developed for Russia. In Yakutia, the management plans for Kytalyk and the Middle Aldan have been published by the authorities in Moscow, but the financial budgets developed were deliberately omitted, and most of the maps were removed. Although the Department of Biological Resources (DBR) under the Yakutian Ministry of Nature Protection indicated that the plan was “*being implemented step-by-step*” and that it had “*finished being implemented*”, word from both the Project staff and from those on the ground was that although moves to upgrade Kytalyk from a Resource Reservation to a Regional Zakaznik were underway, the management plan had not been implemented, staff had been cut from three to two, no money had been made available for improved management, and project staff described the whole episode as “*empty work*” and as being “*not useful to the people [on the ground]*”. Both management plans covered the period 2008-2011 but there were no plans to have them updated. Notwithstanding this, the DBR indicated that it had recognised the value of the site management plans and had circulated those produced under the Project to other protected areas under its control to act as models and with recommendations to develop similar plans.

37. The Project’s Terminal Report *Safe Flyways* states:

“In all four countries, we introduced stakeholder committees, comprised of representatives of local agencies and organizations with interests or influence over wetlands. For each site, composition of the committees was uniquely tailored to the resources and to the players relevant to wetland use. ... These committees met at least twice a year, and offered the opportunity for nature reserves to explain activities to be conducted with SCWP funding in order to gain support, or at least understanding, of the interventions intended.”

Evidence from the TE’s site visits suggests that these committees are now all defunct except the Basin Council at Naurzum, Kazakhstan but even this plays no role in reserve management, and that co-

²⁶ **NCU comment:** *Game guard station is working now* [January 2012].

²⁷ **NCU comment:** *Management Plan is being sent to the Provincial DoE Office for implementation.*

management in its purest sense has never really been achieved, or where in some cases it got close, it did so only briefly and now no longer actively. In all honesty, this is no real surprise, and the aim was always hugely optimistic. As *Safe Flyways* goes on to state with a large dose of realism:

“Given ... the lack of strong, living traditions for participatory management in the four countries of the project, it is not surprising that this component of SCWP was perhaps the most challenging.”

and:

“Reserve managers for the most part have been well practiced at telling others what will be happening, but they haven’t had such extensive experience with listening to others, particularly those with less power or education. ... Another element for success depends on planning joint activity with truly open-ended outcomes; one cannot engage the community in meaningful discussion if the managers already have the endpoint set. Yet effectiveness with all of these necessary skills comes with experience. The fundamental change in relationships comes only through time if at all. ... Few nature reserve managers have the inclination for empowering the poorest residents within their reserves, or have clear ideas on how to do so.”

Safe Flyways also notes that:

“Indicative of the lack of local experience with participatory approaches, the consultants for the work in northeast China had to be imported from the far southwest of the country”.

But the issues raised in these quotes tend to overlook the fact that the Project actually tried, and while the end result may not have been successful when viewed against the set aims of sustainable co-management of reserves, the TE does not believe that such unrealistic expectations should overshadow the very real achievements of introducing the concept of local stakeholder involvement in protected area management within some of the world’s most authoritarian and bureaucratic countries. To many interviewed, but especially those in NE China where a platform for community participation is largely absent from the culture, the introduction of *“advanced ideas of how to manage reserves to international standards, especially the engagement of local communities”* was the most important achievement of the Project (see also paragraph 45), and hence the seeds for the concept have been sown. Although it was deemed a significant challenge to *“learn to make partners out of enemies”*, the clear replacement of conflict by cooperation between residents of villages and NNR staff where alternative livelihoods were attempted (see paragraph 42), even if covering only a limited number of situations, will only fertilize these seeds in the long-term.

This output has achieved most of its major global environmental objectives, and yielded satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings, hence is evaluated as **Satisfactory**.

OUTPUT 1.3: EXTERNAL THREATS TO SITES REDUCED THROUGH OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES

38. Perhaps the most significant and successful deliverable under this output has been in China with the development of water management plans for all four Project sites in the north-east with support from national and local hydrological experts. Support from provincial and local governments has resulted in environmental flow releases to Zhalong, Momoge, and Xianghai NNRs, and ecological monitoring at the first two of these is providing feedback on delivery of these environmental flows in relation to wetland restoration objectives. These are the first instances of China’s national policy for the need for ecological water provision being put into practice and could form a model for replication at other wetland nature reserves in China²⁸. Also at Momoge NNR, the Project worked with an oil company to monitor and reduce operational impacts on the wetland, while elsewhere, scientific data, partnerships with international NGOs and universities, and awareness programmes on water management at Poyang Lake have influenced government assessment of the costs and benefits of a proposed dam at the outlet of the lake (see also paragraph 74).

39. In Kazakhstan, a buffer zone of 116,726 ha was established at Naurzum Zapovednik in order to safeguard the lakes and wetlands in the three core areas from degradation of surrounding uplands by controlling the numbers of livestock and other human activities. Reserve boundaries were moved away from

²⁸ **RCU comment:** For clarification - this text reads as though referring to a specific national policy on ecological water provision, when we understand that it is simply one provision of an overall water resource management policy.

lake shores and forest edges, and the expansion enabled the reserve to protect a full range of steppe, wetland, and other ecosystems, bringing three previously isolated areas into one contiguous protected area in the process. The southernmost lakes of Naurzum, which had been removed from the reserve during agricultural expansion, were brought back under protection, including Kulagol Lake, which provides critical habitat for Siberian Cranes and other waterbirds during low-water periods when larger water bodies shrink or dry up. The TE notes the careful involvement of, and consultation with, local people during the development of plans for the buffer zone, which has provided a new model for protected area establishment in Kazakhstan. Discussions took place within Naurzum District over the course of a year, and only after this were negotiations started with other stakeholders and the regional government. Preliminary plans for protection zones and their management guidelines were discussed and agreed upon with each land user before official maps were prepared. This experience has already been applied to the expansion of Barsa-Kelmes and Aksu-Dzhabagly Reserves, and to the preparation of proposals elsewhere in the country.

40. In Russia, the Zuravliny Division of the Synsko-Voikarsky Natural Park was established as a buffer around existing Kunovat Zakaznik (see paragraph 34), while provincial and local stakeholder support has supported protected areas and helped resolve land use conflicts. The Project mitigated some immediate threats including the removal of an exploratory oil well from inside a protected area at Konda Alymka (West Siberia). In Yakutia, the Director of the YCU (Dr. Nikolai Germogenov) provided advice through a research study under the auspices of the Institute of Biological Problems in the Cryolithozone (not the Project as per various reports) to Yakut Energo Ltd, a power company routing power cables across the Kyupsky Resource Reserve (one of the Middle Aldan sites) and although scaring devices were purchased and demonstrated, ensuing financial stringencies within the company meant that none were installed and the lines were not re-routed away from the main crane flyway.

This output has achieved all its major objectives, and yielded substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The output can be presented as “good practice”, hence is evaluated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

OUTPUT 1.4: IMPLEMENTATION OF SITE MANAGEMENT PLANS IS SUPPORTED BY APPLICATION OF RESULTS OF APPLIED FIELD STUDIES

41. Scientific studies have underpinned much of the work in the SCWP, and a large amount of time, resources, and effort have gone into them. The TE notes that these studies have been undertaken to the highest quality levels; and the methods, analysis, results and their subsequent use for applied purposes are possibly the best that the TE has seen in some 20 projects he has evaluated across a similar number of countries. The three main examples are:

- China: The Project conducted applied research and ecological monitoring at a number of Project sites but included an ICF/SCWP study of the ecological relationships between water levels, the production of *Vallisneria spiralis* (a major food source for Siberian Crane and other waterbird species including White-naped and Hooded Cranes, Swan Geese, and Tundra Swans), and waterbird distribution at Poyang Lake NNR. This information has been used in the preparation of technical reports relating to a proposed water control structure project at the outlet of Poyang Lake aimed to hold back water and stabilize water levels in winter. Such a structure may have potentially significant negative impacts on the Siberian Crane and other regional migratory waterbird populations as well as on the overall ecological integrity of the dynamics of the wetland ecosystem (see paragraph 74). A similar study was supported at Xianghai NNR implemented by a local consultant. Geographical Information System (GIS) platforms were developed covering all Project sites and incorporated into scientific studies and management planning. Unfortunately, the TE was unable to evaluate the efficacy of the GIS system for Poyang Lake because of a curious inability of the designers to provide a coherent demonstration of its capabilities.
- Iran: Scientific studies here included a preliminary assessment of the catch and economics of duck-trapping, and while the monitoring of waterbird populations at sites along the southern Caspian coast have been extensive but have not yet been analysed in sufficient detail to answer the key questions relating to duck-trapping – a somewhat visceral reaction against trapping by the Wildlife Department appearing to cloud the issue. In response to the rapid emergence and spread of H5N1 avian influenza, guidelines for the reduction of highly pathogenic avian influenza risks at wetlands of importance for waterbirds were developed through the Project’s regional programme and were included as part of

Ramsar Resolution X.21 and published as a SCWP Technical Brief. Also at Fereydoon Kenar participatory integrated pest management (IPM) pilot projects were conducted. Rice is the major crop grown at the site, and once harvested, the fields in the *damgahs*²⁹ are flooded, providing habitat for many migratory waterbirds, including the Siberian Crane. The farmers apply pesticides, herbicides and fungicides more than ten times a year on some of these fields thereby threatening aquatic life and posing a serious threat to the survival of the waterbirds and health of the people. Some of the pesticides used are even banned but obtained on the black market. Pilot IPM projects conducted since 2003 with support from SCWP and the UNDP-GEF Small Grant Programme demonstrated how participating farmers could eliminate the use of pesticides from their farming, while largely maintaining yields. These pilots emphasised the farmers' empowerment through the Farmer Field School approach, whereby participating farmers were trained through informal adult education techniques by an Iranian NGO. They learned how to replace herbicides with mixed rice cropping and ducks to control weeds, particularly *Azolla* (an invasive aquatic plant), and to use a microbial agent, *Bacillus thuringiensis*, to control the leaf-feeder worm. The Terminal Report *Safe Flyways* claims that “*the result was wonderful*” and local farmers interviewed by the TE were enthusiastic about the results indicating that profits had risen because they no longer had to buy expensive chemicals. They were also looking at specialised marketing of added-value organic produce. Other similar environmentally-friendly practices have now been tried, e.g. using *Azolla* compost as an alternative to fertilizers. Extension of these methods was encouraged through farmer-to-farmer techniques, and support of these pilots by other relevant government agencies was another important achievement. Now, the local extension office is ready to collaborate with the DoE and other organizations to support the expansion of these methods to other parts of the country, and one group of the pilot sites' farmers has been linked with local groups and NGOs in Kiashar to transfer their experience in setting up a new IPM project along the Sefid Rud River near Bujagh National Park, the other SCWP site in Iran.

- **Russia:** The monitoring system of Siberian Cranes and other waterbirds has been expanded from a single site at Kytalyk to six along the migration route, and since the end of the SCWP the Institute of Biological Problems of the Cryolithozone in Yakutia has been paying for this expanded programme through other project funding. Monitoring of the Siberian Crane's breeding grounds has been undertaken at Kytalyk since the early 1990s, but this too was expanded by the SCWP. While annual ground survey coverage of the entire study area is nearly impossible due to difficult landscape conditions (and annual air surveys are too expensive to sustain), by 2006, within the main study area in the Kytalyk reserve, the individual sites for 102 crane pairs had been located within an area totalling 7,884 km². In 2008, 16 new pairs of Siberian Crane were discovered in other survey areas. The breeding grounds of the East Asian population are relatively undisturbed, but one of the main threats is the reduction of Siberian Crane nesting habitats. Long-term monitoring and analysis of satellite imagery for the Kytalyk reserve have revealed an increase in the area of large lakes through the inundation of surrounding lowland used as breeding habitat by the Siberian Crane. This process is continuing, and while it is natural caused by annual thawing of permafrost and movement of water in the lakes, researchers believe habitat deterioration has been increasing, as a result of warmer temperatures in recent years. However, while much of this scientific approach is to be lauded, the TE wonders whether at times this goes too far – in particular work describing the geo-botanic habitat requirements of breeding Siberian Cranes appears to be close to navel-gazing; the idea that it can be used to identify areas for future protection should the cranes be forced to move by say climate change appears fanciful – why not wait and see where they go and then protect those areas?

This output has achieved all its major objectives, and yielded substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The output can be presented as “good practice”, hence is evaluated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

OUTPUT 1.5: SUSTAINABLE, ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOOD PROJECTS DEVELOPED WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN AND AROUND SELECTED PROJECT SITES

42. Stakeholder participation was promoted and established at project sites in China, Iran, and Kazakhstan through various group formations – site management committees, local NGOs, community-based organisations, or simple associations.

²⁹ Damgah is the Farsi word for trapping site.

- China: Community development pilot projects have produced positive results at Keerqin, Poyang, Xianghai, and Zhalong NNRs.
 - At Keerqin, the aim was to reduce grazing from a core area of steppe through the total removal of goats and no winter grazing for sheep. This was done through the provision of high quality cashmere goats (to be raised only in enclosures) to 11 families; high fertility pigs to 15 families; encouragement to revive Mongolian folk culture within the village to promote environmental conservation and possibly act as a tourist attraction; and a micro-credit scheme. The village of Baizifu was selected by a local consultant, and 70 of the 220 families therein established an NGO, the *Keerqin Grassland Protection and Development Association*. As well as the provision of animals, the Project helped establish a scientific plan for rotational grazing which has helped all families and the results are visible to all – the steppe now provides better grazing and flowers profusely which provides a significant aesthetic benefit. The revival of folk culture has also been beneficial, since before the Project the concept of nature conservation was effectively unknown in the village, but now by incorporating environmental themes and their benefits into traditional singing and dancing, nature conservation has a high priority within the village. However, key has been the micro-credit scheme which is administered by a five-person committee. The Project provided 67,000 RMB (US\$ 10,500) for the scheme. Families may apply for a fixed 1,000 RMB (US\$ 150) loan for a fixed seven-month period (which covers the growing season) for which a 30 RMB (US\$ 4.50) management fee is charged, but no interest is added. This is probably not enough to maintain the fund long-term given an official inflation rate of 5% and a real one considered considerably higher, and perhaps the Project could have gained advice on setting the details of the scheme, e.g. UNDP country offices often have Poverty and Human Development Units dealing with these issues. In the three cases where families could not pay back the loan, they were given another year which enabled them to clear the debt. In all three years the scheme has run (which includes 2010 and 2011 after Project closure), all 67 loans have been taken up. As a result of all interventions, direct income has increased in the village by c. 20% but the residents make the point that indirect income has also increased – their basic capacity has increased; more information has arrived so they know more about things like fertilizer costs and application, and when to sell their goats at the highest price. Ten years of fighting the NNR staff over grazing issues has now given way to trust and cooperation.
 - At Poyang Lake, interventions were made at two villages, the largest at Chi'an in Duchang County. While not directly bordering the NNR, the village was used extensively by fishermen fishing in the Reserve, and residents used to shoot and poison birds (particularly geese) to keep them off of the winter wheat crop, as well as using punt guns and mist nets to kill them for food. The Project made a range of interventions in which the TE can see little coherence or relevance to the issues including part of the cost of a new road through the village (c. 1.5km), provision of a paved playground for the primary school, and a series of concrete steps (“harbour”) for washing clothes (see [Annex X](#)). Perhaps more relevant were paintings of waterbirds on the walls of the school playground, but these are now over-painted and lost (see [Annex X](#)); equipping an “*environmental centre*” but which to all intents and purposes is simply a village meeting room which can double as an adult classroom, only a Project banner is present plus a few dusty books bequeathed by the Project on a shelf in an otherwise bare and seemingly unused “*library*”; and clearing litter from the village, but this could have been temporary at best and should have been complemented by training on litter issues since the village was dirty again and the TE saw villagers actively emptying rubbish from a car into the street during his visit. Two other interventions appear to have worked well – provision of biogas to 20 families has been expanded by other people in the village copying the models and funding this themselves. One communal biogas plant has been installed serving 30 families and another eight individual households have installed their own system, bringing the total to 58 of the village’s 380 families. Replication continues – the TE saw new biogas systems being built into the foundations of new houses under construction (see [Annex X](#)). The other success has been the training of a group of ten voluntary bird guards who informally patrol the land around the village to prevent illegal activities. Apparently they have caught poachers who were subsequently given five-year jail terms! Pertinently, the Headman made a key point that although the environmental issues have improved since 2003, most of this had come about

because the Chinese economy had taken off over the same period. Most of the young men had gone to the cities from where they send money home making village life much improved, and as a result, the people are less dependent upon crops and fishing and wildfowl for food, resulting in little interest in killing birds.

- At Xianghai, the aim was to relieve disturbance of the wetlands by providing an integrated series of benefits to a single village known as “Seed Station Village”, selected by a local consultant. All the families there were involved, and the village signed a contract with the NNR such that if it was broken, the money invested would have to be returned. The Project introduced high quality cashmere goats to the village to replace lower value existing stock. The higher productivity meant fewer animals were needed to produce more wool, and hence food costs were down and profit up. In addition, high fertility pigs were introduced and promoted. “Good grass³⁰” was introduced to provide food for the goats; flow irrigation was replaced with more water-efficient sprinkler equipment; and biogas was introduced as a fuel source to reduce the dependency on firewood. While incomes of those keeping goats increased by c. 40% and those with pigs by c. 10%, much of the design of this intervention was flawed. While on paper the integration looks good – pig slurry for biogas; irrigation for “good grass” as goat food – the Project separated the elements between different families such that 12 families received goats, eight families, pigs; 11 received the fodder crop; and 22 received sprinkler equipment or biogas – all on the assumption that the people would work together to share the benefits, and of course they did not, preferring to work independently. As a result, most of the synergy was lost. Some goats were sold by families because they thought some sort of virus was being spread to humans from them. Furthermore, the provision of biogas overlooks the fact that the winter temperatures are too low in NE China for biogas to be produced, so that at the time of the year that fuel demand is highest, production of gas ceases. The NNR indicated that it wanted to extract the lessons learned and replicate the successful parts of the model to the other 41 villages in the Reserve, but admitted that the mechanisms did not exist currently for it to do so (see paragraph 120).
- At Zhalong, dairy cows were introduced to Sanhe village where there had been a problem of unemployed people entering the reserve to harvest birds/eggs/fish and to cut reeds, and where domestic animals had been sent to graze on the wetlands causing widespread disturbance. The Project provided training on artificial insemination and on good husbandry techniques to prevent disease, and provided frozen, sexually-selected sperm (to produce only female calves) of high-yield Friesian stock in return for a legal contract between the village and the NNR to keep all domestic animals within enclosures in the village. The Project also donated 80,000 RMB (US\$ 12,500) out of a total of 700,000 RMB (US\$ 110,000) to build a new 4.5km road to Mapun village to help with the transportation of milk to market. Prior to the Project there were some 600 cows in the village, but this rose to about 1,000 (with old breeds being replaced by Friesians) during the Project. This has fallen back to about 800 at the time of the TE’s visit because the price of cattle food had increased rapidly and some people had sold their cows. However, the husbandry training courses are still run each year by the village committee themselves, and although no replication has been attempted, some residents of nearby villages have come to see and learn, and frozen sperm is available from the local husbandry stations. Zhalong was the only place to record an outright failure of an alternative livelihood scheme – the introduction of reed handicrafts for tourists simply did not provide enough additional income for those concerned.
- Iran: Alternative livelihood interventions were made only at Fereydoon Kenar, but these were initiated only in 2007³¹ when a capacity-building consultant was hired, far too late in the Project to have any significant effect. Cooperatives of local trappers had been formed on the basis of individual damgahs (e.g. c. 120 people at Fereydoon Kenar damgah, c. 40 people at Ezbaran damgah) to work on the management plan³² (see paragraph 36), and these cooperatives were used as the basis for developing

³⁰ Not actually grass, but a small purple-flowered fodder crop, the name of which was unknown by anyone on the field visit.

³¹ **RCU comment:** *an important reason for the delay was that it was very difficult to find a good local consultant.*

³² **RCU comment:** *Actually to facilitate site management – it was impossible to deal with all the trappers/farmers on an individual basis, and trappers associations provided a mechanism for collective representation and dialogue between locals, DOE and other concerned bodies like FDK city council.*

alternative livelihoods. The Project recognised about 200 trappers, and initially provided c. US\$ 100 per person directly to the cooperatives to buy rubber boots, protective clothing, bird food, etc. without any coherent plan or aim and hence no tangible results were achieved. Two significant problems were a) that the staff of the Mazandaran Province DoE had never recognised the cooperatives as equal partners, hence there was still considerable distrust between the two sides; and b) the cooperatives had too little experience in making collective decisions and were often dominated by one or two individuals. To try to overcome these problems, the cooperatives were divided into smaller groups of 10-15 people from immediately adjacent trapping points, and a representative of each elected from each group to sit within a core group, thereby easing decision-making. Each cooperative was formally registered as an Association complete with its own Charter, and a Trust Fund established to provide access to micro-credit – one fund per association. Seed capital was provided by the Project to the tune of c. US\$ 70 per person, and the associations' members then each invested US\$ 5 per month into the relevant bank account. Small loans were made on application through decisions of the core group of representatives. No collateral was required and interest charged at only 4% compared to 20% charged by banks. Peer-pressure was applied to paying back the loan; if any person defaulted, no further loans would be made to members within the same sub-group until the loan was repaid. Each association also made decisions for the joint development of its members, e.g. cooperative tree-planting; a jointly-owned rotovator for use amongst members and for renting out to neighbouring farmers. Unfortunately, at no time was any advice forthcoming from the Project about developing business plans for the associations, and by the time the communities were getting ready to bring in other options to offset duck-trapping, the Project ended³³. The result has been that most of the successes have stalled, not least because of the DoE's failure to continue to engage the associations fully (e.g. no approved management plan, see paragraph 36). Only the integrated pest management scheme appears to be thriving, largely because it is of direct economic benefit to its practitioners.

- Kazakhstan: A total of 45 workshops were organized in three rounds from 2005 to 2009. The first informed local people about the Project, undertook social surveys identified local leaders for creation of NGOs, and identified local problems. About 6,000 people took part in these workshops including representatives of the *Akimats* (local councils) and businessmen. Workshops held in 2007 trained local people in the creation of new NGOs, finding donors, writing grant project proposals, accounting, reporting, and writing business plans for the use of micro-credit. The third cycle held in 2008-2009 provided training in ecotourism infrastructure; use of alternative energy sources and eco-sanitation; training of guest house owners in eco-tourism principles, reception of guests, requirements for premises, planning meals, pricing, taxation, use of alternative energy and eco-sanitary technologies in guest houses; making souvenirs out of local materials and felt using different embroidery types and techniques; and production of milk products (cheese, kumis (national drink)). As a result, by 2008 business activity in Naurzum district had tripled compared to 2006. Apart from the new NGOs below, new businesses included five guest houses (visited by more than 150 guests), two new cafes, a vehicle spare parts shop and a wheel repair workshop in Karamendy village; a barbershop in Ulendy village; a mini-bakery at Urkash village; a new point for refilling cartridges and servicing of office equipment; and a souvenir shop. Near Naurzum Zapovednik, a number of Community-based Organisations or local NGOs have been formed to undertake a variety of activities. Although not strictly dealing with “*sustainable, alternative livelihood projects*” as per the title of this Output, nonetheless they demonstrate community involvement at the site. Four organisations have been founded as a result of the Project:
 - *Ak-niet*: is a local NGO concerned with disabled children but has been active with Karamendy School in organising crane festivals.
 - *Ak-tyrna*: is an NGO formed in November 2009 which took over the Naurzum Resource Centre founded by the Project in October 2008. The Resource Centre provides equipment to facilitate visits by researchers (and the Project's consultants) as well as more recently, tourists. It has a computer, internet connection, extensive library, and camping and optical equipment. It has developed seven new ecotourism itineraries in the vicinity of the Naurzum Zapovednik. It has been active in following up on training provided to local people by the Project in areas such as creating felt souvenirs and the running of guest houses, and acts as something of a first port of call for visitors to find accommodation. Additionally, it has developed a joint fund for

³³ **RCU comment:** Yes, we simply ran out of time on this due to a variety of delays in implementation in Iran.

marketing guesthouses through a website in collaboration with the Austrian BirdLife partner and the Russian Academy of Science; 21 foreigners visited in 2010 compared to only four in 2008. It also provides assistance in establishing local NGOs through provision of documents, information on the submission process, translation of charters into Kazakh, and subsequently with project development and fund-raising. It is also participating in a new *Eco-sanitation-Energy-Ecology* project, financed by the Government of The Netherlands and implemented in partnership with the international NGO *Women In Europe For A Common Future*, including hydro-ram pumps and installation of biogas which will double up by providing fine organic fertilizer suitable for restoring farmland humus.

- *Burevestnik 2009*: was somewhat quirkily formed in January 2010, just prior to the Project's absolute end and has the aim of conserving water, renovating local dams, and preventing silting of the water-storage lakes. It has assumed the responsibility for the dams around the village (Burevestnik); has installed drip irrigation in the kitchen gardens of 20 households funded by the UNDP-GEF Adaptation to Climate Change national project; and is involved in promoting the use of dry toilets under the *Eco-sanitation-Energy-Ecology* project outlined above.
- *Naurzum Bionet*: supports conservation activities such as waterbird monitoring, plays national coordination roles for a national project on reforestation and the Youth Ecological Network of Kazakhstan NGO Eco-forum, and is also involved in the *Eco-sanitation-Energy-Ecology* Project.

#12	Lesson learned: Alternative livelihoods must take account of the level of existing incomes.
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#13	Lesson learned: Micro-credit schemes need to start very early in a project.
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#14	Lesson learned: Link micro-credit to other expertise.
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#14	This output has achieved most of its major global environmental objectives, but with some significant shortcomings and did not yield some of the expected global environmental benefits, hence <u>is evaluated as Marginally Satisfactory</u> .
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OUTPUT 1.6: CAPACITY OF STAFF OF RELEVANT AGENCIES STRENGTHENED TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF SITE MANAGEMENT PLANS

43. The Project contributed to the development of the management capacity at the Project sites through significant numbers of diverse training courses, technical assistance, and the provision of substantial levels of equipment, including vehicles, boats, communications equipment, computers, optics, and GPS. The latter was seen by the Project as especially important for Kytalyk and Middle Aldan sites in Yakutia, Russia, where lack of equipment was a serious constraint for effective management. The Project supported numerous short-term training courses for site staff to build their capacity, but only very limited funding from the country budgets went to international consultants. Three of the four countries had considerable technical capacity within country, and the Project considered it more cost-effective and more strategic to use consultants from within the countries as a way of developing domestic experience and skills, but in Iran international consultants were used because locating local expertise on some progressive aspects of wetland management was a challenge. The RCU convened two international training courses on data management (2004) and site management planning (2006), and these were followed up by more in-depth training and consultancy support at national and site levels. Training on waterbird monitoring was significant for Iran (South Caspian lowlands); Kazakhstan (joint Russian-Kazakhstan monitoring included training for site staff at Naurzum); and China (all sites, with major effort for Poyang Lake Basin, where 200 people in 40 teams received annual training before coordinated winter counts).

44. In China, at least 25 training courses were conducted on a variety of technical subjects, also benefiting other Chinese sites in the NE Asia Crane Site Network³⁴. Several site staff had formal university courses

³⁴ Now part of the East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) waterbird site network.

supported by the Project (e.g. eight staff at Poyang Lake NNR completed various levels of formal university education), and some links have been made and continue between sites and local institutes and universities that may provide longer-term benefits (e.g. continuing GIS support from the NE Institute of Geography and Agro-ecology to the four sites in NE China; continued involvement of four universities in ecological and hydrological monitoring at Zhalong NNR where six doctorate theses are in various stages of completion from students involved; and student projects supported at the Project sites in Iran). Another example of capacity-building through collaborative research and ecological monitoring is the ten-year long ICF/SCWP study of ecological relationships involving water levels, food plants and waterbird distribution at Poyang Lake NNR. Training has been provided to reserve staff in sampling methods, data entry, and database management, with joint publications and presentation of results to international meetings. This programme has led to the development of a continuing wider partnership involving both Chinese and international universities.

45. The TE found that increased capacity of department- and reserve-level staff to be one of the most important things mentioned when interviewees were asked what the SCWP's main achievements had been, except in Russia where the emphasis appears to remain on the primacy of science by scientists. Indeed, low staff capacity was also mentioned by some as one of the initial challenges for implementing the Project. In many cases, but particularly in China, the receipt of new international concepts for undertaking management planning, for including local communities in site management work, and for introducing new scientific methods (e.g. coordinated monitoring surveys) was seen as a particularly important achievement of the Project. As a result, improvements were recorded annually throughout the Project in management effectiveness at most of the Project sites using the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (see [Annex IV](#)). Most sites showed progressive improvements, with a few showing significant gains (especially where major improvements were made in legal protection) e.g. Nanjishan NNR, Naurzum Zapovednik, Urkash-Zharsor Proposed Zakaznik, and Chabda Resource Reservation, while others made less progress and some declined due to significant constraints outside of the Project's control, notably those in western Siberia. However, it is probably rightly claimed that the Project resulted in improvements to the management of over seven million hectares of wetlands.

This output has achieved all its major objectives, and yielded substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The output can be presented as “good practice”, hence is evaluated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

OUTPUT 1.7: AWARENESS OF WETLAND BIODIVERSITY VALUES RAISED AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

46. Communication, education, and public awareness (CEPA) activities formed a big part of the Project, although somewhat surprisingly a Communication Strategy for the Project was not produced until relatively late on. The Terminal Report *Safe Flyways* makes the important point that:

“... urbanized societies become so separated from nature, and the natural connections among waters, land, forest and wildlife that they make many of the decisions in ignorance of their impacts. ... People have lost a feeling for nature that makes it easy to destroy.”

Perhaps what is more shocking is that this can be true for rural communities too; in Kazakhstan, questionnaire surveys around Naurzum in 2005 showed that 99% of the local population were unaware of the significance of the area where they lived. By 2008 as a result of activities under this Output, 100% of respondents knew that their areas were internationally recognized for biodiversity conservation. In Yakutia, Russia, and China, synergy was developed between the SCWP and another project called *Three White Cranes, Two Flyways, One World* developed and started during the course of the SCWP by the ICF with the idea of achieving mutual goals. This aims to involve children in conservation of the three rarest of the world's cranes, all white (the Siberian, Red-crowned, and Whooping Cranes (*Grus americana*) along the east Asian and eastern North American crane flyways. This project aims to show children how conservation challenges and solutions are similar in distant places, that children can make important contributions to conservation, and that all world citizens can help one another to solve seemingly huge problems. Co-financing from this project was used to help activities that served both projects simultaneously.

- China: Activities here have been coordinated by Beijing Brooks Education Centre (BBEC), a small non-profit organization. Effort focused on developing materials and teacher training for communities near important wetland reserves for cranes. For each Project location, BBEC developed curriculum

books that address resource issues from local perspectives, relying heavily upon local expertise, especially teachers, in creating the materials. Teachers thus became conservation leaders as they included local experience, needs, and local culture, into the curricula that have been printed and distributed. Summer camps were held providing teachers with the opportunity to practice new skills that emphasise experiencing nature and taking action for conservation, thus fostering citizen skills. They met with other teachers from along the flyway and American teachers who had journeyed to China as part of the *Three White Cranes* project. Teachers near three of the reserves developed their own curricula, to supplement the curricula developed through BBEC, and one of these has been published. At Xianghai students created a seven metre long mural about cranes and wetlands which will hang in the new museum of the Xianghai NNR, and painted another one on the outside wall of a building in the middle of the town that everyone there passes daily. Further south, at the time of the TE's visit to Nanchang, provincial or regional athletics games were shortly due to start and the official logo was a cartoon Siberian Crane in a running vest. Sometimes awareness-raising activities get a life of their own.

- Iran: CEPA activities were undertaken at two sites and targeted at two groups – children and local community members, particularly trappers – throughout the Project. An Awareness Strategy was completed in 2007 after a protracted delay. Children were addressed through schools and mosques and good use was made of two films. Links were made with the alternative livelihood output (see paragraph 42) for local communities and two tours were organised to sites to illustrate this. However, gradually it became apparent that the public did not know about Siberian Cranes of the Project, hence activities were altered to concentrate on public activities (e.g. signs) using the experience gained from an earlier UNDP project on cheetahs. Distrust was always a challenge, and there was considerable resistance from the (now former-) head of the Mazandaran Provincial DoE, but the consultants found that the closer that they lived with the communities, the more they and their messages were accepted. At the time of the TE's visit, a statue of Siberian Cranes, initiated by the Project, had been erected in 2011 on a roundabout in the centre of Fereydoon Kenar town (see Annex X).
- Kazakhstan: A remarkable array of awareness-raising materials and activities were created and organised, largely by consultants but in collaboration with Youth Public Associations, the local resource centres, and the staff of Naurzum Zapovednik. In each of four years, conservation activities were organised including clearing springs; Marches of Parks; theatrical performances on Earth Day, Biodiversity Conservation Day, World Migratory Bird Day; an ecological play for schoolchildren; and formation of an eco-club. A number of television shows and performances were organised. Innovative approaches were taken that included the organisation of large-scale actions and campaigns which have never before been organised in the poorest areas of Kazakhstan, e.g. crane festivals, contests, youth ecological forums, and regional athletics games. The latter, organised by the NCU under the symbol of the Siberian Crane, involved more than a thousand participants each of whom received Siberian Crane athlete stickers. Two 20 meter-high billboards depicted Siberian Cranes in the stadium. An electronic network was created comprising 120 internet users from all the district schools and NGOs in the Kostanay Oblast. Web-sites for the Project in Kazakhstan and for the Naurzum Reserve were established. Information display stands on the Project were installed in all schools in the vicinity of the Project sites, and more than 5,000 booklets about the Project were disseminated as well as 500 CDs and DVDs with Project films. Four films were produced in Kazakhstan in three languages and shown in workshops and festivals to more than 30,000 people. The TE found these films were largely of good quality (and the sub-titles suggested that they were quite informative) but the repeated use of obvious captive birds detracted from the overall conservation message. A Crane Museum was created in the school in Karamendy which unfortunately the TE could not visit because the corridors' floors had just been painted. Special mention should be made of the four Crane Festivals that were organised in Naurzum Rayon during the period 2006 -2009 and which at their height in 2008's "*Ecological Holiday*" involved 11 villages located in the Project area with more than 14,000 schoolchildren, plus representatives from seven cities and several countries taking part. A video of the first festival shown to the TE displayed singing and dancing of the highest quality; that of one young girl being breathtaking in its beauty – what a shame that the SCWP could not award bursaries for the Bolshoi Ballet!
- Russia: The public awareness campaign in western Siberia was, along with the establishment of reserves to buffer Kunovat (see paragraph 34), one of the few successes of this region. Although the

TE did not visit the area, the programme was described by one member of the RCU as “fantastic”, and some intensive work appears to have been undertaken by local people for local people. The programme was led by the Sterkh Foundation (who also led the WSCU), based in Salekhard, and had as its centrepiece not one-day crane festivals but events lasting up to two weeks. In 2005 and 2009, the Sterkh Foundation, organised major Siberian Crane Festivals that included a “brilliant” exhibition of more than 300 pieces of children’s art, photos, handicrafts, poems, carvings, and sculptures and was visited by people aged seven to seventy from schools, local communities, a fish factory, the regional administration, the district administrations, hunting departments, and mass media. In one instance, a vast image and conservation slogan for the Siberian Crane was stretched down the side of a nine-storey building; while elsewhere a monument was erected in Salekhard with a Siberian Crane over a globe. The Sterkh Foundation arranged children’s art competitions and the best pictures have been exhibited in the city airport. In Yakutia, the Project worked closely with local schools and universities to raise the awareness of children and young adults and for them to form an emotional attachment to birds. Children’s educational camps were established including at Kytalyk, and field visits and bird-watching was undertaken, educational games were played, and a lot of anti-hunting messages were propagated, especially those to not kill cranes. Support was provided from WWF-Germany and ICF to enable Project staff to develop a website that tracked cranes and that was linked to parallel websites in China and the United States. Extensive education materials were available on the website on the biology of cranes, threats, what people can do to help cranes, and profiles of people and communities that were already involved in their conservation. Much material was translated from the Chinese and English websites into Russian. Despite significant investment by the Yakutian Government in internet capacity for remote schools since many of those participating schools could still not access the Project website, the materials were prepared in printed form and distributed by hand as chance allowed or sent by mail. Since peoples’ attachment to cranes is often deep, it has become embedded in their culture, and the Project used this wherever it could. An attractive little book, *Birds, Shamans, People: Siberian Cranes and other Migratory Birds in Eastern Siberia Folklore* was prepared and published with the support of the Project, and the TE was impressed to see that teachers as far away as Karamendy, Kazakhstan, were using it in teaching their own pupils.

#19 Lesson learned: Films are effective for awareness-raising.

This output has achieved all its major objectives, and yielded substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The output can be presented as “good practice”, hence is evaluated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

Component 2: National measures to strengthen wetland and migratory waterbird conservation

Outcome 2.1: Enhanced conservation of wetland biodiversity through national and sectoral legislation, as well as supporting policies, plans, and financial mechanisms

OUTPUT 2.1: IMPROVEMENTS MADE TO NATIONAL AND SECTORAL LEGISLATION, POLICIES, PLANS, AND FINANCIAL MECHANISMS IN SUPPORT OF THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS AND WETLAND BIODIVERSITY

47. Results under this Output are highly mixed with considerable achievements in China, not really being matched by anything substantive in the other three countries.

- **China:** The *China Waterbirds Conservation Action Plan* is included as one part of the *China Wetlands Conservation Action Plan* which was approved by the State Council of China in 2004, and wildlife conservation has been improving since the *Wildlife Protection Law* was approved by the National People's Congress in August 2004. Bilateral agreements on conservation of migratory birds have been developed by the NBBC with the Republic of Korea and Russia. Following completion of water management plans for Keerqin, Momoge, Xianghai and Zhalong NNRs during the Project, the Chinese authorities established a long-term funding mechanism for water supply to Zhalong NNR totalling 4 million RMB (US\$ 625,000) per year – 2 million RMB (US\$ 312,500) per year from the Helionjiang Provincial Government, and 1 million RMB (US\$ 156,250) per year each from Qiqihar City and Daqing City. Part of this money has been used to fund a programme initiated during the Project at Zhalong NNR to monitor water levels, vegetation, and waterbirds. At Momoge NNR,

increased water supply has restored wetlands critical to Siberian Cranes during dry years and, post-Project in 2010-11 expanded the area to 3,900 ha. The Jilin Provincial Government has committed a total of 2 million RMB (US\$ 312,500) per year to fund the water supply for ecological benefits indefinitely. In 2011, water was supplied to Xianghai NNR, providing water to most of the reserve's wetlands for the first season in many years. Jilin Province has also provided funds to purchase one of two reservoirs within the NNR, and to give control of it to the reserve, thus helping to reduce water conflicts within the reserve's boundaries. Staff at Keerqin NNR reported that although the proposal for water had been submitted to the Provincial Forestry Department in December 2005, no-one knew what its current status was. No additional water was being supplied to Keerqin at the time of the TE but wetland restoration work was being undertaken through funding of 6 million RMB (US\$ 0.938 million) provided by the SFA. The SFA and Chinese Academy of Forestry are providing research funds to the NBBC to monitor breeding Red-crowned Cranes and water conditions at Zhalong NNR, and migrating Siberian Cranes in relation to water conditions at Momoge NNR.

- Iran: During the Project, the penalty for illegally killing a Siberian Crane was more than doubled to US\$ 12,400. The Department of Environment is continuing to liaise with the established Trappers' Associations regarding improvements to local legislation on duck trapping and use of aerial nets, although this remains a difficult issue and the TE could not see any progress having been made at the time of his visit.
- Kazakhstan: A review of wetland legislation and development of recommendations were incorporated into the national "*Plan of Measures for Implementation of CMS and Ramsar Convention for 2006-2008*".
- Russia: The Project supported legal reviews aimed at harmonising provincial laws for the areas containing the Project sites with federal ecological laws, but only limited progress was achieved. Problems with the administration of the federal zakazniki are slowly being resolved at the national level, while arrangements through the provincial governments to secure these areas were made in parallel (see paragraph 40). The management plans for Kytalyk and Middle Aldan in Yakutia have been recommended by the Yakutian authorities as models for use by another 40 protected areas under its jurisdiction. The Project's analytical review on *Ecotourism in Yakutia* will be incorporated into the planning framework by local and regional authorities. A proposal to include all Siberian Crane sites in the national Ramsar shadow list was developed and submitted to the MNR, as well as a proposal to strengthen protection levels for Kunovat and Chabda.

A single ranking for this output is not possible because of the major dichotomy of the results between countries.

- In China, the output has achieved all its major objectives through long-term financing mechanisms for the provision of water, and thereby yielded substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings, hence is evaluated as Highly Satisfactory.
- In Iran, Kazakhstan, and Russia, the output has achieved some of its major global environmental objectives, but with major shortcomings and did not yield some its major global environmental benefits, hence is evaluated as Marginally Unsatisfactory.

Outcome 2.2: Strengthened conservation of wetland biodiversity through provincial land use planning, water resource management and coastal zone management

OUTPUT 2.2: WETLAND BIODIVERSITY INPUT TO PROVINCIAL LAND USE PLANNING, WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT THROUGH BASELINE SURVEYS, MONITORING AND IMPROVED INTER-SECTORAL COOPERATION

48. In China and Kazakhstan, significant improvements were made to water resource management of protected areas, while some progress was also made in Iran. Unfortunately, nothing substantive was achieved in Russia.

- China: Simple as it sounds, wetlands require water, and in China drought and human requirements for water were having a detrimental effect on wetland protected areas. When the Project began, all four NNRs in the Songnen Plain in the north-east of China were receiving such dramatically reduced supplies as to threaten the many waterbird species that depend on them. Since this undermined the

entire mid-point stop-over region for cranes and many other waterbirds travelling between the tundra and the Yangtze Basin, the Project identified water supply for these four NNRs as one of the central issues that it would address. It did so by developing site water management plans based on hydrological assessments, aligned towards wetland conservation and restoration goals. Responsibility for water resources and nature reserves reside under different jurisdictions, and while interviews suggest that high level contacts between the SFA and the Songliao Water Resources Commission (SWRC) which operates under the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) remain weak, the Project took advantage of the fact that the MoWR had recently expanded the scope of its water management efforts to give equal weight to ecological and economic values. Since the SWRC had been tasked with developing a water management plan for Zhalong, and also for the Huolin River that historically provided most water for Keerqin and Xianghai NNRs, the Project, ever flexible and adaptive, contacted one of the Commission's senior hydrologists who agreed to work with it. It proved to be an excellent match since he provided experience based on extensive hydrological data while the Project provided ecological expertise that the Commission was keen to acquire. These water management plans have now been incorporated into regional long-range water distribution plans for the Songliao River Basin, providing a mechanism for secure water supply to meet ecological needs. A meeting in November 2007 gained the support of relevant agencies and subsequently efforts have resulted in detailed implementation arrangements for water delivery. Funding arrangements are described under Output 2.1 above (see paragraph 47) and as of October 2011, water is now flowing to all except Keerqin NNR, although wetland restoration activities are active there too. Hydrological monitoring is continuing at these sites to assess progress towards restoration objectives.

- Iran: Hydrological studies were undertaken by a consultant at Fereydoon Kenar and the report sent to the Mazandaran Provincial DoE where it may be used to influence water required for winter flooding. Currently, the water necessary for flooding the damgahs is secured annually by negotiation between the Provincial DoE and the Provincial Water Authorities. There is no written agreement but early each autumn the local DoE communicates with the water authorities to remind them about the required water. In 2007, the Provincial DoE took action to exclude Fereydoon Kenar from implementation of the proposed *Integrated Rice Paddies Plan*, which was being applied to all areas of the southern part of the Caspian Sea at the time, and which would have led to the destruction of the damgahs. Since then, a permanent Provincial Coordination Council has been established to review and discuss any new development proposal for Fereydoon Kenar, with the General Director of Mazandaran DoE as a member. Any major development proposal requires the approval of the council and any minor proposal requires ratification by the DoE Mazandaran.
- Kazakhstan: The hydrological regime at Naurzum is a local closed lake basin that was apparently affected by the construction of earth dams across the main water inflows and the ploughing of a considerable part of the upper reaches of the catchment area in the 1960s and 1970s. There was significant conflict between the Zapovednik authorities and the local farmers since the former claimed that the dams resulted in the acceleration of the rate of water level decrease in the years following high water levels, and an increase in the lake depression period, i.e. the state of low and very low water levels. In short, the dams held back water needed by the reserve. The local farmers on the other hand relied on the dams for all their irrigation and domestic needs. Hydrological studies undertaken by the Project showed conclusively that if all the dams were removed, the water level in the Naurzum lakes would rise by only 1.5 cm; hence the situation was left alone. Those dams that had decayed naturally were let go, while those that were still needed for water or to protect against soil erosion were repaired partially through the involvement of a locally formed NGO – the *Burevestnik 2009*. This solution was formalised through a Basin Agreement between the stakeholders drawn up through a Basin Council. The successful realisation of such a scheme was supported by new legislation in the field of water resource use and changes in the socio-economic situation in Kazakhstan. The TE uses the word “apparently” because interviews indicated that despite recent concern over low water levels at Naurzum, there is a natural 20-year cycle for the lakes and that this, and the minimal effect that the dams were shown to have, was already well-known as far back as 1975. While this may be so, the TE cannot quite concur that the studies were “*a waste of time*” since if nothing else, they were formative in eliminating the conflict between the reserve staff and the local population.

49. GIS platforms were developed for the project regions (landscapes) in Songnen Plain and Poyang Lake Basin (China); Kostanay region (Kazakhstan); both sites in Iran, and for Kytalyk and Middle Aldan (Yakutia) and Kunovat (west Siberia) to inform conservation planning.

A single ranking for this output is not possible because of the major difference of the results achieved between countries.

- In China and Kazakhstan, the output has achieved all its major objectives, and yielded substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The output can be presented as “good practice”, hence is evaluated as **Highly Satisfactory**.
- In Iran the output achieved some progress towards its objectives but with modest overall relevance, hence is evaluated as **Marginally Satisfactory**.
- In Russia, the output has failed to achieve any of its major global environment objectives with no worthwhile benefits, hence is evaluated as **Highly Unsatisfactory**.

Output 2.3: Strengthened flyway conservation efforts through functional national monitoring programmes for the Siberian Crane and other migratory waterbirds

OUTPUT 2.3: MONITORING PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTED ON DISTRIBUTION AND MOVEMENTS OF THE SIBERIAN CRANE AND OTHER GLOBALLY SIGNIFICANT MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS

50. The Project recognised that a key aspect of protecting essential links in the flyway depended upon knowing where those links were, how significant they were and when they are significant. The Project made special effort to answer these questions for little known or unknown sites that had not been selected for more intensive effort. This flyway research was most easily accomplished by national teams working within their own countries and by sharing the results internationally. Capacity for waterbird monitoring was improved through the strengthening, or establishment, of monitoring programmes at various site levels providing new data on waterbird populations and sites.

- China: A flyway monitoring network was developed comprising 18 partners in ten provinces. A total of 158 locations were included within the monitoring plan, and the flyway was divided into four sections (see Figure 2) with a coordinator assigned to each responsible for the planning and for compiling the year’s work into a report that a national level consultant reviewed prior to submission to the NCU. This was the first time in China that unified monitoring methods had been used to track and monitor large, globally significant, waterbirds – Siberian Crane, Red-crowned Crane (*Grus japonensis*), White-naped Crane (*G. vipio*), Hooded Crane (*G. monachus*), Eurasian Crane (*G. grus*), and Demoiselle Crane (*Anthropoides virgo*), Oriental Stork (*Ciconia boyciana*) and Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) – and allowed a fuller understanding of the distribution, movement, and population dynamics of these along the flyway in China, and enabled the current status of, and threats, to the habitats to be evaluated and recommendations for protection and management to be made. Preliminary results showed more than 20 wetlands fulfilled the criteria of international important wetlands (excluding the Poyang Lake Basin); and that more than 20 new significant staging areas of Siberian Crane were discovered. At Poyang Lake, consistent annual waterbird counts were developed across the entire basin, and these were supported by aerial surveys undertaken in the winters of 2004 and 2008. Ground and aerial surveys were also conducted of breeding large waterbirds on the West Songnen Plain in NE China, and 500,000 RMB (US\$ 78,125) of co-financing was committed to conduct monitoring and/or study programmes in 2009 for 18 NEACSN sites of China.

FIGURE 2: NETWORK OF WATERBIRD MONITORING SITES (CHINA)



- Iran: Counts were continued for the regular International Waterbird Census and systematic waterbird monitoring was developed at the two Project sites. Data have not yet been analysed in sufficient detail to address key outstanding questions, e.g. in relation to duck-trapping. National database has been improved by adding information from all seasons and also developing a ringing database. Monitoring of waterbirds has been much improved for the South Caspian Region through national trainings.
- Kazakhstan: From autumn 2005 to autumn 2009, groups of Kazakh and international ornithologists monitored the number and distribution of migratory birds around the lakes of the Kostanay Region of northern Kazakhstan. More than 370 point counts were made on over 40 water bodies along a route of covering over 600 km. Counts were also made during feeding flights and on the feeding grounds. A total of 1,640,309 waterbirds of 126 species were registered on the lakes during the surveys. During the surveys, young ornithologists were trained to be involved in conducting these counts and studies in the future. An analytical report on waterbird monitoring for 2005-2008 was prepared.
- Russia: Long-term survey work of Siberian Cranes and other globally-threatened species on their breeding grounds in Kytalyk was expanded during the Project (see paragraph 41), and monitoring of waterbird migration was developed at sites along the middle Aldan River in southern Yakutia. Some aerial surveys were undertaken to complement long-term studies in western Siberia. Joint studies on spring monitoring of waterbird species at potential or historic Siberian Crane migratory stopover sites were conducted with Project colleagues in Kazakhstan, and an analytical report of observations during the migration in Kazakhstan was published as the part of an Analytical Review. Significant time and resources were also spent in attempts to satellite-track young cranes (see paragraph 56).

While the ICF recognises that these intensive surveys, which have worked well for most waterbird species, are not sustainable, since networks of observers are needed on the ground to cover the vast remote areas involved, the data collected have proved vital and are being used in national and regional databases in support of the CMS MoU, and to support the conservation management of these areas. A Siberian Crane regional database has been established to store and share data and to support publications on the species such as the *Atlas of Key Sites for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds in Western/Central Asia* (see paragraph 55). Training has been provided to all countries on use of this database which will be maintained by ICF on behalf of the range states to the Siberian Crane CMS MoU.

This output has achieved all its major objectives, and yielded substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The output can be presented as “good practice”, hence is evaluated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

Outcome 2.4: Enhanced implementation of international conventions and agreements on the conservation of (wetland & waterbird) biodiversity

OUTPUT 2.4: MEASURES UNDERTAKEN AT NATIONAL LEVEL TO ENHANCE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

51. Activities under this Output link strongly with those undertaken very successfully for Outputs 1.1 and 3.1, and work done under these provided much learning-by-doing experience for Project partners, thereby enhancing their capacity substantially (see paragraph 55). In addition to the activities described there, the Project also supported and provided technical assistance for the accession of Iran and Kazakhstan to the CMS, and accession of Kazakhstan to the Ramsar Convention. China also made some progress towards CMS membership and attended CMS COP9 as an observer.

This output has achieved most of its major global environmental objectives, and yielded satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings, hence is evaluated as **Satisfactory**.

OUTPUT 2.5: TRAINING PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTED TO ENHANCE NATIONAL CAPACITY FOR WETLAND AND WATERBIRD MANAGEMENT

52. While capacity building was addressed through specific outputs at all three levels of project intervention, in reality it was a cross-cutting issue through nearly all project activities. National training programmes were developed based on a training needs assessment and training plan, largely focused on strengthening site management (linking strongly to Output 1.6 – see paragraph 43). National training programmes covered a wide range of subjects including wetland assessment, monitoring and integrated management, species management, water resource management, sustainable utilisation of wetland resources, community-based management, conflict resolution, visitor management, environmental education methods,

basic computer skills, and GIS use. These short-term training courses were an important means of improving the skills of individuals, and subjects and delivery were carefully targeted to local needs. Selection of participants for these courses was a key issue, as trainees had to be able to apply new knowledge, skills and attitudes in the workplace to really benefit. The networking benefits from multi-site participation in training courses were significant (e.g. involving other crane sites in NE Asia). As indicated under Output 1.6 (see paragraph 45), the TE found that the increase in the capacity of site staff and national staff was recognised by many as being a key, and by some as the most important, achievement of the Project.

This output has achieved all its major objectives, and yielded substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The output can be presented as “good practice”, hence is evaluated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

OUTPUT 2.6: ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS MEASURES UNDERTAKEN AT NATIONAL LEVEL

53. It is hard to separate this set of activities from those described in Output 1.7 (see paragraph 46), and in many ways site level CEPA activities were supported more at a sub-national level than at a fully national level. The TE was unable to visit the apparently excellent programme implemented in west Siberia, Russia. However, the systematic development of an environmental education programme for the school system in Kostanay Oblast in Kazakhstan was exemplary. Five sets of training guides were prepared, one set for each of junior, middle, and senior school children; university students; and huntsmen. Each set comprised a guide for trainers emphasising methods to be used, and one for trainees focussing on the information being taught. Five training-of-trainers workshops were held, one for each of the above groups, and all trainees then went and taught others meaning that by the end of the programme, more than 1,000 teachers had taken part and taken away copies of the training materials. Material for use in schools was also delivered to district education departments, schools and libraries at the Project sites, and subsequently there were requests to extend the programme to the entire province and even to make it available for the national curriculum. In China, a film was produced, with co-financing provided by ICF, that followed the process of creating a mural that was part of the 3-2-1 Project in the Xianghai Village (close to the Xianghai NNR headquarters), and the students’ growing initiative and creativity as environmental activists; the film won a national award³⁵. In Iran, a public awareness raising strategy was developed and implemented at national, provincial and local levels, although few truly national activities appear to have been performed, most of the focus having been at the local level.

This output has achieved most of its major global environmental objectives, and yielded satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings, hence is evaluated as **Satisfactory**.

Component 3: Enhanced international cooperation for the development of wetland site networks

Outcome 3.1: Improved crane conservation through development and implementation of regional flyway networks and adopted crane conservation plans in Western/Central Asia and Eastern Asia

OUTPUT 3.1: REGIONAL FLYWAY NETWORKS DEVELOPED IN WESTERN/CENTRAL ASIA AND EASTERN ASIA, AND A PROGRAMME OF REGIONAL ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ADOPTED CONSERVATION PLANS FOR CRANES

54. The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) was an active partner and member of the Project Steering Committee. All UNEP/GEF SCWP activities were included in the Conservation Plans under the CMS MOU for Siberian Cranes and were endorsed by all 11 range states. The Siberian Crane MOU was highlighted at CMS COP 9 and presentations on implementation highlights were made by each of the project countries in plenary. The Western/Central Asia Site Network (WCASN) for Siberian Cranes and other Migratory Waterbirds was launched officially and certificates assigned at CMS COP 9, initially comprising ten sites in five countries (India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) designated on 18th May 2007. A further 14 sites in six countries were proposed pending government approval and official

³⁵ **RCU comment:** A year later, the students, volunteering to help control a beetle infesting the endangered Mongolian Elm at Xianghai, suffered severe reactions from the pesticide exposure, leading to extensive national media coverage of the students’ activism and environmental commitment. The involvement of students in pest control was not part of the SCWP project, but an independent activity organized by the nature reserve.

nomination procedures, of which two in Pakistan were designated in 2010. Small grants were provided by the Project in support of Crane Festivals at listed WCASN sites. Activities were developed and implemented under the CMS MoU Conservation Plans including coordination with the Central Asian Flyway initiative, winter and migration monitoring, and development of strategies to reduce impacts of illegal hunting (a grant was secured from the Mohammed Bin Zayed Species Foundation to support hunter education in five Central Asian countries following up on SCWP).

55. During the Project, the capacity of China's National Bird Banding Centre (and NCU) developed significantly for flyway coordination both within China and in East Asia. In East Asia, the Project supported the development of the North East Asian Crane Site Network (NEACSN) under the emerging EAAFP; the latter supported by the ICF, China, and Russia, including input from the ICF to the EAAFP Management Committee on issues, including recruitment of the Chief Executive for the Secretariat (post project). Project activities in East Asia were aligned with the EAAFP Implementation Strategy and reported to the EAAFP meetings. However, while China exceeded the Project target of designating 12 sites as EAAFP Network sites by designating 20, Russia missed the same target by designating none. The Project countries participated in the International Crane Workshop held in Gumi, Korea 23-24th October 2008 and gave presentations and shared experiences, which were subsequently presented at a side event at Ramsar COP 10. A NEACSN Working Group Meeting was held in Harbin, October 2009, back to back with the Project Completion Workshop and SCM8, and participants attended the SCWP events. The "twinning programme" was modified to exchange of staff between sites following the MTR. The knowledge base was developed as planned through supporting surveys and monitoring of poorly known areas, and developing centralised databases in order to improve access to available information. Regional databases were established on experts, projects, network sites and waterbird monitoring results. Data from national census activities was compiled at the flyway level and made available for conservation status assessments in relation to the relevant flyway plans. The RCU took the lead on a regional database that will be maintained beyond the Project by the ICF, as a service to the CMS MoU. This database, designed as a mechanism to compile all the data from many sources and locations into one system accessible to all, initially had glitches due to its complexity and the multiple languages involved. The Project's Terminal Report *Safe Flyways*, reports that

"Another obstacle has been the timely submission of data from all of the project countries. The Chinese in particular have held their data back, explaining that it is highly fragmented, in need of organizing, and much of the information requires translation. Part of their delay has been a higher priority effort (for them) to develop a Chinese database for their own use in analyzing the data they have collected and to support on-going monitoring and research within the country. They wish to build on their flyway scale monitoring program."

However, while this issue was much cause for concern at the time, the TE believes that the above explanation may not present the full picture since the explanation from Chinese sources is that the software platform on which the database was programmed in Russian and certain parts of the code clashed with the Chinese system. But as *Safe Flyways* goes on to explain:

"At project's end, their database is functional and the data now have also come to the RCU. The regional data have been used to compile an Atlas of Siberian Crane Sites in West/Central Asia as one of the final project outputs." (See also paragraph 50).

International cooperation between countries was enhanced through international technical workshops on management planning and databases. Project members from Russia and China conducted reciprocal visits and collaborated on monitoring, while those from Russia visited Kazakhstan to provide assistance and training on monitoring. Unfortunately, several study tours and staff exchanges were cancelled due to problems with visas and inadequate time allocated for travel planning by countries.

56. The Project also invested significant effort into capturing Siberian Crane chicks and marking them with satellite transmitters (PTTs) on the breeding grounds in Yakutia. This was frustrated by increasingly stringent permitting requirements (four separate permits were required), expensive and unpredictable availability of helicopter services, and the unpredictability of Arctic breeding seasons. In August 2005, eight chicks were caught and marked with colour bands, but PTTs could not be deployed due an unexpected change in permit requirements. Finally, in August 2008, PTTs were deployed on two chicks, and their migration paths were successfully tracked to Poyang Lake, and one was tracked all the way back to its natal

site in Yakutia. Poor signal quality in eastern China was a major problem due to some kind of interference. The results were broadcast over the project website, and used in a flyway education programme.

57. Finally, recognizing the origins of the GEF project through the CMS MOU on the Siberian Crane, strategies for the transition of activities back under the MOU were carefully planned at the final SCWP Project Steering Committee (October 2009) and the Seventh Meeting of the CMS MOU Range States (June 2010). These are reflected in the CMS MOU Conservation Plan 2010-2012.

This output has achieved all its major objectives, and yielded substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The output can be presented as “good practice”, hence is evaluated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

Outcome 3.2: Strengthened understanding, support and effective action towards flyway conservation through dissemination of information and experience between sites, countries, related experts and organizations and the interested public

OUTPUT 3.2: RESULTS OF PROJECT DISSEMINATED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE GLOBAL CONSERVATION COMMUNITY.

58. Results and lessons learned from the Project were shared widely through international meetings, publications, electronic media and other means. Project outputs including national and site level technical reports, fact sheets and technical briefs, and an image database have been archived by ICF and are available through the ICF Library, the project website and on CD. Two websites were established linked to SCWP activities (www.scwp.info) and for activities linked to the CMS MoU (www.sibeflyway.org). Since the end of the Project, these have been merged (www.sibeflyway.org). The results were showcased at Ramsar COP 10 in South Korea in October 2008 and at CMS COP 9 in Rome in December 2009. Presentations have also been made at a number of international scientific conferences and workshops. National level project completion workshops were held in 2009. The final results were presented and the Seventh Meeting of the CMS MoU Range States held in Bonn from 10-12th June 2010 and plans discussed for the transition of activities under the CMS MoU following project completion. The Project Completion Workshop (the Proceedings of which were published and distributed on CD) was held in Harbin China from 14-15th October 2009 along with a special seminar on the Zhalong NNR on 17th October 2009. The Project’s Terminal Report, *“Safe Flyways for the Siberian Crane: A flyway approach conserves some of Asia’s most beautiful wetlands and waterbirds”*³⁶ was officially launched at a press conference featuring a representative of the UNEP ED and the CMS Executive Secretary at the 11th Special Session of UNEP’s Governing Council in Bali, Indonesia in February 2010. This beautifully written, sumptuously illustrated, and exquisitely produced report is far and away the best terminal report of a project that the TE has seen. It provides a broad and largely candid view of the background and development of SCWP, the experiences and practices of the Project, and the challenges and commitments ahead, and importantly it includes a number of insightful lessons learned about flyway and waterbird approaches.

59. Another important publication was produced jointly by the Project and its sister WOW Project, entitled *“The Experience of UNEP GEF and Partners in Flyway Conservation”*³⁷. This publication provides some important insights and lessons learned from the joint experience of the two projects and some excellent recommendations covering the technical design, management arrangements, and monitoring and evaluation of flyway-scale projects. Unfortunately, the publication was reviewed by a member of the STAP roster who, in the TE’s opinion, appears to have had little if any experience of dealing with migratory systems or the design and implementation of large GEF projects. In fact his introductory sentence indicates that he has completely missed the point of the heart of the document:

“Much of its content is process-oriented and institutional in nature, and I have little to say about those sections”

and the idea that:

“these two initiatives had resulted in direct field activities in only 28 sites”

³⁶ http://www.scwp.info/final_report.shtml.

³⁷ UNEP GEF Portfolio Outlook and Evolution: Biodiversity Issue Paper BD/001.

clearly shows no understanding that the vast majority of GEF projects deal with less than four sites apiece and that for two projects to accomplish interventions at a total of 28 is outstanding. Academic waffle on the applicability of the flyway concept is also misplaced, at least in relation to this document, since for migratory waterbirds, which these two projects were established to deal with, the concept has almost universal acceptance. In the TE's view, work of such low calibre as this brings the value of such STAP reviews into question. As a result of this review, the TE understands that the GEF never took formal note of this publication, something the TE believes that the GEF Secretariat should reconsider, perhaps by having it re-reviewed by a member of the STAP with more relevant experience of GEF projects.

The TE recommends that UNEP should request that the GEF Secretariat reconsiders the joint SCWP/WOW/UNEP publication "*The Experience of UNEP GEF and Partners in Flyway Conservation*" and take cognizance of it in the design and implementation of future flyway-scale projects, or at the very least have it re-reviewed.

<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
GEF	Re-review publication by a member of the STAP with relevant experience of GEF projects	As soon as possible	New review of publication
GEF	Distribute publication to design teams and management teams of future flyway projects	As relevant	Distribution of publication

This output has achieved all its major objectives, and yielded substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The output can be presented as "good practice", hence is evaluated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

60. The Project has been implemented through the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** and its execution has been contracted through the **International Crane Foundation (ICF)**, an international NGO with its headquarters in Wisconsin, USA. UNEP authorised the ICF to enter into contractual arrangements with physical and legal persons on their behalf, and to make direct payments against all categories of the project budget, and to manage project funds, including budget planning, monitoring, revisions, disbursements, record keeping, reporting and auditing that all observe UNEP rules. Thus, the Project has been executed in accordance with the standard rules and procedures of the UNEP external execution modality. At the country level, the Project has been executed through four national executing agencies thus:

- China: **State Forestry Administration**, implemented through the National Bird Banding Centre;
- Iran: **Department of Environment**, implemented through the Wildlife Bureau;
- Kazakhstan: **Ministry of Agriculture**, implemented through the Forestry and Hunting Committee;
- Russia: **Ministry of Ministry of Natural Resources** implemented by the All Russian Research Institute for Nature Protection.

However, in Russia there were significant problems (see paragraphs 66 and 70) and during a second change in the national coordination unit, the MNR refused further official involvement in the Project meaning that the ICF signed a new MoU with a national NGO **Birds and People** for it to become the national executing agency with the money routed through a UNDP bank account. Similarly, in Kazakhstan, the FHC did not extend the contract with the ICF beyond the original end date, so the ICF used the same mechanism there, signing an MoU with the national NGO **Ak-Tyrna** to complete the Project (the NPD giving a written warrant for it to receive funds on behalf of the FHC).

Stakeholder Participation

61. In addition to the ICF whose *râison d'être* crane conservation is, the Project involved a huge range of organisations at international, national and local levels see Annex VII. The Project worked very closely with

the CMS throughout, as well as during the conceptualisation of the design, and everything in the Project's workplans was reflected in the CMS's Conservation Plans for the four countries, and vice versa. The Project has also placed considerable store in maintaining close links with other players involved in the conservation of the flyways, especially other multilateral environmental agreements such as African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, Ramsar, and the emerging East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership, through excellent communication at many levels – an informative website which was frequently updated with a whole raft of reports through which progress and technical issues could be tracked by interested parties; an annual Project newsletter; a number of high quality and attractive booklets and brochures; and presentations to numerous international meetings.

62. Government departments were the prime means of national implementation and although the representation was often narrow, a large number of provincial and local level departments were involved. Perhaps one of the most impressive areas of stakeholder participation is the large number of scientific academic institutions involved, particularly in China and Russia, and this gave a very strong scientific basis to many of the Project's activities. But the real strength lies in the number of national/local NGOs and wide variety of community groups involved – 25 NGOs and 56 community groups are listed in Annex VII – although even this gives no indication of the number of people involved; it is estimated that the crane festivals in Kazakhstan reached over 30,000 people alone while the numbers of an equally successful awareness campaign in western Siberia are unknown to the TE. In the Project sites that the TE visited, awareness of the overall SCWP, of Siberian Cranes and other waterbirds, and in many cases of the issues pertaining to wetlands, was almost universally high amongst stakeholders, whether this be village farmers in NE China, fishermen in Poyang Lake (China), the duck trappers in Fereydoon Kenar (Iran), or herders in Karamendy (Kazakhstan). Interestingly, the members of the Keerqin Grassland Protection and Development Association (formed by the Project in the village of Baizifu) also noted that the Project had brought to them not just increased information about direct Project issues, but indirect information that had improved their economic situation, e.g. how to use fertilizer more effectively (see paragraph 42).

The Project has worked closely with a large number of stakeholders throughout and the active engagement of stakeholders has been vital to fulfilling its achievements, hence stakeholder participation is evaluated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

Project Oversight

Regional

63. Project oversight has been undertaken at the strategic level by a **Project Steering Committee** (PSC). This comprised representatives from each of the key project partners (UNEP, ICF, and CMS,) plus the National Project Directors and National Project Managers from each of the four countries involved. In the absence of an NPD from Russia, the Project Director from the Yakutian Coordination Unit was invited. The TE feels that this composition is flawed – understandable, but flawed nonetheless. The main role of the PSC is to provide an oversight function of a project including of its management, and to provide an official level of approval for work plans and budgets. A project's management reports to a PSC³⁸ so how is it possible to include these same people on the body that they are reporting to? None of the NPMs, nor the International Technical Advisor and Operations Manager, should have been included, nor in the TE's mind should the Project Director since to all intents and purposes she was actually acting as an international project manager, a title that would have better suited her role³⁹. *In lieu* of these members, wider representation could have been drawn by including selected members from, say, the Project Advisory Group (see paragraph 65), or each of the country's representatives to the CMS Siberian Crane MoU, although the TE has subsequently learnt that several of the national staff attending the PSC were actually the national focal points on the CMS MoU on Siberian Crane. Perhaps it really is too small a world!

³⁸ Long **UNEP comment** – reproduced in Annex XI.

³⁹ In the Project Document, a distinction is drawn between the Project Director and the RCU Director, but in practice the two appear to have become merged.

64. The PSC met approximately once a year, moving from country to country but also meeting in Bangkok at UNEP's offices and taking advantage of the CMS COP 9 in Rome to meet. In addition, there was a small meeting in Moscow in June 2004 with just Kazakhstan and Russian members to get Kazakhstan started. The minutes show that the meetings were well-structured, often with good presentations, and interviewees indicated that they were considered "*very fruitful with good collaboration and constructive, critical assessment of issues*". The meetings covered issues such as reaching aims, overcoming challenges, how to ensure sustainability, and improving commitment and dialogue between countries. The level of discussion was good with what was described as "*intelligent questioning*". Unlike the steering committee for the WOW Project, the PSC appears to have worked effectively throughout and, while in the TE's view at times the PSC tended to act more like a technical workshop than a governance meeting, it was not averse to taking strategic decisions opportunistically to facilitate progress and adapt the Project to changing circumstances, e.g. at SCM4 in 2005 to reduce the project sites in Iran to two by cancelling activities at the Amir Kelayeh Wildlife Refuge and Rud Posht in Gilan Province; and at SCM5 in 2006 to fully endorse the findings of the Mid-term Review as well as to find ways to address international issues that emerged since project design, e.g. avian influenza.

65. The SCWP also had a **Project Advisory Group** to help coordinate it with other initiatives and to obtain technical feedback on its plans. This comprised ten members drawn from key international stakeholders such as development agencies, multilateral environmental agreements, and international NGOs (see [Annex VI](#)). On paper this was a commendable approach, but unfortunately as one interviewee put it, "*was not very helpful in reality*" since very little feedback was obtained⁴⁰. Members representing the FAO and Ramsar did attend some of the PSC meetings, but the TE cannot help but wonder if the group would have been more effective if a core of these members had been invited to join a properly constituted PSC⁴¹ together with an appropriate budget. The TE acknowledges that there was no budget allocated to the PAG (perhaps a design fault), and that such meetings would likely have been expensive, but that short of conducting virtual meetings, such financial help would have been a "*big help to drawing on a strong set of experts*" (see paragraph 79).

National

66. Each of the countries involved had the option of forming their own National Project Steering Committee (NPSC) to oversee the SCWP's activities at both site and national levels. The composition, engagement, and effectiveness of these committees, varied greatly amongst the countries involved, as did the representativeness of stakeholders. However, in no case did the NPSC act as it should, i.e. in providing governance and oversight and acting as a vehicle for facilitating high-level inter-sectoral cooperation.

- **China:** The NPSC met annually with all Project personnel from all sites and with all long-term national consultants, as well as with all members of the Project Advisory Group, ahead of the development of work plans. While the NPSC comprised a "*large panel of experts*" and was clearly active, it lacked wide representation, suffered from frequent change of personnel, and some named institutions never attended (e.g. Ministry of Agriculture), and hence was severely limited in what it could achieve. This is best illustrated by the fact that while the Project in China worked very closely with the Songliao Water Resources Commission (see paragraph 48), no high level links were established with the Ministry of Water Resources through the NPSC as might be expected, but rather the work was accomplished through the use of senior consultants. Similarly, the State Environmental Protection Agency (which prior to 2003 had responsibility for Keerqin NNR) had no contact with, or input to, the Project. By common consent, it had no oversight function and acted more as a technical advisory committee. Nonetheless, it provided a high-level strategic overview that was deemed helpful, and since it was well respected, its comments were largely included, perhaps the most significant one being to upgrade Nanjishan (Poyang Lake) to NNR status. At the site level, site management committees at the sites in the north-east had some success in cross-sectoral communication and coordinated well to establish water management plans and delivery, while the Provincial Advisory Group in Jiangxi helped coordinate activities around Poyang Lake and sub-contracted the Jiangxi Mountain-River-Lake Development Committee to do the GIS work there.

⁴⁰ **RCU comment:** Key planning (all annual workplans for example) and evaluation documents were regularly sent out for comment with limited response.

⁴¹ **RCU comment:** For some issues, input was solicited and received from individual PAG members on specific issues based on their expertise.

- Iran: Of all the countries, this NPSC came closest to the ideal. It comprised a fairly wide representation of national and provincial bodies and included the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Planning and Management Organisation, the Provincial Director-Generals of the DoE from two provinces where the Project sites were located, and the Director-Generals of the various divisions of the national DoE. It met about twice a year, timing its meetings to coincide with the regular visits of the ITA two or three times yearly and oversaw the work of the NCU. Its functioning was reported as quite good with some helpful cross-fertilisation of ideas on various issues.
- Kazakhstan: The NPSC here was known as a National Project Management Group and had the slightly unusual remit of being the joint oversight body for the UNDP-GEF sister project *Integrated Conservation of Globally Significant Migratory Bird Wetland Habitat: A Demonstration on Three Sites* as well as the NPSC for the SCWP which was treated as a fourth site. While the underlying rationale was sound in that it was expected to draw synergies between the two projects, in reality there were difficulties, not least in personal differences between the two NPMS, and this joint approach ultimately did not work particularly well.
- Russia: No national oversight body functioned in Russia, largely because the MNR backed away from direct involvement in the SCWP as a whole. The MTR reports that:

“The functioning of the NPSC in Phase 1 was questionable – whilst records of dates of meetings exist in annual reports (four meetings in Phase 1) - no records of minutes of these meetings were available to the MTR Team. It was also noted that the validity of any NPSC meeting in preparation for Phase 2 work plans and budgets would be reliant on the MO identifying NPSC membership and responsibilities.”

That Ministerial Order apparently was never signed hence, as far as the TE can determine, such a body did not play any further role in the Project. The MTR also reported that:

“A 13-member National Project Advisory Group was also established in Phase 1. This group did not “meet” during this period but members were invited to NPSC meetings and provided an advisory role on individual project components and issues. Additional Advisory Groups were established in Yakutia and West Siberia.”

The TE has no information on this from western Siberia, but in Yakutia there appears to have been something termed a Council which appears to have acted part way between a Yakutian PSC and an advisory group. Conflicting information exists as to its form and function, but at best it appears to have provided scientific appraisal of activities rather than any meaningful oversight function.

Project Management

67. The Project’s implementation has closely followed the logframe throughout through a complex but logical structure at three scales:

- site level where direct interventions were made to improve the efficiency of conservation actions on the ground;
- national level where interventions were made to provide supportive legislative and policy frameworks and bring international recognition for flyway sites; and
- regional level where international cooperation was sought to provide increased coordination of conservation actions between countries.

Management and direction of the entire Project has been the responsibility of the **Regional Coordination Unit (RCU)** which has coordinated **National Coordination Units (NCU)** in each of the four countries. In Russia, two further structures, the West Siberian Coordination Unit (WSCU) and the Yakutia Coordination Unit (YCU) have undertaken work in their eponymous regions.

Regional Coordination Unit

68. The ICF established the RCU to manage the overall project and coordinate the country finances and outputs. To facilitate execution, MoUs were signed with three of the four project country Governments⁴² outlining the roles and responsibilities of each party as well as the overall objectives of the Project. The

⁴² The exception is Iran, where for political reasons the EA has signed a sub-project document directly with UNEP.

RCU was not based in a single geographic locality, depending upon electronic and telecommunications to form a coherently functional unit. The RCU comprised a **Project Director** Ms. Claire Mirande, based at ICF's headquarters in Baraboo, Wisconsin, USA with support from a Project Assistant, Ms. Elena Smirenski; an Operations Manager, initially Mr. Paul McVey, but succeeded by Ms. Patricia Gleason, both based in Beijing, China, where they were supported by a Financial and Administrative Assistant, initially Ms. Luan Haiyan, succeeded by Ms. Chen Yun in Beijing, and later Rebecca Pfile based at ICF; and a Communications Coordinator, Ms. Sara Gavney Moore based at ICF; and a technical team headed by an **International Technical Advisor** Mr. Crawford Prentice based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and supported by a Technical Advisor for China, Dr. Li Fengshan, who was based half-time in China and half-time at the ICF, and a part-time Technical Advisor for Russia and Kazakhstan, Mr. Mikhail Stishov, who was based in Moscow along with the Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator, Ms. Elena Ilyashenko. Additional staff support was provided and co-financed through the ICF by Vice President and China Programme Director, Mr. James Harris; Co-founder, Dr. George Archibald; Field Ecology Director, Mr. Jeb Barzen; and ICF financial staff.

69. All persons interviewed expressed their strong admiration for the RCU and indicated that it was highly supportive of the NCUs, being flexible, extremely responsive to their queries and needs, and demonstrating high levels of coordination skills in providing help in technical and administrative matters throughout. Communication mechanisms were well developed with full use being made of modern means through regular Skype conference calls and email contact, complemented through regular supervisory visits and *ad hoc* missions to all of the partner countries to resolve problems, complete fact-finding or specific training tasks, undertake reviews, site visits, or to attend workshops and conferences. The RCU's technical grasp of the issues, ability to adapt responses to changed circumstances, and their supportive attitude to even mundane administrative issues, were all singled out for praise. They have displayed outstanding communication skills by producing a range of informative, high quality, extremely clear and well-structured technical and administrative reports in a timely manner despite a number of difficulties. Their dedication and commitment to this Project are noted by the TE as being praiseworthy.

National Coordination Units

70. The Project formed NCUs in each of the four countries involved. Each of these was supervised by a National Project Director (NPD) but the day-to-day work was undertaken by a National Project Manager (NPM) assisted by a Technical Coordinator, and one or two Operations Assistant/Administrative, and Financial and Technical Assistant. In all cases, insufficient attention was paid to the operations role when developing the NCUs where the technical and managerial roles were emphasised but once this deficiency had been diagnosed, employment of highly capable individuals in this role in China and Iran enabled significant improvements in operational efficiency to accrue. The TE finds that the efficiency and effectiveness of the four NCUs has varied greatly:

- China: The NCU was established in the National Bird Banding Centre in the Chinese Forestry Academy under the auspices of the SFA. Although they had poor office accommodation for much of the Project, this was eventually alleviated in November 2006 when the NBBC moved into a new building. The team was capable and stable throughout, and set up teams at the five sites very quickly comprising a Local Project Coordinator and two Technical Officers occasionally supported by a Finance Officer. The presence of the RCU Operations Manager in Beijing undoubtedly helped this NCU and they report close collaboration, but despite this the NCU reports it experienced initial difficulties with the finances but especially with the reporting where collating information from five sites and translating it all from Chinese took a lot of the NPM's time before he could train assistants to do it instead. Most of the difficulties with finance were down to inexperience, this being the first time any of the staff involved had implemented a project of this scale, and some mistakes were made (see paragraph 88), although another issue with finances was that caused by the delays in the Russian NCU reporting in turn delaying the release of funds by UNEP. This was the only NCU to report that it used specialist project management software (*Microsoft Project*) to plan and monitor activities⁴³.
- Iran: A senior member of the Wildlife Bureau of the DoE was appointed as NPM but he was provided with little support until March 2005 when a National Technical Officer was also recruited and

⁴³ **RCU comment:** *Actually this was introduced across the project for the annual workplans and assessing progress on tasks, including some training support – although in reality the software was used only in a rather basic way.* NCU Iran also subsequently reported its use in a comment on the draft.

subsequently a Financial and Technical Assistant. It had been the intention to hire a short-term International Consultant to assist in developing project management systems, but unfortunately he fell ill before he could take up his position. In the first phase of the project, the NCU relied heavily on national consultants to deliver Project interventions, but the MTR raised considerable doubts over the technical quality and timeliness of the work; and more worryingly over the NCU's:

“... difficulty [in] managing well-respected experts who fail to deliver, and in the cases highlighted below have even given “contract extensions” to try and complete the work.”

Periods of up to eight months overdue were reported. It appears that these consultants were replaced in the second phase, with improved delivery in the quality and timeliness of products, but the lost time significantly impeded the effectiveness of delivery, e.g. the micro-credit scheme at Fereydoon Kenar (see paragraph 42). Throughout, the NCU was affected by a number of issues arising from a national context that included:

- initial inexperience of its members in dealing with the bureaucracy of a GEF project which they reported as being “too heavy”;
- very limited capacity of site level staff yet they had to deal with administrative, financial and technical issues which were often beyond them;
- the NPD pitched at too high a level within the DoE to be involved at, or understand fully, the technical level of the project, thereby leading to difficulties over practical issues such as refusing to sign Requests for Direct Payment, these having to be accompanied by time-consuming lengthy justifications for the proposed payment;
- frequent organisational changes within the DoE, each of which affected the Project, and personnel changes, e.g. three NPDs, all of which caused delays to the workplans;
- resistance from the former-Head of the DoE in Mazandaran Province who did not believe in capacity-building or approve of NGOs/cooperatives and viewed all duck-trappers as illegal hunters resulting in the Trappers' Associations never being recognised as equal partners⁴⁴;
- significant limitations placed on them by Government bureaucracy which required national policy and regulations to be followed but these were not aligned with international norms;
- difficulties with Government functioning – weekends not aligned with international working practices so that there is nominally only an overlap of three working days per week with the RCU, logistical difficulties with mixed gender representation at international meetings;
- Government in-kind contributions that could not be tracked, and committed finances that were not received (e.g. two game-guard station buildings were not completed as a result); and
- Government officials who saw international projects as a resource for existing activities (e.g. the Project paid for a car for use by the NCU but it was reported that it was sometimes used by the NPD for other official use);

The NCU worked hard and with astuteness to overcome or work around most of these problems and to make significant progress at the two Project sites⁴⁵. Maintaining the same NPM throughout was seen by all as a big advantage, and although Government lethargy has put many of the Project's gains at risk (see paragraph 121), his continued involvement with, and commitment to, Fereydoon Kenar, where he appears to be trusted by the local community, bodes well for the future. The NCU also reports that problems experienced by the other international parts of the Project, most significantly the delays in financing arising from delayed reporting by the SCWP-Russia, put a lot of work with the local people at risk since building trust between the local people and the DoE was of crucial importance to progress and delays in delivering promised actions often put this at risk.

- **Kazakhstan**: Implementation was delayed in Kazakhstan until January 2005 (see paragraph 23) when the NPM signed her contract, but from then on implementation was of the highest calibre, making up for lost time and achieving all the deliverables within the originally allotted time span. This was in spite of the NCU never having a dedicated office in Astana because of a shortage of space within the Ministry; the NCU apparently worked out of the NPM's home throughout. The Technical Expert was based in Kostanay and, despite some initial doubts as to the efficacy of this arrangement, the strong

⁴⁴ **RCU comment:** *During the latter years of the project – his predecessor was more supportive.*

⁴⁵ Activities were cancelled at the Amir Kelayeh Wildlife Refuge and Rud Posht in Gilan Province in 2005.

communications between the two overcame any difficulty, while having a presence in Kostanay Oblast facilitated activities at the regional level. Highly competent and professional consultants were recruited and generally performed well. Apart from having a highly capable NPM, one of the key reasons behind the success is that the NPM was independent of other commitments having no ties with academic institutions (Russia) or government bodies (China, Iran), hence she could devote herself full-time to the Project. Furthermore, coming from a project management background rather than a technical one, this NPM was the only one not to find the reporting requirements burdensome and the only one to find the financial aspects “very easy”. However, difficulties were encountered with the logframe especially with regard to non-realistic indicators (see paragraph 16), with delays in financing accruing from delayed reporting by the Russian NCU, and with some government arrangements. Chief among the latter was the fact that while ministries participate in the official meetings of international conventions, practical work on the ground to implement these conventions takes place only through international projects. This is exacerbated by too few Government staff having a capability in English causing bottlenecks. At the end of the Project, FHC officials were hesitant about extending the Agreement with the ICF for what appear to have been political circumstances at the time. The ICF found that it was possible to work directly through an NGO and signed an Agreement with *Ak-Tyrna* in April 2009, although no money was forthcoming until September 2009 when the extension to the Project was confirmed. Amazingly, all members of the Kazakh NCU and related staff worked through this period without salary or payments in the belief that the extension would be forthcoming. They also produced a lot of publications which they held off from printing until the money did arrive.

- Russia:⁴⁶ The NCU coordinated national activities as well as regional-level activities undertaken by the Western Siberia Coordination Unit (WSCU) based in Salekhard through the Sterkh Foundation, an NGO headed by Alexander Ermakov, and by the Yakutia Coordination Unit (YCU) based in Yakutsk through the Institute of Biological Problems of the Cryolithozone of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, headed by its Deputy Director, Dr. Nikolai Germogenov. Dr. Alexander Sorokin was initially appointed as the NPM. As the protégé of Dr. Vladimir Flint, a doyen of Soviet ornithology, lead author of *Birds of the USSR*, and the first contact for the ICF when they started working in the ex-Soviet Union, Dr. Sorokin was the obvious choice for NPM since he probably knew more about Siberian Cranes than any person alive. Unfortunately, while his technical skills were indeed outstanding, he proved not to possess the project management skills necessary, and as the Terminal Report *Safe Flyways* states:

“The Russian NCU was led by scientists who had devoted their careers to Siberian Cranes and who did accomplish important work during the early years of the project. Yet they could not enlarge that passion to include fulfilling the considerable management and reporting requirements necessary in a GEF project.”

There is no shame in that since outstanding scientific ability and project management skills are rarely found in the same person. However, the MTR also makes the point that the NCU dedicated insufficient time to the Project:

“During Phase I it was apparent that the NCU lacked the capacity or time to effectively implement the administrative and coordination aspects of the project. Both the former NPM (now the National Scientific Coordinator) and NTM have heavy technical and administrative work loads at ARRINP, as well as annual field research programmes, and neither has a project management background. This effectively meant that both key management staff in the NCU could only commit part-time to the project, and could not cope with the heavy UNEP-GEF reporting loads, formats and regulations”.

As a result, loose accounting and chronic late reporting plagued this part of the Project and had serious negative knock-on effects for the rest of the entire Project because of the need for combined progress reports prior to further release of funds to any (see paragraph 84). However, in the face of the scale of this problem UNEP did display some flexibility by authorising payment to the three other countries even without the proper reports from Russia, in order not to hold the Project back. The associated respect for, and loyalty to, Dr. Sorokin, coupled with concerns over possible problems at ministerial

⁴⁶ **UNEP comment:** *Main problem with NCU (staff) was that they did not keep to agreed reporting standards and timelines, circumvented agreed check-and-balances, as well as not reporting on delays in delivery of the many consultants contracted.*

level due to his contacts and influence (which did indeed create barriers when ties were finally severed) led to a significant delay while the ICF and UNEP sought all kinds of solutions to the problem. This, plus the change in national policy over the federal zakazniki, brought disaster as close as can be experienced while a project yet still survives. When change was finally made in March 2006, the clean break called for was not forthcoming, and while Vyacheslav Miklyaev was appointed NPM, Dr. Sorokin was moved to the post of National Scientific Coordinator, a new post created within the NCU. It is clear that resentment and influence made the NPM's job virtually impossible and only after a further change was made in April 2007 with a completely new management team did significant improvements begin to accrue. Appointment of the new team itself was not without difficulty. The MNR was asked by UNEP/ICF to appoint a new organisation as the NCU and a new NPM, but the organisation they proposed was focussed on ecotourism, and the director of this organisation was closely related to the second NPM. Thus, UNEP blocked it on the grounds of inadequate experience with large international conservation projects and a very clear conflict of interest. UNEP/ICF were also concerned that the MNR had not appointed a new NPD (and that ARRINP whose director nominally served as the NPD had a high turnover of leadership – some seven directors during the course of the Project), but despite a request to appoint another organisation, the MNR refused further official involvement in the Project. This in turn led to the new team forming an NGO Birds and People so that they could be contracted under the project as the national executing agency. Although it took a good deal of time and effort by the new team, the vast majority of the outstanding accounts and reports were successfully reconciled, with only a relatively small amount of money deemed irrecoverable (see paragraph 83). Implementation of activities in western Siberia then began refreshed and with some successes, notably the moves to protect the federal zakaznik of Kunovat (see paragraphs 34 and 40) and the public awareness programme (see paragraph 46). Throughout, the YCU, being largely independent of Moscow, ran their activities efficiently and effectively, and although they suffered delayed funding (as did the three other countries) because of Moscow's delayed reporting, they made substantive progress after successfully arguing for an increase from 10% to 20% of the Russian budget, given the importance of the population of the Siberian Crane on the eastern flyway. However, the TE garnered the feeling that the YCU was not only isolated geographically, communications with Moscow remaining poor until the very end, but that it was isolated by its interest almost solely in science, and mainly crane science, the team showing very little interest in non-scientific activities.

#7

Lesson learned: Hire the right people from the start.

#8

Lesson learned: Do not delay in making changes where project management is failing.

#9

Lesson learned: The role of Operations Manager is crucial for regional projects at both regional and national levels – the latter should not be underestimated.

International Crane Foundation

71. The ICF have implemented this Project particularly well. Although inexperienced at dealing with GEF projects – this is not only their first but the largest of any type that they have implemented – they displayed none of the hesitancy that characterised Wetland International's approach to the WOW Project. From the outset they deployed sufficient resources of sufficient quality to ensure the Project was run both effectively and efficiently. The two lead members of the RCU – the Project Director and the ITA – were both technical specialists with project management experience but, crucially, they recognised their own limitations and employed a specialist project manager as an Operations Manager to facilitate smooth running of the administrative and financial systems. Backed by a capable team, they provided excellent service to the four NCUs as indicated above (see paragraph 69). But the ICF was more than just the RCU, the specialist unit it formed to run this Project. Members of its senior management team played a huge role in supporting the RCU – the Vice President Jim Harris' name is frequently encountered in reports and interviews – and in helping to solve problems and find additional co-financing. While its inexperience (and probably misplaced loyalties) were clearly evident in not dealing quickly enough with the inadequacies of the NCU in Russia, it continued to use its immense body of goodwill and wide range of contacts to maintain informal links with a

government reluctant to engage officially and with provincial governments, to maximise progress wherever possible.

Adaptive Management

72. The Project's adaptive management has been excellent throughout, as it has had to be in order to overcome the number of problems that it has faced. This has stemmed from both a highly capable RCU as well as having a well-functioning PSC which, despite the TE's reservations about its structure as an organ of governance, has provided a serious decision-making capacity to the Project enabling flexible and sometimes innovative responses to overcome problems. This has been backed by highly responsive UNEP Task Managers who have provided high quality technical and administrative advice throughout. Adaptive management has operated effectively at both the strategic level and the tactical level. Four examples of the former:

- Perhaps the best example of strategic adaptation was the Project's response to finding that the Federal Russian Government had divested itself of its responsibilities for its federal-level nature reserves (zakazniki), resulting in their loss of all finance and staff. Since two of the Project sites were federal level zakazniki, this presented a major challenge. However, as described in paragraph 34, although work within the site at Kunovat proved impossible, the site could still be provided with protection by designating provincial-level reserves around its perimeter to act as buffers.
- While considerable finance was made available for the community-based livelihood initiatives, in China it was found that some communities were not cooperative and that economic migration of the labour force to the cities had left some rural communities without enough young people to carry out the initiatives. As a result the China NCU changed its strategy to locate better sites and invested much time and effort at Keerqin NNR where people were very keen to be involved and wanted to improve their environmental and living conditions.
- At the commencement of the Project it had been envisaged that there would be an inception workshop held in China (as the country with the biggest work programme) for all Project staff from all four countries and the RCU. However, the outbreak of SARS meant that all travel to and from China was restricted for several months, so a strategic decision was taken to forego the joint workshop and hold several smaller, national-level ones instead (see paragraph 20).
- After the MTR which found that the Project was over-extended, decisions were taken to reduce activities by dropping one site in Iran (Amirkelayeh and the contiguous rice fields and wetlands of Rud Posht), scaling back the work programme in China, and significantly curtailing work in western Siberia. At the same time, the logframe was simplified and the number of indicators reduced.

Examples of tactical level adaptation include:

- Agreement of the annual workplans at the PSC meetings, where there would be extensive reviews of what was working and what was not, and adjustments made to fit accordingly;
- Development of the operations manual to formalise systems in the light of initial low capacity within the NCUs;
- The employment of a senior hydrologist from the Songliao Water Commission to work on the water management plans in view of the difficulties of engaging with the Commission at a high level;
- The employment of a community development specialist from Yunnan Province because of an absence of any expertise in NE China despite needing to reallocate budgets and reduce the amount of travel;
- Undertake annual budget revisions to take account of high rates of inflation; and
- Not granting an extension to Russia because of continuing problems with budget reporting

Notwithstanding the excellent adaptive management practiced, the TE finds that the formality of using the monitoring of indicators to provide a basis for adaptive management is effectively absent; but then again would argue that most of the issues that the Project had to adapt to would not have been covered in any way by the monitoring of those indicators.

Technical Management

73. The technical management of the Project has largely been of the highest standard. The Project has deployed expertise of the highest calibre, whether internationally or nationally and the products they have produced have also been excellent whether these are specialist material, e.g. management plans, reports on avian influenza; scientific material, e.g. analyses of bird monitoring data, bird/plant/water level interactions at Poyang Lake; populist material e.g. the booklet *Birds, Shamans, People: Siberian Cranes and other Migratory Birds in Eastern Siberia Folklore*; or practically-based products e.g. the introduction of high-yield dairy-farming at Zhalong NNR and its associated support. The Project's explicit intention of favouring national consultants over international ones to help build local capacity and to provide greater cost-effectiveness has paid dividends if the quality of the end products is taken as a key criterion. One of the strengths the Project has displayed is in basing its interventions on the best scientific information available, and the strength of the scientific team involved is particularly noteworthy, especially in the RCU and in Russia. Although such an approach was encapsulated within Output 1.4 *Implementation of site management plans is supported by application of results of applied field studies*, this ethos has permeated most of the Project. In one or two places, the approach of trying to apply the highest international standards has clashed with the reality of the relatively low capacity on the ground. This was most noticeable with regard to both the format and process for the participatory management plans especially at sites with particular management problems, e.g. Fereydoon Kenar, Iran, or where the participatory nature envisaged was not part of the culture, e.g. China, or where there was simply no legal mechanism available e.g. in the zapovedniks in Kazakhstan and Russia. A number of interviewees expressed the notion that perhaps a less complex approach would have better fitted certain situations.

The Project has been well-organised and well-managed throughout providing products of the highest technical quality while responding effectively to a range of internal and external challenges through excellent adaptive management. Only in Russia, where there have been significant and chronic management problems in the national and western Siberian coordination units, has implementation been less than acceptable on a GEF Project. Only because these problems, which should have been solved long before they were, cannot be overlooked has the implementation approach not been assessed more highly, hence the implementation approach has been evaluated as Satisfactory.

Poyang Lake Dam

74. There is one technical issue that, while not strictly part of the evaluation of the Project and which is not included in any part of its assessment, requires brief mention. The Jiangxi Provincial Government has put forward a proposal to dam the outlet to Poyang Lake. The dam would be open during the high water season but closed during winter to prevent the waters from falling below one of three design levels – 16m asl; 14m asl; or 12m asl. Based in large part on work undertaken during the SCWP on water levels, food plants and bird distribution, two reports were prepared by the ICF that indicated that construction of such a dam would have major, negative, and potentially irreversible impacts on wintering waterbird populations, possibly leading to their extirpation, particularly for the higher design levels. This assessment has made a significant contribution to the response by the Chinese Government, and information obtained during the TE's interviews, and cross-checked by an interviewee at the time of said interview, indicates that the SFA was in receipt of an official planning consultation document for the highest-level dam early in 2011, and that it categorically rejected the proposal. No further proposals have yet been received officially by the SFA, although it is understood that proposals for a lower level dam will still be put forward. Such proposals still cast considerable doubt over the likelihood that any of the Project's achievements, with regard to the Siberian Crane and associated waterbirds, can be sustained in the light of a threat to the most important wintering site on the eastern flyway, and the TE was disturbed at the general level of support for the dam found amongst many of those involved in the Project in the Province.

UNEP supervision and backstopping

75. UNEP-DGEF supervision was accomplished by standard procedures. The Task Manager role was fulfilled by two persons during the lifetime of the Project thus:

Mr. Mark Zimsky – March 2003⁴⁷ to April 2004; and

⁴⁷ and was task manager during the PDF-B as well.

Mr. Max Zieren – April 2004 to March 2010⁴⁸.

Key aspects of supervision were made through the Task Manager's involvement in the PSC meetings and through the annual PIRs, but at least weekly contact (phone/skype), sometimes more frequent, was made between the Project Director and the Task Manager and the latter was copied into all key technical material. Members of the RCU made it clear during interviews how helpful and supportive both Task Managers were during the implementation period, responding quickly to provide good guidance, honest and constructive criticism, and help overcome particular problems as necessary. They were also open to one-on-one approaches directly from the NCUs. The RCU also reports significant assistance from, and close cooperation with, UNEP's Funds Manager, Sandeep Bhambra, in dealing with the Project's finances. The Task Manager and Funds Manager were heavily involved in regular issues such as the review and approval of workplans and budgets, review of progress and performance against such workplans, and completion of the Logframe Tracking Form, as well as one-off key project decisions such as the extension proposals. No special supervisory visits were made to the Project. Max Zieren co-led the technical process of simplifying the logframe and was the architect in re-designing the format of the Semi-Annual Reports using a model from the Asian Development Bank to make them simpler to create and more relevant to use. The TE finds that the PIRs have generally rated the activities realistically throughout, and that the Task Manager's perceptions of risk were occasionally higher, but more realistic, than those of the Project Director, e.g. external risks in PIR 2009.

UNEP have provided a very high level of backstopping and supervision to this Project, and its performance has benefitted as a direct result. Given that it is difficult for the TE to see how this could have been improved, it is considered as "good practice", hence UNEP's supervision and backstopping role is evaluated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

76. One member of staff from one of the NCUs had experience of working on both UNDP-GEF projects and this one, and raised a number of interesting points about the comparative experience of the two GEF Implementing Agencies. Most pertinent was the fact that UNEP's procedures (procurement, financial) were found to be considerably easier to deal with in project terms than UNDP's. No barriers were encountered, which with UNDP are frequent through that agency applying many unnecessary requirements which are absent from UNEP (although note the significant exception raised under paragraph 84). Crucially, the point was made that UNDP appears to aim at compliance with procedures, not with outputs, while UNEP, or at least the SCWP, aims at producing on-the-ground results. One example provided to the TE – with seeking authorisation for business trips, UNDP requires multi-level signatures, while with UNEP, a justified decision on a written order is adequate to arrange the trip immediately. The onus appears to be solely on showing that the expenses under consideration are reasonable for achieving the output. In short, a much greater level of trust is given to project staff under the UNEP system. Interestingly in Kazakhstan, the UNDP Country Office was used as a "transformer" of money (i.e. acting as a bank) rather than being accepted as a partner specifically in order to reduce delays inherent in the UNDP bureaucracy when acting as a partner. The TE raises this issue here because the levels of bureaucracy within UNDP-GEF (the agency with which he has most experience), as applied by some Country Offices, have come close to the absurd and it is refreshing to see an agency applying a common sense approach. A recent global analysis⁴⁹ of red tape as applied to the private sector showed a strong correlation between reduced bureaucracy in countries with their economic health – a principle that surely has to apply similarly to the efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation. The TE suggests that UNEP look to make good use of this perceived benefit when applying the principle of comparative advantage in developing new GEF projects.

FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

77. Financing contributions are US\$ 10,000,000 from the GEF, with cash co-financing of US\$ 9,377,672 and in-kind contributions of US\$ 8,341,795; a total of US\$ 17,719,467. GEF money was routed directly through the national executing agencies in China and Kazakhstan, i.e. the SFA and FHC respectively, but in Iran and Russia this was not deemed prudent and in both cases funds were passed through accounts held by

⁴⁸ remains in post at the time of the TE.

⁴⁹ *Doing Business 2012* by the International Finance Corporation, as reported in *The Economist*, 22nd October 2011 – "It's A Jungle Out There" pp.73-74.

the relevant UNDP country offices which in effect thereby acted as a bank. Table 10 provides the full details of the Project's co-financing, from which a number of points are pertinent:

TABLE 10: SOURCES OF CO-FINANCING TO 31ST DECEMBER 2010 (US\$) AGAINST PROJECT BUDGET AS PER PROJECT DOCUMENT

Co financing source (alphabetic order)	EA/NEA own		Multi-lateral Agencies (Non-GEF)		Local Government		Private Sector		NGOs		Total	
	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual
Grant (cash)												
CBCC										156,000	165,399	
Chevron										0	2,000	
CMS			38,000	204,223								
HLJ Water Dept					450,000	450,000						
ICF	122,500	833,361										
Inner Mongolia Env Protection					390,000	0						
Iran DOE	0	592,500										
ITC-Netherlands									0	1,500		
Jiangxi Forestry Dept					602,000	942,061						
Jiangxi Wildlife Man. Bureau					20,000	115,200						
Jilin Yingtail Oil Co							40,000	260,000				
Keerqin NNR					262,500	933,000						
Momoge NNR					1,611,700	346,000						
Nanjishan NNR					0	260,000						
Nat.l Comm. on US-China Relations									0	15,000		
National Bird Banding Centre (China)	162,000	117,000										
NEACSN			18,000	54,700								
Poyang Lake NNR					0	1,039,000						
Qi-Da					300,000	0						
Qiqihar Finance Bureau					437,500	732,000						
State Forestry Administration (China)	3,100,000	3,100,000										
Trust for Mutual Understanding									0	41,828		
Xianghai NNR					838,000	2,213,900						
Zhalong NNR					487,000	53,000						
Zhenlai Cty Finance Bureau					75,000	6,000						
Grant total	3,384,500	4,642,861	56,000	258,923	5,211,200	7,090,161	40,000	260,000	156,000	225,727	8,847,700	12,477,672
In-kind												
ARRINP	118,840	14,320										
Bernhard Wessling							20,000	0				
CBCC									30,000	44,000		
CMS			118,000	180,000								
Institute of Biological Problems of the Cryolithic Zone					92,000	12,062						
ICF	618,000	883,328										
Inner Mongolia Env Protection					100,000	0						
Iran DOE	1,410,000	1,521,000										
ITC-Netherlands									0	2,500		

Co financing source (alphabetic order)	EA/NEA own		Multi-lateral Agencies (Non-GEF)		Local Government		Private Sector		NGOs		Total	
	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual
Jiangxi Forestry Dept					639,000	766,895						
Jiangxi Wildlife Man. Bureau					55,000	50,700						
Jilin Yingtail Oil Co							20,000	0				
Keerqin NNR					120,000	41,000						
Kostanay Region Society of Hunters-fishers									36,000	35,423		
Migratory Animals of Eurasia Research Centre									60,000	0		
Min.Ag. Kazakhstan	2,533,000	3,176,312										
MNR (Russia)	1,356,570	560										
Momoge NNR					403,000	90,000						
Moscow Zoo					14,400	16,000						
National Bird Banding Centre (China)	1,261,000	949,200										
NEACSN			8,000	21,000								
Oka					60,000	2,200						
Poyang Lake NNR					90,000	77,300						
Qiqihar Finance Bureau					65,000	47,000						
RBCU									30,000	0		
Sterkh Foundation									244,000	80,000		
WI - Russia									30,000	0		
WWF Kazakhstan									15,530	0		
WWF Russia									30,000	0		
Xianghai NNR					75,000	32,000						
Zhalong NNR					240,000	181,000						
Additional New Sources												
Botok Fund							0	191				
Kazakh Tourist Assn									0	220		
NGO Ak Niet							0	1,520				
Nubr (corporate fdtn)									0	700		
Prgrm Ecol Tourism devpt for Naurzum 2007-10, Industry and Business Dept, Kostanay Region					0	20,206						
Seeds Proj Flow Fnd Circle							0	1,658				
WECF Program "Empowerment and Local Action", Ecoforum BGO							0	83,500				
Xianghai NNR - Hungriness Prevention & Cure Ctr					0	10,000						
In-kind total	7,297,410	6,544,720	126,000	201,000	1,953,400	1,346,363	40,000	86,869	475,530	162,843	9,892,340	8,341,795
TOTAL	10,681,910	11,187,581	182,000	459,923	7,164,600	8,436,524	80,000	346,869	631,530	388,570	18,740,040	20,819,467

SOURCE: ICF. Note: there is a discrepancy of US\$ 2,007,169 between the total in this table (US\$ 20,819,467) and the totals for co-financing in Tables (11 and 12) (US\$ 22,826,636) because the figures above do not include the full amount of Russian co-financing which was not fully reported to the ICF. Most of this total would be attributable to ARRINP and the IPBCZ.

NOTE: it is outside the scope of the TE to verify independently the financial figures contained in any of the tables and figures presented here through an audit.

- The total co-financing was 11.1% above that originally proposed – a total of US\$ 20,819,467 against US\$ 18,740,040; an increase of US\$ 2,079,427.
- All types of grant co-financing (international agencies, multi-lateral agencies, local government, private sector, and NGOs) produced more cash than was originally proposed;
- The total amount of cash received was 41.0% more than originally pledged – US\$ 12,477,672 against US\$ 8,847,700; an increase of US\$ 3,629,972;
- In-kind co-financing produced only 84.3% of that budgeted – a total of US\$ 8,341,795 against US\$ 9,892,340; a shortfall of US\$ 1,550,545 although much of this was from organisations where increases in cash co-financing were made, e.g. the Chinese NNRs. However, in one or two cases, co-financing committed was not received, e.g. from the Iranian DoE for the game-guard stations at the two Project sites and these remain incomplete as a result.

78. Table 11 shows the amounts of co-financing by country and by Project component. Again, two points are of interest:

- The amount of co-financing raised and spent in China is five times that of the next best performing country, Kazakhstan;
- The total spent on site level activities (component 1) is 77% of that spent on national level activities (component 2) but this is markedly different in Kazakhstan where site level spending was only 2.3% of national level spending, while in Russia site level spending was 3,091% of national level spending – very eloquent statements of the differing priorities and levels of engagement between the governments of the two countries concerned.

TABLE 11: TOTAL DISBURSEMENT OF CO-FUNDING BY COUNTRY AND OUTPUT TO 31ST DECEMBER 2010 (US\$)

	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Total
China	5,843,400	7,850,495	–	13,693,895
Kazakhstan	60,495	2,632,030	–	2,692,525
Iran	1,056,750	1,061,250	–	2,118,000
Russia	1,803,541	58,337	–	1,861,878
RCU	432,668	326,476	1,701,194	2,460,338
Totals	9,196,854	11,928,588	1,701,194	22,826,636

SOURCE: ICF.

79. Total disbursement of funds, to the end of the Project in December 2009, amounted to US\$ 32,684,658 (see Table 12). If Project spending can be taken as a crude measure of the progress of implementation, then the Project has achieved the progress originally envisaged and much more besides, since this sum represents a very creditable 141.4% of the budget projected in the original Project Document. Table 12 also highlights a number of points:

- Twice as much co-financing was raised from regional level sources as was projected and of this extra US\$ 1,261,938, US\$ 976,688 (77.4%) was supplied by the ICF;
- An extra US\$ 8,448,328 (71%) in co-financing was raised from national level sources;
- Project management costs were primarily funded by GEF, but were partly co-financed by ICF (US\$ 335,000 (7.4%)) paying for the time of staff involved in the Project. Project management costs ran at only 72.4% of those projected – a hugely cost-effective result indicating significant efficiency in running this large project⁵⁰;
- Project management costs comprised just 13.8% of the total spend, an excellent performance for such a complex project. However, in places this was achieved only by allowing sub-optimal performance of certain aspects, e.g. the PAG where greater financial investment would have enabled increased technical oversight and involvement (see paragraph 65), and there is very great concern expressed by both UNEP and the RCU that continued reductions by GEF in the allowable level of project management costs (10% maximum under GEF-4 and 5% under GEF-5) will make good project

⁵⁰ Although country contributions are not separated out in Table 12, in practice they provided office space and salaries for the time the National Project Directors spent on SCWP. Iran also provided an estimated \$120,000 in salary for the National Project Manager.

management and oversight untenable, e.g. “What NGO driven project in this world can produce good management and PSC steering at a 5% level?”. The TE agrees.

- The final GEF : co-finance ratio in terms of monies spent was 1:2.31 (US\$ 9,858,022 to US\$ 22,826,636), also an extremely praiseworthy result;
- Spending on Component 1 (site level) was almost exactly as planned while that for Component 2 (national level) and Component 3 (international level) were both three-and-a-quarter times higher than originally budgeted, largely because of significantly higher levels of co-financing; and
- GEF funding was spent largely as planned but with some re-adjustments in favour of national level activities.

#15 Lesson learned: Good project management and project oversight has a minimum cost.

TABLE 12: TOTAL DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS BY OUTPUT TO 31ST DECEMBER 2010 (US\$) AGAINST FULL PROJECT BUDGET AS PER PROJECT DOCUMENT

	GEF			Regional Level Co-Financing†					National Level Co-Financing†			Total		
	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual ICF	Actual Other Sources	Total Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%
Component 1	3,288,249	3,335,420	101.0	0	399,168	33,500	432,668	+	8,683,210	8,764,186	100.9	11,971,459	12,532,274	104.7
Component 2	2,573,200	2,117,484	82.3	0	326,476	0	326,476	+	1,759,100	11,602,112	659.5	4,332,300	14,046,072	324.2
Component 3	284,900	232,845	81.7	303,400	656,044	710,150	1,366,194	192.4	0	0	-	588,300	1,599,039	271.8
Proj. man.	3,853,651	4,172,273	108.3	895,000	335,000	-	335,000	37.4	1,475,660	0	0.0	6,224,311	4,507,273	72.4
Total	10,000,000	9,858,022	98.6	1,198,400	1,716,688	743,650	2,460,338	205.3	11,917,970	20,366,298	170.9	23,116,370	32,684,658	141.4

SOURCE: ICF. †Actual amounts reported under National and Regional co-financing include funds received from original committers and additional new sources of funding.

80. Table 13 shows the disbursement of GEF funds by component over time and these are graphed cumulatively in Figure 3. These illustrate a number of factors:

- A slow start to the actual activities in all countries with effectively no work being carried out in 2003 while the emphasis was on set-up and coordination work, as indicated by the regional project management costs and the slightly lower national project management costs;
- A rapid increase in site level (Component 1) activities in 2004 but still slow progress on national level (Component 2) and international level (Component 3) which continued on the latter into 2005;
- A significant but unexplained retrenchment of site level activities in 2006 (see paragraph 81) (actual spend being more than US\$ 150,000 lower than the previous two years at a time when spending was budgeted to increase rapidly); and
- Significantly elevated levels of spending towards the end of the Project with peak real-term disbursements being made in 2008 for site and national level activities, and peak percentage term spending being made in the final year for national and international level activities.

TABLE 13: TOTAL DISBURSEMENT OF GEF FUNDS (US\$) BY COMPONENT BY YEAR AGAINST BUDGET AS PER PROJECT DOCUMENT

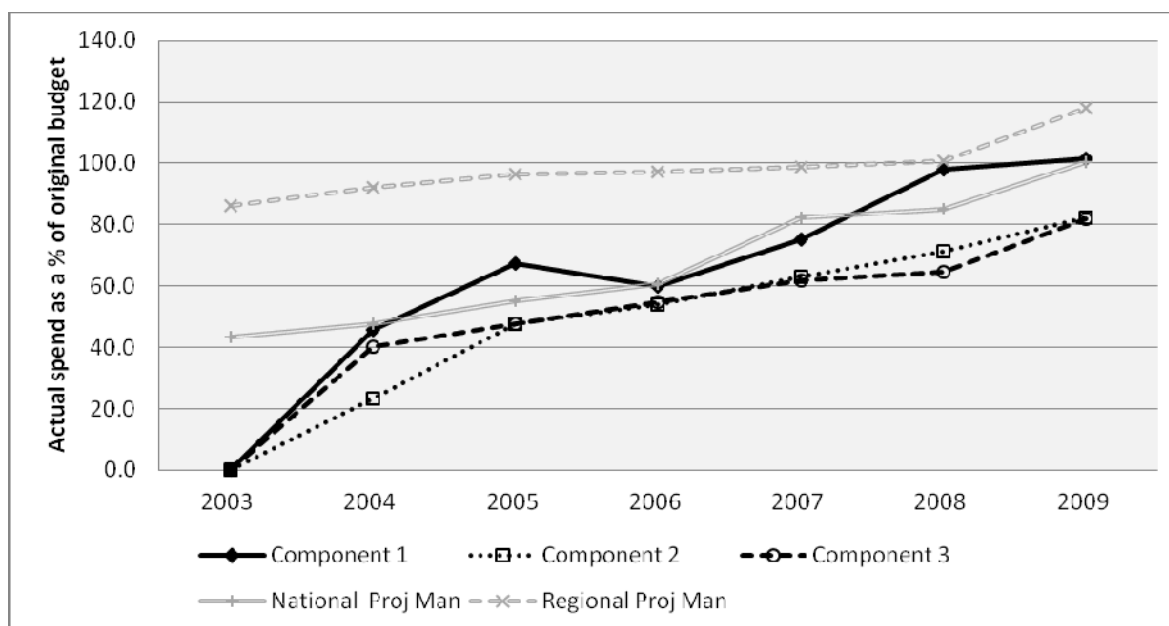
	2003			2004			2005			2006		
	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%
Component 1	819,343		0	481,590	592,993	123.1	372,871	536,964	144.0	824,215	364,401	44.2
Component 2	359,685	817	0	470,530	193,431	41.1	353,730	368,609	104.2	519,890	355,878	68.5
Component 3	25,600	-	0	87,900	45,614	51.9	40,400	27,885	69.0	20,400	22,252	109.1
Nat. Proj Man.	493,409	213,110	43.2	303,233	166,657	55.0	307,171	227,989	74.2	316,427	253,578	80.1
Reg. Proj.Man.	254,437	219,354	86.2	259,207	252,822	97.5	265,203	279,025	105.2	290,460	287,810	99.1
Total	1,952,474	433,281	22.2	1,602,459	1,251,518	78.1	1,339,375	1,440,472	107.5	1,971,392	1,283,920	65.1

TABLE 13 CONT.

	2007			2008			2009			Total		
	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%
Component 1	354,779	652,841	184.0	327,412	967,272	295.4	108,039	220,948	204.5	3,288,249	3,335,420	101.4
Component 2	386,780	397,357	102.7	359,080	426,218	118.7	123,505	375,174	303.8	2,573,200	2,117,484	82.3
Component 3	68,650	53,998	78.7	20,400	20,603	101.0	21,550	62,493	290.0	284,900	232,845	81.7
Nat. Proj Man.	300,639	554,313	184.4	322,898	318,223	98.6	94,774	414,880	437.8	2,138,551	2,148,751	100.5
Reg. Proj.Man.	280,543	294,633	105.0	286,929	312,598	108.9	78,320	377,279	481.7	1,715,100	2,023,521	118.0
Total	1,391,391	1,953,143	140.0	1,316,720	2,044,914	155.3	426,188	1,450,775	340.4	9,999,999	9,858,022	98.6

SOURCE: ICF. Please note: figures at project completion still being finalised by UNEP under the UN system.

FIGURE 3: CUMULATIVE DISBURSEMENT OF GEF FUNDS (US\$) BY COMPONENT BY YEAR AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BUDGET IN PROJECT DOCUMENT



81. Table 14 shows the disbursement of GEF funds by country over time and these are also graphed cumulatively in Figure 4. Again, a number of factors are discernible:

- The delayed start by Kazakhstan is immediately apparent with less than US\$ 15,000 spent in the first two years, but with a rapid increase in spending thereafter with budgets exceeded in all subsequent years such that Kazakhstan was the only country to exceed disbursement of its original GEF budget, following UNEP approval of a budget adjustment as part of the project extension based on strong performance up to that time, as well as savings made elsewhere;
- A markedly quick start by Russia, but this becoming bogged down thereafter with a significant dip around the mid-term in 2006 before increasing sharply to be well above budget after changes to the NCU during 2007-2009;
- A slow start by Iran but good progress thereafter, yet curiously also with a mid-term dip before significantly elevated levels of disbursement from there onwards; and
- A slow start by China but only because of the absurdly optimistic one million dollar budget for 2003 followed by steady progress thereafter (but also note that disbursement levels were 2-5 times higher than the other countries in most years), again with a mid-term dip.

The dip in spending on country activities in 2006 is curious. Figure 5 shows the total disbursements of GEF funds for all four countries by year (i.e. excluding all project management costs) and illustrates that the dip is some US\$ 400,000 below a projected interim figure (dotted line). Although not registered in Kazakhstan, which makes it even harder to explain, the TE wonders if this dip could be due to significant attention being diverted to the mid-term review – a very large undertaking for this Project involving large workshops of

project participants in each country^{51,52}. The minutes of Steering Committee Meeting held in Moscow in September 2006 make reference to the process as being “*time consuming*” (point H6), so this would seem a possibility. It is notable that the management costs of the RCU do not show such a dip, which would also be consistent with this explanation since the review is itself a project management exercise. If this explanation is correct, then the TE draws attention to the possibility that such large-scale mid-term reviews may have significant hidden costs in terms of interrupting a project’s progress; the more so when one considers the likely associated dip in the disbursement of co-financing which cannot be measured here through lack of data. The TE is not questioning the need for, or the importance of, or the benefits that accrue from, any scale of mid-term review, and the benefits of the MTR to this Project are self-evident and unanimously voiced. However, large-scale reviews, such as undertaken here, may have costs associated with them through disruption of progress that good planning in future projects could help alleviate. It is also worth noting that for the SCWP, UNEP offered to skip the semi-annual progress report for the one time, and instead work with the MTR country reports, given the largely similar contents, but the ICF management preferred to still provide the SAR on top of the MTR reporting to keep to formally agreed schedules.

TABLE 14: TOTAL DISBURSEMENT OF GEF FUNDS (US\$) BY COUNTRY BY YEAR AGAINST BUDGET AS PER PROJECT DOCUMENT

	2003			2004			2005			2006		
	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%
China	1,035,900	135,558	13.1	569,030	686,780	120.7	529,450	705,037	133.2	794,980	482,295	60.7
Iran	221,285	-	0.0	186,502	120,939	64.8	85,562	85,466	99.9	331,217	162,553	49.1
Kazakstan	170,656	817	0.5	197,706	13,245	6.7	131,025	159,783	121.9	208,515	227,947	109.3
Russia	244,595	77,552	31.7	292,115	132,118	45.2	287,735	183,276	63.7	335,820	101,062	30.1
RCU	280,037	219,354	78.3	347,107	298,436	86.0	305,603	306,909	100.4	310,860	310,062	99.7
Total	1,952,473	433,281	22.2	1,592,460	1,251,518	78.6	1,339,375	1,440,472	107.5	794,980	482,295	60.7

TABLE 14 CONT.

	2007			2008			2009			Total		
	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%
China	435,850	574,890	131.9	440,530	759,732	172.5	194,260	416,740	214.5	4,000,000	3,761,033	94.0
Iran	90,300	242,500	268.5	69,700	151,196	216.9	15,434	191,685	1,242.0	1,000,000	954,338	95.4
Kazakstan	137,758	247,487	179.7	129,931	285,229	219.5	24,409	171,475	702.5	1,000,000	1,105,982	110.6
Russia	378,290	539,634	142.7	369,230	515,557	139.6	92,215	211,103	228.9	2,000,000	1,760,302	88.0
RCU	349,193	348,631	99.8	307,329	333,201	108.4	99,870	459,772	460.4	2,000,000	2,276,366	113.8
Total	1,391,391	1,953,142	140.4	1,316,720	2,044,915	155.3	426,188	1,450,775	340.4	10,000,000	9,858,021	98.6

SOURCE: ICF.

⁵¹ **RCU comment:** *There was a decrease in country spending associated with the time spent on MTR responsibilities. The countries were aware of this and concerned about the delays in technical activities associated with this important review.*

⁵² **UNEP comment:** *I do not think this proves anything as the project often had dips in expenditures due to other reasons such as delayed delivery on consultancies, etc.*

FIGURE 4: CUMULATIVE DISBURSEMENT OF GEF FUNDS (US\$) BY COUNTRY BY YEAR AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BUDGET IN PROJECT DOCUMENT

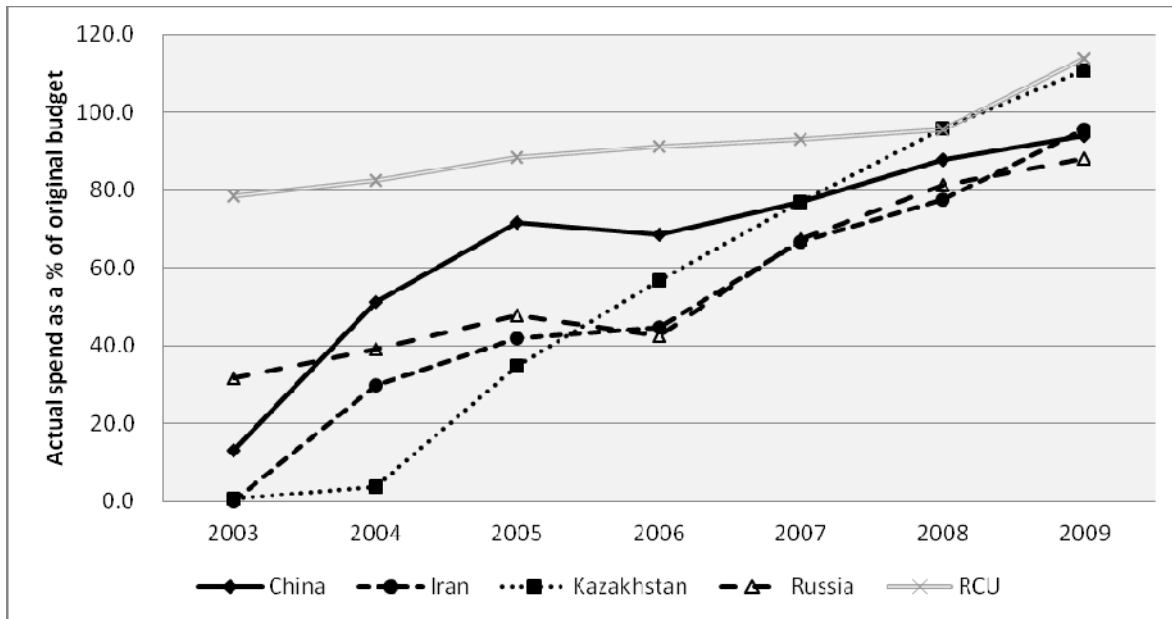
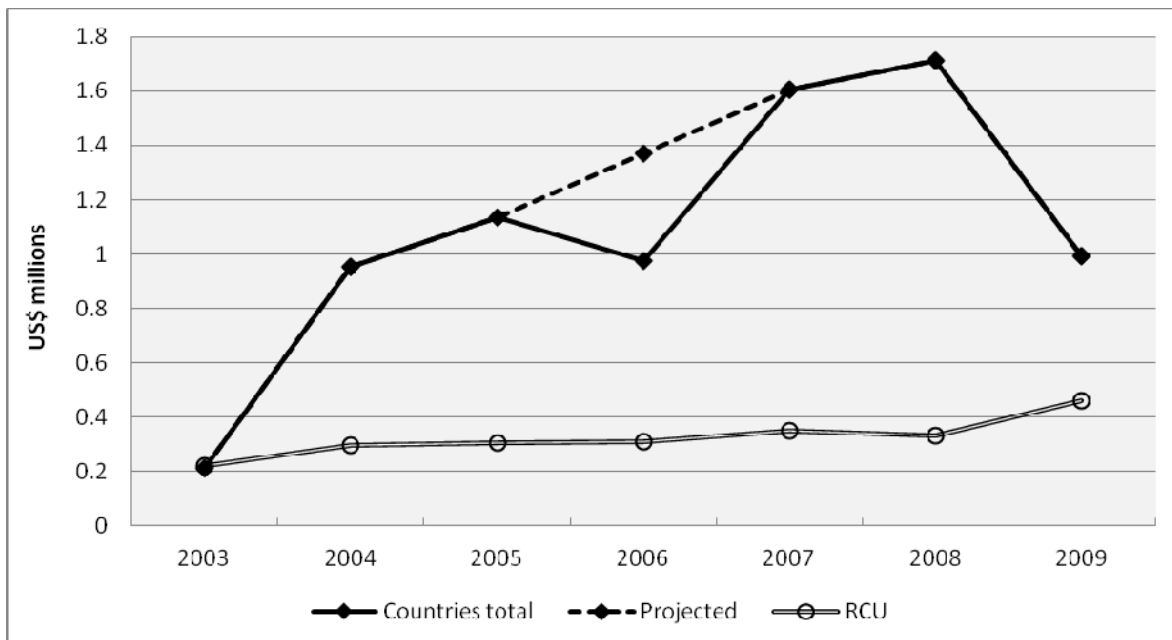


FIGURE 5: TOTAL COUNTRIES' ANNUAL DISBURSEMENT OF GEF FUNDS AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT COSTS



82. Throughout, the RCU has exhibited excellent financial planning and management skills in dealing with a complex Project both in terms of the array of activities undertaken and the large number of donors involved. At all times, the PSC has been kept abreast of the Project's progress though outstanding reporting and this has allowed the necessary budget revisions to be made on a sound basis. Similarly, the link between the RCU, UNEP and the NCUs has been as efficient as UN procedures would allow (see paragraphs 84-85) in ensuring that budget replenishments have been timely, but there have been inherent procedural delays.

83. Unfortunately, there has been one marked exception to the excellent financial planning and reporting exhibited by the Project, and this has been from the Russian NCU. During the first phase, this NCU displayed not so much incompetence but a cavalier disregard for standard management operating procedures and an attitude described by one senior actor as "*objecting to management oversight*". Payments were made

to consultants for work that was never completed; payments were made for which no records were kept; reporting was chronically late and inaccurate. Eventually, after two changes of management, things improved but only after almost a year of work, and much costly travel between Moscow and Salekhard where the West Siberian Coordination Unit had been based, was all paperwork put in order and all accounts bar one reconciled satisfactorily. However, by then UNEP had made a decision not to allow further use of GEF funds in western Siberia, and what activities continued there were carried out solely with co-financing. The one exception to satisfactory reconciliation related to a sub-contract let to the Association of Ecological Education and Programmes for US\$ 148,410 for a variety of services including the development of national training and education and awareness strategies. The MTR notes that the former:

“were performed adequately, but progress on the development of the strategies was negligible⁵³”.

Moves were subsequently made by the RCU to recover the outstanding monies, about US\$ 25,209, but it was found that the person responsible had moved to the Mediterranean and that legal advice suggested that the costs associated with recovering the money would far exceed its value. The ICF paid these funds back to UNEP during the final reconciliation. It should be stressed that despite these problems, the Yakutian Coordination Unit worked effectively throughout.

Financial planning and management has been extremely effective throughout and the Project has displayed great ability in obtaining additional co-financing to that originally pledged. Accounting and reporting has been thorough and of the highest order, enabling sound decision-making to be made, hence financial planning has been evaluated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

84. There are, however, two issues regarding financial planning and management that require discussion. First is the perceived need for separate reporting. The capacity-related difficulties of the Russian NCU but perhaps more importantly its reluctance to keep to international project accounting and reporting procedures, especially in the first half of the Project, led to chronic late reporting to the RCU and to UNEP withholding funding from all countries until the combined report was completed and formally approved. This issue was raised with the TE independently by national- and site-based management in China, Iran, and Kazakhstan, where the interruptions to the cash flow were seen to have negatively impacted pre-planned surveys and breached the delivery of promises to local people thereby affecting trust which took a significant period to mend. The MTR also noted it formerly thus:

“The failure of the UN system to allow the International Implementing Agency (ICF/RCU) to submit separate quarterly budgets and work plans for each of the four implementing countries (as opposed to a combined report that is often delayed by one or more of the four countries) is seen as a major problem by the [Chinese] Government Executing Agency.”

However, this viewpoint of blaming the Russian NCU and UNEP’s system overlooks the fact that all the NCUs were slow at processing their country work plans and revisions at various times which also resulted in such late reporting. It also overlooks the fact that this was an international project where added value was being conferred through the synchronisation of joint activities across the four countries (e.g. training, surveys); the main mechanism for which was the submission of combined progress reports enabling combined cash advance authorisations. There appears to have been a lack of understanding of this at all levels within all countries, which again suggests inadequate communication of the need for basic procedures at the outset (see paragraph 95), perhaps in part due to events necessitating individual inception workshops rather than a single international one (see paragraph 20). While UNEP appear to have acknowledged the scale of the problem with the Russian NCU by occasionally authorising payment to the three other countries without the proper reports from Russia, most actors now consider that the ICF/UNEP should probably have acted sooner and perhaps more radically than they did to solve the problem, with suggestions including the exclusion of Russia from the Project altogether, or running activities in Russia solely on co-finance with its own reporting schedule, such as was actually the case during the last year of the Project.

85. The second issue is that of the timing of cash advance payments against quarterly expense reports. As above, this was raised during the TE by all NCUs, and during the MTR thus:

⁵³ **RCU comment:** *This was in large part due to the NCU not providing adequate oversight in reviewing/approving TOR or other documents prepared by the Association for Ecological Education Programmes.*

“... there were significant delays and problems with the disbursement of quarterly cash advances ... Delays were apparent both with respect to cash advances from RCU reaching the NCU and consequently the flow of funds from the NPU to the PSOs [Project Site Offices]. Consistently, and at all levels, throughout the MTR process this fact was highlighted as a **major concern** and a major factor holding up effective project implementation⁵⁴.”

Key to this problem appears to be linking the release of monies for the forthcoming quarter on the basis of a budget forecast to the report on monies spent against activities undertaken in the previous quarter. Even when things were running smoothly, the time needed to collect the previous quarter’s information from all of the Project sites, compile a report and budget, and submit them to the RCU left no time for the UN’s procedures and approval process that reportedly took six weeks between the NCU submitting their cash advance statement to the RCU and the eventual submission into the RCU-SCWP account. To that, time needed to be added subsequently for the actual bank transfer to occur, e.g. the China NCU reported that a month would elapse between money being transferred from ICF’s American bank account before its arrival in a local bank account and, in some cases, another month for the correct approvals to be obtained enabling its exchange from US dollars into local currency (e.g. China). While the TE takes note of the MTR’s suggestions for better planning by the NCUs over their budgetary requirements and better understanding and predicting of delays, it is clear that asking such things of project managers that a) have no training in such matters, b) are already overloaded with technical and other administrative requirements, and c) who are all undertaking projects of this nature for the first time, is never going to work effectively. While the TE fully concurs with UNEP’s need to control funds so as to ensure these are spent correctly, the TE believes that with just a little more latitude the system could be made to work in everyone’s favour. The TE recommends that UNEP decouples the release of funds requested in the next quarter’s cash advance statement from the previous quarter’s spending report but links it instead to the quarter-before-last⁵⁵. To illustrate: currently, release of funds for Quarter 2 (Q2) is linked to the approval of the spending report for Q1 – delays are inevitable; change this so that release of funds for Q3 is linked to the approval of the spending report for Q1 giving an extra three month’s leeway in the system for all required procedures to be accomplished in a practical timescale and allow the project to run at full speed unless there really is a management problem. Although this entails a slight increase in the risk of UNEP suffering from intentional or unintentional financial mismanagement by the project, the result is a system which itself has factored in the inherent delays rather than trying to get inexperienced project managers to do so (badly).

#16

Lesson learned: The time between reporting on spending and the release of future funds is too short to facilitate uninterrupted cash flow.

Cost-effectiveness

86. The UNEP Evaluation Office’s criteria of “*efficiency*” really applies solely to cost-effectiveness (see TOR in Annex I) hence the rather ambiguous term “*efficiency*”, which could apply to efficiency in terms of time, energy-use or even carbon footprint, has been replaced in this evaluation with the more precise term “*cost-effectiveness*”.

87. Overall, the Project appears to have been extremely cost-effective since it has produced almost all of its planned deliverables within its original GEF budget, and has delivered additional benefits through effective co-financing. Of particular note are the project management costs. First, the total spent amounted to just 72% of that originally budgeted indicating significant real efficiencies; and second, that reduction from the original budget of US\$ 6.22 million, which amounted to 26.9% of the originally budgeted expenditure (23.1 million) (see Table 12), actually became just 13.8% of the total (i.e. US\$ 4.51 million out of an increased total of US\$ 32.7 million) – that is under half of its originally planned proportion, a quite exceptional performance. As a comparison, the WOW Project spent much less on the management of its implementation, a miserly US\$ 1.94 million but out of a significantly smaller total of just US\$ 12.3 million – that is 15.7% of the total. However, this must be set in context. The management costs of the WOW Project were seen as top-heavy, accounting for almost one-third of its GEF funding (US\$ 1,935,250 of US\$

⁵⁴ **UNEP comment:** It can be seen in the financial records that ICF and countries often had adequate cash at hand to buffer delays (often caused by themselves). In fact CAS included a ‘top-up’ of additional cash flow to establish a temporary buffer of funds. Also, Kazakhstan started the project late. The whole project did not have to wait for it and Russia had financial issues and funds were frozen. The freeze was not for all project countries.

⁵⁵ **UNEP comment:** Maybe a good suggestion.

6,000,000 = 32.25%) yet in this Project they account for 42.32% of the GEF grant (US\$ 4,172,273 of US\$ 9,858,022); the difference clearly lies in the effectiveness of the SCWP in generating and delivering large amounts of co-financing, something made considerably easier by China's booming economy and the ability and willingness of its Government to contribute generously. In comparison with WOW's complex and cumbersome management structure, comprising a PCU, plus management teams in the two lead contractors, plus regional centres and then project management teams at each of the demonstration sites, as well as regional training boards, the management structure of this project was elegant and streamlined – a central regional coordination unit, a national coordination unit in each country with two (sub-)regional units in Russia, and local site coordinators which for the most part used existing government structures. This in turn raises a lesson for flyway-level projects – having several sites in each country makes managing a project more cost-effective than having only one site in each of many countries. However, this may be possible only for large countries, something that favours Asia over the Africa-Eurasia flyway that WOW worked within.

#4	Lesson learned: Having several sites in each country makes managing a project more cost-effective than having only one site in each of many countries.
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88. All levels of the Project have appeared to have taken cost-effectiveness very seriously, looking to get the best results for the money spent. An example from the RCU is that there was a policy of intent to use national consultants in place of international consultants wherever this proved to be possible, partly to help build local capacity but partly to maximise their effect by saving money. At the NCU level, one event is very revealing about the desire to make the Project's money work as hard as possible. Apparently at Poyang Lake, China, the original budget to provide vehicles to assist those involved in the Project was based on five or six large, foreign-built, four by fours. When the China NCU reported against this budget early in the Project, they had spent the amount budgeted but had bought 15 smaller, Chinese-made four-wheel drive vehicles – one for each county around Poyang Lake so that the Project would have wider involvement and be more effective! This did create problems with UNEP – the NCU was still inexperienced at that time and had not understood that it needed permission to change the specification prior to procuring items, but eventually, and wisely, the issue was resolved ... and there was wider involvement of the counties as a direct result. Finally, the Project has resulted in millions of US\$ being leveraged in China as catalytic financing for supplying water to the wetland reserves in the NE, and for increased levels of capital and operational costs associated with management plans. The total value cannot be calculated. For water supplies, it amounts to US\$ 625,000 per year for Zhalong NNR; US\$ 312,500 per year for Momoge NNR; and for Xianghai NNR an unknown amount; while US\$ 938,000 has been provided to Keerqin NNR for a programme of wetland restoration. Additionally, large sums have been provided by the SFA for management (see paragraph 36) but it is uncertain how much of this money provided is truly catalytic finance as leveraged by the Project, and how much was in the Chinese Government's budget independently.

89. Without a doubt, the Project has fulfilled the concept of incremental cost since without it there would have been neither the framework nor the funds available for a flyway-scale approach to have been undertaken. While it has not quite managed to fulfil everything it set out to do, it has achieved a great deal and captured a lot of experience that will be of use to follow-on projects. Given that like the WOW Project, it was completely innovative, it had nothing on which to build and few lessons to take on board. Nonetheless, it has built on existing scientific and technical information to achieve its aims while developing much new scientific information in turn. The ROtI analysis (table 6) shows a strong likelihood of most outcomes achieving their impacts and the sustainability of these appears to be very high (table 15) – both issues increasing the effectiveness of the money spent. There is one area, however, where UNEP appears to be at a comparative disadvantage in terms of cost-effectiveness, and that is in establishing adequate funding modalities in countries where risks exist in passing monies directly to government institutions. In this Project, funds were able to be routed directly from the ICF to the SFA in China and the FHC in Kazakhstan with the appropriate approvals from UNEP, but in Iran and Russia this was not deemed prudent. In both these cases, funds were passed through accounts held by the relevant UNDP country offices which in effect acted as a bank and made an administrative charge for each transaction – perhaps a necessity but not a particularly cost-effective mechanism. Nonetheless, it is also worth noting that this was undertaken only where there was no more cost-effective option.

Project management costs were trimmed to 67% of those originally budgeted, and the RCU and NCUs have worked with cost-effectiveness amongst their priorities, with actions to make the money work hard evident. That, combined with significant levels of catalytic financing leveraged by the Project's activities, means the overall cost-effectiveness of the Project has been extremely high, hence it is evaluated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

90. Finally, and possibly something of a side-issue, one issue that the TE is often critical about is that of in-kind co-financing, not least because it is rarely transparent, but in the case of the SCWP it is possible that it has worked effectively. The main criticism levied at in-kind contributions is that they are supposed to be undertakings by Governments and other agencies to commit paid staff full- or part-time to project activities and for their regular posts to be temporarily filled by other personnel – that cost being born as the contribution. However, this rarely seems to occur. Instead of working the hours allocated on the project *in lieu* of other work for which the in-kind contribution is assessed, all too frequently civil servants (and government agencies are the main culprits of this) are asked to undertake project activities as additions to their regular jobs for the same pay, leading to stress, resentment, poor work, and inadequate time being committed to the job at hand, and resulting in the project suffering through poor delivery, or simply other partners of the project team having to cover for this work and bearing the resultant (unaccounted for) cost. In the case of the SCWP, not a single person interviewed indicated any issues over having to double up work commitments or complained about this as an issue in others, which is curious since workloads outside of the Project were frequently reported as being problematic and interfering with Project delivery. This was certainly the case amongst the NCUs in the early part of the Project, but the problem was still being reported for site staff in the final Semi-Annual Report, e.g. (China – 8.1.1 (p.120)):

“Project staff workloads are found not reasonably allocated and some personal capability overestimated. Some staff has too much work in addition to SCWP project with the result that a lot of project activities could not be completed within the time schedule and identified targets.”

Perhaps this dichotomy is in part due to the high proportion of Project staff working for NGOs, where in-kind financing can usually be considered effective largely due to the drive and commitment of the staff who work for such organisations in ensuring that all of the demands placed upon them are met (note the TE said “effective” not “fair”), but it also appears in part due to similar levels of commitment found in the numerous government scientists involved in this Project. One other reason may be because a significant proportion of the in-kind co-financing appears to have been contributed through the staff of the many protected areas involved and their associated coordinating offices. For many such staff, their individual capacity was self-recognised as being low and the resources allocated to them to do their job inadequate, thereby making many largely under-employed. This big international project, the first to involve most of them, offered them an opportunity to learn much while filling their days with interest, so that even if in rare cases they did have to undertake project activities as additions to their regular jobs for the same pay, the Project came first and no complaints were received. The TE remains unconvinced even by his own arguments, and while the lack of verbal complaint over the in-kind co-financing system may suggest an uncommon success for it, the written words appear to tell a different story. The TE remains fiercely critical of the concept since he finds it to be rarely effective and believes strongly that it should not be attributed equal value to cash financing, even if in this case it may be possible to report that it appears to have worked as intended.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

M&E design was of a standard commensurate with the design period, and despite the lack of a defined budget allocation, adequate funds have enabled extensive M&E activities throughout. Outstanding progress monitoring through reporting and strong internal activity monitoring by the RCU has not been matched by internal activity or impact monitoring by the NCU where neither has been fed-back into decision-making. Strong responses to the mid-term review and the risk assessments have helped offset this to a large degree, hence the overall rating for monitoring and evaluation has been evaluated as Satisfactory.

M&E Design

91. The Project design did not contain any specific monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan but the Project Document did include a specific section entitled “*Monitoring, Evaluation and Dissemination*” which covered the need and various steps for M&E, including some allocation of responsibilities, commensurate with the

design requirements of the time (the early 2000s) and prior to GEF introducing its improved M&E policy in 2006. Statements were included about progress monitoring being undertaken in accordance with UNEP's internal requirements, and of including an external mid-term review (note not evaluation) as well as this terminal evaluation. However, in common with most GEF-3 projects, it did not include any specific budget allocation for M&E; the TE assumes in the absence of a specific budget line that it must have been included in the general budget for project management and, indeed, since M&E is included within the Terms of Reference for the Project Director, Operations Manager, International Technical Advisor, and National Project Directors in the Project Document, part of these salaries would have been allocated for M&E, while it is understood that field surveys (e.g. on birds) were an integral part of the national budgets even if not specified as being for M&E. Extensive indicators were included for what at the time were termed outputs, not only for the main Project logframe but also for each of the national logframes – but see also paragraph 15. In almost all cases, these could be considered both SMART⁵⁶ and results-oriented. While most were quantitative, no baseline figures were included in the logframe, but again that was the norm at the time of the design. The baseline situation was determined for most of these at most sites, relatively early in the Project.

The design of M&E was of a standard commensurate with the design period, and while no plan as such was included, the Project Document covered all the various M&E steps including the allocation of responsibilities. The absence of a clearly defined budget allocation in the design is a concern, but it appears to have been included within other categories, hence monitoring and evaluation design has been evaluated as Satisfactory.

Budgeting and Funding for M&E

92. As indicated above, no specific budget was allocated to M&E within the Project's design. Nonetheless, the RCU and NCUs (probably under the former's and UNEP's direction) have ensured that funding has been made available to cover a considerable amount of M&E work. This has included funds for the inception workshop and the Project completion workshops, while reallocations were made to provide considerable resources to be allotted to the Mid-term Review (see paragraph 97) for the four national reviews. Much time and money has also been spent on monitoring work to track the various logframe indicators, as each of the PIRs makes clear. Furthermore, the Project has worked hard at developing or expanding scientific monitoring systems (e.g. see paragraph 50), and while these are specific outputs within the Project, the results have been used in the M&E of the Project itself. There is no indication that any M&E required for project management purposes has not been undertaken, or even curtailed, because of a shortage of funding, since travel budgets for the International Project Director, the ITA, and the Operations Manager were mostly for M&E missions to the countries. Sufficient funding was also set aside for this Terminal Evaluation when the Project's extension was planned.

The lack of an allocated budget for M&E within the project has to be viewed as unsatisfactory, but this has been taken into account under M&E "design" and has not been found to have affected M&E implementation in any way. M&E activities have been extensive and all have been fully-funded throughout, hence budgeting and funding for monitoring and evaluation has been evaluated as Satisfactory.

M&E Implementation

93. Monitoring and evaluation of Project activities have been undertaken in varying detail at three levels:
- i. Progress monitoring
 - ii. Internal activity monitoring
 - iii. Impact monitoring

94. Progress monitoring has been very good and has been made through consolidated progress reports, also referred to as Semi-annual Reports (SAR), to the Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination UNEP, Nairobi. The UNEP Task Manager in Bangkok and the RCU agreed at the outset that given the scale of the Project, quarterly reporting (as per the Project Document) was too onerous and semi-annual reports would be sufficient. A standard format was adopted, but midway through the Project, a modified version was introduced that provided more relevant information and analysis of Project progress and impact, as well

⁵⁶ Specific; Measurable; Achievable and attributable; Relevant and realistic; Time-bound, timely, trackable and targeted.

as ease of overview thereby benefitting Project oversight. Even so, each still comfortably exceeded 100 pages. The quality of these reports is of the highest order – they are comprehensive, well-structured, well-written and accessible, highly detailed and informative, and contain excellent concise executive summaries complete with quantitative estimates of progress, and tabulated information on key issues containing proposed action, deadline, and allocated responsibilities. Unusually but commendably, there is a section entitled “*Project Impact - Monitoring of Objectives and Outputs*” which provides a significant level of detail on the monitoring work undertaken by each country against the Development and Intermediate Objective indicators. The Development Objective indicators were still reported on in the text, even though they had been omitted from the Logframe Tracking Form that accompanied the PIRs (see paragraph 28). There is throughout the Project team a tendency to “talk-up” its achievements (and possibly progress) which is understandable if not always desirable. However, this is common to almost all projects and the TE finds that largely the SARs have been credible and pragmatic. Quarterly financial reports were prepared and submitted with workplans and budgets for the next quarter. The information contained is comprehensive and is analysed by budget line and includes details of expenditure by Quarter, cumulative for year and remaining balance, as well as full details of equipment, location, repairs and write-offs.

95. However, it is pertinent to raise the issue that the NCUs found the reporting process to be seriously “burdensome” and “too heavy”, with one NCU stating that at times they “spent 20% of energy in the field and 80% reporting”. While the latter is undoubtedly an exaggeration of the truth, the comment is worth including since it reflects the generally-held perspective of the national staff in all four countries. UNEP has suggested that perhaps some NCU staff had problems with the very principle of reporting or may have been extremely inefficient, and consider that such type of reports should never take more than one week’s work over a six-month period. However, the staff themselves point out that while bi-annual reporting was considered as “maybe OK for an English-language country”, the amount of material that was required for each, most of which had to be translated, was described as “energy-sapping”. In a comment on the draft of this report, UNEP point out that:

“The problem was that ICF had not established more streamlined/partial reporting formats with NEAs (e.g. logframe and progress tables only), which would be combined to form the SA Progress Reports. UNEP would have expected ICF to have taken this initiative as an internal measure, as this is entirely out of sight of UNEP as IA.”

The TE finds a measure of agreement with this, since he was shown multiple iterations of drafts of the internal national reports, suggesting that perhaps ICF’s requirements could have simplified, although to be completely fair to the RCU, in many cases the information requested was simply not supplied adequately by the NCUs. As ICF also commented on the draft:

“Another factor that caused delays was the need to work iteratively with the countries to build their capacity to write professional reports. The RCU focused on information needs and conciseness and allowed flexibility in English language as long as the meaning was clear.”

Nonetheless, a common theme of the NCU’s was that not only was it seen as just a “bureaucratic process” but that, crucially, almost none of the NCUs understood why the material was requested or “*what was it used for?*” None understood its value as a project planning tool. This is particularly important when one considers the low initial capacity of most of the NPMs, as one said “*although we came to recognise it was a good mechanism for the RCU to monitor the Project, at first we didn’t know how to do these reports*”. The TE recommends that UNEP should address this issue at the start of every Project⁵⁷, and perhaps provide a written reminder of the use to which it is put at the time it commences the process semi-annually⁵⁸. In addition, even after the simplification of the SAR’s structure in response to the NCU’s concerns, the fully-synthesised format remained cumbersome, involving a great deal of time-consuming cutting-and-pasting by the RCU because it received separate country reports, while UNEP required the information by subject. There was a clear dichotomy of views between the RCU and UNEP over this format, the former indicating that a country-based format for the consolidated report would improve efficiency while UNEP believed that

⁵⁷ **RCU comment:** *I agree with this recommendation. I would like to note that country visits and PSC meetings were devoted to developing the understanding of the need for and value of reporting, and to streamline the process. However, it was hard to achieve buy in. Tangible examples of how the information is used might help. **UNEP response:** this shows we had not the right selected staff on the NCU at project inception. I have seen this sometimes where lead managers question having to report on GEF expenditures and activities. Sorry this is not something UNEP specific.*

⁵⁸ Long **UNEP comment** and response – reproduced in Annex XI.

fully synthesised reports strengthened the regional integration of the project as well as providing a clearer overview. There is apparently no clear solution, but the TE wonders if this issue is in fact connected to that immediately above, in that the amount of detail contained in the SARs was very great, and the formatting not conducive to easy access. As UNEP suggest, a more streamlined approach would undoubtedly have helped, for there is a notable difference between the style used by the SCWP and used by the WOW Project for its reports – the latter being much less dense, clearer, and better management-oriented, while providing cross-references to more detailed material for those interested.

#17	Lesson learned: Translation is a major issue for management.
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#18	Lesson learned: Everyone needs to have an understanding of the value of reporting.
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96. The major findings and observations of all these reports are given in an annual report covering the period July to June, the Project Implementation Report (PIR), which is submitted to UNEP-GEF for review and official comments, followed by final submission to GEF. The PIRs are generally informative, and the TE believes the ratings given were generally realistic. Project risk assessment was updated annually as part of the PIR by the RCU and the UNEP Task Manager. Again, the identification and rating of risks was generally realistic but the Task Manager's perceptions of risk were occasionally higher, and more realistic, than those of the Project Director, e.g. external risks in PIRs 2007 and 2009. Most risks were ranked Low or Medium, but those for Russia were often separated out and frequently assessed as Substantial, or once in 2007 for "Management Structure" as High (the riskiest category). The general levels of frustration and concern over the situation in Russia in 2007 are also apparent from five other risks identified as Substantial, namely Workflow, Financial Management, Reporting, Political influences, and Capacity issues, and is perhaps best summed up by the Task Manager's comment against the latter:

"R[ussian] F[ederation] needs a miracle solution or else we have to close the program in the country!"

The adaptive response to the risk assessments has been strong in all cases, even if in some instances these responses have taken time to commence and the desired effects have taken yet more time to materialise.

97. A Mid-term Review (MTR) was undertaken between April and July 2006 and consisted of each National Executing Agency and National Coordination Unit drafting a Country MTR Report, followed by a mission involving site visits and stakeholder consultations undertaken by an International and a National consultant to review progress and plans. Each mission culminated in a workshop where the Country MTR Reports were presented and discussed and work plans for Phase 2 adjusted accordingly. A first draft of the Consolidated Mid-Term Review Report was disseminated amongst the NCUs and stakeholders in August 2006 with a revised version presented to SCM5 in Moscow in September 2006. The final report is dated February 2007. The MTR process was described by several persons as "very useful", one making the observation that it was "good to pause". The national workshops were considered to be very important in engaging all the right people and as another interviewee said "[It] helped us in looking at ourselves". In reassessing the goals of the Project, its major single finding was to clearly show that the Project was over-extended and recommended a reduction in the overall scale of activities. Since much new information had come to light during the first phase of the Project, this process provided an opportunity to respond to emerging conditions and by common consent increased the effectiveness of Phase 2. All the recommendations contained in the MTR were implemented to at least some degree. While clearly a very successful process, interviewees did indicate that it was very time-consuming; how time-consuming and what the hidden effects of this were may be judged from the financial figures (see Figure 5 and paragraph 81). The TE does wonder whether the net benefits of a review of this depth really do outweigh those of a less searching, but less disruptive, process undertaken by a more standard Mid-term Evaluation.

98. Almost uniquely in the TE's experience, the SCWP also had a formal system of quality assurance for technical reports. This varied from country to country, for example:

- China: the first draft of a technical report was submitted to a site level consultant for review, then to a related consultant of the Provincial Advisory Group for review, and finally to the NCU and a national level consultant before being returned for comments and corrections to be incorporated. If necessary,

the NCU would submit a version to related members of the NPAG, NPSC and/or RCU for further review.

- Russia: All technical reports were revised by the National Technical Manager and the Technical Advisor for Russia and Kazakhstan (within the RCU). In some cases the other experts and RCU members (e.g. the Siberian Flyway Coordinator) were involved in the review process.

but in Kazakhstan it involved the formal establishment of a Government Commission to assess the quality of all project technical reports and publications!

99. Internal activity monitoring undertaken by the RCU has been very thorough comprising a range of mechanisms that have been used together to keep abreast of the situation in all four countries and to respond quickly and effectively to areas of concern. These comprised many of the methods used to track progress but to use the results pro-actively to ensure activities were kept on track. They included preparation of the SARs and the quarterly work plans and budgets which enabled detailed pictures of the situations in each country to emerge at least every three months; regular visits by RCU members to the NCUs; and regular telecommunication contact. All country visits had agreed targets that included problems to be resolved, included performance evaluations of NCU staff, and provided coaching of staff on a range of subjects as necessary. Finances were often a major feature. At the PSC meetings, the RCU (with UNEP) introduced “*Help Sessions*” which were effectively one-on-one NCU to RCU/UNEP meetings where issues of concern in either direction could be aired in a constructive environment. It is reported that these were especially helpful. The introduction of a formal structure for NCU presentations at the PSC meetings also reportedly focussed minds sharply and identified areas of weakness to the benefit of all. In addition, the RCU spent much time and effort in developing the TORs for consultancy contracts and Statements of Work for subcontracts, with the ITA and the TAs for China and Kazakhstan/Russia drafting, reviewing, and revising them (often a number of times) before giving approval. These were monitored and enforced to variable effect by the NCUs. Despite a number of problems, this active review and support by both ICF and UNEP on contracting, consultant delivery, and appropriate procedures appears to have been largely effective in leading to some highly successful technical and institutional results⁵⁹.

100. Such monitoring at the NCU level, however, appears to have been adequate, but little more. Implementation has been guided in all cases by the Annual Work Plan and the quarterly plans submitted to release funds. Generally the NCU’s have been small enough not to require formalised communication or monitoring procedures; members being in almost daily contact. As indicated above (see paragraph 69) the RCU was in regular phone/skype and e-mail contact with the NCUs and made regular visits, usually twice or more per year. Similarly, the NCUs have been in regular contact by the same means with their offices at the Project sites, and similarly have made frequent visits to monitor progress. Much of the work was undertaken by national or local consultants, and for the most part these were on lump-sum contracts payable according to milestones defined by time and quality – failure to achieve either resulting in forfeiture of some part of the payment. By and large, this provided enough incentive for sound delivery, improving as the Project progressed. The use of long-term “advisors” payable on monthly basis supported by time-sheets, favoured by the Russian NCU in the early stages, was changed when the NCU team was changed. The same system was applied in Kazakhstan to an ornithological advisor on the recommendation of the RCU, but after two years the NPM decided that it was inefficient and all contracts became results-based. This use of consultants has reduced much of the need for complex activity monitoring. In China, the NCU had no formalised mechanism for working until the MTR, using Excel spreadsheets to keep vague track of progress on the activities at the various sites. This was leading to some problems which the MTR noted, so in direct response to the key requirement for:

“Improving the monitoring of the implementation process: implementation needs to be based around a cycle of “implementation-evaluation-revision” for site-based activities in particular.”

the NCU established a formal communication system involving monthly progress meetings of all NCU staff and developed a monthly report for approval of the NPD. These meetings were used to develop monthly work plans from the Annual Work Plans including cash advance statements. The NCU also converted to using project management software (Microsoft Project), ironically through the recommendation of the Russian NCU! It is not known by the TE whether the Russian NCU actually used this system themselves, but assumes not; although conflicting information comes from the RCU which indicates that Microsoft

⁵⁹ **UNEP comment:** *Yes, this is a road to follow for all but in the interest of quality and sustainability so seldom achieved in other GEF projects or with other GEF IA projects!. Thanks ICF!*

Project was initially a requirement for all NCUs but that differences in the versions and languages available meant that, despite some considerable training, most NCUs did not use it⁶⁰. It appears that the format of the workplans was easier to translate into an Excel spreadsheet⁶¹. The TE could find no evidence to suggest that the considerable work undertaken in monitoring the impact indicators was ever used by any of the NCUs to influence in any way the considerable adaptive management that the Project has practiced. As often seems the case, the adaptive management of the Project has been influenced to a much greater extent by external variables and overcoming the problems (or taking opportunities) that these have presented. Independent financial audits were undertaken annually by national and ICF auditors and recommendations made were implemented. The Project as a whole has also featured on occasion in UNEP's regional annual audit when it has been selected for inclusion on a random basis.

101. As with most projects, impact monitoring has been the least well developed, but to give credit, most of the NCUs were aware of the idea and had attempted to apply it in some shape or form. In some cases, some of the logframe indicators provided excellent information on impact, e.g. the PATT scores from the Project sites. In Kazakhstan, questionnaires relating to awareness were undertaken where a survey of people living around Naurzum indicated that as a baseline, just 2% of those questioned knew about the reserve, its importance, and the presence of Siberian Cranes. This had become 100% by the end of the Project. Questionnaires were also circulated at the training-of-trainers workshops run to introduce the education material produced (see paragraph 53), but as is often the case these appeared to concentrate on obtaining feedback about the quality of the teaching and relevance of the materials rather than on obtaining any indication about whether the material taught had been absorbed. In China, questionnaires were run before and after most training courses and while these covered similar material to Kazakhstan, i.e. general teaching style of trainer, relevance of materials, if repeated what else should be included; they did include some questions on what the attendees learned. Importantly, and something rarely seen by the TE, they tried to re-contact the attendees six months later to repeat the questionnaires, although predictably found it harder to obtain responses. Socio-economic surveys were also made at most of the villages where alternative livelihood interventions were made, and these plus local people's estimates of gross income provided some indication of impact, but no achievement targets were set prior to activities commencing and as with the internal activity monitoring above (paragraph 100), the TE could find no evidence that any material so obtained by any NCU was used to feedback into the management and decision-making of the Project itself.

102. Of course the area of monitoring where the Project excelled was in counting birds, and while development of this was a prescribed activity (see paragraph 50) there is an issue prevalent in biodiversity projects (and especially those concerned with birds), in that impact monitoring, if it does occur, almost exclusively focuses on bird counting, the rationale being that if numbers are climbing then the project is having a beneficial impact. While superficially this may be the case, of course it does not take account of natural variations in breeding and survival nor of factors such as the project maybe simply attracting birds from nearby, but somewhat less attractive, sites. In this Project, for the Siberian Crane alone, this is probably not the case; the species inhabiting very few but well-studied sites and interventions at these by this Project appear to have had significantly beneficial effects. Nonetheless, for the other (globally important) species of waterbirds present at the sites, the natural variations probably still mask the direct effects of the Project's interventions. Perhaps the whole concept and rationale of impact monitoring tailored directly to the intervention being examined rather than general counting of birds needs to be explained and formalised – a job for the recommended Operations Manual (see paragraph 21) perhaps?

M&E implementation has been mixed, with excellent progress monitoring and strong internal activity monitoring by the RCU, but that this has been depreciated by less good internal activity monitoring by the NCUs and poor or absent impact monitoring, and importantly neither of the latter two being fed back to influence management decisions. Strong responses to the mid-term review and the risk assessments have helped offset this to a large degree, hence the implementation of monitoring and evaluation has been evaluated as Satisfactory.

⁶⁰ **RCU comment:** *MS Project was recommended by the RCU and UNEP and imposed across all NCUs through a Steering Committee decision with variable uptake as mentioned. It was in use for most of the project. The degree to which the higher level analytical features were used to monitor progress varied.*

⁶¹ **RCU comment:** *Reports were sometimes converted to Excel so they could be shared with others that did not have MS Project software.* **TE Response:** The TE assumes that these would be parties external to the Project given Steering Committee's decision in the previous comment/footnote.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

103. As can be seen from the foregoing part of the evaluation, the TE believes that this has been a well-conceived and well-implemented project that has achieved most of its stated aims. The aim of this section is to concentrate on some key cross-cutting issues. It is important that the reader keeps in mind that this section is not intended to show this Project in a poor light, rather to learn lessons.

RELEVANCE

104. The main concepts to be examined under relevance relate to the flyway approach, the use of a flagship species, the site-based approach, and relevance of the outputs and activities in relation to the threats to biodiversity.

Flyway Approach

105. Migratory birds and other animals require the use of multiple sites often thousands of kilometres apart to complete their annual life cycle. Such migratory systems play a fundamental part in many, if not all, of the world's biomes – the tundra, the boreal forests, the oceans. It would seem obvious that to achieve effective conservation of such systems a holistic approach is necessary, for as one interviewee noted, “*What is the point in conserving wetlands if the birds continue to be shot elsewhere or have their breeding habitat destroyed?*” Yet despite this, it took until GEF 3 before a project aimed at the conservation of a major migratory system was funded at the appropriate scale. The SCWP is that project – the first site-based flyway-scale project to be implemented by GEF; therefore highly innovative but perhaps more importantly, as this evaluation demonstrates, very successful. In fact, at the time of writing this evaluation, both the SCWP and the WOW Project (also flyway-scale) have been selected as being amongst the best 20 projects by the UNEP Division of GEF Coordination to showcase the work of UNEP in the first 20 years of the GEF⁶². The TE and most of the project partners interviewed believe very strongly that, complex and time-consuming as they are to design effectively, flyway-scale projects are an extremely important addition to the GEF repertoire; they are the most relevant approach to undertaking the conservation of migratory animals, principally birds, at the appropriate scale; and that given the paucity of international funding mechanisms available that enable a regional/global conservation approach, GEF resources should continue to be made available for them. Nationally-oriented approaches have a significant role, but the regional links that are so vital for migratory systems are then never, or poorly, made. An example of this would be the UNDP-GEF group of projects covering the Altai Sayan region in Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and Russia. Originally designed as a regional project, it was broken down into three national-based projects because the countries involved fell either side of an internal UNDP organisational boundary, and although each contained explicit components to make trans-boundary links, in reality these were only poorly addressed despite some transboundary cooperation and protected areas being established⁶³. It has been said time and time again that birds and animals do not recognise political boundaries, so given that intersectoral cooperation is a lynchpin of GEF's approach within a national context, it would seem natural that the regional cooperation necessary to conserve migratory systems would be strongly evident within GEF. Yet very few flyway-scale projects have been funded since the SCWP commenced, and under GEF 5 a current UNEP proposal for just a single flyway project⁶⁴ is struggling to overcome the constraints imposed by the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources. Given the success that the SCWP has achieved, the experience that both SCWP and WOW have generated, and the lessons that have been learned, the TE strongly recommends that the GEF consolidates, promotes, and expands flyway conservation efforts on a global scale by making available the necessary funds and mechanisms to facilitate this approach in GEF 6⁶⁵.

#1

Lesson learned: The GEF should consolidate, promote, and expand flyway conservation efforts on a global scale.

⁶² <http://www.unep.org/dgef/GEF20BestProjects/tabid/55715/Default.aspx>

⁶³ The TE feels qualified to comment having carried out the mid-term evaluation of the Kazakhstan project and the terminal evaluation in Mongolia.

⁶⁴ To improve Protected Areas Management Effectiveness and Enhance the Conservation of Migratory Species in Globally Significant Wetlands Located Along Major Flyways.

⁶⁵ **RCU comment:** *We strongly support this recommendation.*

Flagship Species

106. So what of the flagship species approach? This has long been a tenet of the conservation movement and the use of the Siberian Crane as a flagship species to conserve wetlands for other migratory birds appears to have provided another successful example. The basic concept of using a large, readily recognisable, charismatic species as an umbrella to conserve a much wider ecological community is not at issue – it works and is a highly relevant approach, e.g. an interviewee in Iran indicated that “*International projects bring added value by spotlighting certain species and public opinion becomes favourable, so the Government tends to react [positively]*”. What is worth looking at are a number of more subtle issues such as the degree of focus desirable on the flagship species within a project; the effects of a project’s name; and whether the choice of a flagship species should really include one that is wholly, or in part of its range, on the brink of extinction.

107. The TE finds that there is a dichotomy of views expressed between those that think the Project over-emphasised the Siberian Crane to the detriment of other species, and those that believe that the Project was a system-based one that simply used the Siberian Crane appropriately as a flagship. Interestingly, this dichotomy is split almost completely geographically between Iran and Kazakhstan in the former camp^{66,67}, and China and Russia (and the RCU) in the latter⁶⁸. In Kazakhstan, the view was expressed that “*The designers emphasised the Siberian Crane throughout ... Everything was concentrated on the Siberian Crane – monitoring, research, education. ... Other species were included but the conservation of all species should have been stressed. It should have been a system approach like the Wetland Project*”⁶⁹. In Iran, a member of the DoE commenting on negotiations with local people, noted that “*local people say “we are already protecting it [the Siberian Crane], so what more do you want us to do?” If we had focussed on a wider approach we would have been able to achieve more*”. Also in Iran, several people noted that there was a problem with the Project’s title, it being referred to widely as the “Siberian Crane Project” or just the “Crane Project” when in fact the emphasis should have been on the Siberian Crane Wetlands. Given that the official abbreviated title as given in the footer of this report is the “Siberian Crane Wetlands Project”, readers may wonder about the veracity of this point, but the TE understands that out on the frontline with the public and partners, the word “wetlands” appeared to have been dropped pretty much in all countries and the resultant emphasis was therefore on one species; a point acquiesced by one member of the RCU “*It was not intentional but became a reality*”. This does have repercussions as will be discussed shortly. Elsewhere, the reverse argument was prevalent – there was “*not too much focus on Siberian Cranes; the Project contributed to a system approach*” and “*it had to be habitat-based to engage people*” – but it was notable that these views tended to come from people for whom cranes were close to their heart; ICF, Russian scientists, Chinese reserve staff.

108. In the TE’s view the Siberian Crane did act as a good flagship species but, and he recognises that this will create controversy, believes that the emphasis was far too much on that species throughout⁷⁰, possibly to the detriment of others. As one of those involved in the design indicated, “*the design had to meet GEF requirements and it was approved because the Siberian Crane was being used as a flagship*”, which kind of gives the game away really in that if possible some people might have been happier if it had been a project just about the Siberian Crane⁷¹. In the TE’s opinion this came as close to a single-species project as GEF could ever allow, and yes, all the sites involved were important for other globally important species, and yes, other waterbirds were included but seemingly as tokens, admittedly important tokens, but tokens nonetheless in order to enable GEF to fund a project promoted under a single-species framework – the Siberian Crane MoU – championed by an NGO focussed on a single bird family. To provide a simple and unscientific

⁶⁶ **RCU comment:** *This may also be symptomatic of the national project managers’ / their divisions’ approaches to conservation.*

⁶⁷ **RCU comment:** *The NPM (Iran) and NPD (Kazakhstan) have both communicated concerns to the Project Director about problems with future support when the Siberian Crane is effectively gone.*

⁶⁸ **RCU comment:** *In China, we remember a comment made by the late Prof. Wang Qishan at one of the annual meetings where he said: “I came to the Siberian Crane GEF meeting, but I have not heard a single word of Siberian Crane yet”.*

⁶⁹ UNDP-GEF – Integrated Conservation of Globally Significant Migratory Bird Wetland Habitat: A Demonstration at Three Sites.

⁷⁰ **RCU comment:** *Agreed, and we should have picked up on this issue in Steering Committee and worked on a communications policy to correct it.*

⁷¹ Long **RCU comment** – reproduced in Annex XI.

illustration of this over-emphasis, the beautifully-produced Terminal Report *Safe Flyways*⁷² (subtitled *For the Siberian Crane*) contains a few photographs of other species, e.g. Red-breasted and Lesser White-fronted Goose and Ross's Gull, and has two tables (numbers 2 and 3 on pages 17-19) that list all of the globally important species that occur at the Project sites, but in the body of the text itself (excluding all captions, titles, tables etc.) these have the following number of explicit mentions: Red-crowned Crane (6); Hooded Crane (4); White-naped Crane (2); Demoiselle Crane (2 (both in one paragraph)); Eurasian Crane (2); Lesser White-fronted Goose (6 including a feature on page 8); Red-breasted Goose (3); Swan Goose (5); Tundra Swan⁷³ (3); Oriental Stork (3) ... and Siberian Crane 150! That's five references to Siberian Crane for every one reference to any of ten other species. Unscientific? Yes, but also highly indicative of the degree of emphasis found throughout the Project's activities and most, but not all, of its publications.

109. Which leads to the question, "OK, but why is this important?" Well, again in the TE's view it is not, at least in the east where the Siberian Crane is relatively plentiful. But on the western flyway, this was not the case. When the Project began there were about six Siberian Cranes that were still known about – by its end there was one. So by most people associated with the Project in Iran, and by many in Kazakhstan, despite much money and time and activities and effort, and because everything about the Project was focussed so closely on the Siberian Crane, the end result is seen as failure⁷⁴; there were six, now despite everything, there is only one. While this may be desperately unfair on all those involved in the Project, nonetheless it was a view they had garnered from others and expressed to the TE as such and, importantly, the TE confirmed first-hand from others. And it becomes important not just because of the perception of failure itself, but because of the repercussions. If the Project is perceived as having been a failure, or if there are no longer any Siberian Cranes present, then why should Government continue to support a site, or provide funds for a given suite of activities. While a case may be justified on wetland terms or because of the presence of other globally important species, the Project's focus on the Siberian Crane has inadvertently made the situation much, much harder. Had the emphasis been different, with the focus instead having been on the wetlands and the range of species present, and with the Siberian Crane used more to justify the choice of Project sites, then its subsequent continued decline (or extinction) would not have had such a negative effect. Flagship species are a relevant approach, but the experience here suggests that care should be exerted in their selection or use.

#3	Lesson learned: When selecting a flagship species for a project, care should be taken not to choose one too close to extirpation from the sites addressed, or if unavoidable then the project should ensure a wide focus ⁷⁵ .
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Site-based

110. The SCWP and the WOW Project were the first two projects to be undertaken at the flyway-scale under the auspices of the GEF. Conceived and designed at approximately the same time, the SCWP commenced implementation three years ahead of WOW and finished about one year ahead of it, although interestingly this terminal evaluation is taking place approximately one year after that of WOW's. The two projects kept in close communication throughout and even published a booklet on joint experiences and lessons learned (see paragraph 59). While they shared many similarities, their basic design concept was the complete opposite of each other and hence makes for an interesting comparison. The WOW Project is designed from regional-level to site-level, i.e. it designed a new interactive internet-based tool enabling rapid access to all available data on important wetland sites and waterbird species' populations within the Africa-Eurasia Flyway, and a modular-based training kit to form the basis for a training of trainers programme to raise the capacity of all of those involved with conservation of wetlands and waterbirds within the flyway, and complemented these with a number of demonstration projects across a wide range of countries. Compared with that, the SCWP is the opposite, a site-level to regional-level project whereby actions at 16 sites in four countries have been complemented by national and regional activities to enhance cooperative and coordinated actions.

⁷² **RCU comment:** A keyword search of *Safe Flyways* showed the following results: *Wetland*: 388, *Flyway*: 285, *Waterbird*: 177. **TE response:** A very nice riposte, but the point remains, at the specific rather than generic level, Siberian Crane was overly dominant. If talking about "wetlands", "flyways", and "waterbirds" was in itself good enough to generate public and decision-maker interest, then why did the Project have to use a flagship species?

⁷³ Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*); Swan Goose (*Anser cygnoides*); Tundra Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*)

⁷⁴ Long **RCU comment** – reproduced in Annex XI.

⁷⁵ **RCU comment:** We agree with this lesson learned.

111. Discussions with a number of interviewees suggests that the SCWP has provided a more integrated approach and has produced a greater impact on the ground with concrete enhancements to a wide range of sites but all interlinked in providing the chain necessary for given populations to complete their annual cycle. This is not surprising since WOW concentrated on regional tools, but its site interventions were fractured and possessed no ecological links other than being generally on the same flyway. This evaluator is perhaps uniquely placed to compare the two since he has completed the TEs of both projects, and would agree in general terms with these views. If GEF can overcome its indifference (or even antipathy) towards flyway-scale projects, then the model pioneered by the SCWP with a site focus complemented by national and international coordinating activities probably provides a more beneficial approach for replication and a more immediate result in terms of cost-effectiveness. However, the key sites need to be able to be identifiable prior to such work commencing, and WOW produced a tool to do just that. Perhaps it would be possible to reproduce the Critical Sites Network tool for another flyway and implement this together with the SCWP model in a programmatic approach⁷⁶.

Outputs and Activities

112. The outputs and activities undertaken by the Project have been highly relevant to the threats and challenges faced by the Siberian Crane and associated waterfowl. As indicated above (paragraph 8), the SCWP largely addressed habitat loss and degradation along the flyways leaving hunting to other initiatives. As such, it has undertaken work to enhance the legal protection afforded to key sites and to increase the amount of land under protection through the designation of new sites or the expansion of existing ones; increase the technical and management capacity of staff to safeguard sites through extensive training, management planning, and provision of equipment; to increase intersectoral cooperation to facilitate adequate provision of water to maintain important wetlands in NE China; raise public awareness about the Siberian Crane and other waterbirds through extensive communication and education work; catalyse participatory management planning through the involvement of other sectors and local people; provide demonstrations of alternative livelihoods for local people in and around protected areas in many cases resulting in reduction of conflicts; enhanced national scientific monitoring and other research programmes for waterbirds; and, acting as a regional project, it has provided measurable benefits through increased coordination of efforts to act at a flyway-scale by being instrumental in establishing the Western/Central Asia Site Network for Siberian Cranes and other Migratory Waterbirds, supporting the development of the North East Asian Crane Site Network under the emerging East Asian-Australian Flyway Partnership, and developing a regional database to centralise all the data on Siberian Cranes and other species from many sources and locations into one system accessible to all, as well as enhancing international understanding and technical cooperation through reciprocal visits and training workshops. All of these activities were consistent with the Coastal, Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems operational programme and the Biodiversity Strategic Priorities “*I. Catalyzing sustainability of Protected Areas*” and “*II. Mainstreaming biodiversity in production landscapes and sectors*” of the GEF business plan and, therefore, with the central aims of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as fitting into a wider process guided by the requirements of the Conservation Plans for the various flyways under the CMS Siberian Crane MoU.

The Project has used the flagship species approach to implement a wide range of actions that have made significant contributions to site-, national-, and regional-level wetland conservation needs along two major Asian flyways, acting in a fully integrated and concerted way to demonstrate the full range of benefits and added value that a flyway-scale approach can bring to the conservation of migratory ecological systems, hence relevance is evaluated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

SUSTAINABILITY

113. Evaluation of the sustainability of this Project is not straightforward because of the disparate nature of both the components and the characteristics of the four countries involved. Attempting to lump together seven outcomes that have been designed expressly to deal with site, national, and regional level initiatives across four countries to get a single rating would, in the view of the TE, lead to meaningless gibberish. Therefore, although not as neat as producing a single rating for each of the elements of sustainability each outcome has been evaluated by individual country by each of five elements in tabular form for completeness

⁷⁶ **RCU comment:** *We agree that this is the way to go for maximum impact at multiple scales.*

(Table 15). In addition to the elements of sustainability required by UNEP-GEF, that of economic sustainability has been added where appropriate since this is frequently highly relevant to a site-based project because if an activity provides sound economic returns to one or more stakeholders, that activity is more likely to be maintained as a behaviour than if there is no economic gain or if losses are involved. It is deemed separate from financial since that tends to involve access to outside funding, while economic sustainability reflects internal benefits accruing directly from the activity/behaviour itself. Rating criteria are defined in Table 2. An overall rating has been provided for each output for each country. Since UNEP-GEF deems each risk dimension of sustainability critical, the overall rating for sustainability cannot be higher than the rating of the dimension with lowest rating. Using these, modal values for each country across the seven outputs have been provided (see also paragraph 31) at the bottom of the table.

Regional

114. The sustainability of the regional dimension of this Project, encapsulated under Outcome 3.1: *Improved crane conservation through development and implementation of regional flyway networks and adopted crane conservation plans in Western/Central Asia and Eastern Asia* is probably the most assured of any of the 20+ projects that the TE has evaluated mainly because it has always been seen by all the lead players simply as a big step on a much longer journey. This is probably the single most important lesson learned from the SCWP – that instead of it being a stand alone intervention, this Project was designed to fit into a bigger process guided by the requirements of the Conservation Plans for the various flyways of the Siberian Crane drawn up under the Siberian Crane MoU within the auspices of the CMS. Within this framework, and with strong financial backing from the ICF, the CMS, and other bodies, its financial sustainability is adjudged to be **Likely**. Politically, it is also well-supported through the CMS. Even while it was being implemented, other projects were being run in parallel to address other aspects of the species' (and associated waterbirds') needs, e.g. *Flight of Hope* (a re-introduction programme)⁷⁷ and the *Three White Cranes, Two Flyways, One World* (international awareness-raising)⁷⁸. As a result, all of the actors were already engaged in developing the long-term follow-up agenda to not only sustain the gains made by the SCWP, but also to build upon them and take them forwards. This shows that the socio-political sustainability is also **Likely**. Institutionally, continuity and support were built into the Project by the ICF and CMS through ensuring that its activities were fully integrated into parallel annual work plans of outside bodies. Many international processes were occurring in parallel, but the Project also invested a lot of time and resources into these to ensure not only their sustainability but, as a result, that of its own achievements, e.g. the West Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes and other migratory waterbirds which was established through the Project⁷⁹, and the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership which the Project made significant inputs to, especially through the NE Asian Crane Site Network. To provide solid evidence of this, the TE refers to the draft of Resolution 10.3 on the *Role of Ecological Networks in the Conservation of Migratory Species* adopted by the CMS Scientific Council at its 17th meeting⁸⁰ for consideration by the CMS COP 10⁸¹, which reads:

“WELCOMES the establishment in 2007 of the Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Migratory Waterbirds under the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project to further implement the MOU concerning the Siberian Crane as a framework for the management of the network of internationally important sites for waterbird and other migratory species; and the designation of internationally important sites by six Parties (Iran, India, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan)”

and

“FURTHER INVITES Parties and Range States to designate additional sites to the Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Migratory Waterbirds,

⁷⁷ **RCU comment:** *Managed separately as a species oriented approach.*

⁷⁸ **RCU comment:** *This project was closely linked to SCWP with a focus on awareness activities in China and Russia.*

⁷⁹ **RCU comment:** *See also footnote 62/Annex XI commenting on the intent to bring this site network under CAF through AEWA and to change the title to Western/Central Asian Site Network for Migratory Waterbirds.*

⁸⁰ Bergen, Norway, 17-18th November 2011

⁸¹ Bergen, Norway, 20-25th November 2011

*the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Site Network ... to strengthen flyway connectivity and to improve management of these sites, working in synergy with partners*⁸².

Thus, the institutional sustainability of the Project is evaluated as **Likely**. The environmental sustainability of this component is effectively not applicable since it is not site-related. In general, it should lead to improved conservation status for sites throughout the region through a more targeted and coordinated approach to site designations, and to raised capacity to manage conservation at many levels. However, it will not directly diminish the environmental threats to any site, nor provide any immediate benefits, hence the environmental sustainability is evaluated as **not applicable**.

Since UNEP-GEF deems each risk dimension of sustainability critical, the overall rating for sustainability cannot be higher than the rating of the dimension with lowest rating, and as such the overall sustainability of the regional component is ranked as **Likely**.

#2

Lesson learned: Designing a project to be part of a much longer and wider process generates huge benefits for sustainability, and through the synergies developed provides the intervention with much greater effectiveness than that which can be achieved by stand-alone projects.

National

115. The assessments of the sustainability of the site- and national-level components are shown in detail in Table 15. It is again important to point out that since UNEP-GEF deems each risk dimension of sustainability critical, the overall rating for sustainability cannot be higher than the rating of the dimension with lowest rating, and that this method has been applied in determining the overall rating for each outcome in each country. Although too little progress was achieved on some outcomes in some countries for any assessment of sustainability to be meaningful, the range and modal value of the overall assessments of the seven outcomes shows that for:

- China the sustainability is between Likely and Moderately Likely with a mode of **Likely**;
- Iran the sustainability is between Likely and Unlikely with a mode of **Moderately Unlikely**;
- Kazakhstan the sustainability is between Moderately Likely and Unlikely with a mode of **Moderately Likely**; and
- Russia the sustainability is between Likely and Unlikely with a mode of **Likely or Moderately Unlikely**.

In addition, an examination of national performance by element of sustainability using the modal values provided at the bottom of the table shows:

- **Financial:** the sustainability in China to be Likely with good financing of most outputs; in Iran to be very mixed but mostly Moderately Likely; in Kazakhstan to be having real difficulties with onward financing and most outputs Moderately Unlikely; and in Russia to be very mixed with Federal Government not really financing outputs but the provincial governments and scientific community financing some, hence Likely or Moderately Unlikely.
- **Socio-political:** the sustainability in China to be Likely with very strong political support of most outputs; in Iran generally good if slow political support for most outputs so Likely or Moderately Likely; in Kazakhstan to be Likely with very strong political support of most outputs; and in Russia to be very mixed with no support from Federal Government but with good support from provincial governments and the scientific community, hence Likely or Moderately Unlikely.
- **Institutional:** the sustainability in China to be Likely with a very strong institutional framework in place for all outputs; in Iran generally good undermined in places by slow post-project responses but for most outputs Likely; in Kazakhstan to be Likely with a very strong institutional framework for most outputs; and in Russia to be again very mixed with the Federal structures having to be replaced by provincial or scientific ones, yet Likely.

⁸² Long **RCU comment** – reproduced in Annex XI.

- **Environmental:** the sustainability across the board is Likely, with just a small few risks posed by possible drought to one or two outputs in NE China and in Kazakhstan.
- **Economic:** applies only to Outcome 1.2 where the sustainability in China is Likely with strong local economic benefits evident; in Iran is Moderately Unlikely because of little economic benefit from the Project⁸³ and continuing disagreement with the DoE; in Kazakhstan to be Moderately Likely with economic benefits accruing from a fledgling tourist industry; and in Russia to be Likely because no risks are perceived from an almost non-existent local community.

116. Two other small technical points are worth brief discussion under this section. First, the TE strongly suggests that the ICF facilitates a small amount of funding (c. US\$ 5,000) annually or biennially to fund Crane Festivals centred on Naurzum (see Table 15). There is still considerable enthusiasm on behalf of the local people to organise and take part in this event as is evident from the fact that they funded a festival in 2010 from their own pockets without any local, provincial or state government support. Despite this considerable commitment they indicated that they are just too poor to do this on an annual basis hence no festival could be financed by them in 2011. Without further funding, it is clear that no further crane festivals will be possible and that the gains made in terms of awareness raising would become restricted to just the small pulse of children who were fortunate enough to take part during the Project. For long-term effects to be sustained, crane festivals need to take place at least biennially – hence the suggestion⁸⁴.

117. The second relates to the sustainability of eco-tourism development at sites. In Karamendy, Kazakhstan, two diametrically-opposed concepts had been put forward by various persons working for the Project, that:

- Until tourist infrastructure is developed no tourists will visit a given site (such as Naurzum); and
- Tourists will come wherever there is an attraction and that as a result, infrastructure will follow.

The TE sides strongly with the latter since this has been his experience worldwide, both as a professional and as a tourist. In essence, there are two types of eco-tourist – those who are adventurous, generally below the age of 45-50, with limited finances, and for whom comfort is of secondary importance to experiencing the attraction, e.g. seeing a particular bird or mammal; and those who are less adventurous, generally above the age of 45-50, well financed, for whom some degree of comfort and ease of access to an attraction is important. In the TE's experience, the former will pioneer tourism at a given site, pretty much come-what-may, and these people's expertise in their subject (most often birds) is often responsible for a site being "discovered for tourism" in the first place often on the back of a recent scientific discovery, e.g. Jocotoco Antpitta (*Grallaria ridgelyi*) in Ecuador; or a re-discovery e.g. Gurney's Pitta (*Pitta gurneyi*) in Thailand. Once word gets out that something of value can be seen or experienced at a site, many more people in the "pioneer" category visit and as a result, the local infrastructure to exploit this market grows organically. Eventually, as ease of access and comfort and perceived safety increases, the second group who are willing to pay more starts to arrive and the local market matures, e.g. Bwindi Forest in Uganda where a wide range of accommodation is present ... but the National Park still sells limited places on its gorilla-watching treks for US\$ 500/person/day! Wherever the TE has seen the former approach tried, that is develop the infrastructure to create a market, he has never seen success because of factors such as the supposed attraction does not have enough pulling power e.g. sites with good numbers of waterbirds but no "special" species in Sri Lanka; or because some other barrier has not been taken into account, e.g. difficulties in obtaining tourist visas to enter the country e.g. Uzbekistan. The serious downside of pursuing this strategy is that local people's expectation will usually have been raised and when the tourists fail to arrive, the "broken promises" can have significant repercussions negating other gains a project may have made or in breaching trust so badly that other conservation initiatives are damaged or delayed. While the TE makes no recommendations in regard to the development of a sustainable tourist strategy generally, or at Karamendy in particular, he hopes that those following up on the Project's initiatives (e.g. the ICF) can inform the debate at appropriate locations.

⁸³ Long **Iran NCU comment** – reproduced in Annex XI.

⁸⁴ Long **RCU comment** – reproduced in Annex XI.

TABLE 15: SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES BY COUNTRY

	China	Iran	Kazakhstan	Russia
Outcome 1.1: Enhanced legal protection through clear regulations and identified enforcement responsibilities at selected project sites				
Financial	Clear evidence of increased State financing for protection and conservation management at all five NNRs visited with clear commitments to the future. Likely	Little evidence for adequate Government financing of protective measures, e.g. local game-guards established under SCWP not yet being paid for by DoE. Moderately Unlikely	Evidence that finance for protection is a problem for Government but clever measures introduced to increase cost-effectiveness. Moderately Unlikely	Federal government effectively abandoned financing of its zakazniki soon after the outset of SCWP. ⁸⁵ Provincial level finance ⁸⁶ promised in Yakutia ⁸⁷ , but no evidence yet of its arrival. Unlikely
Socio-political	Documentation produced for new Ramsar sites. Government sent observers to CMS COP 9. SFA objected to Jiangxi Province proposals for a new high dam at the outlet of Poyang Lake. At local level, game guards operate around Chi'an village on edge of Poyang Lake NNR. Likely	Iran joined CMS in February 2008. Fereydoon Kenar established as Non Shooting Area and Ramsar Site; Bujagh extended and upgraded to NP and Ramsar Site extended; both designated as WCASN sites. Local trappers remain main means of protection at Fereydoon Kenar ⁸⁸ , although local game guards also deployed. Moderately Likely	Kazakhstan joined CMS in May 2007. Four new Ramsar sites and five WCASN sites designated, and UNESCO World Heritage status for Naurzum shows strong political support. At local level, improved support for protection is direct legacy of successful awareness-raising activities. Likely	Federal government effectively abandoned operation of its zakazniki at outset of SCWP and failed to engage in any of the regional initiatives within the Project. Nominations pending through MNR for international recognition of project site (Ramsar sites and WCASN). Provincial level support quite strong and new reserves designated in Yamalo-Nenetskiy Autonomous Region. Unlikely
Institutional framework	Strong – Project executed through auspices of SFA which is showing genuine commitment to waterbird conservation. Likely	Strong – Project executed through DoE but very slow post-project responses. Moderately Likely	Strong – FHC vociferous champion for nature conservation. Zapovednik Administration undertakes its role very seriously. Likely	Weak – MNR exhibited no interest in being involved in SCWP. As one interviewee said " <i>It appears that the Kremlin is trying to keep nature conservation weak through a constant state of reorganisation</i> ". Unlikely
Environmental	Drought a problem in NE NNRs, although new water management agreements mitigate most of its effects. In Jiangxi, continuing proposals to dam outlet to Poyang Lake may maintain water levels too high for Siberian Cranes and waterbirds. Moderately Likely	No risks apparent. Likely	No risks apparent. Likely	No risks apparent. Likely
Economic	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Overall	ML	MU	MU	U

⁸⁵ **RCU comment:** It is worth noting that very late in the project the management of the federal zakazniki was reassigned from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology. This was too late to help with SCWP, but may open doors for future work.

⁸⁶ **RCU comment:** We expect that provincial govt financing for new reserves in West Siberia (Yemalo-Nenetski Autonomous Region) will continue to be good given that it is wealthy from gas.

⁸⁷ **RCU comment:** It would be helpful to know the type of funding promised. **TE response:** This was not forthcoming – appeared to be direct from the Provincial Government.

⁸⁸ **RCU comment:** We don't think Bujagh NP has been adequately considered throughout the ratings – please check. **TE response:** There were insufficient time and resources for the TE to visit Bujagh NP or the sites in Western Siberia. An independent evaluation cannot therefore be made. These sites are referred to only where information was available that could be cross-verified by more than one third party.

	China	Iran	Kazakhstan	Russia
Outcome 1.2: Sustained biodiversity protection through participatory and effective site management				
Financial	High levels of finance committed by SFA to fund capital and operational costs of conservation activities in NNRs. New infrastructure in evidence at time of TE's visit at Keerqin, Momoge, and Zhalong NNRs. Further annual funding provided by various sources to provide environmental water flows. Likely	Closely linked to very slow post-project response by DOE with no money yet flowing for management of Fereydoon Kenar. Government co-financing for new reserve buildings at Fereydoon Kenar never materialised and buildings remain unfinished. Bujagh NP funded through DOE. Unlikely	Considerable doubt was expressed as to the adequacy of finance available to fund management of Naurzum, although new rangers have been deployed at new zakaznik of Zharsor-Urkash Lakes. Strong political commitment may overcome this, especially in view of its new World Heritage status. Moderately Likely	Money for implementation of management plans indicated as being forthcoming from Yakutian Government, yet only contrary evidence obtained from other interviewees. Moderately Unlikely
Socio-political	No evidence of local people really participating in management, but such ideas are not part of country's culture so should not be expected. Local people involved in alternative livelihood interventions remain very positive and are fulfilling their side of the contracts to reduce impacts on NNRs. Awareness of local people over wildlife values raised. Likely	Very slow post-project response by DOE has effectively killed any chance of maintaining gains. There is a degree of remaining enthusiasm, but no support and no-one promoting the issues. As one interviewee said <i>"the magic is over"</i> . At local level, trappers remain very suspicious of DoE's intentions especially since 18 months have elapsed without approval of management plan, e.g. one local person <i>"Now better they don't come back and interfere – let us do what we are doing"</i> . Moderately Unlikely	Evidence of strong political intent at central level to sustain management although financing this remains recognised as the problem. Locally, intense support apparent from small but active NGOs and from successful awareness-raising activities. Crane festival took place in 2010 financed solely from local means but could not repeat event in 2011. TE recommends ICF and/or CMS provide assistance to enable this. Likely	Political support for nature reserves and their management appears strong at provincial level, but absent at federal level. Reserves are generally too vast and too sparsely-populated for participation of local people to be meaningful. No sign of intersectoral cooperation, but again, size and remoteness mean that other sectoral agencies not really interested unless for exploitation of natural resources. Oil exploration in reserve in west Siberia stopped on grounds of conflict with conservation aims. Sites not visited so no first-hand evidence of local peoples' views but high awareness of nature conservation and Siberian Cranes reported from west Siberia. Moderately Unlikely
Institutional framework	Capacity of NNR staff and associated provincial support raised. Clear evidence that SFA and local management approve of newly introduced concept of local participation and view it as a good thing, even if unsure of mechanics of how to apply it and logistical difficulties (large reserves, many communities). Also clear evidence that participatory intersectoral cooperation is being practiced with regard to water agreements. Likely	Capacity of DoE staff increased, especially at provincial level, but poor communications still reported between Tehran DoE and provincial DoE (Mazandaran) which is detrimental to effectiveness of latter. Interviewees indicated that level of protection and management was higher at Fereydoon Kenar where DoE not involved than at Bujagh NP where they are ⁸⁹ . Moderately Unlikely	Effective. SCWP increased capacity of staff at Naurzum Zapovednik and they are now actively preparing a new management plan to be in place for when the one designed under the Project runs out. Site management committees not in evidence yet Basin Agreement has removed much conflict between zapovednik and locals to everyone's pleasure. Likely	Same federal level disengagement with reserves as reported above. Stronger provincial level presence especially in Government, but few resources deployed on ground although again, size and remoteness or reserves means need for management is small. Moderately Likely

⁸⁹ **RCU comment:** Note that the stakes are higher at Bujagh – it is a sturgeon fishery, so illegal fishing is a big issue.

	China	Iran	Kazakhstan	Russia
Environmental	Applied research and ecological monitoring significantly reduces environmental risks. Likely	No risks apparent. Likely	Natural water cycle now understood and agreed as reason for variability of water levels between years. Still limited fire response service but local people aware and help out at times of high fire risk. No other risks apparent. Likely	No risks apparent. Likely
Economic	Local people report significant increases in both gross and net incomes. Some people have sold cows (increased food costs) and goats (disease) but most involved in alternative livelihood interventions remain happy with changes. Likely	Trappers report economics of taking ducks are marginal and that suggested management impositions of banning tower nets and other non-traditional traps would mean that they might abandon trapping. Land value rising as development of coast increases and could tilt the balance against continued local conservation of area. Moderately Unlikely	Improving rapidly. Naurzum in economically depressed area with high unemployment and no initiatives. Project and World Heritage status has brought life to area. Income levels of those supported with alternative livelihood tripled by end of Project. Modest increase in international and national nature tourists to Naurzum has provided sustainable demand for guest houses locally and associated benefits, e.g. guides. Likely	No risks apparent. Likely
Overall	L	U	ML	MU
Outcome 2.1: Enhanced conservation of wetland biodiversity through national and sectoral legislation, as well as supporting policies, plans, and financial mechanisms				
Financial	Extremely good sustainability through high level of financing commitments from provincial and municipal sources to pay for water supplies to NNRs. Annual commitments set and appear to rise over time. Crucially no time limits placed on commitments. Likely			
Socio-political	Strong intersectoral support apparent through Songliao Water Resources Commission (SWRC) under the Ministry of Water Resources, and from Provincial Governments of Heilongjiang and Jilin and from administrations of Qiqihar and Daqing Cities. Likely	Too little achieved under Outcome for any assessment of sustainability to be meaningful.	Too little achieved under Outcome for any assessment of sustainability to be meaningful.	Too little achieved under Outcome for any assessment of sustainability to be meaningful.
Institutional framework	Difficult to see, yet clearly strong because of scale of commitment in an area where human demand for water is very high and increasing. Lead appears to be with SFA, yet apparently no high level intersectoral			

	China	Iran	Kazakhstan	Russia
	links. TE feels it unlikely that so much could have been achieved at only medium level – yet everything seemingly invisible. Result rather than mechanism would seem to be the key criterion to assess sustainability. Likely			
Environmental	Water is in short supply in NE China and drought has been a problem during much of the SCWP's lifetime. Nonetheless, water provision set during this time, presumably at levels that Ministry of Water Resources feels are sustainable in the long-term. Likely			
Economic	N/a			
Overall	L	N/a	N/a	N/a
Outcome 2.2: Strengthened conservation of wetland biodiversity through provincial land use planning, water resource management and coastal zone management				
Financial	Water management plans fully financed by State, Provincial and Local Governments – see Outcome 2.1 immediately above. Likely	Too little achieved under Outcome for any assessment of sustainability to be meaningful.	Basin Agreement does not require finance for its long-term sustainability. Likely	Too little achieved under Outcome for any assessment of sustainability to be meaningful.
Socio-political	Strong; see Outcome 2.1 immediately above. Also, the water management plans have been incorporated into regional long-range water distribution plans for the Songliao River Basin, providing a mechanism for secure water supply to meet ecological needs. Likely		Strong support for Basin Agreement amongst local population especially farmers who are reliant on small dams. Agreement has reduced uncertainty and long-term conflict, and through new local NGO spawned new-found enthusiasm to solve local water-related issues, e.g. efficient irrigation. NGO's involvement in other international projects bodes well for sustainability. Likely	
Institutional framework	Incorporation of water management plans into regional long-range water distribution plans indicates potent institutional support Likely		Basin Agreement was drawn up between the stakeholders through auspices of a new Basin Council. This continues to meet and provides a means of resolving any potential areas of conflict. Likely	
Environmental	Strong; see Outcome 2.1.		Natural water cycle now believed to be on upward supply slope. Problems may arise towards bottom of supply curve, yet Basin	

	China	Iran	Kazakhstan	Russia
			Agreement negotiated during similar conditions, so such problems may be able to be overcome. Moderately Likely	
Economic	N/a		N/a	
Overall	L	N/a	ML	N/a
Outcome 2.3: Strengthened flyway conservation efforts through functional national monitoring programmes for the Siberian Crane and other migratory waterbirds				
Financial	Commitment of state and provincial monies for continuing the expanded monitoring network seems assured. Additional co-finance has been used in 2009; and the authorities at Poyang Lake showed confidence that money could be found for another set of aerial surveys probably in 2012 ⁹⁰ . Likely	International Waterbird Census (IWC) counts have been made at many sites around the southern Caspian since 2001, financed by the DoE. All indications show that this is set to continue, but there are no plans to expand it. Likely	Sites in northern Kazakhstan were surveyed regularly during both migration periods in 2005-9, but no government finance appears to be in evidence to continue these. There were no surveys in Spring 2010, but the Russian Working Group on Geese In Eurasia funded some surveys in Autumn 2010, and AEWA funded them in Spring 2011, but these are <i>ad hoc</i> funding sources and are in no way secure despite the acknowledged value of the data ⁹¹ . Moderately Unlikely	Financing appears sound for sites in Yakutia through the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. In west Siberia, the TE has little information but the fact that Russian funding was available for joint studies in Kazakhstan and that re-introduction work also requires monitoring of sites, suggests that funding is reasonably secure. Likely
Socio-political	Strong political support for monitoring programme evident within SFA. Likely	Adequate political support for monitoring programme evident within DoE. Likely	FHC indicate understanding of need for monitoring and keen to find ways of continuing it through other projects/studies e.g. on Lesser White-fronted Goose, but lack of finance dominates the issue. Moderately Likely	Strong political support for monitoring programme evident within scientific community. Likely
Institutional framework	Strong – fully fledged monitoring network operative with coordination mechanism. Likely	IWC counts fully organised and long-established. Likely	Weak – no mechanism for organising monitoring in place, and no evidence that FHC is about to develop one until financial issues sorted out. Appears as if will remain <i>ad hoc</i> by international players. Unlikely	Strong – scientific organisations understand need for, and scientific basis underpinning, monitoring and organise accordingly. Likely
Environmental	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Economic	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Overall	L	L	U	L

⁹⁰ **RCU comment:** A ground survey completed in December 2011 to be followed by another survey in early 2012 – aerial surveys preferred but difficult to get the necessary permissions in a timely way.

⁹¹ **RCU comment:** Agreed – aside from gathering this valuable data, the project focused on building capacity for waterbird monitoring at the reserves, recognizing that the costs of monitoring the huge and remote area covered previously would be unsustainable.

Outcome 2.4: Enhanced implementation of international conventions and agreements on the conservation of (wetland & waterbird) biodiversity				
Financial	Unclear. No overt evidence to suggest financial commitment, e.g. to maintain levels of training, but increased political engagement in conventions suggest that sufficient monies will be made available. Moderately Likely	No evidence for financing enhanced implementation of conventions and agreements, although existing levels probably will be maintained. Government appears to pay for participation at meetings while implementation on the ground occurs only through international projects. Moderately Unlikely	Significant increase made in engagement with conventions during Project but finances remain a problem with Government paying for participation at meetings while implementation on the ground occurs only through international projects. Moderately Unlikely	No direct state financing for enhanced implementation evident. Russian involvement in various networks and partnerships paid for through scientific community and associated projects. Moderately Unlikely
Socio-political	Political will for increased engagement in conventions evident but not yet fully committed, e.g. attendance at Meetings, but no membership, of CMS ⁹² . Moderately Likely	Strong – full engagement in Ramsar, AEWA, and as of February 2008, CMS. Likely	Strong – full engagement in Ramsar, AEWA, and as of May 2007, CMS. Also World Heritage Convention re Nurzum. Likely	Mixed – full engagement in international conventions and agreements, but federal Government's almost total disengagement from SCWP suggests little commitment to conservation processes. Moderately Unlikely
Institutional framework	Strong – institutional responsibilities defined and allocated within Government structure. Likely	Strong – institutional responsibilities defined and allocated within Government structure. Likely	Strong – institutional responsibilities defined and allocated within Government structure. Likely	Weak – constant reorganisation with federal Government means institutional responsibilities are poorly defined and allocated. Moderately Unlikely
Environmental	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Economic	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Overall	ML	MU	MU	MU
Outcome 3.1: Improved crane conservation through development and implementation of regional flyway networks and adopted crane conservation plans in Western/Central Asia and Eastern Asia.				
Financial	Significant levels of financing evident for all crane conservation initiatives. Likely	Unclear. No clear-cut evidence for adequate financing networks and plans, yet readiness to engage in regional initiatives suggests that finance may be available. Moderately Likely	Finances generally appear problematic, yet eagerness to engage in regional initiatives suggests that basic finance may be available. Moderately Likely	No direct state financing but discussion of provincial funding evident. Adequate finances available for current conservation initiatives through Russian scientific community and associated projects. Likely
Socio-political	Support evident within SFA for flyway measures, perhaps diluted slightly by Government's conservative approach to all things international. Likely	Support evident within DoE for flyway measures (e.g. WCASN), but diffident approach to SCWP follow-up suggests there may be unseen issues. Moderately Likely	Strong support evident within FHC for flyway measures (e.g. WCASN), with only lack of finance perceived as a barrier. Likely	Little support evident from federal Government, but strong support from provincial authorities and scientific community. Likely
Institutional framework	Strong state government structure to promote and implement crane conservation measures.	Strong state government structure to promote and implement crane conservation measures.	Strong state government structure to promote and implement crane conservation measures.	Strong scientific institutional base and provincial government structure to promote and implement crane conservation measures.

⁹² **RCU comment:** China is now serving as Vice Chair of EAAFP and will host an international workshop, "Cranes and Agriculture", in December 2012 involving all countries in the region.

	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
Environmental	No risks apparent.	No risks apparent.	No risks apparent.	No risks apparent.
	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
Economic	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Overall	L	ML	ML	L
Mode: Financial	L	ML	MU	L/MU
Mode: Socio-political	L	L/ML	L	L/MU
Mode: Institutional framework	L	L	L	L
Mode: Environmental	L	L	L	L
Mode: Economic	L	MU	ML	MU
Overall: Range	L – ML	L – U	ML – U	L – U
Overall: Mode	L	MU	ML	L/MU

CATALYTIC ROLE AND REPLICATION

118. Discussion of replication in relation to the SCWP has to be undertaken at two levels – the macro-level of replicating it as a flyway-scale project, and the micro-level with regard to replication of its products and site-based interventions. As has been discussed elsewhere (see paragraph 105, and the section on relevance in the Terminal Evaluation of the WOW Project), at the macro-level the flyway-scale approach has clearly been shown to be relevant, at least for waterbirds, and its replication in a similar form is highly desirable. However, the problem for replication of project using a flagship species at the flyway scale may be in finding something suitable. Species with the same widespread charisma as the Siberian Crane are few and far between; maybe the use of Spoon-billed Sandpiper (*Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus*) would be appropriate for coastal sites in eastern Asia, or Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*) in western Asia/Europe, but it may prove more tricky to find something for the Africa-Eurasia flyway, and probably impossible in the Americas under GEF. A broader taxon such as “Shorebirds” may suffice, as in the Western Hemisphere Migratory Shorebird Network. However, given the partners involved in this Project (CMS, ICF) and the WOW Project (AEWA, BirdLife International, Ramsar, and Wetlands International) it is clear that the concept will find ready champions and solid support from with UNEP. Indeed, it is understood that at the time of this TE, UNEP were trying to promote another flyway-scale project (see paragraph 105).

119. At the micro-level, its performance is mixed. The Project has shown great innovation in overcoming problems (e.g. the designation of buffer reserves at Kunovat, Russia, see paragraphs 34 and 72) and in developing new mechanisms to resolve serious threats (e.g. the water management agreements in NE China, see paragraph 48). Importantly, it has also introduced new concepts institutionally, e.g. the idea of participatory management (especially in China where it has fallen on fertile ground); and its state-of-the-art management planning has been accepted as a model for replication within various regions, e.g. the Yakutian Government has sent the SCWP management plans to other reserves to influence their planning. Such work could be scaled-up further, e.g. Ramsar would like Russia to provide management plans for all of its Ramsar sites, and SCWP’s management planning guidelines could be useful for that if the political will of the Federal Government to do so eventually becomes apparent. However, the Project’s attempts, or lack of them, to replicate other site-based initiatives has not been particularly impressive and is probably the weakest component of the Project. Nonetheless, the pioneering role it has played in developing the water management agreements and the subsequent catalytic finance that it has generated to implement these, is an outstanding achievement and the fact that the first has been replicated by two more, pretty much within the lifetime of the Project, is close to astonishing. It may seem hard then to chastise it for not working harder to replicate other initiatives at the site level, but in fact the TE recognises that there are many other subtle factors at play, and that some of these were beyond the project’s ability to influence. Replication of site-based initiatives is an inherently difficult task for the very reason that the characteristics of a given site are generally unique to one site and not conducive to transfer. Thus, trying to replicate the good work undertaken at Fereydoon Kenar, Iran, at another site either within or without the country simply has no relevance – the duck-trapping system practiced there and the benefits and problems that are associated with it are simply unique. Nonetheless, the alternative livelihood initiatives undertaken in China and Kazakhstan have been implemented on only a very local scale, usually in only one or two villages at a given site (and in China there may be up to 40 other villages in a given NNR) and with seemingly little thought given to their replication²⁰⁴, e.g. the relatively high costs associated with introducing high-yield dairy-farming at Zhalong NNR. At Keerqin NNR, the members of the *Keerqin Grassland Protection and Development Association* NGO indicated that all the villages around knew that the SCWP had changed their lives and come and ask for information to learn more, yet when this was checked at a neighbouring village the evidence was contrary.

120. To be fair, in China²⁰⁵ there was a lot of evidence to suggest that the NNRs would like to replicate the advances the Project made with the local communities, recognising that in almost all cases conflict had been replaced by cooperation or at least diminished significantly, but they all cited that money would be a problem. This may seem strange in a country which has provided significant levels of catalytic finance to Project sites, yet it appears that there is no mechanism to provide such funding simply because there is no

²⁰⁴ Long **RCU comment** – reproduced in Annex XI.

²⁰⁵ Long **RCU comment** – reproduced in Annex XI.

platform. The role of NNRs is to provide conservation of nature; community development is wholly outside the SFA's remit. Nonetheless, some interviewed indicated that they would include community development in the forthcoming updates of their management plans in an attempt to force the issue; and at Keerqin NNR there is a programme to enlarge the cooperation with the communities to cover all villages within the next 3-5 years although the status of this remained very unclear, especially with regard to the foregoing. In Kazakhstan, there is simply a lack of financing at present to replicate such initiatives, but strong political will may overcome this (see Table 15). There are signs at a local level that people will copy things for themselves where they see an advantage – two simple examples are biogas units being built for new houses post-Project at Chi'an village, Poyang Lake, China (see photo in [Annex IX](#)); and people opening their houses to guests as tourism is beginning to increase at Naurzum, Kazakhstan. It is also clear that the first shoots of organic replication at the reserve administration level in China are occurring, arising from benefits of increased communication and information exchange pioneered by the Project's annual staff meetings. As a result, because the benefits of conflict resolution are greatly appreciated, other reserves have been sending staff and occasionally local people to learn more from Keerqin and Xianghai NNRs whose experiences are now being used as a model to attempt replication elsewhere.

As the first flyway-scale site-based project to be implemented through the GEF, it has displayed high levels of innovation and ability for replication, with significant catalytic financing leveraged for water management, but at the sites themselves actions to promote replication have been less successful, hence catalytic role and replication is evaluated as **Satisfactory**.

COUNTRY DRIVEN-NESS AND COORDINATION

121. As with the WOW project, the assessment of country ownership is inherently difficult for projects involving a large number of countries, but unlike WOW, the four constituent countries were involved directly in the conceptual design. It would, however, be hard to suggest that the countries, at least at governmental level, were responsible for driving the Project – this fell largely to the ICF and a number of interested scientists in China, Iran and Russia who, while they may have been in the employ of the government or academic institutions, were largely exhibiting personal levels of commitment rather than fully representing active government policies. Nonetheless, once underway, national and provincial governments exhibited varying levels of commitment and cooperation and this is explored further in this section.

- China: The national government has been extremely supportive of the Project throughout, although this view needs careful interpretation. In actuality, the support at national level has come almost solely from the State Forestry Administration²⁰⁶ and its related agencies; involvement, support, or cooperation has been effectively absent from other ministries. Even for those success stories such as the agreements over water, the links were not made at high level between the SFA and the responsible water agencies but rather through clever use by the Project of mid-level consultants. Nonetheless, the SFA on behalf of the Government has provided its full backing throughout, facilitated coordination, and provided considerable financial resources both during the Project and for implementation of the management plans in the various national nature reserves, but not yet for replication of community-based activities although this appears to be more a result of bureaucratic regulations than lack of will – the SFA can fund forestry- and nature conservation-related activities; but community development appears to fall outside of this remit²⁰⁷. At the provincial level, the provincial and municipal authorities have also proved to be highly supportive, especially in the north-east where large amounts of money have been provided to fund the provision of water to Zhalong, Momoge, and Keerqin NNRs.
- Iran: The Iranian authorities seemed to display ambivalence towards the Project²⁰⁸. On the one hand, the Wildlife Department has engaged with the Project and its activities during their active phase, yet on the other has stood back and not taken the decisions necessary to ensure that the gains made will be

²⁰⁶ **RCU comment:** *This was in a large part due to support from the NPD Mr. Wang Wei. Support needs to be maintained through the new leader.*

²⁰⁷ **RCU comment:** *Maybe this is appropriate – community development support might more suitably come from local government, coordinated through provincial or local level collaboration. There was some interest from local government applying its own funds at Poyang Lake (e.g. China village). The challenge is in linking community development investments to environmental goals.*

²⁰⁸ **RCU comment:** *A challenge for Iran has been the frequent turnover of higher level DOE officials who need to be brought up to speed by the NPM. Support varied with the individual leading, and was strongest initially under the first NPD – Mr Anoushirvan Najafi – who had both interest and influence.*

maintained in the future. This is most apparent in the case of the management plan at Fereydoon Kenar²⁰⁹ (see paragraph 36). However, information from a range of interviewees suggests that the wheels of the Government's bureaucracy grind slowly on most issues and that the slow follow-up should not be taken as a sign of little interest. Certainly the Wildlife Department displayed enthusiasm for what the Project had achieved and indicated its intention to act to build on its achievements – the issue appears to be when this might be.

- **Kazakhstan:** Perhaps of all the four countries involved, the Government of Kazakhstan has shown the most drive within the Project. While acknowledging that in terms of capacity it starts from a lower baseline than its partner countries, the FHC has embraced the Project with open arms, recognising the benefits it has brought in building the capacity of its central- and reserve-based staff as well as to strengthening the protected area network. Although the Project started much later than elsewhere because of re-organisation and funding issues (see paragraph 23), the Government worked closely with the Project to ensure a number of high profile successes, notably the designation of four new Ramsar sites, the designation of Naurzum as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the establishment of Zharsor-Urkash Lakes as a new zakaznik, and it was particularly proud that it had left none of the Projects aims unachieved. Despite recognising that they cannot continue to work at such a “high level”, the FHC has demonstrated its commitment to building on what is described as “*one of the best projects implemented in Kazakhstan which achieved a great deal*” by copying the ideas demonstrated in the Project for the *National Programme for the Conservation of Lesser White-fronted Goose* and its request to the Project for a list of proposals for follow-up activities²¹⁰, which were supplied by the ITA. The FHC also indicated that while lack of money remained a problem for it, providing appropriate levels of staff and resources to the various protected areas was a priority and while it may take a time to achieve, it would be done since it was a stated objective of the Government. The TE did see signs of this on the ground during a visit to Naurzum.
- **Russia:** The Federal Government has been conspicuous by its absence from this Project. As recorded in paragraphs 60 and 66, the Ministry of Natural Resources failed to engage fully as the national executing agency, at first delegating ARRINP to that role. Subsequent prolonged (some say repeated) re-organisations resulted in serious instability for ARRINP, seven changes of director (nominally the NPD), and consequent negative impacts for the functioning of the NCU (whose office were located therein) and the NPSC. Philosophical differences from the Project, and the Project/UNEP's rejection of attempted interference in appointing a new NPM and new host NCU, led to further retrenchment of the Ministry, and a continued confrontational approach led UNEP to agree to work independently for most of the second phase of the Project²¹¹. The UNEP Task Manager even notes in the PIR 2007 in the external risk section under “social, cultural and economic factors” that,

“Russian management ‘culture’ detrimental to efficient work and needed ‘problem solving’ approach”.

In addition, during phase one of the Project, the Ministry of Agriculture divested itself of its responsibilities for the federal level zakazniki (two of which, Belozersky and Kunovat, in western Siberia were Project sites) without making any formal transfer of jurisdiction for these to another body, thereby creating a vacuum. While on paper they still existed, they had no budget, no staff, and no legal powers. Considerable disquiet was expressed by a number of interviewees over the Federal Government's general approach to nature conservation, the common theme being that it is viewed as more of an obstacle to development of natural resources than as a national benefit. The TE has no intention of second-guessing the motives of a sovereign government in conducting its own affairs; nonetheless perhaps the GEF should seek stronger commitments for engagement of the federal authorities in future projects involving Russia and monitor the effectiveness of such engagement more closely.

²⁰⁹ **RCU comment:** Note that management plans for PAs come under a different division of DOE – Nature Reserve Management, so the Wildlife Division can only push so far under its jurisdiction.

²¹⁰ **RCU comment:** ICF, WI and UNEP attempted in 2010 to develop a UNEP/GEF regional project for Central Asia for GEF5, with good support from FHC in Kazakhstan. However, it was impossible to pull together due to the constraints of the GEF STAR system in multiple countries. Additionally we have tried a similar type of project but now focussing on NE China wetlands which had been fully designed, approved by the SFA China in Beijing, as well as secured over \$12million in cash co-finance, yet the Chinese national GEF focal point did not support this.

²¹¹ Long **UNEP comment** – reproduced in Annex XI.

122. At the regional level, the TE has little firm information regarding western Siberia. The MTR reported that:

“The management of regional [provincial] zakazniki has also been affected by the reforms [at the federal level]. At [Konda and Alymka River Basin Wetlands], the administrative authority of two regional zakazniki (Sterkh 1 and Sterkh 2²¹²) has been transferred from the Department of Hunting (MoA) to the Tyumen Oblast Administration. This has led to serious problems with staffing and protection and resulted in threatening incursions into the zakazniki for oil prospecting and logging. UNEP and RCU should consider putting the work program at affected sites and corresponding GEF funding on hold until guarantees from the government of the RF can be obtained pertaining to the status and conservation ‘future’ of the SCWP sites.”

More recent information from the Yamalo-Nenetsky Autonomous Region suggests that Alexander Ermakov, head of the Sterkh Foundation, has developed very strong support from the Regional Government including financial help for awareness-raising work with local stakeholders. In Yakutia, however, the Government of the Sakha Republic has been supportive of the Project throughout and was at pains to point out that it regarded its green image as very important. It has supported legal moves to upgrade the Kytalyk Regional Reservation to a Regional Zakaznik; is moving to upgrade all wetland sites on its territory on the shadow list of Ramsar to full status (although it requires help to do this and may need to involve the Federal Government as well); and indicated that it was commencing implementation of the management plan for Kytalyk produced by the Project, although alternative views persist (see paragraph 36).

Country driven-ness and coordination is largely irrelevant to a project driven at a supra-national level through the CMS and led by a very competent international NGO, the ICF. Nonetheless, full engagement of countries’ central authorities, even in a supportive rather than leading role, apparently makes a huge difference – the results from Kazakhstan and China being particularly praiseworthy, while those from Iran have been more modest, and those from Russia attributable more to the dedication of the scientists involved rather than to any government involvement, although provincial government assistance particularly in Yakutia has compensated for a lack of central level support. In view of the mixed experiences, country driven-ness and coordination is evaluated as Satisfactory (but with Russia evaluated as Highly Unsatisfactory).

RECOMMENDATIONS

123. The recommendation herewith cannot help with the SCWP which has ended but is made to help future flyway-scale or regional projects.

The GEF Secretariat should take cognizance of the joint SCWP/WOW/UNEP publication “*The Experience of UNEP GEF and Partners in Flyway Conservation*”. This publication provides some important insights and lessons learned from the joint experience of the two projects and some excellent recommendations covering the technical design, management arrangements, and monitoring and evaluation of flyway-scale projects. Unfortunately, the publication was reviewed by a member of the STAP roster who appears to have had little if any experience of dealing with migratory systems or the design and implementation of large GEF projects, and as a result it appears that the GEF never took formal note of this publication. The GEF Secretariat should reconsider this by having the publication re-reviewed as soon as possible by a member of the STAP with relevant experience of GEF projects, and distribute it to design teams and management teams of future flyway projects.

- Recommendation 1: UNEP should request that the GEF Secretariat reconsiders the joint SCWP/WOW/UNEP publication “*The Experience of UNEP GEF and Partners in Flyway Conservation*” and take cognizance of it in the design and implementation of future flyway-scale projects, or at the very least have it re-reviewed (see paragraph 59).

²¹² The RCU point out that Sterkh 1 and 2 should read as Stershini 1 and 2 – but the passage is a direct quote.

LESSONS LEARNED

124. Lessons learned have been arranged under project-related headings, and cross-referenced back to the paragraph where they appear. Further discussion and key points for future projects have been added in this section. It is important to point out that the SCWP Project, together with the WOW Project, produced an excellent publication entitled "*The Experience of UNEP GEF and Partners in Flyway Conservation*"²¹³ which discusses the lessons learned at many levels arising from the experience of the two projects (see paragraph 59), as well as collating a number of lessons learned in a paper²¹⁴ given at the Project Completion Workshop in Harbin, China in October 2009 and in the Project's terminal Report "*Safe Flyways*"; all of which the reader is encouraged to view. Many of the lessons learned given immediately below have arisen from discussions with persons interviewed during the evaluation and the TE thanks them for their insights.

STRATEGIC

#1 **The GEF should consolidate, promote, and expand flyway conservation efforts on a global scale.**

Given the maxim that animals do not recognise political boundaries, and also given that intersectoral cooperation is seen as a lynchpin of GEF's approach within a national context, it would seem natural that the regional cooperation necessary to conserve migratory systems would be strongly evident within the GEF portfolio. It is not. It maybe that GEF has been waiting to see how such complex projects perform. The answer appears to be very well – both the SCWP and the WOW Project have been selected as being amongst the best 20 projects by the UNEP Division of GEF Coordination to showcase the work of UNEP in the first 20 years of the GEF²¹⁵. Yet GEF appears to be moving in the other direction – the nationally focussed System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) placing significant constraints upon international projects. Given the importance of international cooperation to conserving migratory animals at the appropriate scale, and given the paucity of international funding mechanisms available that enable a regional/global conservation approach, GEF resources should continue to be made available for them.

See paragraph 105

Key point for future:

- a) *GEF should develop funding mechanisms/allocations such as set-aside funding envelopes for the development of global, regional and transboundary, migratory fauna and flyway-scale projects, which are not dependent on the present system of national STAR allocations under GEF.*

DESIGN

#2 **Designing a project to be part of a much longer and wider process generates huge benefits for sustainability, and through the synergies developed provides the intervention with much greater effectiveness than that which can be achieved by stand-alone projects.**

This is probably the single most important lesson learned from the SCWP and is applicable to all GEF projects, not just those operating at a flyway- or regional-scale. The SCWP was designed, and always seen during its implementation, as being part of a much longer process. It was fitted within the framework provided by the CMS Siberian Crane MoU and guided by the requirements of the Conservation Plans drawn up under that agreement. As a result it was preceded by considerable amounts of other work that provided a solid platform on which to build its achievements and, perhaps even more importantly, it has structures in place to support those achievements after its end. Consequently, not only has the SCWP achieved a great deal, those achievements are set to last well into the future and perhaps act as the foundation upon which to set the next building blocks – a reality unfortunately all too rare with GEF projects.

See paragraph 114

Key points for future projects:

²¹³ UNEP GEF Portfolio Outlook and Evolution: Biodiversity Issue Paper BD/001.

²¹⁴ Mirande, C. and Prentice, C.. 2009. Conservation of Flyway Wetlands in Asia using the Siberian Crane as a Flagship Species: An Overview of the Outcomes of the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project. In: Prentice C. (Ed.) *Conservation of Flyway Wetlands in East and West/Central Asia. Proceedings of the Project Completion Workshop of the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project, 14-15 October 2009, Harbin, China.* Baraboo (Wisconsin), USA: International Crane Foundation.

²¹⁵ <http://www.unep.org/dgef/GEF20BestProjects/tabid/55715/Default.aspx>

- a) *Wherever possible, GEF projects should be designed within an existing demonstrable process to promote the chances their accomplishments being sustainable.*
- b) *Where this is not possible, sustainability can be improved by the project trying to establish such a process as part of its defined activities. Designing a sustainability plan into the management activities from a project's mid-point can catalyse this, e.g. on a simplistic scale, see the UNDP-GEF project Community-based Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mountain Landscapes of Mongolia's Altai Sayan Eco-region.*

#3 **When selecting a flagship species for a project, care should be taken not to choose one too close to extirpation from the sites addressed, or if unavoidable then the project should ensure a wide focus.** The Project has provided another clear example of the value of using a flagship species approach to provide conservation benefits to a wide range of other species by providing the inspirational focus for the work. Selecting a flagship species which is rare has the added advantage of galvanising people and institutions to act quickly to overcome threats that might otherwise lead to its extinction. However, the Project has also shown that selecting a flagship species too close to local extinction in some areas of its range has unintended consequences of halting or delaying conservation actions and re-focussing priorities elsewhere, if the population declines or dies out. Even where this is for reasons unconnected with the project, the project can still be viewed as having failed, particularly if its emphasis has been too narrow. Unfortunately, such views are often held by those with little understanding of the issues, but who nonetheless control the purse-strings.

See paragraph 109

Key points for future projects:

- a) *Use of charismatic flagship species is a good vehicle for projects, but try to ensure that their populations are robust enough within the project areas to remain extant throughout.*
- b) *Where very rare species are selected, try to ensure that sufficient weight is given to other species or habitats that they are being used as an umbrella to protect.*

#4 **Having several sites in each country makes managing a project more cost-effective than having only one site in each of many countries.** One of the aspects in which the SCWP has been more cost-effective than the WOW Project has been by having several sites in a few countries rather than a single site in many countries. While this is in part because the SCWP operated in Asia where large countries predominate, the end result has been to cut management, travel and communication costs, and to increase the level of coordination between sites. It also means that actions taken at national level (e.g. legal- and policy-based actions will affect more than just one site. While the political reality of the Africa-Eurasia flyway inherently involves more countries, future flyway-scale projects are likely to prove more effective if resources are not spread too thinly.

See paragraph 87

Key points for future projects:

- a) *Designers of flyway-scale projects should seek to maximise coordination and minimise management costs by focussing site-based interventions on several sites within a few countries, wherever possible.*

#5 **It is important that a project's design takes real account of national constraints.** While most of the SCWP has proved successful, there have been a few instances of problems arising because the intended activities did not have the right platforms on which to build. Two examples of this have been the introduction of participatory management planning in China, and the introduction of integrated management plans for PAs in Iran. In the former, there has been no culture of involving local people in political or technical decision-making so that "participatory" in this instance has really meant increasing intersectoral cooperation, which has resulted in the very successful water management plans in NE China. However, this is probably not at the scale the designers originally contemplated, since even those communities where alternative livelihood development has been taking place have not been participating seriously in real decision-making. At Fereydoon Kenar, in Iran, there is no administrative context nor legal framework for implementing a management plan and hence although much good work was undertaken in involving local people in the development of one, subsequently little action has been taken by the DoE in approving it and none whatever in trying to implement it. This has been exacerbated by institutional/cultural barriers that remain within the DOE to the effective use of management plans. These national constraints could and should have been understood fully by the designers and variations in the overall concept introduced to allow the project to work more effectively in each country.

See paragraph 14

Key points for future projects:

- a) *Designers should make themselves more aware of cultural and administrative constraints within target countries, rather than trying to "impose" international best-practice uniformly.*

#6 **Changing people's behaviour takes time – allow for it in design.** Most projects involve the aim of changing people's behaviour, whether this be site managers or local communities. This usually involves training, education, or other means of introducing new concepts. In all cases, designers tend to allow enough time for these activities, but not always enough time for the implementation of the behavioural change itself, which often requires continual reinforcement. It is not that projects need to be longer, rather that the changes sought need to be introduced earlier in the project to enable them to bear fruit.

General

Key points for future projects:

- a) *Designers should seek to timetable training and education activities as early as practical into a project.*
- b) *Designers should ensure that reinforcement activities are included into a project, especially where the intended behavioural change is likely to be large, or where the unwanted behaviour is ingrained, and include adequate budgets for this.*

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

#7 **Hire the right people from the start.**

and

#8 **Do not delay in making changes where project management is failing.** The SCWP's biggest problems arose from the incorrect selection of a national project manager in Russia and were then compounded by being unable, or unwilling, to recognise that change was necessary in the face of unacceptable results. While the circumstances surrounding this are wholly understandable, this is not the first project that the TE has come across where the role of project manager has been given to a scientist because of their previously leading role in academic research. Scientists can make good project managers but in the absence of a proven track record, it may be better to appoint on a results-based probationary period, or to appoint a person with proven project management experience as the manager and the scientist in a technical role.

See paragraph 70

Key points for future projects:

- a) *Projects should ensure they employ people with the right skills in the right roles; and*
- b) *If subsequently the person does not perform according to expectations or need, there should be no delay in making the changes necessary to ensure the success of the project.*

#9 **The role of Operations Manager is crucial for regional projects at both regional and national levels – the latter should not be underestimated.** While the SCWP employed an Operations Manager with extensive work experience in international agencies early in the first year of implementation, insufficient attention was paid to this role when developing the NCUs where the technical and managerial roles were emphasised. As a result, difficulties were encountered through weak or insufficient staffing for operational functions and in Kazakhstan and Russia, no Operations Manager was employed. In contrast, once the deficiency had been diagnosed, employment of highly capable individuals in this role in China and Iran enabled significant improvements in operational efficiency to accrue and freed other staff to concentrate more effectively on their other duties.

See paragraph 70

Key points for future projects:

- a) *The role of Operations Manager is crucial to the success of both regional and national components of a multi-country project, and should be staffed accordingly.*

#10 It helps if projects could have guidance from GEF or the GEF Implementing Agency on how to manage a big project. One of the very few complaints reported by the project about UNEP was the fact that there was no formal guidance available on what was needed to manage a project of this size. In fact the TE finds this to be a recurrent problem, irrespective of the project's size – project managers often being new to running such projects and hence unfamiliar with the type and scale of GEF reporting and accounting procedures.

See paragraph 21

Key points for future projects:

- a) *GEF Implementing Agencies could help themselves and the projects being implemented under their remit if they provided formal guidance (and possibly training) on managing large-scale projects.*
- b) *Issue the SCWP Operations Manual to all UNEP-GEF projects during their inception phase as a tool to assist project management teams and enable them to adapt it to their specific needs.*

#11 The inception period is very valuable – allow sufficient time. The SCWP placed great importance on ensuring that the inception phase was carried out effectively and did not rush into the implementation process immediately upon full operational status being achieved. Despite an untimely outbreak of SARS in China when the main inception workshop had been planned, the Project simply re-scheduled smaller, single country ones as soon as possible thereafter. Also, despite the significant delay in the commencement of the Project in Kazakhstan, time was still taken to carry out an inception workshop and a mini-steering committee meeting to ensure the proper foundations for work there were laid. This is in marked contrast to the WOW Project where no inception workshop was held, despite the huge changes that had occurred between the design and commencement of the project. A comparison of the resultant smooth implementation of the SCWP and the fractured and problematic implementation of WOW is instructive. The importance of taking time to study the situation at project start-up calmly, to collect the experience from as many sources as possible prior to commencing to plan the implementation process, to revisit carefully the current legal, policy and institutional conditions within the relevant countries has been found by the TE to have stood a number of projects in good stead, e.g. Uzbekistan²¹⁶, Latvia²¹⁷.

See paragraph 20

Key points for future projects:

- a) *All GEF projects should ensure that sufficient time is allocated to the inception period even if delays have been incurred before or at commencement. Inception periods should never be seen as wasted time – a careful and thorough re-assessment of the situation at the outset always pays dividends.*

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT

#12 Alternative livelihoods must take account of the level of existing incomes. The SCWP introduced a wide range of alternative livelihood initiatives across a wide range of situations. The majority of these appear to have been successful to varying degrees. Only one appears to have failed outright, that designed by a former Reserve Director who lacked commitment to the role of alternative livelihoods in protecting wetland resources, but which produces an interesting lesson. At Zhalong NNR, China, a scheme was introduced to produce handicrafts made from reed for sale to tourists. Although training was provided and the people encouraged, it appears one simple fact had been overlooked – the people involved were simply not poor enough for the scheme to be attractive! While not a common occurrence, it does illustrate the need to ensure that adequate attention is paid to the baseline situation before designing and/or commencing a scheme.

See paragraph 42

Key points for future projects:

- a) *Projects need to determine the existing levels of income of intended recipients and to tailor proposed alternative livelihood options accordingly.*

²¹⁶ UNDP-GEF – Conservation of Tugai Forest and Strengthening Protected Areas System in the Amu Darya Delta of Karakalpakstan

²¹⁷ UNDP-GEF – Biodiversity Protection in the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve

#13 Micro-credit schemes need to start very early in a project.

And

#14 Link micro-credit to other expertise – at least two micro-credit schemes were introduced by the Project; both very different in how they were financed and in how loans were made. In Keerqin NNR, China, funding of the scheme was solely by the Project and rates of interest charged are probably too small to sustain the fund over the long-term. At Fereydoon Kenar, Iran, a steady supply of self-funding will maintain the original grant from the Project. However, while the scheme at Keerqin is working well, that in Iran is struggling, mainly because it was introduced too late in the Project to be effective²¹⁸. The society and economic conditions at Fereydoon Kenar are much more sophisticated than those at Keerqin, and too little time was allowed for the development of the business plans that were really a necessary partner to help guide the investment of micro-credit loans. At Keerqin, money is used solely to buy seed, fertilizer, and other agricultural supplies or tools and investment is based solely on the growing season. This simpler model, plus the earlier introduction of the scheme, has made it much more successful. Furthermore, the design and establishment of micro-credit schemes have a number of subtle nuances that can mean the difference between success and failure. In many countries, the UNDP country offices have Poverty and Human Development Units who have much expertise in the micro-credit field. Consultation with such units could greatly help the likely success of schemes²¹⁹ – but starting such schemes early in a project’s life remains a priority.

See paragraph 42

Key points for future projects:

- a) *Plan to establish micro-credit schemes very early in a project since it enables the benefits to accrue, problems to be solved, and the goodwill generated to be translated into actions required by the project.*
- b) *Micro-credit is a complex field. Projects should seek all help that is available. UNDP’s Poverty and Human Development Units maybe such a source.*

FINANCE

#15 Good project management and project oversight has a minimum cost. Good projects require good management and oversight, and while all donors like to keep the proportion of funds spent on these to a minimum, there comes a limit beyond which financial constraints end up being self-defeating. The TE is not alone in believing that that proportion has been reached with the 10% cap in management fees introduced with GEF-4 and that the 5% level of GEF-% is really a step too far.

See paragraph 79

Key point for future projects:

- a) *GEF should review its guidelines on the maximum proportion of funds to be used for project management since there is widespread belief that these are now set unrealistically low.*
- b) *the maximum level should be used as a guide not a rule – the complexity of a project should be taken into consideration when determining its management needs and costs – simple rules do not always apply.*

#16 The time between reporting on spending and the release of future funds is too short to facilitate uninterrupted cash flow. The key to this problem appears to be the link between the release of monies for the forthcoming quarter on the basis of a budget forecast to the report on monies spent against activities undertaken in the previous quarter. In the current Project, even when things were running smoothly, the time needed to collect the previous quarter’s information from all of the Project sites, compile a report and budget, and submit them to the RCU left no time for the UN’s procedures and approval process that reportedly took six weeks between the NCU submitting their cash advance statement to the RCU and the eventual submission into the RCU-SCWP account. To that, time needed to be added subsequently for the actual bank transfer to occur, e.g. the China NCU reported that a month would elapse between money being transferred from ICF’s American bank account before its

See paragraph 85

²¹⁸ **RCU comment:** *This work was planned for much earlier in the project, but delays were encountered in finding a suitably skilled facilitator (consultant), and during project implementation (as noted elsewhere in the TE report) for various bureaucratic reasons.*

²¹⁹ **RCU comment:** *The facilitator in Iran previously worked with UNDP CO on such work and there was some coordination with the GEF Small Grants Programme on this work. The lesson learned is relevant.*

arrival in a local bank account and, in some cases, another month for the correct approvals to be obtained enabling its exchange from US dollars into local currency (e.g. China).

Key points for future projects:

- a) *UNEP should decouple the release of funds requested in the next quarter's cash advance statement from the previous quarter's spending report but link it instead to the quarter-before-last.*

#17 Translation is a major issue for management. One of the issues raised by numerous people involved in the NCUs was that of translation, particularly in relation to what was perceived as the heavy reporting requirements of UNEP-GEF. It was widely felt that someone in the NCU needed to be capable of translating documents into English, a task usually falling to the project manager, but neither time nor budget was allowed for this process²²⁰ resulting in declining morale as it saps time and energy from other things.

See paragraph 95

Key points for future projects:

- a) *Project management budgets should take account of the time needed for translation or allow periodic employment of translation services.*

COMMUNICATION

#18 Everyone needs to have an understanding of the value of reporting. The usual complaints were aired by all levels of management about the burden of reporting and accounting for UNEP-GEF. While this is to be expected, there were widely differing interpretations as to its purpose. In the RCU, and later in China, the level of reporting required was (or came to be recognised) as an important planning tool. In Iran and Kazakhstan, it was never viewed as anything other than tiresome bureaucracy. In Russia, at least early on, it was viewed as intrusive oversight. These varying concepts of the same process are enlightening. Where viewed as a tool, reporting was done diligently and with the understanding that although time-consuming, the process would have future benefits. This was not the case elsewhere. It is, perhaps, conducive of the GEF Implementing Agency to ensure that everyone involved in the reporting process within a project understands why the information is being requested, what it is used for, and how it is of benefit to the persons involved²²¹.

See paragraph 95

Key points for future projects:

- a) *During the inception period (Inception Workshop?) ensure that all aspects of the reporting process are fully understood and appreciated by those involved.*
- b) *Issue standardised explanation of how and where UNEP and GEF use semi-annual reports, PIRs and similar, during inception workshop and as a reminder document issued with the request to commence each reporting process. **Alternatively:** Add the same information to the Operations Manual discussed under Lessons Learned #9.*

#19 Films are effective for awareness-raising²²². A small, and in retrospect somewhat obvious lesson, but making and showing films is an excellent way to reach a very wide audience. In the SCWP, as far as the TE can tell, only in Kazakhstan was a film-maker commissioned to produce (three) films about the Project. Although some of the wildlife photography left a little to be desired, these films were highly informative and, when shown at the various Crane Festivals, were said to have reached an audience of over 30,000 people. Some projects, including the SCWP (e.g. in Iran) get programmes or interviews onto state or local television channels, but making and getting films shown on television is rare.

See paragraph 46

Key points for future projects:

²²⁰ Long RCU comment – reproduced in Annex XI.

²²¹ **UNEP comment:** *see my previous response on the same. This basic information and explanation has been given on numerous occasion yet it is to be questioned why any project should feel the need to defend the principle of reporting on expenditures and technical progress. It is my view that indeed more thorough NCU staff selection could have helped!* **TE response:** The TE does not view this as the need for a project to “defend” the principle of reporting, but to explain to project staff, often on their first major project and often with limited capacity, the need for such reporting in such a way as they can understand its importance. While UNEP maintain that this was done, the evidence on the ground suggests that it was not done effectively by ICF or UNEP.

²²² Long RCU comment – reproduced in Annex XI.

- a) *Project designers should recognise the power that the medium of film possesses and should be encouraged to include the activity and its associated budget within a project as part of the general communications strategy.*

ANNEX I : TERMINAL EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terminal Independent Evaluation of the UNEP GEF project

China, Iran, Kazakhstan & Russian Federation – Development of a Wetland Site and Flyway Network for Conservation of the Siberian Crane and Other Migratory Waterbirds in Asia

Project Number: GF/2712-03-4627

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

GEF Project ID: GF/2712-03-; PMS: GF/6030-03-

Project duration: 72 Months

Commencing: March 2003

Completion: January 2009

Country: Regional: China, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan & Russian Federation

Project Title: China, Iran, Kazakhstan & Russian Federation – Development of a Wetland Site and Flyway Network for Conservation of the Siberian Crane and Other Migratory Waterbirds in Asia

GEF Implementing Agency: UNEP

Other Executing partners: International Crane Foundation (ICF) in collaboration with National Executing Agencies

GEF Strategic Objective: BD2 – Coastal, Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems

Cost to the GEF trust fund: US\$ 10,000,000

Co-Financing: US\$ 13,116,370

In-Kind Contribution: of which US\$ 7,985,000 in-kind

Project rationale

The project aimed to develop a coordinated approach towards the conservation of a chain of internationally important wetlands along two flyways used by the Critically Endangered Siberian Crane *Grus leucogeranus*. It encompassed actions at site, provincial, national and international levels in four Asian countries namely China, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan and Russian Federation.

The governments of China, Iran, Kazakhstan and Russia recognize the importance of their countries' wetland biodiversity and have made commitments under international conventions and agreements to conserve wetlands of international importance and threatened waterbird species. Additional technical and financial assistance, however, is required to strengthen capacity in each of these countries in order to achieve flyway conservation goals, in view of the difficulties being experienced during their current social and economic transitions.

The approach of this project was to use the Siberian Crane as a flagship for wetland conservation and international cooperation, and the strategy for project implementation is inextricably linked to the life history of this species.

The project's Development objective as stated in the Logical framework was:

"Globally significant wetlands and migratory waterbirds conserved in Asia"

The Project's Immediate Objective as stated in the Logical Framework was:

"Improved ecological integrity and viability of the network of critical wetlands needed by the Siberian Crane, migratory waterbirds and other globally significant wetland biodiversity"

The implementation of the project consisted of two phases, each with a proposed duration of 3 years, and with lessons learned from phase 1 incorporated into phase 2. This Terminal Evaluation covers both phases of the project.

The project was divided into three main components, reflecting different levels of intervention: site, national and regional flyway. Together these components will provide a comprehensive approach to the protection of

a network of important flyway wetlands, including a substantial programme of practical site management activities.

(a) Site level

The project will address threats to key wetlands of international importance that are of critical importance for the conservation of the Siberian Crane and other migratory waterbirds.

(b) National level

The project will undertake specific actions to strengthen the national legislative, policy and planning framework for wetland and waterbird conservation, strengthen capacity for international cooperation, and undertake activities that support site conservation such as monitoring, training, education and public awareness programmes.

(c) International level

The project will focus on building capacity for the coordination of flyway networks of wetlands along the West/Central and East Asian flyways for migratory waterbirds, led by sites of importance for the flagship species. These networks will be carefully coordinated with other flyway conservation initiatives in order to form an integrated programme, contributing significantly towards the implementation of international conventions.

Relevance to GEF Programmes

The project contributes directly to GEF Operational Program #2 Coastal, Marine and Freshwater Systems. The project directly addresses OP #2 objective of *the conservation and sustainable use of the biological resources in freshwater ecosystems*, and will generate substantial global benefits.

This project is designed to support the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity CBD which all four participating countries have ratified. The project also adheres to the principles of the Joint Work Plan (1998) between the CBD and the Ramsar Convention, and addresses many of the objectives of the Ramsar Convention Work Plan 2000-2002.

Executing Arrangements

UNEP is the Implementing Agency for this GEF project. The International Crane Foundation (ICF) will serve as the International Executing Agency and will handle the overall management, administration and financial management of the project. ICF will coordinate activities with CMS under the MoU and CMS will organize the Steering Committee Meetings and provide advice on flyway issues.

The project will be executed by the Governments of China, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, and the Russian Federation with overall responsibility vested with the following National Executing Agencies (NEAs):

China: State Forestry Administration

Islamic Republic of Iran: Department of the Environment

Kazakhstan: Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection

Russian Federation: Ministry of Natural Resources / All Russia Research Institute for Nature Protection

These agencies will implement the project in collaboration with other national, provincial and local government agencies, NGOs, and local communities. In order to ensure joint programming of GEF interventions with related projects, formal and informal inter-agency links will be maintained.

Project Activities

The implementation of the project consisted of two phases, each with a proposed duration of 3 years, and with lessons learned from phase 1 incorporated into phase 2. Project activities during Phase 1 were planned to address those sites that are under most immediate threat, are most critical for the life cycle and survival of the endangered Siberian Crane, and that are also most critical for a range of other globally significant

species. Phase 2 was scheduled to address sites important to the Siberian Crane and other globally significant species, but under a less urgent level of threat. It was also scheduled to include sites for which a period greater than three years is required to accomplish conservation objectives; these sites were planned to be included in both phases (i.e., those sites with very significant interventions, or with activities that by necessity take a long period to implement).

The project was divided into three main components, reflecting different levels of intervention: site, national and regional flyway. The planned outputs under each component were stated as follows:

Component 1: Conservation of globally significant wetland biodiversity at the project sites

- Output 1.1: Appropriate legal protection, clear regulations and identified enforcement responsibilities in place at selected project sites
- Output 1.2: Participatory management plans for the conservation of selected project sites developed and implemented
- Output 1.3: External threats to sites reduced through off-site activities
- Output 1.4: Implementation of site management plans is supported by application of results of applied field studies
- Output 1.5: Sustainable, alternative livelihood projects developed with local communities in and around selected project sites
- Output 1.6: Capacity of staff of relevant agencies strengthened to ensure effective implementation of site management plans
- Output 1.7: Awareness of wetland biodiversity values raised among stakeholders

Component 2: National measures to strengthen wetland and migratory waterbird conservation

- Output 2.1: Improvements made to national and sectoral legislation, policies, plans, and financial mechanisms in support of the conservation of migratory waterbirds and wetland biodiversity
- Output 2.2: Wetland biodiversity input to provincial land use planning, water resource management and coastal zone management through baseline surveys, monitoring and improved inter-sectoral cooperation
- Output 2.3: Monitoring programme implemented on distribution and movements of the Siberian Crane and other globally significant migratory waterbirds
- Output 2.4: Measures undertaken at national level to enhance international cooperation
- Output 2.5: Training programme implemented to enhance national capacity for wetland and waterbird management
- Output 2.6: Environmental education and public awareness measures undertaken at national level

Component 3: Enhanced international cooperation for the development of wetland site networks

- Output 3.1: Regional flyway networks developed in Western/Central Asia and Eastern Asia, and a programme of regional activities undertaken within the framework of adopted conservation plans for cranes
- Output 3.2: Results of project disseminated for the benefit of the global conservation community

Budget

At project inception the following budget was prepared:

Cost of the Project:	US\$	%
Cost to the GEF Trust Fund	10,000,000	43.26
<i>Co-financing (in-cash)</i>		
ICF	122,000	0.52
CMS	120,000	0.51
Governments:		
China	3,913,000	16.92
<i>Co-financing (in-kind)</i>		
ICF	618,000	2.67
CMS	36,000	0.15
Governments:		
China	2,025,000	8.76
Iran	1,410,000	6.09
Kazakhstan	2,533,000	10.95
Russian Federation	1,363,000	5.89
Total Cost	23,116,000	100.00

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

1. Objective and Scope of the Evaluation

The objective of this Terminal Evaluation is to examine the extent and magnitude of any project impacts to date and determine the likelihood of future impacts. The evaluation will also assess project performance and the implementation of planned project activities and planned outputs against actual results. The evaluation will also assess the extent to which recommendations provided by the Mid-Term Review were taken into consideration.

The evaluation will focus on the following main questions:

1. To what extent did the project improve the conservation status of globally significant wetlands, flyway networks and migratory waterbirds?
2. Did the project succeed raising awareness of local communities and governments about the importance of wetland and waterbird conservation and improve the capacity of participating countries to cooperate on regional/international level?
3. Did the project succeed in strengthening national legislative, policy and planning frameworks for wetland and waterbird conservation? Was the approach expedient?
4. Could it be stated that the attitude towards wetland and waterbird conservation in the participating countries has become more positive as a consequence of the project?
5. Did the project adequately adapt to emerging issues such as CC, changed local governance to PA and wetland management, or local capacity issues?
6. Did the project adopt appropriate participatory approaches and conservation measures?
7. Did the project incorporate an adequate balance between long term biodiversity conservation goals, short-term social needs and human capacity, as well as fairness in its practices?
8. Did the project contribute significantly towards the implementation of relevant MEAs in the project countries?
9. Did the project's flyway conservation approach demonstrate significant benefits over and above national conservation approaches, and is this of importance for future GEF programming?
10. Did the project's focus on tangible interventions at project sites effectively contribute to the strengthening of the site network (i.e., legal protection, participatory site management plans, external threats, sustainable alternative livelihoods, capacity building, applied field studies)?

2. Methods

This Terminal Evaluation will be conducted as an in-depth evaluation using a participatory mixed-methods approach, during which the UNEP/DGEF Task Manager, key representatives of the Executing Agencies and other relevant staff are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation. The consultant will liaise with the UNEP Evaluation Office and the UNEP/DGEF Task Manager on any logistic and/or methodological issues to properly conduct the review in as independent a way as possible, given the circumstances and resources offered. The draft report will be delivered to the Evaluation Office. The Chief of Evaluation will circulate the report to UNEP/DGEF Task Manager, who will then distribute the report to key representatives of the Executing Agencies for comments. Any comments or responses to the draft report will be sent to the UNEP Evaluation Office for collation and the consultant will be advised of any necessary or suggested revisions.

The findings of the evaluation will be based on multiple approaches:

1. A desk review of project documents including, but not limited to:
 - (a) The project documents, outputs, monitoring reports (such as progress and financial reports to UNEP and GEF annual Project Implementation Review reports, Project Mid-Term Review) and relevant correspondence.
 - (b) Notes from the Steering Committee meetings.
 - (c) Other project-related material produced by the project staff or partners.
 - (d) Meeting reports, specifically on the MoU, flyways and other agreements joined by the project partners.
 - (e) Official and informal publications on project (results)
 - (f) Relevant material published on the project web-site.
2. Interviews with project management and technical support.
3. Interviews and telephone interviews with intended users for the project outputs and other stakeholders involved with this project, including in the participating countries and international bodies like CMS, RAMSAR, EAAFP Secretariat, and members of the Project Advisory Group. The Consultant shall determine whether to seek additional information and opinions from representatives of donor agencies and other organisations. As appropriate, these interviews could be combined with an email questionnaire, online survey, or other electronic communication.
4. Interviews with the UNEP/DGEF project Task Manager and Fund Management Officer, and other relevant staff in UNEP as necessary. The Consultant shall also gain broader perspectives from discussions with relevant GEF Secretariat staff.
5. Field visits²²³ to project staff and target audiences. The evaluator will make field visits to China, Kazakhstan, Iran and Russia, and key audiences for the project's outputs will be canvassed for their opinions in relation the project.

Key Evaluation principles

In attempting to evaluate any outcomes and impacts that the project may have achieved, evaluators should remember that the project's performance should be assessed by considering the difference between the answers to two simple questions "*what happened?*" and "*what would have happened anyway?*". These questions imply that there should be consideration of the baseline conditions and trends in relation to the intended project outcomes and impacts. In addition it implies that there should be plausible evidence to **attribute** such outcomes and impacts **to the actions of the project**.

Sometimes, adequate information on baseline conditions and trends is lacking. In such cases this should be clearly highlighted by the evaluator, along with any simplifying assumptions that were taken to enable the evaluator to make informed judgements about project performance.

²²³ Evaluators should make a brief courtesy call to GEF Country Focal points during field visits if at all possible.

3. Project Evaluation Parameters and Ratings

The success of project implementation will be rated on a scale from ‘highly unsatisfactory’ to ‘highly satisfactory’. In particular the evaluation shall **assess and rate** the project with respect to the **eleven categories (A-K)**²²⁴ defined below.

It should be noted that many of the evaluation parameters are interrelated. For example, the ‘achievement of objectives and planned results’ is closely linked to the issue of ‘sustainability’. Sustainability is understood as the probability of continued long-term project-derived outcomes and impacts and is, in turn, linked to the issues of ‘catalytic effects/ replication’ and, often, ‘country ownership’ and ‘stakeholder participation’.

The *ratings for the parameters A-K will be presented in the form of a table (see Annex I)*. Each of the eleven categories should be rated separately with **brief justifications** based on the findings of the main analysis. An overall rating for the project should also be given. The following rating system is to be applied:

HS	=	Highly Satisfactory
S	=	Satisfactory
MS	=	Moderately Satisfactory
MU	=	Moderately Unsatisfactory
U	=	Unsatisfactory
HU	=	Highly Unsatisfactory

A. Attainment of objectives and planned results:

The evaluation should assess the extent to which the project's major relevant objectives were effectively and efficiently achieved or are expected to be achieved and their relevance.

- *Effectiveness*: Evaluate the **overall likelihood of impact achievement**, taking into account the “achievement indicators”, the achievement of outcomes and the progress made towards impacts. UNEP’s Evaluation Office advocates the use of the **Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI)** method (described in Annex 6) to establish this rating.
- *Relevance*: In retrospect, were the project’s outcomes consistent with the focal areas/operational program strategies? Ascertain the nature and significance of the contribution of the project outcomes to relevant conventions and the wider portfolio of the GEF.
- *Efficiency*: Was the project cost effective? Was the project the least cost option? Was the project implementation delayed and if it was, then did that affect cost-effectiveness? Assess the contribution of cash and in-kind co-financing, and any additional resources leveraged by the project, to the project’s achievements. Did the project build on earlier initiatives; did it make effective use of available scientific and/ or technical information? Wherever possible, the evaluator should also compare the cost-time vs. outcomes relationship of the project with that of other similar projects..

B. Sustainability:

Sustainability is understood as the probability of continued long-term project-derived outcomes and impacts after the GEF project funding ends. The evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to contribute or undermine the persistence of benefits after the project ends. Some of these factors might be outcomes of the project, e.g. stronger institutional capacities or better informed decision-making. Other factors will include contextual circumstances or developments that are not outcomes of the project but that are relevant to the sustainability of outcomes. The evaluation should ascertain to what extent follow-up work has been initiated and how project outcomes will be sustained and enhanced over time. **Application of the ROtI method** described in Annex 6 will also assist in the evaluation of sustainability.

²²⁴ However, the views and comments expressed by the evaluator need not be restricted to these items.

Four aspects of sustainability should be addressed: financial, socio-political, institutional frameworks and governance, environmental (if applicable). The following questions provide guidance on the assessment of these aspects:

- *Financial resources.* Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes and onward progress towards impact? What is the likelihood that financial and economic resources will not be available once the GEF assistance ends (resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and trends that may indicate that it is likely that in future there will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)? To what extent are the outcomes and eventual impact of the project dependent on continued financial support?
- *Socio-political.* Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes and onward progress towards impacts? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public/ stakeholder awareness in support of the long term objectives of the project?
- *Institutional framework.* To what extent is the sustenance of the outcomes and onward progress towards impacts dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance? What is the likelihood that institutional and technical achievements, legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes will allow for, the project outcomes/ benefits to be sustained? While responding to these questions consider if the required systems for accountability and transparency and the required technical know-how are in place.
- *Environmental.* Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project environmental benefits? The TE should assess whether certain activities in the project area will pose a threat to the sustainability of the project outcomes. For example; construction of dam in a protected area could inundate a sizable area and thereby neutralize the biodiversity-related gains made by the project; or, a newly established pulp mill might jeopardise the viability of nearby protected forest areas by increasing logging pressures; or a vector control intervention may be made less effective by changes in climate and consequent alterations to the incidence and distribution of malarial mosquitoes. Would these risks apply in other contexts where the project may be replicated?

C. Catalytic Role and Replication

The catalytic role of the GEF is embodied in its approach of supporting the creation an enabling environment, investing in activities which are innovative and show how new approaches and market changes can work, and supporting activities that upscale new approaches to a national (or regional) level to sustainably achieve global environmental benefits. The evaluation should assess whether the project, and in particular the training tools developed, have potential to be replicated, either in terms of expansion, extension or replication in other countries and/or regions and whether any steps have been taken by the project to do so and the relevance and feasibility of these steps.

The three categories approach combines all the elements that have been shown to catalyze results in international cooperation. Evaluations in the bilateral and multilateral aid community have shown time and again that activities at the micro level of skills transfer—piloting new technologies and demonstrating new approaches—will fail if these activities are not supported at the institutional or market level as well. Evaluations have also consistently shown that institutional capacity development or market interventions on a larger scale will fail if governmental laws, regulatory frameworks, and policies are not in place to support and sustain these improvements. And they show that demonstration, innovation and market barrier removal do not work if there is no follow up through investment or scaling up of financial means.

In general this catalytic approach can be separated into are three broad categories of GEF activities: (1) “**foundational**” and enabling activities, focusing on policy, regulatory frameworks, and national priority setting and relevant capacity (2) **demonstration** activities, which focus on demonstration, capacity development, innovation, and market barrier removal; and (3) **investment** activities, full-size projects with high rates of cofunding, catalyzing investments or implementing a new strategic approach at the national level.

In this context the evaluation should assess the catalytic role played by this project by consideration of the following questions:

- INCENTIVES: To what extent have the project activities provided incentives (socio-economic / market based) to contribute to catalyzing changes in stakeholder behaviours?
- INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE: To what extent have the project activities contributed to changing institutional behaviors?
- POLICY CHANGE: To what extent have project activities contributed to policy changes (and implementation of policy)?
- CATALYTIC FINANCING: To what extent did the project contribute to sustained follow-on financing from Government and / or other donors? (this is different from co-financing)
- PROJECT CHAMPIONS: To what extent have changes (listed above) been catalyzed by particular individuals or institutions (without which the project would not have achieved results)?

(Note: the **ROtI analysis** should contribute useful information to address these questions)

Replication approach, in the context of GEF projects, is defined as lessons and experiences coming out of the project that are replicated or scaled up in the design and implementation of other projects. Replication can have two aspects, *replication proper* (lessons and experiences are replicated in different geographic area) or *scaling up* (lessons and experiences are replicated within the same geographic area but funded by other sources).

Is the project suitable for replication? If so, has the project approach been replicated? If no effects are identified, the evaluation will describe the strategy / approach adopted by the project to promote replication effects.

D. Stakeholder participation / public awareness:

This consists of three related and often overlapping processes: (1) information dissemination, (2) consultation, and (3) “stakeholder” participation. Stakeholders are the individuals, groups, institutions, or other bodies that have an interest or stake in the outcome of the GEF- financed project. The term also applies to those potentially adversely affected by a project. Note: the RoTI analysis should assist the evaluator in identifying the key stakeholders in each step of the causal pathway from activities to objectives. The evaluation will specifically:

- Assess the mechanisms put in place by the project for identification and engagement of stakeholders in each participating country and establish, in consultation with the stakeholders, whether this mechanism was successful, and identify its strengths and weaknesses with respect to the achievement of the intended outcomes and objective of the project..
- Assess the degree and effectiveness of collaboration/ interactions between the various project partners and institutions during the course of implementation of the project.
- Assess the degree and effectiveness of any various public awareness activities that were undertaken during the course of implementation of the project.

E. Country ownership / driven-ness:

This is the relevance of the project to national development and environmental agendas, recipient country commitment, and regional and international agreements. The evaluation will:

- Assess the level of country ownership. Specifically, the evaluator should assess whether the project was effective in providing and communicating information on migratory waterbirds and their critical sites that catalyzed action in participating countries to improve decisions relating to the conservation of the waterbirds and planning and management of flyways in each country.
- Assess the level of country commitment to the generation and use of research related to migratory waterbirds and their critical sites during and after the project, including in regional and international fora.

F. Achievement of outputs and activities:

- Delivered outputs: Assessment of the project's success in producing each of the programmed outputs, both in **quantity and quality** as well as **usefulness and timeliness**.
- Assess the soundness and effectiveness of the methodologies used for developing the technical documents and related management options in the participating countries
- Assess to what extent the project outputs produced have the weight of scientific authority/ credibility, necessary to influence policy and decision-makers, particularly at the national level.

G. Preparation and Readiness

Were the project's objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe? Were the capacities of executing institution and counterparts properly considered when the project was designed? Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated in the project design? Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and the roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project implementation? Were counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities), enabling legislation, and adequate project management arrangements in place?

H. Implementation Approach and Adaptive Management:

This includes an analysis of the project's management framework, adaptation to changing conditions (adaptive management), partnerships in implementation arrangements, changes in project design, and overall project management. The evaluation will:

- Ascertain to what extent the project implementation mechanisms outlined in the project document have been closely followed and whether the project document was clear and realistic to enable effective and efficient implementation.
- Assess the role of the various committees established and the project execution arrangements at all levels policy decisions: (1) Steering Group; (2) day to day project management in each of the country Executing Agencies.
- Assess the extent to which the project responded to the mid-term review.
- Evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and adaptability of project management and how well the management was able to adapt to changes during the life of the project.
- Identify administrative, operational and/ or technical problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the project.

I. Monitoring and Evaluation:

The evaluation shall include an assessment of the quality, application and effectiveness of project monitoring and evaluation plans and tools, including an assessment of risk management based on the assumptions and risks identified in the project document. The Terminal Evaluation will assess whether the project met the minimum requirements for 'project design of M&E' and 'the application of the Project M&E plan' (see minimum requirements 1&2 in Annex 4). GEF projects must budget adequately for execution of the M&E plan, and provide adequate resources during implementation of the M&E plan. Project managers are also expected to use the information generated by the M&E system during project implementation to adapt and improve the project.

M&E during project implementation

(I) M&E Design. Projects should have sound M&E plans to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives. An M&E plan should include a baseline (including data, methodology, etc.), SMART indicators (see Annex 4) and data analysis systems, and evaluation studies at specific times to assess results. The time frame for various M&E activities and standards for outputs should have been specified.

The evaluator should use the following questions to help assess the M&E design aspects:

SMART-ness of Indicators

- Are there specific indicators in the logical framework for each of the project objectives and outcomes?

- Are the indicators relevant to the objectives and outcomes?
- Are the indicators for the objectives and outcomes sufficient?
- Are the indicators quantifiable?

Adequacy of Baseline Information

- Is there baseline information?
- Has the methodology for the baseline data collection been explained?
- Is desired level of achievement for indicators based on a reasoned estimate of baseline?

Arrangements for Monitoring of Implementation

- Has a budget been allocated for M&E activities?
- Have the responsibility centers for M&E activities been clearly defined?
- Has the time frame for M&E activities been specified?

Arrangements for Evaluation

- Have specific targets been specified for project outputs?
- Has the desired level of achievement been specified for all Indicators of Objectives and Outcomes?

(2) ***M&E Plan Implementation.*** A Terminal Evaluation should verify that:

- An M&E system was in place and facilitated timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period (perhaps through use of a logical framework or similar);
- Annual project reports and Progress Implementation Review (PIR) reports were complete, accurate and with well justified ratings;
- That the information provided by the M&E system was used during the project to improve project performance and to adapt to changing needs;
- And that projects had an M&E system in place with proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities.

(3) ***Budgeting and Funding for M&E Activities.*** The Terminal Evaluation should determine whether support for M&E was budgeted adequately and was funded in a timely fashion during implementation.

J. Financial Planning

Evaluation of financial planning requires assessment of the quality and effectiveness of financial planning and control of financial resources throughout the project's lifetime. Evaluation includes actual project costs by activities compared to budget (variances), financial management (including disbursement issues), and co- financing. The evaluation should:

- Assess the strength and utility of financial controls, including reporting, and planning to allow the project management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for a proper and timely flow of funds for the payment of satisfactory project deliverables.
- Present the major findings from the financial audit if one has been conducted.
- Identify and verify the sources of co- financing as well as leveraged and associated financing (in co-operation with the IA and EA).
- Assess whether the project has applied appropriate standards of due diligence in the management of funds and financial audits.
- The evaluation should also include a breakdown of final actual costs and co-financing for the project prepared in consultation with the relevant UNEP Fund Management Officer of the project (table attached in Annex 2 *Co-financing and leveraged resources*).

K. UNEP Supervision and Backstopping

The purpose of supervision is to work with the executing agency in identifying and dealing with problems which arise during implementation of the project itself. Such problems may be related to

project management but may also involve technical/substantive issues in which UNEP has a major contribution to make. The evaluator should assess the effectiveness of supervision and administrative and financial support provided by UNEP/DGEF including:

- the adequacy of project supervision plans, inputs and processes;
- the emphasis given to outcome monitoring (results-based project management);
- the realism / candor of project reporting and rating (i.e. are PIR ratings an accurate reflection of the project realities and risks);
- the quality of documentation of project supervision activities; and
- financial, administrative and other fiduciary aspects of project implementation supervision.

In summary, accountability and implementation support through technical assistance and problem solving are the main elements of project supervision (Annex 5).

L. Complementarity with UNEP Medium Term Strategy and Programme of Work

UNEP aims to undertake GEF funded projects that are aligned with its strategy. Whilst it is recognised that UNEP GEF projects designed prior to the production of the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS)²²⁵ / Programme of Work (POW) 2010/11 would not necessarily be aligned with the Expected Accomplishments articulated in those documents, complementarity may exist nevertheless. For this reason, the complementarity of GEF projects with UNEP's MTS / POW will not be formally rated, however, the evaluation should present a brief narrative to cover the following issues:

- *Linkage to UNEP's Expected Accomplishments.* The UNEP Medium Term Strategy specifies desired results in six thematic focal areas. The desired results are termed Expected Accomplishments. Using the completed ROtI analysis, the evaluation should comment on whether the project makes a tangible contribution to any of the Expected Accomplishments specified in the UNEP MTS. The magnitude and extent any contributions, and the causal linkages should be fully described.
- *Project contributions that are in-line with the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP)*²²⁶. The outcomes and achievements of the project should be briefly discussed in relation to the objectives of the UNEP BSP.
- *South-South Cooperation* is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology, and knowledge between developing countries. Briefly describe any aspects of the project that could be considered as examples of South-South Cooperation.

4. Evaluation Report Format and Review Procedures

The report should be brief, to the point and easy to understand. It must explain; the purpose of the evaluation, exactly what was evaluated and the methods used. The report must highlight any methodological limitations, identify key concerns and present evidence-based findings, consequent conclusions, recommendations and lessons. The report should be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible and include an executive summary that encapsulates the essence of the information contained in the report to facilitate dissemination and distillation of lessons.

The evaluation will rate the overall implementation success of the project and provide individual ratings of the eleven implementation aspects as described in Section 1 of this TOR. The ratings will be presented in the format of a table with brief justifications based on the findings of the main analysis.

Evidence, findings, conclusions and recommendations should be presented in a complete and balanced manner. Any dissident views in response to evaluation findings will be appended in an annex. The evaluation report shall be written in English, be of no more than 50 pages (excluding annexes), use numbered paragraphs and include:

²²⁵ <http://www.unep.org/PDF/FinalMTSGCSS-X-8.pdf>

²²⁶ <http://www.unep.org/GC/GC23/documents/GC23-6-add-1.pdf>

- i) An **executive summary** (no more than 3 pages) providing a brief overview of the main conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation;
- ii) **Introduction and background** giving a brief overview of the evaluated project, for example, the objective and status of activities; The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, 2006, requires that a TE report will provide summary information on when the evaluation took place; places visited; who was involved; the key questions; and, the methodology.
- iii) **Scope, objective and methods** presenting the evaluation's purpose, the evaluation criteria used and questions to be addressed;
- iv) **Project Performance and Impact** providing *factual evidence* relevant to the questions asked by the evaluator and interpretations of such evidence. This is the main substantive section of the report. The evaluator should provide a commentary and analysis on all eleven evaluation aspects (A – K above).
- v) **Conclusions and rating** of project implementation success giving the evaluator's concluding assessments and ratings of the project against given evaluation criteria and standards of performance. The conclusions should provide answers to questions about whether the project is considered good or bad, and whether the results are considered positive or negative. The ratings should be provided with a brief narrative comment in a table (see Annex 1);
- vi) **Lessons (to be) learned** presenting general conclusions from the standpoint of the design and implementation of the project, based on good practices and successes or problems and mistakes. Lessons should have the potential for wider application and use. All lessons should 'stand alone' and should:
 - Briefly describe the context from which they are derived
 - State or imply some prescriptive action;
 - Specify the contexts in which they may be applied (if possible, who when and where)
- vii) **Recommendations** suggesting *actionable* proposals for improvement of the current project. In general, Terminal Evaluations are likely to have very few (perhaps two or three) actionable recommendations.

Prior to each recommendation, the issue(s) or problem(s) to be addressed by the recommendation should be clearly stated.

A high quality recommendation is an actionable proposal that is:

1. Feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available
2. Commensurate with the available capacities of project team and partners
3. Specific in terms of who would do what and when
4. Contains results-based language (i.e. a measurable performance target)
5. Includes a trade-off analysis, when its implementation may require utilizing significant resources that would otherwise be used for other project purposes.

- viii) **Annexes** may include additional material deemed relevant by the evaluator but must include:
 1. The Evaluation Terms of Reference,
 2. A list of interviewees, and evaluation timeline
 3. A list of documents reviewed / consulted
 4. Summary co-finance information and a statement of project expenditure by activity
 5. Details of the project's 'impact pathways' and the 'ROtI' analysis
 6. The expertise of the evaluation team. (brief CV).

TE reports will also include any formal response / comments from the project management team and/or the country focal point regarding the evaluation findings or conclusions as an annex to the report, however, such will be appended to the report by UNEP Evaluation Office.

Examples of UNEP GEF Terminal Evaluation Reports are available at www.unep.org/eou

Review of the Draft Evaluation Report

Draft reports shall be submitted to the Chief of Evaluation. The Chief of Evaluation will share the report with the corresponding Programme or Project Officer and his or her supervisor for initial review and consultation. The DGEF staff and senior Executing Agency staff (viz. ICF) are allowed to comment on the draft evaluation report. They may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions. Where, possible, a consultation is held between the evaluator, Evaluation Office Staff, the Task Manager and key members of the project execution team. The consultation seeks feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. UNEP Evaluation Office collates all review comments and provides them to the evaluator(s) for their consideration in preparing the final version of the report.

All UNEP GEF Evaluation Reports are subject to quality assessments by UNEP Evaluation Office. These incorporate GEF Office of Evaluation quality assessment criteria and are used as a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluator (see Annex 3).

5. Submission of Final Terminal Evaluation Reports.

The final report shall be submitted in electronic form in MS Word format and should be sent directly to:

Segbedzi Norgbey, Chief,
UNEP Evaluation Office

P.O. Box 30552-00100
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel.: (+254-20) 762 3387
Fax: (+254-20) 762 3158

Email: segbedzi.norgbey@unep.org

The Chief of Evaluation will share the report with the following individuals:

Maryam Niamir-Fuller, Director
UNEP/Division of GEF Coordination (DGEF)
P.O. Box 30552-00100
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: (+254-20) 762 4686
Fax: (+254-20) 762 3158/ 4042
Email: Maryam.Niamir-Fuller@unep.org

Max Zieren (Task Manager)
UNEP/DGEF Regional Focal Point Asia
UNEP Regional Office Asia Pacific,
Bangkok, Thailand
Tel.: +66-2-2882101
Email: max.zieren@unep.org

The final Terminal Evaluation report will be published on the Evaluation Office website www.unep.org/eou and may be printed in hard copy. Subsequently, the report will be sent to the GEF Office of Evaluation for their review, appraisal and inclusion on the GEF website. The full list of intended recipients is attached in Annex 7.

6. Resources and Schedule of the Evaluation

This terminal evaluation will be undertaken by an international evaluator assisted by local evaluation assistants contracted by the UNEP Evaluation Office.

The contract for the Lead Evaluator will begin on **24th June 2011** and end on **19th September 2011**

(12 weeks including 31 days of travel to China, Kazakhstan, Iran and Russia). The evaluator will submit a draft report on **29th August 2011** to UNEP/EO. Evaluation Office will circulate the draft to UNEP/DGEF Task Manager, and key representatives of the Executing Agencies for comments. Any comments or responses to the draft report will be sent to UNEP/EO for collation and the consultant will be advised of any necessary revisions. Comments to the final draft report will be sent to the consultant by **12th September 2011** after which, the consultant will submit the final report no later than **19th September 2011**.

The contract for the Evaluation assistant for Iran will begin on **24th June 2011** and end on **12th August 2011** (1 week spread over 7 weeks). The evaluator will submit a travel diary entailing findings from the project site visits to UNEP/EO and the Lead Evaluator by **18th July 2011**.

The contract for the Research assistant for Kazakhstan will begin on **4th July 2011** and end on **29th August 2011** (1 week spread over 8 weeks). The evaluator will submit a travel diary entailing findings from the project site visits to UNEP/EO and the Lead Evaluator by **15th August 2011**.

The contract for the Associate evaluator for China will begin on **28th July 2011** and end on **19th September 2011** (13 days spread over 7,5 weeks). The evaluator will submit a brief report entailing her/his findings from the project site visits to UNEP/EO and the Lead Evaluator by **20th August 2011**.

The evaluator will after an initial telephone briefing with the staff of the UNEP Evaluation Office and UNEP/GEF Task Manager conduct initial desk review work and later travel to Bangkok Thailand and meet with project Task Manager at the beginning of the evaluation. Furthermore, the evaluator is expected to travel China, Kazakhstan, Iran and Russia and meet with representatives of the project Executing Agencies and the intended users of project's outputs.

In accordance with the evaluation policies of UNEP and the GEF, all GEF projects are evaluated by independently contracted evaluators. The evaluator should have the following qualifications:

The Lead Evaluator

The evaluator should not have been associated with the design and implementation of the project in a paid capacity. The evaluator will work under the overall supervision of the Chief, Evaluation Office, UNEP. The evaluator should have a Master's Degree or higher in ecology or relevant field and at least 10 years of experience in wetland management, hydrology and conservation with a sound understanding of flyway networks and migratory water bird conservation issues. The consultant should have the following minimum qualifications: (i) experience in international wetland issues; (ii) experience in conservation of migratory water birds (iii) experience with international environmental policymaking (iv) experience with project evaluations. Knowledge of UNEP programmes and GEF activities is desirable. Knowledge of Chinese and/or Russian is an advantage. Fluency in oral and written English is a must.

The Evaluation Assistant for Iran

The evaluation assistant should not have been associated with the design and implementation of the project in a paid capacity. The evaluator will work under the overall supervision of the Chief, Evaluation Office, UNEP. The evaluation assistant should have a Bachelor's Degree or higher in English, communication or relevant field. The evaluation assistant should be an Iranian national with fluent in oral and written English. Experience in project evaluations and understanding of wetland management, hydrology and conservation is an asset.

The Research Assistant for Kazakhstan

The evaluation assistant should not have been associated with the design and implementation of the project in an extensive capacity. The evaluator will work under the overall supervision of the Chief, Evaluation Office, UNEP. The research assistant should have excellent English skills, experience in conducting translations and simultaneous interpretation, and experience in working as a research assistant. The evaluation assistant should be a national of Kazakhstan. Experience in project evaluations and understanding of wetland management, hydrology and conservation is an asset.

The Associate Evaluator for China

The evaluation assistant should not have been associated with the design and implementation of the project in a paid capacity. The evaluator will work under the overall supervision of the Chief, Evaluation Office, UNEP. The associate evaluator should have a Bachelor's Degree or higher in ecology or relevant field and at least 5 years of experience in wetland management, hydrology and conservation with a sound understanding of flyway networks and migratory water bird conservation issues. The research assistant should be fluent in both, written and spoken English and Chinese. Experience in project evaluations is an asset.

7. Schedule Of Payment

The consultant shall select one of the following two contract options:

Lump-Sum Option

The evaluator will receive an initial payment covering the travel costs upon signature of the contract. A further 40% will be paid upon acceptance of the draft report. A final payment of 60% will be made upon satisfactory completion of work. The fee is payable under the individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) of the evaluator and is **inclusive** of all expenses such as travel, accommodation and incidental expenses.

Fee-only Option

The evaluator will receive an initial payment of 40% of the total amount due upon acceptance of the draft report. Final payment of 60% will be made upon acceptance and satisfactory completion of work. The fee is payable under the individual SSAs of the evaluator and is **NOT** inclusive of all expenses such as travel, accommodation and incidental expenses. Ticket and DSA will be paid separately.

In case, the evaluator cannot provide the products in accordance with the TOR, the timeframe agreed, or his products are substandard, the payment to the evaluator could be withheld, until such a time the products are modified to meet UNEP's standard. In case the evaluator fails to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP, the product prepared by the evaluator may not constitute the evaluation report.

Annex 1. OVERALL RATINGS TABLE

Criterion	Evaluator's Summary Comments	Evaluator's Rating
A. Attainment of project objectives and results (overall rating) Sub criteria (below)		
A. 1. Effectiveness - overall likelihood of impact achievement (ROtI rating)		
A. 2. Relevance		
A. 3. Efficiency		
B. Sustainability of Project outcomes (overall rating) Sub criteria (below)		
B. 1. Financial		
B. 2. Socio Political		
B. 3. Institutional framework and governance		
B. 4. Environmental		
C. Catalytic role and replication		
D. Stakeholders Participation/Public awareness		
E. Country ownership / drivenness		
F. Achievement of outputs and activities		
G. Preparation and readiness		
H. Implementation approach and adaptive management		
I. Monitoring and Evaluation (overall rating) Sub criteria (below)		
E. 1. M&E Design		
E. 2. M&E Plan Implementation (use for adaptive management)		
E. 3. Budgeting and Funding for M&E activities		
J. Financial planning and control		
K. UNEP supervision and backstopping		
Overall Rating		

RATING OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

Highly Satisfactory (HS): The project had no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency.

Satisfactory (S): The project had minor shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency.

Moderately Satisfactory (MS): The project had moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency.

Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): The project had significant shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency.

Unsatisfactory (U) The project had major shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency.

Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The project had severe shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency.

Please note: Relevance and effectiveness will be considered as critical criteria. The overall rating of the project for achievement of objectives and results **may not be higher** than the lowest rating on

either of these two criteria. Thus, to have an overall satisfactory rating for outcomes a project must have at least satisfactory ratings on both relevance and effectiveness.

RATINGS ON SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability will be understood as the probability of continued long-term outcomes and impacts after the GEF project funding ends. The Terminal evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to contribute or undermine the persistence of benefits after the project ends. Some of these factors might be outcomes of the project, i.e. stronger institutional capacities, legal frameworks, socio-economic incentives /or public awareness. Other factors will include contextual circumstances or developments that are not outcomes of the project but that are relevant to the sustainability of outcomes..

Rating system for sustainability sub-criteria

On each of the dimensions of sustainability of the project outcomes will be rated as follows.

Likely (L): There are no risks affecting this dimension of sustainability.

Moderately Likely (ML). There are moderate risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.

Moderately Unlikely (MU): There are significant risks that affect this dimension of sustainability

Unlikely (U): There are severe risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.

According to the GEF Office of Evaluation, all the risk dimensions of sustainability are deemed critical. Therefore, overall rating for sustainability will not be higher than the rating of the dimension with lowest ratings. For example, if a project has an Unlikely rating in any of the dimensions then its overall rating cannot be higher than Unlikely, regardless of whether higher ratings in other dimensions of sustainability produce a higher average.

RATINGS OF PROJECT M&E

Monitoring is a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing project with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds. Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, its design, implementation and results. Project evaluation may involve the definition of appropriate standards, the examination of performance against those standards, and an assessment of actual and expected results.

The Project monitoring and evaluation system will be rated on ‘M&E Design’, ‘M&E Plan Implementation’ and ‘Budgeting and Funding for M&E activities’ as follows:

Highly Satisfactory (HS): There were no shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Satisfactory(S): There were minor shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Moderately Satisfactory (MS): There were moderate shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): There were significant shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Unsatisfactory (U): There were major shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The Project had no M&E system.

“M&E plan implementation” will be considered a critical parameter for the overall assessment of the M&E system. The overall rating for the M&E systems will not be higher than the rating on “M&E plan implementation.”

All other ratings will be on the GEF six point scale.

GEF Performance Description
HS = Highly Satisfactory

S	= Satisfactory
MS	= Moderately Satisfactory
MU	= Moderately Unsatisfactory
U	= Unsatisfactory
HU	= Highly Unsatisfactory

Annex 2. Co-financing and Leveraged Resources

Co-financing (basic data to be supplied to the consultant for verification)

Co financing (Type/Source)	IA own Financing (mill US\$)		Government (mill US\$)		Other* (mill US\$)		Total (mill US\$)		Total Disbursement (mill US\$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
- Grants										
- Loans/Concessional (compared to market rate)										
- Credits										
- Equity investments										
- In-kind support										
- Other (*)										
-										
--										
Totals										

* Other is referred to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries.

Leveraged Resources

Leveraged resources are additional resources—beyond those committed to the project itself at the time of approval—that are mobilized later as a direct result of the project. Leveraged resources can be financial or in-kind and they may be from other donors, NGO's, foundations, governments, communities or the private sector. Please briefly describe the resources the project has leveraged since inception and indicate how these resources are contributing to the project's ultimate objective.

Table showing final actual project expenditure by activity to be supplied by the UNEP Fund management Officer. (insert here)

Annex 3. Review of the Draft Report

Draft reports submitted to the UNEP Evaluation Office are shared with the corresponding Programme or Project Officer and his or her supervisor for initial review and consultation. The DGEF staff and senior Executing Agency staff provide comments on the draft evaluation report. They may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions. The consultation also seeks agreement on the findings and recommendations. UNEP Evaluation Office collates the review comments and provides them to the evaluators for their consideration in preparing the final version of the report. General comments on the draft report with respect to compliance with these TOR are shared with the reviewer.

Quality Assessment of the Evaluation Report

All UNEP Evaluation reports are subject to quality assessments by the Evaluation Office. These are used as a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluator.

The quality of the draft evaluation report is assessed and rated against the following criteria:

GEF Report Quality Criteria	UNEP EO Assessment	Rating
A. Did the report present an assessment of relevant outcomes and achievement of project objectives in the context of the focal area program indicators if applicable?		
B. Was the report consistent and the evidence complete and convincing and were the ratings substantiated when used?		
C. Did the report present a sound assessment of sustainability of outcomes?		
D. Were the lessons and recommendations supported by the evidence presented?		
E. Did the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?		
F. Did the report include an assessment of the quality of the project M&E system and its use for project management?		
UNEP additional Report Quality Criteria	UNEP EO Assessment	Rating
G. Quality of the lessons: Were lessons readily applicable in other contexts? Did they suggest prescriptive action?		
H. Quality of the recommendations: Did recommendations specify the actions necessary to correct existing conditions or improve operations ('who?' 'what?' 'where?' 'when?'). Can they be implemented? Did the recommendations specify a goal and an associated performance indicator?		
I. Was the report well written? (clear English language and grammar)		
J. Did the report structure follow EOU guidelines, were all requested Annexes included?		
K. Were all evaluation aspects specified in the TORs adequately addressed?		
L. Was the report delivered in a timely manner		

$$\text{Quality} = (2*(0.3*(A + B) + 0.1*(C+D+E+F)) + 0.3*(G + H) + 0.1*(I+J+K+L))/3$$

The Totals are rounded and converted to the scale of HS to HU

Rating system for quality of terminal evaluation reports

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1, and unable to assess = 0.

Annex 4: Minimum requirements for M&E

Minimum Requirement 1: Project Design of M&E

All projects must include a concrete and fully budgeted monitoring and evaluation plan by the time of Work Program entry (full-sized projects) or CEO approval (medium-sized projects). This plan must contain at a minimum:

- SMART (see below) indicators for project implementation, or, if no indicators are identified, an alternative plan for monitoring that will deliver reliable and valid information to management
- SMART indicators for results (outcomes and, if applicable, impacts), and, where appropriate, corporate-level indicators
- A project baseline, with:
 - a description of the problem to address
 - indicator data
 - or, if major baseline indicators are not identified, an alternative plan for addressing this within one year of implementation
- An M&E Plan with identification of reviews and evaluations which will be undertaken, such as mid-term reviews or evaluations of activities
- An organizational setup and budgets for monitoring and evaluation.

Minimum Requirement 2: Application of Project M&E

- Project monitoring and supervision will include implementation of the M&E plan, comprising:
 - Use of SMART indicators for implementation (or provision of a reasonable explanation if not used)
 - Use of SMART indicators for results (or provision of a reasonable explanation if not used)
 - Fully established baseline for the project and data compiled to review progress
 - Evaluations are undertaken as planned
 - Operational organizational setup for M&E and budgets spent as planned.

SMART INDICATORS GEF projects and programs should monitor using relevant performance indicators. The monitoring system should be “SMART”:

1. **Specific:** The system captures the essence of the desired result by clearly and directly relating to achieving an objective, and only that objective.
2. **Measurable:** The monitoring system and its indicators are unambiguously specified so that all parties agree on what the system covers and there are practical ways to measure the indicators and results.
3. **Achievable and Attributable:** The system identifies what changes are anticipated as a result of the intervention and whether the result(s) are realistic. Attribution requires that changes in the targeted developmental issue can be linked to the intervention.
4. **Relevant and Realistic:** The system establishes levels of performance that are likely to be achieved in a practical manner, and that reflect the expectations of stakeholders.

²²⁷ <http://gefweb.org/MonitoringandEvaluation/MEPoliciesProcedures/MEPTools/meptstandards.html>

5. **Time-bound, Timely, Trackable, and Targeted:** The system allows progress to be tracked in a cost-effective manner at desired frequency for a set period, with clear identification of the particular stakeholder group to be impacted by the project or program.

M&E during Project implementation

- *M&E design.* Projects should have sound M&E plans to monitor results and track progress towards achieving Project objectives. An M&E plan should include a baseline (including data, methodology, etc.), SMART indicators (see Annex 4) and data analysis systems, and evaluation studies at specific times to assess results. The time frame for various M&E activities and standards for outputs should have been specified.

The Consultant(s) should use the following questions to help assess the M&E design aspects:

SMART-ness of Indicators

- Are there specific indicators in the log frame for each of the Project objectives and outcomes?
- Are the indicators relevant to the objectives and outcomes?
- Are the indicators for the objectives and outcomes sufficient?
- Are the indicators quantifiable?

Adequacy of Baseline Information

- Is there baseline information?
- Has the methodology for the baseline data collection been explained?
- Is desired level of achievement for indicators based on a reasoned estimate of baseline?

Arrangements for Monitoring of Implementation

- Has a budget been allocated for M&E activities?
- Have the responsibility centers for M&E activities been clearly defined?
- Has the time frame for M&E activities been specified?

Arrangements for Evaluation

- Have specific targets been specified for Project outputs?
- Has the desired level of achievement been specified for all Indicators of Objectives and Outcomes?
- *M&E plan implementation.* A Terminal Evaluation should verify that:
 - an M&E system was in place and facilitated timely tracking of results and progress towards Projects objectives throughout the Project implementation period (perhaps through use of a logframe or similar);
 - annual Project reports and Progress Implementation Review (PIR) reports were complete, accurate and with well justified ratings;
 - that the information provided by the M&E system was used during the Project to improve Project performance and to adapt to changing needs;
 - and that Projects had an M&E system in place with proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities.
- *Budgeting and Funding for M&E activities.* The terminal evaluation should determine whether support for M&E was budgeted adequately and was funded in a timely fashion during implementation.

Annex 5: Expectations regarding the role of DGEF Task Managers in GEF Project Supervision and a list of Documentation relevant for the evaluation of Project Supervision (provided to Evaluator by DGEF)

Project start up phase

- Pink File preparation and signature (including detailed project supervision plan)
- Co-financing arrangements
- Bank account opened and/or information provided
- Initial cash advance
- Supervision of recruitment of project staff
- Office set up (office space, procurement of equipment, host agreements)
- Establishment of project steering committee and any other advisory/governing structures

Inception mission and workshop

- Preparation
- Review of institutional arrangements and project implementation responsibilities
- Workshop including providing training (important to discuss at inception how project will be evaluated at exit)
- First Steering Committee meeting
- Revised project implementation, M&E or supervision plan as necessary

Project implementation

- Project financial and substantive reporting (includes audited statements, inventories of non-expendable equipment)
- Active monitoring of progress in achieving outcomes
- Liaising with co-implementing agency if applicable
- Steering committee meeting preparation and attendance
- Field visits as relevant/required
- Risk monitoring (social and environmental safeguards)
- Preparation and coordination of MTR (or support to MTE)
- Adaptive management to respond to risk and problems (includes follow up to MTR/MTE recommendations, and risk mitigation plan if applicable)
- Revisions
- Other technical assistance (e.g., output review, support to communications efforts)
- Database maintenance
- Knowledge management

Project completion

- Review/clearance of outputs
- Clearance of terminal report and review of audited financial statement
- Completion revision
- Request for disposal of equipment
- Support to Evaluation Office for terminal evaluation (review of draft evaluation TOR, project information, comments to draft TE, completion of management response / implementation plan, follow up on recommendations [if any])
- Knowledge management

Documents to inform evaluation of project supervision

- Project supervision plan, with associated budget
- Correspondence related to project
- Supervision mission reports
- Steering Committee meeting documents, including agendas, meeting minutes, and any summary reports
- Project progress reports, including financial reports submitted
- Cash advance requests documenting disbursements

- Annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs)
- Mid-term evaluation and associated action plans, (if any)
- Management memos related to project
- Other documentation of supervision feedback on project outputs and processes (e.g. comments on draft progress reports, etc.)

Possible additional documents;

Has a project extension occurred?

- Extension documentation

Has a formal revision of project activities or objectives occurred? (Beyond modifications to project plans based on normal adaptive management procedures)

- Project revision documentation

Has a formal budget revision occurred?

- Budget revision documentation

ANNEX 6: Risk Factor Table

Evaluators will use this table to summarize risks identified in the **Project Document** and reflect also **any new risks** identified or experienced in the course of the evaluation in regard to project implementation. The Notes column should be used to provide additional details concerning manifestation of the risk **as relevant**.

INTERNAL RISK Project management										
Risk Factor	Indicator of Low Risk	Indicator of Medium Risk	Indicator of High Risk	Low	Medium	Substantial	High	Not Applicable	To be determined	NOTES
Management structure	Stable with roles and responsibilities clearly defined and understood	Individuals understand their own role but are unsure of responsibilities of others	Unclear responsibilities or overlapping functions which lead to management problems							
Governance structure	Steering Committee and/or other project bodies meet periodically and provide effective direction/inputs	Body(ies) meets periodically but guidance/input provided to project is inadequate	Members lack commitment (seldom meet) and therefore the Committee/body does not fulfil its function							
Internal communications	Fluid and cordial	Communication process deficient although relationships between team members are	Lack of adequate communication between team members leading to							

		good	deterioration of relationships and resentment / factions							
Work flow	Project progressing according to work plan	Some changes in project work plan but without major effect on overall implementation	Major delays or changes in work plan or method of implementation							
Co-financing	Co-financing is secured and payments are received on time	Is secured but payments are slow and bureaucratic	A substantial part of pledged co-financing may not materialize							
Budget	Activities are progressing within planned budget	Minor budget reallocation needed	Reallocation between budget lines exceeding 30% of original budget							
Financial management	Funds are correctly managed and transparently accounted for	Financial reporting slow or deficient	Serious financial reporting problems or indication of mismanagement of funds							
Reporting	Substantive reports are presented in a timely manner and are complete and accurate with a good analysis of project progress and implementation issues	Reports are complete and accurate but often delayed or lack critical analysis of progress and implementation issues	Serious concerns about quality and timeliness of project reporting							
Stakeholder involvement	Stakeholder analysis done and positive feedback from critical stakeholders and partners	Consultation and participation process seems strong but misses some groups or relevant partners	Symptoms of conflict with critical stakeholders or evidence of apathy and lack of interest from partners or other stakeholders							
External communications	Evidence that stakeholders,	Communications efforts	Project existence is							

	practitioners and/or the general public understand project and are regularly updated on progress	are taking place but not yet evidence that message is successfully transmitted	not known beyond implementation partners or misunderstandings concerning objectives and activities evident							
Short term/long term balance	Project is meeting short term needs and results within a long term perspective, particularly sustainability and replicability	Project is interested in the short term with little understanding of or interest in the long term	Longer term issues are deliberately ignored or neglected							
Science and technological issues	Project based on sound science and well established technologies	Project testing approaches, methods or technologies but based on sound analysis of options and risks	Many scientific and/or technological uncertainties							
Political influences	Project decisions and choices are not particularly politically driven	Signs that some project decisions are politically motivated	Project is subject to a variety of political influences that may jeopardize project objectives							
Other, please specify. Add rows as necessary										

EXTERNAL RISK

Risk Factor	Indicator of Low Risk	Indicator of Medium Risk	Indicator of High Risk	Low	Medium	Substantial	Not	To be	NOTES
Political stability	Political context is stable and safe	Political context is unstable but predictable and not a threat to project implementation	Very disruptive and volatile						

Environmental conditions	Project area is not affected by severe weather events or major environmental stress factors	Project area is subject to more or less predictable disasters or changes	Project area has very harsh environmental conditions						
Social, cultural and economic factors	There are no evident social, cultural and/or economic issues that may affect project performance and results	Social or economic issues or changes pose challenges to project implementation but mitigation strategies have been developed	Project is highly sensitive to economic fluctuations, to social issues or cultural barriers						
Capacity issues	Sound technical and managerial capacity of institutions and other project partners	Weaknesses exist but have been identified and actions is taken to build the necessary capacity	Capacity is very low at all levels and partners require constant support and technical assistance						
Others, please specify									

Annex 7 – Introduction to Theory of Change / impact pathways, the ROti Method and the ROti Results Scoresheet

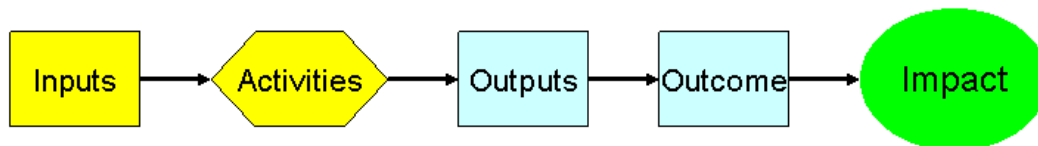
Terminal evaluations of projects are conducted at, or shortly after, project completion. At this stage it is normally possible to assess the achievement of the project’s outputs. However, the possibilities for evaluation of the project’s outcomes are often more limited and the feasibility of assessing project **impacts** at this time is usually severely constrained. Full impacts often accrue only after considerable time-lags, and it is common for there to be a lack of long-term baseline and monitoring information to aid their evaluation. Consequently, substantial resources are often needed to support the extensive primary field data collection required for assessing impact and there are concomitant practical difficulties because project resources are seldom available to support the assessment of such impacts when they have accrued – often several years after completion of activities and closure of the project.

Despite these difficulties, it is possible to enhance the scope and depth of information available from Terminal Evaluations on the achievement of results **through rigorous review of project progress along the pathways from outcome to impact**. Such reviews identify the sequence of conditions and factors deemed necessary for project outcomes to yield impact and assess the current status of and future prospects for results. In evaluation literature these relationships can be variously described as ‘Theories of Change’, Impact ‘Pathways’, ‘Results Chains’, ‘Intervention logic’, and ‘Causal Pathways’ (to name only some!).

Theory of Change (TOC) / impact pathways

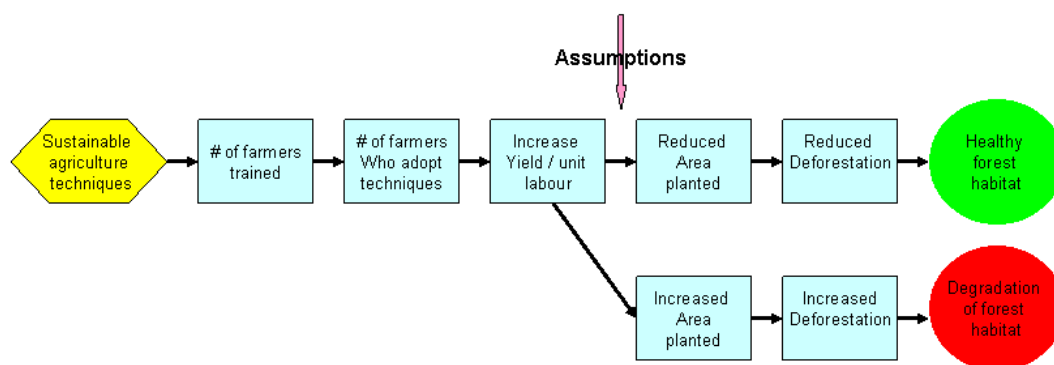
Figure 1 shows a generic impact pathway which links the standard elements of project logical frameworks in a graphical representation of causal linkages. When specified with more detail, for example including the key users of outputs, the processes (the arrows) that lead to outcomes and with details of performance indicators, analysis of impact pathways can be invaluable as a tool for both project planning and evaluation.

Figure 1. A generic results chain, which can also be termed an ‘Impact Pathway’ or Theory of Change.



The pathways summarise casual relationships and help identify or clarify the assumptions in the intervention logic of the project. For example, in the Figure 2 below the eventual impact depends upon the behaviour of the farmers in using the new agricultural techniques they have learnt from the training. The project design for the intervention might be based on the upper pathway assuming that the farmers can now meet their needs from more efficient management of a given area therefore reducing the need for an expansion of cultivated area and ultimately reducing pressure on nearby forest habitat, whereas the evidence gathered in the evaluation may in some locations follow the lower of the two pathways; the improved faming methods offer the possibility for increased profits and create an incentive for farmers to cultivate more land resulting in clearance or degradation of the nearby forest habitat.

Figure 2. An impact pathway / TOC for a training intervention intended to aid forest conservation.



The GEF Evaluation Office has recently developed an approach that builds on the concepts of theory of change / causal chains / impact pathways. The method is known as Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI)²²⁸ and has three distinct stages:

- a. Identifying the project’s intended impacts
- b. Review of the project’s logical framework
- c. Analysis and modeling of the project’s outcomes-impact pathways

The **identification of the projects intended impacts** should be possible from the ‘objectives’ statements specified in the official project document. The next stage is to **review the project’s logical framework** to assess whether the design of the project is consistent with, and appropriate for, the delivery of the intended impact. The method requires verification of the causal logic between the different hierarchical levels of the logical framework moving ‘backwards’ from impacts through outcomes to the outputs; the activities level is not formally considered in the ROtI method²²⁹. The aim of this stage is to develop and understanding of the causal logic of the project intervention and to identify the key ‘impact pathways’. In reality such process are often complex; they often involve

²²⁸ GEF Evaluation Office (2009). ROtI: Review of Outcomes to Impacts Practitioners Handbook. http://www.gefweb.org/uploadedFiles/Evaluation_Office/OPS4/Roti%20Practitioners%20Handbook%2015%20June%202009.pdf

²²⁹ Evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources to generate outputs is already a major focus within UNEP Terminal Evaluations.

multiple actors and decision-processes are subject to time-lags, meaning that project impact often accrue long after the completion of project activities.

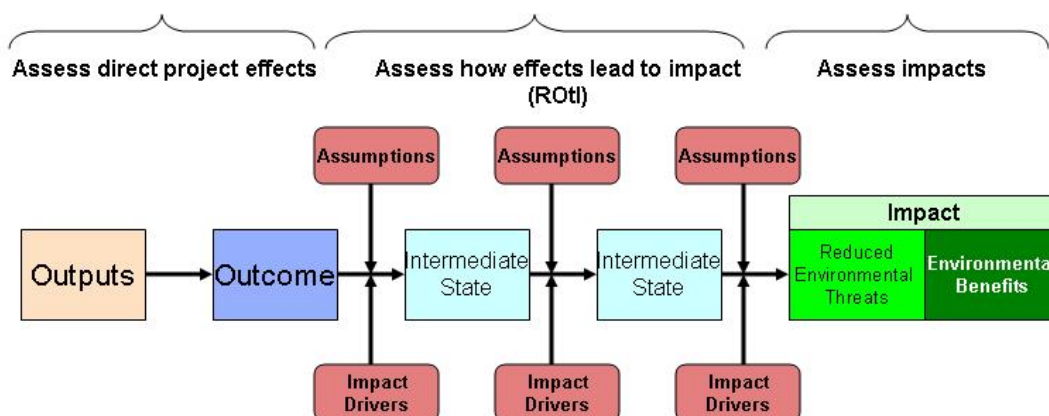
The third stage involves analysis of the ‘impact pathways’ that link project outcomes to impacts. The pathways are analysed in terms of the ‘**assumptions**’ and ‘**impact drivers**’ that underpin the processes involved in the transformation of outcomes to impacts via **intermediate states** (see Figure 3). Project outcomes are the direct intended results stemming from the outputs, and they are likely to occur either towards the end of the project or in the short term following project completion. **Intermediate states** are the transitional conditions between the project’s immediate outcomes and the intended impact. They are necessary conditions for the achievement of the intended impacts and there may be more than one intermediate state between the immediate project outcome and the eventual impact.

Impact drivers are defined as the significant factors that if present are expected to contribute to the realization of the intended impacts and **can be influenced** by the project / project partners & stakeholders. **Assumptions** are the significant factors that if present are expected to contribute to the realization of the intended impacts but are largely **beyond the control of the project** / project partners & stakeholders. The impact drivers and assumptions are ordinarily considered in Terminal Evaluations when assessing the sustainability of the project.

Since project logical frameworks do not often provide comprehensive information on the processes by which project outputs yield outcomes and eventually lead, via ‘intermediate states’ to impacts, the impact pathways need to be carefully examined and the following questions addressed:

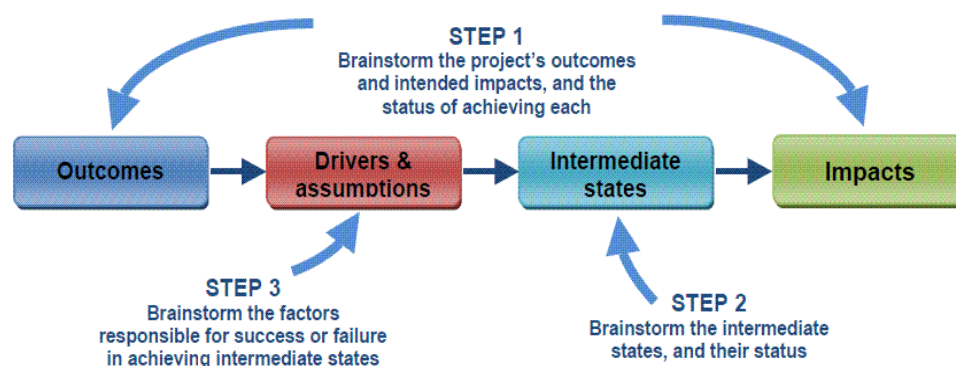
- Are there other causal pathways that would stem from the use of project outputs by other potential user groups?
- Is (each) impact pathway complete? Are there any missing intermediate states between project outcomes and impacts?
- Have the key impact drivers and assumptions been identified for each ‘step’ in the impact pathway.

Figure 3. A schematic ‘impact pathway’ showing intermediate states, assumptions and impact drivers (adapted from GEF EO 2009).



The process of identifying the impact pathways and specifying the impact drivers and assumptions can be done as a desk exercise by the evaluator or, preferably, as a group exercise, led by the evaluator with a cross-section of project stakeholders as part of an evaluation field mission or both. Ideally, the evaluator would have done a desk-based assessment of the project’s theory of change and then use this understanding to facilitate a group exercise. The group exercise is best done through collective discussions to develop a visual model of the impact pathways using a card exercise. The component elements (outputs, outcomes, impact drivers, assumptions intended impacts etc.) of the impact pathways are written on individual cards and arranged and discussed as a group activity. Figure 4 below shows the suggested sequence of the group discussions needed to develop the TOC for the project.

Figure 4. Suggested sequencing of group discussions (from GEF EO 2009)



Once the theory of change model for the project is complete the evaluator can assess the design of the project intervention and collate evidence that will inform judgments on the extent and effectiveness of implementation, through the evaluation process. Performance judgments are made always noting that project contexts can change and that adaptive management is required during project implementation.

The ROI method requires ratings for outcomes achieved by the project and the progress made towards the ‘intermediate states’ at the time of the evaluation. According to the GEF guidance on the method; *“The rating system is intended to recognize project preparation and conceptualization that considers its own assumptions, and that seeks to remove barriers to future scaling up and out. Projects that are a part of a long-term process need not at all be “penalized” for not achieving impacts in the lifetime of the project: the system recognizes projects’ forward thinking to eventual impacts, even if those impacts are eventually achieved by other partners and stakeholders, albeit with achievements based on present day, present project building blocks.”* For example, a project receiving an “AA” rating appears likely to deliver impacts, while for a project receiving a “DD” this would seem unlikely, due to low achievement in outcomes and the limited likelihood of achieving the intermediate states needed for eventual impact (see Table 1).

Table 1. Rating scale for outcomes and progress towards ‘intermediate states’

Outcome Rating	Rating on progress toward Intermediate States
D: The project’s intended outcomes were not delivered	D: No measures taken to move towards intermediate states.
C: The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, but were not designed to feed into a continuing process after project funding	C: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced results.
B: The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, but with no prior allocation of responsibilities after project funding	B: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which give no indication that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.
A: The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, with specific allocation of responsibilities after project funding.	A: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which clearly indicate that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.

Thus a project will end up with a two letter rating e.g. AB, CD, BB etc. In addition the rating is given a ‘+’ notation if there is evidence of impacts accruing within the life of the project. The possible rating permutations are then translated onto the usual six point rating scale used in all UNEP project evaluations in the following way.

Table 2. Shows how the ratings for ‘achievement of outcomes’ and ‘progress towards intermediate states translate to ratings for the ‘Overall likelihood of impact achievement’ on a six point scale.

Highly Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Moderately Unlikely	Unlikely	Highly Unlikely
AA AB BA CA BB+ CB+ DA+ DB+	BB CB DA DB AC+ BC+	AC BC CC+ DC+	CC DC AD+ BD+	AD BD CD+ DD+	CD DD

In addition, projects that achieve documented changes in environmental status during the project’s lifetime receive a positive impact rating, indicated by a “+”. The overall likelihood of achieving impacts is shown in Table 11 below (a + score above moves the double letter rating up one space in the 6-point scale).

The ROTI method provides a basis for comparisons across projects through application of a rating system that can indicate the expected impact. However it should be noted that whilst this will provide a relative scoring for all projects assessed, it does not imply that the results from projects can necessarily be aggregated. Nevertheless, since the approach yields greater clarity in the ‘results metrics’ for a project, opportunities where aggregation of project results might be possible can more readily be identified.

Results rating of project entitled:							
Outputs	Outcomes	Rating (D – A)	Intermediary	Rating (D – A)	Impact (GEBs)	Rating (+)	Overall
1.	1.		1.		1.		
2.	2.		2.		2.		
3.	3.		3.		3.		
	Rating justification:		Rating justification:		Rating justification:		

Scoring Guidelines

The achievement of **Outputs** is largely assumed. Outputs are such concrete things as training courses held, numbers of persons trained, studies conducted, networks established, websites developed, and many others. Outputs reflect where and for what project funds were used. These were not rated: projects generally succeed in spending their funding.

Outcomes:

Outcomes, on the other hand, are the first level of intended results stemming from the outputs. Not so much the number of persons trained; but how many persons who then demonstrated that they had gained the intended knowledge or skills. Not a study conducted; but one that could change the evolution or development of the project. Not so much a network of NGOs established; but that the network showed potential for functioning as intended. A sound outcome might be genuinely improved strategic planning in SLM stemming from workshops, training courses, and networking.

Examples

Funds were spent, outputs were produced, but nothing in terms of outcomes was achieved. People attended training courses but there is no evidence of increased capacity. A website was developed, but no one used it. (Score – D)

Outcomes achieved but are dead ends; no forward linkages to intermediary stages in the future. People attended training courses, increased their capacities, but all left for other jobs shortly after; or were not given opportunities to apply their new skills. A website was developed and was used, but achieved little or nothing of what was intended because intended end users had no access to computers. People had meetings that led nowhere. Outcomes hypothesized or achieved, but either insignificant and/or *no evident linkages forward* to intermediary stages leading towards impacts. (Score – C)

Outcomes plus implicit linkages forward. Outcomes achieved and have *implicit forward linkages* to intermediary stages and impacts. Collaboration as evidenced by meetings and decisions made among a loose network is documented that should lead to better planning. Improved capacity is in place and should lead to desired intermediate outcomes. Providing implicit linkages to intermediary stages is probably the most common case when outcomes have been achieved. (Score - B)

Outcomes plus explicit linkages forward. Outcomes have *definite and explicit forward linkages* to intermediary stages and impacts. An alternative energy project may result in solar panels installed that reduced reliance on local wood fuels, with the outcome quantified in terms of reduced C emissions. Explicit forward linkages are easy to recognize in being concrete, but are relatively uncommon. (Score A)

Intermediary stages:

The **intermediate stage** indicates achievements that lead to Global Environmental Benefits, especially if the potential for scaling up is established.

“Outcomes” scored C or D. If the outcomes above scored C or D, there is no need to continue forward to score intermediate stages given that achievement of such is then not possible.

In spite of outcomes and implicit linkages, and follow-up actions, the project dead-ends. Although outcomes achieved have *implicit forward linkages* to intermediary stages and impacts, the project dead-ends. Outcomes turn out to be insufficient to move the project towards intermediate stages and to the eventual achievement of GEBs. Collaboration as evidenced by meetings and among participants in a network never progresses further. The implicit linkage based on follow-up never materializes. Although outcomes involve, for example, further participation and discussion, such actions do not take the project forward towards intended intermediate impacts. People have fun getting together and talking more, but nothing, based on the implicit forwards linkages, actually eventuates. (**Score = D**)

The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced result, barriers and/or unmet assumptions may still exist. In spite of sound outputs and in spite of explicit forward linkages, there is limited possibility of intermediary stage achievement due to barriers not removed or unmet assumptions. This may be the fate of several policy related, capacity building, and networking projects: people work together, but fail to develop a way forward towards concrete results, or fail to successfully address inherent barriers. The project may increase ground cover and or carbon stocks, may reduce grazing or GHG emissions; and may have project level recommendations regarding scaling up; but barrier removal or the addressing of fatal assumptions means that scaling up remains limited and unlikely to be achieved at larger scales. Barriers can be policy and institutional limitations; (mis-) assumptions may have to do with markets or public – private sector relationships. (**Score = C**)

Barriers and assumptions are successfully addressed. Intermediary stage(s) planned or conceived have feasible direct and explicit forward linkages to impact achievement; barriers and assumptions are successfully addressed. The project achieves measurable intermediate impacts, and works to scale up and out, but falls well short of scaling up to global levels such that achievement of GEBs still lies in doubt. **(Score = B)**

Scaling up and out over time is possible. Measurable intermediary stage impacts achieved, scaling up to global levels and the achievement of GEBs appears to be well in reach over time. **(Score = A)**

Impact: Actual changes in environmental status

“Intermediary stages” scored B to A.

Measurable impacts achieved at a globally significant level within the project life-span. .

(Score = ‘+’)

ANNEX II: ITINERARY OF ACTIVITIES OF THE TERMINAL EVALUATION MISSION

Date		Activities
Fri	14 th July	am: Meeting (Skype) with International Technical Adviser (Mr. Crawford Prentice). pm: 1. Meeting (Skype) with International Project Director (Ms. Claire Mirande).
Sun	17 th July	All day: Travel to Moscow, Russia
Mon	18 th July	am: 1. Evaluator arrives Moscow (after flight delays). 2. Meeting with Flyway Coordinator (Elena Ilyashenko). 3. Meeting with NCU Project Manager (Ms. Julia Gorelova) and NCU Technical Advisor (Mr. Alexi Blagovidov). pm: 1. Continuation of meeting with NCU Project Manager and NCU Technical Advisor. 2. Joined by UNEP financial (Ludmila Khorosheva). 3. Fly to Yakutsk.
Tue	19 th July	am: 1. Meeting with Deputy Director of the Institute of Biological Problems in the Cryolithic Zone, and Project Director, Yakutia Coordination Unit (Dr. Nikolai Germogenov). 2. Meeting with Director of Department of Biological Resources, Ministry of Nature Protection (Dr. Yakov Sitsev). 3. Meeting with YCU Project Manager (Mr. Andrei Degtyarev). pm: 1. Meeting with Project Director, YCU (Dr. Nikolai Germogenov).
Wed	20 th July	am: 1. Meeting with Head of Institute of Biological Problems in the Cryolithozone (Prof. Nikita Solomonov). 2. Meeting with Project Director, YCU (Dr. Nikolai Germogenov). 3. Meeting with Technical Assistant, YCU (Ms. Maria Vladimirsteva). 4. Meeting with Management Planner and Workshop Assistant, YCU (Ms. Inga Bysykatova). pm: 1. Meeting with Project Director, YCU (Dr. Nikolai Germogenov). 2. Meeting with Head of Monitoring, Biological Resources; President of Yakutia branch of NGO Northern Forum Academy; and Coordinator of ECORA Project (completed) (Dr. Vladimir Vassiliev). 3. Meeting with Head of Inspectorate of Allaikha District (inc. Kytalyk Reserve) (Ms. Tatiana Stryukova).
Thu	21 st July	Free day
Fri	22 nd July	am: 1. Free morning. pm: 1. Meeting with Project Director, YCU (Dr. Nikolai Germogenov).
Sat	23 rd July	am: 1. Fly to Moscow (delayed flight). pm: 1. Travel to UK.
Tue	2 nd August	All day: Travel to Astana, Kazakhstan
Wed	3 rd August	am: 1. Evaluator arrives Astana. 2 Meeting with National Project Manager (Ms. Vera Inyutina). pm: 1. Meeting with original National Project Director and Deputy Chairman of the Forestry and Hunting Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture (Mr. Khairbek Mussabayev) and final National Project Director and Chief of the Fauna Department of the Ministry of Agriculture (Mr. Bakytbek Duisekeyev).
Thu	4 th August	am: 1. Meeting with National Project Manager (Ms. Vera Inyutina). pm: 1. Meeting with Consultant on Education (Dr. Alexandr Belyi). 2. Meeting with Finance Assistant (Ms. Aigul Yesseneeva). 3. Meeting with National Project Manager (Ms. Vera Inyutina).
Fri	5 th August	am: 1. Fly to Kostanay. pm: 1. Travel to Karamendy (Naurzum Zapovednik). 2. Meeting with Consultant Ornithologist (Mr. Alexander Moissejev). 3. Meeting with Consultant Hydrologist (Mr. Vladimir Parastatov). 4. Meeting with Head <i>Ak-tyrna</i> (White Crane) NGO Resource Centre (Mr. Igor Symbayev). 5. Meeting with Consultant Ornithologist – Monitoring (Mr. Alexey Timoshenko).
Sat	6 th August	am: 1. Site visit to vicinity of Naurzum Zapovednik. 2. Meeting with organisers of Crane Festival (Ms. Olga Glushkova (Teacher, Karamendy Secondary School), Ms. Gulnara Anesova ((Teacher, Karamendy Secondary School), Ms. Tatiana Vasilyeva,

Date		Activities
		(Librarian, Karamendy Secondary School and Leader of <i>Ak-niet</i> NGO), and Mr. Mikhail Zhigalko, Chair Naurzum Bionet NGO). pm: 1. Travel to Burevestnik. 2. Meeting with Public Awareness Consultant (Mr. Rauf Sabitov). 3. Meeting with Chair, Burevestnik 2009 NGO (Mr. Oleg Torokhov). 4. Meeting with Film-maker (for project) (Ms. Yelena Yefimova). 5. Site visit to Burevestnik reservoirs.
Sun	7 th August	am: 1. Site visit to vicinity of Naurzum Zapovednik. 2. Meeting with Deputy Director of Naurzum Zapovednik (Ms. Maria Zeinellova). pm: 1. Site visit to Naurzum Zapovednik. 2. Meeting with Head <i>Ak-tyrna</i> (White Crane) NGO Resource Centre (Mr. Igor Symbayev).
Mon	8 th August	am: Free morning pm: 1. Travel to Kostanay.
Tues	9 th August	am: 1. Fly to Astana. pm: 1. Meeting with National Project Manager (Ms. Vera Inyutina). 2. Travel to UK.
Wed	10 th August	am: 1. Travel to UK.
Wed	14 th September	pm: 1. Meeting (Skype) with Project Director (Dr. Claire Mirande)
Sat	24 th September	All day: Travel to Tehran, Iran
Sun	25 th September	am: 1. Evaluator arrives Tehran. 2 Meeting with National Project Manager (Mr. Sadegh Sadeghi Zadegan). pm: 1. Meeting with National Technical Officer (Ms. Azin Fazeli).
Mon	26 th September	am: 1. Meeting with Member of Boompajuham Society NGO (Mr. Mehdi Almassi). 2. Meeting with Head of Wildlife Department, Department of Environment and final National Project Director (Mr. Hossein Mohammadi). pm: 1. Travel to Sari (5 hours).
Tue	27 th September	am: 1. Meeting with Deputy Director, DoE Mazandran Province (Mr. Darius Moghadass). 2 Meeting with Head Wildlife Officer, DoE Mazandran Province (Mr. Koros Rabiee). pm: 1. Meeting with Head, Public Awareness Department, DoE Mazandran Province (Mr. Mohammad Rahmati). 2. Visit to example Wildlife Refuges. 3. Meeting with National Project Manager (Mr. Sadegh Sadeghi Zadegan).
Wed	28 th September	am: 1. Travel to Babol Sar. 2 Meeting with Head Babol Sar, DoE Local Office (Mr. Abdolreza Sadeghi). 3. Meeting with Local Community/DoE Game Guards (Mr. Mojtaba Alizabh, Mr. Hossein Mohammadi, Mr. Mahdi Majidnia, and Mr. Abdullah Dadbin). 4. Travel to Fereydoon Kenar. 5. Meeting with Community Representative, Ezbaran Dongha (Mr. Rahmat Ahmmadi). pm: 1. Lunch meeting with Head of Mazandran Crane Conservation Society (Ms. Ellen Tavakoli). 2. Site visit to Fereydoon Kenar wetland. 3. Meeting with Community Representative, Fereydoon Kenar Dongha (Mr. Ghorban Azali). 4. Travel to Sari.
Thu	29 th September	Free day.
Fri	30 th September	am: Free morning. pm: 1. Travel to Tehran (4.5 hours). 2. Meeting with Project Capacity-building Consultant (Mr. Mehdi Shafiei).
Sat	1 st October	am: Travel to UK.
Tue	4 th October	pm: 1. Meeting (Skype) with International Project Director (Dr. Claire Mirande).
Sun	9 th October	All day: Travel to Bangkok, Thailand
Mon	10 th October	am: 1. Evaluator arrives Bangkok. 2. Meeting with UNEP Task Manager (Mr. Max Zieren). pm: 1. Travel to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Tues	11 th October	All day: Meeting with International Technical Advisor (Mr. Crawford Prentice).
Wed	12 th October	am: 1. Meeting with International Technical Advisor (Mr. Crawford Prentice).

Date		Activities
		pm: 1. Meeting with International Technical Advisor (Mr. Crawford Prentice. 2. Travel to Port Dickson.
Thu	13 th October	am: 1. Meeting with Mid-term Reviewer (Mr. John Howes). pm: 1. Free time.
Fri	14 th October	Free day.
Sat	15 th October	Free day.
Sun	16 th October	All day: Travel to Beijing, China .
Mon	17 th October	am: 1. Meeting with Community Co-management National Consultant (Dr. Liu Jin Long). pm: 1. Meeting with National Project Manager (Mr. Qian Fawen). 2. Meeting with National Technical Coordinator (Dr. Hongxing Jiang). 3. Meeting with National Operations Assistant Mr. Shu J.D. Kinder).
Tue	18 th October	am: 1. Meeting with former Deputy Director General, Department of Wildlife Conservation, State Forestry Administration ²³⁰ and National Project Director (Mr. Wang Wei). pm: 1. Meeting with National Wetland Consultant (Ms. Cui Li Juan). 2. Travel to Qiqihar.
Wed	19 th October	am: 1. Travel to Zhalong National Nature Reserve. 2. Site visit to Zhalong National Nature Reserve. pm: 1. Travel to Sanhe Village. 2. Meeting with Secretary of Sanhe Village (Mr. Lü Xue Hui). 3. Meeting with village beneficiary (Ms. Zhang Chun Fan). 4. Travel to Qiqihar. 5. Meeting with Director of Scientific and Monitoring Centre, Zhalong National Nature Reserve (Mr. Pang Shi Liang). 6. Meeting with Vice Director, Zhalong National Nature Reserve (Mr. Wang Wen Feng).
Thu	20 th May	am: 1. Travel to Momoge National Nature Reserve. pm: 1. Site visit to Momoge National Nature Reserve. 2. Meeting with Scientific Director, Momoge National Nature Reserve (Mr. Sun Xiao-wei). 3. Meeting with Deputy Director, Momoge National Nature Reserve (Mr. Yu Guo Hai).
Fri	21 st October	am: 1. Travel to Xianghai National Nature Reserve. 2. Presentation by Deputy Director, Xianghai National Nature Reserve (Mr. Bao Jun) plus Director of Research Division (Mr. Lin Baoqing), Director of General Office (Mr. Yang Jun) and Research Officers (Mr. Xu Rong and Mr. Li Lianshan). pm: 1. Site visit to Xianghai National Nature Reserve. 2. Meeting with Farmer, “Seed Station Village” (Mr. Han Chun Fa). 3. Meeting with Mayor, “Seed Station Village” (Mr. Lan Xi Jun). 4. Meeting with Director General Office, Xianghai National Nature Reserve (Mr. Yang Jun). 5. Meeting with Deputy Director, Xianghai National Nature Reserve (Mr. Bao Jun).
Sat	22 nd October	am: 1. Travel to Keerqin National Nature Reserve. pm: 1. Free time. 2. Meeting with Deputy Director, Keerqin National Nature Reserve (Mr. Yu You Zhong).
Sun	23 rd October	am: 1. Meeting with Head, Gilibai village ²³¹ (Mr. Baoying Xila). 2. Meeting with Head of Baizifu village and members of NGO “Keerqin Grassland Protection and Development Association” (Mr. Siqinbatu Bao, Mr. Yinji’a Bai, Ms. Hongmei Bao, Mr. Shushan Beng, and Mr. Bashishan Wang). ²³² pm: 1. Travel to Ulanhot. 2. Meeting with former Executive Deputy Director, Keerqin National Nature Reserve ²³³ (Mr. Song Yong Sheng).
Mon	24 th October	am: 1. Travel to Beijing. 2. Meeting with National Project Manager (Mr. Qian Fawen). pm: 1. Travel to Nanchang.
Tue	25 th October	am: 1. Presentation by Deputy Director, Jiangxi Provincial Management Bureau of Wild

²³⁰ Currently Secretary-General of China Forest Certification Council, State Forestry Administration.

²³¹ a non-beneficiary village.

²³² All Mongolian names from these two meetings include a patronymic although all people go by a single name.

²³³ Currently Head Office Affairs, Xing’an Municipality.

Date		Activities
		<p>Fauna and Flora Conservation (Mr. Wu Yinghao) plus Head, Nature Reserve Management (Mr. Huang Zhiqiang) and Deputy Head (Ms. Zheou Xiaoyan). 2. Meeting with Deputy Director, Jiangxi Provincial Management Bureau of Wild Fauna and Flora Conservation (Mr. Wu Yinghao). 3. Meeting with Head, Nature Reserve Management, Jiangxi Provincial Management Bureau of Wild Fauna and Flora Conservation (Mr. Huang Zhiqiang).</p> <p>pm: 1. Meeting with Deputy Director (Planning and Administration), Mountain-River-Lake Development Committee of Jiangxi (Mr. Yan Bangyou) and Chief, Technical and Application Division and GIS Application Centre, Mountain-River-Lake Development Committee of Jiangxi (Mr. Sheng Ming). 2. Meeting with Deputy Director (GIS, Remote-sensing, and International Cooperation, and Member of National Steering Committee (Mr. Zhang Qihar). 3. Meeting with Director, Jiangxi Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve (Mr. Zhu Qi). 4. Meeting with Deputy Director, Jiangxi Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve (Mr. Lin Guan).</p>
Wed	26 th October	<p>am: 1. Travel to Duchang.</p> <p>pm: 1. Meeting with Director of Forestry Bureau, Duchang County (Mr. Cau Dau Gui). 2. Travel to Chi'an village. 3. Meeting with village beneficiary (Mr. Duan Dewang). 3. Meeting with Headman, Chi'an village (Mr. Duan Demain). 4. Travel to Duchang. 5. Meeting with Head of Flora and Fauna Protection Section, Duchang County Forestry Bureau (Mr. Cao Da-san).</p>
Thu	27 th October	<p>am: 1. Travel to Jianxi Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve. 2. Site visit to Jianxi Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve.</p> <p>pm: 1. Free time. 2. Travel to Nanchang.</p>
Fri	28 th October	All day: Travel to UK via Beijing and Bangkok.
Sat	29 th October	am: Arrive UK and travel home.

ANNEX III : PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Alphabetic order.

UNEP / GEF

Ludmila Khorosheva	Financial Assistant, UNEP, Moscow
Max Zieren	Task Manager UNEP Asia-Pacific

Regional Coordination Unit

Claire Mirande	International Project Director
Crawford Prentice	International Technical Adviser
Elena Ilyashenko	Flyway Coordinator

National Coordination Units

Aigul Yesseneeva	Finance Assistant – Kazakhstan
Alexi Blagovidov	National Technical Adviser - Russia
Azin Fazeli	National Technical Officer – Iran
Hongxing Jiang	National Technical Coordinator – China
Julia Gorelova	National Project Manager – Russia
Qian Fawen	National Project Manager – China
Sadegh Sadeghi Zadegan	National Project Manager – Iran
Shu J.D. Kinder	National Operations Assistant – China
Vera Inyutina	National Project Manager – Kazakhstan

Local Coordination Units

Andrei Degtyarev	Project Manager, Yakutia Coordination Unit
Inga Bysykatova	Management Planner and Workshop Assistant, Yakutia Coordination Unit
Maria Vladimirsteva	Technical Assistant, Yakutia Coordination Unit
Nikolai Germogenov	Deputy Director of the Institute of Biological Problems in the Cryolithic Zone, and Project Director, Yakutia Coordination Unit

Project Consultants

Alexander Moissejev	Ornithological Consultant – Kazakhstan
Alexandr Belyi	Education Consultant – Kazakhstan
Alexey Timoshenko	Ornithological Consultant – Kazakhstan
Cui Li Juan	National Wetland Consultant – China
Liu Jin Long	Community Co-management National Consultant – China
Mehdi Shafiei	Capacity-building Consultant – Iran
Rauf Sabitov	Public Awareness Consultant – Kazakhstan
Sheng Ming	Chief, Technical and Application Division and GIS Application Centre, Mountain-River-Lake Development Committee of Jiangxi – China
Vladimir Parastatov	Hydrological Consultant – Kazakhstan
Yan Bangyou	Deputy Director (Planning and Administration), Mountain-River-Lake Development Committee of Jiangxi – China
Yelena Yefimova	Film-maker – Kazakhstan
Zhang Qihar	Deputy Director (GIS, Remote-sensing, and International Cooperation, and Member of National Steering Committee – China

National Governments

Bakytbek Duisekeyev	Chief of the Fauna Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and final Project Director – Kazakhstan
Hossein Mohammadi	Head of Wildlife Department, Department of Environment and final National Project Director – Iran
Khairbek Mussabayev	Deputy Chairman of the Forestry and Hunting Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture and original Project Director – Kazakhstan
Maria Zeinellova	Deputy Director of Naurzum Zapovednik – Kazakhstan
Wang Wei	former Deputy Director General, Department of Wildlife Conservation, State Forestry Administration ²³⁴ and National Project Director – China

Local Governments

Abdullah Dadbin	Local Community/DoE Game Guard– Iran
Bao Jun	Deputy Director, Xianghai National Nature Reserve – China
Cao Da-san	Head of Flora and Fauna Protection Section, Duchang County Forestry Bureau – China
Cau Dau Gui	Director of Forestry Bureau, Duchang County – China
Darius Moghadass	Deputy Director, DoE Mazandran Province - Iran
Hossein Mohammadi	Local Community/DoE Game Guard – Iran
Huang Zhiqiang	Head, Nature Reserve Management, Jiangxi Provincial Management Bureau of Wild Fauna and Flora Conservation – China
Koros Rabiee	Head Wildlife Officer, DoE Mazandran Province = Iran
Lin Guan	Deputy Director, Jiangxi Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve – China
Mahdi Majidnia	Local Community/DoE Game Guard – Iran
Mohammad Rahmati	Head, Public Awareness Department, DoE Mazandran Province – Iran
Mojtaba Alizabh	Local Community/DoE Game Guard – Iran
Pang Shi Liang	Director of Scientific and Monitoring Centre, Zhalong National Nature Reserve – China
Song Yong Sheng	Former Executive Deputy Director, Keerqin National Nature Reserve ²³⁵ – China
Sun Xiao-wei	Scientific Director, Momoge National Nature Reserve – China
Tatiana Stryukova	Head of Inspectorate of Allaikha District, Yakutia – Russia
Wang Wen Feng	Vice Director, Zhalong National Nature Reserve – China
Wu Yinghao	Deputy Director, Jiangxi Provincial Management Bureau of Wild Fauna and Flora Conservation – China
Yakov Sitsev	Director of Department of Biological Resources, Ministry of Nature Protection, Yakutia - Russia
Yang Jun	Director General Office, Xianghai National Nature Reserve – China
Yu Guo Hai	Deputy Director, Momoge National Nature Reserve – China
Yu You Zhong	Deputy Director, Keerqin National Nature Reserve – China

²³⁴ Currently Secretary-General of China Forest Certification Council, State Forestry Administration.

²³⁵ Currently Head Office Affairs, Xing'an Municipality.

Zhu Qi	Director, Jiangxi Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve – China
Abdolreza Sadeghi	Head Babol Sar, DoE Local Office – Iran

Miscellaneous

Baoying Xila	Head, Gilibai village ²³⁶ – China
Gulnara Anesova	Teacher, Karamendy Secondary School and organiser of Crane Festival – Kazakhstan
John Howes	Mid-term Reviewer
Nikita Solomonov	Head of Institute of Biological Problems in the Cryolithic Zone, Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Science
Olga Glushkova	Teacher, Karamendy Secondary School and organiser of Crane Festival – Kazakhstan

NGOs

Ellen Tavakoli	Head of Mazandran Crane Conservation Society
Igor Symbayev	Head Ak-tyrna (White Crane) NGO – Kazakhstan
Mehdi Almassi	Member of Boompajuham Society NGO – Iran
Mikhail Zhigalko	Chair Naurzum Bionet NGO and organiser of Crane Festival – Kazakhstan
Oleg Torokhov	Chair, Burevestnik 2009 NGO
Tatiana Vasilyeva	Leader of <i>Ak-niet</i> NGO and organiser of Crane Festival – Kazakhstan
Vladimir Vassiliev	President of Yakutia branch of NGO Northern Forum Academy – Russia

Project Beneficiaries

Bashishan Wang	Resident of Baizifu village and member of NGO “Keerqin Grassland Protection and Development Association” – China
Duan Demain	Headman, Chi’an village – China
Duan Dewang	Resident of Chi’an village – China
Ghorban Azali	Community Representative, Fereydoon Kenar Dongha – Iran
Han Chun Fa	Farmer, “Seed Station Village” – China
Hongmei Bao	Resident of Baizifu village and member of NGO “Keerqin Grassland Protection and Development Association” – China
Lan Xi Jun	Mayor, “Seed Station Village” – China
Lü Xue Hui	Secretary of Sanhe Village – China
Rahmat Ahmmadi	Community Representative, Ezbaran Dongha – Iran
Shushan Beng	Resident of Baizifu village and member of NGO “Keerqin Grassland Protection and Development Association” – China
Siqinbatu Bao	Head of Baizifu village and member of NGO “Keerqin Grassland Protection and Development Association” – China
Yinji’a Bai	Resident of Baizifu village and member of NGO “Keerqin Grassland Protection and Development Association” – China
Zhang Chun Fan	Farmer’s wife, Sanhe Village – China

²³⁶ Currently Head Office Affairs, Xing’an Municipality.

ANNEX IV: SUMMARY EVALUATION OF PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS BY OBJECTIVES AND COMPONENTS

The initial Project logframe was simplified following the Mid-term Review and the new version was approved by the Project Steering Committee in September 2006. The present evaluation matrix uses this revised logframe.

KEY:

GREEN = Indicators show achievement successful at the end of the Project.

YELLOW = Indicators show achievement nearly successful at the end of the Project.

RED = Indicators not achieved at the end of Project.

HATCHED COLOUR = situation unclear; estimate made.

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
Immediate Objective: Improved ecological integrity and viability of the network of critical wetlands needed by the Siberian Crane, migratory waterbirds and other globally significant wetland biodiversity.	11	Hydrological monitoring in final year of project indicates that conditions at project sites meet minimum requirements for maintaining wetland functions, according to parameters to be specified in the site management plans. Long term monitoring confirms this. Indicative parameters include: water level measurements, surface discharge into wetlands, local precipitation, local evaporation, outflows from the wetland, storage volume.	Baseline to be determined for each project site during preparation of site management plans - by Year 3 for Phase 1 sites	Values of indicator parameters fall within limits of acceptable change specified in site management plans	China							
					<i>Keerqin NNR: "Summary Report of Keerqin Wetland Monitoring" was finalized. Wetlands restoration project implemented with fund of the SFA and wetland area maintained stable.</i>	Wetland restoration commenced in 2008.						
					<i>Momoge NNR: "Summary Report of Momoge Wetland Monitoring" and "Water Management Plan" finalized and published. Wetland area was slightly increased thanks to wetlands restoration project implemented.</i>	Water being supplied; numbers of Siberian Crane increasing.						
					<i>Poyang Lake Basin: According to data from</i>	Initial idea for a high dam dismissed out of hand by SFA.						

²³⁷ Taken from the delivery reported in the Logframe Tracking Form presented in the final PIR 2010.

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					Environment Protection Department and Water Conservancy Department, water quality maintaining at class II or III. The economic development around Poyang Lake is to be discussed and most experts put negative comments on the dam project.	Plans for lower dam still under consideration. See paragraph 72.						
					Xianghai NNR: water diversion project implemented and wetland area maintained.	Water delivered for first time in 2011.						
					Zhalong NNR: The provincial government allocates 2 million RMB per year to Zhalong NNR for ecological water supply to maintain and restore Zhalong wetland.	Water being supplied.						
					Iran							
					Hydrological data have been collected for management plan at Fereydoon Kenar and Bujagh. For Fereydoon Kenar, hydrological study collected meteorological data, hydrometric data, statistics of surface water quality, statistics of wells and springs, monthly changes of Caspian Sea water level, and statistics of dams. Final report completed. Also	No active management taking place. Water levels remain within acceptable levels but not through any intervention by the Project. Management plan still not yet approved (or agreed).						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					hydrological data base in GIS has been developed and analysed.							
Kazakhstan												
					Hydrological data have been collected for 2009. The lake water level was middle according to danilenko scale. Kazakhstan Naurzum Basin Agreement was prepared, discussed with officials and main stakeholders. In connection with the changed status of the reserve as a World Heritage Site, the budget for 2010 will be revised; procurement (state budget) of 2 hydroposts will be planned. Reconstruction of one dam cleaned from silt was made and water release facilities were installed using co-financing in 2007-2010. \$47,000 was provided for project realisation in 2010 from GEF SGP, for maintenance of small dams and elimination of erosion and salinity of water sources filling the Naurzum lakes. Three workshops for water users were organized in Burevestnik village, a							

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					Charter for a new water users' NGO was adopted and a chairman was elected. NGO of water users have been registered as NGO "Burevestnik 2009".							
					Russia							
					West Siberia - project sites monitoring integrated in governmental programme of ecological monitoring.	No active management taking place. Water levels remain within acceptable levels but not through any intervention by the Project. Management plan available only for Kunovat.						
					Yakutia : project sites monitoring included in governmental program of monitoring of Nature Protected Areas and conducted by IBPC.	No active management taking place. Water levels remain within acceptable levels but not through any intervention by the Project.						
	12	Monitoring in final year of project indicates that the total areas of wetland habitats at project sites (ha) have not declined beyond baseline determined for site management plans (no net loss).	Baseline to be determined for each project site during preparation of site management plans - by Year 3 for Phase 1 sites. See Table 1.	No decline in area of wetland habitats at sites	China							
					Keerqin NNR : Wetland is recovering this year due to completion of wetland restoration projects and good rainfall. Wetland area maintained stable.							
					Momoge NNR : Area of wetland is maintained at the same level due to government input to buy water for wetland restoration. Wetland area increased a bit thanks to water diversion project from Nenjiang River to Baicheng City.							
					Poyang Lake Basin :							

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					wetland maintained at the same level with the wetlands converted from the paddy fields.							
					Xianghai NNR: No decline in wetland area with the implementation of water diversion projects.							
					Zhalong NNR: No decline in wetland area with the implementation of water diversion projects.							
					Iran							
					GIS prepared for project sites and improved with high resolution images. The extents of habitats are included in the GIS database; but it is not possible to give exact figure for wetland habitats as they are not permanent and depend on seasonal situation. The images and GIS database have been provided to DoE provincial offices for their future studies.	No evidence of any decline in wetland area.						
					Kazakhstan							
					Data on GIS coverage of project sites have been prepared in Kazakhstan. Two Atlases of ecosystems, landscapes and biodiversity have been prepared and distributed for all sites. All	Seemingly irrelevant to indicator. No evidence of any decline in wetland area.						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					needed GIS maps (13) have been included in the management plans for Naurzum and Urkash - Zharsor sites. In 2009, two atlases were translated into English and prepared for release.							
Russia												
					<u>West Siberia:</u> GIS map was developed for Siberian Crane key biotopes in order to optimise border of NPAs for better protection of birds.	Again, much extraneous detail. No evidence of any decline in wetland area.						
					<u>Yakutia:</u> Basic GIS for Kytalyk and Middle Aldan Project Sites including vector coverage at 1:200,000 scale for whole project sites and at larger scale (at least 1:100,000) for territories of Siberian Crane study and monitoring at Kytalyk, Kyupsky and Chabda reserves. The set of layers (themes) includes: topography, hydrology, settlements, roads and other infrastructure, PA boundaries and zones, forest regulation and hunting parcels (if available). GIS studies of Kytalyk show changes in tundra landscape including increase in size							

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					of large lakes.			■				
	13	Status of globally threatened species and globally significant concentrations of waterbirds remain within limits of acceptable change specified in site management plans	Baseline to be determined for each project site should be based on Ramsar Convention criteria for waterbirds and threatened species and included in site management plans	Annual trends in status of globally threatened species and globally significant concentrations of waterbirds using the project sites are stable (0% change) or increasing by up to 10% by final year of project, based on 3 year means.	China			■				
					Keerqin NNR: waterbirds observed as normal.			■				
					Momoge NNR: waterbirds population was stable. The migratory Siberian cranes have continuously increasing at this site. The largest flock observed at one time was over 2,000.	Numbers in autumn are now rising. At time of TE's visit in October 2011, number of Siberian Cranes present estimated at 3,500.		■				
					Poyang Lake Basin: ground survey and aerial survey shown that population of waterbirds stable. The quantity and percentage of individual waterbirds in some small lakes are over 20,000 or over 1% of the total population.			■				
					Xianghai NNR: stable.			■				
					Zhalong NNR: Population and species of waterbirds including cranes maintained stable.	In fact it now appears that number of Siberian Cranes using Zhalong NNR during autumn migration is now greatly reduced and Momoge has become the preferred site.			■			
					Iran			■				
					No change from last report - Iran conducted IWC counts with assistance from WIWO.			■				
					Kazakhstan			■				
					Autumn monitoring of waterbirds was conducted for Naurzum and UZ	No baseline data against which the TE can assess these figures. It is assumed that they show no		■				

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					project sites from 9 September to 2 October 2009 (by Russian ornithologist. and Naurzum reserve staff). The total number of birds – 218,778 birds, 9 species including: <i>Anser anser</i> – 134,178, <i>Branta ruficollis</i> – 28,172, <i>Anser erythropus</i> – 3,778, <i>Anser albifrons</i> – 4,685, <i>Oxyura leucocephala</i> - 184, <i>Tadorna ferruginea</i> – 24,287, <i>Grus grus</i> – 19,182, <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> – 1,342, <i>Anser sp.</i> – 3,000. Analytical report on waterbird monitoring for 2005-2008 was prepared	decline.						
					Russia							
					Management plans for Kunovat, Kytalyk and Middle Aldan including monitoring protocols on habitats condition and indicator species density have been completed, approved and published, but not implemented yet. Guidelines for use of indicators in monitoring were developed by RCU.	Information completely irrelevant to the indicator. TE cannot make assessment since data lacking.						
	14	Status of selected wetland indicator species to be identified in site management	Baseline to be determined for each project site during	Status of selected wetland indicator species	China							
					Keerqin NNR: The breeding and migratory	No indication as to whether decrease in Siberian Cranes is						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
		plans remain within specified limits of acceptable change for each site by Year 6.	preparation of site management plans - by Year 3 for Phase 1 sites	identified in site management plans remain within specified limits of acceptable change for each site	cranes and Great Bustard are identified as the indicator species. However, the migratory population of Siberian Crane tended to be decreasing but the population of Great Bustard is increasing.	outside level of acceptable change, so TE has given some benefit of doubt. Great Bustard is not a wetland species, so cannot be a wetland indicator.						
					Momoge NNR: The number of migrating Siberian Cranes is stable and a little bit increasing. The wetland habitat research needs to be enhanced and a comprehensive in-depth study is urgent to save the largest flock of migrating Siberian cranes.	A somewhat pessimistic end of project delivery. In fact, the number of cranes on (at least autumn) migration has increased substantially, it is thought at the expense of Zhalong because the wetland conditions at Momoge are now more favourable for this species.						
					Poyang Lake Basin: The wintering waterbirds census report in 2004-2009 has been finalised. The population in 2009 was observed as normal.							
					Xianghai NNR: The breeding cranes and migratory waterbirds identified as normal.							
					Zhalong NNR: survey indicated population was stable.							
					Iran							
					Management plan for Fereydoon Kenar completed which includes monitoring programme for	No information provided about the indicator. Suggests maybe a misunderstanding about the data required but TE unsure why this						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					specific indicators. For Bujagh NP management plan remains under development by DoE including indicator species.	was not corrected by RCU or why it was accepted by UNEP. TE cannot make assessment.						
Kazakhstan												
					A list of indicator species has been prepared for Naurzum and Urkash – Zharsor sites. Management plan for the Naurzum Reserve is being implemented; Management plan for Urkash –Zharsor is being implemented. Both include monitoring of indicator species. Analytical review on Naurzum has been prepared.	No information provided about the indicator. Suggests maybe a misunderstanding about the data required but TE unsure why this was not corrected by RCU or why it was accepted by UNEP. TE cannot make assessment.						
Russia												
					Management plans for Kunovat, Kytalyk and Middle Aldan including monitoring protocols on habitats condition and indicator species density have been completed, approved and published, but not implemented yet. Guidelines for use of indicators in monitoring were developed by RCU.	No information provided about the indicator. Suggests maybe a misunderstanding about the data required but TE unsure why this was not corrected by RCU or why it was accepted by UNEP. TE cannot make assessment.						
COMPONENT 1: CONSERVATION OF GLOBALLY SIGNIFICANT WETLAND BIODIVERSITY AT THE PROJECT SITES												
Outcome 1.1: Enhanced legal protection through clear	O1.1	Approved site management regulations are in place or revised as necessary to specify	China Keergin NNR: Management	Proposals for changes in	The regulation was approved by the People's	Keyouzhongqi is an						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
regulations and identified enforcement responsibilities at selected project sites.		enforcement responsibilities and adequate control over access and land uses by end of Year 6	regulations in place	regulations based on management plan, as necessary	Congress of Keyouzhongqi in 2003.	administrative division of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region						
			Momoge NNR: Management regulations in place	Proposals for changes in regulations based on management plan, as necessary	The existing Nature Reserve Management Regulation for Momoge is being improved and revised. Management plan prepared.	Revision of the Regulation is not yet complete, but management plan is being implemented.						
			Poyang Lake NNR: No wetland management regulations for PLB; only migratory bird protection regulations for PLNNR	Migratory Waterbirds Protection Regulations published for Poyang Lake Basin in year 4; the Wetlands Protection and Management Regulations are put into implementation	Both regulations are completed	Management being implemented with sufficient financial resources from SFA and Jiangxi Provincial Government.						
			Xianghai NNR: October 2002: Existing Nature Reserve Management Regulation for Xianghai has some weaknesses	Nature Reserve Management Regulation improved in Year 3 by Jilin Legal Affairs Bureau.	Waiting for approval by Jilin Peoples' Congress	Regulations discussed twice by Jilin Peoples' Congress but not yet approved; but this is outside of the Project's control. Management plan is being implemented.						
			Zhalong NNR: October 2002: Management Regulation has not been developed by Heilongjiang Province, but Nature	Nature Reserve Management Regulation for Zhalong submitted to Provincial People's	Waiting for approval by Heilongjiang Peoples' Congress	Regulations discussed twice by Heilongjiang Peoples' Congress but not yet approved; but this is outside of the Project's control. Management plan is being implemented.						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
			Reserve Management Measures has been issued by Qiqihar	Congress and expected to be ratified by Year 3.								
Iran												
			<u>Fereydoon Kenar NSA</u> : 64 ha wildlife refuge; no management regulations	Non Shooting Area established; end of season shoot-out banned. Proposals for changes in regulations based on management plan, as necessary.	NSA established; management plan prepared; end of season shoot-out banned; The area is under control of DoE and local guards. Legal and institutional arrangements for implementation of the mgt plan are now up to DoE Mazandaran to pursue.	Also established as a Ramsar site. Management plan specifying responsibilities still awaiting approval						
			<u>Bujagh National Park</u> : Non Hunting Area only; no management regulations	Upgrade to National Park. Proposals for changes in regulations based on management plan, as necessary.	National Park with corresponding regulations; management plan under review by DoE; The conservation status is improving with the participation of the local community	Ramsar site extended to whole of NP. Management committee established. Illegal fishing vol reduced in exchange for catching for propagation						
Kazakhstan												
			<u>Naurzum Zapovednik</u> : Administrative Code exists but has shortcomings.	Extension of Zapovednik and creation of buffer zone. Proposals for changes in regulations based on management plan, as necessary.	Extension of Nature Reserve by 103,687 ha to total of 191,381 ha. Creation of buffer zone by 116,726 ha. Management plan prepared	Management active but limited by lack of funding						
			<u>Urkash-Zharsor Proposed Zakaznik</u> :	Prepare proposal for	Management plan prepared, discussed with	Area successfully declared a Zakaznik.						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
			No regulations - not protected.	Zakaznik. Proposals for changes in regulations based on management plan, as necessary.	stakeholders and included in the MP of Naurzum, since UZ became the responsibility of Naurzum administration. Two inspectors conduct regular observations and protect the territory of the reserve.							
			<u>Tontegir – Zhansura</u> : No regulations - not protected.	Prepare zoning map. Prepare proposal for protected area if project extended.	Key zoning report has been prepared and delivered to Naurzum administration	Project target achieved despite area remaining unprotected.						
			<u>Lake Kulykol</u> : No regulations - not protected.	Prepare zoning map. Prepare proposal for protected area if project extended.	Key zoning report has been prepared and delivered to Naurzum administration	Project target achieved despite area remaining unprotected.						
Russia												
			<u>Kunovat Federal Zakaznik</u> : Federal Zakaznik established in 1984. Does not cover biosphere reserve status, zoning of activities, monitoring program, too few staff with inadequate training.	"Revised Kunovatsky Zakaznik Regulation" agreed / approved with relevant agencies.	System of provincial NPAs around Kunovatsky Federal Zakaznik is formed. Sobty-Yuzeksky, Verchne-Polujsky Zakazniki and Synsko-Vojkarsky Nature park organized: management plan prepared, approved by Russian MNR and published. Proposals on PA's boundaries optimization made based on GIS model.	Excellent adaptive response to wholly unforeseen circumstances.						
			<u>Stershini I & II Regional Zakazniki</u>	Plan of enforcement the	Management plan was abandoned,	Changes to the external operating environment meant that						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
			Currently 2 regional zakazniki in Tyumen Oblast lacking staff and management plan (see Table B1in Project Document):.	wetland protection zakazniki "Sershiniy-1" and "Sershiniy-2" in Tyumen Oblast by end of Year 2.	recommendation on management and development was given to Tumen Administration	the ability for the Project to progress its aims was removed from its hands.						
			<u>Belazersky Zakaznik</u> : Normative acts control land use in existing Zakaznik.	" <i>Revised Belozersky Zakaznik Regulation</i> " approved by DoE of MNR, Division of MNR into province and local Administration by end of Year 5.	Management plan is abandoned, recommendation on management and development was given to Tumen Administration	Changes to the external operating environment meant that the ability for the Project to progress its aims were removed from its hands.						
			<u>Kytalyk Resource Reservation</u> : Normative acts control land use in existing Resource Reservation.	List of needs for optimization and harmonization of normative acts and drafts of optimized acts. Agreed/ approved optimized normative acts under Sakha Republic (Yakutia) legislation on special protected areas, endangered species, and small populations of	Agreed/approved optimised normative acts under Sakha Republic (Yakutia) legislation on special protected areas, endangered species, and small populations of native people of Sakha Republic. Management plan is prepared, approved and published; documents for designation as UNESCO Biosphere Reserve prepared. Proposals on change of current status of the core zone to Strict Reserve made to MNP-SR & MNR.	Project has achieved targets although actions to formulate new designations appear not have sufficient support at federal level.						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
				native people of Sakha Republic.								
			<u>Middle Aldan</u> ²³⁸ : Normative acts control land use in existing Resource Reservations.	Review administrative arrangements for management of Middle Aldan new model territory.	Management plan is prepared, approved and published; documentation for Ramsar designation prepared and passed to MNP-SR & MNR.	Project targets significantly exceeded. Designation and plans awaiting provincial and federal government approval.						
Outcome 1.2: Sustained biodiversity protection through participatory and effective site management.	O1.2.1	Management plans are approved and published for each selected site by end of Year 3 or 6 for Phase 1 and 2 sites respectively. Implementation of management plans commences by end of Year 3 or 6 for Phase 1 and 2 sites respectively.	No sites have effectively functioning site management committees	Management plans are approved and published for each selected site by end of Year 3 or 6 for Phase 1 and 2 sites respectively. Implementation of management plans commences by end of Year 3 or 6 for Phase 1 and 2 sites respectively.	China							
					<u>Keergin NNR</u> : the management plan has been published and is implementing well.	All five reserves have secured funding for operational and/or capital work management from State or provincial/local sources.						
					<u>Momoge NNR</u> : The management plan and water management plan are finished and are being implemented well							
					<u>Poyang Lake NNR</u> : new master plan of PLNNR is being implemented.							
					<u>Xianghai NNR</u> : Stakeholders' Participatory Plan put into operation							
					<u>Zhalong NNR</u> : Community participatory co-management plan and public education plan are published and being implemented. Water replenishment and wetland restoration plans are being implemented with support from provincial government.							

²³⁸ Chabda Resource Reservation; Kuoluma-Chappanda Resource Reservation; and Kyupsky Resource Reservation.

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					Iran							
					Fereydoon Kenar NSA: Management plan completed. Now with DoE Mazandaran to implement.	Actual position shows that Management plan is not yet approved, and may not yet be completed either since local people have not seen a "final" draft. Process has stalled.						
					Bujagh National Park: Management plan remains under development by DoE. SCWP provided inputs on stakeholder participation to internal DoE management planning process	Although the problems on this site seem less complex, DoE has still not completed the plan.						
					Kazakhstan							
					Naurzum Zapovednik: Management plan is being implemented.	Limited finance means that not all aspects of plan can be carried out.						
					Urkash-Zharsor Proposed Zakaznik: Management plan has been prepared and included in the management plan for the Naurzum Reserve (UZ falls under the Naurzum administration).	Clever innovation to save costs, but same limited finances apply.						
					Tontegir – Zhansura and Lake Kulykol:	Under Outcome 1.1 it is clear that the target was only preparation of zoning reports which cannot be implemented.						
					Russia							
					Kunovat Federal Zakaznik: Management plan prepared and approved by local authorities and Russian MNR and published.	Not seen/visited by TE. Given external problems over administration of federal zakazniki, this appears to be a successful yet unexpected result.						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					Stershini I & II Regional Zakaznikj: Abandoned. Belazersky Zakaznik: Abandoned.	Outside of Project's control.						
					Kytalyk Resource Reservation: Management plan prepared and approved by Sakha (Yakutia) Republic government and published.	Evidence indicates that despite government's good intentions, plan is not being implemented or financed.						
					Middle Aldan: Management plan prepared and approved by Sakha (Yakutia) Republic government and published.	No indication that management plan is being implemented.						
	01.2.2	Site Management Committees including local stakeholders are provided with annual reports, consulted at least twice per year on implementation of site management plans and included in reviews of management plans on a long term basis by end of year 6.	No sites have effectively functioning site management committees.	Site Management Committees including local stakeholders are provided with annual reports, consulted at least twice per year on implementation of site management plans and included in reviews of management plans on a long term basis by end of year 6.	China Keerqin: 2 meetings of village representatives held at Beizifu village led by "Keerqin Grassland Protection and Development Association". A "Regulation for Grassland, flocks and herds Mg" was issued through efforts by Keerqin NNR. Momoqe NNR: Community Co-management Committee supported Project activities since 2006. Poyang Lake NNR: Community Co-management Committee coordinated local	The TE has evaluated "Site Management Committees" vicariously, since there is little evidence that these exist, particularly none that involve local stakeholders to any meaningful degree, yet the commendable work with the water plans indicates that some sort of joint site management committee must be operative. The only reason that the evaluation does not assign Highly Satisfactory to the sites is that at a macro-scale, there is no involvement of local people in any of the sites' management, although this may occur at a single village scale, e.g. at Keerqin.						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					government inputs for pilot projects							
					Xianghai NNR: Community Co-management Committee supported Project activities since 2004.							
					Zhalong NNR: Community Co-management Committee supported Project activities since 2004.							
					Iran							
					Site management committees established and meeting each year, consultant on community participation increased the capacity of SMCs to ensure their sustainability.	Site management committees do not appear to have met twice a year during Project, and evidence suggests these are now inactive at both sites.						
					Kazakhstan							
					Naurzum: Site Management Committee was established and had annual meetings;	Clear evidence that " <i>Steering Committee</i> " (= site management committee) that includes local district and village administrations still operative, as well as local population where problems are relevant. Next version of management plan under development.						
					Urkash-Zharsor: Site Management Committee members had meeting jointly with Naurzum.	TE assumes that this site is still included in arrangements for Naurzum and hence that site management committee is still extant.						
					Tyntyugur-Zhanshura and Lake Kulykol:	Under Outcome 1.1 it is clear that the target was only preparation of zoning reports which cannot be implemented.						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					Russia							
					<i>Strategies for Improving Relationship between Local People and Waterbirds</i> at both Yakutian and West Siberian Project Sites were developed and published.	No evidence of participatory site management committees, but TE recognises extremely low population densities at most sites may present some difficulties ²³⁹ .						
	01.2.3	Annual PATT form evaluations show a clear trend of management improvement based on PATT scores and supporting information	First available PATT form for each site: ideally 2003 for Phase 1 sites; 2006 for Phase 2 sites.	Each site shows a consistent improvement in PATT scores from one year to the next.	China							
					<u>Keergin NNR:</u> 2005: 66 2006: 63 2007: 58 2008: 65 2009: 65	Initial decrease due to staff being moved. Overall slight decrease registered.						
					<u>Momoge NNR:</u> 2005: 64 2006: 55 2007: 60 2008: 64 2009: 68	Initial decrease due to staff being moved. Overall slight increase registered.						
					<u>Nanjishan NR:</u> 2005: 34 2006: 34 2007: 38 2008: 64 2009:62	Very successful result.						
					<u>Poyang Lake NNR:</u> 2005: 60 2006: 67 2007: 68 2008: 68 2009: 69	Increase registered, but little improvement registered after initial year.						
					<u>Xianghai NNR:</u> 2005: 49 2006: 51	Large increase apparent but not year on year						

²³⁹ Long RCU comment and response – reproduced in Annex XI.

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					2007: 51 2008: 51 2009: 63			■				
					<u>Zhalong NNR:</u> 2005: 63 2006: 64 2007: 64 2008: 65 2009: 65	Only a two point increase registered, but not year on year.			■			
Iran												
					<u>Fereydoon Kenar NSA:</u> 2003: 43 2005: 51 2006: 50 2007: 54 2008: 55 2009: 55	Little progress over the final 3 years, but a significant rise overall.			■			
					<u>Bujagh National Park:</u> 2006: 47 2007: 45 2008: 48 2009: 48	An increase of one point over four years.				■		
Kazakhstan												
					<u>Naurzum Zapovednik:</u> 2004: 64 2005: 60 2006: 60 2007: 62 2008: 74 2009: 82	A slow start but an excellent result		■				
					<u>Urkash-Zharsor Proposed Zakaznik:</u> 2007: 24 2008: 35 2009: 50	A 100% increase on capacity score in 3 years.		■				
					<u>Tontegir – Zhansura and Lake Kulykol:</u>	No PATT as no protection status or effective management.						
Russia												
					<u>Kunovat Federal</u>	Overall decline.						■

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					Zakaznik: 2005: 21 2006: ? 2007: 12 2008: 14 2009: 17							
					Stershini I & II Regional Zakaznik: 2005: 18 2006: ? 2007: 11 2008: 11 2009: 0	No activity in 2009.						
					Belozersky Zakaznik: 2005: 21 2006: ? 2007: 12 2008: 14 2009: 17	Overall decline.						
					Kytalyk Resource Reservation: 2005: 48 2006: 50 2007: 54 2008: 60 2009: 62	Steady increase – although with recent cuts to number of rangers, this may have been reversed since the Project ended.						
					Chabda Resource Reservation: 2006: 52 2007: 59 2008: 69 2009: 72	Good solid increase.						
					Kuoluma-Chappanda Resource Reservation: 2007: 48 2008: 48 2009: 50	Shows only a very slight increase.						
					Kyupsky Resource Reservation: 2006: 49	Good increase, beginning to slow.						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					2007: 57 2008: 65 2009: 66							
COMPONENT 2: NATIONAL MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN WETLAND AND MIGRATORY WATERBIRD CONSERVATION												
Outcome 2.1: Enhanced conservation of wetland biodiversity through national and sectoral legislation, as well as supporting policies, plans, and financial mechanisms	O2.1.1	Each country can show at least one modification made to national legislation in this respect, as well as one new policy and/or financial mechanism made through the intervention of this project by end of Year 6	<u>China</u> : Wildlife Protection Law requires updating in line with conservation status of species & need for a waterbird action plan.	Each country can show at least one modification made to national legislation in this respect, as well as one new policy and/or financial mechanism made through the intervention of this project by end of Year 6	<u>China</u> : The China Waterbirds Conservation Action Plan is included as one part of the China Wetlands Conservation Action Plan approved by the State Council of China in 2004. Wildlife conservation has been improving since the Wildlife Protection Law was approved by the National People's Congress in Aug 2004.							
			<u>Iran</u> : Species protection legislation needs to be revised to include higher penalties according to protected species groups & legislation or policy needed to manage duck-trapping.		<u>Iran</u> : In 2005 all the penalties were increased to twice the baseline, i.e. the penalty for killing a Siberian crane is now US\$12,400. Established Trappers' Associations are the main body for consultation regarding improvements to local legislation on duck trapping and use of aerial nets. First stage of trapping study has provided data on catch rates for legal methods.	Increase in penalty meets narrow definition of legislation to protect species. Insufficient progress with trapping to fulfil policy requirement.						
			<u>Kazakhstan</u> : need to review wetland and species protection legislation in cooperation with UNDP/GEF		<u>Kazakhstan</u> : In 2008 Ramsar country report has been prepared. Review of the wetland legislation and development of	No legislation modified. Review fulfils policy requirement.						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
			Wetlands Project.		recommendations are incorporated into the national "Plan of Measures for Implementation of CMS and Ramsar Convention for 2006-2008".							
			Russia: need to harmonize federal and regional nature protection legislation		Russia: SCWP project website prepared and updated at www.birder.ru Internet portal.	This does not meet the criterion of "one modification made to national legislation".						
Outcome 2.2: Strengthened conservation of wetland biodiversity through provincial land use planning, water resource management and coastal zone management	O2.2.1	Specified improvements relating to wetland biodiversity conservation made to land use, water resource & coastal zone management plans by end of Year 6.	China: Regional plans for Poyang Lake Basin and Songhua River Basin are subject to environmental assessment and consultation.	Specified improvements relating to wetland biodiversity conservation made to land use, water resource & coastal zone management plans by end of Year 6.	China: Project Completion Workshop and Zhalong Seminar were organized in Harbin in Oct 2009. Members from most of China steering committee and advisory group sent representatives to attend the workshop and delivered presentations, especially representatives from Water Resource Department. This indicates the long-term mechanism has been established and the relationship is enhancing. Meanwhile Xianghai, Keerqin NNRs have incorporated the Water Management Plan and the regional water diversion plan. Jiangxi Forestry Department is assigned by the provincial government to develop conservation plan for forest, wetland, nature	This understates magnitude of achievement in China. Water plans including delivery and financial mechanisms have been established by the Project for Keerqin, Momoge, and Zhalong NNRs. By the time of the TE's visit in October 2011, all three were receiving water on a regular basis. Project data used to oppose proposed dam at outlet of Poyang Lake but this continues to pose a substantial risk to waterbirds (see paragraph 72).						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					reserve and wintering migratory birds to ensure water quality of Poyang Lake, which will be used for reference of decision-making of regional economic development, especially for eco-economic zone and industrial development plan.							
			Iran: DoE represented on all Provincial Directors' Councils and City Directors' Councils where an office is present & consulted on developments.		Iran: Currently, DoE is represented on provincial planning council and related local administrative councils.	No substantive improvements to land use, water resource or coastal zone management plans; and no apparent change from baseline re DoE representation on planning council						
			Kazakhstan: land use and water resource committees for Kostanay pay little attention to needs of wetland biodiversity.		Kazakhstan: specific policies relating to conservation of wetland biodiversity in Naurzum site and possibilities of special agreement with Akimat were discussed with the Committee on Water Resources Management of Kostanay Region. A project on reconstruction of dams of great importance for local population as a road infrastructure and being filters for retaining silt sediments and installation of water release facilities on them has been developed. The reservoir in front of the dam in	A new Basin Agreement signed under auspices of a Basin Council, supported by appropriate legislation, whereby existing dams retained and decayed dams allowed to deteriorate further, i.e. status quo maintained. Agreement has removed conflict between local population and zapovednik staff.						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					Burevestnik village has been cleaned from silt, water release facilities have been installed on the dam. US\$2,000 was provided for project preparation from GEF SGP in 2008. The estimator and hydrological consultant have been contracted on partner's Ecosan project funds. In 2009, a project proposal on dams was prepared and approved (US\$47,000) by UNDP/GEF SGP.							
			Russia: plans for wetland biodiversity input to regional plans are incomplete.		Russia: Administration Yamalo-Nenetsky of Autonomous Region organized system of provincial zakazniki around Kunovat; Chokurdakh Administration participated in Kytalyk RR management and endowment.	Nothing substantive achieved. Kunovat achievement is at site level and not national level; and is attributed to indicator O1.2.1. Issue related to Kytalyk is irrelevant to this indicator. TE could find no evidence of any endowment.						
Outcome 2.3: Strengthened flyway conservation efforts through functional national monitoring programmes for the Siberian Crane and other migratory waterbirds	O2.3.1	Data on numbers of Siberian Cranes and other globally significant migratory waterbird species using the same sites collected according to approved monitoring methods and reported annually to Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator (SCFC).	Flyway level sharing of information on Siberian Crane coordinated by SCFC during PDF B Phase. Iran conducting IWC regularly; <i>ad hoc</i> sharing of other information on migratory waterbirds	Data on numbers of Siberian Cranes and other globally significant migratory waterbird species using the same sites collected	China: 2 editing council meetings were held in Changchun in Sep and Dec 2009. The 3 books (monitoring report of migration waterbirds along the Siberian crane flyway, wintering waterbirds survey in Poyang Lake Basin and breeding waterbirds survey in Northeast China	The TE finds it very strange to have targets worded exactly the same as the indicator; as is the case for many of those above and all the remaining indicators. As is the case with certain other parts of the wording in the final version of the Logframe Tracking Tool, it seems to provide an update of the final year's activities rather than a proper						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
				according to approved monitoring methods and reported annually to Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator (SCFC).	have been finalized and released to related experts for review in Project Completion Workshop. Now the final versions have been sent to press for official publishing. Half million RMB Yuan co-financed for 18 NEACSN sites of China to conduct monitoring and/or study programmes in 2009 and final reports are collecting.	overview of the Projects achievements as a whole. Flyway monitoring network was developed comprising 18 partners in ten provinces. A total of 158 locations were included within the monitoring plan, divided into four sections. Aerial surveys also conducted of wintering birds at Poyang Lake and breeding birds on Songnen Plain.						
					<u>Iran</u> : Data on Siberian Cranes and release information reported to SCFC plus input for regional database. IWC January waterfowl count data for Iran provided to IWC coordinator. National database being improved by adding information from all seasons and also developing a ringing database. Monitoring of waterbirds improved for the South Caspian Region through national trainings.							
					<u>Kazakhstan</u> : Siberian Crane sightings reported to SCFC; waterbird survey reports have been prepared. Report on spring monitoring for 2009 prepared, the data	Waterbird monitoring conducted by Kazakh and international ornithologists from autumn 2005 to autumn 2009 covering more than 40 water bodies along a route of over 600 km.						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					has been included into the regional database. Autumn 2009 monitoring conducted by Russian expert. Analytical report on waterbird monitoring for 2005-2008 was prepared.							
					Russia: monitoring actively in progress in Yakutia and West Siberia; results shared with SCFC. Analytical Review on Siberian Cranes and their Habitats published and disseminated. Joint studies on spring monitoring of waterbird species at potential / historic Siberian Crane migratory stopover sites were conducted with Project colleagues in Kazakhstan. An analytical report on the migration observation in Kazakhstan was published as the part of the Analytical Review. Monitoring on the Siberian Crane breeding grounds and flyway was continued, including other species of global importance. Previously collected data were summarized in Analytical review. Monitoring of PTT placed in 2008 continued until it stopped							

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					transmitting.							
Outcome 2.4: Enhanced implementation of international conventions and agreements on the conservation of (wetland & waterbird) biodiversity	O2.4.1	Designation of all qualifying project sites as Ramsar Sites by Year 6.	Ramsar Sites as of October 2002: China - Xianghai and Zhalong; Iran - Kiashahr Lagoon (Bujagh); Kazakhstan - none; Russia - Kunovat, Tyumen-Kurgan (part).	Designation of all qualifying project sites as Ramsar Sites by Year 6.	China: NCU has been assisting Momoge and Keerqin NNR to become Ramsar sites. The Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region Government has submitted the application to the Ramsar Convention Implementation Office of SFA.							
					Iran: FDK designated as Ramsar site in 2003; Bujagh National Park designated as Ramsar site in December 2009 (through extension of existing Kia Shahr Lagoon Ramsar Site).							
					Kazakhstan: nominations for 4 project sites have been prepared and submitted to FHC after expert review. In 2009, all 4 project sites of Kazakhstan: Naurzum lake system, Zharsor – Urkash lake system, Koibagar-Tyuntyugur and Kulykol-Taldykol lake systems were included into the List of Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention.							
					Russia: Sakha Republic (Yakutia) prepared nomination for Kytalyk and Middle Aldan, YNAO							

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					prepared for Kunovat and provincial zakazniki.							
	O2.4.2	All 4 project countries complete process for accession to CMS by Year 6.	No project countries are CMS signatories. All are Ramsar members except Kazakhstan.	All 4 project countries complete process for accession to CMS by Year 6.	<p><u>China</u>: SFA has been actively involved in the CMS activities even as observers and also coordinated with the other government authorities for the approval of the convention. Two representatives participated in the CMS MOU meeting held in Bonn in March 2010.</p> <p><u>Iran</u>: joined the CMS; participated in CMS COP9</p> <p><u>Kazakhstan</u>: has acceded to CMS. In December 2008, a presentation on Kazakhstan SCWP achievements was given at CMS COP-9.</p> <p><u>Russia</u>: proposal to join to CMS prepared and adopted by MNR. MNR will agree designation process with other ministries and Government.</p>	<p>Sadegh Sadeghi Zadehan is member of Budget and Finance Sub-committee representing Asia Region since COP9.</p>						
	O2.4.3	National project websites are established and make available all major outputs in the national language by end of Year 6.	No national project websites.	National project websites are established and make available all major outputs in the national language by end of Year 6.	<p><u>China</u>: The service contract for maintaining SCWP China's website http://www.baihegef.com will come to the end by Sept 2010. NPM of China NCU will search for funding the continued impacts of the project</p>	No further funding identified and website not operative beyond September 2010. National project outputs no longer available on the internet.						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					beyond.							
					Iran: websites operational; outputs will be made available through the websites.	Was independent address – now linked via DOE www.irandoe.org/ but website appears quiet with no new news posted in last two years.						
					Kazakhstan: website operational. The national project website was transformed for NGO "Eco centre Ak-tyrna" website www.aktyrna.kz	Appears live and active.						
					Russia: national website is being updated regularly.							
COMPONENT 3: ENHANCED INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WETLAND SITE NETWORKS												
Outcome 3.1: Improved crane conservation through development and implementation of regional flyway networks and adopted crane conservation plans in Western/Central Asia and Eastern Asia.	O3.1.1	Key conservation measures for threatened crane species and their habitats are covered collectively: 1) in the Conservation Plans under the CMS MoU for Siberian Cranes, 2) in East Asia under the five year action plan (2008-2012) for the Crane Working Group under the EAAFP, 3) in Western/Central Asia under the action plans for the W/CASN and CAF, and 4) in the proposed CWGE strategy and action plan for CIS countries.	1) At the start of the project the CMS MoU Conservation Plans were updated following the 4th Meeting with assistance from the project (in PDF B Phase); 2) Action Plan for the NEACSN 2001-2005 was in place; 3) WCASN & CAF Action Plans did not exist; CWGE had no strategy	Key conservation measures for threatened crane species and their habitats are covered collectively : 1) in the Conservation Plans under the CMS MoU for Siberian Cranes, 2) in East Asia under the five year action plan (2008-2012) for the Crane Working Group under the EAAFP, 3) in Western/Central	Regional: 1) Project has provided input to the biennial CMS MoU Conservation Plans since PDF B Phase. Last updated in May 2007 and final versions now on CMS and SCFC websites. Preparing for update as part of MoU 7 in Iran in Mar 2010; 2) Project provided input to new TOR for NEACWG, which includes priority actions from NEACWG Action Plan 2007-2012, co-hosted NEACSN-WG meeting China Oct 2009; Gumi (Korea) Crane Workshop Proceedings issued by NEACSN WG early 2009; 3) comments provided to							

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
				Asia under the action plans for the WCASN and CAF, and 4) in the CWGE strategy and action plan for CIS countries (2008-2011)	CAF Action Plan approved in June 2005, later launched by CMS in Jan 2008, ICF developing plans with WI for new GEF project to support WCASN and CAF development; WCASN plans being drafted for next MoU meeting in March 2010; 4) CWGE strategy and action plan proposals discussed at the CWGE Conference, proceedings published; 5) Project staff prepared draft documents for seventh meeting of CMS MoU in Iran, March 2010.	Cancelled in Iran – hosted in Bonn – visa issues for members.						
					China: Approx. half million RMB were allocated to 20 sites for waterbirds survey and study in the fiscal year 2009-2010. Now reports are being collected and will be consolidated in the next few months.	TE unsure how this fits against target.						
					Iran: Iran delegation attended CMS COP9 and will host CMS MOU7 meeting in 2010.	Intention was good but cancelled in Iran because of visa issues for members – hosted in Bonn instead. Evaluated on intention, not actual.						
					Kazakhstan: Hosted the CMS MoU 6 meeting and updated the activities of 2007-2010 western and central flyway CMS MoU							

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					Conservation Plans and submitted to CMS and SCFC.							
					Russia: 1) CMS MoU Conservation Plans updated; 2) CWG Action Plan prepared; 3) CAF Action Plan updated; WCASN action plan to be drafted for next MoU meeting in 2010							
	O3.1.2	1) Designated WCASN and EAAFP/NEACSN site totals meet following national targets: WCASN - Iran 2, Kazakhstan 5, Russia 5; 2) EAAFP waterbird network - China 12, Russia 12.	1) China - 10 sites, Iran - 0 sites, Kazakhstan - 0 sites, Russia 10 sites (included in site networks under the APMWCS).	1) Designated WCASN and EAAFP/NEACSN site totals meet following national targets: WCASN - Iran 2, Kazakhstan 5, Russia 5; 2)EAAFP waterbird network - China 12, Russia 12.	Regional: 1) WCASN: 10 sites from 4 countries accepted for inclusion at launch of WCASN in May 2007 (including 5 sites in Kazakhstan and 2 in Iran); site certificates issued to designated sites including ceremony at CMS COP9 Meeting; site designation ceremony guidelines completed; document outlining administrative and financial mechanisms for WCASN prepared and posted in CMS website; WCASN documents and site information posted on merged SCWP-SCFC website; site certification ceremonies conducted in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan during Crane Celebration; education activities for WCASN sites in Iran,	No baseline for EAAFP stated. Targets effectively met for both WCASN and NEACSN/EAAFP, except for Russia. However, significant work completed elsewhere.						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan supported by SCWP. 2) Now 12 NEACSN sites in China and 4 in Russia. No further progress in 2009.							
					China: Currently 20 reserves have been designated as EAAFP waterbird network sites (excluding Taiwan), including 12 sites of Crane Network, 15 sites of Shorebird Network, 2 sites of Anatidae Network (some reserves have been nominated in 2 or more of these networks). New candidate sites are nominated by the local authorities and more reserves are encouraged to join the waterbird site network under EAAFP.	Exceeds EAAFP target by 66%.						
					Iran: No further site nominations made after Fereydoon Kenar and Bujagh NP.	Two sites meets WCASN target.						
					Kazakhstan: Kazakhstan: Completed site nomination forms for 5 sites - Kulikol-Taldikol Lake System, Zharsor-Urkash Lake System, Naurzum Lake System, Delta of the Ural River and Coastal Zone of the	Five sites meets WCASN target.						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					Caspian Sea and Tyuntyugur-Zhanshura Lake System. All 5 sites were included. Certificates were presented to FHC representative at CMS COP9.							
					Russia: No more sites accepted to WCASN and EAAF/NEACSN in reporting period.	2009 PIR reports four NEACSN sites in Russia – eight short of target. No WCSAN sites reported.						
	O3.1.3	Required data on sites and waterbirds are entered in regional database for all project sites by end of Year 6 and made available to support implementation of the CMS MoU on the Siberian Crane.	Databases in existence that cover part of project's scope or overlap project's interest	Required data on sites and waterbirds are entered in regional database for all project sites by end of Year 6 and made available to support implementation of the CMS MoU on the Siberian Crane. Required data on non-project sites in Siberian Crane Range States are entered. All historical and recent data are entered in the regional database.	Regional: database operational, with users guide. Training provided for NCU users. Data input done for Russian, Iranian and Kazakhstan sites. Data on Siberian Crane sightings registered since 2000 as well as data on non-project sites have been entered into regional database. GIS for sites in progress. Technical issues remained a problem for China. Complete data on Chinese waterbird monitoring received Dec 2009 and will be entered. Next step under CMS MoU will be to produce reports.	Chinese data believed to have been entered. Target achieved						
Outcome 3.2: Strengthened	O3.2.1	At least 20 papers describing project results published in	Papers based on PDF B phase	At least 20 papers	Regional: Papers published in proceedings							

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU	
understanding, support and effective action towards flyway conservation through dissemination of information and experience between sites, countries, related experts and organizations and the interested public		scientific journals and conference and workshop proceedings by end of Year 6.	outputs presented to at least 2 conferences and workshops. Report provided to CMS website.	describing project results published in scientific journals and conference and workshop proceedings by end of Year 6.	of Global Flyways Conference in April 2004; CMS MoU 5 th and 6 th meetings; CMS COP 8 in Nov 2005 and MWCC 10 th meeting in Dec 2005. Reports on project published in CWGE Newsletter #6, #7-8, #9 and #10 and in China Crane News #8(1 and 2). More than 14 papers published regarding waterbird studies and project sites in Kazakhstan by MTR. Presentation on research at Poyang Lake Basin at International Conference on PLB. Several presentations made during scientific programme in Salekhard, Russia in November 2005. Presentations made to CMS Scientific Task Force on AI (June 2007); 3 rd N Pacific Migratory Birds Conference (Aug 2007); Asian Regional Ramsar Meeting (Jan 2008); Asian Wetland Symposium (June 2008); CWGE Conference in 2007; NEACSN Workshop at Gumi, Korea (Oct 2008, published early 2009); Ramsar COP10 Side Event (Oct								

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					2008); CMS COP9 Technical Session (Dec 2008), Society for Conservation Biology (Jul 2009). Joint paper on SC releases in Iran published in Sandgrouse journal (2009). A series of papers on Siberian Crane monitoring were published in China Crane News (1 st and 2 nd issues 2009). Papers at Society Conservation Biology symposium Beijing July 2009. Co-authored UNEP DGEF flyway publication Sept 2009.							
					China: Monitoring Report along Siberian Crane Flyway in China, Breeding Waterbirds Survey in Northeast China and Wintering Waterbirds Survey in Middle and Lower Yangtze River finalized and circulated to relevant experts for review and comments during the PCW.							
					Iran: Presentations made to NEACSN Workshop at Gumi and CMS COP9 Technical Session in late 2008. Paper on Siberian Crane releases in Iran published in Sandgrouse Journal (Ornithological Soc of the Middle East);	Iran presented a paper on continuing efforts at the 2011 Crane Conservation Conference in Volgograd.						

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					Paper on community participation provided for the project workshop completion proceedings.							
					<p><u>Kazakhstan:</u> Presentations made by Kazakhstan NPM at COP-9 CEPA fair in Bonn, May 2008, at CMS COP-9 in Italy, December 2008, at COP-14 (UNFCCC) in Poznan, December 2008. At national meeting for Kazakhstan projects - Sustainable Development in Almaty, March 2008, at national meeting on SCWP Data Base in Astana, October 2008, two articles in ornithological journals. At the national meeting for Kazakhstan projects - on March 27, 2009, a national workshop on the subject: "<i>Development of Alternative Livelihoods within the Framework of International Projects</i>" was held in Astana. Presentation on site protection & mgt made for SCWP Project Completion Workshop and 6 papers prepared for the proceedings..</p>							
					<p><u>Russia:</u> Two papers presented at Project Completion Workshop in</p>							

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					October: flyway monitoring in Yakutia and PA network development around Kunovat. Articles on Siberian Crane monitoring along Eastern Flyway and about impact of climate change to Siberian Crane breeding grounds were published in Siberian Crane Flyway News #9 and #10.							
	O3.2.2	All main regional project results and significant national results presented on ICF and flyway websites (linked to Wetlands International, BirdLife International, Ramsar Convention & CMS websites) as well as newsletters, technical reports by end of year 6	GEF Project websites under construction. SCFC in operation. Report on CMS website.	All main regional project results and significant national results presented on ICF and flyway websites (linked to Wetlands International, BirdLife International, Ramsar Convention & CMS websites) as well as newsletters, technical reports by end of year 6	<u>Regional:</u> Communications strategy completed and action plan for implementation in 2007-9 determined. SCWP and SCFC Websites functioning, with links to ICF site. SCWP site actively maintained to present news and results from project. Project outputs being uploaded to internal FTP site for access by project staff. Siberian Crane Flyway News published regularly - latest #9 published in May 2009 and #10 in early July 2009. Report on CMS MoU 6 meeting put up on CMS, WI and SCWP sites. Conservation Plans uploaded to CMS and SCFC websites. Website created for school students and teachers along eastern flyway, in							

Aim	#	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at End of Project ²³⁷	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					Chinese, English and Russian languages. SCWP and <i>Lily of Birds</i> booklets, and completed fact sheets and technical briefs posted on SCWP website. Regional mechanisms for presenting project results functioning. 10 fact sheets and technical briefs and 2 booklets prepared and distributed, banners prepared and displayed in booths. Systematic documentation, categorisation and storage of all project outputs at ICF in final stages. Project Terminal Report and Project Completion Workshop Proceedings being made available on SCWP website.							
	O3.2.3	Over 100 articles published on project results in national and international media by end of Year 6.	Many articles already published during PDF B phase (not quantified)	Over 100 articles published on project results in national and international media by end of Year 6.	<u>Regional:</u> Communications strategy completed and action plan for implementation in 2007-9 determined. Cumulatively all components have far surpassed the target of 100 articles in national and international media.	TE considers it would have been better if communications strategy had been completed earlier in Project						

ANNEX V : LIST OF PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND MEETINGS

As of 31 December 2009 (alphabetic order)

	Representative	Institution
1	Bakhtytbek Duisekeyev	Ministry of Agriculture, Kazakhstan; National Project Director
2	Claire Mirande	ICF, Project Director (Chair)
3	Crawford Prentice	SCWP International Technical Advisor
4	Douglas Hykle	Senior Advisor to CMS, UNEP
5	James Harris	Senior Vice-president, ICF
6	Julia Gorelova	SCWP National Project Manager, Russia
7	Max Zieren	Task Manager, UNEP/GEF Coordination Office
8	Mohammad-Baher Sadoogh	Department of the Environment, Iran; National Project Director
9	Nikolai Germongenov	SCWP Yakutia Project Director, Russia
10	Patricia Gleason	SCWP Operations Manager
11	Qian Fawen	National Project Manager, China
12	Sadegh Sadeghi-Zadegan	SCWP National Project Manager, Iran
13	Vera Inyutina	SCWP National Project Manger, Kazakhstan
14	Wang Wei	State Forestry Administration, China; National Project Director

MEETINGS

1 st	27-29 th September 2003	Moscow.
2 nd	24-27 th February 2004	Beijing
3 rd	4-8 th December 2004	Ramsar, Iran
4 th	30 th November – 2 nd December 2005	Almaty
5 th	27-29 th September 2006	Moscow
6 th	4-6 th December 2007	Bangkok
7 th	28-30 th November 2008	Rome (with CMS COP9)
8 th	12-13 th October 2009	Harbin (linked to Project completion workshop)

Plus a mini meeting with Kazakhstan and Russia on 4-6th June 2004 Moscow to get Kazakhstan started.

ANNEX VI : LIST OF PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS

Alphabetic order

	Representative	Institution
1	Adriana Dinu	GEF Regional Team Leader for UNDP in Europe and the CIS
2	Christoph Zoekler	UNEP- World Conservation Monitoring Centre
3	Donald Woodward	Hydraulic Engineer, USA
4	Joseph D'Cruz	Biodiversity and International Waters, UNDP GEF Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
5	Kathy MacKinnon	The World Bank
6	Llewellyn Young	Senior Technical Advisor for Asia, Ramsar Convention Secretariat
7	Mike Crosby	BirdLife International
8	Taej Mundkur	Assistant Wildlife Coordinator for Avian Influenza, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
9	Ward Hagemeijer	Senior Biodiversity Conservation Officer, Wetlands International
10	Yutaka Kanai	Chairman of Crane Working Group and Director, Wild Bird Society of Japan

ANNEX VII: STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

Alphabetic order.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES (EXCLUDING UNEP)

- ADB/GEF Sanjiang Wetlands Protection Project (China)
- Finnish Scandinavian Lesser White-fronted Goose Project (Kazakhstan)
- UNDP (fund transfer; participation in national inception and mid-term workshops representation on Project Advisory Group)
- UNDP/GEF China Wetlands Project
- UNDP/GEF Kazakhstan Wetlands Project
- UNDP/GEF Iran Wetlands Project
- UNDP/GEF Lower Volga Delta Project in Russia
- UNDP Small Grants Programme in Iran
- UNDP Small Grants Programme in Kazakhstan
- UNEP-WCMC (through PAG)
- World Bank (through PAG, but no active involvement)

MULTI-LATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS/MULTI-LATERAL AGENCIES

- African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (active liaison)
- CBD – project inputs to national reports; national staff involved in CBD COP delegations
- CMS (Douglas Hykle on Project Steering Committee; CMS MoU linkages; CMS COP9 participation; CMS Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza)
- East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership
- Ramsar (PAG; active liaison and inputs to SC meetings; AI guidelines; project inputs to national reports)
- World Heritage Convention – support for nomination of Naurzum as part of World Heritage Site

GOVERNMENTS AND AGENCIES

China

National Level

- Department of Nature and Ecology Conservation, Ministry of Environmental Protection
- GEF Focal Point, Ministry of Finance
- Jiangxi Poyang Lake Nanji National Nature Reserve
- Jiangxi Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve
- Keerqin National Nature Reserve
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Momoge National Nature Reserve
- National Audit Office
- Songliao Water Resources Commission, Ministry of Water Resources
- Xinjiang National Nature Reserve
- Zhalong National Nature Reserve

Province Level

- Department of Forestry, Heilongjiang Province

- Department of Forestry, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region
- Department of Forestry, Jiangxi Province
- Department of Forestry, Jilin Province

Prefecture Level

- Forestry Bureau, Baicheng City Government, Jilin Province
- Forestry Bureau, Jiujiang City Government, Jiangxi Province
- Forestry Bureau, Nanchang City Government, Jiangxi Province
- Forestry Bureau, Shanlao City Government, Jiangxi Province
- Forestry Bureau, Xingan League, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region
- Qiqihar City Government, Heilongjiang Province

County Level:

- Forestry Bureau, Boyang County, Jiangxi Province
- Forestry Bureau, Duchang County, Jiangxi Province
- Forestry Bureau, Gongqing County, Jiangxi Province
- Forestry Bureau, Hukou County, Jiangxi Province
- Forestry Bureau, Jinxian County, Jiangxi Province
- Forestry Bureau, Jiujiang County, Jiangxi Province
- Forestry Bureau, Lushan County, Jiangxi Province
- Forestry Bureau, Nanchang County, Jiangxi Province
- Forestry Bureau, Pengze County, Jiangxi Province
- Forestry Bureau, Ruichang County, Jiangxi Province
- Forestry Bureau, Xinjian County, Jiangxi Province
- Forestry Bureau, Xinzi County, Jiangxi Province
- Forestry Bureau, Yugan County, Jiangxi Province
- Keyouzhongqi Government, Autonomous Region of Inner Mongolia
- Tongyu County Government, Jilin Province
- Zhenlai County Government, Jilin Province

Iran

National Level

- Department of Environment
- Wildlife Bureau (DoE)

Province Level

- DoE Guilan Provincial Office
- DoE Mazandaran Provincial Office

District Level

- DoE Babolsar Office

Kazakhstan

National Level

- Forestry and Hunting Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- Naurzum State Nature Reserve

Province Level

- Regional Akimat of the Kostanay Oblast
- Regional Department on Education

District Level

- Akimat of Kamystin Rayon
- Akimat of Karamendy Village
- Akimat of Karasu Rayon,
- Akimat of Naurzum Rayon
- Rayon Department on Business and Industry
- Rayon Department on Internal Policy

Russia

National Level

- Department of State Policy and Regulation in the Sphere of Environmental Protection and Ecological Safety of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation;
- Kunivatskiy Federal Reserve, Yamalo-Nanetskiy Autonomous Region
- State Department on Protection, Reproduction and Regulation of Bio-resources Use of Yamalo-Nanetskiy Autonomous region (federal region);

Province Level

- Chabda Resource Reserve, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)
- Department of Biological Resources of the Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)
- Fishing Committee of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)
- Forest Department the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)
- Kuoluma-Chappanda Resource Reserve, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)
- Kytalyk Resource Reserve, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)
- Kyupskiy Resource Reserve, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)
- State Department on Protected Areas of the Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)
- Low Dvuobie Ramsar Site, Yamalo-Nanetskiy Autonomous Region
- Poluyskiy Regional Reserve, Yamalo-Nanetskiy Autonomous Region
- Sobty-Yuganskiy Regional Reserve, Yamalo-Nanetskiy Autonomous Region
- State Management Service on Protection, Control and Regulation of Hunting Species Use of Yamalo-Nanetskiy Autonomous region
- Synsko-Voykarskiy Nature Park, Yamalo-Nanetskiy Autonomous Region
- Verkhne-Poluyskiy Regional Reserve, Yamalo-Nanetskiy Autonomous Region
- Yakutian Branch of Federal Service on Nature Use Control
- Yakutian Branch of Federal Service on Veterinarian and Phyto-sanitary Control

District Level

- Allaikhovskiy Ulus Administration, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)
- Hunting Inspection of Allaikhovskiy Ulus, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)
- Hunting Inspection of Ust-Mayskiy Ulus, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)
- Nature Conservation Inspection of Allaikhovskiy Ulus, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)
- Shuryshkarskiy District Administration, Yamalo-Nanetskiy Autonomous Region
- Tattinskiy Ulus Administration, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)

- Tumul Ulus Administration, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)
- Ust-Mayskiy Ulus Administration, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)

RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

China

- Centre of Remote Sensing System, Office of the Mountain-River-Lake Development Committee of Jiangxi Province
- Forestry Research Institute, Jilin Province
- Harbin Normal University
- Institute of Wetlands Research, Chinese Academy of Forestry
- Hydro-ecology Institute under the Ministry of Water Resources in China
- Nanjing Institute of Geography & Limnology, Chinese Academy of Sciences
- National Bird Banding Centre
- Northeast Forestry University
- Northeast Institute of Geography and Agroecology, Chinese Academy of Sciences
- Qiqihar University
- School of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development, People's University of China
- Water Resources Protection Bureau of Songhuajiang and Liaohe Rivers, Songliao Water Resources Commission
- Wuhan University of China
- Yunan Forestry Technological College

Iran

- GIS Centre of Iran
- Rural Research Centre of Ministry of Agricultural Jihad

Kazakhstan

- Institute of Zoology of the RK

Russia

- All-Russian Institute of Nature Protection (Moscow)
- Institute of Biological Problems of Cryolithozone of Siberian Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences (Yakutsk)
- Institute of Ecology and Evolution Problems of a name of Severtsov (Moscow)
- Mammoth Museum of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)
- Moscow State University named M.V.Lomonosov
- Nursery of Crane Rare Species of Oksky State Biosphere Nature Reserve
- Oksky State Biosphere Nature Reserve
- Oryol State University
- Pacific Institute of Geography of Far East Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences, Vladivostok
- State Laboratory of Forest Ecology and Productivity
- Vladivostok State University of Economics
- Yakutsk State University named M.K.Ammosova

Other

- International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation, the Netherlands
- Scientific Centre of Wild Bird Society of Japan
- University of Michigan, USA
- University of Wisconsin, USA

LOCAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

China

- Centre School of Xianghai Town, Tongyu County, Jilin Province
- Chi'an Primary School, Duchang County, Jiangxi Province
- Primary School of Xinjiamu Town, Keyouzhongqi, Autonomous Region of Inner Mongolia
- Zhalong Primary School, Qiqihar City, Heilongjiang Province

Kazakhstan

- Kostanay Regional Institute of Refreshment Courses
- Kostanay Regional Pedagogical University
- Schools in Kamystin Rayon
- Schools in Karasu Rayon
- Schools in Naurzum Rayon

Russia

- local schools of Chokurdakh town, Allaikhovskiy Ulus, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)
- Ust-Maya secondary school, Tattinskiy Ulus, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)

INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL NGOS

International

- Birdlife International & Wild Bird Society of Japan
- Crane Working Group of Eurasia
- IUCN SSC (Crane Specialist Group)
- North East Asia Crane Working Group
- Northern Forum
- Wetlands International
- Women in Europe for Common Future international public organization
- World Wide Fund for Nature

China

- Brooks Environmental Education Centre, Beijing
- China Office, Wetland International
- China Office, World Wide Fund for Nature

Iran

- Dorna NGO

- IGRA NGO
- Poompajuhan NGO
- Souteh NGO
- South Caspian NGO

Kazakhstan

- *Ak Niet* Local NGO
- *Ak-tyrna* Local NGO
- Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan
- Naurzum Bionet Local NGO
- Regional Association of Hunters and Fishermen
- Youth Environmental Network of the Republic of Kazakhstan NGO EcoForum
- “*Zherles*” initiative group

Russia

- Birds and People
- Centre of Ecological Education “Eyre” of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)
- International Forest Institute (Moscow)
- International Socio-Ecological Union (Moscow)
- Non-commercial Partnership for Zapovedniks
- Northern Forum Academy (Yakutsk)
- Oryol Regional Public Movement “Centre Kovyl” (Oryol, Russia)
- Russian Birds Conservation Union (Moscow)
- Sterkh Foundation (Salekhard, Yamalo-Nenetskiy Region)
- Yakutian Regional Public Organization “Network of Public Ecological Monitoring of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)”

COMMUNITY GROUPS

China

- Beizifu village, Keyouzhongqi, Autonomous Region of Inner Mongolia
- Chian village, Duchang County, Jiangxi Province
- Longkou village, Boyang County, Jiangxi Province
- Sanhe village, Dumeng County, Heilongjiang Province
- Zhalong village, Qiqihar City, Heilongjiang Province
- Zhongzizhang village, Tongyu County, Jilin Province

Iran

- Trappers’ Cooperative of Ezbaran
- Trappers’ Cooperative of Fereydoon Kenar
- Trappers’ Cooperative of Sorkh Rood

Kazakhstan

- local population of the following villages:
 - Akbulak
 - Burevestnik
 - Druzhba

- Karakuduk
- Karamendy
- Kazanskoye
- Kievka
- Kopa
- Kozha
- Naurzum
- Oktyabr
- Razdolnoye
- Sarshyganak
- Shily
- Sholakkopa
- Sholaksay
- Taldykol
- Ulendy
- Urkas
- Yeginsay
- Zarechnoye

Russia (project area in parentheses)

- Berelyakh village (Kytalyk)
- Chabda biological station, Chabda Resource Reserve (Middle Aldan)
- “Chukachan” school club (Kytalyk)
- Chokurdakh town, Allaikhovskiy Ulus (Kytalyk)
- “Choranchik” kindergarten club (Kytalyk)
- D.A.Lebedev local Museum of Tundra and Hunting (Kytalyk)
- Elon biostation of Kytalyk Resource Reserve
- Erzstantsy village, Kyupskiy Resource Reserve (Middle Aldan)
- Evens and Evenks indigenous people (Middle Aldan)
- Hunting and Fishing Local Society of Allaikhovskiy Ulus (Kytalyk)
- “Sendukha”, school library club of Russkoe Ustie village (Kytalyk)
- Khanty indigenous people community (Kunovat)
- Komi-zyryane indigenous people community (Kunovat)
- Kyubyai indigenous community, Kyupskiy Resource Reserve (Middle Aldan)
- Kyuptsy traditional hunting-trade economy, Kuoluma-Chappanda Resource Reserve (Middle Aldan)
- Kyuptsy village, Kyupskiy Resource Reserve (Middle Aldan)
- Maydinskiy indigenous nomadic community, Chabda Resource Reserve (Middle Aldan)
- Okhotskiy Perevoz village, Kuoluma-Chappanda Resource Reserve (Middle Aldan)
- Olenegorsk village (Kytalyk)
- Petropavlovsk village, Kyupskiy Resource Reserve (Middle Aldan)
- “Rosen Gull” school club (Kytalyk)
- Russkoe Ustie village (Kytalyk)
- “Talakhtakh” children club (Kytalyk)
- Troitsk village, Kyupskiy Resource Reserve (Middle Aldan)
- Tumul village, Kyupskiy Resource Reserve (Middle Aldan)
- Ytyk-Kuyel village, Kuoluma-Chappanda Resource Reserve (Middle Aldan)

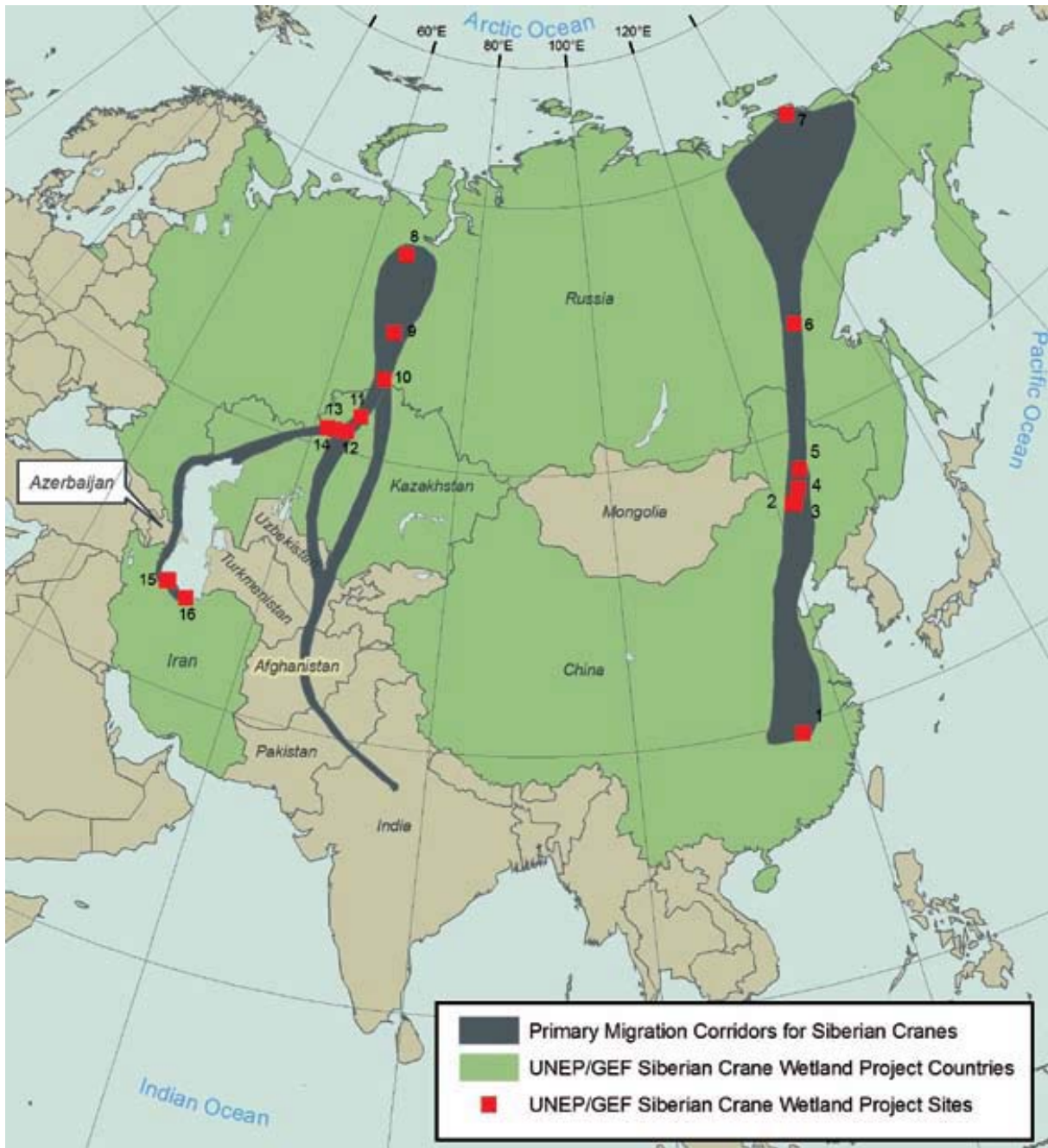
Other

- Schools in Milwaukee, Wisconsin

MISCELLANEOUS

- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Geological Survey – AI surveillance on migratory birds in Yakutia
- USFWS Office of International Affairs
- US State Department (US - China and US- Russian environmental agreements)

ANNEX VIII: MAP OF SIBERIAN CRANE FLYWAYS AND PROJECT SITES



Map by the International Crane Foundation 2005 . Cartographer: Zoe Rickenbach

China		9	Konda and Alymka Rivers Basin
1	Poyang Lake Basin	10	Trans-boundary Wetlands in Tyumen
2	Keerqin Nature Reserve	Kazakhstan	
3	Xianghai Nature Reserve	11	Tantegir Hollow – Zhanshura Lake
4	Momoge Nature Reserve	12	Naurzum Lake System
5	Zhalong Nature Reserve	13	Zharsor and Urkash Lakes
Russia		14	Kulykol Lake
6	Middle Aldan	Iran	
7	Kytalyk Resource Reserve	15	Bujagh National Park
8	Kunovat River Basin	16	Fereydoon Kenar

In Iran, Amirkelayeh and Rud Posht were withdrawn after the project Mid Term Review

ANNEX IX: ICF’S SCWP OPERATIONS MANUAL: TABLE OF CONTENTS

Policy & Procedure Guidelines

Sections

Introduction	.....
Section 1: Financial Reporting	.....
Section 2: Cash Advances	.....
Section 3: Non-Expendable Equipment	.....
Section 4: Progress Reporting	.....
Section 5: Guidelines for Information Exchanges	.....
Section 6: Cost Allowability	.....
Section 7: Procurement Standards	.....
Section 8: Travel Expenses	.....
Section 9: Terms of Reference Guidelines	.....
Section 10: Service Agreements	.....
Section 11: Training Standards	.....
Section 12: Subcontract Statements of Work	.....
Section 13: Subcontracting and Administration	.....
Section 14: Co-financing Reporting	.....
Section 15: Engagement Terms	.....
Section 16: Logframe Tracking Form	.....
Section 17: Audits	.....
Section 18: Budget Re-phasing	.....
Section 19: RCU Country Visitation	.....
Section 20: Work Plan Development	.....

Attachments

PPG Attachment Section 1 – Quarterly Expenditure Report (Revised)	.....
PPG Attachment Section 2A – Cash Advance Statement (Revised)	.....
PPG Attachment Section 2B – Calculation Worksheet (Revised)	.....
PPG Attachment Section 3 – Quarterly NXE Report	.....
PPG Attachment Section 4A – UNEP Progress Report	.....
PPG Attachment Section 4B – Executive Summary	.....
PPG Attachment Section 7 – Procurement Memo	.....
PPG Attachment Section 9A – Sample TOR	.....
PPG Attachment Section 9B – TOR Template with Instructions	.....
PPG Attachment Section 9C – Consultant Progress Report Template	.....
PPG Attachment Section 10 – Sample Service Agreement	.....

PPG Attachment Section 11A – Level 1 Training Evaluation

PPG Attachment Section 11B – Training Report Guidelines.....

PPG Attachment Section 12 – Subcontractor Progress Report Template

PPG Attachment Section 13 – Sample Subcontract Clauses

PPG Attachment Section 14 – GEF Co-financing Report.....

PPG Attachment Section 16 – Logframe Tracking Form

PPG Attachment Section 17 – Sample Auditor SOW

PPG Attachment Section 18 – Budget Re-phasing Template (Revised).....

PPG Attachment Section 19 – Trip Report

PPG Attachment Section 20A – Workplan Format.....

PPG Attachment Section 20B – Work Plan Coding.....

PPG Attachment Section 20C – M&E Checklist

PPG Attachment Section 20D – Stakeholder Participation Checklist.....

ANNEX X: PHOTOGRAPHS FROM PROJECT SITES

CHINA

	
<p>Interviewing Project beneficiary in Sanhe village, Zhalong NNR; high yield Friesian cows in background. (L to R: national evaluation consultant (He Fen-qi), beneficiary (Zhang Chun Fan), TE).</p>	<p>Sign at entrance to "Seed Station" Village displaying contract between villagers and Xianghai National Nature Reserve.</p>
	
<p>Biogas unit built into foundations of new house in Chi'an village, Poyang Lake, by new private owners.</p>	<p>Washing "harbour" in Chi'an village, Poyang Lake.</p>
	
<p>Wall in school playground in Chi'an village, Poyang Lake, in 2008 with freshly-painted GEF-sponsored bird murals.</p>	<p>Wall in school playground in Chi'an village, Poyang Lake, in October 2011 re-painted with murals lost.</p>

IRAN

	
<p>Meeting at Mazandaran Provincial DoE office (L to R: NPM (Sadegh Sadeghi-Zadegan), TE, Head of office (Abdolreza Sadeghi), national evaluation consultant (Lisa Pourlak)</p>	<p>Siberian Crane statue in centre of Fereydoon Kenar town</p>
	
<p>Tower nets at Fereydoon Kenar damgah</p>	<p>Meeting with DoE local Game Guards (L to R: TE, Mojtaba Alizabh, Hossein Mohammadi, Abdullah Dadbin, Mahdi Majidnia)</p>

KAZAKHSTAN

	
<p>Ak-tyrna (White Crane) Resource Centre in Karamendy village.</p>	<p>Entrance to Ak-tyrna (White Crane) Resource Centre in Karamendy village. Centre's Head (Igor Symbayev (centre) is flanked (R) by ornithological guide and monitoring expert (Alexy Timoshenko) and (L) English interpreter (Botagoz Abdykanova)</p>



Organisers of Crane Festival in library of Karamendy school (L to R: Gulnara Anesova, Mikhail Zhigalko, Olga Glushkova, and Tatiana Vasilyeva).



Earth dam and retained pool near Burevestnik village.



Wetlands in Naurzum Zapovednik.



Lake Kaulikol in Naurzum Zapovednik.

RUSSIA

No project sites visited in Russia.

ANNEX XI: LONGER COMMENTS ON DRAFT REPORT

Paragraph #	Footnote #	Comment	Response
Summary	4	RCU comment: Based on withdrawal of national support for the federal zakazniks, UNEP advised that the project focus shift scope and emphasis to East Asia in the latter stages of the project as an adaptive response. The RCU also had difficulty in communication with the Sterkh Foundation due to language and workload conflicts for the NCU. In hindsight, I think more could have been accomplished if ICF worked more directly with Sterkh Foundation in the latter stages through hiring an English speaking staff in West Siberia. As the reviewer noted, the SynSko-Voykarski Park established after GEF support was reduced is a testament to the commitment of the west Siberian team.	
23	11	Iran NCU comment: The NCU does not believe this is a fair reflection of the situation since the NPM was fully involved with the project and did his best. One problem in Iran was that the original design for the structure of the project team was very weak. During the early phases of the project no funds were budgeted for project personnel and all staffing was provided by Iran. During full operation, only three people were funded by GEF which is low compared with other countries. The NPM worked several years for free. In spite of this, SCWP in Iran had the most stable project team. An additional note from the RCU: Sadegh was unable to receive GEF funds in remuneration for his working time because of the DOE rules about this – he would have had to resign and be re-employed as a consultant (losing a permanent position and pension benefits etc.). So it was tough on him and his additional responsibility and workload were largely unrecognized at the time.	The paragraph is purely factual – the phrase “ <i>largely inexperienced</i> ” was not meant to be critical, but the text has been changed to “ <i>largely inexperienced in implementing GEF projects</i> ” to avoid any ambiguity. There is no implication that the NPM did anything other than his best. The text already points out that he was involved during the PDF-B and that the weakness of the original team was recognised through the plan to appoint a short-term consultant. All NCU’s had no more than three funded positions, and the project team in Iran was no more stable than those in China or Kazakhstan. Inclusion of this additional point here should help provide this recognition.
29	18	RCU comment: It is acknowledged that, with the exception of summarized results for China, <i>the results</i> of monitoring at the sites and their compliance with monitoring objectives in the management plans are not given in the LTF. To a fair extent this was due to the fact that most of the management plans were not completed and approved until towards the end of the project. The LTF entries do, however, state that indicator species were included in monitoring programmes for the sites with management plans, which shows some progress towards the aims of this indicator. We did receive	The first sentence of this comment is the most pertinent and was the reason for the rhetorical question in the text. In the final logframe tracking tool provided to the TE and reproduced in the evaluation made in Annex IV, no information was provided about many of these indicators, the levels of acceptable change, or indeed that many of the management plans were actually written and being implemented (see indicator I4 in Annex IV).. Therefore, in the TE’s view, this supposed indicator can hardly have been being used to measure the progress of the Project itself.

		<p>some information from detailed monitoring work that was being conducted at most of these sites with support from the project – the intensive ground surveys of breeding Siberian Cranes and other birds at Kytalyk, flyway monitoring and breeding Hooded Crane surveys at the Middle Aldan complex, IWC counts at Bujagh and Fereydoon Kenar, spring and autumn migration monitoring in N Kazakhstan including all four project sites, so it is not as though there was no work going on, more that this was not framed within the context of the developing site management plans. The sites in China were of course well covered as the TE has recognized. We were also aware of sporadic monitoring at the three sites in West Siberia (captured in some of the progress reports), albeit largely done outside the project <i>per se</i>.</p> <p>We also note that in NE China there were time gaps between the time of survey and the time of the results. Since there were several regional coordinators responsible to summarize the data, it took up to several years in some cases or the data sheets to be collected and analyzed. Also some data sheets were incomplete. It was difficult, and sometimes forgotten, to compare results between years. Therefore, more systematic thinking about this issue was needed and is a lesson learned for future projects.</p> <p>Another reason for lack of adequate follow-up was that surveys and general observations (without analyzed data) did not raise issues about significant declines of species numbers. It is likely that the key species are either stable or increasing. However, some of the numbers that increased might be attributed to better counts due to more trained staff, better equipment, or coverage of more sites.</p>	
63	38	<p>UNEP comment: That’s not formally the case as the PSC is for oversight and advice , however legally the project management reports to UNEP. This said yes the project ‘reports’ to the PSC annually, combined with the annual project progress workshop. Although indeed various project management staff attend to the PSC meetings, any voting (if needed) and review discussions were restricted to the NPD, UNEP and CMS members. UNEP often uses this type of mixed teams attending PSC meetings, as it has learned that if we just work with external members they often have little understanding or commitment to a project and as such are less effective in directing a project when needed. BTW several of the national staff attending the PSC are actually national focal points on the CMS MoU on Siberian Crane! Also: if</p>	<p>These are good points but the TE remains concerned that of the 14 people comprising the PSC (at least as listed in Annex V), only three were not serving as Project staff. This hardly fits the TE’s definition of “mixed teams” and, notwithstanding UNEP’s valid concerns, wider representation could have been beneficial in tackling some of the bigger problems that the Project faced.</p>

		using external/independent members those often change as other commitments and priorities come up. Also GEF project budgets do not allow much costs on SC meetings (external members would require the project to pay travel and DSA for them)	
95	58	UNEP comment: This is like requesting UNEP to explain to NEA and staff why we have traffic lights and why we should comply with them. Reporting is an integral part of all projects, and in the case of GEF project being introduced during the various inception meetings. In the case of SCWP our TM and FMO staff have attended such meetings and assisted establishing formats, procedures and agreed reporting time schedules.	The TE has some sympathy with this viewpoint; nonetheless people do have to be told why we have traffic lights and why we have to comply with them ... and even then some people still don't! The culture of reporting is second nature to those in the UN system or those experienced with project cycle management. Unfortunately, this is not the case with most national project managers and capacity level is often an issue on projects, as experienced here in the early years. Whatever UNEP's views, it is clear that there was a problem here throughout the Project and a better explanation at the outset, with regular reinforcement cannot but help.
108	71	RCU comment: The Siberian Crane was used as a flagship for wetland ecosystems, not migratory birds. GEF does not fund species conservation programs. ICF strongly supports the broader approach. All sites selected were globally significant for biodiversity. This broader approach is consistent with ICF's mission to work worldwide to conserve cranes and the wetlands, grasslands and other ecosystems upon which they depend. It was also consistent with our approach and efforts to broaden the MoU from species-oriented activities to include critical ecosystems and the socio-economic issues necessary for success. ICF and CMS have actively supported the development of the East-Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership and the Central Asian Flyway Initiative (see comment on 109 and 114 below). We believe our case is adequately set out in the project document, and the project's accomplishments speak for themselves – improved protection and integrated management of a chain of internationally important wetlands that WILL benefit millions of migratory waterbirds, 27+ globally threatened spp, other wetland biodiversity, and dependent communities [UNEP: strongly endorse this summary of the true approach and impact of the SCWP)]. For China, we strongly believe the major efforts were for wetlands/ecosystems. For example, our research at Poyang Lake aimed at understanding ecosystem function – allowing us to contribute strongly to evaluation of the dam proposal, not on the basis of Siberian Cranes, but of waterbirds generally, and of the dominant vegetation	The TE agrees with everything in this comment relating to the aim, approach and results, especially results. The issue is about communication as the previous RUC comment (footnote #57), that immediately below, and that relating to the Lesson Learned (footnote #62), possibly written by a different person, recognise. The TE is not being critical of the Project, simply pointing out that there is a danger when using a flagship species, that the focus can become too concentrated. The quote to which this comment applies is simply used to show that (some) people involved with the Project were simply too close to cranes to recognise that even better communication was needed to avoid the pitfalls discussed; something that the author of the other three comments referred to acknowledges.

		communities.	
109	74	<p>RCU comment: We agree that the project would have been more effective if the intended broader goal of protecting wetland ecosystems and migratory waterbirds had been more assertively communicated to the national governments of Kazakhstan and Iran.</p> <p>To maintain country interest post-project, discussions were held with the Central Asian representatives at the CMS COP10. The WCASN was conceived and created with the intent of serving as the initial set of model sites to be included under the Central Asian Flyway (The Siberian Crane was used as a flagship for wetland ecosystems, not Migratory birds. GEF does not fund species conservation programs. CAF) Initiative. Mechanisms to promote the official development of the CAF were reflected in discussions and COP 10 Resolutions 10.3 1 and 10.10 and are proposed to be taken up at the AEWA MOP9 Meeting in 2012. Under CAF the site network would be renamed the <i>Western/Central Asian Site Network for Migratory Waterbirds</i>.</p>	
114	82	<p>RCU comment: See also Resolution 10.10 brought forward by ICF and WI which states:</p> <p>17.3 Central Asian Flyway:</p> <p>17.3.1 Build on existing achievements, in particular the Central Asian Flyway Action Plan for waterbirds and the recently approved Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Migratory Waterbirds, and consider the potential to align with existing agreements, building on earlier discussions and considering synergies with AEWA in particular; and</p> <p>17.3.2 Consider the potential for new Action Plans, in order to address the key conservation priorities for passerines, and the organization of a regional-level workshop (resources permitting);</p> <p>Note that the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership already integrates cranes under a broader migratory approach. ICF has actively supported EAAFP and CAF development.</p>	
115	83	<p>Iran NCU comment: Additional information should be taken into account on the present functionality of the trappers associations, employment of local guards by DOE, financial mechanisms established to support site management, and actual benefits provided to locals through project investments in the trappers associations in this part of the assessment</p>	<p>The assessment does take all of this into account, but the TE disagrees with the NCU over the trappers' associations for most of the reasons discussed in paragraph 42; over the employment of game guards as in the text and responses given here above; and financial mechanisms that apparently have been put in place since the TE mission (see above). No action taken.</p>

116	84	<p>RCU comment: It would be valuable to continue small grants to help Kazakhstan and the other 9 countries to continue the ~120 annual crane festivals. CMS had provided some support annually for the SCFC position and core educational activities. Due to the growing number of agreements, CMS is depending more on partners to raise funds, so other sources of funding will need to be found. The crane festivals originally started under the Crane Working Group of Eurasia. We also need the countries to develop capacity to seek their own funds from sources other than their governments. Oil companies with interests in the region. Ultimately, this needs to be self-sustaining through local/national sponsors plus limited funds for coordination as you have suggested or embassies might be options.</p> <p>ICF funding priorities will focus on east Asia where there are ongoing threats and we can have the strongest impact.</p>	
119	93	<p>RCU comment: In our opinion the level of effort and time involved simply in conducting the pilot projects was significant, and it was difficult to take this to another level within the project lifetime. This work requires a paid external facilitator to work, which needs follow up funding to sustain. We did succeed in writing up some of these experiences, both as a Chinese Academic Press book and also as case studies in the Project Completion Workshop proceedings – so the information is available for others to learn from.</p>	<p>The TE agrees that the effort and time involved in the pilot projects was significant, and many were very good. He also is aware of the difficulties of replicating them, certainly not possible within the budget for this project. But, and it is an important but, the TE saw no evidence of thought having been given as to how the pilots could be replicated – there were no replication plans; no indication of the pilots being used as demonstration vehicles, etc.. That the experiences were written up is good, but the TE would have liked to have seen something much more tangible.</p>
120	94	<p>RCU comment: Agree that in China one obstacle is that other agencies are responsible for community development and poverty alleviation, and also that nature reserve staff lack appropriate training or experience; hence successful replication likely depends on securing external expertise.</p> <p>Also, NRs in China do not have financial channels to apply for community development funding and upper level governments are not supposed to give funding to NRs for this type of activity. NRs may only be able to work through community development agencies which they will pursue only when they think a project is worthwhile. However, NRs can work directly with communities on ecotourism.</p> <p>ICF is about to initiate participatory activities at three locations, including the SCWP project site Momoge NNR, mindful of the need to develop better strategies for</p>	

		replication.	
121	100	<p>UNEP comment: Don't the observations of the TE confirm the fact that the NPMs as well as other staff at the NCU (including with and beyond ARRINP) had great problems/objections to comply with minimum standards and procedures of project management? Added to that the fact they were working as part of a multi-country project where timelines and shared responsibilities within the regional project workplan are to be kept as much as possible. Do not know this weakness in management approach and principles would fit the description "philosophical", although it may be largely cultural. Given my experience with several other GEF projects in and with RF staff I think it is more likely caused by the fact that many project management staff in RF end up being selected from research and scientists backgrounds – who in the RF in their purest form are often less interested or skilled in project management and oversight. An additional reason may be found in the low priority put to the SCWP project by the MNR, due to not formally being the hosting agency in RF (which was a project design weakness).</p>	The TE would agree with most of these observations, particularly those related to research scientists being selected as project managers.
LL #18	109	<p>RCU comment: In some cases budget was allocated – e.g. Kazakhstan and Yakutia had translators on the project payroll. The point is valid otherwise, but note that the costs for continuous professional translation services for a project of this size would be very significant and likely disallowed by GEF (who are now asking for 5% project management costs!). Much better is therefore to select staff with adequate English language capacity – specifically being this an international/regional project (so different from e.g. national UNDP led initiatives).</p> <p>In response to this ongoing concern, the RCU worked with the NCU's to reallocate some of the technical funds to cover necessary and time consuming translation. It is interesting that the Russian NCU wrote reports directly in English, with the result that the reports were not always available in the Russian language for the regional NCUs, government officials, or other relevant individuals.</p>	
LL #20	111	<p>RCU comment: ICF made several attempts to interest and develop an international level film on the project which was discussed at the CMS MoU Meetings. We had tentative interest from high level companies including WGBH in Boston, National Geographic, and a German film company. All were primarily interested in the of the Flight of Hope</p>	

		<p>Project under the CMS MoU and were unwilling to take on the story of the broader conservation program without this charismatic element as a fund raising tool. So instead, local and less professional films were made through work with national media or students in Kazakhstan, Iran, and Russia.</p> <p>See also paragraph 55 – film made under the student 3-2-1) project at Xianghai.</p>	
Annex IV Indicator O1.2.2	128	<p>The Project Director and ITA participated in Site Management Committee Meeting in West Siberia an Yakutia, primarily in the early years of the project. The meetings in West Siberia assisted with removal of oil and gas rig on PA and management of hunting lodge near Belozersky reserve. Meetings in West Siberia were discontinued after support for federal Zakazniks was withdrawn by the Russian government. Meetings continued to be help in Chokurdakh and Middle Aldan region of East Russia linked to site visits.</p>	

ANNEX XII: BRIEF CV OF EVALUATOR

Phillip Edwards is an ecological and environmental consultant with 28 years' experience in both the private and international development sectors whose clients include the world's major development agencies (World Bank, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, IFAD, ADB), international conservation organisations (IUCN, BirdLife International, Wetlands International), and private companies (British Petroleum). He is a specialist in strategic conservation planning, project/programme planning and evaluation, particularly those involving biodiversity and protected area management, sustainable land management issues, as well as in environmental impact assessment of industrial and development projects. He has wide international experience having visited 84 countries and worked in 42. He obtained a first class honours degree in zoology from the University of Wales and a doctorate in ornithology from the Edward Grey Institute for Field Ornithology, Oxford University. He was elected a Fellow of the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (UK) in 1997 in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the practice of ecology and environmental management.