

**Process Framework for Involuntary Restrictions  
Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Management Plan**

CEPF Grant 113035

Global and Local Information Partnership

Improving Public Protected Area Management and Strengthening Community Based Micro-Reserves in Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan

1. **Grantee organization:** Global and Local Information Partnership (GLIP)
2. **Grant title:** Improving Public Protected Area Management and Strengthening Community Based Micro-Reserves in Kyrgyzstan
3. **Grant number:** 113035
4. **Grant amount (US dollars):** approximately \$104,000 plus \$28,000 option
5. **Proposed dates of grant:** August 2022 – July 2024
6. **Location (country):** Kyrgyzstan
7. **Date of preparation of this document:** 22 July 2022

## 8. Project background

The formal protected area system in Kyrgyzstan does not use any system or tool for assessment of efficient management, at least not in any systematic way. Some donor-funded projects use the METT, originally developed by WWF. However, the METT offers only a snapshot in time. It tells managers that progress is being made against the milestones defined in the METT and serves, for donors, as a form of verification. In this sense, it helps donors. However, it does not help PA manager, who want to know the most efficient things they can do right away.

Recognizing the limitations of the METT, in 2015, WWF-Russia led a series of workshops with state PA managers in Kyrgyzstan to develop a new methodology called Protected Area Effectiveness Assessment. Among other things, the methodology systematically collects information on red listed species, ecosystems, and natural monuments, giving the manager more ways to plan their work. In 2017, GLIP, as one of the participants in the development of the tool, tested it in four different reserves. In 2018 this methodology was approved by an order of the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry director. At the same time, the State Agency appointed GLIP as the trainer of PA staff throughout the country, with the plan being to conduct an assessment once every five years in each reserve. We started this process via our previous CEPF small grant, CEPF-110815. Within the ministry, the PA and Biodiversity Department and its director, Ibraev Emil, regularly request GLIP's assistance. We have finished work in four "nature reserves" (out of ten in the country) and are ready to work in the country's thirteen "national parks."

The Protected Area Effectiveness tool can also be entered into the Kyrgyz national government's digital system, called Tunduk. If this project is successful, the tool will be used throughout all PAs in the country, with replicated training and the use of publications for PA managers.

Separate from this tool, the State Agency has been trying for years to create a national database on biodiversity. As a contribution to this effort, we will use a smartphone application called NEXTGIS. This is meant to be used by rangers during their daily patrols like a diary and as a replacement for notebooks, pencils, cameras, and GPS units. NEXTGIS can also be used by non-professionals in buffer zones. NEXTGIS works on commercially available smartphones and still works when phones are offline (i.e., in the field). The device stores data and once it connects to the internet, automatically uploads information to a central database. Depending on their level of authorization, a user can observe the monitoring data in real time in a single reserve as well in the entire project area. NEXTGIS has been tested in the Altay Republic of Russia, in Kazakhstan, and in Tajikistan.

While our work will ultimately have a national benefit, we will focus training on the PA Effectiveness tool and NEXTGIS in KBA KBZ 28 (Kumtor and Sarychat-Ertash) and KBA KGZ 30 (Sary-Djaz), which themselves

are part of priority Corridor 18 (Khan-Tengri and Tomur Mountains) and are home to Sarychat Eertash State Reserve and Khan Tengri National Park. We will also work in Salkyn-Tor National Park (located in Naryn district) and the Baiboosun community reserve (located in Ton district), as both of these places can serve as central training and demonstration locations. The Khan-Tengri corridor has the country's highest density of snow leopards and their prey, and it also has fifteen hunting concessions, thus this an advantageous place to start this work.

Sarychat Eertash State Reserve is notable for its remoteness and challenging work conditions. Rangers are required to be there throughout the year, even in winter snows. There is currently no all-weather ranger station, just small and dilapidated structures from Soviet times. Part of our work, in exchange for the good will of reserve staff to participate in the training and then use the PA Effectiveness methodology and NEXTGIS app, will be to repair and improve the field station. The station is 18 kilometers from the nearest village, only reachable by horseback or on foot.

Baiboosun is a community reserve with livestock grazing. Herders typically release their animals to graze unattended in the mountains, where they can be attacked by predators (particularly wolves, but also brown bears and leopards), leading to human-wildlife conflict. Part of our work will be to build a fenced corral to protect the livestock. We will also help the community continue with the reserve registration process. As prescribed by the national Law on Protected Areas for the creation of community reserves, these include:

Agreement with the owner/manager of land for protection, where the owner is typically the local government administration or a pasture management committee.

1. Community consultation.
2. Mapping of the territory.
3. Biodiversity baseline assessment.
4. Management plan development.
5. Community consultation.
6. Formal registration of the reserve with the Department of biodiversity and protected areas of Ministry for natural resources and environment protection.

Baiboosun is now focused on Steps 3, 4, and 5.

The community conservation area Chunkur Tor (located in Aksuu district) is important part of migratory roots of snow leopard and ungulates between Khan Tengri National Park and Sarychat Eertash State reserve, and partially located in priority Corridor 18 (Khan-Tengri and Tomur Mountains). The community is just started their conservation activity and need assistance in baseline monitoring to get official status in the future.

#### Option for Amendment and Additional Funded Work

As originally conceived, this grant was to include another element on creation of community reserves. However, we have removed this component to respect CEPF's limits of an approximately \$100,000 budget. We are not proposing this work now but are including it here as the basis of a possible cost-plus-scope amendment. Using Baiboosun as the model, we would work with communities in Corridor 18 to follow steps for reserve creation. During implementation, apart from any possible amendment, we

will have community members from Corridor 18 visit Baiboosun to better understand what happens in these registration steps.

Our approach will follow six components.

- Component 1. Training on Protected Area Effectiveness Assessment Tool
- Component 2. Training in NEXTGIS
- Component 3. Ranger facilities and equipment
- Component 4. Baiboosun community reserve fencing
- Component 5. Baiboosun community reserve formal registration
- Component 6. Replication of PA Effectiveness tool and NEXTGIS

**Specifically, this project may lead to restrictions on access to resources in the following ways:**

- Strengthening the management of the three state reserves and two community reserves may lead to further imposition of existing rules, in adherence with existing laws, on access to this land, particularly for grazing of livestock.
- Engagement with pastoralists, hunters, and other community members on the edge of state reserves to improve their understanding of their rights and responsibilities.
- Engagement with pastoralists, hunters, and other community members who are the “owners” of the community reserves to voluntarily and collectively accept and enact stronger management provisions.

## **9. Participatory implementation**

GLIP has ongoing engagements with the two community reserves, Baiboosun and Chunkor Tor. We have been working with these communities, in one capacity or another, since, 2020. Formally, we will assist the communities with participatory mapping and the consultation steps leading to and after writing of the management plan.

In the area surrounding Khan-Tengri and Sary Eertash, there are very few people immediately adjacent to the reserves. The nearest village to Sarychat Eertash is 18 kilometers away. Nonetheless, there are people who bring their livestock to the area for the short summer season. As part of training in the PA tool, GLIP will work with the reserve managers to identify these people as part of the reserve “ecosystem,” to be engaged as partners instead of as enemies.

Naryn reserve, where will test the PA system and NEXTGIS, is somewhat closer to villages. Still, the reserve has been in existence for decades and is well demarcated. Grazing inside the reserve occurs only rarely. The current system is that if a ranger meets someone grazing inside the reserve, they are told to leave, with subsequently higher levels of citation (e.g., report to village head, formal warning) before going to police. People respond positively to this method. With stronger enforcement of regulations, GLIP will ensure that the park staff have proper outreach to the surrounding communities.

In general, consultations with local stakeholders will discuss:

- Current land use requirements (e.g., for grazing, hunting, other).
- Possibilities for alternative zones of land use, if restrictions are put in place.
- The varying needs of different “classes” of users, such as men, women, old versus young, hunters, livestock owners, livestock herders, nearby residents, further distanced users and owners, etc.

As any plan develops, these “classes” of stakeholders will be engaged:

- At the input stage prior to drafting of plans.
- At the review stage to comments on drafts.
- As allowed by local administrative procedures, to “endorse” final drafts before they are formally approved by the government.

## **10. Criteria for eligibility of affected persons**

Eligible “affected” persons include the people living within 20 kilometers of the three public reserves and all the members of the Baiboosun and Chunkor Tor communities.

## **11. Measures to assist the affected persons**

Anticipated “effects” are largely about denying people the ability to do things they are already not supposed to be doing: no further grazing of livestock in reserve boundaries, no hunting within reserve boundaries or without permits or outside of designated seasons.

Measures to assist these people will be via two mechanisms.

The first is in the form of ensuring consultation and input into any pasture management plan or hunting regime. In this sense, anyone engaged in this work will do so voluntarily from the start. By example, pasture management plans will address issues such as:

- Location of pasture
- Number of animals
- Seasonal movements of livestock
- Best practice on watering and feeding of animals

The second mitigation measure will be by facilitating connections between affected people and other providers of public welfare services, be they government or non-government. This could include assistance with alternative livelihood promotion, veterinary care, agriculture extension, and health care.

## **12. Conflict resolution and complaint mechanism**

GLIP will ensure that local stakeholders are aware of the work and understand how to voice complaints if any. We will:

- Post information in Kyrgyz and Russian in relevant district offices and reserve offices.
- Explain our activities at all stakeholder meetings.

- Create fliers about the project’s objectives and planned activities. These fliers will include contact information for GLIP staff. We will distribute these fliers at all stakeholder meetings.

During all meetings and in general interactions with the public, GLIP personnel will inform local people and other stakeholders that they have the right to raise a grievance at any time with GLIP, local authorities, nature reserve personnel, or CEPF about any issue relating to the project. Before starting the project implementation, local communities will be informed of the objectives of the grant. They will be given telephone numbers and e-mails of contact persons at GLIP, the reserves, and CEPF. This information will also be put on all education materials that will be produced during this project implementation including posters, brochures, and booklets. Contact information of the Regional Implementation Team and CEPF will be made publicly available in Kyrgyz or Russian, as appropriate. If GLIP receives a grievance, it will communicate the grievance, together with a proposed response, to CEPF and the RIT within 15 days.

We will inform stakeholders that grievances should proceed in the order below. If the stakeholder is unsatisfied with the response at any step, they may proceed further.

- Director of GLIP, f\_balbakova@mail.ru
- Regional Implementation Team via <https://www.mca.earth/en/contacts/>
- Conservation International Ethics Hotline: +1-866-294-8674 / secure web portal: <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/10680/index.html>

### **13. Implementation Arrangements**

The project will be coordinated from GLIP offices in Bishkek and Issy-Kul, with staff traveling to the field several weeks per year to engage with stakeholders and reserve authorities. The primary field-facing personnel will be:

- Project manager
- Protected area capacity building specialist
- Biodiversity monitoring specialist