



**United Nations Development Programme**  
**Country: Russia**  
**PROJECT DOCUMENT<sup>1</sup>**

Project Title:	Improving the Coverage and Management Efficiency of Protected Areas in the Steppe Biome of Russia
UNDAF Outcome(s):	n/a
UNDP Strategic Plan Environment and Sustainable Development <u>Primary</u> Outcome: Strengthened national capacities to mainstream environment and energy concerns into national development plans and implementation systems.	
UNDP Strategic Plan <u>Secondary</u> Outcome:	
Expected CP Outcome(s) (Those linked to the project and extracted from the country programme document): Improved environmental sustainability of development processes	
Expected CPAP Output (s) (Those that will result from the project and extracted from the CPAP): n/a	
Executing Entity/Implementing Partner: Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology	
Implementing Entity/Responsible Partners: <b>tbd</b>	

**Brief Description**

The Government of Russia is requesting assistance from GEF and UNDP to remove barriers to securing the long-term conservation of Russia's steppe biological diversity. The project objective is to develop the capacity and ecologically based enabling tools and mechanisms for the consolidation, expansion and disturbance based integrated management of a system of protected natural areas at the landscape level within the steppe biome. The three main outcomes of the project are: (i) Consolidation and expansion of the system of steppe protected areas (SPA); (ii) Strengthened operational management capacities for PA site management; and (iii) Strengthened institutional management capacities for managing an expanded PA system. The project is designed to improve management effectiveness of a network of 15 SPA across Russia covering over 1.8 million ha. The project will expand this system and its coverage of steppe ecosystems by nearly 50% or 867,400 hectares through: a) consolidating three zakazniks into Chernye Zemli Zapovednik in Kalmykia, expanding the Zapovednik by 496,200 hectares, b) facilitating the expansion or establishment of five SPA in Kursk, Orenburg and Dauria regions covering an additional 305,200 hectares; and c) creating the enabling environment for the protection of an additional 30,000 ha of steppe ecosystems in the Orenburg steppe. The project is also designed to catalyze innovation in steppe-land conservation beyond traditional protected areas into "specially managed steppe areas" or SMSA and will pilot the establishment of two SMSA covering 36,000 ha in the Central Russian steppe. Cumulatively, these results represent an important step in securing the long-term conservation of globally significant northern temperate grassland/steppe ecosystems, one of the least protected biomes in the world.

Programme Period:	2008-2011
Atlas Award ID:	00058254
Project ID:	00072294
PIMS #	4194
Start date:	January 2010
End Date	December 2015
Management Arrangements	NEX (NIM)
PAC Meeting Date	_____

Total resources required	US\$ 20,204,545
Total allocated resources:	_____
• Regular (UNDP)	US\$ 10,000
• Other:	
o GEF	US\$ 5,304,545
o Government	US\$ 11,400,000
o Private sector	US\$ 390,000
o NGO	US\$ 300,000
In-kind contributions:	
Government	US\$ 2,800,000

Agreed by (Government):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date/Month/Year

Agreed by (Executing Entity/Implementing Partner):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date/Month/Year

Agreed by (UNDP):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date/Month/Year

<sup>1</sup> For UNDP supported GEF funded projects as this includes GEF-specific requirements

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## Acronyms

APR	Annual Project Report
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BCC	Biodiversity Conservation Center
BD	Biodiversity
BSAP	Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCF	Country Cooperation Framework
CCZ	Centralno Chernozemny Zapovednik
CZZ	Chernye Zemly Zapovednik
CHM	Clearing House Mechanism
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CO	Country Office/UNDP Country Office
CoP	Conference of the Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CWG	Community Working Group
DI	Designated Institution
DIPA	Dauria International Protected Area (China, Mongolia, Russia)
DSPA	Department of Specially Protected Areas (MNRE)
DZ	Daurian Zapovednik
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GoRF	Government of Russian Federation
GPS	Global Positioning System
IA	Implementing Agency
IBA	Important Bird Area
ICS	Institutional Capacity Scorecard
IFM	Integrated Fire Management
IR	Inception Report
ISO	International Standards Organization
IW	Inception Workshop
LTM	Long Term Mean (5 year rolling average productivity & population of target species)
MGU	Moscow State University
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
METT	Management Efficiency Tracking Tool
MNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources & Ecology
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MPG	Monitoring Partnership Group
NEX	National Execution
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPD	National Project Director
OP	Operational Programme
OZ	Orenburgsky Zapovednik
PA	Protected Area[s]
PDF[A,B]	Project Development Facility [Block A or B]
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PM	Project Manager
PMCU	Project Management and Coordination Unit
PoW/PA	Programme of Work on Protected Areas

PSC	Project Steering Committee
PTC	Project Technical Coordinator
PSTE	Pilot Site Technical Expert
RCU	Regional Coordination Unit
RAS	Russian Academy of Sciences
RF	Russian Federation
RW	Ramsar Wetland
SCF	Stakeholder Consultation Forum
SEC	Siberian Environmental Center
SMSA	Specially Managed Steppe Areas
SLCP	Steppe Landscape Conservation Plan
TSI	The Steppe Institute
SP	Strategic Programme
SPA	Steppe Protected Area(s)
TA	Technical Assistance
ToR	Terms of Reference
TPR	Tripartite Review
TRA	Threat Reduction Analysis
TTR	Terminal Tripartite Review
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization
WB	The World Bank
WHS	World Heritage Site
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

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## SECTION 1: ELABORATION OF THE NARRATIVE

### PART I: Situation Analysis

#### I.1. Context and global significance

8. With an area of 17,075,200 square kilometers, Russia is the largest country in the world. It occupies much of easternmost Europe and northern Asia, stretching from Norway to the Pacific Ocean and from the Black Sea to the Arctic Ocean. Russia straddles eight biomes: polar deserts, arctic and sub-arctic forest tundra, taiga, broad-leaved forests, steppe, semi-arid and arid zones. The country is a repository of globally significant biodiversity hosting 14 Global 200 Ecoregions (9 terrestrial, 3 freshwater and 2 marine), eight in their entirety. In terms of species diversity, about 8% of global vascular plant flora, 7% of mammal fauna and almost 8% of bird fauna are represented in Russia. Ecosystems harboring relict biota of glacial and interglacial periods and many species that are rare today are particularly widespread in European Russia and eastern Siberia.

9. The world's largest zone of the **steppe biome** - the vast *Eurasian Steppe* - is found in southwest Russia (European Russia and southern Siberia) and neighboring countries in Central Asia. There are two major sub-regions of the steppe region of Russia: Pontic-Kazakh Steppe Subregion and East Siberian Inner-Asian Steppe Sub-region. The Pontic-Kazakh steppe occupies a vast area stretching for almost 3,500 km from west to east and for more than 1,200 km from north to south and stretches from Romania and Ukraine in the west to the Altay Mountains in the east. Forbs and bunchgrass dominate this steppe biome, while broadleaf forests are often intermixed with the grasslands in the north and along river valleys in the south. The East Siberian Inner-Asian Sub-region of the Russian steppe stretches from the intermountain depressions of Altai Mountains in the west almost 2,000 km to the Amur River basin in the east. This entire region is mountainous, thus steppe vegetation in the east of Russia is restricted to intermontane troughs and lower altitudinal belts of the mountains.

10. Eight of the thirteen steppe eco-regions that make up the Steppe Biome are present in Russia (Pontic steppe, Kazakh forest steppe, Kazakh steppe, Sayan Intermontane steppe, Daurian steppe, Mongolian-Manchurian grassland, Selenge-Orkhon forest steppe, and South Siberian forest steppe). One of these eco-regions, the Daurian steppe, is a Global 200 Ecoregion. The floristic diversity of the steppes changes substantially from the west-to-east and from north-to-south. It is estimated that more than 6,000 species of plants, about 100 species of mammals, up to 180 species of birds and thousands of species of insects and other invertebrates, are found in the steppe grasslands. Over 110 of the flowering plants and 119 of the animal species listed in the Red Data Book of the Russian Federation are associated with steppe habitats – approximately 26% of the total flora and fauna listed in the Red Book.

11. Russia is recognized as the most important European country for the conservation of steppe birds, harbouring 21 of the 27 bird species whose European populations are 75% or more concentrated in steppe habitats. Russia supports 39% of the total European breeding population of these 27 species—the largest percentage of any European country. Ten of these 27 breeding steppe species are of global conservation concern; Russia harbours nine of them – more than any other European country. These nine species are: Pallid Harrier (*Circus macrourus*), Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*), Saker (*Falco cherrug*), Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*), Little Bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*), Sociable Lapwing (*Vanellus gregarius*), Slender-Billed Curlew (*Numenius tenuirostris*) and Black-winged Pratincole (*Glareola nordmanni*).

12. On the national level, the Russian Federation Red Data Book (1998) lists 126 bird species and subspecies, 30 of which are typical steppe birds or are closely associated with steppe ecosystems. The Great bustard (*Otis tarda*) IUCN Red List category “vulnerable” and Little bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*) Red List category “Near Threatened” are two such steppe birds that are emblematic of the steppe regions of

this part of the world. Although population numbers are unknown, it is thought that Russia harbours the world's largest populations of these two species. There are 88 Important Bird Areas (IBA) in the steppe regions of Russia that contain significant steppe areas and/or are important for steppe birds.

13. Russia's steppe regions provide habitats for 11 mammal species of global conservation concern including two of the world's most charismatic ungulate species, saiga antelope and the Mongolian gazelle. Two ungulates have become extinct in the wild, the European bison and the Przewalski horse. Saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*) is an Annex II species under the Bonn Convention and is categorized as "Critically Endangered" by IUCN's Red List (2002). Mongolian gazelle (*Procapra gutturosa*) represent the largest and most globally significant migratory population of ungulates in the northern temperate regions worldwide. Other species of global concern include: Steppe cat (*Felis manul*), the Daurian hedgehog (*Mesechinus dauuricus*), the Mongolian marmot (*Marmota sibirica*), Siberian crane (*Grus leucogeranus*), the Hooded (*Grus monachus*), White-naped (*Grus vipio*), Common (*Grus grus*), and Demoiselle cranes (*Anthropoides virgo*), and the Swan goose (*Anser cygnoides*).

14. Important plant areas as a designation are relatively new to Russia. Over 80 have been nominated nation-wide and twenty-four of these hold relatively large steppe tracts and/or were nominated for rare or endemic steppe species and unique habitats.

#### Overview of Steppe Protected Areas in Russian Federation

15. Russia's national system of protected areas (PA) currently include 13,628 PA under different categories and management arrangements (federal, regional, and local) that cover about 11.7% (~199 million hectares) of the total land area of Russia. The different types of PA are represented by: (i) federal system of reserves (*Zapovednik*<sup>2</sup>, National Parks, Nature Monuments and *Zakazniks*<sup>3</sup>) - that cover about 3.2% of country's territory<sup>4</sup> - and are managed by the Federal Government; (ii) regional protected areas (Nature Parks, *Zakazniks*, Nature Monuments and other PA categories) that are managed by Regional Governments (Nature Parks, Nature Monuments and other PA categories); and (iii) local protected areas that are managed by local (municipal) authorities.

16. Russia's federal system of PA is large by any measure and has many impressive attributes, including a comprehensive array of habitats and biological values under protection and a core group of knowledgeable and dedicated professional staff. During the first ten years of Russia's transition, the network of federal protected areas in Russia expanded rapidly: twenty-six new *zapovedniks*, nineteen national parks, seven *zakazniks*, and three nature monuments were founded, encompassing 27,000,000 ha. Russia's federal protected areas now include 100 *zapovedniks* covering 337 million ha; 35 national parks covering 6.9 million ha, 69 *zakazniks* covering 12.5 million ha and twenty-eight nature monuments covering a total area of 532,000 km<sup>2</sup> or approximately 3.2% of the Russian Federation.

17. Currently, there are 50 protected areas within Russia's federal system of protected areas (PA) that include some steppe area: 27 *zapovedniks* (strict protected areas); 8 national parks; and 15 federal *zakazniks* (wildlife refuges). In total, these 50 areas encompass approximately 70,000 km<sup>2</sup> or approximately 3.5% of Russia's entire national system of protected areas (Table 1). But many of these 50 protected areas have less than 20% of their territory in steppe habitat. Fifteen of these 50 protected areas are comprised of at least 25% steppe lands. It is these 15 areas that are referred to hereafter as "steppe protected areas" or SPA. If we count only the estimated steppe lands within each of these 15 SPA, the total estimated area of proactively protected steppe lands drops from 70,000 km<sup>2</sup> to less than 2,000 km<sup>2</sup> (1,834,161 hectares): the equivalent of less than 0.15% of the total PA patrimony of Russia.

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<sup>2</sup> Strict Federal Nature Reserve –i.e. strict scientific reserves (IUCN Category I)

<sup>3</sup> State sanctuary – areas where temporary, or permanent limitations are placed upon certain on-site economic activities (IUCN Category IV or VI)

<sup>4</sup> About 1.48% of the total land area of Russia is under strict federal protection (IUCN categories I and II).

18. Until recently, few of Russia's steppe areas were protected. Although many PA contain some steppe habitats, only a few were created to conserve steppe habitats, including the oldest existing protected area in Russia created especially for steppe conservation, Centralno-Chernozemny Zapovednik, which was established in 1935 (Galichya Gora and Zhigulevskiy Zapovedniks were created even earlier in 1927, but not for steppe conservation). Most of the important zapovedniks created mainly to protect steppe areas were founded in 1987-1995 (Orenburgskiy, Dauriskiy, Rostovskiy, Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina, and Chernye Zemli Zapovedniks). No separate list of SPA has ever been created officially in Russia, apart from the overall list of protected areas. Tables 1 and 2 are an attempt to elaborate such a list.

**Table 1. Steppe Protected Areas in Russian Federation**

\* BR – Biosphere Reserve, TR – Transboundary Reserve, IBA – Important Bird Area,  
WH – World Heritage, RW – Ramsar Wetland

	Name of Reserve	Int'l Status*	Province	Longitudinal sector of steppe biome	Total area (ha)	Buffer zone (ha)	# of plots <sup>5</sup>	% of PA area comprised of steppe habitats (ha)
<b>Zapovedniks (IUCN Category Ia)</b>								
1	Belogorye		Belgorod	Western	2,131	2,458	5	>25%
2	Centralno-Chernozemny	BR	Kursk	Western	5,287	28,662	6	>25%
3	Chernye Zemli	BR, RW	Kalmyk	Western	121,482	91,170	2	>25%
4	Dauriskiy	BR, TR, RW, IBA	Zabaikalskii Krai	Eastern	45,790	163,530	9	>50%
5	Galichya Gora		Lipetsk	Western	231	0	6	>25%
6	Orenburgskiy	IBA	Orenburg	Western	21,653	12,208	4	>90%
7	Privolzhskaya Lesostep'		Penza	Western	8,373	19,059	5	>25%
8	Rostovskiy	BR, RW, IBA	Rostov/Don	Western	9,532	74,350	4	>50%
9	Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina	BR, WH, TR, IBA	Tyva	Eastern	87,830	170,790	7	>25%
<b>National Parks (IUCN Category II)</b>								
10	Pribaikalskiy	WH, IBA	Irkutsk	Eastern	418,000	0	2	25%
<b>Federal zakazniks (IUCN Category IV and VI)</b>								
11	Kharbinskiy		Kalmyk	Western	163,900	0	1	>25%
12	Mekletinskiy		Kalmyk	Western	102,500	0	1	>25%
13	Saratovskiy	IBA	Saratov	Western	44,302	0	1	>25%
14	Sarpinskiy	IBA	Kalmyk	Western	195,925	0	1	>25%
15	Tsimlyanskiy	IBA	Volgograd	Western	44,998	0	1	>25%
	<b>Total zapovedniks</b>				<b>302,309</b>	<b>562,227</b>		
	<b>Total national parks</b>				<b>418,000</b>	<b>0</b>		
	<b>Total federal zakazniks</b>				<b>551,625</b>	<b>0</b>		
	<b>Total for all types of SPA</b>				<b>1,271,934</b>	<b>562,227</b>		

19. Under Russian law, a protected area is a status of land under the Environmental Protection Law and not a "category" of land under the Land Code (see Annex 7 for details). This means that it is possible to have a protected area with agricultural land or private land within it. As a rule, land protected by a regional SPA is in either private or municipal ownership but regional governments actually manage and administer the regional SPA. In Russian legislation some categories of PA, such as regional Nature Monuments and Zakazniks, are actually a set of restrictions placed upon a legally designated tract of land. Establishing such a PA requires no change in ownership, no special administration, even no financing.

<sup>5</sup> Most of SPA consist of several separate tracts of land situated far one from other but united under one common administration.



These types of PA require that the restrictions on land-use be specified, for example: no mining or building, or limits on livestock numbers, or a ban on plowing. Most regional SPA are this kind of PA.

20. Different bodies of regional authorities manage SPA, depending upon the specific oblast or krai; they can be conservation or game or agricultural bodies or some other entity. Steppe areas that are not under any source of protection are largely in private or municipal ownership and managed by cattle-breeding farms or municipalities.

21. Although most regional SPA were not created to protect steppe areas per se, a significant portion of them are comprised of steppe lands. For example Ukok Nature Park in Altai and Eltonskiy Nature Park in Volgograd encompass significant portions of steppe lands within their 254,000 and 132,000 hectares respectively. Regional nature monuments and zakazniks with steppe areas are relatively numerous and located across the Russian steppe zone, from the western regions of the Caucasus and Kalmykia to the eastern Daurian region. Very little good data are available for all legal forms of regional SPA. A common characteristic of most of these areas however is that they were not created to complement federal level PA in a conservation sense. They were not created with an eye towards establishing larger protected steppe landscape mosaics.

22. Table 2 provides information on the number and current status of Nature Parks, one type of regional SPA. This type of PA must have administration and specially targeted financing and thus it may contribute substantially to the development of the national system of SPA.

**Table 2. Regional protected areas including steppe habitats** (Nature parks, IUCN Category V).

	Name of Reserve	Int'l Status	Province	Longitudinal sector of steppe biome	Total area (ha)	Percentage of steppe habitats (ha)
<b>Nature parks (IUCN Category V)</b>						
1	Bamb Tsetsq*		Kalmykia	Western	529	>25%
2	Chuy Oozy*		Altai	Eastern	9,538	>25%
3	Donskoy	IBA	Rostov	Western	40,955	>25%
4	Donskoy		Volgograd	Western	17,600	>25%
5	Eltonskiy	IBA	Volgograd	Western	132,000	>25%
6	Kandry-Kul		Bashkortostan	Western	8,500	>25%
7	Nizhnekhoperskiy		Volgograd	Western	231,206	>25%
8	Rovenskiy		Belgorod	Western	1,300	>25%
9	Scherbakovskiy		Volgograd	Western	20,000	>25%
10	Tsimlyanskies Peski (Tsimla' Sands)	IBA	Volgograd	Western	66,951	>25%
11	Uch Enmek*		Altai	Eastern	65,000	>25%
12	Ukok	WH,IBA	Altai	Eastern	254,000	ca. 30%

\* Formal status only, no legal entity, staff, and budget.

23. Other types of specially managed areas in steppe regions include wildlife protection zones where hunting is prohibited as a form of game management. This may be an important instrument for steppe conservation, although its potential has never been explored. Other forms of special management include: right-of-ways for railroads, pipelines, and highways, riparian and shoreline protection zones, and traditional cemeteries and sacred places of Turkic and Mongolian indigenous peoples. Military lands of different types play an extremely important role in conserving Russia's steppe areas. Many of the largest and most natural steppe areas in Russia are current or former military lands. A challenge (and opportunity) for steppe conservation lies in the normal, ongoing process of closing many of these military areas, which opens the land for other uses in the private sector (*i.e.* agriculture and mining). For example,

the military status of 16,500 ha Orlovskaya Steppe area in Orenburg was ended in 1998. For the first time in Russian history, this steppe was saved due to efforts of a local NGO, which achieved the change of legal land status and leased the property for conservation purposes.

24. **Protected area management capacities.** The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) score for each one of the fifteen SPA is listed in Table 3 below. Individual scorecards can be found in Annex 1. The scores show a range of management capacities on a scale of 1-99, from Saratovskiy Zakaznik (score of 9), to the Rostovskiy Zapovednik (score of 67). In completing the scorecards, experts focused upon the design, boundaries, protection system, research and cooperation specifically related to the steppe parts of the PA. Many PA that include both steppe and forest or wetland areas have focused their management efforts on the non-steppe part. They have developed capacity for forest and wetland management, but not steppe and may be generally underscored as a result. Another interesting point about the scores is that the very concept of a zapovednik is that people are prohibited and natural processes should be allowed to take their course. But, this assumes that the zapovedniks exist in a “natural context” without human influences, when in fact nearly all of them exist in a landscape context that is decidedly influenced by people. The scores highlight the potential for improvement for most zapovedniks and zakazniks to bolster their “management” program to account for this change.

**Table: 3.** Summary of SPA METT Scores

Type and Name of SPA	Score	Type and Name of SPA	Score
<b>ZAPOVEDNIKS -</b>		Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina	51 / 74
Belogorye	52 / 90	<b>NATIONAL PARKS</b>	
Centralno-Chernozemny	53 / 79	Pribaikalskiy	34 / 89
Chernye Zemli	42 / 67	<b>FEDERAL ZAKAZNIKS</b>	
Daurskiy	49 / 75	Kharbinskiy	11 / 51
Galichya Gora	45 / 90	Mekletinskiy	18 / 55
Orenburgskiy	52 / 90	Sarpinskiy	11 / 51
Privolzhskaya Lesostep'	56 / 96	Saratovskiy	9 / 86
Rostovskiy	67 / 73	Tsimlyanskiy	12 / 88

25. The GEF has funded a number of projects focusing on the PA estate at an ecoregional level in Russia (Altay Sayan mountains, Kamchatka meadows, forests, tundra and taiga ecoregions, Taimyr central Siberian tundra forests, Volga river wetlands, Komi-Ural mountain taiga and tundra). This support has sought to enhance the management effectiveness and sustainability of 28 federal and regional protected areas covering an area of 15 million hectares. Within the programming framework for GEF IV, the Russian government and UNDP are currently preparing three new projects, which aim at catalyzing the sustainability of the national protected area system by addressing remaining representation gaps: (i) Ural montane forest tundra and taiga and Scandinavian and Russian taiga in Republic of Komi – this has been approved and has already started its implementation; (ii) steppe ecoregions- approved as part of January WP; and (iii) Steppe conservation and management – approved as part of November WP 2008. This strategy – which aims to strengthen subsystems of protected areas at the ecoregional level—is necessary in the Russian context given the size of the territory, the country’s governance structure, its immense diversity, and the heterogeneity of land use models and development challenges. The Government has requested UNDP assistance in designing and implementing this FSP, due to UNDP’s track record both in Europe and the CIS and globally in developing the enabling environment for protected area establishment and management in terms of the policy context, governance, institutional capacity and management know-how.

## I.2. Socio-economic context

26. The socio-economic context of Russia's SPA is changing almost as quickly as is Russia's economic and social indicators. Russia ended 2008 with its tenth straight year of growth, averaging 7% annually since the financial crisis of 1998. Although high oil prices and a relatively cheap ruble initially drove this growth, since 2003 consumer demand and investment have played a significant role. Over the last six years personal incomes have achieved real gains more than 12% per year. During this time, poverty has declined steadily and the middle class has continued to expand.

**Table 4:** Russian Federation's human development index (HDI) 2005

HDI value	Life expectancy at birth (years)	Adult literacy rate (% ages 15 and older)	Combined school enrollment ratio (%)	GDP per capita (PPP US\$)
1. Iceland (0.968)	1. Japan (82.3)	1. Georgia (100.0)	1. Australia (113.0)	1. Luxembourg (60,228)
65. Mauritius (0.804)	117. Kyrgyzstan (65.6)	8. Kazakhstan (99.5)	29. Hungary (89.3)	56. South Africa (11,110)
<b>67. Russian Federation (0.802)</b>	<b>119. Russian Federation (65.0)</b>	<b>10. Russian Federation (99.4)</b>	<b>31. Russian Federation (88.9)</b>	<b>58. Russian Federation (10,845)</b>

27. The HDI for Russian Federation is 0.802, which gives the country a rank of 67th out of 177 countries with data (Table 4). Exports of goods and services by Russia as a % of GDP has doubled between 1990 and 2005, from 18% to 35% - much of this increase is due to the export of increasingly valuable natural resources such as oil, gas, timber and diamonds. The HDI trends tell an important story: Russia has recovered to the economic and social level it maintained before the fall of the Soviet Union.

28. The socio-economic context of Russia's SPA is characterized overall by a human population density that ranges from 45 people/km<sup>2</sup> in Kursk to 17.5 people/km<sup>2</sup> in Orenburg to 3.8 people/km<sup>2</sup> in Kalmykia to 2.7/km<sup>2</sup> in Zabaikalski Krai. Most SPA occur in districts with a population density under 15 persons/km<sup>2</sup> and over 90% of the SPA occur in districts with a population density under 10 persons/km<sup>2</sup>.

29. Nearly all of the SPA are located in districts where agriculture (farming and raising livestock) is a primary economic activity involving the local population (and the SPA). In Russia, agricultural production makes up only 7% of GDP, but it is of even larger importance to local communities and rural areas, where it takes on significance for small businesses and subsistence purposes. The agricultural sector in many of Russia's rural areas has struggled in recent years.

30. In considering the socio-economic context of steppe lands and steppe protected areas in Russia, it is important to note the level of decline in agricultural production and activity in Russia in the past 15 years. The main domestic animals utilizing temperate grasslands in Russia are beef cattle, sheep, goats, and horses. Yaks and camels are important locally. As Table 5 illustrates, populations of these domestic animals in Russia declined by an average of 50% between 1992 and 2007.

**Table 5:** Livestock numbers in Russia

Year	Cattle	Sheep	Goats	Horses
<b>1992</b>	54,676,704	52,194,600	3,060,000	2,590,000
<b>2007</b>	21,466,217	17,508,132	2,166,536	1,303,837
<b>% change</b>	-61%	-66.5%	-30%	-50%

31. Ten percent of the total area of arable land in Russia has been abandoned since 1991, leaving large tracts of land to be slowly reclaimed by the steppe. People stopped plowing these lands for different

reasons, mostly because they were unprofitable tracts of land that had been developed largely as a result of political decisions or in response to higher commodity prices. Nowadays, these spontaneously recovering arable lands are among the most important habitats supporting agricultural biodiversity and are the natural reserve for large-scale steppe restoration. However, many decision makers in Russia view this situation negatively as a decline in Russian agricultural production (as defined in the traditional sense).

32. Russian agriculture experienced deep declines in 1991-1998. During 1999-2006 agricultural production rose by 34%. But since 2002 the growth slowed to 2.3% per year. Recently grain production reached the 1990 level while cattle breeding is remaining sufficiently lower than 1990 level (see Table above). The Ministry of Agriculture has placed a high priority on improving the efficiency and profitability of the Russian agriculture. The MoA's goal is to raise agricultural production 24% by 2012 (from the 2006 level). It seeks to spur investment in new agricultural equipment; to stimulate sustainable development of countryside, to raise employment and living standards of rural population; and to secure conservation and reproduction of land and other natural resources used in agriculture. The important contributions of SPA to the health and sustainability of rural agricultural lands is not recognized and no quantitative assessment of the contribution of SPA has yet been made in Russia.

33. Russia's recently approved national social and economic development plan "Concept on Long-Term Social and Economic Development in the Russian Federation" supports these trends and emphasizes initiatives in Russia's agricultural areas. Increasing exports of grain and other agricultural products is one of its main priorities. Expanding the land market and simplifying the land development process is also a priority. Specific to the agricultural sector, the Concept seeks to dramatically increase fertilizer use and expand crop areas. The Concept treats environmental protection as an important issue and declares that protected areas should be enlarged and their presence should be raised and made more proportionate (to conserve natural ecosystems in all natural and climatic regions of Russia). Government adopted the Concept on November 17, 2008 (N1662-r) and it is in effect until 2020.

34. Eco-tourism. As least 6 of the 13 regions where the main federal SPA are located have tourism as an important developing activity. There are few figures by which to track the evolving tourism sector in Russia, especially the eco and hunting/fishing tourism industry. Anecdotal evidence and reports from various SPA indicate low levels of tourism in steppe areas while some SPA face significant pressure from ad-hoc tourism threatening their ecosystems (*i.e.* Pribaikalskiy NP and Khakasskiy Zapovednik). Land ownership figures (federal, regional, municipal and private) are not readily available and will be part of the project's steppe conservation gap analysis work done under Component 1.

35. The scope of the existing national SPA system is far exceeded by the area of steppe lands classified as pasture lands and military lands. Arable and permanent cropland in Russia covers over 126,000,000 hectares. Indeed, remaining steppe lands are found mainly on the large tracts of pastureland and on military testing areas. Military lands are specially designated and well protected but do not meet IUCN criteria. It is in this context that a national system of SPA must be built and strengthened and functionally integrated with federal protected areas.

### **I.3. Policy and legislative context**

#### Policy context:

36. Laws and policies: The federal Law 'On Specially Protected Natural Areas' (1995) and regional laws and regulations of the 84 administrative regions (47 oblasts, 21 republics, 5 autonomous okrugs, 8 krai, 2 federal cities and 1 autonomous oblast), govern the operation of protected areas in Russia.

37. The management of Russia's PA is regulated by the federal Law 'On Principles and Procedure of the Delimitation of Areas of Responsibility and Powers between State Bodies of the Russian Federation

and State Bodies of Regions in the Russian Federation' (1999) which defines the inter-agency division of responsibilities at the federal and regional levels, and the appropriate delegation of management authority and responsibility for protected areas to the regional and local levels. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology (MNRE) is responsible for the development and implementation of state policy and legislation on protected areas, and ensuring the implementation of Russia's commitments to international conservation conventions and agreements. The MNRE, and its regional offices, are currently responsible for the management of the federal reserves although there are ongoing processes of administrative reform affecting all levels of the Russian government. Regional PA are managed by regional executive bodies (Regional Board for Environmental Protection, or equivalent body) and local protected areas by local (municipal) administrations

38. The country prepared its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) in 2001, through which it defined national biodiversity conservation priorities and laid out a programme for addressing the identified biodiversity conservation requirements and promoting the sustainable and equitable use of biodiversity. The establishment and effective management of protected areas as instruments of *in situ* biodiversity conservation are central features of the NBSAP. The NBSAP clearly outlines steppe areas as a national conservation priority, as one of the most transformed and threatened biomes in Russia. The NBSAP considers development of SPA as an indispensable tool to conserve remaining steppe areas.

39. In 2002, the Government of Russia promulgated the Ecological Doctrine of the Russian Federation. The Doctrine presents an integrating framework for maintaining a healthy environment and providing for sustainable development in the country. It is based upon the Constitution of the Russian Federation, federal legislation and regulations, and international conventions and agreements to which Russia is a party. It sets forth the government's strategic goals, which include the conservation of natural ecosystems for their life supporting functions and contribution to sustainable development. The conservation and restoration of ecosystems and associated biodiversity, and the promotion of sustainable use of resources, are central to the Doctrine.

40. Two policy decisions of the Russian government had a direct impact on the development of the national protected areas system. The Government Resolution dated 2001 called for the expansion of the national PA system and establishment of new federal reserves and national parks during the period from 2001 to 2010. Implementation of this plan is the responsibility of the MNRE. In May 2005 the Government issued a resolution requesting the MNRE to develop a national PA development strategy. Adoption of the state strategy should help in enhancing effectiveness of protected areas and establishing a viable and coordinated system of protected areas. A set of strategic objectives and principles were elaborated. However, development of the Strategy has not been completed yet and requires input from professional conservationist community and PA managers as well as best practices and lessons from concrete demonstration projects implemented in the protected areas.

### Legal Context

41. National level: At the federal level, the legal framework for protected area management and conservation is based on the Constitution of the Russian Federation, Ecological Doctrine of the Russian Federation (2002), Federal Law "On Protected Areas" (1995) as well as on the Russia's commitments in the framework of international agreements and conventions.

42. The management of Russia's protected area network has been influenced by extensive and ongoing administrative reform, which introduced and continues to introduce changes to the interagency division of responsibilities at the federal and regional levels, and to the delegation of management authority and responsibility to the regional and local levels. Broad policy changes were introduced into protected area legislation through a series of revisions to the 1995 Federal Law (2001, 2004, 2005). More authority over management of regional PA was decentralized and delegated to the regions. At the same time, regional

governments were forced to bring their regional PA networks into compliance with national legislation, particularly land tenure legislation.

43. These reforms have exposed shortfalls in protected area management capacity, including a lack of experienced staff and capacities for PA management in both federal and regional-level protected areas. In addition, poor harmonization of the law with other federal legislation hampers PA management: contradictions between the Law on Protected Areas and the Land Code have led to many cases where the federal government owns land and other natural resources located within the boundaries of regional PA. Reforms have also resulted in a loss of federal funding for regional-level PA, burdening already over-stretched regional budgets.

44. Russian legislation does not identify steppe as a separate category for legal regulation like it does for forests for example. Nor does it specifically provide for steppes to be treated as a special case when applying any legislation. In addition, there is no federal program that considers steppes, or grasslands in general, as a special subject. In reality, steppes do not exist in Russian federal legislation. The same situation exists in most Russian provinces.

45. The legal context for steppe PA in Russia is defined by the legislation described in Table 6. Because SPA exist in an agricultural landscape as defined by law in Russia, agricultural laws and policies, as well as Land Code provisions and land-use categorizations will deeply affect how future efforts to conserve steppe lands in Russia progress. One thing is for certain – the legal context provides some opportunities for and erects some barriers to expanded steppe conservation in Russia. Much of this legislation is general in its content and, with rare exception, does not take into account the specificity or complexity of steppe ecosystems and/or PA management to ensure adequate steppe conservation.

**Table 6:** Federal legislation relevant to SPA network expansion and management.

Federal Legislation/Policy relevant to SPA	Baseline – what does the law/policy provide for and its relevance for SPA	Gaps
Law On Protected Nature Areas	The principal legislation on PA, it establishes permanent federal ownership over federal PA, the PA categories, responsibilities of federal and regional authorities, and the general order of their implementation and enforcement. The law enables the establishment of regional level nature reserves and other types of PA. The law requires fines/fees collected in federal PA to be re-invested in the PA themselves.	Allows for strategic partnerships and collaboration with other stakeholders, but does not provide any guidance or policy on how to develop and implement these. Provides no incentives to motivate landowners and users to accept land-use restrictions to create PA. Does not make clear how PA could exist on private lands. Does not directly ban ecosystem management in PA (like grazing, mowing, prescribed fires, etc.), but does not provide clear and unambiguous regulations to support it.
Land Code (2001 #136)	The current Land Code of the RF is based upon environmental principles, among them being that “land ownership and land-use can be carried out freely if they do not harm the environment.”  The Land Code divides all lands in Russia into different categories, such as: agricultural land, human settlement land,	The Land Code has disincentives for steppe conservation such as provisions that limit the right of a landowner to leave steppe land unused per its designated use for more than 3 years, after which point the land can be subject to judicial seizure.  There is no legislation regulating

Federal Legislation/Policy relevant to SPA	Baseline – what does the law/policy provide for and its relevance for SPA	Gaps
	<p>forest fund lands, water fund lands, defense lands. Farmland is predominantly classified as “agricultural land.” Most of Russia’s steppe lands occur in what are legally categorized as agricultural lands, which are further sub-divided into categories such as: cropland, pastures (grazing land), hayfields, “badlands”, and “old fields” (recovering with natural vegetation after having been set aside). Actually steppe ecosystems are usually located on grazing land, less commonly on natural hayfields and old fields.</p> <p>The Land Code specifies acceptable use under each category. For example “agricultural land” can be used for cropland, pastures, windbreaks and shelterbelts, research and training and various activities related to farming. This land cannot be formally used for conservation or protection of the environment, at least as “conservation” and “environmental protection” are currently defined in Russia.</p>	<p>biodiversity conservation in agricultural lands. Moreover it is formally not allowed under the agricultural land category. Sustainable use is allowed, but not preservation/non-agricultural use. The opportunities for conservation on agricultural lands are not yet supported by law and policies. The current Land Code does not yet provide for an opportunity to use agricultural land to support ecosystem services.</p> <p>Actions taken in this regard are innovative and will help to inform future mainstreaming efforts.</p>
Federal Law On the Development of Agriculture (2006, #264)	<p>The primary legislation governing agriculture in Russia today. Under this Law the “Program on Socio-Economic Development of the Russian Federation” includes one objective “the conservation and renewal of natural resources necessary for agricultural production.” Steppe communities and their associated biological diversity could be considered as natural resources. These are the kinds of “angles” that the conservation community must develop further if steppe conservation is to progress markedly in Russia. Like the Land Code, the law calls for, among other things, “rational land use” in agricultural areas. Rational land use is understood to mean extracting full economic benefits from agricultural lands.</p>	<p>Agricultural law and policy as currently written provides more disincentives to steppe conservation and restoration than incentives. There is no tradition in Russia of exploring the “un-counted” economic benefits of healthy steppe ecosystems, thereby enabling conservation and sustainable use of steppe lands to qualify as one form of “rational land use” under the Law on Agriculture.</p>
Law on Protection of Natural Environment	<p>The basic umbrella law on the environment. It is the general policy framework for PA, defines the standards for environmental quality, and provides a basis for federal PA and activities permitted in them.</p>	<p>Does not recognize the specific and growing needs of biodiversity conservation in Russia’s steppe areas. It is not designed to add “environmental increments” to agricultural and land-use laws and policies – a key priority for steppe conservation.</p>
Law on Wildlife (FL #52)	<p>Prohibits the burning of vegetation and the storing and applying of pesticides,</p>	<p>The legislation does not provide legal instruments to help meet the listed</p>

Federal Legislation/Policy relevant to SPA	Baseline – what does the law/policy provide for and its relevance for SPA	Gaps
	herbicides fertilizers and other materials and wastes that are hazardous to wildlife and wildlife habitats. Provides for mandatory actions for conservation of wildlife habitats when developing land.	requirements.
Water Code	Provides instruments for the protection of riparian lands assigning water protection along the shorelines of water bodies; it is applicable in steppe landscapes as well.  Introduces the notion of “specially protected aquatic zone” and its equivalence to the “specially protected nature area.” This may be relevant to some steppe areas.	No specific rules and norms of implementation and management for wetlands are given.  The standard 100 m wide riparian conservation requirements of water bodies.

46. The legal regulation of steppe ecosystems is determined by the legal status of an area depending on where it is located. Most steppe communities in Russia occur on farmland, which is defined here to mean all those areas where agriculture is the dominant form of land use, or was in the recent past. Therefore, the regulation of most steppe ecosystems in Russia is determined by agricultural law and policy. Russian conservation law and agricultural and rural development law are not linked. There is no legislation or any state programs regulating biodiversity conservation on farmlands, or in farming practice in general. The terms *biodiversity on farmland* or *biodiversity on agricultural land* and similar expressions, are not even considered as legal terms and are certainly not being defined or applied in current legislation.

47. In Russia today, farming, rural development and agricultural land-use are regulated principally by land law, agricultural law and increasingly, by territorial planning laws. Biodiversity conservation, as well as wildlife resource use, is covered by environmental laws, including wildlife-related laws.

48. Russia has environmental bi-lateral agreements with Kazakhstan, Mongolia and China. But these agreements do not specifically reference steppe ecosystems that the three countries share. Most of these agreements do not mention steppe areas in particular, but rather call for joint conservation of water resources and joint development of conservation programs for wildlife and ecosystems. One agreement is focused on the conservation of grassland ecosystem – the Dauria International Protected Area (DIPA) agreement signed in 1994 by Russia, China and Mongolia. Daursky Zapovednik, one of this project’s pilot sites, forms the Russian part of this tri-country DIPA. See Annex 6 for more details on existing international agreement baseline.

49. Russia is a signatory to an agreement under the Convention on Migratory Species but not to the Convention itself. There are several memoranda of understanding (MoU) under the CMS that have direct relevance to steppe conservation, including: Saiga antelope, Great bustard, and Birds of Prey. Russia very recently signed the MoU on Saiga (June 25, 2009) and has yet to indicate its participation in other two MoU under the Bonn Convention on Migrating Species.

#### **I.4. Institutional context**

50. Over ten national-level governmental and institutions have official responsibilities with direct relevance to the effective functioning of steppe PA in Russia. This institutional context of Russia’s steppe protected areas is comprised of the interests of government authorities in: natural resources,



protected areas, agriculture, economic development, and defense and border patrol. Stakeholder institutions at the regional and other levels are described under section “I.6 Stakeholder Analysis.”

**Table 7.** Federal government institutions with Steppe PA-relevant responsibilities.

#	Institution	Roles and responsibilities relevant to SPA
<b>Federal level institutions</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Ministry of Natural Resources &amp; Ecology (MNRE)</b>	Develops policy, prepares and issues regulation, coordinates the process of planning, establishing and operating new PA. Responsible for management of all federal-level protected areas.
	Department for State Policy and Regulation on Environment (DSPR)	Elaborates state policy on nature conservation. It is the lead MNR department for international conventions and agreements and for monitoring and facilitating State implementation of international conventions and agreements. Works with protected areas to refine and improve state protected area law and policy and secure additional financing for PA to meet international obligations.
	- Division of Specially Protected Nature Areas of the MNRE	Manages the system of federal PA with regard to strategy, financial planning, reporting, and staff policy.
	Federal Service for Natural Resource Management (Rosprirodnadzor)	Responsible for control of environment and use of natural resources (except aquatic biological resource and game).
	- Regional directorates of Rosprirodnadzor	They work closely with the federal PA in their particular region. Piloting an effective system for control and surveillance of federal-level SPA in a few locations.
<b>2</b>	<b>Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)</b>	Develops agricultural, forestry, and wildlife game management policy; approves farming rules which strongly influence steppes and may influence SPA; Responsible for enforcing agricultural laws in all lands categorized under different forms of agricultural use, which encompasses most of Russia’s steppe ecosystems. Important stakeholder (among other governmental institutions) in approving proposals for new SPA and extension of existing PA.
	Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Control – “Rosselkhoznadzor” (under MoA)	Control over soil fertility issues, agrochemical use, land-use, forest use. Enforcement of agricultural law on agricultural and forest (except forests located at SPA areas). State fire control in forests.
	Federal Forestry Agency (Rosleskhoz, under MoA)	Government forestland management. Consideration of applications on transfer of forest lands to other categories.
<b>3</b>	<b>Ministry of Economic Development (Federal level)</b>	Land ownership issues, social-economic development in rural areas. State cadastre oversight, state monitoring of lands (including SPA), state registration of rights for real estate.
<b>4</b>	<b>Ministry of Regional Development</b>	Territorial planning
<b>5</b>	<b>Ministry of Defense</b>	Major owner of relatively undisturbed steppe areas (former military polygons)
<b>6</b>	<b>Russian Academy of Sciences (MGU)</b>	Several institutes have agreements with particular federal PA, conduct joint research and are involved in planning new SPA. MGU has Steppe Institute in Orenburg that contributed to the organization of the Orenburg Zapovednik.
<b>7</b>	<b>National and Regional-level Universities</b>	Several national-level universities (Moscow University, St. Petersburg University,) have long-term relationships with particular zapovedniks, maintain scientific cooperation with them and their graduates, and operate long-term research on a range of environmental topics.

51. Since 2000, numerous Governmental and administrative reforms in Russia’s environmental agencies resulted in the disruption of the environmental protection functions of Government. The protected area management authority within the federal government was downgraded, which was then mirrored at the regional level. The need for a specialized service or agency responsible for PA system management has been under discussion and the government’s decision to elaborate a national protected

areas development strategy is a positive sign that a more adequate attention will be paid to PA management in the coming years.

52. Natural Resources & Environment Sector. The Ministry of Natural Resources & Ecology (MNRE) is the central institution for Steppe PA (SPA) in Russia. SPA-relevant entities within the MNRE are: the Department for State Policy on Environment, the Directorate of Specially Protected Nature Areas of the MNRE, the Federal Service for Natural Resource Management (Rosprirodnadzor), the Regional directorates of Rosprirodnadzor; and the Institute of Nature Conservation. Through these organizations, the MNRE is responsible for developing policy, regulation, planning, establishing and operating SPA. The MNRE is responsible for the management of all of Russia’s federal SPA.

53. Agriculture Sector. Federal Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and agricultural authorities of Provinces of Russian Federation are of crucial importance to surviving steppe outside federal SPA. But currently, the MoA (federal or provincial levels) does not recognize the value of steppe lands and does not distinguish steppe as management priority. There is no specific MoA department that is particularly relevant to SPA and MoA has no responsibility relevant to SPA. But three departments in federal MoA are particularly relevant to steppe conservation: Dept. of Forestry and Wildlife Management, Dept. of Livestock Breeding, and Dept. of Land Policy, Private and State Property.

54. Transport, Power, and Border Protection. The transport and security sector institutions are also important to SPA in Russia with respect to their law enforcement and oil/hazardous spill response functions. Included in this sector is the Border Service of the Federal Security Service and the Ministry of Transport. Responsibility for oversight of the electricity sector has been given to the Ministry of Energy. The Federal Grid Company also remains state-owned and is responsible for the operation of the electrical grid system.

55. Table 8 summarizes the Capacity Development Scorecard scores for MNRE’s SPA network. The full scorecard can be found in Annex 2. The scorecard reflects results of the capacity assessment at the level of federal SPA. Integrated capacity development scores of the SPA are slightly above 44% of the total possible scores. Various elements of the SPA subset include federal and regional protected areas. If assessed individually, these elements would demonstrate different level of individual and institutional capacity (higher for most of the federal PA, lower for the regionally-managed PA) and these differences can be found above in the METT scores. The UNDP/GEF project will address and strengthen PA system capacity at all levels by proposing mechanisms for federal-regional collaboration and inter-agency learning, capacity building and knowledge transfer to address capacity gaps among various elements of the SPA system. Also interesting in the scores below is the discrepancy between the systemic and the individual scores, which will be addressed through the project’s capacity building efforts.

**Table 8:** Summary Capacity Development Indicator Score for MNRE’s SPA network.

Strategic Areas of Support	% of Actual Score of Total Possible Score		
	Systemic	Institutional	Individual
1. Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislation, strategies and programmes.	50%	67%	
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes.	33%	37%	50%
3. Capacity to engage and build consensus among stakeholders	50%	33%	33%
4. Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge: Technical skills related to the requirements of the SPs and Conventions.	67%	67%	33%
5. Capacity to monitor, evaluate and report and learn at the sector and project levels.	50%	33%	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>37%</b>

## I.5. Challenges, threats, root causes and barriers analysis

56. The conservation and sustainable management of Russia's steppe ecosystems face significant challenges going forward. Climate change is the overarching challenge to long-term conservation effectiveness for Russia's steppe protected areas. The primary threat to steppe ecosystem health is the conversion of steppe habitats as a result of direct or indirect anthropogenic impacts emanating largely from the agricultural sector. Over-harvesting of wild steppe species is a third threat, albeit a lower level one. Table 9 ranks the relevance of each one of the three threats to each one of the 15 SPA on a scale of 1-3. The analysis shows that nearly all SPA face these threats at one level or another.

**Table 9.** Main threats to Russia's steppe biological diversity and their relevance to each one of Russia's Steppe Protected Areas (SPA).

Type/ #	Name of SPA	Threats and their ranking 1-3 / SPA							
		Climate Change	Conversion of steppe lands: 1) plowing, 2) lack of grazing/over-grazing; 3) infrastructure (roads, power lines), 4) lack of fire/too much fire; 5) afforestation; 6) mining, oil and gas producing .						Over harvesting of wild animals and plants.
			1	2	3	4	5	6	
<b>Zapovedniki</b>									
1	Belogorye	2	NA*	2	1	1	1	NA**	3
2	Centralno-Chernozemny	2	NA*	2	1	1	1	NA**	3
3	Chernye Zemli	2	NA	3	2	1	NA	NA**	1
4	Daurskiy	1	NA	3	3	1	NA	NA**	1
5	Galichya Gora	3	NA	3	2	1	1	NA	3
6	Orenburgskiy	3	NA*	1	3	1	3	NA**	3
7	Privolzhskaya Lesostep'	2	NA*	2	2	1	2	NA	3
8	Rostovskiy	3	NA*	2	3	1	3	NA**	3
9	Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina	2	NA	3	3	3	NA	NA**	1
<b>National Parks</b>									
1	Pribaikalskiy	3	3	2	1	3	3	NA**	1
<b>Zakazniks</b>									
1	Kharbinskiy	3	2	2	2	1	1	2	1
2	Mekletinskiy	3	2	2	2	1	1	2	1
3	Saratovskiy	3	1	2	2	2	2	1	2
4	Sarpinskiy	3	2	2	2	1	1	2	1
5	Tsimlyanskiy	3	2	2	2	1	1	2	3

**Ranking:**

1 – high present threat; 2 – medium present threat; 3 – minimal present but significant future threat;  
NA – Not applicable.

\* For all Zapovedniks, plowing steppe ecosystems is prohibited by law but it would be the highest priority threat if the legal status of PA would be stopped – to the marked SPA.

\*\* For all Zapovedniks and NPs, mining and oil (gas) drilling are prohibited by law but it would be high priority threat if the legal status of PA would be stopped – to the marked SPA.

### Over-arching Challenge: Climate instability

57. Climate change is the over-arching threat to steppe ecosystems in Russia and challenge to effective SPA management. Scientists can predict climate-change induced trends, but the results of these changes – the responses of plant and animal communities on the ground – are unpredictable and will require new tools and management approaches in order to adapt conservation practice accordingly.

58. In recent decades changing climate conditions in Russia have caused discernible shifts in phenological dates in plants (frondescence and blossom) and animals (seasonal migrations) in spatial limits and in ecosystem structure in some regions. In last 10 years, distribution range changes have been recorded for many steppe species. Special research was undertaken on the shifts in range boundaries of four species of ground squirrels in Volga steppe region. The distribution of the typical steppe ground squirrels (little, great, and spotted sousliks) has shifted further south entailing numerous changes in steppe ecosystems. Some non-steppe species are appearing in steppe ecosystems for the first time. For example the jackal was recorded in the steppes of Volga region. Another recorded effect is a shift in the timberline to higher altitudes in the high mountains along Russia's southern border, affecting mountainous steppes in Altai and Caucasus. Heavy droughts have also become more frequent in some steppe regions in recent years, affecting Dauriskiy, Chernye Zemli Biosphere Reserves, Tsimlyanskiy Zakaznik and other SPA.

59. The increase in annual mean temperature due to climate change is expected to be much larger in Russia than the global average. By the middle of this century, the temperature rise in Russia is expected to be especially large in winter. Along with increasing temperatures scientists predict shortened cold periods and reduced soil moisture content in spring and summer in many areas of Russia's steppe region, presenting significant challenges to traditional agriculture. Responding to these challenges will require agricultural policy and practice to develop a deeper understating of natural systems' (*i.e.* steppe grassland) ability to withstand these changes and to adopt as many of these characteristics (such as higher soil organic matter) as possible.

60. Climate change may potentially cause a species interaction mismatch, shifts in vegetation zones on plains and altitudinal belts in mountains, and alterations in ecosystem structure. Unless PAs are able to apply new and more flexible conservation tools, they may partly lose their nature conservation value due to such climate-driven changes.<sup>6</sup> Shifts in temperature and precipitation in temperate rangelands of Russia/Central Asia may result in altered growing seasons and boundary shifts among grasslands, forests and shrublands. In addition, Russia's national system of PA will need to expand so as to include some of the critical steppe biodiversity (species, habitats, ecosystems) not included to date and to apply new resilience-based risk management strategies in the face of climate change.

61. Although climate change is placing increasing pressure on the resiliency of steppe biodiversity, it is not the only stressor. Others include: plowing of virgin and formerly cultivated steppe lands; inappropriate oil and mineral extraction and other development infrastructure leading to fragmentation and destruction of steppe habitats.

### ***Threat #2: Land Conversion***

62. The conversion of steppe lands is actually the number one threat to steppe biodiversity and ecosystem health. In Russia, the principal driver of steppe land conversion is agriculture. This threat is more applicable to steppe lands outside strictly protected federal areas – *i.e.* > 95% of Russia's steppe lands. Steppe land conversion as discussed here includes outright destruction from plowing of virgin lands or formerly cultivated land as well as afforestation and mining and/or oil and gas development, and also modification or degradation from other practices such as too little or too much grazing, and too little or too much fire. More than 40% of the steppe (including forest steppe and semi-desert) biome in Russia has already been completely transformed to date. Steppe grasslands on the rich black soils in European Russia and the North Caucasus have been almost completely converted to croplands, while steppe vegetation has all but vanished on the Azov-Kuban plain and some part of Western Siberia plain. Steppe and forest steppe habitats in Volga-Urals and Altai regions, Central and Eastern Siberia have been less

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<sup>6</sup> 2008. "Assessment Report on Climate Change and its Consequences in Russian Federation." Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring (Roshydromet).

impacted, as agricultural expansion is limited by cold continental climate, permafrost, and lands that are poorly suited for agriculture (i.e. hilly or saline). This steppe land conversion has been partly reversed in Russia in recent decades. Since 1991, Russian farms and cooperatives have “abandoned” roughly 10% of the total area of arable land in Russia. Such lands are recovering their natural steppe characteristics and serve as the natural reserve for large-scale steppe restoration in Russia. “Old-fields” or fallow lands are being increasingly re-cultivated in response to perverse incentives under Russian agricultural law. Thus plowing is an imminent threat to these lands as well as to virgin steppe lands across Russia.

63. As described in the law and policy section, agricultural policy emphasizes the importance of cultivating as much land as possible and provides many incentives for plowing land and disincentives for not plowing land. In response, many local officials will seek to plow both virgin steppe and fallow lands even if there are no plans to plant crops. In addition to destroying steppe ecosystems, misguided plowing can result directly in erosion, which destroys the land’s use for any purpose.

64. **Grazing:** In many parts of Russia’s steppe zone, steppe ecosystems are also being converted (degraded) due to too little and in few cases too much grazing. After the collapse of Soviet-style agriculture, livestock numbers decreased dramatically. Cattle numbers dropped by over 50% since the 1990s (5,467,704 in 1992 vs 2,146,217 in 2007). Smaller livestock (sheep and goats) numbers dropped almost 70% in the same time period (55,254,600 in 1992 to 19,674,668 in 2007). Land area categorized as grazing land did not change (~ 566,000 km<sup>2</sup> across 35 steppe regions). Thus grazing pressure decreased 50-70% on average. This is the overall story but the picture becomes more complicated at the local level. The same changes that brought the dramatic decrease in livestock numbers also meant a greater portion of livestock in Russia belonged to households, and these animals were grazed mainly near settlements. The former collective farms used many distant pastures that were abandoned in 1990-2000s. For this reason actual grazing pressure on distant steppe pastures decreased by 90-100%. The area of steppe grazing land in Russia is enormous – an estimated 565,823 km<sup>2</sup>. By expert assessment, under-grazed grasslands equal at least 50% of this figure, or 283,000 km<sup>2</sup> for all steppe regions. Experts estimate that 20% of this total grazing area is over-grazed pasture, or 113,164 km<sup>2</sup>. These figures vary depending upon the region of Russia and have yet to be specified.

65. Steppe lands, like nearly all natural grasslands, evolved over millennia with larger ungulates. Herbivory is a determining factor in plant diversity and species richness in a grassland ecosystem. Plant communities characteristic of a healthy steppe system are dependent upon moderate and spatially proportional grazing in order to maximize nutrient cycling, health and stability. Herbivores modify vegetation<sup>7</sup> by reducing plant and canopy height and changing plant morphology. They can alter horizontal structure and create patchiness or vegetation mosaics that differ from non-grazed landscapes. Grazing can change the proportion of biomass among various plant functional groups, which also impacts belowground vegetation structure (root biomass). Light to moderate grazing intensities may increase or decrease plant species diversity in grasslands. Indeed, many steppe species that are now globally threatened rely on grazing by ungulates to provide specific habitat conditions. Dramatic shifts in grazing pressure—defined as either ‘over-grazing’ or ‘under-grazing’—can have important ecological implications. As a result, paradoxically, steppe ecosystems are being degraded /converted across Russia as a result of reduced grazing pressure in most places and over-grazing in other areas.

66. **Fire:** No less than 20% of Russia’s total steppe area (nationwide) is affected by undesirable fires annually. Recent steppe fires result mainly from burning stubble and straw in fields and burning dry grass in under-grazed pastures. This is done in the late spring/early summer and thus affects emerging plants, nesting birds, and calving antelope. Specifically spring/summer fires are one of the main threats to Saiga in Kalmykia and Mongolian Gazelle in Dauria. Anthropogenic fire is an important threat to the Steppe

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<sup>7</sup> 1997. Ecology and Conservation of Great Plains Vertebrates. Ecological Studies, Vol. 125 Knopf, Fritz L.; Samson, Fred B. (Eds.)

eagle, Pallid harrier, Pratincole, Larks and many other endangered birds in these same steppe regions as well as Orenburg. SPA are affected with wild fires as well. For example, 50 km<sup>2</sup> in Khakasskiy Zapovednik was devastated by fire in 2007. In Chernye Zemli Zapovednik summer steppe fires cover 641 km<sup>2</sup> in 2002 and 192 km<sup>2</sup> in 2004. Every 2-3 years 60-75% of this Zapovednik burns. In Orenburgskiy Zapovednik 85% of the area burned in 2003. Each of four plots of this Zapovednik burned 70-80% of their area several times over a 20 year period.

67. On an area basis, 46% of the world's priority ecosystems are fire dependent, meaning that they need to burn under an appropriate fire regime if they are to persist in the landscape (Hardesty et al. 2005)<sup>8</sup>. Just as steppe lands are "grazing dependent" ecosystems, so too are they "fire dependent" ecosystems. If fire is removed from a steppe system or if the fire regime is altered beyond its normal range of variability, the ecosystem changes to something else, and habitats and species are lost. Individual species within fire-dependent ecosystems have evolved in response to specific fire regime characteristics such as frequency, intensity and season of burn, and to the variability of those characteristics. When people alter fire's natural frequency, intensity and season of burn, it can damage ecological systems and species. This presents conservation practitioners with a conservation paradox where fire is both a threat to steppe ecosystems and an essential ecological process. Russia's SPA will need to define "the problem" with respect to fire and begin to incorporate proactive management practices that recognizes the benefit fire provides to natural steppe systems and minimizes the impact of fire on people and their property.

68. The term "conversion" is also defined here to include degradation. Steppe lands are under threat of degradation due to large-scale infrastructure development in the form of railroads, highways, border fences, and mining and oil production impacts. Russia's huge long land border with Kazakhstan and Mongolia cuts across the world's largest steppe zone. As countries become more concerned with border issues, more barriers are put up along borders that can cause significant problems for migratory species and other natural steppe ecological processes. Natural resource exploration and extraction or transportation infrastructure development can also damage or destroy steppe habitats and cause fragmentation of plant and animal communities.

### ***Threat #3: Over-exploitation of animal and plant species in steppe zones.***

69. A third and more localized threat to steppe biodiversity is over-exploitation of animal and plant species in steppe zones. This takes the form of three distinct types of activities: (i) subsistence harvesting of birds and other animals (e.g. marmot) for food; (ii) harvesting of plant resources by local communities for commercial purposes; and (iii) commercial poaching for horns, skins, or meat and for living animals (especially raptors to falconers). Type (iii) threatens some steppe species globally while (i) and (ii) affect locally. Commercial poaching to supply international markets impacts steppe species such as: Saiga antelope, Saker, argali, Pallas' Cat, Mongolian gazelle, Imperial and Steppe eagles, Eagle owl, some reptiles and some plants. For example, in the capital city of Orenburg Province, the city's streets are full of vendors selling wild tulips harvested in the vast steppe lands surrounding the city. This harvest is largely uncontrolled and is leading to the disappearance of this species from the locality.

70. With respect to commercial poaching, the most known problem is in one particular area with the saiga antelope. Throughout saiga range states it is illegal to hunt saiga. Yet overexploitation remains the primary threat to the species. The Republic of Kalmykia is a key stronghold for saiga. Until the late 1980s more than one million saiga used to roam the arid regions of Eurasia, including the Republic of Kalmykia in the Russian Federation. Since the mid-1990s saiga populations have declined by more than 90%, primarily due to poaching for the male's horn for its value in traditional Chinese medicine. Only saiga males bear the precious horn and as a result poachers aim to kill males, which caused the number of

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<sup>8</sup> Hardesty, J., R. L. Myers & W. Fulks. 2005. Fire, ecosystems, and people: a preliminary assessment of fire as a global conservation issue. *The George Wright Forum* 22:78-87.

adult males to drop dramatically and led to a reproductive collapse. In 1997, saiga population in Kalmykia was 259,000. This number has dropped to approximately 20,000 in 2008.

71. **Threat Conclusion:** The most significant cumulative impact of these threats is: (a) the loss of large areas of healthy steppe ecosystems; (b) a reduction in the ecological functioning of steppe ecosystems due to increased fragmentation; (c) a reduction in the effectiveness of the steppe natural areas as a buffer against climate change impacts; (d) a reduction in the capacity of the steppe to provide key ecosystem services, including water retention, productive soils for agriculture and agro-biodiversity; (e) the ongoing loss of threatened habitats and associated species; (f) an incremental loss of habitat for breeding and migrating faunal species; and (g) the incremental spread of severe soil erosion, sheet erosion and gully formation.

72. Despite these threats, approximately 25% of the Asia's steppes still remain in largely native condition and are considered global priorities for conservation action (IUCN-WCPA, 2006). The project is designed to complement the governmental efforts to expand the steppe protected area system and strengthen its management effectiveness. In order to meet these new challenges described above, Russia's steppe ecosystems must be stewarded effectively first within the PA that already exist, second within newly created or expanded PA in steppe lands; and thirdly within the productive agricultural landscape that surrounds most SPA.

#### **Long-term solution and Barriers to achieving it.**

73. Two basic conservation approaches have been considered to structure this first GEF investment in Russia's steppe biodiversity and its conservation and sustainable use: (i) The establishment and management of a secure comprehensive, adequate and representative system of protected areas; and (ii) The mainstreaming of biodiversity to ensure that all sectors that impact on biodiversity factor biodiversity considerations into the development and implementation of their policies, plans and programmes.

74. This project focuses on the first approach – the expansion and strengthening of Russia's sub-system of steppe protected areas – as an integrated strategic response to the threats described above. Ultimately, both mainstreaming and protected area approaches will be needed to conserve Russia's steppe ecosystems and achieve sustainable agricultural development in Russia. This project's long-term solution fosters long-term conservation of steppe mosaics by building upon the steppe conservation foundation already in place -- existing steppe PA. The project will do this by strengthening and expanding existing PA in priority steppe zones and using those PA as building blocks for creating traditional and new types of Steppe PA such as specially managed steppe areas. The end result will be improved steppe area conservation through a landscape mosaic approach that strengthens the linkages between SPA and their surrounding agricultural landscapes in order to catalyze modest conservation gains in Russia's vast steppe areas that are not within protected areas.

75. Protected areas serve as the foundation for long-term conservation of steppe ecosystems and biological diversity. In Russia's current administrative reform context this approach is most timely and critical to secure steppe conservation objectives in the medium-term as well as to pave the way to for future mainstreaming action. Among the key impediments to the achievement of a representative network of effectively managed steppe protected areas are the following:

76. Barrier (i) **Incomplete representation of Russia's steppe biomes within the PA system:** A recent gap analysis (WWF-Russia, 2007) demonstrates that only 0.8% of the total extent of federal and regional PA falls within the steppe biome. Only 0.11% of the steppe region is formally covered by protected areas

-- the lowest figure of PA coverage among all biomes of Russia.<sup>9</sup> But inside even these few PA different non-steppe ecosystems occupy most of their area. Less than 0.2% of the national network of PA can be counted as “steppe protected areas”, i.e. those PA with 25% or more of their protected lands being steppe lands. This tiny representation of steppe systems in Russia’s PA network is a significant barrier to sufficient conservation of steppe biodiversity within Russia’s PA network. The existing SPA network, apart from the small overall steppe area protected, suffers from other shortcomings as well. More SPA exist in European Russia, but their size is much smaller than the SPA in Central and Siberian Russia. The existing SPA system does not adequately represent all the geographic zones in Russia’s steppe areas, the nine major types of steppe ecosystems in Russia, and the rare and endangered biomes and habitats.

77. While expanding the SPA network is an established government priority, the baseline approach to this expansion is too oriented towards the traditional environment and conservation sector, lacks innovation and is not carefully prioritized. Steppe ecological and representation gaps are not critically assessed prior to expansion decisions. A significant factor contributing to this barrier is the difficulty of accessing accurate data on steppe ecosystems in the 15+ regions of Russia where steppe systems occur. None of the SPA is designed to conserve landscape scale processes. Apart from WWF’s PA system overview in 2007, there has never been a full-fledged strategic assessment and gap analysis of the steppe ecosystems covered by the existing PA network. Other important specially managed area designations, such as military reserves and wildlife protection zones are not considered as part of the SPA network and thus not included in the analysis of coverage and gaps and potential synergies.

78. Perhaps most importantly, network expansion planning has not been strategic with respect to broader, landscape level processes and objectives, but rather are ad-hoc in nature, an issue that gains importance as new challenges come to the fore such as climate instability and its impact on species and ecosystems. Issues such as cost effectiveness and economic benefits (and costs) are not clearly highlighted during the preparatory process for new SPA. This is a significant barrier to SPA expansion in modern Russia, where economic development is the primary goal. In order to secure protection for additional steppe areas, stakeholders must make a convincing argument as to the economic and social benefits of protecting priority steppe areas.

79. Emphasis on a traditional one-sector approach to biodiversity conservation in the steppe zone will not be sufficient to achieve steppe ecosystem conservation. Despite the importance of migratory species, the boundary-less nature of the steppe environment, and the vast areas involved, SPA are managed largely in isolation from the surrounding landscapes. Steppe PA must understand and define their landscape context well and on that basis proceed to work with other partners who are critical to that larger landscape context. Instead, like many PA in many parts of the world, SPA in Russia have pursued a relatively isolated course of management that is a recipe for long-term ecological decline.

80. Barrier (ii) Limited operational capacities for individual SPA management: The overall capacity (planning, financial, human resources, skills, knowledge, equipment) of the federal and regional PA authorities to manage proactively or respond to key threats and challenges facing existing steppe PA is generally limited, although there are a few localized ‘centers’ of adequacy, such as the Steppe Institute in Orenburg. Steppe areas comprise 10% or less of 35 federal PA with steppe ecosystems inside their jurisdiction. Because these areas were never created for the purposes of steppe conservation, they provide little to no special management attention to the steppe zones within their borders. As a result, there traditionally has been minimal focus on developing expertise in steppe ecosystem dynamics and how to manage a PA to sustain natural steppe ecological processes.

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<sup>9</sup> Nikolsky & Rummyantsev. 2002. Zonal representativeness of Zapovedniks system of Russian Federation. In: Scientific issues of ecological problems of Russia. Proc. of National Conference ad memoriam A.L. Yashin. 1. Moscow, Nauka. 160-165. (in Russian)



81. Capacity barriers include information deficiencies, absence of know-how to address specific threats (plowing, fragmentation, grazing or fire-related degradation). There are a number of key knowledge gaps to support operational decision-making in steppe PA. SPA management requires some specialized expertise in the technical areas and new, more “fluid” perspectives in the management area. Among Russia’s PA staff, there is a low level of competence and qualification in steppe conservation issues and management challenges. For example, despite Russia’s vast steppe areas, there is no experience with integrated fire management and how to use, prevent and suppress fire in ways that benefit steppe ecosystem health within Russia’s SPA system – most notably fire management requirements for different steppe habitats under different management regimes, cost-effective restoration and rehabilitation measures for different steppe vegetation types and habitat requirements for key faunal species. SPA staff and local community officials have minimal knowledge of the substantial body of experience worldwide in controlling and managing fire and little understanding of the problem (and opportunities). The frequency and extent of uncontrolled wildfires is increasing, while the equivalent human resource capacity, technologies and equipment to proactively respond to these is not. The result is increasingly degraded ecological integrity of grassland habitats.

82. Isolation of SPA staff from one another and from the outside world prevents them from learning and adopting new and better PA management experiences and practices. This is caused in part by poorly developed mechanisms for exchanging information and experiences among SPA in Russia and internationally by language barriers that prevent staff from accessing new thinking, management practices and conservation methods available in the international arena. In most SPA there is a paucity of data and information on priority species numbers and condition, local resource use, and trends regarding current and emerging threats. This lack of basic, reliable information available for decision-makers is a significant barrier that hampers the planning, development and effective management of the SPA system.

83. Although scientific institutions in Russia have conducted much research on the ecology and biodiversity of Russia’s steppe areas, seldom have this data been incorporated into SPA management planning. Practical monitoring methodologies for steppe wildlife and ecosystem health are poorly developed, resulting in significant data gaps in nearly every SPA. Those methods that do exist tend to rely on an unrealistic unaffordable level of highly technical, scientific input and not enough on local capacity and partnerships for practical monitoring. As a result, SPA are not able to apply basic, adaptive management practices. Very few SPA collect and analyze baseline information on the local climatic trends, which would enable them to begin thinking about adaptive management responses to climate-induced ecological change. There are specific methodologies in dealing with these threats that have been tested worldwide, but they are not available to SPA managers.

84. Russia doesn’t have a common culture of co-management of protected areas, and enforcement activities often result in the aggravation of conflicts with local communities. Due to a lack of involvement of local stakeholders in PA activities and projects, the steppe PA are poorly oriented to contribute to or support socio-economic development priorities of local communities. PA staff has limited experience in participatory PA management, public involvement and resolving conflicts of interests with resource users. There are few if any effective co-management and enforcement models. Russia’s SPA are inexperienced in facilitating local environmental governance, which is a serious barrier to improving SPA effectiveness. In some SPA, the local community has the right to utilize biological resources inside the Reserve’s multiple use zones. To ensure that this is done sustainably, the Reserve must be able to engage local stakeholders effectively to develop local grazing management practices that ensure this outcome. Inadequate data and untrained staff hamper the development of effective management proscriptions, such as the optimal timing of proscribed burns or best grazing management practices. There are few coordinated strategies for, and limited coordinated implementation of, the effective conservation of steppe species of concern, notably migrating faunal species.

85. The prospects for collaboration and cooperation with counterpart PA agencies in adjacent countries in the planning, establishment and operations of trans-boundary steppe PA have also not been optimally developed. For example, although Russia, Mongolia and China have agreed to collaborate in conservation measures through the Daurian International Protected Area, the actual collaborative mechanisms and practices have yet to be elaborated and implemented effectively. Finally, there is no consolidated database and environmental information system for the steppe biome, and limited fora to share and disseminate information and best practice across the Eurasian steppes.

86. Barrier (iii) Limited institutional capacities to manage an expanded steppe PA system: Federal and regional agency budgets in the steppe region are under severe pressure, and any PA expansion initiative dilutes already limited financial resources. The situation has been dramatically aggravated by wide-ranging administrative reform processes that are resulting in high staff turnover, losses of institutional memory and uncertainties in the span of control. Capacity shortfalls have important consequences for SPA functionality and effectiveness. Capacity shortfalls present an even bigger challenge in a context of system expansion, where it may become increasingly difficult to identify adequate numbers of qualified personnel. Limited capacities are preventing effective enforcement or even clear understanding of existing legislation and associated regulations. The PA system in Russia experiences tremendous problems with attracting and keeping good qualified scientific and management personnel on staff. This is a significant barrier to strengthening management effectiveness. In former times, zapovednik staffs were recruited regularly from among the graduates of the best universities and natural resource academies in Russia. These institutions had long-term traditions of cooperating with specific protected areas, but this tradition was broken during the difficult transition years.

87. There is minimal cooperation and co-ordination between conservation agencies and agricultural agencies or oil/gas and border patrol authorities at national and oblast levels. The productive landscape context of most SPA is a critical element in the long-term viability and effectiveness of any SPA. Cooperation across sectors is critical to any landscape-scale vision of steppe conservation, as well as to effective monitoring and enforcement work and proactive, prevention-oriented efforts. It is particularly critical with respect to ecological information, given the important knowledge barriers facing managers of steppe ecosystems. Several important factors result in inadequate cooperation and coordination among SPA authorities and other resource management agencies responsible for resources in and around the SPA. First, there is a tendency to view steppe conservation as agency-specific problems, resulting in inadequate cooperation and coordination among relevant agencies. The absence of effective coordination diminishes SPA capacity at the network and individual level to monitor natural resource use or enforce hunting laws in areas bordering the SPA. In the absence of such a cooperative framework, their ability to mitigate primary threats to globally significant steppe biological diversity is compromised significantly.

88. Existing agricultural and land law and policy do not provide innovative “non-protected area” kinds of tools for sustainably utilizing and conserving steppe lands outside of protected areas. The Land Code does not specify conservation areas or areas of high conservation value. These areas therefore have no basis for protection, unlike high value farmland, and special measures to regulate the use of such land, taking into account their high natural value, cannot be developed under the Land Code. Some provisions of the Land Code can be interpreted to encourage a reduction in the proportion of natural ecosystems, including steppe habitats, within agricultural lands. For example, the Land Code requires and regulates land protection and provides specific measures for protecting land from erosion, salinization as well as “encroachment by trees, bushes and weeds.” This encroachment is considered to be a form of land deterioration. Because no legal definition for the term “weeds” is given in the Code, this provision can be interpreted very broadly and gives legal grounds for preventing the natural recovery of steppe plant communities in formally cultivated areas.

89. Neither biodiversity conservation nor protection of natural ecosystems in farming areas is among the objectives of state agricultural policy in Russia. Sustainable development is mentioned in the context

of increasing rural employment, living standards and income. The law emphasizes “rational land use,” which in the parlance of Russian law, is understood to mean primarily the absence of economically unexploited land.

## I.6. Stakeholder analysis

90. In this section, the most important stakeholders for the SPA project at the national, regional and local levels are listed and their relevance briefly analyzed. Understanding the stakeholder context of this project is key to both good project design and effective project implementation. This section builds upon the institutional context and broadens the discussion to include all relevant stakeholders as well as a brief description and analysis of their roles and responsibilities relevant to this project. The preparatory phase of the project placed strong emphasis on various forms of stakeholder involvement, including the direct involvement of federal and regional government agencies in regional stakeholder meetings and workshops. The project design phase also placed a strong emphasis on the involvement of local stakeholders active in the pilot areas. Project objective and envisioned full-scale project outcomes and outputs were discussed in a series of meetings with relevant representatives from i.e. the fisheries and other sectors. A listing of major stakeholders with a description of their relevant roles and responsibilities is given below in Table 10.

**Table 10.** Regional and Local Project Stakeholders and Relevant Roles and Responsibilities

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Roles and responsibilities relevant to steppe ecosystem conservation and management.</b>
Regional Administrations/ Governments	Oversee resource use in local and regional lands. Establish and manage regional SPA and approve the designation and regulation of buffer zones. Often involved in supporting federal SPA. In the more developed regions may have environmental ministries or directorates with staff and budget.
<b>KURSK OBLAST</b>	
1) Committee for Natural Resources and Environment Protection	Responsible for managing all regional protected areas that are potential partners for the federal SPA in Kursk Oblast.
-Department of environmental safety and nature use.	Control over regional PA functioning, species conservation at regional level, regional environmental legislation drafting and control over its compliance.
2) Rosprirodnadzor regional department (federal)	Control over federal PA functioning.
<b>KALMYKIA</b>	
1) Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment Protection and Energy Development	Regional environmental policy and legislation, species protection and biodiversity conservation. Establishment and operation of regional level SPA.
2) Ministry of Agriculture and Land Relations Development	Land use regulations, implementation of regional policy for agricultural development. Participate in oversight of land-use regulation on agricultural lands and their conversion into other categories under the Land Code.
3) Rosprirodnadzor Kalmykia (federal)	Control over protection functions assigned at a federal level, control over federal PA activities, control over land re-cultivation processes.
4) Department of Federal Land Registration Service for Republic of Kalmykia	Land cadastre, land tenure, land-use planning and control, control over landuse legislation compliance.
<b>ORENBURG</b>	
1) Orenburg Legislative Assembly	Drafting of legislation.
2) Committee for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection	Responsible for managing and financing all regional protected areas that are potential partners for the federal SPA in Orenburg.

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Roles and responsibilities relevant to steppe ecosystem conservation and management.</b>
3) Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Food and Manufacturing Industry	Develops regional agricultural policy and legislation. Regulates use of agricultural lands including grazing lands (i.e. steppes) strongly affecting all regional SPA and buffer zone of federal SPA (Orenburgsky Zapovednik). Responsible for wildlife and game management and forestry. Specially authorized to manage species listed in Red Data Book of Russia.
4) Rosprirodnadzor Orenburg (federal)	Control over nature protection activities, biodiversity conservation, regional PA establishment and functioning, forests.
5) Rosselkhoz regional department (federal).	Control over land use regulations compliance, hunting, reintroduction of species.
<b>ZABAİKALKSY KRAI(Dauria)</b>	
1) Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of Zabaikalsky Krai (under the auspices of regional Government)	Nature resource management, environment protection, relevant legislation compliance, information management. Facilitates and oversees the ecological expertise (EIA) process required for PA establishment or reorganization.
- State Institution "United Directory of Biological Zakazniks of Zabaikalsky Krai" (under MNRE of Zabaikalsky Krai)	Regional SPA management, arrangement of their protection, activities on SPA regime compliance, implementation of biotechnical activities, monitoring of wild life objects number.
- State Service of Protection, Control and Regulating of Wild Life Objects Use of Zabaikalsky Krai (under the MRNE)	Control of legislation compliance in the field of game wildlife protection. Control of regional SPA activity, wild life users; monitoring of population, implementation of activities on reproduction and habitat conservation.
2) Ministry of Agriculture of Zabaikalsky Krai	Planning of agricultural lands use; establishment, protection and utilization of the state biological zakazniks of Krai significance; proposing on reservation of lands, which are supposed to be declared as the state biological zakazniks of Krai significance, and on limitation of economic activity within their borders.
3) Rosprirodnadzor Zabaikalsky Krai (federal)	Control over biodiversity conservation activities, forest protection, species population status. Monitoring. Forest control (including forest fires), control over implementation of measures to improve soil fertility, control over changes in landuse categories, pollution control.
<b>SPA</b>	
1) "Daursky" Zapovednik & Biosphere Reserve (Zabaikalsky krai)	Initiation of process of and preparation of background environmental-economic documentation for expanding of there serve area, establishment of the federal zakaznik "Dzeren Valley"; participation in the development and implementation of programs for restoration of extinct ungulates and bird species of Daurian steppe eco-region; participation in activities to assess the impact of climate change on biodiversity and agriculture; implementation of model and demo projects on introduction of adaptive management mechanisms.
2) "Chiornye Zemli" (Black Lands) Zapovednika & Biosphere Reserve and other SPA (Kalmykia)	Conservation and study of biological diversity within the Reserve area and its protection zone. Environmental awareness and educational activity at areas adjacent to the Reserve.
3) Central-Chernozem Zapovednik and Biosphere Reserve (Kursk oblast)	Protection of some of the last remaining virgin "black soil" steppe regions of Russia; Emphasis on scientific studies, including maintenance of Annals of Nature; ecological monitoring; participation in environmental impact assessments; environmental awareness and education; preparation of scientific personnel and specialists in the field of environment protection.
4) "Orenburgsky" Zapovednik (Orenburg oblast)	Development and implementation of demonstration projects aimed at establishment of effective steppe SPA management.
<b>Scientific Institutions.</b>	

Stakeholders	Roles and responsibilities relevant to steppe ecosystem conservation and management.
Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) Institutes and Regional Branches.	Severtsov' Institute of Ecology and Evolution and Institute of Geography in Moscow, Zoological and Botanical Institutes in St. Petersburg, Institute of Ecology of Volga R. Basin in Togliatti, Institute of Ecology of Mountain Areas, Precaspian Institute of Biological Resources in Makhachkala, Institute of Water and Ecological Problems in Barnaul, Institute of Animal Ecology and Systematics and Central Siberian Botanical Garden in Novosibirsk, Baikal Joint Institute of Nature Management in Ulan-Ude, Institute of Geography in Irkutsk, Tuvianian Institute of Complex Development of Natural Resources in Kyzyl.
The Steppe Institute (also under the RAS)	Russia's only academic institute dedicated to steppe studies, The Steppe Institute is affiliated with the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) and has been a leader in steppe ecosystem studies for many years. With experts in a range of ecological and environmental disciplines, the Institute provides expert support to regional and federal conservation efforts and resource management.
Universities	Moscow State University, St. Petersburg, Saratov, Voronezh, Tomsk, Irkutsk State Universities, Southern Federal University in Rostov on Don, Bashkirian State University in Ufa, Altai State University in Barnaul.
Zabaikalsky State Humanitarian Pedagogical University; Chita Institute of Natural Resources (CINR of SB RAS); Chita State Technical University; Institute of Natural Resources, Ecology and Cryology of SB RAS;	Informational support, provision of baseline and monitoring. Other Zabaikalsky krai academic institutions: Zabaikalsky Agricultural Academy; A. N. Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution (SEVIN) of RAS; Komarov Botanical Institute of RAS.
Kalmykian State University and Natural Mathematics Institute	Informational support. Monitoring of landscape and biological diversity. Active in environmental and ecological issues in Kalmykia, the University is a potential source of new staff for SPA.
Kalmykian Institute of Integrated Arid Areas Studies	Develops integrated socio-economic and legal studies and scientific programs on the rational use of natural resources in the RoK. Studies biodiversity conservation and rational use of natural resources of the region aimed at conservation of etalon steppe and semi-steppe ecosystems. Environmental monitoring and study of arid ecosystem health.
Kalmykian Scientific Research Institute of Agriculture (of RAS); Institute of Integrated Arid Areas Studies	Improvement of technologies of prevention of Chiornye Zempli desertification; propaganda of scientific knowledge and best practices in the aforementioned areas.
Kursk State University; Kursk State Agricultural Academy; All-Russian Scientific Research Institute of Agriculture and Soil Protection from Erosion.	Training of specialists in ecology; addressing of ecological problems of protection of water and vegetation resources of multiple use, melioration, land conservation and reclamation.
Institute of Steppes of UB RAS	Development of ecological-economic justification and background materials for SPA (traditional and new forms), their monitoring, scientific support for PA management. Development of mechanisms for establishing SPA under conditions of modern land use.
Kursk State Oblast History Museum; Chita Oblast History Museum	Scientific research, education, methodological support for environmental protection, study of oblast biodiversity. Education, strengthening of its role in the development of SPA, development of all forms of tourism for Kursk grasslands. Chita: Activities on information dissemination.
<b>Municipalities:</b>	
Municipal administrations of Chita oblast districts	Promotion in inventory of steppe areas.
Gorshechensky district Administration - Kursk oblast	Assistance in interaction with land users under the establishment of new regional SPA.

Stakeholders	Roles and responsibilities relevant to steppe ecosystem conservation and management.
Orenburg Oblast; SolIletsy, Beliaevsky, Akbulaksky, and Kuvandyksky district Administrations.	Promotion in formal registration of steppe SPA, wide participation of heads of local and district municipal entities in marketing of eco-friendly production of adaptive cattle-breeding. Development of adaptive steppe cattle-breeding, including horse-breeding.
<b>NGOs.</b>	
WWF Russia	WWF-Russia has been active in promoting the expansion of Russia's protected area system for many years. Recently, at the request of the MNRE, WWF has developed a report entitled, "National PA Development Plan up to 2020." More than 120 of the suggested locations for new national PA contain steppe ecosystems. Gathers, analyses and publishes information on SPA; maintains long-term cooperation with particular SPA (Daursky Zapovednik).
Wetlands International, Russia office	Maintains a database on the important wetlands that are within either existing or planned SPA.
Biodiversity Conservation Centre (NGO)	Maintains a web-based resource on federal strictly protected nature areas in Russia.
Siberian Environmental Center (Sibecocenter, NGO)	Publishes one Russian-language periodical specially devoted to steppe conservation, restoration, and sustainable use. Elaborated Steppe conservation strategy for Russian NGOs (partnering with BCC). Maintains a database on steppe related institutions and experts. Monitors changes in national legislation for impacts on steppe areas. Collects data on the most valuable steppe tracts (nationally) and field monitors some in Altai region. Species program on some globally vulnerable steppe species like Pallas cat and Saker. Based in Novosibirsk.
Foundation for the Revival of Orenburg Steppes	Regional NGO based in Orenburg. Responsible for managing Tarpon Park on a 49-year lease from the Federal Agency for State Property.
<b>International Stakeholders:</b>	
<b>KAZAKHSTAN</b>	
- Forestry & Hunting Committee, MoA (Akmola, Aktyubinsk, Kostanai, Pavlodar, Karaganda, and East Kazakhstan)	Makes recommendations, develops legislation, approves studies, manages PA, and cooperates internationally. It is currently executing a UNDP/GEF funded project on steppe conservation and management.
Association for Biodiversity Conservation (ACBK)	The largest conservation NGO in Kazakhstan and runs several conservation programmes and projects focused on steppe ecosystems.
<b>MONGOLIA</b>	
- Ministry of Nature and Environment (Department of Protected Area Management)	Responsible for all of Mongolia's protected areas, the MNE is also responsible for wildlife management outside of protected areas.
Mongol Daguur strictly protected area, Dornod Aimag (Mongolian part of DIPA)	The strictly protected area in the Mongolian part of the Daurian steppe. Is located opposite the Russian Daursky Zapovednik.

## I.7. Business-as-usual "Baseline" scenario

### Consolidated and expanded coverage of steppe ecosystems

91. Baseline: The total area of Russia's steppe regions is estimated at an enormous 500,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Only 0.11 % of this is protected formally within protected areas. Less than 0.2% of the national network of PA can be counted as "steppe protected areas. However, change characterizes the social, economic, and climatic contexts in which Russia's steppe areas exist, presenting new opportunities and new challenges for the SPA system and its managers. Economic change will continue to increase pressure on agricultural/steppe landscapes across the country, generating new threats to steppe biodiversity but also presenting new opportunities for partnerships and landscape-scale conservation of steppe ecosystems anchored by different types of specially managed steppe areas. The timing is right for incremental

investments that will enable the SPA network to understand the gaps, anticipate the trends, and measure and methodically improve effectiveness in order to develop a SPA system for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Component 1: The Government of Russia has committed to expanding the national PA network up to four new federal steppe protected areas totaling 83,500 hectares by 2010. However in a baseline situation, the MNRE will be unable to develop and apply a long-term strategy for expanding and improving the effectiveness of the SPA network. To date, no gap analysis has been done at a national, system-wide level of the “coverage” provided by the 15 existing SPA in terms of species, plant and animal communities, habitats, ecosystems, and eco-regions. No strategic plan for expansion has been developed and proposed for multi-sector support. In the baseline situation, the SPA system will continue to suffer from gaps in its coverage of the range of habitats and ecosystems and gaps in its management capacity.

Developing a stronger sub-system of SPA that protects a representative cross-section of steppe ecosystems will be difficult without concerted effort to generate the information, institutional and human capacity needed to support such a process. In the baseline situation, the MNRE’s Department for Specially Protected Areas will face capacity constraints in achieving this Government commitment and will require assistance from other non-profit NGO and academic stakeholders to continue down this path to finalize new SPA consultations and planning documentation.

In the baseline situation, many SPA (Zakazniks, Nature Monuments & some Nature Parks) were created on paper, but the boundaries were never demarcated and/or they were gazetted but were not indexed into the State Land Cadastre and State Register of Property Rights and Transactions. Most of these SPA have no management and are designed to work only as set of restrictions on land use and handling. For this reason, it is crucially important to make their boundaries as legal as possible and make it apprehensible for both landholder and owner, and land authorities. In the baseline situation, such SPA cannot work because their boundaries are not quite legal and still not clearly understood by land user, landowner, and state authorities. This must be improved in order for these SPA to work as intended.

On other hand, there is strict governmental control over the handling and use of agricultural lands, including pasturelands. The “weak forms” of SPA exist on the pasturelands as a rule. The enforcement of SPA restrictions is the responsibility of environmental protection or wildlife management bodies. These bodies are much less developed at the local level in comparison to agriculture and land authorities. In the baseline, agricultural and land authorities play no role in SPA management and enforcement. But once SPA are properly integrated into Land Cadastre and State Register of Property Rights, these bodies will be obliged to enforce SPA restrictions – a significantly beneficial partnership for maintaining SPA functions.

92. As in many countries, in Russia the system-wide perspective of the protected area system historically has been biased towards forest and mountain systems in terms of prioritization, equipment and methodologies and staff capacity. In the baseline situation, this will likely continue. Traditionally in Russia as in nearly every other country, steppe lands have been recognized for their agricultural values only. Only recently have steppe areas been the subject of increased attention in Russia, with stakeholders taking up the issue in Russia and with the World Commission on Protected Areas (WPCA) Grasslands Protected Area Task Force recent meeting in Huhot, China.

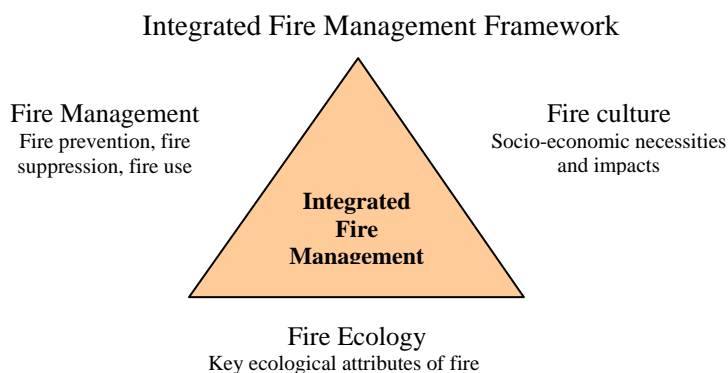
93. But to date, no effort has been made to identify the main trends affecting SPA effectiveness and develop a strategic approach in response. As a result, minimal capacity exists within the SPA system to respond to the main threats facing steppe biodiversity in Russia. In the baseline situation few if any new and innovative policy tools will be developed at the intersection of biodiversity and agriculture, enabling the ecological and biological importance of the much larger portion of steppe lands outside of protected areas to be recognized and conserved under existing agricultural land categories and designations. In the

baseline situation, Russia’s emerging SPA network will continue to struggle to expand its ecological coverage to include ecosystems and habitats that are under-represented in the current system.

94. Component II. Improving Operational Management Capacities. Protected area management in Russia is still evolving and improving. While the conservation laws are quite well developed both with respect to PA and forest areas, in the baseline situation, steppe communities, or any non-forest communities, are still not identified as a specific subject for legal protection. This results in an absence of legislation that allows for adequate management of steppe ecosystems within protected areas. To date, no effort has been made to identify the main trends affecting SPA effectiveness and to develop a strategic approach in response to improve operational management capacity within the unique ecology and policy context of steppe areas. In the baseline situation, the existing SPA system will continue to have minimal capacity to respond to the main threats facing steppe biodiversity in Russia.

95. Under the baseline situation, operational management capacities for SPA will remain under-developed and inadequate to the task of managing steppe ecosystems. In the baseline situation, capacity building for SPA staff is done on an ad-hoc basis and is not linked to the needs of an overall strategic management plan. The shortcomings in the management planning process discussed above affect the capacity building program as well. The isolated nature of most reserves’ planning processes limits the ability of each PA to seek out and pursue innovative capacity building opportunities, through partnerships with other SPA inside and outside of Russia and through partnerships with other government agencies and the private sector.

96. *Integrated Fire Management (IFM) or Grazing Management.* For example, under the baseline scenario, Russia’s SPA will continue to be ill equipped to deal proactively with IFM and grazing management. Although there is increasing recognition of the importance of grazing to steppe ecosystems in Russia, grazing is still forbidden in many SPA and in the baseline situation most the steppe ecology within most SPA will continue to suffer from inadequate grazing. With respect to fire management, not one SPA has an IFM plan or program. Some SPA recently have begun to conduct education & outreach to increase awareness of fire problems. But these efforts are hampered because IFM materials are not available in the Russian language. Similarly, Reserve staff people have no training in monitoring to detect signs of under-grazing or over-grazing or too much fire or too little fire.



97. Grassland restoration must be an important element of a long-term strategic approach to expand the number of hectares under conservation management in Russia’s steppe zone. Under a baseline situation, grassland restoration will receive inadequate attention and resources. These efforts will be characterized by a small group of deeply committed individuals making a small bit of money stretch a long way. But as impressive as these efforts are, they will be hampered by their ad-hoc nature as well as inadequate resources (financial, experiential, and methodological) and inadequate support from global best practice. In the baseline situation, grassland restoration will fall far short of the needs across Russia’s vast agro-steppe landscape. Other management challenges will also go unaddressed in steppe regions, including



proactive management of priority steppe species and communities such as saiga and Mongolian gazelle, Russia's increasingly rare meadow steppe plant communities, and a range of rare and endangered birdlife.

98. Staff capacities. Most SPA fund modest field monitoring and research focused on: weather/climatological conditions; wildlife populations and harvesting numbers; wildlife and botanical surveys. Most reserves have funding and positions committed to monitoring work, but monitoring tends to be done in an ad-hoc way by SPA. Staff lack the expertise to conduct more modern monitoring work. There is a fair amount of historical data on the flora and fauna of many SPA – a result of the prolific work done during the Soviet period. At the same time, many different institutions currently conduct research in and around Russia's SPA. Among these institutions are dozens of research institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences and their regional branches that have ongoing research programs covering: wildlife and ecology, agriculture, climatological parameters, and other relevant subjects. Many of these research projects involve significant international collaboration.

99. Data and information generated by such research in various SPA is summarized every year by each respective SPA in an annual "state of the environment" report compiled and submitted to MNRE in Moscow. But in the "business as usual" future scenario, the SPA will be able to utilize very little of this data to generate new insights into trends affecting biodiversity in the Reserve and to generate new management priorities. To date, little of this information has been incorporated into reserve management planning and practice or a national-level SPA knowledge management system. Reserve science staff are trained to collect data, compile it into tables, and submit it in a report. They are not trained to analyze data, to assess trends, and to use these analyses and assessments to inform the development of reserve management priorities.

100. Reserve staff need help in learning how to do two important things. First, staff must strengthen their capacity to apply the research and monitoring data to ongoing reserve management work and planning. Of course this does happen, but it is not normal procedure. For example, in Dauria, Mongolian gazelle are increasingly coming to the Russian portion of the Daurian steppe. These movements must be tracked and recorded in order to understand the trends that this may entail and the subsequent challenges for the protected area to adapt to this expanded use of the Russian Daurian by Mongolian gazelle. Secondly, staffs lack the broader perspective or the skills to consolidate and present data to scientific colleagues and the general public. SPA staff must strengthen their capacity to get their information into the public realm, and need training in how to prepare articles and scientific presentations.

101. In future years, SPA will also be grappling with how to work effectively with the resources at hand in implementing effective monitoring and conservation programs in the short term, while forming partnerships and orchestrating collaborative work that allow it to build its own capacity, strengthen its partnership with the local community, and bring more resources to bear on its SPA management challenges over time. There are promising developments upon which to build. For example, Kalmykia State University and the Imperial College of London are working together to design and implement a sustainable monitoring program for saiga antelope.

102. Component 3: Institutional capacities for managing expanded SPA system. *Cooperative governance & co-management.* Strictly protected nature reserves or *zapovedniks* were created in Russia for conservation, science and field training. The public was forbidden from entering *zapovedniks*, which were managed with an inward looking, fortress-like mentality. These old habits are changing among Russia's SPA, but their legacy remains. For example, this kind of perspective hampers the ability of reserves to look beyond their borders in order to anticipate change and emerging threats. It means they have little experience in building strategic partnerships with relevant stakeholders from "outside" the reserve in the agricultural sectors. It means that SPA are still learning how to coordinate effectively with the local communities on controlling fire and grazing as well as in land-use planning in an agricultural landscape. Not one SPA has yet developed effective collaboration with the MoA and other government

agencies working in and around the SPA. This is crucial to helping SPA deal effectively with the threats to the steppe environment beyond their ability to control alone. In the baseline situation, this low level of collaboration will likely continue. But many SPA have contacts with neighboring landowners and land users. For example, Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina and Altaiskiy Zapovedniks have Community Advisory Councils comprised of local people.

103. In the baseline situation, individual SPA will be left to their own devices in terms of negotiating and forming partnerships with other agencies and stakeholders to improve the management effectiveness of steppe biodiversity. Inadequate partnering between and among existing federal SPA and federal and regional SPA will hamper conservation effectiveness. No official policies or guidelines and related tools will be developed to catalyze the SPA system's ability to form effective partnerships for conservation across Russia. This will have the effect of slowing down the rate of innovation across the system of SPA and hampering the ability of fellow PA in the system to replicate this innovation and add new innovations of their own.

104. For example, in Kalmykia, three federal level zakazniks were re-assigned to the MNRE from the MoA. The question of how these zakazniks will be managed has yet to be resolved and in a baseline situation, the necessary work to do this will likely remain undone. It is proposed that the functions on the protection and control will be re-assigned to the neighboring Chiornye Zemli zapovednik. However, financing and staffing issues are not yet settled at this time.

105. The baseline situation does offer some promising trends upon which a future project can build. For example, there is an agreement between the MNRE of Kalmykia and the Chiornye Zemli reserve on the joint protection of saiga antelope. Periodic joint protection, monitoring and wildlife census measures are implemented under the agreement, mainly beyond the reserve borders. However, in the baseline situation, little opportunity will be provided for Kalmykian stakeholders to share these experiences with colleagues in Dauria or other steppe regions facing landscape-scale conservation challenges for large ungulates.

*Management plans for SPA.* In the baseline situation, improving management and field conservation capacity will be a struggle for most SPA in Russia. None of the SPA have a long-term strategic management plan developed in consultation with local stakeholders. Rather, each reserve annually prepares three types of plans for the annual budgeting process: (i) a research plan; (ii) a conservation and law enforcement plan; and (iii) an ecological education plan. This is an internal MNRE process, done largely in isolation from other community and government agency stakeholders. Each SPA prepares an annual "wish-list" budget for submission to the MNRE office in Moscow and each year the reserve receives approximately 1/5 of this amount for its annual appropriation. The reserve's workplan is then based upon the amount of the funds budgeted by the Ministry for that SPA each year. This means that all activities in the Reserve must be scaled down proportionally to the size of that particular year's budget appropriation.

106. This approach hampers capacity building for each reserve in three ways. First, it forces the reserve into a "survival" mentality and makes it difficult to be strategic and think about long-term planning. Second, this survival mentality hampers the Reserve's ability to think in terms of practical, step-by-step approaches to advance its management agenda, from a basic level, to a medium level, to a higher level of complexity and intensity over time. And third, it provides little opportunity for the Reserve to cultivate serendipity: to benefit from unexpected linkages made during a consultative planning process and the opportunities that could be generated from this.

107. *Collaborative agreements for joint steppe ecosystem management planning and operations across boundaries.* But in a baseline situation, two such opportunities, DIPA and the Russian-Kazakh steppe border in the Orenburg region, will remain under-developed. The Dauria International Protected Area

(DIPA) of China, Mongolia, and Russia was established in March 1994 in order to build cooperation and join the conservation efforts among the management of three adjacent nature reserves. Each country established a nature reserve during the 1980s, and by the early 1990s each site had been listed on the IUCN and Ramsar lists. Today, DIPA agreements allow for joint scientific research on several charismatic species, including Mongolian gazelle (*Procapra gutturosa*), Swan Goose (*Anser cygnoides*), White-naped Crane (*Grus vipio*), and Red-crowned Crane (*Grus japonensis*), as well as many other animal and plant species.

108. DIPA was founded according to the Agreement between the MNRE (Russian Federation), Ministry of Nature and Environment (Mongolia) and Agency on Environmental Protection (People's Republic of China) on the creation of a joint protected area. A Joint Commission comprised of the three PA is supposed to meet as frequently as possible with smaller working group meetings being held in between. The meetings are now held biannually, the most recent one being in 2006. At the 2006 meeting, the Joint Commission adopted a Program of Collaboration for 2006-2010 and agreed upon the basic elements of their cooperation. This included scientific activity (like creating an inventory of all of the flora/fauna on the territory of DIPA and site monitoring according to joint methods), collaboration on new ideas for research, environmental education, and protection of the area itself from poaching and other illegal activities. These activities are realized only partially because of difficulties in crossing the border and communication barriers (language and communication facilities).

109. With respect to the Russian-Kazakhstan border, there are no steppe protected areas in Kazakhstan on the border and there are no collaborative agreements with Kazakhstan similar to DIPA. The two countries do have a very active bilateral relationship, however, but under the baseline scenario, joint steppe conservation work will remain in its nascent, undeveloped stage. Russia's recent signing of the Bonn Convention MoU on Saiga opens up the potential for co-management between Russia and Kazakhstan of shared wildlife and steppe plant and animal community resources, but in the baseline situation, this opportunity for developing a collaborative agreement will be slow in developing.

110. *Knowledge management system.* In a business as usual scenario, the MNRE will continue to have difficulty coping with both the everyday burdens of managing the system of SPA and improving the effectiveness of the system in a strategic manner. Discussions on steppe zoning and SPA planning have never been held in Russia. Other sub-sets of Russia's national PA system have done this: for example, the marine protected area managers and stakeholders have met sporadically to learn from each others' experiences. But for now, the only way for SPA managers to exchange experience and share knowledge across the network of SPA in Russia is through their personal contacts with colleagues. Improving peer-to-peer learning among SPA has not received focused attention. No interactive website exists to enable SPA staff nationwide to interact and share lessons learned. In the baseline situation, a language barrier will prevent most SPA staff across Russia from being able to contribute to and benefit from global resources on steppe/prairie/grassland management, such as the online professional newsletter "Grassland Restoration Network" which is only available in English.

111. MNRE policy calls for every staff member to participate in an off-site training program each year, but in the baseline scenario, SPA are not able to afford this. There is no specialized national system for training of SPA staff and no regular training planned. Rather, training is conducted on an ad-hoc and opportunistic basis. Reserve staffs are invited occasionally to participate in various conferences and workshops. At the local level some SPA periodically sends staff to computer school or inspector training school, depending upon budget resources. In the absence of GEF investment, the baseline scenario will see a continued lack of proactive knowledge management, replication of best-practices across the SPA network, and minimal needs-based training on a system-wide level for Russia's SPA.

112. System-level SPA management effectiveness measuring and monitoring. In the baseline situation, there is no real measurement of system-level effectiveness and performance of SPA. Long-term strategic

planning and capacity building will continue to be a lower priority due to inadequate funding and experiential gaps in how to assess institutional effectiveness. There are some mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and reporting and learning, but they are limited and weak. In the baseline situation, effectiveness will not be measured in a way that supports and encourages adaptive management. Indeed most SPA managers consider their year a success if they are simply able to obtain sufficient budgetary resources to pay staff. This is deemed “effective” and for good reasons. Under a baseline situation, the SPA network will continue to have difficulty understanding that defining and measuring effectiveness is inextricably tied to the ability of the network to obtain sufficient resources to be effective. In the absence of GEF catalytic investment, effectiveness and funding will remain decoupled.

## **PART II: Strategy**

### **II.1. Project Rationale and Policy Conformity**

113. Strategic Objective and Programme Conformity: This project is consistent with the focus of GEF’s Strategic Objective 1: Catalyzing the Sustainability of PA systems (SO-1) and the Strategic Program #3 (SP-3): Strengthening Terrestrial Protected Area Networks. The PA system of Russia is not uniformly distributed across the ecological landscape and there are substantial ecosystem coverage gaps that need to be addressed to ensure the adequate representation in the system of the main types of ecosystems. This project will contribute to the sustainability and maturation of Russia’s PA by supporting the expansion and improving the management effectiveness of its steppe protected area network. The project is designed to further the achievement of the impacts and outcomes identified by GEF at the programmatic level, especially the two primary expected outcomes of SO-1/SP-3: i) Increased coverage of terrestrial ecosystems globally and in national PA systems; and ii) Improved management of terrestrial PA.

114. CBD Conformity. This project is designed to support the primary objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable-use of its components, and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of these components. The project follows the guidance and decisions provided to the financial mechanisms by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD. The project meets CBD objectives by fulfilling the requirements contained in the Convention’s Articles 6 (General Measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use), 7 (Identification and Monitoring), 8 (In-situ Conservation), 10 (Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity), 11 (Incentive Measures), 12 (Research and Training), 13 (Education and Awareness), and 17 (Exchange of Information). Decision VII/28 of the CoP includes a Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoW/PA). The PoW/PA calls upon Parties to develop and adopt appropriate methods, standards, criteria, and indicators for evaluating management effectiveness and governance by 2008, and to assess at least 30% of their protected areas by 2010. The overall purpose of the PoW/PA is to support the establishment and maintenance of comprehensive, effectively managed, and ecologically representative national and regional systems of protected areas. This project conforms to and supports this POWPA by enabling Russia’s 15 SPA to evaluate management effectiveness and governance by 2010.

#### **Project Strategy:**

115. The project is designed to complement governmental efforts to expand the SPA system and strengthen its management effectiveness. To do this, a key part of the project’s design is to demonstrate improved practices related to overcoming significant barriers and mitigating the main threats in four pilot regions for expansion of protected steppe lands: Kursk/Belograd, Kalmykia, Orenburg and Zabaikalsky Krai. These four areas represent the diversity of steppe lands across Russia’s vast West-East expanse of steppe ecosystems. They were chosen based upon a variety of criteria summarized in Table 11 below and in the four points below:

- (i) Opportunity to demonstrate key threat/barrier removal activity. Overall, the selection of priority sites was based first and foremost on the question: “Does this site add value as a potential host for demonstration of barrier removal activities for the entire SPA network?” The vetting process focused on the network benefits that each pilot site could bring, in addition to the following criteria:
- (ii) Global significance & biodiversity values, zonal position and geographic region. Does each site bring to the table different biological diversity and elements of global significance?
- (iii) Significance of SPA within overall network and potential to influence other SPA in the network. What unique attributes does each site hold within the SPA network itself that will add to that site’s demonstration value? The newest, the oldest, and the largest SPA all offer useful contexts in which to develop lessons for the whole network.
- (iv) Potential for support from government, private sector and international partners. Obtaining co-funding support from non-traditional sources will also be key to SPA’s future effectiveness and so pilot sites were chosen in part based upon the level of promise or success to date in sourcing this kind of funding or support. Many of Russia’s SPA are located in Russia’s border regions, indicating that long-term conservation effectiveness will be enhanced through effective cooperation across borders.

**Table 11: Pilot Site Fit with Selection Criteria**

Pilot Site	Demo value; Barrier removal; threat mitigation.	Biodiversity values	Significance of SPA within overall network
<b>Kalmykia</b> Pilot zapovednik: Chernye Zemli Zapovednik (CZZ) 121,482 ha core; 91,170	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Piloting sustainable grazing practices &amp; collaborative management of rare, large ungulate (saiga).</li> <li>- Monitoring partnership with local groups, regional academic institutes;</li> <li>- Piloting bird-safe power line platforms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The best representation of dry and desert steppe of Pontic steppe region.</li> <li>- Home to Russia’s only population of Saiga antelope (<i>Saiga tatarica</i>).</li> <li>- Biosphere Reserve</li> <li>- Ramsar site.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Largest steppe zapovednik within SPA network offers useful context to demonstrate value of SPA;</li> <li>- UNESCO Biosphere Reserve;</li> <li>- Southern-most SPA in Russia;</li> </ul>
<b>Kursk</b> Pilot zapovednik: Centralno Chernozemnyy Zapovednik (CCZ) 5,287 ha core; 28,662 buffer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integrated Fire Management;</li> <li>- Monitoring partnership;</li> <li>- Piloting small-scale steppe PA conservation practices.</li> <li>- Agricultural landscape is primary context for expanding network.</li> <li>- Steppe restoration pilot area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meadow steppe (least dry) of Pontic steppe sector (similar to tall grass prairie in North America)</li> </ul> <p>Last virgin meadow steppe with black earth soils “chernozem” in Russia, existing only in PA.</p> <p>Unique moderate latitude species diversity with more than 80 species of vascular plants per 1 km<sup>2</sup>, including endemic and relic species of global significance (IUCN Red Book, Bern Convention): <i>Androsace kozopoljanskii</i>, <i>Cotoneaster alaunicus</i>, <i>Schivereckia podolica</i>, <i>Hyssopus cretaceous</i>, <i>Scrophularia cretacea</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Oldest and most well-known SPA in Russia, created in 1935.</li> <li>- UNESCO Biosphere Reserve;</li> <li>- One of the smallest SPA, it is truly an island in a sea of agricultural land, posing interesting challenges to long-term management effectiveness.</li> </ul>

Pilot Site	Demo value; Barrier removal; threat mitigation.	Biodiversity values	Significance of SPA within overall network
Orenburg. Pilot zapovednik: Orenburgskiy Zapovednik (OZ) (21,653 ha core; 12,208 ha buffer) ha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Potential for future transboundary steppe conservation initiatives with Kazakhstan.</li> <li>- Piloting incentives for steppe restoration and conservation of steppes on abandoned farmland and non-traditional SMSA for conservation and sustainable use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Genuine and dry steppe of Trans Volga-Kazakh steppe sector.</li> <li>- Forbs and bunchgrass steppes of Kazakh steppe region.</li> <li>- IBA harbors rare species of: Imperial eagle (<i>Aquila heliaca</i>) &amp; Steppe eagle (<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>), Great bustard western subspecies (<i>Otis tarda tarda</i>).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One of the oldest SPA zapovedniks in Russia in one of the least protected steppe zones of Russia.</li> </ul>
Zabaikalsky Krai Daurian Steppe; Dauriski Zapovednik (DZ) (45,790 ha core; 163,530 ha buffer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstration of cooperation with the authorities (Border Service, MNRE, MOA) in the field of steppe biological resources conservation.</li> <li>- Incorporating climate change adaptation strategies into long-term PA management practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Daurian steppe: Global 200 Ecoregion #95.</li> <li>- Far Eastern Steppe region; <i>Stipa</i> dominated mountain forbe bunchgrass and floodplain meadow steppe.</li> <li>- Only home of globally significant Mongolian gazelle in Russia (dzeren – <i>Procapra gutturosa</i>);</li> <li>- Torey Lakes IBA: Eastern Great Bustard (<i>Otis tarda dubowskii</i>)(66% of global population), Swan Goose (<i>Anser cygnoides</i>)(75%), White-naped Crane (<i>Grus vipio</i>)(29%), Red-crowned Crane (<i>Grus japonenss</i>) (13%); Demoiselle Crane (<i>Anthropoides virgo</i>) (37%), Relict Gull (<i>Larus relictus</i>)(20%), Hooded Crane (<i>Grus monacha</i>)(13%), Asiatic Dowitcher (<i>Limnodromus semipalmatus</i>)(2%).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Only steppe PA in Russia that is engaged in transboundary conservation work (Mongolia and China). This holds significant lessons for SPA in other border regions.</li> <li>- UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.</li> <li>- Different steppes of Eastern steppe sector: mountainous <i>Filifolium sibiricum</i> steppe, mountain forbs-bunchgrass, Leymus dominated bunchgrass in valleys, <i>Stipa</i> bunchgrass steppes, floodplain meadow grass-lands/shrubs, salt lakes.</li> </ul>

## II.2. Project Objective, Outcomes and Outputs/activities

116. The objective of the project is to develop the capacity and ecologically based enabling tools and mechanisms for the consolidation, expansion and disturbance based integrated management of a system of protected natural areas at the landscape level within the steppe biome.

### COMPONENT 1: CONSOLIDATION AND EXPANSION OF SYSTEM OF STEPPE PROTECTED AREAS (SPA) AND SPECIALLY MANAGED STEPPE AREAS (SMSA) IN THE STEPPE BIOME.

(Total cost: US\$6,660,000; GEF request: \$1,560,000; Co-financing: \$5,100,000)

Component 1 will support activities that enable a systematic approach to the consolidation and expansion of a representative system of PA in the steppe biome of Russia. The PA establishment processes will be targeted in four ecologically important areas of the steppe biome – the Central Russian grasslands, the Orenburg, Daurian and Kalmykkian steppes.

**Output 1.1.** Steppe Landscape Conservation Plan (SLCP) for Consolidating and Expanding the SPA network.

This output will support MNRE's work to expand Russia's PA network by applying a landscape based approach to establishing expansion and consolidation priorities for Russia's emerging system of steppe protected areas (SPA). It will do this at the national level with one national SLCP and at the regional level in the project's four pilot steppe regions with one SLCP for each of the project's four pilot regions. The conservation planning process will begin with a national "gap analysis." An inventory of the country's remaining steppe lands will be taken and compared to existing PA coverage in order to assess biogeographic and ecological (habitat types) coverage of steppe areas by the existing PA network from the viewpoint of its sufficiency for conservation of the steppe biome. The national SLCP for the SPA network shall also generate priority national-level SPA recommendations to be added to existing proposals on the development of Russia's national PA estate.

A more detailed regional level SLCP for consolidating and expanding the SPA network will be developed in each of the four pilot regions. In addition to assessing existing PA network in each region, the gap analysis will consider the whole steppe landscape, including agricultural lands and relevant special management areas (*e.g.* Ramsar sites, local and regional protected areas, no-hunting areas for wildlife management, "abandoned" fallow lands, and military lands). Most importantly, these regional level SLCP will focus on producing a landscape-scale steppe conservation and sustainable use vision in which existing SPA are consolidated and strengthened in order to anchor a landscape-scale mosaic of different types of protected areas and specially managed steppe areas in each region.

An important output of this gap analysis and inventory work will be Russia's first Steppe Atlas "The Last Steppes of Russia." The atlas will be an important communications tool to reach out to decision makers at the national legislative assembly and regional-level legislative assembly levels as well as other stakeholders about the need for increased steppe landscape conservation and how this can be achieved.

**Output 1.2** Steppe Protected Area Expansion Strategy and Implementation Plan

The Steppe PA expansion strategy and implementation plan will describe the approaches, tools and processes to be applied in the expansion and consolidation of PA in Russia's steppe biome as well potential corridors and modalities for landscape level planning and conservation. This planning process will emphasize proactive conservation action in response to the evolving threat context facing SPA (*i.e.* plowing pressure, too little/too much grazing and fire, mining and hydrocarbons drilling extraction, the impacts of climate change and the need to maximize resilience). Work under this output will enable stakeholders to develop a practical implementation plan with priority actions for SPA expansion and consolidation at the federal and regional levels. It will also detail actions that all SPA should take to ensure that SPA effectiveness is improved and relevance maintained. The plan will also prioritize SPA according to their needs with respect to different levels of required management interventions (*i.e.* for immediate mitigation or long-term prevention).

Instruments, approaches, and tools for establishing/expanding SPA network.

Some new and innovative tools will need to be applied in Russia if a landscape scale approach is to guide future steppe conservation action. This is because Russia's steppe areas are largely within agricultural landscapes as defined under Russian law. As a result, in addition to what we know of as traditional protected areas, new steppe conservation tools and approaches will need to be applied by stakeholders. These are described briefly below.

*A. Legal & policy instruments in place to prevent plowing of fallow and wild steppe lands or afforestation of steppe lands.*

Influencing conservation policy and practice in Russia is a long-term proposition. Through this output the project focuses first at the local and regional levels and to help those experiences inform eventual change at the national level. Work under this outcome will be piloted at the regional level, where stakeholders will work to make regional law and policy more steppe biodiversity friendly. In Orenburg Oblast, respective authorities within the Orenburg Legislative Assembly, the Steppe Institute and regional Ministry of Agriculture will prepare, discuss, and adopt a package of amendments to existing regulations in order to better support steppe conservation and sustainable use in Orenburg Oblast. In doing so, stakeholders will modify existing regional programs for adaptive livestock farming and conservation of low-yield arable lands to allow them to support steppe conservation, restoration, and sustainable use. The project will provide the expert input, global best practice experience, and modest logistical support for these consultations.

Local stakeholders require additional information to shed new light on issues related to agricultural policies, steppe-land health, and long-term sustainability of agricultural ecosystems. In Dauria, the local branch of the Academy of Sciences will conduct a crop production profitability analysis of the last 50 years, the impact of climate change, and its results brought to attention of authorities, agricultural producers and general public. A study of post-plowing the local steppe's ability to recover passively from cultivation will be conducted to shed light on the importance of certain policy tools to exempt large scale steppe sites from plowing mandates currently in the law. And finally, in Dauria, stakeholders will seek the passage by the Oblast Legislative Assembly of a regulatory act creating a "High Natural Value Farmland" designation. In Kalmykia, regulatory barriers to plowing virgin steppe lands will be strengthened.

Legal and/or administrative mechanisms will be piloted on a regional level to prevent conflicts between steppe conservation objectives and afforestation, including establishing "Kyoto forests" or forests planted to generate carbon credits. As part of this effort, an analytical memorandum will be prepared and submitted to the UNFCCC Secretariat highlighting the contradiction between existing requirements to establishment of "Kyoto forests" and CBD objectives regarding steppes.

At the national level, an analysis of federal legislation will be prepared and submitted to MNRE, identifying legal barriers on the way to regulation of steppe ecosystems in PA. Based upon this analysis, specific amendments to the Land Code will be prepared, aimed at the removal of barriers blocking the use of agriculturally designated land for steppe conservation.

As part of this work, a key group of influential professional civil servants will participate in a targeted study tour to assess other countries' experiences with applying agro-environmental law and policy tools to achieve grassland conservation and sustainable agriculture (reduced erosion, enhanced grassland restoration).

*B. Grazing/Pasture Lands SMSA:* Private and Municipal SMSA piloted through adaptive grazing and other sustainable pasturing and haying techniques.

The project will establish a legal approach for steppe grasslands conservation based on agreements with landowners and land users that will result in the creation of SMSA. The approach will be piloted in one region (Orenburg) and includes elaborating a legal framework on the Orenburg Oblast level, and its implementation. Regional legislative authorities and government, municipalities, landowners and land users, and local experts should act in concert to secure biodiversity on pastureland.

In addition, the project will work with regional authorities, PA staff, academicians, and other stakeholders in priority sites to upgrade existing pastureland and grazing management programs to include the state of the art practice for adaptive grazing and sustainable livestock management in the three of the four



different steppe ecosystems represented by the projects pilot regions. This will include the project delivering methodological aid for sustainable grazing and organizational support to the establishment of at least 1 livestock farm to be based on non-exhaustive use of steppe pasturelands in the area of former bankrupt farm “Jarlinski” (100,000 ha) in Orenburg and three collective farms in Kalmykia, and sustainable haying practices in Kursk.

*C. Former Military Lands SMSA: Alternative use models introduced for former military lands.*

In Orenburg, the non-governmental SMSA Orenburgskaya Tarpania (16,000 ha) will be operationalized in the Orlovskaya steppe site. This will involve delimiting the borders of the SMSA and elaborating a co-management arrangement with the Oblast administration, the Steppe Institute and other stakeholders. A business-plan will be prepared and infrastructure and equipment base established in joint effort among the NGO, the Municipality and the Economic Development office of Orenburg Oblast.

*D. Scientific and economic climate change adaptation options assessment.*

The science of resilience is an emerging field in its nascent stages. This project activity seeks to build know-how for strategic SPA system planning and adaptive management to enhance steppe ecosystem resilience in the face of climate change. This assessment will be key foundational step in developing, testing and adapting SPA management and system expansion strategies aimed at ensuring resilience. Stakeholders will apply this assessment as part of the management plan strengthening process in one of the project’s pilot sites – the Daurian Zapovednik (Component 3, Output -).

### **Output 1.3 Steppe Protected Areas establishment and consolidation process completed.**

Building upon the steppe ecosystem and habitat conservation gap analysis of the SPA network under Output 1.1 work under this Output will focus on the consolidation and expansion of Russia’s SPA network.

The project will improve the PA system’s coverage of steppe ecosystems by 867,400 hectares through: a) consolidating three zakazniks under governance of Chernye Zemli Zapovednik in Kalmykia, expanding the Zapovednik managed area by 496,200 hectares, b) facilitating the expansion or establishment of five SPA covering an additional 305,200 hectares; and c) creating the enabling environment for the protection of an additional 30,000 ha of steppe ecosystems.

Consolidation: The existing PA estate in Russia comprises a range of different types of PA, from the strictest and highest level of protection (zapovednik, IUCN management category I) to the least strict and lowest level (natural monuments) with several types in between. In some cases, steppe conservation can be improved by consolidating lower level of protection areas with no management or staff into higher-level areas with management and staff resources.

In the Kalmykian Republic, the project will enable stakeholders to consolidate three zakazniks (496,200 ha) under the jurisdiction and administration of the Chernye Zemli Zapovednik (CZZ), nearly quadrupling the size of the buffer zone of the CZZ. Table 12 below has more detail. In this way CZZ will extend improved management over this nearly 500,000 ha, helping it to anchor the project’s landscape mosaic approach to steppe conservation to be piloted in Kalmykia (and in the other three pilot regions).

Expansion: Expansion of the steppe protected area estate will focus on two types of PA – “traditional” PA such zapovedniks, national parks, zakazniks and natural monuments, and new types of “specially managed steppe areas” or SMSA consisting of different types of lands under special steppe-oriented

management, including former military lands, “abandoned” cultivated land (otherwise known as fallow land), and pasture lands.

The project’s expansion work will include negotiating agreements for the formal protection of steppe land in the target areas, formalising the designation of PA in alignment with the legal requirements for PA establishment, working with other stakeholders to expand buffer zones around some priority sites, and piloting new types of SMSAs with an emphasis on sustainable grazing and other agricultural practices to enhance steppe ecosystem health. Specifically, the project will:

- (i) Expand three steppe zapovedniks (CCZ, OZ, and DZ) per details in Table 12 for a total of 55,000 ha. These SPA will anchor the project’s landscape mosaic approach to steppe conservation that will be introduced and piloted in each of the four regions. To expand zapovedniks, various types of support will be provided to zapovednik and MNRE staff in terms of expert input and financial resources to meet the significant legal documentation requirements.
- (ii) Establish two new zakazniks and two new provincial steppe nature monuments per details in Table 12 for a total of 250,200 ha.
- (iii) Support will be provided to MNRE to finalize the gazetting procedure, including: (a) preparing the ecological and economic justification, the chapters on PA design, territorial land-use planning, management regime and budgets; (b) Organizing public consultations with local stakeholders on the respective proposed SPA; and (c) Securing agreement on new PA with relevant federal ministries, agencies, and regional authorities.
- (iv) Create an enabling environment for the protection of an additional 30,000 hectares of priority steppe habitats. This will include new SPA for which the project will prepare documentation but cannot secure actual establishment of the PA within the short project time-frame.
- (v) Pilot new regulatory tools at the Oblast level for steppe conservation in the form of incentives for sustainable use of steppe lands and new partnerships with municipalities and NGOs in the sustainable management and conservation of former military lands. This will focus initially on Orenburg Oblast, where the project will pilot support for a new NGO managed SMSA on former military lands as well as methodological support for a new livestock farm on “abandoned” steppe lands. This will result in the conservation of approximately 36,000 hectares of previously unconserved land.

**Table 12:** Proposed New SPA to be established or existing SPA to be expanded.

Location	Name of PA	Area (hectares)	Action Needed/ New Area Conserved	Current Status & Next Steps
Kursk Oblast	Centralno Chernozemny Biosphere Zapovednik (CCZ)	Core: 5,287 ha  Buffer zone: 28,662 ha	Expand size of existing zapovednik’s core and buffer zone areas.  300-500 ha added to core area (federal zakaznik status); 8,000 ha added to buffer zone 28,700 ha of buffer zone legalized.	Planned, to be started in 2010 or later: 1) Field studies and preparation of documentation for expansion of CCZ. 2) Stakeholder consultations on provincial and federal level; 3) Provide supporting documents for State land-survey and delineation; a) All justifications completed. Council of Ministers issued internal document expanding zapovednik. b) Finalizing gazetting procedure by enabling the Russian Government to issue special order introducing new area to CCZ.
	UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.			

Location	Name of PA	Area (hectares)	Action Needed/ New Area Conserved	Current Status & Next Steps
	2 provincial nature monuments	Not yet created.	- Not less than 200 ha. - Establishment of 2 new Oblast-level nature monuments designed to enhance the landscape-scale benefits of CCZ (increasing opportunities for seed dispersal and pollinator movement among steppe fragments).	Planned for 2010: 1) Field studies and preparation of documentation for expansion of CCZ. 2) Stakeholder consultations on provincial and federal level; 3) Provide supporting documents for State land-survey and delineation; a) All justifications completed. b) Finalizing gazetting procedure by enabling the Kursk Oblast to issue special order for two new nature monuments.
Kalmykia Republic	Chernye Zemly Zapovednik (CZZ)	Core areas: 121,482 ha  Buffer zone 91,170 ha	Expansion of CZZ and its buffer zone through consolidation of three zakazniks under CZZ administration:  - Mekletinski (102,500), Sarpinski (195,900 ha), and Tingutinski (197,800).	Planned, to be started in 2010-11: 1) Prepare justification for transfer of two Federal Zakazniks (Metkletinski & Sarpinski) under the CAA administration (for buffer zone). 2) Demarcation of Zakaznik boundaries and buffer zone borders. 3) Prepare analysis and justification for expanding the buffer zone to cover the area of Tingutinskiy Provincial Zakaznik.
Orenburg Oblast	Orenburgski Zapovednik (OZ)	21,653 ha core; 12,208 ha buffer	Buffer zone expansion.  - 20,000 hectares.	Planned for 2010-11: a) Documents prepared for State Ecological Expert Panel Review. b) Organize public hearings. - Convene state expert panel. - Elaborate management arrangements and business plan for innovative financing. - Secure Council of Ministers endorsement.
	5 nature monuments: - Boevaya Mountain - Troitsk Chalk Mtns - Kzyladyrsk Karst - Vozdvizhenski - Karabutak Steppe	Not yet created.	Enabling documentation created for establishment of 5 new Oblast-level nature monuments.  30-36,000 ha in total.	Planned for 2011-12: - Prepare documentation describing area and justification for steppe areas to ensure clear land use rights, economic and budgetary justifications.
Zabaikalsky Krai	Daurian Steppe; Dauriski Zapovednik (DZ)	45,790 ha core; 163,530 ha buffer	Expand size of existing zapovednik's core and buffer zone areas.  14,000 – 30,000 ha added to core area.  20,000 – 50,000 ha added to buffer zone.	<u>Remaining activities core area:</u> a) Consult with the administration of zapovednik, local municipal land owners, prepare the proposal; b) Develop the proposal: - Organize public hearings; - Convene state expert panel; - Prepare documents for State land-survey; - Delineate borders, elaborate management; - Secure Council of Ministers endorsement. <u>Remaining activities buffer area:</u> 1) Finalize agreements with landowners; 2) Prepare map and develop zoning, management, prepare the documents for State Ecological Expert Panel Review, legal approval. 3) Codify land-use restrictions for buffer lands.

Location	Name of PA	Area (hectares)	Action Needed/ New Area Conserved	Current Status & Next Steps
	“Dolina dzerena” (Valley of Zeren) Federal Zakaznik	Not yet created.	New federal zakaznik to be established.  - 200,000 hectares	Started, to be finished in 2011: 1) Finalize agreements with landowners; 2) Consult with DZ, local municipal land owners, prepare the proposal; 3) Develop the proposal: - Organize public hearings; - Convene state expert panel; - Prepare documents for State land-survey; - Delineate borders, elaborate management; - Secure Council of Ministers endorsement. 4) constructing a rangers post and equipping two patrol groups. 5) purchasing fire-fighting equipment and other materials and technique.
	Regional zakaznik established in Baleiski District	Not yet created.	Creation of new wooded steppe zakaznik.  50,000 hectares	1) Finalize agreements with municipal and federal landowners; 2) Prepare map and develop management concept, work with stakeholders, prepare the documents for Regional Ecological Expert Panel Review, legal approval; 3) Codify land-use restrictions for zakaznik land.

**Output 1.4** Strengthening the institutional capacities for coordinating and implementing the SLCP.

Work under this output will produce guidelines and other tools to help key stakeholders such as MNRE’s DPPA and other partners to implement effectively the SLCP and to carry forward the consolidation and expansion of SPA into the future. For example, the work done above to consolidate and expand SPA will be captured in various “how to” short information sheets. In order to effectively coordinate and implement a steppe PA expansion and consolidation plan in Russia, the implementers (MNRE’s DSPA) will need to think somewhat differently than a traditional PA approach. Much of this project is actually designed to contribute to this output – to helping SPA managers and stakeholders strengthen their capacities and develop new tools for steppe conservation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Focused communications and consultations will be part of this strengthening effort to enable stakeholders to make informed decisions on whether and how to conserve steppe landscapes. For example, to implement the SLCP for consolidating and expanding the SPA network properly, the DSPA and Oblast-level authorities will need to apply new tools and new understanding of different sectors such as agriculture. Agricultural policy calls for re-claiming abandoned land by plowing it. Workshops for DSPA, MoA and SPA staff will be organized to focus on how to “reclaim” abandoned land by using it in other economically beneficial ways, for example as grazing land, while restoring the steppe system in the process.

New insights and knowledge generated through these discussions and workshops and study will be encapsulated into an information sheet for distribution to all SPA and partners. This will be important knowledge for DPPA and partners to have in order to work effectively in lands designated for agricultural use but where in fact no cultivation is taking place. To do this, the project will work both at the federal and regional levels in Russia to catalyze change in allowing productive economic activity that ensures sustainable landuse and steppe ecosystem function. This will require first of its kind consultations among MNRE, MoA and other stakeholders on key opportunities to amend the land code for mutually beneficial purposes.

At the regional level more practical aspects of this work will proceed in each of the project’s four pilot regions according to the specific opportunities offered by each region’s relevant law and policy

framework. This will include testing different approaches to achieving sustainable use and ecological function without changing the land-use category. There are many PA that have different land-use categories inside PA boundaries. This tool will help them to consolidate and modernize their management approaches to steppe ecosystems. One working group will be established in each pilot region comprised of key stakeholder groups to guide this kind of coordination. A priority of this work will be to share these experiences at the national level to create an enabling environment for the eventual development of national guidelines and supportive regulations under Russia's Land Code.

Also under this output, the project will provide incremental support to bolster the operational capacity of the pilot SPA as they take on new or larger responsibilities due to the consolidation and expansion process described above. This will include modest support for basic equipment PA offices, field patrolling, monitoring. This will also include support for repair and restoration of one visitor center in each pilot steppe area.

## **COMPONENT 2. OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT CAPACITIES FOR PA SITE MANAGEMENT.**

(Total cost: US\$6,450,000; GEF request: US\$1,650,000; Co-financing: US\$4,800,000)

### **Strengthen the operational management capacities for PA site management in the steppe biome**

Work under this outcome focuses on testing and putting into practice new SPA management and conservation tools for improving management effectiveness at the individual protected area level. Activities will focus on strengthening the capacity of management authorities to respond to unique management challenges in steppe habitats facing PA and their buffer zones.

Activities under this component will be directed toward: (i) Improving the operational management capacity for integrated fire management; (ii) Testing cost-effectiveness of different rehabilitation and restoration measures for grassland habitats; (iii) Ecological needs assessments and species-specific conservation strategies for key endemic grassland species (iv) Collaborative enforcement capabilities of PA institutions; (v) Demonstrating that modest tourism in steppe areas is possible. Each activity is designed to strengthen the management effectiveness of individual SPA and the SPA system in addressing current and emerging threats to steppe biodiversity in Russia.

### **Output 2.1. Integrated fire management plans developed for at least 7 expanded/consolidated SPA.**

The vision of Integrated Fire Management is to: markedly and measurably reduce fire threats in conservation areas, on communal and private lands and within watersheds by maintaining the ecologically acceptable range in variation of fire regimes, and improving trends on those lands that are burning too much, too little, or inappropriately. The goal of Integrated Fire Management is to: (i) Increase support among decision-makers at multiple levels, as evidenced by the effectiveness of local and national institutions charged with managing fire, by (ii) Integrating biological, environmental, and social needs and benefits into fire management programs and responses, so that; (iii) Socially and ecologically acceptable and sustainable solutions to fire problems are attained.<sup>10</sup> Steppe systems in Russia and throughout Central Asia, like similar systems in North America, are fire dependent systems: they depend upon fire to maintain native species, habitats and landscapes. Work under this output will enable stakeholders in each of the four demonstrate sites to develop IFM programs that are appropriate for their own particular situations.

GEF funds will enable stakeholders to develop and pilot IFM Strategy and Action Plan in each of the four

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<sup>10</sup> Myers, R.L. 2006. Living with Fire: Sustaining Ecosystems and Livelihoods Through Integrated Fire Management. The Nature Conservancy. [www.tnc.org/](http://www.tnc.org/)

demonstration areas of the project covering over seven SPA. Each pilot will include at least one demonstration of the beneficial use of fire in managing healthy steppe communities. In addition, MNRE DPPA will prepare and approve methodology guidelines on IFM focused specifically on steppe ecosystems. These methodological guidelines will reflect the overall goals of IFM as well as the specific methods for its development and implementation.

**Output 2.2. Cost effectiveness of different rehabilitation and restoration measures for grassland habitats tested and best practices documented.**

Work under this output will test grassland restoration and rehabilitation measures in at least three different types of grasslands. The work will draw upon experience in this area from across Russia as well as worldwide.

Grassland/steppe restoration is becoming more scientifically rigorous, but is still as much art as it is science. People tend to find innovative ways to make it work in their local areas. Work under this output will focus on cross-site research projects that compare methods across geographic regions to identify common successes and challenges. Such comparisons and learning will be facilitated by connecting Russian stakeholders with experts in grassland restoration from other regions of the world, *e.g.* the Grassland Restoration Network that meets several times each year in North America.

“...let us go beyond mere salvage to begin the restoration of natural environments, in order to enlarge wild populations and stanch the hemorrhaging of biological wealth. There can be no purpose more enspiriting than to begin the age of restoration, reweaving the wondrous diversity of life that still surrounds us.”  
— E.O. Wilson

The pilots will emphasize the importance of clearly defining measurable objectives for each steppe restoration and of matching the project’s methods with the objective. The pilots will cover a range of options available for grassland restoration--- from active to passive restoration. For example:

- Planting a new steppe area. Establishing a diverse steppe plant community from seed and using different approaches to do this depending upon the land-use history and current status of each site. This approach has different levels of preparedness. One consistently successful method of restoration in this way is to broadcast seed into a harvested soybean field (no site prep other than harvesting the beans) during the dormant season following harvest.
- Allowing natural processes to re-vegetate an area. This involves rehabilitating steppe lands through passive care. This option relies upon natural seed dispersal to repopulate the site with steppe plants. Peoples’ input is limited to weeding the site or mowing the site to keep weeds down, allowing more diverse steppe communities to take root.
- Proactive management of grasslands inside of SPA. In different pilot sites, there are different challenges. In the woody steppe of Kursk one of the main problems is spontaneous afforestation in meadow steppe areas. CCZ counteracts this in limited plots only but recently this process accelerates as a result of climate change and needs more proactive management on larger area. Project will support purchasing some mowing equipment necessary to prevent afforestation and fire control. In the genuine steppes of OZ (Orenburg) the most serious threat is under-grazing conducting to rise of wild fires, decrease of habitat quality, and the loss of characteristic steppe species. Thus the project will help to start horse grazing as a management instrument. It is necessary to establish the appropriate legal basis for it and then practically organize grazing via agreements with neighboring horse owners.

**Output 2.3. Species management and conservation plans for key endemic grassland species.**

An ecological needs assessments of a number of priority target species will be conducted in each region. The needs assessment will study available habitat for the species, map it and assess the conservation action needed to conserve sufficient habitat for the species. A preliminary list of species for which ecological needs assessments will be conducted includes: Mongolian gazelle, Pallas cat, and Steppe eagle (Dauria); Saiga antelope, Small bustard and Steppe eagle (Kalmykia); Small bustard and Steppe eagle (Orenburg); Feathergrass and Pheasant's eye (*Adonis vernalis*) (Kursk). These needs assessments will complement the regional SLCP work done under Output 1.1.

These assessments will help the national and regional level SLCP to: a) guide future expansion and improve the ecological representation of the SPA network, and b) make recommendations for improving linkages among these different sites in order to enhance the network benefits associated with conserving migratory species and enhancing ecological resilience; and c) provide part of the ecological basis for strengthening biological corridors and physical connectivity between protected areas.

Work under this output focusses project efforts on conserving priority populations of endemic species of steppe animals and/or plants. In Dauria, this will mean developing a practical, affordable species conservation plan for Mongolian gazelle and Pallas cat. In Kursk, this will mean ensuring that key habitats for vulnerable and endangered species are given special management status and methodological support is provided for a co-funded re-introduction of the steppe marmot and/or spotted souslik in CZ. In Orenburg, this will mean developing action plans for conservation of little bustard and steppe eagle as well as the steppe marmot and the great bustard. In Kalmykia, the CZZ and University partners will develop a conservation and recovery program (monitoring and protection) for three distinct groups of saiga antelope, including two seasonal zakazniks to protect calving and nesting grounds; action plans for conservation of steppe eagle and little bustard will be developed.

Marmots and ground squirrels are important components of steppe ecosystems, and can even be considered keystone species in certain areas. Ground squirrels serve as prey for a large diversity of predators including raptors, ravens, carnivores and snakes. Ground squirrel burrowing plays an important role by mixing soils<sup>11</sup>. One study reported that Arctic ground squirrels moved over 30 tons of soil/ha/yr at one site<sup>12</sup>. Burrowing also provides for significant soil aeration<sup>13</sup> and fertilization below ground from animal waste and increases the rates of water infiltration into the soil, which in turn increases productivity of bunchgrasses<sup>14</sup>. The project will support modest re-introduction efforts for two different species important to healthy steppe systems: the steppe marmot and the spotted souslik (ground squirrel). These two have been extirpated from certain areas of the steppe and will be re-introduced to areas such as CCZ in Kursk-Belgorard Oblasts from other steppe regions of Russia where these species are more common.

In Kalmykia, an important pilot for steppe species conservation will involve power lines and making them safer for birds. Inventory taken of power lines identified as the most hazardous for birds, methodology and organizational support delivered to installation of bird protection devices over 100 km of power lines identified as the most hazardous for birds, to setting up control of implementation of bird death prevention requirements at power lines, and introduction of new power lines equipped with efficient bird protection devices.

#### **Output 2.4. PA staff competence levels cover key skills required for the operational management of SPA.**

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<sup>11</sup> Abaturov, B. 1972. The role of burrowing animals in the transport of mineral substances in the soil. *Pedobiologia* 12:261-266.

<sup>12</sup> Price, L. 1971. Geomorphic effect of the arctic ground squirrel in an alpine environment. *Geografiska Annaler* 53A:100-106.

<sup>13</sup> Inouye, R., N. Huntly, D. Tilman, and J. Tester. 1987. Pocket gophers (*Geomys bursarius*), vegetation, and soil nitrogen along a successional sere in east central Minnesota. *Oecologia* 72:178-184.

<sup>14</sup> Laundre, J. 1993. Effects of small mammal burrows on water infiltration in a cool desert environment. *Oecologia* 94:43-48.

Work under this output rounds out the key skills developed under outputs 2.1-2.3 with a focus on strengthened enforcement & monitoring partnerships among SPA and key stakeholder institutions. GEF funds will support the process of developing and solidifying enforcement partnerships of different compositions in all four regions between each pilot Zapovednik and relevant institutions such as: the Department for Specially Protected Areas, the Federal Border Service, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and their regional directorates, and regional MNRE offices. This will include the necessary costs associated with forming an enforcement working group in each pilot site, holding meetings and round table discussions, and finalizing memoranda of understanding (MoU).

Such partnerships are crucial to enabling SPA to respond effectively to threats emerging from outside the SPA and which require resources and jurisdiction beyond those given by law to SPA. For example, effective enforcement of fire regulations or hunting regulations will require effective collaboration with agricultural, municipal, and hunting organization authorities. Secondly, for those SPA in border regions, collaboration with the Border Guard Service on enforcement and wildlife and fire management issues will be beneficial.

Effective and affordable monitoring is crucial to proactive and adaptive SPA management. Given the scale of monitoring needs and the limited means available to each SPA to do it, partnerships are crucial to long-term monitoring success. This pilot work will demonstrate how to improve SPA monitoring through strategic partnerships and how to apply a multi-level approach to monitoring biodiversity in resource constrained areas. Level 1 focuses upon practical and basic monitoring at a limited scope and emphasizes community, school and NGO-based partnerships; Levels 2 & 3 expand the scope and complexity of the monitoring work and emphasize partnerships with expert institutions.

One monitoring working group (MWG) in each pilot site will develop an effective monitoring and targeted research program. Each MWG will be a small group of expert ecologists from partner organizations such as the Steppe Institute of Russian Academy of Sciences, Biodiversity Conservation Center, World Wildlife Fund, and others. Each SPA Pilot Site Manager and SPA Director will convene their respective MWG. The MWG's work will begin by compiling and consolidating existing baseline biodiversity and ecosystem health data. Paper data sheets will be properly transcribed into a computer database and stored. Based upon this baseline, critical gaps will be identified.

The MWG will determine a strategic approach to building a rigorous and affordable ecological inventory, monitoring and research program to fill these gaps and support proactive management in each pilot SPA. The inventory and monitoring protocols for priority species, habitats, natural communities and environmental parameters will be selected following best practices. The emphasis under the approach will be to define a long-term vision but begins with immediate practical steps that allow SPA to begin utilizing resources and partnerships that are already at hand. For example, such an approach to monitoring would begin with a "level 1" approach to strengthen community or NGO-based monitoring efforts and to integrate them into the SPA's long-term monitoring program. As the program matured and the level of financing increased, the program would move on to higher level monitoring work with Russian and international academic research institutions to support adaptive management.

The key to developing this approach successfully will be for the SPA Director to develop new partnerships and collaborative efforts in an orchestrated effort to achieve the overall objective. This will be central to the project's emphasis on a needs-based/opportunity-oriented approach to establishing sustainable conservation monitoring in Russia's SPA. The survey methodology will be designed to strengthen local capacity and be low cost and participatory. Data will be compiled in standardized map and report formats for Russia's PA system that will allow data to be shared with other protected areas in Russia. GEF resources will support the start-up costs of monitoring and sustain them through the project's lifetime. An agreement among key partners to continue the monitoring activities upon conclusion of the project will be an important milestone in year four of the project.



### **Output 2.5. The NGO-operation of a new type of SPA is tested and best practices captured.**

Work under this pilot will be conducted jointly by the Orenburg NGO reserve “Orenburgskaya Tarpania” and the regional administration of Orenburg Oblast. This steppe reserve is the first of its kind in the nation, where former military lands were leased to a local NGO for conservation purposes. The project will support the operationalization of this SPA with a focus on helping the NGO to pilot a model small-scale sustainable tourism program. To date, tourism in most SPA is practically non-existent and where it does exist it is ad-hoc and threatens certain PA values. This output pilots a modest tourism development program in a recently established NGO-operated PA. A small tourism management working group will be formed comprised of the Oblast economic development office, the Pilot site manager, the project pilot site manager and at least one recognized Russian tourism expert. The group will develop a model tourism management plan for the area that is practical and affordable. The group’s work will be facilitated by short-term targeted input from an international expert in tourism management in an SPA context.

### **COMPONENT 3: INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES FOR MANAGING AN EXPANDED SYSTEM OF SPA AND SMSA:(Total cost: US\$5,064,545; GEF request: US\$1,564,545; Co-financing: US\$3,500,000)**

Work under Component 3 will seek to develop and/or strengthen the capacities of PA and other natural resource management institutions to more effectively administer a consolidated and expanded network developed under Outcome 1 and to encourage the adoption of best practice demonstrated under Outcome 2.

### **Output 3.1. Capacities for co-management of SPA are developed and strengthened through training and the development co-management frameworks.**

Emerging challenges such as climate change will require stronger co-management tools in order for SPA to respond effectively. In addition, effective landscape-level conservation will require effective co-management tools in order to begin applying practical land management prescriptions across different land-use designations effectively.

Under this output, capacities for co-management of SPA are developed and strengthened. This will entail training programs in co-management and cooperative governance, the development co-management frameworks and structures for SPA and the refinement of co-management tools. This training will be conducted by the Project Technical Coordinator at the national level with the DSPA and at the regional level in all four pilot regions.

Transboundary co-management elements will be elaborated for site-level SPA as part of the work under Output 3.4. Co-managed protected areas are defined as PA (IUCN categories I-VI) where management authority, responsibility and accountability are shared among two or more stakeholders, including government bodies and agencies at various levels, indigenous and local communities, non-governmental organizations and private operators, or even among different state governments as in the case of trans-boundary protected areas.

Project resources will support the elaboration of a co-management framework for SPA that provides specific guidance to and directs the establishment of co-management structures affecting at least 7 SPA the project is working to expand or consolidate. Work under this activity will draw upon global best practice and tailor this practice to Russia’s own experience. The framework will specify the type of representation a co-management framework must entail, the roles that stakeholders play in a co-

management arrangement. The project will support a co-management inception meeting in each pilot area to launch the co-management framework.

### **Output 3.2. Collaborative, steppe-specific SPA management plans.**

Effective SPA management requires an understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities facing steppe ecosystems in an agricultural landscape. Under this output, project resources will provide incremental support to each of the four pilot zapovedniks in developing model management plans for different, complementary needs of each zapovednik. Work done under this output will affect at least seven different SPA as some of the pilot zapovedniks will be consolidating zakazniks within their buffer zones under Component 1.

In Dauria, project resources will help to integrate climate change adaptation into the baseline management planning process so that DZ is able to improve monitoring of changes in flora and fauna due to climate impacts. Project resources will help stakeholders to draw upon the resilience thinking done under Component 1, Output 1.2 and will support the incorporation of the *Scientific and economic climate change adaptation options assessment* into the DZ's revised management plan. In Kursk, project support will enable stakeholders to develop a model management plan for a wooded steppe PA. In Kalmykia, stakeholders will update their existing management plan with innovative management tools for dryland steppe ecosystems.

The project will help stakeholders establish a community working group (CWG) of up to five people representing civil society in each of the four pilot areas. The CWG will be the main mechanism for local peoples' involvement in developing or upgrading each pilot site's management plan. The group will be chaired by the SPA Director and will include representatives of the MoA, Oblast administration, relevant scientific institutes, businesses, NGOs, and local societies for hunting or birding or other relevant activity.

This work will draw upon the partnering policy and guidelines being developed for all PA under the GEF-funded Marine and Coastal Protected Areas project in Russia. For example, maps made to support this planning process will show the protected area within its steppe regional context and not just stop at the borders of the protected area. The maps will show different forms of steppe biomes in the region surrounding the PA as well as the respective types and locations of land categories and designations under Russian law. In this way, the management planning process can begin to envision larger steppe landscapes comprised of different land-use designations but managed with one overall common goal: the sustainable economic development and conservation of Russia's steppe ecosystem patrimony.

### **Output 3.3. Collaborative agreements between SPA and other sectoral government agencies.**

Inter-organization management agreements for steppe conservation. Work under this output will complement and bolster the co-management framework work under Output 3.1 and lies at the heart of the implementation of the landscape-based approach to steppe conservation planning and action described in Component 1. Effective cooperation between the SPA and partners is crucial to the success of the project. Activities will improve SPA management capacity to apply co-management approaches to conserving steppe ecosystems. For example, for many SPA (zapovedniks or zakazniks) land within their buffer zones or borders may be owned by another party (such as the local municipality or a private sector) and is likely to be categorized as agricultural land, placing the MoA in charge of its management as well. This situation requires co-management agreements to clarify roles and responsibilities and specify areas of shared interest and concern (*i.e.* integrated fire management or sustainable grazing management). This approach is critical for most SPA in Russia given that most SPA are "islands" in an "ocean" of agricultural lands. This work will draw upon the partnering policy and guidelines under development by DSPA. In this way, co-management agreements are key to helping form larger steppe landscapes

comprised of different land-use designations but managed with one overall common goal: the sustainable economic development and conservation of Russia's steppe ecosystem patrimony.

**Output 3.4.** Collaborative steppe conservation agreements developed or improved and implemented in transboundary areas.

At the transboundary level, project input will support the formation of collaborative joint planning and operational management agreements for steppe trans-boundary conservation initiatives in Dauria (Zabaikalsky Krai), where the steppe lands of China, Mongolia and Russia come together, and in Orenburg Oblast where Russia's and Kazakhstan's steppe lands meet. Stakeholders will apply lessons learned under the co-management work of Output 1 above.

In Dauria, project efforts will build upon the existing tri-national protected area DIPA (Dauria International Protected Area). Project resources will support the gathering of the three different SPA of DIPA (Mongol Daguur Strictly Protected Area, Russia's Daursky Zapovednik and Biosphere Reserve, and China's Dalai Lake Biosphere Reserve) to elaborate an improved transboundary collaboration agreement for steppe conservation and management. Such an agreement will focus on improving: a) PA coverage and distribution including the identification of landscape corridors, taking into account climate change processes affecting wildlife movements, particularly the Mongolian gazelle (dzeren); b) transboundary collaboration under framework of DIPA with respect to monitoring and research; and c) transboundary collaboration on tourism and integrated fire management. Project resources will also help to bridge the language gap between Russians and Mongolians and their Chinese counterparts.

In Orenburg efforts will work within the framework of existing international cooperation between the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan. Project resources will help Orenburg Oblast, West Kazakhstan Oblast and Aktyubinsk Oblast to strengthen contacts and elaborate and adopt an action plan on steppe ecosystems conservation within the framework of existing international cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan. The action plan will expand the conservation and research measures for specific indicator species, improve joint fire monitoring, and improve transboundary enforcement cooperation among Orenburg Oblast and its neighboring West Kazakhstan, Aktobe, and Kostanai Oblasts. As part of this process, stakeholders will prepare working documents to establish a transboundary steppe PA on the Russia/Kazakhstan border (Both sides of Ural River or Trans-Urals steppe or on Sub-Urals Plateau).

**Output 3.5. National SPA knowledge management and development program.**

Work under this output will focus on helping MNRE/DSPA to build a national SPA knowledge management program. In order to manage knowledge, the DSPA must first measure what knowledge exists within the SPA network already. Project resources will support the development and adoption by MNRE of a system-level SPA management effectiveness measuring and monitoring program for coordinated and targeted monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystem health in Russia's SPA. Many methods are being developed around the world for evaluating PA management effectiveness. Under this activity, MNRE will assess, analyze and adopt a system-level method for evaluating SPA management effectiveness that is most appropriate for its needs. This work will build upon the SLCP and SPA management standards and guidelines developed under the EIP and the individual METT utilized to measure effectiveness at the individual SPA level. The system-level measurement method includes measures and descriptions of a wide range of management elements and provides a strong basis for understanding and improving management across the network of SPA as well as reporting on progress and promoting good practice. The recurrent costs of running the system-level monitoring will be met through the budget of the MNRE.

Work under this output will develop good practice training modules (courses) for use by SPA managers.

The purpose of the training modules is to ensure that the new ideas, knowledge, and skills needed for effective SPA management will be taught to the current and next generation of SPA managers. These modules will emerge from the pilot demonstrations under Outcome 2 and will include but not be limited to: (i) How to strengthen SPA capacity to implement practical adaptation measures into their management planning; (ii) Working with resources at hand to build effective conservation practice by applying a multiple level framework of action; (iii) How to build effective partnerships for enforcement between SPA and other key institutions; (iv) How to develop and implement a practical monitoring program to support adaptive management; (v) How to develop and apply integrated fire management practices; and (vi) How to develop and apply sustainable grazing management practices.

Additionally, the project will support a summer internship program to help overcome the capacity barrier of too few young university-educated staff being brought into the SPA network. This will be done in close cooperation with the traditional centers of academic excellence in Russia for biology, ecology, natural resources and grassland management. An open and fair competition will be held for a limited number of internship spots each year, with a commitment from the MNRE-DSPA to hire a certain number of “graduated” interns each year.

In order to ensure the replicability of conservation outcomes and capture lessons needed to improve the sustainability of the SPA system, the project will complement the efforts of the GEF-funded Marine & Coastal Protected Areas project to support the establishment of a peer-to-peer knowledge sharing web-based mechanism to improve access to information for SPA. This mechanism will be open to all and will utilize web-based technologies for facilitating information exchange, learning, and networking. The project will identify and train knowledge managers within the MNRE to develop and manage this website to be interactive and to facilitate peer-to-peer knowledge sharing through online subject blogs, email list-serves and an online training and capacity building program for use across the SPA system. The training program will be comprised of best practice SPA management modules and video lectures from SPA managers on their best practices and experiences to facilitate peer-to-peer information exchange and brainstorming. MNRE’s knowledge management program will launch an annual SPA meeting, where SPA stakeholders will be able to discuss emerging priorities and best SPA management practice in interactive sessions.

Parallel to the MNRE knowledge sharing activities, a mechanism for knowledge sharing and distributing information as well as for making the project more transparent and more understandable for the Russian-speaking conservation and steppe science community (both in Russia and in the main steppe countries like Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Mongolia). This mechanism will involve a two-pronged approach. First, the project will support the publication in Russian of the Steppe Bulletin and second creating and supporting a special web site for steppe conservation practitioners. Activities will also include the translation of some key academic papers from different international journals and publishing them in the Steppe Bulletin and on the web site. This will help to overcome the significant language barrier that prevents most Russian conservation practitioners from benefiting from and contributing to the international discussion on best practice and emerging innovations. In addition, project resources will be used to help the SPA staff find a way to access key grassland conservation and management journals online. This is especially important for SPA staff and some scientific institutions outside Moscow (e.g. Steppe Institute in Orenburg, Institute of Natural Resources, Ecology and Cryology in Chita). Many journals are accessible on the web but only for subscribers making them practically unreachable for most interested Russian SPA staff.

And finally, to facilitate sharing of experiences and information, projects resources will provide partial logistical and travel support to a limited number of Russian participants to the 6th International Symposium 'Steppes of Northern Eurasia: Global conservation priority' that will be held in 2012 in Astana, Kazakhstan.

### II.3. Project Indicators, Risks and Assumptions

117. Please see the Logical Framework for full list of indicators, sources of verification, risks and assumptions.

**Table 13.** Indicators at the level of Objective:

Objective/outcomes	Indicators
<b>Objective:</b> To develop the capacity and ecologically based enabling tools and mechanisms for the consolidation, expansion and disturbance based integrated management of a system of protected natural areas at the landscape level within the steppe biome.	867,400 ha of newly protected or consolidated steppe area within SPA network.
	METT Scores. Indirect impact on improved management effectiveness in 1.9 million hectares of SPA.
	Stable or growing # of SPA in Orenburg and Kursk pilots where feather grass dominates.
	Stable or growing populations of globally threatened little bustard and density during nesting season in Kalmykia and Orenburg pilot sites. .
	Stable or growing # of Saiga antelope in Kalmykia pilot and share of males in the population.
	Stable or growing population # of Mongolian antelope in Daurisky Zapovednik and % of young in population.
<b>Component 1: Consolidate and expand the system of PA in the steppe biome.</b>	Increase in # of regional level SPA correctly documented per the Land Code.
	# of lower level SPA consolidated into better-managed, higher level SPA.
	# ha of steppe ecosystems protected under contractual conditions or other obligations without direct government involvement.
	# of possessors of landownership rights that have undertaken voluntary obligations to conserve steppe sites.
<b>Component 2: Strengthen the operational management capacities for PA site management in the steppe biome.</b>	% reduction in area swept by destructive grassland fires within pilot PA during hazardous seasons.
	METT Score - Direct impact on improved effectiveness in pilot sites = improved management in 489,782 hectares.
	# of SPA incorporating sustainable grazing best practice into their management regime for steppe areas.
	# of IFM adopted by SPA by end of project.
<b>Component 3: Develop the institutional capacities for managing an expanded system of PA in the steppe biome.</b>	# of SPA adopting interagency management agreements with partner organizations.
	# of SPA with management regime updated to include steppe ecosystem conservation priorities.
	MNRE SPA Capacity Scorecard (Policy formulation, Implementation, Engagement & consensus, Info & knowledge, Monitoring)
	% improvement of SPA staff understanding of key steppe issues before/after training.

#### Risks

118. The risks confronting the project have been carefully evaluated during project preparation, and risk mitigation measures have been internalized into the project design. A careful analysis of barriers was

conducted and measures designed to lower or overcome these barriers. Six main risks have been identified, and are summarized below. Other assumptions behind project design are elaborated in the Logical Framework.

**Table 14.** Risks and risk mitigation strategy

Risk	Risk Rating	Risk Mitigation Strategy
SPA staff may have difficulty overcoming years of habit and organizational culture in order to change their approach and mentality from being reactive to proactive in PA management and conservation practice.	S-M	The project places a high priority on capacity building through in-situ training, personnel exchanges with and study tours to similar protected areas with similar challenges and very different management prescriptions.
Environmental perturbations could affect conservation results.	M-S	The project's success indicators are designed to account for these perturbations. The project emphasizes data-driven adaptive management, which will help the SPA to discern the difference between impacts from environmental changes and anthropogenic impacts and respond accordingly.
Federal and provincial protected areas authorities conflict with other productive sectors (e.g. agriculture) over the designation of land for protected areas in the development of federal and regional territorial land use plans	M	The project is designed with a thorough understanding of Russian Land Code and agricultural use land categories. The expansion strategy for the steppe biome allows for alternative spatial and PA management PA type scenarios to achieve the PA representation targets by working closely within Russian land law. This will provide flexibility in the consultation processes required to designate protected area land uses. Key to inter-sectoral consultation and negotiation processes will be the establishment of project cooperative governance structures and the establishment of pilot initiatives to demonstrate inter-sectoral approaches to steppe conservation.
The ongoing administrative reform processes in Russia may require a change to the implementation arrangements for different project activities.	M	Administrative reform in Russia's government has been a fact of life for many years now and it is difficult to predict what direction it will take in future years. The project spreads the risk of this reform process disrupting project implementation by working with a range of stakeholders at both the national level and in four different oblasts/regions of Russia.
Capacity constraints limit the capability of PA institutions to implement the PA expansion plan for the steppe biome beyond the projects four targeted areas	L	Capacity constraints for steppe conservation have been assessed and the project activities developed to optimally address institutional gaps identified in the assessment. The individual capacity of the relevant federal and regional institutions to plan and coordinate the expansion and consolidation of PA in other areas across the steppe biome will be strengthened during project implementation.
Climate change leads to localized species losses and reduction in the ecosystem services derived from grasslands.	L	The project will contribute to conserving landscape-scale ecosystem processes, and physically linking spatially fragmented protected areas, in the steppe biome. The conservation of a representative sample of steppe ecosystems at a landscape scale will improve the resilience of steppe habitats to conserve effectively a number of endemic grassland species and species-associations; act as a buffer to productive agricultural activities; and protect the ecological processes that maintain key ecosystem services.
Stakeholder support and understanding of the project could be undermined by	M-L	The project is designed to further the goals and objectives of the Ministry of Natural Resource's PA program and larger

Risk	Risk Rating	Risk Mitigation Strategy
staff changes at national or regional levels, hampering the project's ability to improve conservation management.		national goals and objectives and as such, should be able to withstand such changes. The project emphasizes the creation of partnerships that goes beyond just individual staff.
Baseline Gov't funding may continue only to support basic management functions of SPA.	M-L	The project emphasizes enabling stakeholders to work with resources at hand and build effective conservation practice step-by-step by applying a multiple-level approach to conservation and monitoring work

Risk Rating: L - Low; M – Medium; S – Substantial

#### II.4. Expected global, national and local benefits

119. There is a long list of global environmental benefits to be generated by this project. First, the project will contribute to the achievement of the programmatic Indicators, Expected Long Term Impacts, and Outcomes of GEF's Biodiversity Strategic Objective #1 (SO-1) and Strategic Program #1, including:

- Improved extent and new habitat protected in the SPA system that enhances ecosystem representation in Russia's SPA network.
- Improved coverage of steppe ecosystems through the expansion of steppe areas under protection by an additional 867,400 hectares.
- Support for Russia's strengthening PA system to ensure its long-term sustainability.
- Improved management effectiveness of individual SPA with direct impact on 1.8 million hectares and indirect impact on 4.6 million hectares.
- Conservation of biodiversity in Russia's steppe protected areas.

120. Secondly, substantial global benefits will be generated due to the globally significant ecoregional context of the Russia's steppe areas. Russia's steppe regions represent one WWF Global 200 Ecoregion – the Daurian/Mongolian Steppe. The Daurian Steppe is represented in the project's Daurisky Zapovednik pilot SPA. Thirdly, the project's focus on expanding coverage and improving the effectiveness of SPA management in Russia will contribute to the conservation of globally significant steppe biodiversity and feed into the global body of experience and best practices.

121. Finally, globally significant species will be conserved. This goes to the heart of the “expected long term impacts” and global benefits of GEF's SO-1. The Daurian Steppe supports one of the world's largest remaining populations of freely roaming ungulate populations in the temperate zone. The Mongolian gazelle (*Procapra gutturosa*) is found here. The Kalmykian steppe harbors Russia's last remaining population of Saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*) CR<sup>15</sup>. Approximately 462 Important Bird Areas and six designated Ramsar sites are found in Russia's steppe lands, harboring such species as the Sociable lapwing (*Vanellus gregarius*) CR, White headed duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) EN, Great Bustard (*Otis tarda dubowskii*) VU, the Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*) VU, Saker (*Falco cherrug*) EN, Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*) VU, Little bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*) NT; Swan Goose (*Anser cygnoides*) VU, White-naped Crane (*Grus vipio*) VU, and Red-crowned Crane (*Grus japonensis*) EN.

122. National and local benefits: The conservation of the steppe biological diversity and ecosystem function will also contribute towards the fulfillment of Russia's obligations under the CBD. The national, regional and local benefits will also include increased management effectiveness of SPA. Government stakeholders will benefit from the increased technical capacity to manage protected areas and conserve biological diversity engendered. Improved interagency coordination and collaboration among federal and

<sup>15</sup> IUCN Red List Categories: Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), Near Threatened (NT), Least Concern (LC).

regional authorities and stakeholder participation in resource management will lead to reductions in duplication of effort, improvements in cost effectiveness. Improved management effectiveness will positively impact the experience of Russian citizens using their protected areas and reduce the number of conflicts among resource users. Local stakeholders will benefit from the project's efforts to help SPA improve proactive management of ecotourism impacts which in the long run will add value to quality of experiences offered by tourism enterprises and increase income generating opportunities for local communities.

123. The decision to commit steppe resources can be guided by a cost-benefit framework that measures whether the potential benefits of protection, adjusted to account for risks, outweigh the potential costs. Although the benefits and costs of SPA can be identified and described, as in Table 15, a precise calculation of the expected net benefits is often not feasible. Like other public investments, the potential benefits of conserved natural steppe habitats will often be realized at some future date, whereas many of the costs are incurred immediately. Difficulties also stem from the complexity and corresponding degree of imprecision when trying to predict the impact of a new management tool on biological and economic systems, at the intersection of agriculture and biodiversity. Another difficulty for managers is the task of predicting and quantifying the non-extractive use values associated with an SPA. It is generally understood that these values are an important consideration in resource allocation decisions. Ongoing research into ecosystem services points to potentially significant benefits to human welfare (agriculture) from being in close proximity to natural and semi-natural habitats. However, given the current lack of research on the magnitude of these benefits in Russia, it may be difficult in the near future to fully incorporate them in decision-making processes and to quantify these as national benefits.

**Table 15. Local/national benefits from protecting steppe areas.**

Local/National Stakeholder Categories	Benefits
Extractive Users (e.g. farmers, livestock growers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Healthier grassland systems can lead to healthier livestock.</li> <li>▪ Ecosystem services for agriculture such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improved pollination services</li> <li>▪ Natural habitats can serve as a source of natural enemies for agricultural pests to assist in pest control.</li> <li>▪ Water retention/drought resistance from increased biomass.</li> <li>▪ Erosion control.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Non-extractive Users (e.g., eco-tourists, and existence values)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain and enhance species diversity</li> <li>▪ Greater habitat complexity and diversity.</li> <li>▪ Suitable conditions for rare or extirpated species and opportunities for viewing &amp; appreciation.</li> </ul>
Management/Society-at-large	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthen resilience of steppe systems to climate instability.</li> <li>▪ Improved scientific knowledge of ecosystem conditions.</li> <li>▪ Serve as a hedge against uncertain precipitation forecasts and subsequent risk of drought or erosion.</li> <li>▪ Provide educational opportunities.</li> </ul>

124. Two of the most significant potential national and local benefits of protected steppe lands accrue to agriculture and are generated by the juxtaposition of natural and semi-natural steppe habitats within an agricultural landscape. The benefits come in the form of improved ecosystem services such as pollination and spill-over of natural insect control (predators) from natural to agricultural lands. Wild bees and other insects pollinate many crops, but their value for crop pollination has been overlooked for centuries. As their services are increasingly being recognized for agriculture, the adequate management of local agro-ecosystems and the conservation of suitable natural or semi-natural pollinator habitats in the surrounding landscapes are receiving more attention. This bodes well for the cost-effectiveness discussion that is just now beginning in Russia with respect to SPA.



125. Ecosystem services, defined as the benefits to human welfare provided by organisms interacting in ecosystems, are considered to be at risk worldwide. Although crop pollination is commonly cited as an example of a critical and endangered ecosystem service, detailed studies of the crop pollination systems are incomplete or out of date. Animal pollination is important to the sexual reproduction of many crops and the decline of pollinating species can lead to a parallel decline of plant species. Research in other parts of the world at the intersection of agriculture and biodiversity is exploring the behavior of diverse native pollinators (bees and other insects) and the environments that sustain them, an often overlooked but critical component of the global food web. By analyzing the behavior patterns of bees, some research is measuring several key variables, including geographic distribution of natural habitats, the diversity of insect pollinators, and the delivery of pollination services<sup>16,17</sup>. Results indicate that the ability of a community of native bees to pollinate crops adequately is dependent on their access to natural habitats within several kilometers of the farm site, underscoring the importance of restoring and protecting natural environments on and around farms. This kind of research also demonstrates the dependence of sustainable agroecology on effective environmental preservation and supports the assertion that protected steppe lands are a cost-effective use of that steppe land. Farmers already derive value from wild bee pollination services, and more importantly, wild bees provide an insurance policy for farmers and consumers in the event of further decline, or even total loss, of managed honeybee stocks. This relationship between pollination services and natural habitat can be used to help establish targets for conservation, restoration and management of an agro-natural landscape for pollination function.

126. Despite the rarity of explicit studies on the topic, there are a number of reasons to predict that the spillover of insect natural enemies across cropland–steppe habitat edges is likely to be a relatively common, and potentially important process. A substantial body of literature illustrates that crop and natural habitats can share important insect natural enemies, and natural-enemy mediated edge effects have been documented within agroecosystems. Natural habitats surrounding agricultural fields provide a source of natural enemies to assist in pest control. The boundaries among landscape elements filter some organisms attempting to cross them, resulting in differing communities within the landscape elements. For example, ground beetles are numerous and generally disperse by walking. One study determined that natural habitats adjacent to wheat fields affected the species composition of ground beetles within the wheat fields by increasing the numbers of individuals and the overall community structure.

127. The magnitude and impact of spillover predation is predicted to be greatest when large differences in productivity occur between natural and cropland systems, especially early in the growing season when natural systems' resources exceed those of the cropping systems and late in the growing season as resources within cropping systems decline. More empirical work examining the prevalence and significance of natural enemy spillover will be critical to better understanding the effects of habitat loss and habitat restoration on insect predator–prey interactions in increasingly agriculturally dominated landscapes<sup>18</sup>.

## **II.5. Country Ownership: Country Eligibility and Country Drivenness**

128. The Russian Federation ratified the CBD on April 5, 1995, and is eligible for country assistance from UNDP. The Government of the Russian Federation (GoRF) has long demonstrated a commitment to protecting biodiversity. The project will assist the Government of Russia to meet its obligations under the following international conventions signed and ratified by Russia: (i) Convention on Biological

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<sup>16</sup> Kremen, C. 2005. "Managing ecosystem services: what do we need to know about their ecology?" *Ecology Letters*. 8: 468–479

<sup>17</sup> Kremen, C., et al. 2004. The area requirements of an ecosystem service: crop pollination by native bee communities in California. *Ecol. Lett.*, 7, 1109–1119

<sup>18</sup> Rand, T., et al. 2006. "Spillover edge effects: the dispersal of agriculturally subsidized insect natural enemies into adjacent natural habitats." *Ecology Letters*. 9: 603–614

Diversity (CBD 1995); (ii) Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (1991); (iii) Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention, 1998); (iv) Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage; (v) the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES 1994); (vi) the Convention ILO 169 (1989) concerning Indigenous and Tribal people; (vii) the World Heritage Convention and the Seville Strategy (28 C/Resolution 2.4 of the UNESCO General Conference, 1995).

129. The project reflects Russia's national priorities in conservation and development as they are expressed in Russia's "National Conservation Action Plan" and the All-Russian Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and National Biodiversity Conservation Action Plan (BCS/BCAP) of 2001. A central feature of the BCS/BCAP is the establishment and effective management of protected areas as instruments of *in situ* biodiversity conservation. The Action Plan provides such objectives as: stimulation of rational management of natural resources and improvement of specially protected areas management.

130. The BCAP biodiversity conservation priorities list steppe and semi-desert ecosystems second after marine areas. With respect to protected areas, the BCAP describes the necessity of a strengthened PA network, and then goes directly to the enlargement of PA coverage in the steppe zone as a top priority. The project furthers several of BCAP's most important priorities, including: strengthening and extending the network of protected areas; promoting the sustainable use of biological and cultural resources; encouraging local participation and equitable access to benefits from biodiversity conservation; and the development of new mechanisms for combining commodity production objectives with biodiversity conservation in steppe regions. Promulgated in 2002, the Ecological Doctrine of the Russian Federation presents an integrated framework for maintaining a healthy environment and providing for sustainable development in the country. It is based upon the Constitution of the Russian Federation, federal law and international agreements to which Russia is a party. It sets forth the government's strategic goals, which include the conservation of natural ecosystems for their life support functions and sustainable development. The conservation of ecosystems and associated biodiversity, and sustainable use of resources are central to the Doctrine. Much national level and regional level legislation has also been passed over the past 10 years to provide for the strengthening of protected areas and their contribution to biodiversity conservation.

131. The project supports the Russian Government's ongoing commitments and programmes to promote and carry out biodiversity conservation. It does so by linking national goals enunciated in federal programs such as "Ecology and Natural Resources (2002-2010)" with local and regional level conservation of globally significant steppe biodiversity. The GoRF initiated the project and provided cash co-financing for the preparation stage.

#### Linkages with UNDP Country Programme

132. Environmental protection and biodiversity conservation is a key focus area of the UNDP Country Cooperation Framework (CCF). The project is entirely supportive of and consistent with UNDP's Country Programme Portfolio. The latter includes an extensive biodiversity conservation programme currently implemented in the Kamchatka peninsula (PA management, wild salmon conservation, and island integrity), Altai-Sayan ecoregion (protection of mountain ecosystems), Lower Volga Region (wetland conservation), Taymir Peninsula and Komi Republic; Steppe Protected Area Network. The following key elements and components implemented/planned within these projects will potentially influence the proposed project as the source of lessons, methods and best practices: (i) PA management; (ii) Alternative livelihood demonstrations; and (iii) Local population involvement in management and decision-making.

#### Linkages with other GEF financed projects

133. GEF and UNDP have partnered with the Russian Government to address some ecological representation gaps by strengthening protected area systems at the ecoregional level (Altay Sayan

ecoregions, Kamchatka meadows, forests, tundra and taiga ecoregions, Taimyr central Siberian tundra and Volga River). These projects address management effectiveness and sustainability of 28 federal and regional protected areas covering an area of 15 million hectares. Within the programming framework for GEF IV, the Russian government and UNDP have recently prepared two new projects, which aim at catalyzing the sustainability of the national protected area system by addressing the major representativeness gaps: (i) Urals montane forest tundra and taiga and Scandinavian and Russian taiga in Republic of Komi; (ii) this proposed project for steppe PA to be submitted for approval in the second part of GEF IV. This strategy of strengthening subsystems of PA at the ecoregional level proved to be the most cost-effective and efficient in the Russia's context given its vast territory, decentralized structure, immense diversity and distribution of ecosystems, land use models and development challenges.

134. Five other projects are currently under implementation, all implemented by UNDP: (i) Marine and Coastal Protected Areas Project (MCPA); (ii) Conservation of Wetland Biodiversity in the Lower Volga Region; (iii) Biodiversity Conservation in the Russian Portion of the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion; (iv) Conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in Russia's Taymir Peninsula: Maintaining connectivity across the landscape; and (v) Demonstrating Sustainable Conservation of Biodiversity in Four Protected Areas in Russia's Kamchatka Oblast, Phase 2. Linkages to the projects will be developed through a network of UNDP/GEF projects that has already been established. The network meets at least once a year, but is active by email and telephone at other times, and also takes advantages of other meetings and workshops to exchange ideas and lessons. There are already examples of successful exchange of lessons, for example, the adoption of the SME approach piloted in Kamchatka by the Altai-Sayan project. Indeed, this project is designed to build upon the MCPA project's work or collaborate closely with it, as mentioned several times in this project's outcomes/outputs section.

135. There are 10 other GEF-funded Biodiversity Conservation projects in Russia. Of these, two are general capacity development projects, both implemented by UNEP, namely: (i) First National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity; and (ii) Development of National Biodiversity CHM. No direct links with these projects will be established.

136. Several other projects have been completed, including: (i) The Biodiversity Conservation project (World Bank); (ii) Strengthening Protected Areas Network for Sikhote-Alin Mountain Forest Ecosystems Conservation in Khabarovsk Krai (World Bank); and (iii) Demonstrating Sustainable Conservation of Biological Diversity in Four Protected Areas in Russia's Kamchatka Oblast, Phase I (UNDP). Another GEF-funded regional project "Strengthening the Network of Training Centers for Protected Area Management through Demonstration of a Tested Approach" has been under implementation by UNEP. Linkages to these projects are through application of lessons learned, as described previously.

137. Nearing completion is the UNEP-GEF project entitled, "An Integrated Ecosystem Management Approach to Conserve Biodiversity and Minimize Habitat Fragmentation in Three Selected Model Areas in the Russian Arctic (ECORA). Initiated by Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) Working Group of the Arctic Council and the Russian Federation, ECORA seeks to conserve biodiversity and minimize habitat fragmentation in three model areas in the Russian Arctic. The major outcomes of the project are approved IEM strategies and action plans in the three model areas. ECORA has much relevance for this project and careful attention will be paid to utilizing its experience and lessons learned.

## **II.6. Sustainability**

138. The project design builds upon the significant financial, institutional, and social sustainability baseline that already exists within Russia in order to assure sustainability. A number of factors combine to ensure that the prospects are good for achieving a high level of sustainability. Russia's commitment to its PA network is stronger than most countries in transition and its financial commitment is on the rise.

Between 2004 and 2007, Government financing for Russia’s PA increased by 93%, from 112,200,000 rubles to 238,206,000 rubles. Of course, different PA experienced different degrees of funding increases, but overall, this is an impressive record.

139. Combine this with the fact that an important part of the project’s strategy to improve effectiveness - the SPA are developing strong ties with other government agencies responsible for resource management in surrounding areas, with the local community, and with international partners – also helps to improve the prospects for long-term sustainability. These prospects are quite good and improving. This project has been designed to enable the continuation of project-inspired changes in practice upon completion of the project itself. The project’s approach to sustainability reflects several overriding assumptions related to the question of sustainability and how this will be achieved. Please see below for a matrix of assumptions and project responses:

**Table 16. Assumptions**

Assumption	Validity of Assumption
<p><i>Assumption #1:</i> The project’s outcomes are largely achievable with current institutions, and existing and to-be-increased financial resources and personnel. Baseline Government funding of the Reserve will continue to enable basic management functions and may even increase in future years.</p>	<p>The MNRE will continue to fund the costs of staffing most SPA, significantly reducing the sustainability challenge.</p> <p>SPA budget has increased significantly from near zero during the most difficult period of the transition, to the bare bones budget now provided. The project is designed purposefully to approach the SPAs’ challenges in this way, building upon existing capacity in incremental steps to maximize absorptive capacity and sustainability.</p>
<p><i>Assumption #2:</i> New, strong partnerships with other government agencies, the local community, NGOs and governmental organizations will improve effectiveness and contribute to sustainability.</p>	<p>The concept is a simple one – that partnerships can enable organizations to do more with less and in the process improve effectiveness. The concept has been proven valid many times before – both in business and government.</p>
<p><i>Assumption #3:</i> Overcoming barriers (knowledge, financial, “proof of concept”) will catalyze the self-sustaining adoption of new protected area management approaches.</p>	<p>The project integrates the guidance from GEF and experience of many other projects by focusing on removing barriers to the adoption of more sustainable practices. The project will seek to work with and strengthen local institutional and stakeholder capacities to access new information and markets.</p>

140. Institutional sustainability. Change has been a constant companion of nearly all of Russia’s natural resource management entities in the past 10 years and it will likely continue to be the case for the next ten years. However, this is not all negative. The reality is that even during these times of change and evolution of Russia’s institutional structures, the government has continued to support protected areas and as stated above, increased their funding dramatically. This bodes well for the long-term institutional sustainability of Russia’s SPA. Another factor that is positive is the increasing frequency with which decision makers in Russia are discussing the need for a stand-alone Ministry of Ecology that would also have responsibility for protected areas. At least this shows the importance with which this issue is considered and at best, it bodes well for solidifying the institutional structure under the SPA.

141. The other key to institutional sustainability concerns economic development policies in the oil/gas, mineral and forest sectors. Large-scale industrial developments in or near protected areas could threaten biodiversity conservation. Fortunately, recent court cases have established the principle that decisions by regional governors cannot apply to the federal protected areas, providing some security against such developments.

142. Financial sustainability: After major cuts in federal budgets during the economic crises of the 1990s, there has been a positive trend in both budgetary and non-budgetary funding. Russian government

funding supports the basic operations of SPA and other federal PA. In some regions of Russia, non-budgetary sources of revenue for PA have increased in recent years to 10 – 20% of total management budgets. This has come from three sources – the private sector dominated by the oil and gas industry, tourism interests, and some academic research projects. While most SPA have not benefited from this trend as much as the coastal or other protected areas, SPA have benefited from the support of local industry and businesses to conduct specific education campaigns or other work. For example, Centralno Chernozemny Zapovednik received funding from a local power company to conduct an education campaign. As SPA improve their linkages with the surrounding agricultural landscape, other non-budgetary support opportunities will arise with respect to sustainable grazing and other uses with both economic and ecological benefits.

143. Social sustainability. The social context of SPA in Russia is an important, even critical element for long-term sustainability of SPA. SPA exist for the most part in an agricultural landscape – in other words in lands that are categorized under Russia’s Land Code as agricultural lands. To date, this “landscape” has been indifferent to steppe conservation at best and at worst Russia’s agricultural policies provide disincentives for steppe conservation and sustainable use. However, many Oblasts and other regional entities in Russia are looking for new solutions to the age-old challenge of sustainable rural development. An SPA’s social sustainability will be maximized when it clearly defines its role in achieving this goal. Social sustainability will be based on: (i) the local benefits for local communities where they exist to be delivered by the SPA (reduced erosion, increased soil biomass and resilience to climate change, quality pasture for domestic animals); and (ii) the overall positive perceptions of key stakeholders as to the value of SPA to Russia and the global community.

144. Ecological sustainability. The project seeks to maximize ecological sustainability through its focus on landscape-level conservation approach as a mechanism to ensure ecological integrity and sustainability. The project’s strategy for expanding the coverage of steppe ecosystem conservation through various types of protected areas and specially managed areas emphasizes flexibility and the importance of innovation in identifying priority steppe areas and conserving them through preservation or sustainable use. The project’s strategic approach calls for increasing the ecological representation and ecosystem resilience of the SPA system.

## **II.7. Replicability**

145. The project’s four demonstration sites represent a cross section of the challenges and opportunities facing SPA throughout the RF. Centralno Chernozemny Zapovednik is one of the smallest SPA and faces some of the most significant problems associated with losing its species diversity over time, a problem that climate change is likely to aggravate across much of Russia in the coming decades. The Orenburgsky Zapovednik faces threats from destructive fires and plowing in its buffer zone, something many of Russia’s other SPA are facing and will face in the future. The Daurisky Zapovednik has already laid the groundwork for cross-border collaboration on steppe conservation issues. The project’s support will allow it to be move forward with these initiatives with Mongolian and Chinese counterparts, providing a valuable experience to be shared and replicated with other steppe PA in the future in other border areas of the Russian steppe.

146. The replicability potential of this project is significant for at least two reasons: (i) the practices to be developed and demonstrated are directly relevant to the needs of other SPA in Russia; and (ii) project partners have the resources or, with proper capacity building, the ability to access resources that are more than sufficient to support replication of civil society partnerships, protected area management, and the knowledge of a conservation economy, including eco-tourism management. The existing and emerging institutional PA framework will also facilitate replication via MNRE nationally and regionally and through emerging information hubs on steppe issues such as the Steppe Bulletin.

**Table 17. Replication strategy**

Strategy	Replication Strategy/Interventions	Locus for Replication
<b>Outcome 1.</b> Consolidation and expansion of the system of steppe PA.	The strategic conservation plan for the SPA network will apply to the whole SPA network and so will by design facilitate replication of priority actions included in the strategy and piloted by the project.	SPA network
	Legal and policy instruments in place and training provided for SPA stakeholder to enable them to utilize mechanisms and techniques for establishing SMSA.	SPA network
<b>Outcome 2.</b> Operational management capacities for PA site management.	Guidance on how to establish a practical, proactive and participatory integrated fire and grazing management plans will be made available by end of year 3 for replication.	SPA network
	b) Optimal financial planning and operational asset assessment steps incorporated into management planning process and required by MNRE for all PA management planning.	SPA network
	-) Guidance on how to establish such a practical, proactive and participatory monitoring program will be made available by end of year 3.	SPA network
	Model steppe species conservation practices in place in pilot areas and ready for replication across the network by end of year 2.	SPA network
<b>Outcome 3.</b> Institutional capacities for managing an expanded system of SPA and SMSA.	a) Refined co-management tools for SPA available and in use for replication of co-management practices across the SPA network by end of year 2.	SPA network
	b) Peer-to-peer knowledge sharing web-based mechanism in place and training modules for SPA managers available by end of year 3.	SPA national network
	Strengthened replication policies and practices.	National SPA level
Independent Evaluations	The independent evaluation scheduled during the Project will be tasked with the identification of factors underpinning the success for Project activities, with a view to replication. Yr 3 and 5.	Regional and National.

**II.8. Financial Modality and Cost-Effectiveness**

147. The total cost of the project is US\$ 20,204,545.

**Table 18. Total project budget/outcome**

Project Components/Outcomes	Co-financing (\$)	GEF (\$)	Total (\$)
1. Improved SPA System and Institutional-level capacity enables the expansion of the SPA	5,100,000	1,560,000	6,660,000
2. SPA management know-how is demonstrated, expanded and reinforced.	4,800,000	1,650,000	6,450,000
3. Strengthened SPA system effectively captures knowledge and enables replication of best practice.	3,500,000	1,564,545	5,064,545
Project management budget/cost*	1,500,000	530,000	2,030,000
Total project costs	14,900,000	5,304,545	20,204,545

\* This item is an aggregate cost of project management; breakdown of this aggregate amount is presented in table 19) below.

**Table 19. Project management Budget/cost**

Cost items	Estimated person weeks	GEF (\$)	Other sources (\$)	Project Total (\$)
Locally recruited consultants*	728	400,400	0	400,400
Project Coordinator (80% time)	208	156,000		
Project Administration Asst (100% time)	260	122,200		
Finance Assistant (100%)	260	122,200		
Internationally recruited consultants*	0	0	0	0
<i>Government staff time on project work (i.e. steering committee, working group meetings) - Project Director, MNRE/ Department of Specially Protected Area staff, SPA staff.</i>		0	400,000	400,000
Office facilities, equipment, vehicles and communications**		40,000	980,000	1,020,000
Travel to project sites**		60,000	120,000	180,000
Miscellaneous (petty cash, stationery, etc)		29,600	0	29,600
<b>Total</b>		<b>530,000</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>	<b>2,030,000</b>

\* Local and international consultants in this table are those who are hired for functions related to the management of project. Consultants who are hired to do a special task are referred to as consultants providing technical assistance (see details of these services in iii) below)

**Table 20. Consultants working for technical assistance components:**

Component	Estimated person weeks <sup>1</sup>	GEF(\$)	Other sources (\$)	Project total (\$)
<b>Local consultants*</b>				
Project coordinator's technical input to pilot site work and national SPA expansion & consolidation.	52	39,000		39,000
Project Technical Coordinator	260	195,000		195,000
Pilot Site Technical Experts (4)	780	460,200	124,800	584,200
Landscape gap analysis and conservation planning working group	48	48,000	48,000	96,000
Land code law and agricultural law and policy expert	24	24,000	24,000	48,000
Monitoring working groups (3)	60	60,000	96,000	156,000
Enforcement working groups (3)	48	48,000	96,000	144,000
IFM planning working groups	36	36,000	144,000	180,000
Community working groups	20	20,000	10,000	30,000
Web-site designer	20	20,000		20,000
<b>International consultants*</b>				
Gap analysis expert	12	36,000		36,000
Steppe/grassland landscape ecologist	12	36,000		36,000
Management effectiveness expert	8	24,000		24,000
Grassland restoration	10	30,000		30,000

IFM specialist	12	36,000		36,000
Sustainable grazing specialist	12	36,000		36,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1414</b>	<b>1,148,200</b>	<b>542,800</b>	<b>1,691,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> This figure is applicable to the respective GEF funding. Co-financed expert input will be at the cost/week determined by each respective co-funder.

**Table 21. Co-financing Sources**

Name of co-financier (for FSP)	Classification	Type	Amount (\$)	Status	
				Confirmed	Un-confirmed
MNRE & Regional Governments, regional sectoral institutions (Ministries of Natural Resources and Agriculture, RAS Steppe Institute)	Government	Cash	11,400,000	X	
MNRE and Regional Governments	Government	In-kind	2,800,000	X	
GEF Agency (UNDP)	International	Cash	10,000	X	
Private Sector companies (Orenburg and Kalmykia pilot regions)	Private Sector	Cash	390,000		
NGO (Private fund for steppe revitalization in Orenburg, EARAZA)	NGO	Cash	300,000	X	
<b>Total</b>			<b>14,900,000</b>		

### Cost-effectiveness

This project is designed to maximize its own cost effectiveness during implementation by: i) improving institutional effectiveness, thus ensuring that the impact-per-unit investment is improved; ii) sharing management benefits and costs with other stakeholder groups and consolidating SPA where appropriate, thus generating economies of scale. The project will seek to strengthen the national legal framework and institutional capacity of federal and regional-level conservation agencies to manage more cost-effectively the expanded SPA network and its enforcement and management efforts. One way the project seeks to do this is by helping to expand partnerships among SPA, agricultural entities and enforcement agencies. Through such partnerships, restrictions on land-use in certain types of SPA can be more cost-effectively enforced and existing technologies can be better applied to fire management or grassland restoration for example.

The project will continue to emphasize this point of cost-effectiveness of SPA. Indeed, SPA-based approaches will shift the focus from agency-specific problem management to interagency cooperation for implementing land-use policies that recognize the spatial heterogeneity of steppe habitats and the need to preserve the structure of steppe ecosystems. An important element of long-term cost effectiveness for the SPA network will involve permanently “bridging the gap” between MNRE-specific problem management to inter-agency (MNRE, MoA, State Land Cadastre) cooperation. This will generate benefits in agricultural productivity (pollination and pest control), allowing existing funds to be used more effectively.

### PART III: Management Arrangements



The Government of Russia (GOR) represented by the Ministry of Natural Resources & Ecology (MNRE) will execute the project according to UNDP National Execution Modality (NEX). After the project launch, the MNRE is expected to delegate certain execution authorities to its regional branches where the four pilot sites are located. The level of responsibility of the latter will be defined based on the governmental structure set at the federal and republican levels by the time of project start-up, and on the overall political situation. The governmental Executing Agency's responsibilities will include: (i) certifying expenditures under approved budgets and work plans; (ii) tracking and reporting on procurement and outputs; (iii) coordinating the financing from UNDP and GEF with that from other sources; (iv) preparation/approval of Terms of Reference for contractors and required tender documentation; and (v) chairing the Project Steering Committee (PSC). The National Executing Agency, both at federal and regional levels, will also facilitate the implementation of the required policy reforms. The UNDP will be responsible for: (i) financial management; and (ii) the final approval of payments to vendors, the procurement of goods, the approval of Terms of Reference, recruitment of consulting services, and sub-contracting upon request of the National Executing Agency. The implementation arrangements for the project have been designed to maximize transparency and accountability. Disbursement figures will be made publicly available. All stakeholders have accepted these arrangements.

Participatory decision-making is also highly stressed in the project. A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be formed to provide overall guidance and support for project implementation activities. To allow for effective decision-making and coordination with other projects, the PSC will include representatives of: the federal government (the MNRE, Department of Specially Protected Nature Areas), Ministry of Agriculture, UNDP Country Office, Regional administration, three SPA, Representatives of scientific community; Environmental NGOs. Relevant international environmental projects might wish to nominate their representatives as observers to the PSC. The PSC will monitor project implementation to ensure timely progress in attaining the desired results, and efficient coordination with other projects.

The PSC will meet twice in the first year and annually thereafter to review project progress and set major policy and implementation directions as required. The National Project Director (NPD) will chair the PSC. The NPD, who will be designated by the MNRE, will be responsible for carrying out the directives of the PSC and for ensuring the proper implementation of the project on behalf of the Government. In doing so, the NPD will be responsible for project delivery, reporting, accounting, monitoring and evaluation, and for the proper management and audit of project resources. The UNDP Country Office will support the project's implementation by maintaining the project budget and project expenditures, contracting project personnel, experts and subcontractors, carrying out procurement, and providing other assistance upon request of the National Executing Agency. The UNDP Country Office will also monitor the project's implementation and achievement of the project outputs and ensure the proper use of UNDP/GEF funds. Financial transactions, reporting and auditing will be carried out in compliance with the national regulations and UNDP rules and procedures for national execution. The UNDP Country Office will ensure the implementation of the day-to-day management and monitoring of the project operations through the appointed official in the UNDP Environment Unit and Project Officer based in Moscow.

Reporting to the PD and UNDP will be the Project Manager (PM). The PM will be in charge of daily implementation of the project and managing project activities and the smooth functioning of the Project Management and Coordination Unit (PMCU). The PMCU will be a small unit comprised of the PM, an Administrative Assistant, and a Finance Assistant. Also assisting the PM will be a Project Technical Coordinator, who will be responsible for technical oversight of all project work in the four pilot sites. He/she will oversee one pilot site technical expert (PSTE) in each of the pilot sites. Each PSTE will be responsible for working closely with stakeholders, consultants, and contractors in each pilot site to implement technical demonstration projects efficiently, effectively, and in a participatory manner.

Members of the PMCU will be full time employees of the project and will be chosen in an open and fair competitive manner following standard UNDP hiring procedures. The PM will be also responsible for the working level co-ordination of the other on-going relevant national and international projects, reporting to the appointed official in the UNDP Environment Unit. The PM's time will be split 80% for management and 20% for technical input.

In order to accord proper acknowledgement to GEF for providing funding, a GEF logo should appear on all relevant GEF project publications, including among others, project hardware and vehicles purchased with GEF funds. Any citation on publications regarding projects funded by GEF should also accord proper acknowledgment to GEF. The UNDP logo should be more prominent -- and separated from the GEF logo if possible, as UN visibility is important for security purposes.

#### **PART IV: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Budget**

Project monitoring and evaluation will be conducted in accordance with established UNDP and GEF procedures by the project team and the UNDP Country Office (UNDP-CO) with support from UNDP/GEF Regional Coordination Unit in Bratislava. The Logical Framework Matrix provides impact and outcome indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The METT tool is going to be used as one of the main instruments to monitor progress in PA management effectiveness. The M&E plan includes: inception report, project implementation reviews, quarterly operational reports, a mid-term and final evaluation, etc. Annex 6 outlines indicative cost estimates related to M&E activities. The project's Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will be presented and finalized at the Project's Inception Meeting following a collective fine-tuning of indicators, means of verification, and the full definition of project staff M&E responsibilities.

##### Project Inception Phase

A Project Inception Workshop will be conducted with the full project team, relevant government counterparts, co-financing partners, the UNDP-CO and representation from the UNDP-GEF Regional Coordinating Unit, as well as UNDP-GEF (HQs) as appropriate. A fundamental objective of this Inception Workshop will be to assist the project team to understand and take ownership of the project's goals and objectives, as well as finalize preparation of the project's first annual work plan on the basis of the project's logframe matrix. This will include reviewing the logframe (indicators, means of verification, assumptions), imparting additional detail as needed, and on the basis of this exercise finalize the Annual Work Plan (AWP) with precise and measurable performance indicators, and in a manner consistent with the expected outcomes for the project. Additionally, the purpose and objective of the Inception Workshop (IW) will be to: (i) introduce project staff with the UNDP-GEF *expanded team* which will support the project during its implementation, namely the CO and responsible Regional Coordinating Unit staff; (ii) detail the roles, support services and complementary responsibilities of UNDP-CO and RCU staff vis à vis the project team; (iii) provide a detailed overview of UNDP-GEF reporting and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) requirements, with particular emphasis on the Annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs) and related documentation, as well as mid-term and final evaluations. Equally, the IW will provide an opportunity to inform the project team on UNDP project related budgetary planning, budget reviews, and mandatory budget rephasings. The IW will also provide an opportunity for all parties to understand their roles, functions, and responsibilities within the project's decision-making structures, including reporting and communication lines, and conflict resolution mechanisms. The Terms of Reference for project staff and decision-making structures will be discussed again, as needed in order to clarify for all, each party's responsibilities during the project's implementation phase.

##### Monitoring responsibilities and events

A detailed schedule of project reviews meetings will be developed by the project management, in consultation with project implementation partners and stakeholder representatives and incorporated in the Project Inception Report. Such a schedule will include: (i) tentative time frames for Steering Committee Meetings, or other relevant advisory and/or coordination mechanisms and (ii) project related Monitoring and Evaluation activities.

Day to day monitoring of implementation progress will be the responsibility of the Project Manager based on the project's Annual Work Plan and its indicators. The Project Team will inform the UNDP-CO of any delays or difficulties faced during implementation so that the appropriate support or corrective measures can be adopted in a timely and remedial fashion. The Project Manager will fine-tune the progress and performance/impact indicators of the project in consultation with the full project team at the Inception Workshop with support from UNDP-CO and assisted by the UNDP-GEF Regional Coordinating Unit. Specific targets for the first year implementation progress indicators together with their means of verification will be developed at this Workshop. These will be used to assess whether implementation is proceeding at the intended pace and in the right direction and will form part of the Annual Work Plan. The local implementing agencies will also take part in the Inception Workshop in which a common vision of overall project goals will be established. Targets and indicators for subsequent years would be defined annually as part of the internal evaluation and planning processes undertaken by the project team.

Periodic monitoring of implementation progress will be undertaken by the UNDP-CO through quarterly meetings with the project local implementation group, or more frequently as deemed necessary. This will allow parties to take stock and to troubleshoot any problems pertaining to the project in a timely fashion to ensure smooth implementation of project activities. UNDP Country Offices and UNDP-GEF RCUs as appropriate, will conduct yearly visits to projects that have field sites, or more often based on an agreed upon schedule to be detailed in the project's Inception Report/Annual Work Plan to assess first hand project progress. Any other member of the Steering Committee can also accompany, as decided by the PSC. A Field Visit Report will be prepared by the CO and circulated no less than one month after the visit to the project team, all PSC members, and UNDP-GEF.

Annual Monitoring will be ensured by means of the project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings<sup>19</sup> being the highest policy-level meeting of the parties directly involved in the implementation of a project. PSC meetings will be held at least once every year. The first such meeting will be held within the first twelve months of the start of full implementation. The project implementation team will prepare a harmonized Annual Project Report and Project Implementation Review (APR/PIR) and submit it to UNDP-CO and the UNDP-GEF regional office at least two weeks prior to the PSC for review and comments. The APR/PIR will be used as one of the basic documents for discussions in the PSC meeting. The project proponent will present the APR to the SC, highlighting policy issues and recommendations for the decision of the PSC members. The project proponent also informs the participants of any agreement reached by stakeholders during the APR/PIR preparation on how to resolve operational issues. Separate reviews of each project component may also be conducted if necessary.

#### Project Monitoring Reporting

The Project Manager in conjunction with the UNDP-GEF extended team will be responsible for the preparation and submission of the following reports that form part of the monitoring process.

A Project Inception Report will be prepared immediately following the Inception Workshop. It will include a detailed First Year Work Plan divided in quarterly time-frames detailing the activities and

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<sup>19</sup> A SCM mechanism as such is similar to the Tripartite Review (TPR) formally required for the UNDP/GEF projects, and differs from the latter only in the composition of the review panel, which, in case of the SC, is broader than that of the TPR.

progress indicators that will guide implementation during the first year of the project. This Work Plan would include the dates of specific field visits, support missions from the UNDP-CO or the Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) or consultants, as well as time-frames for meetings of the project's decision making structures. The Report will also include the detailed project budget for the first full year of implementation, prepared on the basis of the Annual Work Plan, and including any monitoring and evaluation requirements to effectively measure project performance during the targeted 12 months time-frame. The Inception Report will include a more detailed narrative on the institutional roles, responsibilities, coordinating actions and feedback mechanisms of project related partners. In addition, a section will be included on progress to date on project establishment and start-up activities and an update of any changed external conditions that may effect project implementation. When finalized the report will be circulated to project counterparts who will be given a period of one calendar month in which to respond with comments or queries. Prior to this circulation of the IR, the UNDP Country Office and UNDP-GEF's Regional Coordinating Unit will review the document.

The APR/PIR is an annual monitoring process mandated by the GEF<sup>20</sup>. It has become an essential management and monitoring tool for project managers and offers the main vehicle for extracting lessons from ongoing projects. It also forms a part of UNDP's Country Office central oversight, monitoring and project management, as well as represents a key issue for the discussion at the Steering Committee meetings. Once the project has been under implementation for a year, the CO must complete an APR/PIR together with the project implementation team. The APR/PIR can be prepared any time during the year (July-June) and ideally prior to the SCM. The APR/PIR should then be discussed at the SCM so that the result would be an APR/PIR that has been agreed upon by the project, the executing agency, UNDP CO and the key stakeholders. The individual APR/PIRs are collected, reviewed and analyzed by the RC prior to sending them to the focal area clusters at the UNDP/GEF headquarters.

Quarterly Progress reports: Short reports outlining main updates in project progress will be provided quarterly to the local UNDP Country Office and the UNDP-GEF regional office by the project team. See format attached.

As and when called for by UNDP, UNDP-GEF or the Implementing Partner, the project team will prepare Specific Thematic Reports, focusing on specific issues or areas of activity. The request for a Thematic Report will be provided to the project team in written form by UNDP and will clearly state the issue or activities that need to be reported on. These reports can be used as a form of lessons learnt exercise, specific oversight in key areas, or as troubleshooting exercises to evaluate and overcome obstacles and difficulties encountered. UNDP is requested to minimize its requests for Thematic Reports, and when such are necessary will allow reasonable timeframes for their preparation by the project team.

During the last three months of the project the project team will prepare the Project Terminal Report. This comprehensive report will summarize all activities, achievements and outputs of the Project, lessons learnt, objectives met, or not achieved, structures and systems implemented, etc. and will be the definitive statement of the Project's activities during its lifetime. It will also recommend any further steps that may need to be taken to ensure sustainability and replicability of the Project's activities.

### **Independent Evaluation**

The project will be subjected to at least two independent external evaluations as follows:

An independent Mid-Term Evaluation will be undertaken at the mid of the third year of implementation. The Mid-Term Evaluation will determine progress being made towards the achievement of outcomes and will identify course correction if needed. It will focus on the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of

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<sup>20</sup> The GEF M&E Unit provides the scope and content of the PIR. In light of the similarities of both APR (standard UNDP requirement) and PIR (GEF format), UNDP/GEF has prepared a harmonized format - an APR/PIR

project implementation; will highlight issues requiring decisions and actions; and will present initial lessons learned about project design, implementation and management. Findings of this review will be incorporated as recommendations for enhanced implementation during the final half of the project's term. The organization, terms of reference and timing of the mid-term evaluation will be decided after consultation between the parties to the project document. The Terms of Reference for this Mid-term evaluation will be prepared by the UNDP CO based on guidance from the Regional Coordinating Unit and UNDP-GEF.

An independent Final Evaluation will take place three months prior to the terminal Steering Committee meeting, and will focus on the same issues as the mid-term evaluation. The final evaluation will also look at impact and sustainability of results, including the contribution to capacity development and the achievement of global environmental goals. The Final Evaluation should also provide recommendations for follow-up activities. The Terms of Reference for this evaluation will be prepared by the UNDP CO based on guidance from the Regional Coordinating Unit and UNDP-GEF.

#### Audit Clause

The Government will provide the Resident Representative with certified periodic financial statements, and with an annual audit of the financial statements relating to the status of UNDP (including GEF) funds according to the established procedures set out in the Programming and Finance manuals. The Audit will be conducted by the legally recognized auditor of the Government, or by a commercial auditor engaged by the Government.

**Table 22:** Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Budget

Type of M&E activity	Responsible Parties	Budget US\$ <i>Excluding project staff time</i>	Time frame
Inception Workshop & associated arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PM</li> <li>▪ UNDP CO</li> <li>▪ UNDP GEF</li> </ul>	Indicative cost: 14,000	Within first two months of project start up
Inception Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project Team</li> <li>▪ UNDP CO</li> <li>▪ Consultancy support if needed</li> </ul>	Indicative cost 5,000 (stakeholder consultations, consultancy translation)	Immediately following IW
Measurement of Means of Verification for Project Purpose Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PM will oversee the hiring for specific studies and institutions, delegate responsibilities to relevant team members, and</li> <li>▪ Ensure hiring outside experts if deemed necessary</li> </ul>	To be finalized in Inception Phase and Workshop. Indicative cost 12,000	Start, mid and end of project
Measurement of Means of Verification for Project Progress and Performance (measured on an annual basis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Oversight by Project GEF Regional Advisor and PM</li> <li>▪ Measurements by regional field officers and local IAs</li> </ul>	To be determined as part of the Annual Work Plan's preparation. Indicative cost 12,000	Annually prior to APR/PIR and to the definition of annual work plans
APR/PIR; GEF-4 Biodiversity Tracking Tool; METT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project Team</li> <li>▪ UNDP-CO</li> <li>▪ UNDP-GEF</li> </ul>	Indicative cost: 0	Annually
Steering Committee Meetings and relevant meeting proceedings (minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PM</li> <li>▪ UNDP CO</li> </ul>	Indicative cost: 44,000 (travel costs for relevant project stakeholders)	Following Project IW and subsequently at least once a year

Type of M&E activity	Responsible Parties	Budget US\$ <i>Excluding project staff time</i>	Time frame
Quarterly status reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project team</li> </ul>	Indicative cost: 0	To be determined by Project team and UNDP CO
Technical reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project team</li> <li>▪ Hired consultants as needed</li> </ul>	Indicative cost: 30,000	To be determined by Project Team and UNDP-CO
Project Publications (e.g. technical manuals, field guides)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project team</li> <li>▪ Hired consultants as needed</li> </ul>	Indicative cost: 40,000	To be determined by Project Team and UNDP-CO
Mid-term External Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project team</li> <li>▪ UNDP- CO</li> <li>▪ UNDP-GEF RCU</li> <li>▪ External Consultants (i.e. evaluation team)</li> </ul>	Indicative cost: 55,000	At the mid-point of project implementation.
Final External Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project team,</li> <li>▪ UNDP-CO</li> <li>▪ UNDP-GEF RCU</li> <li>▪ External Consultants (i.e. evaluation team)</li> </ul>	Indicative cost: 55,000	At the end of project implementation
Terminal Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project team</li> <li>▪ UNDP-CO</li> <li>▪ External Consultant</li> </ul>	Indicative cost: 5,000	At least one month before the end of the project
Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project team</li> <li>▪ UNDP-GEF RCU (suggested formats for documenting best practices, etc)</li> </ul>	Indicative cost: 14,000	Yearly
Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ UNDP-CO</li> <li>▪ Project team</li> </ul>	Indicative cost: 25,000 (average \$5000 per year + 10,000 for final)	Yearly
Visits to field sites (UNDP staff travel to be charged to IA fees)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ UNDP Country Office</li> <li>▪ UNDP-GEF RCU (as appropriate)</li> <li>▪ Government representatives</li> </ul>	Indicative cost: 54,000 (4-5 visits per year)	Yearly
TOTAL INDICATIVE COST Excluding project team staff time and UNDP staff and travel expenses		US\$ 365,000	

## Learning and Knowledge Sharing

Results from the project will be disseminated within and beyond the project intervention zone through a number of existing information sharing networks and forums. In addition, the project will participate, as relevant and appropriate, in UNDP-GEF sponsored networks, organized for senior projected personnel working on projects that share common characteristics. The project will identify and participate as appropriate, in scientific, policy-based networks such as MPA News that may benefit from the project's lessons learned and/or be of benefit to the project.

The project will identify, analyze, and share lessons learned that might be beneficial in the design and implementation of similar future projects. Identifying and analyzing lessons learned is an on-going process. The need to communicate such lessons is one of the project's central contributions and this will be done at least on an annual basis by producing Biodiversity Experience Notes (BEN). UNDP/GEF shall provide a format and assist the project team in categorizing, documenting and reporting on lessons learned. To this end a sufficient amount of project resources will need to be allocated for these activities.

## **PART V: Legal Context**

This Project Document shall be the instrument referred to as such in Article I of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the United Nations Development Programme, signed by the parties on 17 November 1993. The host country implementing agency shall, for the purpose of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement, refer to the government co-operating agency described in that Agreement. The UNDP Resident Representative in Moscow is authorized to effect in writing the following types of revision to this Project Document, provided that he/she has verified the agreement thereto by the UNDP-GEF Unit and is assured that the other signatories to the Project Document have no objection to the proposed changes: (i) Revision of, or addition to, any of the annexes to the Project Document; (ii) Revisions which do not involve significant changes in the immediate objectives, outputs or activities of the project, but are caused by the rearrangement of the inputs already agreed to or by cost increases due to inflation; (iii) Mandatory annual revisions which re-phase the delivery of agreed project inputs or increased expert or other costs due to inflation or take into account agency expenditure flexibility; and (iv) Inclusion of additional annexes and attachments only as set out here in this Project Document.

## **SECTION II: STRATEGIC RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND GEF INCREMENT**

### **PART I: Incremental Reasoning**

#### **A. PROJECT BACKGROUND**

With an area of 17,075,200 square kilometers, Russia is the largest country in the world. It occupies much of easternmost Europe and northern Asia, stretching from Norway to the Pacific Ocean and from the Black Sea to the Arctic Ocean. Russia straddles eight biomes: polar deserts, arctic and sub-arctic forest tundra, taiga, broad-leaved forests, steppe, semi-arid and arid zones. The country is a repository of globally significant biodiversity hosting 14 Global 200 Ecoregions (9 terrestrial, 3 freshwater and 2 marine), eight in their entirety. In terms of species diversity, about 8% of global vascular plant flora, 7% of mammal fauna and almost 8% of bird fauna are represented in Russia. Ecosystems harboring relict biota of glacial and interglacial periods and many species that are rare today are particularly widespread in European Russia and eastern Siberia.

The world's largest zone of the **steppe biome** - the vast *Eurasian Steppe* - is found in southwest Russia (European Russia and southern Siberia) and neighboring countries in Central Asia. There are two major sub-regions of the steppe region of Russia: Pontic-Kazakh Steppe Subregion and East Siberian Inner-Asian Steppe Sub-region. The Pontic-Kazakh steppe occupies a vast area stretching for almost 3,500 km from west to east and for more than 1,200 km from north to south and stretches from Romania and Ukraine in the west to the Altay Mountains in the east. The East Siberian Inner-Asian Sub-region of the Russian steppe stretches from the intermountain depressions of Altai Mountains in the West almost 2,000 km to the Amur River basin in the East.

Eight of the thirteen steppe eco-regions that make up the Steppe Biome are present in Russia (Pontic steppe, Kazakh forest steppe, Kazakh steppe, Sayan Intermontane steppe, Daurian steppe, Mongolian-Manchurian grassland, Selenge-Orkhon forest steppe, and South Siberian forest steppe). One of these eco-regions, the Daurian steppe, is a Global 200 Ecoregion. The floristic diversity of the steppes changes substantially from the west to east and from north to south. It is estimated that more than 6,000 species of plants, about 100 species of mammals, up to 180 species of birds and thousands of species of insects and other invertebrates are found in the steppe grasslands. Over 110 of the flowering plant species and 119

animal species are associated with steppe habitats, approximately 26% of all flora and fauna species listed in the Red Data Book of the Russian Federation.

The project objective is to develop the capacity and ecologically based enabling tools and mechanisms for the consolidation, expansion and disturbance based integrated management of a system of protected natural areas at the landscape level within the steppe biome. The three main outcomes of the project are: 1) Consolidation and expansion of the system of steppe PA; 2) Strengthened operational management capacities for PA site management; 3) Strengthened institutional management capacities for managing an expanded PA system.

The project will improve the coverage of steppe ecosystems by 867,400 hectares by: a) consolidating three zakazniks into Chernye Zemli Zapovednik in Kalmykia, expanding the Zapovednik by 496,200 hectares, b) facilitating the expansion or establishment of five SPA in Kursk, Orenburg and Dauria regions covering an additional 305,200 hectares; and c) creating the enabling environment for the protection of an additional 30,000 ha of steppe ecosystems in the Orenburg steppe. The project is also designed to catalyze innovation in steppe-land conservation beyond traditional protected areas into “specially managed steppe areas” or SMSA and will pilot the establishment of two SMSA covering 36,000 ha in the Central Russian steppe. Finally, the project is designed to improve management effectiveness of a network of 15 PA across Russia covering over 1.8 million ha.

## **B. INCREMENTAL COST ASSESSMENT**

### **Business-as-Usual**

Baseline: The total area of Russia’s steppe regions is estimated at an enormous 500,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Only 0.11 % of this is protected formally within protected areas. Less than 0.2% of the national network of PA can be counted as “steppe protected areas. However, change characterizes the social, economic, and climatic contexts in which Russia’s steppe areas exist, presenting new opportunities and new challenges for the SPA system and its managers. Economic change will continue to increase pressure on agricultural/steppe landscapes across the country, generating new threats to steppe biodiversity but also presenting new opportunities for partnerships and landscape-scale conservation of steppe ecosystems anchored by different types of specially managed steppe areas. The timing is right for incremental investments that will enable the SPA network to understand the gaps, anticipate the trends, and measure and methodically improve effectiveness in order to develop a SPA system for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Component 1: The Government of Russia has committed to expanding the national PA network. However in a baseline situation, the MNRE will be unable to develop and apply a long-term strategy for expanding and improving the effectiveness of the SPA network. To date, no gap analysis has been done at a national, system-wide level of the “coverage” provided by the 15 existing SPA in terms of species, plant and animal communities, habitats, ecosystems, and eco-regions. No strategic plan for expansion has been developed and proposed for multi-sector support. In the baseline situation, the SPA system will continue to suffer from gaps in its coverage of the range of habitats and ecosystems and gaps in its management capacity.

Developing a stronger sub-system of SPA that protects a representative cross-section of steppe ecosystems will be difficult without concerted effort to generate the information, institutional and human capacity needed to support such a process. In the baseline situation, the MNRE’s Department for Specially Protected Areas will face capacity constraints in achieving this Government commitment and will require assistance from other non-profit NGO and academic stakeholders to continue down this path to finalize new SPA consultations and planning documentation.



As in many countries, in Russia the system-wide perspective of the protected area system historically has been biased towards forest and mountain systems in terms of prioritization, equipment and methodologies and staff capacity. In the baseline situation, this will likely continue. Traditionally in Russia as in nearly every other country, steppe lands have been recognized for their agricultural values only. Only recently have steppe areas been the subject of increased attention in Russia, with stakeholders taking up the issue in Russia and with the World Commission on Protected Areas (WPCA) Grasslands Protected Area Task Force recent meeting in Huhot, China.

But to date, no effort has been made to identify the main trends affecting SPA effectiveness and develop a strategic approach in response. As a result, minimal capacity exists within the SPA system to respond to the main threats facing steppe biodiversity in Russia. In the baseline situation few if any new and innovative policy tools will be developed at the intersection of biodiversity and agriculture, enabling the ecological and biological importance of the much larger portion of steppe lands outside of protected areas to be recognized and conserved under existing agricultural land categories and designations. In the baseline situation, Russia's emerging SPA network will continue to struggle to expand its ecological coverage to include ecosystems and habitats that are under-represented in the current system.

Component II. Improving Operational Management Capacities. Protected area management in Russia is still evolving and improving. But to date, no effort has been made to identify the main trends affecting SPA effectiveness and to develop a strategic approach in response to improve operational management capacity within the unique ecology and policy context of steppe areas. In the baseline situation, the existing SPA system will continue to have minimal capacity to respond to the main threats facing steppe biodiversity in Russia.

Under the baseline situation, operational management capacities for SPA will remain under-developed and inadequate to the task of managing steppe ecosystems. In the baseline situation, capacity building for SPA staff is done on an ad-hoc basis and is not linked to the needs of an overall strategic management plan. The shortcomings in the management planning process discussed above affect the capacity building program as well. The isolated nature of most reserves' planning processes limits the ability of each PA to seek out and pursue innovative capacity building opportunities, through partnerships with other SPA inside and outside of Russia and through partnerships with other government agencies and the private sector.

*Integrated Fire Management (IFM) or Grazing Management.* For example, under the baseline scenario, Russia's SPA will continue to be ill equipped to deal proactively with IFM and grazing management. Although there is increasing recognition of the importance of grazing to steppe ecosystems in Russia, grazing is still forbidden in many SPA and in the baseline situation steppe ecology within most SPA will continue to suffer from inadequate grazing. With respect to fire management, not one SPA has an IFM plan or program. Some SPA recently have begun to conduct education & outreach to increase awareness of fire problems. But these efforts are hampered because IFM materials are not available in the Russian language. Similarly, Reserve staff people have no training in monitoring to detect signs of under-grazing or over-grazing or too much fire or too little fire.

Grassland restoration must be an important element of a long-term strategic approach to expand the number of hectares under conservation management in Russia's steppe zone. Under a baseline situation, grassland restoration will receive inadequate attention and resources. These efforts will be characterized by a small group of deeply committed individuals making a small bit of money stretch a long way. But as impressive as these efforts are, they will be hampered by their ad-hoc nature as well as inadequate resources (financial, experiential, and methodological) and inadequate support from global best practice. In the baseline situation, grassland restoration will fall far short of the needs across Russia's vast agro-steppe landscape. Other management challenges will also go unaddressed in steppe regions, including

proactive management of priority steppe species and communities such as saiga and Mongolian gazelle, Russia's increasingly rare meadow steppe plant communities, and a range of rare and endangered birdlife.

Staff capacities. Most SPA fund modest field monitoring and research focused on: weather/climatological conditions; wildlife populations and harvesting numbers; wildlife and botanical surveys. Most reserves have funding and positions committed to monitoring work, but monitoring tends to be done in an ad-hoc way by SPA. Staff lack the expertise to conduct more modern monitoring work. There is a fair amount of historical data on the flora and fauna of many SPA – a result of the prolific work done during the Soviet period. At the same time, many different institutions currently conduct research in and around Russia's SPA. These and many other institutions have ongoing research programs covering: wildlife and ecology, agriculture, climatological parameters, and other relevant subjects. Many of these research projects involve significant international collaboration.

Data and information generated by such research in various SPA is summarized every year by each respective SPA in an annual “state of the environment” report compiled and submitted to MNRE in Moscow. But in the “business as usual” future scenario, the SPA will be able to utilize very little of this data to generate new insights into trends affecting biodiversity in the Reserve and to generate new management priorities. To date, little of this information has been incorporated into reserve management planning and practice or a national-level SPA knowledge management system. Reserve science staff are trained to collect data, compile it into tables, and submit it in a report. They are not trained to analyze data, to assess trends, and to use these analyses and assessments to inform the development of reserve management priorities.

Reserve staffs need help in learning how to do two important things. First, staff must strengthen their capacity to apply the research and monitoring data to ongoing reserve management work and planning. Of course this does happen, but it is not normal procedure. For example, in Dauria, Mongolian gazelle are increasingly coming to the Russian portion of the Daurian steppe. These movements must be tracked and recorded in order to understand the trends that this may entail and the subsequent challenges for the protected area to adapt to this expanded use of the Russian Daurian by Mongolian gazelle. Secondly, staffs lack the broader perspective or the skills to consolidate and present data to scientific colleagues and the general public. SPA staff must strengthen their capacity to get their information into the public realm, and need training in how to prepare articles and scientific presentations.

In future years, SPA will also be grappling with how to work effectively with the resources at hand in implementing effective monitoring and conservation programs in the short term, while forming partnerships and orchestrating collaborative work that allow it to build its own capacity, strengthen its partnership with the local community, and bring more resources to bear on its SPA management challenges over time. There are promising developments upon which to build. For example, Kalmykia State University and the Imperial College of London are working together to design and implement a sustainable monitoring program for saiga antelope.

Component 3: Institutional capacities for managing expanded SPA system. *Cooperative governance & co-management.* Strictly protected nature reserves or *zapovedniks* were created in Russia for conservation, science and field training. The public was forbidden from entering *zapovedniks*, which were managed with an inward looking, fortress-like mentality. These old habits are changing among Russia's SPA, but their legacy remains. For example, this kind of perspective hampers the ability of reserves to look beyond their borders in order to anticipate change and emerging threats. It means they have little experience in building strategic partnerships with relevant stakeholders from “outside” the reserve in the agricultural sectors. It means that SPA are still learning how to coordinate effectively with the local communities on controlling fire and grazing as well as in land-use planning in an agricultural landscape. Not one SPA has yet developed effective collaboration with the MoA and other government agencies working in and around the SPA. This is crucial to helping SPA deal effectively with the threats

to the steppe environment beyond their ability to control alone. In the baseline situation, this low level of collaboration will likely continue. But many SPA have contacts with neighboring landowners and land users. For example, Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina and Altaiskiy Zapovedniks have Community Advisory Councils comprised of local people.

In the baseline situation, individual SPA will be left to their own devices in terms of negotiating and forming partnerships with other agencies and stakeholders to improve the management effectiveness of steppe biodiversity. Inadequate partnering between and among existing federal SPA and federal and regional SPA will hamper conservation effectiveness. No official policies or guidelines and related tools will be developed to catalyze the SPA system's ability to form effective partnerships for conservation across Russia. This will have the effect of slowing down the rate of innovation across the system of SPA and hampering the ability of fellow PA in the system to replicate this innovation and add new innovations of their own.

For example, in Kalmykia, three federal level zakazniks were re-assigned to the MNRE from the MoA. The question of how these zakazniks will be managed has yet to be resolved and in a baseline situation, the necessary work to do this will likely remain undone. It is proposed that the functions on the protection and control will be re-assigned to the neighboring Chiornye Zemli zapovednik. However, financing and staffing issues are not yet settled at this time.

The baseline situation does offer some promising trends upon which a future project can build. For example, there is an agreement between the MNRE of Kalmykia and the Chiornye Zemli reserve on the joint protection of saiga antelope. Periodic joint protection, monitoring and wildlife census measures are implemented under the agreement, mainly beyond the reserve borders. However, in the baseline situation, little opportunity will be provided for Kalmykian stakeholders to share these experiences with colleagues in Dauria or other steppe regions facing landscape-scale conservation challenges for large ungulates.

*Management plans for SPA.* In the baseline situation, improving management and field conservation capacity will be a struggle for most SPA in Russia. None of the SPA have a long-term strategic management plan developed in consultation with local stakeholders. Rather, each reserve annually prepares three types of plans for the annual budgeting process: (i) a research plan; (ii) a conservation and law enforcement plan; and (iii) an ecological education plan. This is an internal MNRE process, done largely in isolation from other community and government agency stakeholders. Each SPA prepares an annual "wish-list" budget for submission to the MNRE office in Moscow and each year the reserve receives approximately 1/5 of this amount for its annual appropriation. The reserve's workplan is then based upon the amount of the funds budgeted by the Ministry for that SPA each year. This means that all activities in the Reserve must be scaled down proportionally to the size of that particular year's budget appropriation.

This approach hampers capacity building for each reserve in three ways. First, it forces the reserve into a "survival" mentality and makes it difficult to be strategic and think about long-term planning. Second, this survival mentality hampers the Reserve's ability to think in terms of practical, step-by-step approaches to advance its management agenda, from a basic level, to a medium level, to a higher level of complexity and intensity over time. And third, it provides little opportunity for the Reserve to cultivate serendipity: to benefit from unexpected linkages made during a consultative planning process and the opportunities that could be generated from this.

*Collaborative agreements for joint steppe ecosystem management planning and operations across boundaries.* But in a baseline situation, two such opportunities, DIPA and the Russian-Kazakh steppe border in the Orenburg region, will remain under-developed. The Dauria International Protected Area (DIPA) of China, Mongolia, and Russia was established in March 1994 in order to build cooperation and

join the conservation efforts among the management of three adjacent nature reserves. Each country established a nature reserve during the 1980s, and by the early 1990s each site had been listed on the IUCN and Ramsar lists. Today, DIPA agreements allow for joint scientific research on several charismatic species, including Mongolian gazelle (*Procapra gutturosa*), Swan Goose (*Anser cygnoides*), White-naped Crane (*Grus vipio*), and Red-crowned Crane (*Grus japonensis*), as well as many other animal and plant species.

DIPA was founded according to the Agreement between the MNRE (Russian Federation), Ministry of Nature and Environment (Mongolia) and Agency on Environmental Protection (People's Republic of China) on the creation of a joint protected area. A Joint Commission comprised of the three PA is supposed to meet as frequently as possible with smaller working group meetings being held in between. The meetings are now held biannually, the most recent one being in 2006. At the 2006 meeting, the Joint Commission adopted a Program of Collaboration for 2006-2010 and agreed upon the basic elements of their cooperation. This included scientific activity (like creating an inventory of all of the flora/fauna on the territory of DIPA and site monitoring according to joint methods), collaboration on new ideas for research, environmental education, and protection of the area itself from poaching and other illegal activities. These activities are realized only partially because of difficulties in crossing the border and communication barriers (language and communication facilities).

With respect to the Russian-Kazakhstan border, there are no steppe protected areas in Kazakhstan on the border and there are no collaborative agreements with Kazakhstan similar to DIPA. The two countries do have a very active bilateral relationship, however, but under the baseline scenario, joint steppe conservation work will remain in its nascent, undeveloped stage. Russia's recent signing of the Bonn Convention MoU on Saiga opens up the potential for co-management between Russia and Kazakhstan of shared wildlife and steppe plant and animal community resources, but in the baseline situation, this opportunity for developing a collaborative agreement will be slow in developing.

*Knowledge management system.* In a business as usual scenario, the MNRE will continue to have difficulty coping with both the everyday burdens of managing the system of SPA and improving the effectiveness of the system in a strategic manner. Discussions on steppe zoning and SPA planning have never been held in Russia. Other sub-sets of Russia's national PA system have done this: for example, the marine protected area managers and stakeholders have met sporadically to learn from each other's experiences. But for now, the only way for SPA managers to exchange experience and share knowledge across the network of SPA in Russia is through their personal contacts with colleagues. Improving peer-to-peer learning among SPA has not received focused attention. No interactive website exists to enable SPA staff nationwide to interact and share lessons learned. In the baseline situation, a language barrier will prevent most SPA staff across Russia from being able to contribute to and benefit from global resources on steppe/prairie/grassland management, such as the online professional newsletter "Grassland Restoration Network" which is only available in English.

MNRE policy calls for every staff member to participate in an off-site training program each year, but in the baseline scenario, SPA are not able to afford this. There is no specialized national system for training of SPA staff and no regular training planned. Rather, training is conducted on an ad-hoc and opportunistic basis. Reserve staffs are invited occasionally to participate in various conferences and workshops. At the local level some SPA periodically sends staff to computer school or inspector training school, depending upon budget resources. In the absence of GEF investment, the baseline scenario will see a continued lack of proactive knowledge management, replication of best-practices across the SPA network, and minimal needs-based training on a system-wide level for Russia's SPA.

System-level SPA management effectiveness measuring and monitoring. In the baseline situation, there is no real measurement of system-level effectiveness and performance of SPA. Long-term strategic planning and capacity building will continue to be a lower priority due to inadequate funding and

experiential gaps in how to assess institutional effectiveness. There are some mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and reporting and learning, but they are limited and weak. In the baseline situation, effectiveness will not be measured in a way that supports and encourages adaptive management. Indeed most SPA managers consider their year a success if they are simply able to obtain sufficient budgetary resources to pay staff. This is deemed “effective” and for good reasons. Under a baseline situation, the SPA network will continue to have difficulty understanding that defining and measuring effectiveness is inextricably tied to the ability of the network to obtain sufficient resources to be effective. In the absence of GEF catalytic investment, effectiveness and funding will remain decoupled.

In the baseline situation, this threat context will change rapidly for Russia’s SPA but there will be no proactive, strategic vision that enables SPA to anticipate these threats and begin building their capacity to mitigate and prevent. Climate change is placing increasing pressure on the resiliency of steppe biodiversity and may potentially cause a species interaction mismatch, shifts in vegetation zones on plains and altitudinal belts in mountains, and alterations in ecosystem structure. Unless protected areas are able to apply new and more flexible conservation tools, they may partly lose their nature conservation value due to such climate-driven changes. But climate change is not the only threat to steppe systems and the viability of steppe protected areas. Others include: plowing of virgin and formerly cultivated steppe lands; inappropriate oil and mineral extraction and other development infrastructure leading to fragmentation and destruction of steppe habitats.

### **Global Environmental Benefits**

The project’s systemic interventions will secure long-term global benefits by establishing and expanding an SPA network to improve its bio-geographic representation and improving its management effectiveness. Global benefits will primarily be realized by expanding the coverage of the SPA network by nearly 50% to include protection of an additional 867,000 ha. Global benefits will also be realized by improving, in a measurable way, the management effectiveness of the network of over 15 SPA covering approximately 1.8 million ha to provide effective protection to the hugely diverse ecological mosaic of habitats and biotopes that comprise Russia’s steppe zone and shelter IUCN critically endangered, endangered and threatened, vulnerable, and near-threatened species, such as the Saiga antelope (*saiga tartarica*), the Mongolian gazelle (*Procapra gutturosa*), Steppe cat (*Felis manul*), the Daurian hedgehog (*Mesechinus dauuricus*), the Mongolian marmot (*Marmota sibirica*), Siberian crane (*Grus leucogeranus*), the Hooded (*Grus monachus*), White-naped (*Grus vipio*), Common (*Grus grus*), and Demoiselle cranes (*Anthropoides virgo*), and the Swan goose (*Anser cygnoides*).

Russia’s steppe zone contains 88 Important Bird Areas. Russia is recognized as the most important European country for the conservation of steppe birds, harbouring 21 of the 27 bird species whose European population are 75% or more concentrated in steppe habitats. Russia supports 39% of the total European breeding population of these 27 species—the largest percentage of any European country. Ten of these 27 breeding steppe species are of global conservation concern; Russia harbours nine of them – more than any other European country. These nine species are: Pallid Harrier (*Circus macrourus*), Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*), Saker (*Falco cherrug*), Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*), Little Bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*), Sociable Lapwing (*Vanellus gregarius*), Slender-Billed Curlew (*Numenius tenuirostris*) and Black-winged Pratincole (*Glareola nordmanni*).

### **Results Framework**

The proposed Results Framework is summarized in the Logical Framework Matrix in Section II Part II. The three project Outcomes will ensure that:

- New steppe areas are protected in an expanded SPA system. This will amount to at least 1.8 million hectares of newly protected steppe habitat under the SPA network.

- Systemic capacity is sufficiently developed first by a re-conceptualization of the SPA network derived from a strategic analysis of gaps in coverage of the SPA network and gaps in capacity of the network to address critical challenges. It is also sufficiently developed in part by establishing for the first time, a systematic program to measure and monitor system-wide effectiveness.
- The institutional capacity of SPA staff is developed in addressing the key threats to steppe biodiversity in Russia, as demonstrated through project-supported work in three pilot SPA sites. It is also improved in part by establishing for the first time, a systematic program to measure and monitor individual SPA effectiveness.

### **Incremental Reasoning**

A significant baseline of government funding, staffing, and demonstrated commitment to Russia's protected area system exists. But steppe ecosystems have been under-protected historically. Under the 'business-as-usual' situation, the SPA network would expand far more slowly than its threat context and barrier baseline evolves. Without the project, the process of improving the effectiveness of SPA would face significant barriers in terms of poor cross agency collaboration, over-emphasis on traditional one-sector approach to steppe conservation, and experiential and knowledge shortcomings in addressing key threats to steppe biodiversity and SPA effectiveness. GEF incremental funding will be critical in helping to overcome these barriers, catalyze network expansion, introduce new steppe management and conservation tools, and enable measurement and improvement of effectiveness at the individual SPA and system levels.

### **Co-financing**

MNRE & Regional Governments	14,200,000
NGO	300,000
Private Sector	390,000
UNDP	10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,900,000</b>

## PART II: Logical Framework Analysis

<b>This project will contribute to achieving the following Country Programme Outcome as defined in CPAP or CPD:</b> Outcome 3. Improved environmental sustainability	
<b>Country Programme Outcome Indicators:</b> Improved environmental sustainability of development processes/ Environmental dimension in environmental policy	
<b>Primary applicable Key Environment and Sustainable Development Key Result Area (same as that on the cover page, circle one):</b> 1. Mainstreaming environment and energy	
<b>Applicable GEF Strategic Objective and Program:</b> SO: Catalyze Sustainability of Protected Area Systems; SP: Strengthening terrestrial protected area systems	
<b>Applicable GEF Expected Outcomes:</b> Biodiversity conserved and sustainably used in protected area systems	
<b>Applicable GEF Outcome Indicators:</b>	
(i) Extent of habitat cover by biome type maintained as measured by cover and fragmentation in protected area systems	
(ii) Extent and percentage increase of new habitat protected by biome type in PA system that enhances ecosystem representation	
(iii) PA management effectiveness as measured by PA scorecards that assess site management, financial sustainability and capacity.	
<b>Project Strategy</b>	<b>Objectively verifiable indicators</b>
<b>Goal – Conservation and sustainable use of globally significant steppe biodiversity.</b>	

	Indicator	Baseline	End of project target	Sources of verification	Risks and Assumptions
<b>Objective:</b> To develop the capacity and ecologically based enabling, tools and mechanisms for the consolidation, expansion and disturbance based integrated management of a system of protected natural areas at the landscape level within the steppe biome	Area of steppe area under protection expanded.	1,834,161 ha	2,701,561 ha (+ 867,400 ha) - Area of consolidated new SPA: 496,200 ha. - Additional area new SPA created 305,200 ha - Enabling environment created for new SPA: 30,000 ha. - SMSA covering 36,000 ha	Field, map assessments; expert opinion. - Official gazette -Strategic plan endorsed calling for additional million ha protected.	Action on steppe conservation may be difficult in Russia's traditional view of steppe lands as agricultural lands.
	Indirect impact on improved management effectiveness in 1.9 million hectares of SPA through METT Score.	<b>Zapovedniks</b> - Belogorye - 52 Galichya Gora - 45 Privolzhskaya Lesostep - 56 Rostovskiy - 67 Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina - 51 <b>National Parks</b> Pribaikalskiy - 34 <b>Federal Zakazniks</b> Kharbinskiy – 11 Mekletinskiy – 18 Sarpinskiy – 11 Saratovskiy – 9 Tsimlyanskiy - 12	<b>+ 40 - 50%</b> <b>Zapovedniks</b> - Belogorye - 90 Galichya Gora - 90 Privolzhskaya Lesostep - 96 Rostovskiy - 73 Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina - 74 <b>National Parks</b> Pribaikalskiy - 89 <b>Federal Zakazniks</b> Kharbinskiy – 51 Mekletinskiy – 55 Sarpinskiy – 51 Saratovskiy – 86 Tsimlyanskiy - 88	METT Score sheets for 11 SPA in the network.	
	Number of SPA in Orenburg and Kursk pilots where feathergrass dominates. Coverage of feathergrass on	Baseline TBD at project inception  Baseline on model sites TBD at	Same or increased.  Same or increased by x % . -	Remote sensing data.  Annual field surveys.	Environmental perturbations will not affect results.

	Indicator	Baseline	End of project target	Sources of verification	Risks and Assumptions
	sampling sites (Orenburg/ Kursk).	project inception when sampling sites defined.	project inception when sampling sites are defined.		
	The number of sites where Spring adonis occurs (Kursk) Density of adonis on sampling sites (Kursk)	Baseline TBD at project inception  1.0 – 2.0 m <sup>2</sup> (TBD after project inception as no census data available now.	Stable pop or within +/- 20% of Long-Term Mean (LTM).	Field Survey reports	
	Population # of little bustard and density/km <sup>2</sup> during nesting season (Kalmykia/ Orenburg) and migration (Orenburg)	Orenburg 2,000 Kalmykia 4,000 Density to be identified in year 1	Stable or increasing.	Field Survey reports	
	Steppe Eagle - # and density/km <sup>2</sup> during nesting season (Kalmykia /Orenburg/Dauria) and in migration (Kalmykia).	Kalmykia 500 pairs Orenburg 250 Dauria 125 Density to be identified in year 1.	Stable pop or within +/- 20% of LTM.	Field survey reports	
	Mongolian antelope in Daurisky Zapovednik - population # and share of young in population.	2,500 animals  35% young	5000 Stable pop or within +/- 20% of LTM.	Field survey reports	Gazelle migration patterns could change significantly due to unforeseen causes, resulting in dramatically more/less gazelle in Russia's Daurian Steppe.
	Saiga antelope in CZZ/ Kalmykia – population # and share of males in population.	15,000 animals 8% males	Stable pop or within +/- 20% of LTM.	Field survey reports	Factors beyond the project's control may cause Saiga populations to move or decline (climate, hunting outside project area).
<b>OUTCOME 1:</b> Consolidation and expansion of SPA system.	Area of SPA in the process of establishment.	0	867,400 hectares	Official gazette confirming each consolidation/ expansion	There is a high level of political acceptance of the need for additional protected steppe areas.
	Area/share (# ha) of regional-level PA correctly documented per the Land Code (surveyed, PA regime entered in the Property Register & State Register of Immovable Property Rights and Transactions).	Kursk: 0 ha Kalmykia: 0 Orenburg: 0 Dauria: 0	Kursk: at least 3,000 ha Kalmykia: at least 200,000 ha (not regional) Orenburg: at least 20,000 ha Dauria: at least 500,000 ha	Property Registers and Uniform State Register of Immovable Property Rights & Transactions.	Russia's land documentation requirements will not change significantly in the coming five years.
	# of ha of steppe ecosystems conserved under contractual conditions or other obligations, without direct government involvement.	0	36,000	Voluntary agreements/ contracts between land owner and relevant gov't authorities.	Private and non-governmental stakeholders will continue to be interested in sustainable use of steppe systems without any



	Indicator	Baseline	End of project target	Sources of verification	Risks and Assumptions
	# of possessors of land ownership rights (farmers and/or subsurface users) that have undertaken voluntary obligations to conserve steppe	0	At least 5 by EoP	SMSA agreements.	incentives or requirements from government.
	# of draft regulatory acts submitted to a legislative branch and # of standard-setting initiatives formally entered on govt agenda.	0	2 by Year 2 4 by EoP	Official government gazette in Orenburg; Draft regulatory act documents.	Orenburg Oblast assembly will continue to be interested in encouraging steppe conservation and sustainable use outside PA.
<b>OUTCOME 2:</b> SPA know how for critical ecologically-based site management is strengthened.	Direct impact on improved effectiveness in pilot sites = improved management in 489,782 ha through METT Score.	Centralno-Cherno -53 Chernye Zemli - 42 Orenburgskiy - 52 Daurskiy - 49	Centralno-Cherno - 79 Chernye Zemli - 67 Orenburgskiy - 90 Daurskiy - 75	METT Score sheets for four pilot sites.	Baseline Gov't funding will continue to support basic management functions.
	# of IFM adopted by SPA by end of project.	0	Four pilots plus 3 other SPA = 7 IFM adopted.	IFM plans themselves for each SPA.	IFM will not prove to be too controversial for local stakeholders to adopt.
	% reduction in area swept by ecologically & economically destructive grassland fires within pilot PA during hazardous seasons April/May–Sept/Oct.	Baseline (ha/yr) TBD after the inception workshop	(ha/yr) 50% reduction by EoP	Reports from SPA; Reports filed with regional administration and local municipality.	Factors beyond project's control may cause fire frequency and/or numbers to increase (climate, socio-economic).
	# of SPA incorporating sustainable grazing best practice into their management regime for steppe areas.	0	At least two pilots.	SPA management plans; SPA reports	SPA will continue to be open to testing new practices and techniques to restoring steppe ecosystem health.
	# of hectares involved in rehabilitation and restoration activities in/around SPA	0	At least 10,000 ha of grassland habitat under rehabilitation in selected sites	Field visits; SPA reports; Project reports	Rehabilitation will continue to be a priority for SPA in Russia.
	<b>OUTCOME 3.</b> Strengthened SPA system effectively captures knowledge and enables replication of best practice.	The share of SPA area with management regime updated to include steppe ecosystem conservation priorities.	0	7 of 15 SPA.	PA management plans revised with project support -- 6
	<u>MNRE SPA Capacity Scorecard</u> Policy formulation Systemic Institutional Implementation Systemic Institutional Individual Engagement & consensus	<u>Baseline</u> Policy Formulation 3 / 6 2 / 3 Implementation 3 / 9 10 / 27 6 / 12 Eng. & consensus	<u>EoP Target:</u> Policy Formulation 5 / 6 2 / 3 Implementation 7 / 9 20 / 27 8 / 12 Eng. & consensus	Capacity Assessment Scorecard	The reform process in Russia will continue to support high-level political acceptance and update of project strategy.

	Indicator	Baseline	End of project target	Sources of verification	Risks and Assumptions
	Systemic Institutional Individual Info & knowledge Systemic Institutional Individual Monitoring Systemic Institutional Individual	3 / 6 2 / 6 1 / 3 Info & knowledge 2 / 3 2 / 3 1 / 3 Monitoring 3 / 6 2 / 6 1 / 3	5 / 6 4 / 6 2 / 3 Info & knowledge 3 / 3 3 / 3 2 / 3 Monitoring 4 / 6 4 / 6 2 / 3		
	% improvement of SPA staff understanding of key steppe issues (grazing, fire, species conservation, agricultural context) before/after training.	TBD at beginning of each training workshop	At least + 25% in scoring at end of each training workshop	- Knowledge assessment quiz at beginning and end of workshop.	Workshops may not achieve these results initially.
	Size of circulation for key steppe conservation such as Steppe Bulletin.  # of visits of the steppe conservation website.	Current circulation - 1500 printed and 1300 circulated through mail.  Current level of monthly site visitation. 0+	Increase in printed by 2000 and increase in the # of individuals and institutions on the mailing list by 50%  Increase in monthly visitation by 50%	Circulation list.  Google figures for web site hits.	Steppe ecosystems will continue to garner increased attention in Russia.

### SECTION III: TOTAL BUDGET AND WORKPLAN:

Award ID		00058254										
Award Title		PIMS 4194 BD FSP: Improving the Coverage and Management Efficiency of Protected Areas in the Steppe Biome of Russia										
Business Unit		RUS10										
Project Title		PIMS 4194 BD FSP: Improving the Coverage and Management Efficiency of Protected Areas in the Steppe Biome of Russia										
Project ID		00072294										
PIMS No		4194										
Implementing Partner		MNRE (NEX execution)										
GEF Outcome / Atlas Activity	Responsible Party / Implementing Agent	Fund ID	Donor Name	Atlas Budgetary Account Code	ATLAS Budget Description	Amount Year 1 (USD)	Amount Year 2 (USD)	Amount Year 3 (USD)	Amount Year 4 (USD)	Amount Year 5 (USD)	Total (USD)	Annotations
Component 1: Consolidation and expansion of the system of steppe PA	MNRE - SPA	62000	GEF	71200	Int'l Consultants	36,000	36,000	0	0	0	72,000	1
				71300	Local Consultants	35,372	35,372	27,872	27,872	39,872	166,360	2
				71600	Travel	45,000	20,000	10,000	10,000	35,000	120,000	3
				72100	Contractual Services	174,800	174,800	174,800	174,800	174,800	874,000	4
				72200	Equipment	64,000	20,000	8,000	0	0	92,000	5
				74200	Publications	8,000	15,000	15,000	8,000	12,000	58,000	6
				75700	Misc-Training	47,000	47,000	25,000	20,000	22,000	161,000	7
				74500	Misc - Services	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	2,640	16,640	8
<b>Total Outcome 1:</b>						<b>413,672</b>	<b>351,672</b>	<b>264,172</b>	<b>244,172</b>	<b>286,312</b>	<b>1,560,000</b>	
Component 2: Operational management capacities for PA site management.		62000	GEF	71200	Int'l Consultants	36,000	36,000	0	0	0	72,000	9
				71300	Local Consultants	74,772	100,272	55,272	78,952	59,452	368,720	10
				71600	Travel	0	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	32,000	11
				72100	Contractual Services	128,000	128,000	128,000	128,000	128,000	640,000	12
				72200	Equipment	24,000	124,000	124,000	124,000	14,000	410,000	13
				74200	Publications	12,000	10,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	67,000	14
				75700	Misc- Training	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	50,000	15
				74500	Misc - Services	2,280	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	10,280	16
<b>Total Outcome 2:</b>						<b>287,052</b>	<b>418,272</b>	<b>342,272</b>	<b>365,952</b>	<b>236,452</b>	<b>1,650,000</b>	
Component 3:		62000	GEF	71200	Int'l Consultants	30,000	24,000	0	0	0	54,000	17

Institutional capacities for managing an expanded PA system				71300	Local Consultants	83,024	83,024	83,024	83,024	83,024	415,120	18
				71600	Travel	13,000	33,000	43,000	8,000	23,000	120,000	19
				72100	Contractual Services	161,200	207,200	156,200	36,200	36,200	597,000	20
				72200	Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	21
				74100	Professional Services	5,000	55,000	6,500	5,000	65,000	136,500	22
				74200	Publications	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000	23
				75700	Misc- Training	17,000	29,500	18,500	38,500	23,500	127,000	24
				74500	Misc - Services	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	2,925	14,925	25
<b>Total Outcome 3:</b>						<b>332,224</b>	<b>454,724</b>	<b>328,724</b>	<b>193,724</b>	<b>253,649</b>	<b>1,564,545</b>	
Project Management Costs		62000	GEF	71400	Project Personnel	80,080	80,080	80,080	80,080	80,080	400,400	26
				71600	Travel	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	60,000	27
				72200	Equipment	12,000	0	0	0	0	12,000	28
				72400	Communication	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	17,500	29
				72500	Supplies	2,500	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	10,500	30
				74500	Misc - Services	5,920	5,920	5,920	5,920	5,920	29,600	31
				<b>Total Management</b>						<b>116,000</b>	<b>103,500</b>	<b>103,500</b>
GRAND TOTALS		62000	GEF	71200	Int'l Consultants	102,000	96,000	0	0	0	198,000	
				71300	Local Consultants	193,168	218,668	166,168	189,848	182,348	950,200	
				71400	Project Mngmnt Personnel	80,080	80,080	80,080	80,080	80,080	400,400	
				71600	Travel	70,000	73,000	73,000	38,000	78,000	332,000	
				72100	Contractual Services	464,000	510,000	459,000	339,000	339,000	2,111,000	
				72200	Equipment	100,000	144,000	132,000	124,000	14,000	514,000	
				72400	Communications	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	17,500	
				72500	Supplies	2,500	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	10,500	
				74100	Professional Services	5,000	55,000	6,500	5,000	65,000	135,000	
				74200	Publications	40,000	45,000	50,000	43,000	47,000	225,000	
				75700	Misc -Training	74,000	86,500	53,500	68,500	55,500	338,000	
				74500	Misc - Services	14,700	14,420	14,420	14,420	13,485	71,445	
<b>Total Project</b>						<b>1,148,948</b>	<b>1,328,168</b>	<b>1,040,168</b>	<b>907,348</b>	<b>879,913</b>	<b>5,304,545</b>	

## Budget notes

1	Gap analysis expert (36k), Landscape ecologists expert (36k)
2	PM technical input to gap analysis and conservation planning (18 weeks @ 750wk = 13,500). PTC input to Outcome 1 (90 weeks @ 750/week = 67,500); PSTE - (104 weeks @ 590/wk = 61,360); Land code legal and policy expert to support SMSA development (24,000).
3	Inception workshop, SC, field visits, Closing workshop. Travel costs for two int'l experts (20k).
4	SLCP Task Team, mapping and analysis, SPA planning (80k); Technical expert teams for doing field work and formulating legal documents for new SPA establishment (28 weeks per pilot site = 112wks, + mapping + travel = 152k); Conducting Scientific and economic climate change adaptation options assessment (30k). Development and piloting of regional legal mechanisms to prevent inappropriate afforestation in steppe lands (30k); Working group on SPA modernization (64k); Support for new SMSA on former military lands (90k); Preparation of guidelines for SPA expansion (10k); Support for field monitoring and patrolling (130K); Crop production profitability & climate change analysis (4K); Study of local steppe ability to recover post plowing(4k); Elaborating and passing a regional regulatory act on agricultural areas of "high natural value at regional level (15k); Elaborating and passing regulatory acts to strengthen barriers to plowing virgin steppe lands (15k); An analysis of federal legislation to identify legal barriers to regulation of steppe ecosystems in PA (30k); Methodological aid to sustainable grazing and haying practices in pilot sites (170k); Delimiting the borders of the SMSA Orenburskaya Tarpania (50k).
5	Equipment for steppe inventory works (computer, notebooks, GPS navigators, cameras, field equipment - 12k); Basic equipment for SPA pilot sites (60k); equipment base to SMSA 'Orenburskaya Tarpania': Orenburg (off-road vehicle, office facilities, field equipment - 20k)
6	Publication of SLCP (10k) & Last steppes atlas (20k); Guidelines for key stakeholder organizations at national level (8k); Legislative analysis, Crop production and climate change analysis (8k). Production of steppe conservation guidance notes -- How to conserve steppe areas in Russia's agricultural landscape customized to each pilot area (12 k).
7	Workshops for DSPA, MoA, SPA staff and regional PA bodies to promote new SPA approaches; Intra-Russia study tours for policy makers 30000; Regional meetings to present legislative results (13k each site = 52k)
8	Miscellaneous costs.
9	IFM Specialist (12 weeks = 36k); Sustainable grazing specialist (12 weeks = 36k);
10	PM technical input to pilot work to improve SPA effectiveness (18 weeks 13.5k). PTC technical input to pilot work (70 weeks @ 750/wk = 52.5K); Monitoring working groups in each Pilot SPA (3), 4 people each @ 8 weeks each @ 1000/week (96k); Enforcement working groups in each Pilot SPA (48k); IFM working group (1), 3 people @ 12 weeks @ 1,000/week + mapping, documentation (36k);PSTE - (208 weeks @ 590/wk = 122,720).
11	Domestic travel associated with work under this component.
12	Elaborating IFM Strategy and Action Plan for pilot SPA and region (85k); Preparing guidance on IFM to SPA (10k); Demonstration study of recovering meadow steppe on old field in CCZ buffer (40k); Support to local stakeholders steppe restoration/replanting 10,000 ha (200k); Upgrading Regional Program on Conservation and Recovery of soil fertility for agricultural lands and landscapes in Orenburg to make it supportive of semi-natural steppe grassland restoration (5k); Support to local stakeholders in CCZ in replanting at least 1000 ha of steppe (100,000); Development of national action plans/conservation strategies for at least 6 threatened steppe species (50k); Elaborating regional action plans and conservation strategies for steppe species (100k); Reintroduction of marmot or ground squirrel in buffer of CCZ (30k); Inventory of power lines hazardous for birds and improving their safety (20k).
13	Firefighting equipment for SPA in 4 pilots; 6 observation towers in Orenburg (120k); Seeds, equipment and fuel to local stakeholders for restoration of 10,000 ha of steppe lands (290k)
14	Guidance on IFM to SPA, IFM strategies and Action Plans for each region (20k); Regional species conservation action plans (20k); Publications on sustainable tourism business plan for Orenburskaya Tarpania (7k); Training modules printed and made available on the web (20k).
15	Intra-Russia study tour training/exposure to best practice in support of pilot site demonstration work (5-10 persons per tour 5 tours) (50k).
16	Meeting logistics costs associated with pilot activities, community working groups, Mapping and documentation for tourism management planning.
17	Management effectiveness expert (10 weeks 30k). Grassland restoration specialist (8 weeks 24k);
18	PM technical input 16 weeks (12k); PTC 100 weeks = 75k); PSTE -- (468 weeks = 276,120k); Interactive SPA website design completed (20k). Community working group for management plan updating (5k/pilot site or 20k); Institutional effectiveness improvement program (IEIP) (3 experts 1000/week, 12 weeks total or 12k);
19	Improving transboundary cooperation under DIPA - 1 conference, 2 workshops, 3 support meetings for DIPA co-management work (80k); Study tours to pilot sites by other SPA staff; PTC travel to pilot regions (8k/year x 5 = 40k).
20	Output 3.1. Elaborating co-management arrangement for Orenburg Tarpania SMSA (70k); 3.1: Elaborating and passing a regional level action plan on steppe

	ecosystems conservation between Orenburg and Kazakh counterparts 30k; Expanding indicator species conservation measures to cover neighboring territory of Kazakhstan (agreements, direct cooperation, transboundary study) 30k; Preparation of working documents to establish a transboundary steppe PA on Russia Kaz border 40k; Output 3.2 System-level management effectiveness measurement and monitoring program (90k); Output 3.3 Knowledge management/ Training module development (95k); Output 3.3 Costs to translate the monthly online Grassland Restoration from English into Russian (36k); Pilot monitoring working groups (30k); Extending protection over no less than 10,000 ha in buffer zone of OZ and new SPA and SMSA (technology, consultations, training) (156k);
21	NA – no equipment.
22	Audit (25k); Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluations (110k)
23	Steppe bulletin publishing (20k/yr or 100k)
24	Regular meetings to improve transboundary collaboration of counterpart provincial conservation agencies in Orenburg and Aktobe regions 20k; Knowledge development for SPA network: Summer stipends for Russian university students to do field work supervised jointly by professors and SPA staff in project pilot sites (60k). Study tours to pilot SPA sites by SPA staff from around the network (30k) and on reintroduction of Takhi in SMSA (9k); Pilot training workshops utilizing new training modules (18k)
25	Miscellaneous
26	Cost of management-related input of PMCU staff time (PM, Admin Assistant, Finance Assistant)
27	Management-related travel to/from project sites for PMCU staff to enable hands-on management.
28	Laptops for mobile management across 8 time zones.
29	Incremental communication costs for a project working across 8 time zones and globally.
30	Incremental costs for supplies & services to support extraordinary level of activity within project office.
31	

**Summary of Funds:** <sup>21</sup>

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
<b>GEF</b>	1,148,948	1,328,168	1,040,168	907,348	879,913	\$5,304,545
<b>Government</b>						\$11,400,000
<b>Government in kind</b>						\$2,800,000
<b>UNDP</b>						\$10,000
<b>Private sector</b>						\$390,000
<b>NGO</b>						\$300,000
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>\$20,204,545</b>

<sup>21</sup> Summary table should include all financing of all kinds: GEF financing, cofinancing, cash, in-kind, etc. etc

**SIGNATURE PAGE**

**Country: Russian Federation**

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

**CPAP Outcome (s)/Indicator (s):**n/a

**CPAP Output (s)/Indicator (s):**n/a

Executing Entity/Implementing Partner: Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology  
 Implementing entity/Responsible Partner

Programme Period:	2008-2011	Total resources required	US\$ 20,204,545
Atlas Award ID:	00058254	Total allocated resources:	
Project ID:	00072294	• Regular (UNDP)	US\$ 10,000
PIMS #	4194	• Other:	
Start date:	January 2010	o GEF	US\$ 5,304,545
End Date	December 2014	o Government	US\$ 11,400,000
Management Arrangements	NEX (NIM)	o Private sector	US\$ 390,000
PAC Meeting Date	26 Nov 2009	o NGO	US\$ 300,000
		In-kind contributions:	
		Government	US\$ 2,800,000

**Agreed by (Executing Entity/Implementing Partner):**

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NAME SIGNATURE Date/Month/Year

**Agreed by (UNDP):**

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NAME SIGNATURE Date/Month/Year

## **SECTION IV: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Annex 1: METT scores (see separate file)
- Annex 2: Capacity Development Indicator Scorecard
- Annex 3: Stakeholder Participation Plan
- Annex 4: TOR for Key Project Staff
- Annex 5: Letters of Co-financing
- Annex 6: Existing International Agreements with Relevance to Steppe Conservation between and among Russia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and China
- Annex 7: Overall Land-use Categories Relevant to Steppe Protected Areas



## Annex 1: METT

See separate file -

## Annex 2. Capacity Development Indicator Scorecard for the Steppe Protected Areas

### CAPACITY ASSESSMENT SCORECARD SUMMARY

UNDP has developed this scorecard to assist project teams and governments track progress in terms of developing individual, institutional and systemic capacities of the national PA system. The first matrix below indicates the total possible scores of the national PA system's capacity in three categories: i) Systemic; ii) Institutional; and iii) Individual in five strategic support areas. The second matrix shows the scores of the subset of the steppe protected areas (SPA) while the SPA system scores against the total possible scores are presented as the percentage figures in the third matrix.

Short narrative analysis: The scorecard reflects results of the capacity assessment at the level of federal SPA and thus provides integrated ratings. Integrated capacity development scores of the SPA are an average of 43% of the total possible scores (see third matrix below).

The UNDP/GEF project will address and strengthen PA system capacity at all levels. In addition to that, the project will propose mechanisms for the federal-regional collaboration and inter-agency learning, capacity building and knowledge transfer to address capacity gaps among various elements of the SPA system.

Strategic Areas of Support	Total Possible Score		
	Systemic	Institutional	Individual
1. Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislation, strategies and programmes	6	3	
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes	9	27	12
3. Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders	6	6	3
4. Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge: Technical skills related specifically to the requirements of the SPs and associated Conventions	3	3	3
5. Capacity to monitor, evaluate and report and learn at the sector and project levels	6	6	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>21</b>

Strategic Areas of Support	SPA Scores		
	Systemic	Institutional	Individual
1. Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislation, strategies and programmes	3	2	
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes	3	10	6
3. Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders	3	2	1
4. Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge: Technical skills related specifically to the requirements of the SPs and associated Conventions	2	2	1
5. Capacity to monitor, evaluate and report and learn at the sector and project levels	3	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>

Strategic Areas of Support	% of Actual Score of TPS (Average)		
	Systemic	Institutional	Individual
1. Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislation, strategies and programmes	50%	67%	
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes	23%	42%	50%
3. Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders	50%	50%	33%
4. Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge: Technical skills related specifically to the requirements of the SPs and associated Conventions	67%	67%	33%
5. Capacity to monitor, evaluate and report and learn at the sector and project levels	50%	67%	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>43%</b>

Strategic Area of Support	Capacity Level	Outcome	Outcome Indicators (Scorecard)			
			Worst State (Score 0)	Marginal State (Score 1)	Satisfactory State (Score 2)	Best State (Score 3)
1. Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislations, strategies and programmes <b>SCORE 1</b>	Systemic	The protected area agenda is being effectively championed / driven forward	There is essentially no protected area agenda	<b>There are some persons or institutions actively pursuing a protected area agenda but they have little effect or influence</b>	There are a number of protected area champions that drive the protected area agenda, but more is needed	There are an adequate number of able "champions" and "leaders" effectively driving forwards a protected area agenda

Strategic Area of Support	Capacity Level	Outcome	Outcome Indicators (Scorecard)			
			Worst State (Score 0)	Marginal State (Score 1)	Satisfactory State (Score 2)	Best State (Score 3)
1. Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislations, strategies and programmes <b>SCORE 2</b>	Systemic	There is a strong and clear legal mandate for the establishment and management of protected areas	There is no legal framework for protected areas	There is a partial legal framework for protected areas but it has many inadequacies	<b>There is a reasonable legal framework for protected areas but it has a few weaknesses and gaps</b>	There is a strong and clear legal mandate for the establishment and management of protected areas
1. Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislations, strategies and programmes <b>SCORE 2</b>	Institutional	There is an institution responsible for protected areas able to strategize and plan	Protected area institutions have no plans or strategies	Protected area institutions do have strategies and plans, but these are old and no longer up to date or were prepared in a totally top-down fashion	<b>Protected area institutions have some sort of mechanism to update their strategies and plans, but this is irregular or is done in a largely top-down fashion without proper consultation</b>	Protected area institutions have relevant, participatorially prepared, regularly updated strategies and plans
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes <b>SCORE 1</b>	Systemic	There are adequate skills for protected area planning and management	There is a general lack of planning and management skills	<b>Some skills exist but in largely insufficient quantities to guarantee effective planning and management</b>	Necessary skills for effective protected area management and planning do exist but are stretched and not easily available	Adequate quantities of the full range of skills necessary for effective protected area planning and management are easily available
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes <b>SCORE 1</b>	Systemic	There are protected area systems	No or very few protected area exist and they cover only a small portion of the habitats and ecosystems	<b>Protected area system is patchy both in number and geographical coverage and has many gaps in terms of representativeness</b>	Protected area system is covering a reasonably representative sample of the major habitats and ecosystems, but still presents some gaps and not all elements are of viable size	The protected areas includes viable representative examples of all the major habitats and ecosystems of appropriate geographical scale
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes <b>SCORE 1</b>	Systemic	There is a fully transparent oversight authority for the protected areas institutions	There is no oversight at all of protected area institutions	<b>There is some oversight, but only indirectly and in a non-transparent manner</b>	There is a reasonable oversight mechanism in place providing for regular review but lacks in transparency (e.g. is not independent, or is internalized)	There is a fully transparent oversight authority for the protected areas institutions
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes <b>SCORE 2</b>	Institutional	Protected area institutions are effectively led	Protected area institutions have a total lack of leadership	Protected area institutions exist but leadership is weak and provides little guidance	<b>Some protected area institutions have reasonably strong leadership but there is still need for improvement</b>	Protected area institutions are effectively led
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes <b>SCORE 1</b>	Institutional	Protected areas have regularly updated, prepared in a participatory manner, comprehensive management plans	Protected areas have no management plans	<b>Some protected areas have up-to-date management plans but they are typically not comprehensive and were not prepared in a participatory manner.</b>	Most Protected Areas have management plans though some are old, not prepared in a participatory manner or are less than comprehensive	Every protected area has a regularly updated, prepared in a participatory manner, comprehensive management plan.
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes <b>SCORE 1</b>	Institutional	Human resources are well qualified and motivated	Human resources are poorly qualified and unmotivated	<b>Human resources qualification is spotty, with some well qualified, but many only poorly</b>	HR in general reasonably qualified, but many lack in motivation, or those that are motivated are not	Human resources are well qualified and motivated

Strategic Area of Support	Capacity Level	Outcome	Outcome Indicators (Scorecard)			
			Worst State (Score 0)	Marginal State (Score 1)	Satisfactory State (Score 2)	Best State (Score 3)
				<b>and in general unmotivated</b>	sufficiently qualified.	
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes <b>SCORE 0</b>	Institutional	Management plans are implemented in a timely manner effectively achieving their objectives	<b>There is very little implementation of management plans</b>	Management plans are poorly implemented and their objectives are rarely met	Management plans are usually implemented in a timely manner, though delays typically occur and some objectives are not met	Management plans are implemented in a timely manner effectively achieving their objectives
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes <b>SCORE 1</b>	Institutional	Protected area institutions are able to adequately mobilize sufficient quantity of funding, human and material resources to effectively implement their mandate	Protected area institutions typically are severely underfunded and have no capacity to mobilize sufficient resources	<b>Protected area institutions have some funding and are able to mobilize some human and material resources but not enough to effectively implement their mandate</b>	Protected area institutions have reasonable capacity to mobilize funding or other resources but not always in sufficient quantities for fully effective implementation of their mandate	Protected area institutions are able to adequately mobilize sufficient quantity of funding, human and material resources to effectively implement their mandate
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes <b>SCORE 1</b>	Institutional	Protected area institutions are effectively managed, efficiently deploying their human, financial and other resources to the best effect	While the protected area institution exists it has no management	<b>Institutional management is largely ineffective and does not deploy efficiently the resources at its disposal</b>	The institution is reasonably managed, but not always in a fully effective manner and at times does not deploy its resources in the most efficient way	The protected area institution is effectively managed, efficiently deploying its human, financial and other resources to the best effect
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes <b>SCORE 1</b>	Institutional	Protected area institutions are highly transparent, fully audited, and publicly accountable	Protected area institutions totally non-transparent, not being held accountable and not audited	<b>Protected area institutions are not transparent but are occasionally audited without being held publicly accountable</b>	Protected area institutions are regularly audited and there is a fair degree of public accountability but the system is not fully transparent	The Protected area institutions are highly transparent, fully audited, and publicly accountable
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes <b>SCORE 2</b>	Institutional	There are legally designated protected area institutions with the authority to carry out their mandate	There is no lead institution or agency with a clear mandate or responsibility for protected areas	There are one or more institutions or agencies dealing with protected areas but roles and responsibilities are unclear and there are gaps and overlaps in the arrangements	<b>There are one or more institutions or agencies dealing with protected areas, the responsibilities of each are fairly clearly defined, but there are still some gaps and overlaps</b>	Protected Area institutions have clear legal and institutional mandates and the necessary authority to carry this out
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes <b>SCORE 1</b>	Institutional	Protected areas are effectively protected	No enforcement of regulations is taking place	<b>Some enforcement of regulations but largely ineffective and external threats remain active</b>	Protected area regulations are regularly enforced but are not fully effective and external threats are reduced but not eliminated	Protected Area regulations are highly effectively enforced and all external threats are negated
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes <b>SCORE 1</b>	Individual	Individuals are able to advance and develop professionally	No career tracks are developed and no training opportunities are provided	<b>Career tracks are weak and training possibilities are few and not managed transparently</b>	Clear career tracks developed and training available; HR management however has inadequate performance measurement system	Individuals are able to advance and develop professionally
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes	Individual	Individuals are appropriately skilled for their jobs	Skills of individuals do not match job requirements	<b>Individuals have some or poor skills for their jobs</b>	Individuals are reasonably skilled but could further improve for optimum match	Individuals are appropriately skilled for their jobs

Strategic Area of Support	Capacity Level	Outcome	Outcome Indicators (Scorecard)			
			Worst State (Score 0)	Marginal State (Score 1)	Satisfactory State (Score 2)	Best State (Score 3)
<b>SCORE 1</b>					with job requirement	
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes <b>SCORE 2</b>	Individual	Individuals are highly motivated	No motivation at all	Motivation uneven, some are but most are not	<b>Many individuals are motivated but not all</b>	Individuals are highly motivated
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes <b>SCORE 2</b>	Individual	There are appropriate systems of training, mentoring, and learning in place to maintain a continuous flow of new staff	No mechanisms exist	Some mechanisms exist but unable to develop enough and unable to provide the full range of skills needed	<b>Mechanisms generally exist to develop skilled professionals, but either not enough of them or unable to cover the full range of skills required</b>	There are mechanisms for developing adequate numbers of the full range of highly skilled protected area professionals
3. Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders <b>SCORE 1</b>	Systemic	Protected areas have the political commitment they require	There is no political will at all, or worse, the prevailing political will runs counter to the interests of protected areas	<b>Some political will exists, but is not strong enough to make a difference</b>	Reasonable political will exists, but is not always strong enough to fully support protected areas	There are very high levels of political will to support protected areas
3. Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders <b>SCORE 2</b>	Systemic	Protected areas have the public support they require	The public has little interest in protected areas and there is no significant lobby for protected areas	There is limited support for protected areas	<b>There is general public support for protected areas and there are various lobby groups such as environmental NGO's strongly pushing them</b>	There is tremendous public support in the country for protected areas
3. Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders <b>SCORE 1</b>	Institutional	Protected area institutions are mission oriented	Institutional mission not defined	<b>Institutional mission poorly defined and generally not known and internalized at all levels</b>	Institutional mission well defined and internalized but not fully embraced	Institutional missions are fully internalized and embraced
3. Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders <b>SCORE 1</b>	Institutional	Protected area institutions can establish the partnerships needed to achieve their objectives	Protected area institutions operate in isolation	<b>Some partnerships in place but significant gaps and existing partnerships achieve little</b>	Many partnerships in place with a wide range of agencies, NGOs etc, but there are some gaps, partnerships are not always effective and do not always enable efficient achievement of objectives	Protected area institutions establish effective partnerships with other agencies and institutions, including provincial and local governments, NGO's and the private sector to enable achievement of objectives in an efficient and effective manner
3. Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders <b>SCORE 1</b>	Individual	Individuals carry appropriate values, integrity and attitudes	Individuals carry negative attitude	<b>Some individuals have notion of appropriate attitudes and display integrity, but most don't</b>	Many individuals carry appropriate values and integrity, but not all	Individuals carry appropriate values, integrity and attitudes
4. Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge <b>SCORE 2</b>	Systemic	Protected area institutions have the information they need to develop and monitor strategies and action plans for the management of the protected area system	Information is virtually lacking	Some information exists, but is of poor quality, is of limited usefulness, or is very difficult to access	<b>Much information is easily available and mostly of good quality, but there remain some gaps in quality, coverage and availability</b>	Protected area institutions have the information they need to develop and monitor strategies and action plans for the management of the protected area system
4. Capacity to mobilize	Institutional	Protected area institutions	Information is virtually	Some information exists,	<b>Much information is</b>	Adequate quantities of high

Strategic Area of Support	Capacity Level	Outcome	Outcome Indicators (Scorecard)			
			Worst State (Score 0)	Marginal State (Score 1)	Satisfactory State (Score 2)	Best State (Score 3)
information and knowledge <b>SCORE 2</b>		have the information needed to do their work	lacking	but is of poor quality and of limited usefulness and difficult to access	<b>readily available, mostly of good quality, but there remain some gaps both in quality and quantity</b>	quality up to date information for protected area planning, management and monitoring is widely and easily available
4. Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge <b>SCORE 1</b>	Individual	Individuals working with protected areas work effectively together as a team	Individuals work in isolation and don't interact	<b>Individuals interact in limited way and sometimes in teams but this is rarely effective and functional</b>	Individuals interact regularly and form teams, but this is not always fully effective or functional	Individuals interact effectively and form functional teams
5. Capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn <b>SCORE 1</b>	Systemic	Protected area policy is continually reviewed and updated	There is no policy or it is old and not reviewed regularly	<b>Policy is only reviewed at irregular intervals</b>	Policy is reviewed regularly but not annually	National protected areas policy is reviewed annually
5. Capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn <b>SCORE 2</b>	Systemic	Society monitors the state of protected areas	There is no dialogue at all	There is some dialogue going on, but not in the wider public and restricted to specialized circles	<b>There is a reasonably open public dialogue going on but certain issues remain taboo.</b>	There is an open and transparent public dialogue about the state of the protected areas
5. Capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn <b>SCORE 1</b>	Institutional	Institutions are highly adaptive, responding effectively and immediately to change	Institutions resist change	<b>Institutions do change but only very slowly</b>	Institutions tend to adapt in response to change but not always very effectively or with some delay	Institutions are highly adaptive, responding effectively and immediately to change
5. Capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn <b>SCORE 1</b>	Institutional	Institutions have effective internal mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning	There are no mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, reporting or learning	<b>There are some mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning but they are limited and weak</b>	Reasonable mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning are in place but are not as strong or comprehensive as they could be	Institutions have effective internal mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning
5. Capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn <b>SCORE 1</b>	Individual	Individuals are adaptive and continue to learn	There is no measurement of performance or adaptive feedback	<b>Performance is irregularly and poorly measured and there is little use of feedback</b>	There is significant measurement of performance and some feedback but this is not as thorough or comprehensive as it might be	Performance is effectively measured and adaptive feedback utilized

### Annex 3. Project Stakeholders and Relevant Roles and Responsibilities

#	Institution	Roles and responsibilities relevant to SPA	Roles in Project Implementation
1	<b>Ministry of Natural Resources &amp; Ecology (MNRE)</b>	Develops policy, prepares and issues regulation, coordinates the process of planning, establishing and operating new PA. Responsible for management of all federal-level protected areas.	Outcomes 1, 2 and 3. All Outputs. Will serve as the “Designated Institution” in charge of project for Gov’t of Russia. As such, it will be closely involved in all three project outcomes.
	Department for State Policy and Regulation on Environment (DSPR)	Elaborates state policy on nature conservation. It is the lead MNRE department for international conventions and agreements and for monitoring and facilitating State implementation of international conventions and agreements. Works with protected areas to refine and improve state protected area law and policy and secure additional financing for PA to meet international obligations.	Involved mostly with Components 1 and 3, where policy work will be undertaken to help to expand the system of SPA, to involve more cross-sectoral approaches in SPA management, and to facilitate knowledge sharing and replication. Will play a lead role in the development of strengthened policies for partnership building and collaboration between SPA and other sectors, including the development of agreements with other governmental institutions.
	- Division of Specially Protected Areas (DSPA) of the MNRE	Manages the system of federal PA with regard to strategy, financial planning, reporting, and staff policy.	Output 1.1. Strategic Plan for SPA Network. Will plan an active role in the gap analysis and strategic network planning work.  Will be involved with nearly every Output under the three Components. Concerned especially with the expansion of the existing federal system of SPA (Outputs 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4) and in adopting the SLCP of expansion for new federal SPA  Improving the management effectiveness of those SPA through the pilot work under Component 2. Under component 3, it will be one of the primary beneficiaries of strengthening institutional capacities for managing expanded systems of SPA.  Will be a key player in establishing or renewing agreements with key partners such as Border Service and MoA, and approval of management plans for pilot sites, organizing workshops and training courses.
	Federal Service for Natural Resource Management (Rosprirodnadzor)	Responsible for control of environment and use of natural resources (except aquatic biological resource and game).	Output 2.4 Pilot IV, Strengthened enforcement and monitoring partnerships among SPA and key stakeholder institutions.

#	Institution	Roles and responsibilities relevant to SPA	Roles in Project Implementation
	- Regional offices of Rosprirodnadzor	They work closely with the federal PA in their particular region. Piloting an effective system for control and surveillance of federal-level SPA in a few locations.	Co-management work under Output 3.1 Output 2.4 Pilot IV, Strengthened enforcement and monitoring partnerships among SPA and key stakeholder institutions.  Co-management work under Output 3.1
2	<b>Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)</b>	Develops agricultural, forestry, and wildlife game management policy; approves farming rules which strongly influence steppes and may influence SPA; Responsible for enforcing agricultural laws in all lands categorized under different forms of agricultural use, which encompasses most of Russia's steppe ecosystems. Important stakeholder (among other governmental institutions) in approving proposals for new SPA and extension of existing PA.	SC Member Component 1. Outputs 1.2, 1.4 (Expansion and consolidation of SPA and Mechanisms and techniques for establishing SMSA). Component 2. Outputs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3
	Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Control – “Rosselkhoznadzor” (under MoA)	Control over soil fertility issues, agrochemical use, agricultural land use and market, forest use, game and wildlife management. Enforcement of agricultural law on agricultural and forest (except forests located at SPA areas). State fire control in forests. Control over wildlife use and protection, species reintroduction, animal import and export.	Very important in wildlife-related project work, in Outputs of Components 1 and 2. A key player in all issues concerning species conservation (e.g. Saiga and other species under Output 2.3). Will issue permits to reintroduce Marmot or Souslik in Kursk.
	Federal Forestry Agency (Rosleskhoz, under MoA)	Government forestland management. Consideration of applications on transfer of forest lands to other categories.	Play a keystone role in reaching consensus on afforestation in steppe areas (Output 1.4 section A)
3	<b>Ministry of Economic Development</b> (Federal level)	Land ownership issues, social-economic development in rural areas. State cadastre oversight, state monitoring of lands (including SPA), state registration of rights for real estate.	Play a keystone role in stopping “Kyoto afforestation” in steppe areas (Output 1.4 section A).
4	<b>Ministry of Regional Development</b>	Territorial planning	It is responsible for planning regional development including new PA placement – Output 1.1 and 1.2
5	<b>Ministry of Defense</b>	Major owner of relatively undisturbed steppe areas (former military polygons) . Key stakeholder in the approval of new and extending previously established federal SPA with regard to steppe lands.	Potential PSC member. May be involved as a stakeholder in activities under Outputs 1.2 and 1.4
6	<b>Border Guard Service of Russia, Federal Security Service of Russia.</b>	Responsible for law enforcement, including hunting regulations, in Russia's border areas. Many Russia's SPA are located in border areas. This makes the Service an important stakeholder and potential partner for a number of Russia's SPA in steppe patrol efforts.	A key party in enforcement agreements for three pilot sites: enforcing border law along Daurian's -- kilometer-wide protected zone; assist -- in organizing control and surveillance. Especially Output 3.1.



Stakeholders	Roles and responsibilities relevant to steppe ecosystem conservation and management.	Roles in Project Implementation
<b>Regional Administrations/ Governments</b>	Oversee resource use in local and regional lands. Establish and manage regional SPA and approve the designation and regulation of buffer zones. Often involved in supporting federal SPA. In the more developed regions may have environmental ministries or directorates with staff and budget.	Will be key stakeholders involved in the establishment of new SPA or expansion of existing SPA.
<b>KURSK OBLAST</b>		
1) Department of environmental safety and nature use.	Responsible for management, registration, and protection of all regional protected areas in Kursk Oblast. Control over regional PA functioning, species conservation at regional level, regional environmental legislation drafting and control over its compliance. Organizes and conducts ecological expertise on regional level.	Will be a key stakeholder in regional SPA establishing and strengthening (all Outputs of Component 1). Stakeholder in elaborating IFM Strategy and Action Plan under Output 2.1. Important role will play in implementation of Output 2.3 and 2.4. Will be involved in activities under Component 3.
2) Agency for protection, control, and regulation of use of wildlife and water biological resources	Responsible for protection and reproduction of wildlife (except inhabiting on Federal PAs) and its habitats. Conducts state surveys of wildlife, responsible for wildlife monitoring and official cadastre. Manages wildlife populations. It is in commission to initiate regional wildlife reserves (Zakazniks) for wildlife species.	May be a stakeholder in regional SPA establishing and strengthening (all Outputs of Component 1). Key role will play in implementation of Output 2.3. Will be involved in activities under Output 2.1, 3.1, and 3.2.
3) Rosprirodnadzor regional Office (under federal organization)	Supervision over federal PA functioning.	Partner in the project's work with the CCZ pilot site in Kursk Oblast under: Outputs 1.2, 1.4, 2.1-2.4.
4) Department of Federal Land Registration Service for Kursk Oblast	Land cadastre, land tenure, control over land-use legislation compliance.	SPA land documents preparing under Output 1.2
5) Rosselkhoznadzor regional Office (federal Rosselkhoznadzor).	Control over land use regulations compliance, hunting, reintroduction of species.	Will endorse permissions to move and re-naturalization of Marmot or Sousik (Output 2.3)
<b>KALMYKIA</b>		
1) Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment Protection and Energy Development	Regional environmental policy and legislation, species protection and biodiversity conservation. Establishment and operation of regional level SPA. Protection, surveying, monitoring, and managing wildlife and its habitats (including specially protecting species). It has deputed authority for management and protection of species listed in Federal Red Data Book.	Stakeholder in work under Output 1.2. Will be involved in some activities under Output 1.3 (workshop participants, users of guidelines). Key stakeholder in improving legislation and establishing steppe-friendly sustainable grazing (Output 1.4). Stakeholder in elaborating IFM under Output 2.1. One of key players in Saiga protection (Output 2.3). Will be involved in activities under Component 3.
2) Ministry of Agriculture and Land Relations Development	Land use regulations, implementation of regional policy for agricultural development. Participate in oversight of land-use regulation on agricultural lands and their conversion into	Important to success of Outputs 1.2, 2.1, and 2.2. Will be involved in some activities under Output 1.3, 2.4, and 3.1

Stakeholders	Roles and responsibilities relevant to steppe ecosystem conservation and management.	Roles in Project Implementation
	other categories under the Land Code.	
3) Rosprirodnadzor regional Office (federal Rosprirodnadzor)	Control over protection functions assigned at a federal level, supervision over federal PA activities, and control over land restoration (except agricultural lands).	Will play important (key?) role in the project's work with the federal zakazniks under: Outputs 1.2, 1.4, 2.1-2.4.
4) Department of Federal Land Registration Service for Kalmykia	Land cadastre, land tenure, control over land-use legislation compliance.	SPA land documents preparing under Output 1.2
5) Rosselkhoznadzor regional office for Kalmyka	Control over wildlife use and protection, animals naturalization and releasing, animals import and export.	A key stakeholder in all issues concerning Saiga (Output 2.3).
<b>ORENBURG</b>		
1) Orenburg Legislative Assembly	Regional legislative authority including all aspects of regional SPA regulating	Committed stakeholder in analysis and drafting both regional and national legislation – Outputs 1.4. General support in all project activities in the region.
2) Committee for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection	Responsible for managing and financing all regional protected areas that are potential partners for the federal SPA in Orenburg.	Stakeholder in work under Output 1.2. Will be involved in some activities under Output 1.3 (workshop participants, users of guidelines). Stakeholder in elaborating IFM under Output 2.1. Key stakeholder for Output 2.3 (on protected species). Will be involved in activities under Component 3.
3) Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Food and Manufacturing Industry	Develops regional agricultural policy and legislation. Regulates use of agricultural lands including grazing lands (i.e. steppes) strongly affecting all regional SPA and buffer zone of federal SPA (Orenburgsky Zapovednik). Responsible for wildlife and game management and forestry in the region strongly influencing steppes and especially regional SPA. Specially authorized to management of species listed in Red Data Book of Russia.	They will be an important partner in piloting new legal and regulatory tools to enable landusers and owners to effectively conserve steppe ecosystems on land designated as pasture land and in other land-use designations (Output 1.2, 1.4., 2.1, 2.2, 2.3). Stakeholder in elaborating IFM under Output 2.1.  PSC Committee Member
4) Rosprirodnadzor regional Office (federal Rosprirodnadzor)	Control over protection functions assigned at a federal level, supervision over federal PA activities, and control over land restoration (except agricultural lands).	They will play some role in the project's work with the OZ pilot under Outputs 1.2, 1.4, 2.1-2.4, 3.2
5) Rosselkhoznadzor regional Office (federal Rosselkhoznadzor).	Control over land use regulations compliance, hunting, reintroduction of species.	Will endorse permissions to import and re-naturalization of Przewalski' Horse (Output 2.3)
6) regional Office of the Federal Agency for State Property Management (federal Rosimushchestvo)	Agency has special authority in the name of Russian Federation to order and manage federal property including land. Among other things it is responsible for steppe land tracts formerly used as military ranges until their privatization.	Keystone stakeholder in all SMSA activities (as a State lessor of SMSA land property) under Outputs 1.4, 2.2, 2.5
7) Ministry of youth policy, sport, and tourism	Develops the regional government policy in the field of tourism.	Will be stakeholder in working on and implementing the Sustainable tourism business plan for SMSA (under Output 2.5)

Stakeholders	Roles and responsibilities relevant to steppe ecosystem conservation and management.	Roles in Project Implementation
<b>ZABAİKALSKY KRAI (Dauria)</b>		
1) Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of Zabaikalsky Krai (under the auspices of the regional Government)	Nature resource management, environment protection, relevant legislation compliance, information management. Facilitates and oversees the regional ecological expertise (EIA) process required for regional PA establishment or reorganization.	Key stakeholder in SPA projecting and establishing under Output 1.2. Will be involved in some activities under Output 1.3 (workshop participants, users of guidelines). Stakeholder in elaborating IFM under Output 2.1. Key stakeholder for Output 2.3 (on protected species). Will be involved in activities under Component 3.
- State Institution “United Directory of Biological Zakazniks of Zabaikalsky Krai” (under MNRE of Zabaikalsky Krai)	Regional SPA management, arrangement of their protection, activities on SPA regime compliance, implementation of biotechnical activities, monitoring of wild life objects number	Key stakeholder in SPA strengthening and networking under Outputs 1.3, 2.4, 3.3. Stakeholder in elaborating IFM under Output 2.1.
- State Service of Protection, Control and Regulating of Wild Life Objects Use of Zabaikalsky Krai (under the regional MRNE)	Control of legislation compliance in the field of game wildlife protection. Control of regional SPA activity, wild life users; monitoring of population, implementation of activities on reproduction and habitat conservation.	Important partner in Output 2.3.
2) Ministry of Agriculture of Zabaikalsky Krai	Planning of agricultural lands use; establishment, protection and utilization of the state biological zakazniks of Krai significance; proposing on reservation of lands, which are supposed to be declared as the state biological zakazniks of Krai significance, and on limitation of economic activity within their borders.	They will be an important partner in piloting new legal and regulatory tools to enable land users and owners to effectively conserve steppe ecosystems on land designated as pasture land and in other land-use designations (Output 1.2, 1.4., 2.1, 2.2, 2.3). Stakeholder in elaborating IFM under Output 2.1.
3) Rosprirodnadzor regional Office (federal Rosprirodnadzor)	Control over biodiversity conservation activities, forest protection, and species population status. Monitoring. Forest control (including forest fires), control over implementation of measures to improve soil fertility, control over changes in landuse categories, pollution control.	Will play important role in the project’s work with the federal zakazniks under Outputs 1.2, 1.4, 2.1-2.4, and some role in the work with the DIPA (the same Outputs).
<b>SPA</b>		
1) “Daursky” Zapovednik & Biosphere Reserve (Zabaikalsky kraï)	Initiation of process of and preparation of background environmental-economic documentation for expanding of the reserve area, establishment of the federal zakaznik “Dzeren Valley”; participation in the development and implementation of programs for restoration of extinct ungulates and bird species of Daurian steppe eco-region; participation in activities to assess the impact of climate change on biodiversity and agriculture; implementation of model and demo projects on introduction of adaptive management mechanisms.	PSC committee member.  One of the project’s four pilot sites, it will be an important player in and beneficiary of each of the three project Components.
2) “Chiornye Zemli” (Black Lands) Zapovednika & Biosphere Reserve	Conservation and study of biological diversity within the Reserve area and its protection zone. Environmental	PSC committee member.

Stakeholders	Roles and responsibilities relevant to steppe ecosystem conservation and management.	Roles in Project Implementation
and other SPA (Kalmykia)	awareness and educational activity at areas adjacent to the Reserve.	One of the project's four pilot sites, it will be an important player in and beneficiary of each of the three project Components.
3) Central-Chernozem Zapovednik and Biosphere Reserve (Kursk oblast)	Protection of some of the last remaining virgin "black soil" steppe regions of Russia; Emphasis on scientific studies, including maintenance of Annals of Nature; ecological monitoring; participation in environmental impact assessments; environmental awareness and education; preparation of scientific personnel and specialists in the field of environment protection.	PSC committee member.  One of the project's four pilot sites, it will be an important player in and beneficiary of each of the three project Components.
4) "Orenburgsky" Zapovednik (Orenburg oblast)	Development and implementation of demonstration projects aimed at establishment of effective steppe SPA management.	PSC committee member.  One of the project's four pilot sites, it will be an important player in and beneficiary of each of the three project Components.
<b>Scientific Institutions.</b>		
Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) Institutes and Regional Branches.	Severtsov' Institute of Ecology and Evolution and Institute of Geography in Moscow, Zoological and Botanical Institutes in St. Petersburg, Institute of Ecology of Volga R. Basin in Togliatti, Institute of Ecology of Mountain Areas, Precaspian Institute of Biological Resources in Makhachkala, Institute of Water and Ecological Problems in Barnaul, Institute of Animal Ecology and Systematics and Central Siberian Botanical Garden in Novosibirsk, Baikal Joint Institute of Nature Management in Ulan-Ude, Institute of Geography in Irkutsk, Tuviniian Institute of Complex Development of Natural Resources in Kyzyl.	Outcome 2, Outputs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4. Several institutes of RAS are important project partners in developing adaptive management approach through better monitoring and targeted research efforts.
The Steppe Institute (also under the RAS)	Russia's only academic institute dedicated to steppe studies, The Steppe Institute is affiliated with the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) and has been a leader in steppe ecosystem studies for many years. With experts in a range of ecological and environmental disciplines, the Institute provides expert support to regional and federal conservation efforts and resource management.	Will play a key role in providing technical guidance to specific project activities in Orenburg and perhaps across all four pilot sites. Will be especially involved in activities under Component 2, Outputs 2.1-2.4. Will be key player in organizing Symposium 'Steppes of Northern Eurasia as global conservation priority' (Output 3.4.)

Stakeholders	Roles and responsibilities relevant to steppe ecosystem conservation and management.	Roles in Project Implementation
Universities	Moscow State University, St. Petersburg, Saratov, Voronezh, Tomsk, Irkutsk State Universities, Southern Federal University in Rostov on Don, Bashkirian State University in Ufa, Altai State University in Barnaul. Have long-term relationships with particular zapovedniks, maintain scientific cooperation with them and their graduates, and operate long-term research on a range of environmental topics.	Universities and their associated experts will play a key role in several Outputs under the project, including Gap analyses and strategic planning, integrated SPA management planning, improving monitoring practices, and cultivating a new generation of SPA managers from the student population around Russia. Will be key partners in developing the technical aspects of the project's work, primarily under Output 1.1, but especially under Component 2, Outputs 2.1-2.4.
Zabaikalsky State Humanitarian Pedagogical University; Chita Institute of Natural Resources (CINR of SB RAS); Chita State Technical University; Institute of Natural Resources, Ecology and Cryology of SB RAS;	Informational support, provision of baseline and monitoring. Other Zabaikalsky krai academic institutions: Zabaikalsky Agricultural Academy; A. N. Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution (SEVIN) of RAS; Komarov Botanical Institute of RAS.	Expert involvement especially in the Components 1 and 2 of the project. This will include Outputs 1.1, 1.2, and Component 2, Outputs 2.1 – 2.4.
Kalmykian State University and Natural Mathematics Institute	Informational support. Monitoring of landscape and biological diversity. Active in environmental and ecological issues in Kalmykia, the University is a potential source of new staff for SPA.	Expert involvement especially in the Components 1 and 2 of the project. This will include Outputs 1.1, 1.2, and Component 2, Outputs 2.1 – 2.4.
Kalmykian Institute of Integrated Arid Areas Studies	Develops integrated socio-economic and legal studies and scientific programs on the rational use of natural resources in the RoK. Studies biodiversity conservation and rational use of natural resources of the region aimed at conservation of etalon steppe and semi-steppe ecosystems. Environmental monitoring and study of arid ecosystem health.	Expert involvement especially in the Components 1 and 2 of the project. This will include Outputs 1.1, 1.2, and Component 2, Outputs 2.1 – 2.4.
Kalmykian Scientific Research Institute of Agriculture (of RAS); Institute of Integrated Arid Areas Studies	Improvement of technologies of prevention of Chiornye Zemli desertification; propaganda of scientific knowledge and best practices in the aforementioned areas	Expert involvement especially in the Components 1 and 2 of the project. This will include Outputs 1.1, 1.2, and Component 2, Outputs 2.1 – 2.4.
Kursk State University; Kursk State Agricultural Academy; All-Russian Scientific Research Institute of Agriculture and Soil Protection from Erosion.	Training of specialists in ecology; addressing of ecological problems of protection of water and vegetation resources of multiple use, melioration, land conservation and reclamation.	Expert involvement especially in the Components 1 and 2 of the project. This will include Outputs 1.1, 1.2, and Component 2, Outputs 2.1 – 2.4.
Institute of Steppes of UB RAS	Development of ecological-economic justification and background materials for SPA (traditional and new forms), their monitoring, scientific support for PA management. Development of mechanisms for establishing SPA under conditions of modern land use.	Expert involvement especially in the Components 1 and 2 of the project. This will include Outputs 1.1, 1.2, and Component 2, Outputs 2.1 – 2.4. Potential institutional base for management of Orenburg pilot project work.

Stakeholders	Roles and responsibilities relevant to steppe ecosystem conservation and management.	Roles in Project Implementation
Kursk State Oblast History Museum; Chita Oblast History Museum	Scientific research, education, methodological support for environmental protection, study of oblast biodiversity. Education, strengthening of its role in the development of SPA, development of all forms of tourism for Kursk grasslands. Chita: Activities on information dissemination	Expert involvement especially in the Components 1 and 2 of the project. This will include Outputs 1.1, 1.2, and Component 2, Outputs 2.1 – 2.4.
<b>Municipalities:</b>		
Municipal administrations of Chita oblast districts	Making endorsement in any process concerning land property. Assistance in interaction with land users and local stakeholders. Information and organizational support.	Stakeholders in all outputs where some activities are planned on their territory, especially in Outputs 1.2, 2.1
Gorshechensky district Administration – Kursk oblast	Making endorsement in any process concerning land property. Assistance in interaction with land users and local stakeholders under the establishment of new regional SPA. Information and organizational support.	Stakeholders in all outputs where some activities are planned on their territory, especially in Outputs 1.2, 2.1
Orenburg Oblast; Sol-Iletsky, Beliaevsky, Akbulaksky, and Kuvandyksky district Administrations.	Promotion informal registration of steppe SPA, wide participation of heads of local and district municipal entities in marketing of eco-friendly production of adaptive cattle-breeding. Development of adaptive steppe cattle-breeding, including horse-breeding	Stakeholders in all outputs where some activities are planned on their territory, especially in Outputs 1.2, 2.1
<b>NGOs.</b>		
WWF Russia	WWF-Russia has been active in promoting the expansion of Russia’s protected area system for many years. Recently, at the request of the MNRE, WWF has developed a report entitled, “National PA Development Plan up to 2020.” More than 120 of the suggested locations for new national PA contain steppe ecosystems. Gathers, analyses and publishes information on SPA; maintains long-term cooperation with particular SPA (Daursky Zapovednik).	Will be a key actor in capacity building and management planning in the pilot sites. Will be involved in gap-analysis and planning approach for new SPA.
Wetlands International, Russia office	Maintains a database on the important wetlands that are within either existing or planned SPA.	Output 1.1 Partner in Strategic planning for SPA.
Biodiversity Conservation Centre (BCC, NGO)	It has been active in supporting and promoting the expansion of Russia’s protected area system for decades. Maintains a web-based resource on federal strictly protected nature areas in Russia. Has special Steppe Program.	Outputs, 1.1, 3.2, 3.3.  Could be important partner in developing new strategy for SPA network and for developing web-based mechanisms for network learning and capacity building.
Siberian Environmental Center (Sibecocenter, NGO)	Publishes unique Russian-language periodical especially devoted to steppe conservation, restoration, and sustainable use. Elaborated Steppe conservation strategy for Russian NGOs (partnering with BCC). Maintains a database on steppe related institutions and experts. Monitors changes in national legislation for impacts on steppe areas. Collects data on the	Component1: Key technical partner in developing the SLCP. Component 2. Key technical partner in developing and implementing pilot activities under Outputs 2.1-2.4. Component 3. Key partner in developing web-based information sharing and knowledge management

Stakeholders	Roles and responsibilities relevant to steppe ecosystem conservation and management.	Roles in Project Implementation
	most valuable steppe tracts (nationally) and field monitors some in Altai region. Species program on some globally vulnerable steppe species like Pallas cat and Saker. Based in Novosibirsk.	mechanisms.
Foundation for the Revival of Orenburg Steppes	Regional NGO based in Orenburg. Responsible for managing Tarpan Park on a 49-year lease from the Federal Agency for State Property.	Key partner in demonstrating Specially Managed Steppe Area concept (Output 1.4).
<b>Business companies</b>		
ChitaEnergO, a regional branch of Interregional Distribution Grid Company of Siberia, Joint Stock Company (IDGC of Siberia, JSC)	Owns all main power lines in Dauria region, responsible for power line safety for wildlife	Stakeholder in identification and reduction threats for birds from power lines in the region – Output 2.3
OrenburgEnergO, a regional branch of IDGC of Volga, JSC	Owns all main power lines in Orenburg region, responsible for power line safety for wildlife	Stakeholder in identification and reduction threats for birds from power lines in the region – Output 2.3
KalmEnergO, a regional branch of IDGC of South, JSC	Owns all main power lines in Kalmykia region, responsible for power line safety for wildlife	Stakeholder in identification and reduction threats for birds from power lines in the region – Output 2.3

## Annex 4. ToR for Key Project Staff

The Project Management and Coordination Unit (PMCU) will be staffed by the following, nationally-recruited positions:

- Project Manager
- Administrative Assistant
- Finance Assistant
- Project Technical Coordinator

### Project Manager

The project manager (PM) shall be responsible for providing critical technical input to project implementation and overall management and supervision of the GEF project. He/she will manage and provide overall supervision for all staff in the Project Management and Coordination Unit (PMCU). He/she shall liaise directly with the UNDP-CO, National Project Director and project partners in order to develop the annual work plan for the project. He/she will report to the UNDP-CO Environment Unit and the Project Director located in Moscow.

#### Duties:

The PM will have the following specific duties:

#### Management:

- Provide management leadership of the SPA project - both organizational and substantive – budgeting, planning and general monitoring of the project, the PMCU staff and budget.
- Ensure a close working relationship with MNRE and its DSPA, as well as the MoA and other key SPA stakeholders.
- Supervise and coordinate the project’s work to ensure its results are in accordance with the Project Document and the project’s Results Framework and its specific indicators of success.
- Ensure project is implemented according to the rules and procedures established in the UNDP Programming Manual.
- Ensure adequate information flow, discussions and feedback among the various stakeholders of the project.
- Prepare annual work plans and implementation of project activities in full consultation with the SC. Ensure the workplans are linked directly to the project’s Results Framework and its specific “Indicators of Success.” The work plan will provide guidance on the day-to-day implementation of the project document noting the need for overall coordination with other projects and on the integration of the various donor funded parallel initiatives.
- Catalyze the adaptive management of the project by actively monitoring progress towards achievement of project objectives vis-a-vis the agreed progress indicators and applying the resulting insights to the



project's ongoing work; Ensure adherence to the project's work plan, prepare revisions of the work plan, if required.

- Assume overall responsibility for the proper handling of logistics related to project workshops and events.
- Prepare GEF quarterly project progress reports, as well as any other reports requested by the Executing Agency and UNDP.
- Guide the work of consultants and subcontractors and oversee compliance with the agreed work plan.
- Monitor the expenditures, commitments and balance of funds under the project budget lines, and draft project budget revisions.
- Assume overall responsibility for the meeting financial delivery targets set out in the agreed annual work plans, reporting on project funds and related record keeping.
- Liaise with project partners to ensure their co-financing contributions are provided within the agreed terms.

#### Technical Input:

- Provide critical and significant technical input to project implementation based upon professional background and experience. This technical input to be agreed and detailed with UNDP at project inception.
- Provide overall technical guidance and consistency of vision for project's strategic protected area network expansion and protected area management approach as manifested through the development of related sub-contracting documents.
- Effectively and efficiently implement the project activities towards full achievement of its stated objectives and for all substantive, managerial and financial reports from the Project.
- Engage in a constructive dialogue with the Project Director and project partners both within Russia and outside of Russia to maximize consistency and synergy between the various project components.
- Provide technical input to and be responsible for preparation of the development of Terms of Reference for consultants and contractors.
- Arrange for the timely recruitment and procurement of quality services and equipment and for implementation of project activities of in accord with applicable rules, regulation and standards;
- Foster and establish technical best-practice links with other related protected area initiatives.
- Interact on a technical level with other relevant regional protected area initiatives, GEF funded projects.
- Catalyze the development system-wide partnerships for SPA.

- Provide overall technical guidance to maintain and develop the project web-site seeking and incorporating data and information from all project partners;
- Provide overall technical guidance to development of web-based mechanism for peer-to-peer training and learning of lessons among SPA;
- Represent the project at the Steering Committee meetings, technical meetings and other appropriate fora.
- Undertake any other actions related to the project as requested by UNDP.

#### Skills and Experience Required

Post-graduate degree in environmental management or a directly related field, e.g. applied steppe ecosystem or wildlife science or natural resources economics; at least fifteen years experience in fields related to the assignment including ten years of experience at a senior project management level. Must be able to demonstrate ability to make significant technical and management contributions to project. Should have demonstrated management experience. Must be willing to work long hours with frequent travel. Familiarity with the goals and procedures of international organizations; Must be fluent in Russian; excellent knowledge of English an asset.

### **Administrative Assistant (AA)**

Under the supervision of the Project Manager (PM), the AA will manage the day to day operations of the PMCU, particularly with respect to finances, technical services, procurement and personnel matters, all to be carried out in close cooperation with the counterpart staff of MNRE and UNDP-CO Environment Unit in Moscow.

#### Duties

The AA will have the following specific duties:

- Ensure the proper day-to-day functioning of the PMCU by supervising the provision of all necessary supplies and services including maintenance contracts, office supplies and communications. He/she will supervise the Financial Assistant. He/she shall be responsible for the proper running and upkeep of the PMCU hardware including the computers, copiers, etc.
- Prepare draft budget revisions and working budgets in consultation with the UNDP and PM;
- Administer the petty cash and imprest account on behalf of the PM and prepare relevant documents including monthly cash statements, requests for replenishment and budget reviews and revisions.
- He/she shall oversee the work of the Finance Assistant.
- Assist all the PMCU staff with personnel matters relevant to the performance of official duties. This work, with support from the FA, will include organization of project-related travel for PMCU staff.

The incumbent will also supervise keeping records of time and attendance and informing staff of vacation periods and any other UNDP-related administrative functions as required by the PM.

- Undertake all duties relevant to local procurement, with support of the FA. He/she will maintain records of suppliers, obtain competitive bids for the consideration of the PM and complete the relevant documentation including that pertinent to the tax status of the PMCU. He/she will arrange for customs clearance if required. He/she will maintain precise records of all goods purchased and for maintaining proper equipment inventories as well as for ensuring the proper labeling and recording of equipment delivered to the field.

#### Skill and Experience Requirements

Degree in administration or a directly relevant field; three years proven experience in administration and budget management; fluency in Russian required; English an asset; proven experience in the management of computer or other office technology equipment; good knowledge of UNDP policies and regulations an asset.

### **Finance Assistant (FA)**

Under the supervision of the Project Manager (PM), the Finance Assistant (FA) will provide support to the PM and assist the AA to perform his/her tasks.

#### Duties

The FA will have the following specific duties:

- Provide general administrative support to ensure the smooth running of the PMCU.
- Project logistical support to the AA and PM and project consultants in conducting different project activities (trainings, workshops, stakeholder consultations, study tours).
- Prepare and maintain the records of project accounts. He/she shall prepare all relevant documents for administering the imprest account and other accounts for final approval by the PM, in conformity with the stipulations of the financial regulations of the executing agency. He/she shall prepare bank reconciliation and records of total project expenditure including where possible, full records of co-financing contributions to the project.
- Monitor Project expenditures with reference to the approved budget. He/she will prepare budget proposals and also attend to all financial and budgetary aspects of the implementation of the programme including the following specific duties.
- Monitor expenditures, review of the executing agency finance records of expenditures against MODs and budget lines.
- Assist the PM to prepare special budget and financial statements for Steering Committee and to regularly brief the PM on the financial status of the project.

- Review incoming authorizations to ensure adequate recording against budget lines.
- During the visits of expert consultants, bear the responsibility for their support, transportation, hotel accommodation etc.
- Assist the control of budget expenditures by preparing payment documents, and compiling financial reports.
- Maintain the project's disbursement ledger and journal & keep files with project documents, expert reports.
- Draft correspondence and documents; finalize correspondence of administrative nature; edit reports and other documents for correctness of form and content.
- Act on telephone inquiries, fax, post and e-mail transmissions, and co-ordinate appointments.
- Perform any other administrative/financial duties as requested by the PM.
- Organize and coordinate the procurement of services and goods under the project.

#### Skills and Experience Required

Advanced training in finance or accounting; Proven experience in accounting; Fluency in Russian a must; English an asset. Proven experience in the management of computer or other office technology equipment. Knowledge of UNDP policies and regulations an asset.

## **Annex 5. Letters of Co-financing.**

Attached as separate files

## **Annex 6. Description of relevant existing international agreements between Russia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and China.**

### **Russia-Kazakhstan**

- *Russia-Kazakhstan Treaty on friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance* (1992) states environmental safety is a priority in bilateral relations. Parts of the Treaty declare their intention to secure sustainable and resource-saving land use, and develop joint conservation programs and projects.
- *Agreement on Cooperation in Environmental Protection* signed at (2004). Clause 4 calls for establishing and developing a system of protected areas to conserve ecosystems straddling the Russia-Kazakhstan border.
- *Agreement on Joint Use and Protection of Transboundary Waters* signed at (1992).
- *Project of Agreement on the Joint Fund to Conserve the Ecosystem of Ural R. Basin. To be signed at Russia-Kazakhstan summit in September 2009.* The Fund will finance implementation of an *Agreement on Joint Use and Protection of Transboundary Waters* in western region of Russia-Kazakhstan border.
- *Project of Agreement on the Altai Transboundary Russia-Kazakhstan Protected Area* to protect unique biological and landscape diversity of mountainous Altai is prepared by Kazakhstan and forwarded to Russia Government (2009) (based on Katunskiy Biosphere Zapovednik in Russia and Katon-Karagai Nat Park in Kazakhstan; no steppe will be protected, mainly taiga forests and high mountains)

### **Russia-Mongolia**

- *Moscow Declaration* signed by Russia and Mongolia Presidents (2006) is the most general document asserting environmental protection as one of the main tasks for Russia-Mongolia cooperation.
- *Russia-Mongolia Agreement on Cooperation in Environmental Protection* signed at (1994). Establishes a framework for more detailed cooperation.
- *Agreement on Dauria International Protected Area* (1994). Signed by China, Mongolia, and Russia environmental protection agencies to establish Dauria International Protected Area (DIPA) to protect globally important grasslands in the junction of Russia, Mongolia, and China.

### **Russia-China**

- The *Russia-China Treaty on good neighbor relations, friendship and cooperation* (signed 2001, published 2009) considers environmental issues in the border region such as: the protection and improvement of the natural environment and the conservation of endangered species and ecosystems (clause 19 of the Treaty). The 2005-2008 Action plan included the development and agreement on transboundary nature reserves.
- *Russia-China Agreement on Cooperation in Protection of the Natural Environment* (1994). Establishes a framework to more detailed cooperation.
- *Trilateral Agreement on Dauria International Protected Area* (1994).
- *Agreement on Khanka/Xingkai Lake International Nature Reserve* signed in 1996. The agreement envisioned a range of cooperative activities and established a Chinese-Russian Commission on Lake Khanka/Xingkai. International Nature Reserve. Active cooperation between nature reserves started from 2003.
- *Agreement on use and protection of transboundary waters* (2008). It addresses a broad range of environmental issues (no special concern to steppe grassland protection).
- *Provincial-level Agreement on nature protection of Argun river basin* (2006): Zabaikalskiy Krai agreed with Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region to address monitoring and protection of water quality, biodiversity.

## Annex 7. Overall Land-use Categories Relevant to Steppe Protected Areas.

Overall Land-use Categories Relevant to Steppe Areas	Designations under each Category	Complementary conservation role and requirements	Complementary form of protected area in Russian legislation
Agricultural lands	Arable land	Multiple-use area (as a room for nesting and foraging steppe bird species like Great Bustard, cranes, Steppe Harrier, etc.) – some restrictions on use pesticides and technologies, special programs on treating birds carefully, ban on settlement or mining development.	Zakaznik, Nature Monument, Nature Park (some functional zones), National Park (some functional zones) “Restricted land-use areas” may be established based on direct agreements with landholder and owner
	Pasture Land	Sustainable use (or multiple-use) area – as the best place to conserve steppe ecosystems and many steppe species. Need: some restrictions and conditions of grazing method, season, and period, stocking density and rate; ban on turning into any other land use (arable, settlement or mining development, and so on); limitation on fragmenting area and additional conditions for making fences; limitation or ban on pesticide and fertilizer use and other grassland ‘improvement’; fire management.	Zakaznik, Nature Monument, Nature Park (all functional zones), National Park (all functional zones), buffer zone of Zapovednik. “Restricted land-use areas” may be established based on direct agreements with landholder and owner
	Old-fields	Multiple-use area: as a room for nesting and foraging steppe birds, appropriate habitat for many other animals; and place for spontaneous steppe restoration. The urgent need: ban on re-ploughing and turning into crops; other needs – the same as for pasture land.	Zakaznik, Nature Monument, Nature Park (some functional zones), National Park (some functional zones), buffer zone of Zapovednik
Lands of protected areas	Lands of protected areas.	Core and buffer zones	All forms
	Lands of environmental protection (water protection zones, protection forest belts, partially territories of traditional land use for indigenous peoples)	Sustainable use area	No formal PA (regulated under Law on Protected Nature Areas), “restricted land-use areas” (as named at column 2)
Defense lands	No subdivisions in Land Code	Reserve for new SPA establishing (after changing land category). Need: to guarantee safety of steppe ecosystem in case of changing land category and	No formal PA before changing land category;

Overall Land-use Categories Relevant to Steppe Areas	Designations under each Category	Complementary conservation role and requirements	Complementary form of protected area in Russian legislation
		transfer it into complementary land category (protected area or pasture land); under military use: restrictions and conditions like in pasture land.	
Forest Fund	No subdivisions in Land Code	Not important (actual use is regulated by Forest Code and other forestry legislation, not by Land Code)	
Water Fund	No subdivisions in Land Code	Not important (actual use is regulated by Water Code and other water legislation)	
Reserve lands	These lands often entail high mountains or extensive wetlands where no “real” use is possible. Formally, no use is allowed.	Core areas <i>de facto</i> , multi-use areas. Potential lands for new SPA. Need: to follow existing regime of the land category.	No PA may be legally founded before transferring into some other land category