

CEPF Final Completion and Impact Report

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| Organization's Legal Name: | Global Forest Coalition |
| Project Title: | Strengthening Conservation of Key Biodiversity Areas in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan |
| Grant Number: | CEPF-112419 |
| Hotspot: | Mountains of Central Asia |
| Strategic Direction: | 5 Enhance civil society capacity for effective conservation action |
| Grant Amount: | \$150,600.04 |
| Project Dates: | January 01, 2022 - December 31, 2023 |
| Date of Report: | February 25, 2024 |

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

When we started the development of our project, we planned the participation of almost all NGO partners of the Global Forest Coalition from the region of Central Asia. Finally, when we started the project we had a team of 6 partners from the region namely Karaganda Ecocenter and Socio-ecological Fund in Kazakhstan, Aleine+, BIOM, and Kyrgyz Society for Wildlife Protection in Kyrgyzstan, and Noosfera in Tajikistan. Our two partners from Kazakhstan were involved in the development of activities and preparation of the Action Plan for Narynkol KBA in Kazakhstan. Our three partners from Kyrgyzstan were engaged in work with communities to develop activities and prepare an Action Plan for Kassan-Sai KBA. Our partners from Tajikistan planned to work on Dashtijum KBA. However, during project implementation, we had some changes in our program. During the first year, we worked with all 6 NGOs and visited all three project areas in three countries to evaluate capacities and opportunities for project implementation. But after half a year, we needed to change our plans. During our trip to Tajikistan, we figured out that there were some difficulties in visiting Dashtijum KBA due to the complicated situation in the Tajik-Afgan border restricted our work in Dashtijum KBA. Besides, the project coordinator in Tajikistan, Mr. Vladimir Lekarkin did not respond to our letters and did not present any work report conducted. The GFC management team decided to exclude Tajikistan from the project implementation and sent out a letter to CEPF with an explanation of the situation. So, we stopped our work in Tajikistan after coordination with CEPF.

One more member of our team from Kyrgyzstan: Aleine+ and its director Mr. Erik Shukurov were involved in the project work from the beginning, but later he did not respond to our actions and did not participate in the project activities, although we invited him to all webinars. He participated in the first expedition to Kassan-Sai KBA.

CONSERVATION IMPACTS

Planned Long-Term Impacts: 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal)

| Impact Description | Impact Summary |
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| <p>Within three years of a baseline survey conducted in December 2024, more than 7,000 people living in communities around the Narynkol KBA and more than 5,000 students from 22 schools of the Raiymbek District, more than 10,000 people in Ala-Buka District living in communities close to Kassan-Sai KBA and more than 7,000 people living in the proximity of Dashtijum KBA will show an increase in awareness of the biodiversity values of the area as a result of public awareness campaigns in each country.</p> | <p>According to a recent assessment, around Kassan KBA there were involved following communities - Kasan-Sai village: 5585 people (as of January 2023), women - 2921 men - 2664; Kyzyl-Tokoy village - 1783 people (as of January 2023) women - 942, men - 841; Oruktu village - about 5000 people, men, and women we take it equally; the village of Ala-Buka is a large village, we take only the population living closer to the river - no more than one third - 5000 people, of which there are approximately equal numbers of women and men. The village of Baltagulova - 2780 people (as of January 2023), women - 1361, men - 1419. Besides, two schools from Terek-Sai also were involved. So, more than 20,000 people were informed about the biodiversity value of the Kassan-Sai KBA and increased their awareness. In Kazakhstan, our partners worked not only in Narynkol Village itself (population 7,700 people), but also with the Raiymbek district (where they could cover around 39,200 people) through the akim of the district level and akims of rural districts, with community representatives not only from Narynkol during 4 meetings and 3 pieces of training took part in our activities.</p> |
| <p>At least, 15,000 people in 3 countries will be aware of values of biodiversity in 3 KBAs namely Narynkol in Kazakhstan, Kassan-Sai in Kyrgyzstan, and Dashtyjim in Tajikistan through local mass-media, social media campaigns (Facebook and Instagram)</p> | <p>We achieved this impact partly, due to the exclusion of the Dashtijum KBA from the project. However, in two other countries Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, more than 27,700 people are aware of the value of biodiversity in Narynkol and Kassan-Say KBAs. The information was disseminated through local mass media in Kazakh and Kyrgyz languages, through Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, and You-Tube channels.</p> |

Planned Short-Term Impacts: 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal)

| Impact Description | Impact Summary |
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| <p>The technical and financial capacity of 6 GFC members will be increased, as measured by the CEPF civil society tracking tool, gender tracking tool, and other appropriate tools.</p> | <p>At the beginning of the project, we evaluated 6 NGOs using the Civil Society Tracking Tool (CSTT) and Gender Tracking Tool (GTT). To the end of 2023, we evaluated 4 NGOs, who remained in the project and took part in the capacity-building program. These are two organizations in Kazakhstan: Karaganda EcoCenter - CSTT 2022 - 59.5; CSTT - 2023 - 69.5; GTT - 2022 - 11; GTT 2023 - 12 - The CSTT performance has increased by 10 points; Gender performance has increased only 1 point.</p> |

| Impact Description | Impact Summary |
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| | Social and Environmental Fund: CSTT 2022 - 77.5; CSTT - 2023 - 80; GTT - 2022 - 15; GTT 2023 - 20. Two organizations in Kyrgyzstan: KSWC - CSTT 2022 - 56; CSTT - 2023 - 60; GTT - 2022 - 8; GTT 2023 - 9. The evaluation rate slightly increased for CSTT and GTT. BIOM - CSTT 2022 - 65; CSTT - 2023 - 72; GTT - 2022 - 13; GTT 2023 - 18. In the case of BIOM, both rates increased. The analysis of both tools will be done separately. |
| A network will be formed among at least six CSOs in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan that promotes the use of the KBA methodology to inform management decisions in Narynkol, Kassan-Sai, and Dashtijum. | Our network was formed and acted during project implementation. We regularly communicated on the issues of work around KBA and capacity-building issues. All 6 members were involved in the work of the project, and information about the project implementation was disseminated to them and other members from the region, who joined the Global Forest Coalition during the project implementation. Our network accounts now for 12 members; all members are actively involved in the protection of forests, KBAs, and their biodiversity. |
| Memorandums of understanding between one CSO and a government partner in each of three countries codify the use of the KBA methodology to inform management decisions. | The Memorandums of Understanding was concluded between Environmental NGO - Karaganda Ecocenter and Raiymbek District Administration in Kazakhstan and between environmental NGO AKMENA and Ala-Buka District Administration in Kyrgyzstan. Due to the exclusion of the team from Tajikistan, we stopped the project implementation there. Both MoUs in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan will be attached to the report. They use KBA methodology to inform management decisions. |

Unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

We had some unexpected impacts on our project, both positive and negative. The negative impact on our project was the situation in Tajikistan, including both problems - difficulties in accessing the project area on the border with Afghanistan in Dashtijim KBA to carry out there the project activities and the weakness of partners, who ignored the rules of communication and did not show the interest to this particular project implementation. So, we feel that we did not have enough capacity and resources for project implementation in Tajikistan. The lesson learned from this experience is that the project in Tajikistan should be executed at the country level. We are sure that such a project is needed, taking into account that the capacity of the local NGO partner was evaluated during our spring trip in 2022 as low.

In Kyrgyzstan, only one of our partner NGOs ignored the project implementation and quit the project from his side, although we sent out invitations for all our events and did not plan to exclude him and his team from the work of the project. However, due to the presence of other NGO partners, this situation was solved easily. The remaining teams implemented the project on a high level, initiated activities of local grassroots organizations, involved many communities in the project implementation, and achieved very good results.

Unexpected positive impacts:

1. We did not expect that the project implementation would facilitate environmental NGOs from Central Asia to join the Global Forest Coalition. Now we have many active partners from there (see information above).
2. We predicted but were not sure about the response of local communities. The response exceeded our expectations, especially in Kyrgyzstan. We found a very good project manager in Kyrgyzstan. Ms. Evgenia Postnova facilitated the process of KBA management by communities around Kassan-Sai KBA through the establishment of permanent communication contacts, and support to local women to start environmentally friendly businesses, together with us and other members from Kyrgyzstan raised additional funds for project implementation. In fall, 2023 we found that the community is ready to take the responsibilities for biodiversity management. Evgenia and her team worked with 5 local communities and several schools around Kassan-Sai KBA.
3. In Kazakhstan, our partners - Karaganda EcoCenter and Social-Ecological Fund - started to work with local administrations, and in the beginning, the project had a top-down approach, when local district heads invited interested stakeholders for our first meetings. Therefore, we did not see any women in our first workshop - only men. But, when we and our partners explored the situation, we found that in terms of environmentally-friendly business (ecotourism and hospitality) both genders - men and women - are equally involved. During a meeting in September 2023, we found mostly women who participated in our workshop and were interested in the development of Action Plans, which also would highlight their interests.
4. We need also to underline participation and support of the project by local administrative structures, who indicated that they appreciate the support in the development of environmentally friendly initiatives around KBAs.

In general, we feel that the projects with local communities should be continued. We reassured people and they believed that we could help them implement their plans. We are afraid that the long interval between preparing plans and implementing them may disappoint people. We prepared many projects, but only a few of them were supported. We are ready to help our partners with the search for new opportunities, but at the same time, we feel that it will be very important to have continuing support from the CEPF. If we want to have persistent results and aware communities, we need to have at least a 10-15-year program. At the same time, we understand that the new Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the creation of new funding mechanisms should support such opportunities for financing, including financing through international foundations like CEPF.

PROJECT RESULTS/DELIVERABLES

Overall results of the project:

Our project was implemented by teams of enthusiasts. We could see that not only our teams but local partners (local communities) were engaged in project implementation and motivated to plan a future with a healthy environment and protected biodiversity. We had four project components, we briefly highlighted the major goals and achieved results:

1. Capacity Building of partner NGOs: We worked with all our member NGOs in the region, first, to evaluate their capacity (including the capacity to manage gender issues) using CSTT and GTT. Then in spring 2022, we visited all three countries and met with all local NGOs involved in the project implementation. We also visited all three KBAs, met with local communities, and estimated current environmental problems, existing around each KBA. In the summer of 2022, we started the preparation of a training program for involved NGOs. Starting from August to September 2022 until October 2023, we organized 12 training sessions for all NGO members from the region, including new members who joined the GFC during our project implementation. In September 2023, during the next trip to the region,

the project coordinators from GFC organized meetings with our members to evaluate their capacity and see how our training increased member capacity.

2. Strengthen the GFC network in Central Asia: We started the project implementation with 6 members, although not all of them were actively involved in the project implementation, they were actively engaged in the information exchange and capacity building. During 2 years of project execution and due to direct communication, 6 new NGOs from Central Asia joined the GFC, including AKMENA from Kyrgyzstan, Karkaraly EcoCenter from Kazakhstan, Foundation to Support Civil Initiatives and Youth Ecological Center from Tajikistan, and "Ecolog" and "Eco-Maktab" from Uzbekistan. So, we stimulated an increase in the GFC network in Central Asia almost twice. At the same time, we strengthened our partnership with other environmental and community organizations, including local grassroots organizations in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The project piloted the regional network on forest ecosystem management and KBA protection. We see that our partners actively look for opportunities to continue their conservation and safeguard work around our selected KBAs and in other parts of the Mountain Biodiversity Hotspot in Central Asia.

3. Partnerships and Mainstreaming: In April-May 2022, we met with local communities around selected KBAs (Kassan-Sai, Narynkol, and Dashti-Jum) and discussed all issues related to existing problems within and around KBAs, including environmental and socio-ecological. Local communities suggested solutions to improve KBA conservation and management. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan teams defined conservation goals and signed MoU with local administrations from the Raiymbek District of Almaty Region (Narynkol KBA) and with Ala-Buka District (Kassan-Sai KBA). In 2023, both teams worked actively with local communities to develop Action Plans for KBAs. Both Action Plans were prepared in partnership with local communities and approved by local administrations by the end of 2023. Both teams worked out to raise additional funds for project implementation and local actions. We cannot say that all applications were successful, but at least several projects were supported including grants from other organizations.

4. Improved public awareness and stakeholder engagement around selected KBAs: In the first year of project implementation, our teams carried out the mapping of stakeholders and developed Stakeholder Engagement Plans. Our public awareness campaign started in the spring of 2023. The teams prepared materials about biodiversity and the values of KBAs for sharing in local communities. These materials were shared during meetings, workshops, and training conducted in the project area. The materials about the project and KBAs also were shared through mass-media channels as articles in newspapers and magazines, and as materials shared online through Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, and Youtube channels. We also prepared and shared materials through Global Forest Coalition mass media, including online publications in "Roots" and "Forest Cover", presentations on the thematic webinars, and other events.

Results for each deliverable:

| Component | | Deliverable | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--|---|
| # | Description | # | Description | Results for Deliverable |
| 1.0 | Capacity building of partner NGOs | 1.1 | Baseline civil society tracking tools (CSTTs) and gender tracking tools (GTTs) for Karaganda Ecocenter, Socio-Ecological Fund, Aleyne+, BIOM, KSWP, and Noosfera, and a baseline GTT for GFC | The assessment of CSTT at the beginning and at the end of the project showed that the score of CSTT of the Karaganda Ecocenter increased from 59.5 to 69.5, GTT - 2022 - 11; GTT 2023 - 12; Socio-Ecological Fund: CSTT 2022 - 77.5; CSTT - 2023 - 83; GTT - 2022 - 15; GTT 2023 - 20; KSWP: CSTT 2022 - 56; CSTT - 2023 - 61; GTT - 2022 - 8; GTT 2023 - 9; BIOM: CSTT 2022 - 65; CSTT - 2023 - 72; GTT - 2022 - 13; GTT 2023 - 18. Two organizations - Aleyne+ and Noosfera - quit the project for various reasons. So, we did not provide an evaluation of their CSTT and GTT at the end. |
| 1.0 | Capacity building of partner NGOs | 1.3 | Report on training of each NGO, including agenda, dates of events, name and sex of participants, and summary results/next steps | We organized more than 10 training sessions for each involved NGO. First of all, there were organized workshops and communication meetings in all countries in spring 2022 - in April and May- in Tajikistan (2 workshops), in Kyrgyzstan (3 workshops), and in Kazakhstan (2 workshops). Starting from autumn 2022 and until autumn 2023 we organized thematic training on biodiversity (3 webinars), fundraising (1 training), gender and biodiversity (2 webinars), human resources (1 webinar), project management (1 webinar), strategic planning (1 webinar). During our trip in September 2023 to Kazakhstan and |

| Component | | Deliverable | | |
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| # | Description | # | Description | Results for Deliverable |
| | | | | Kyrgyzstan we organized 4 workshops - 2 in each country. |
| 1.0 | Capacity building of partner NGOs | 1.2 | Developed training plan for each NGO | Since the start of the project, we established a project communication team from the project coordinators and all leads of the involved partner NGOs. Every month we had regular calls with all partners, regarding project activities, including capacity building of local NGOs. Together we developed a training plan and invited our partners to contribute to the capacity building through sharing their knowledge on specific conservation issues and experience of environmental NGO work in their countries. We organized 9 webinars and 10 face-to-face seminars in 3 project countries during the project implementation. |
| 1.0 | Capacity building of partner NGOs | 1.4 | Final civil society tracking tools (CSTTs) and gender tracking tools (GTTs) for Karaganda, Ecocenter, Socio-Ecological Fund, Aleyne+, BIOM, KSWP, and Noosfera. | The Global Forest Coalition (GFC) is an international coalition of 126 NGOs and Indigenous Peoples' Organizations defending social justice and the rights of forest peoples in forest policies. The GFC advocates for human rights, including gender issues. Therefore, the gender agenda was one of the important components of the project. Our participating organizations increased their knowledge of gender issues and their capacity to include gender data in the project cycle. Assessment with the Gender Tracking Tool (GTT) indicates that the general score increased for all NGOs, that participated in the project. In Kazakhstan, these are Karaganda |

| Component | | Deliverable | | |
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| # | Description | # | Description | Results for Deliverable |
| | | | | <p>Ecocenter - 11 in 2022 and 13 in 2023; Socio-Ecological Fund 15 in 2022 and 20 in 2023. In Kyrgyzstan, these are BIOM - 13 in 2022 and 18 in 2023; KSWP - 8 in 2022 and 12 in 2023. The scoring of the Civil Society Tracking Tool (CSTT) also increased: In Kazakhstan, for Karaganda Ecocenter it was 59.5 in 2022 and 69.5 in 2023; for Ecocenter it was 70.5 in 2022 and 83 in 2023; In Kyrgyzstan, for BIOM it was 65 in 2022 and it was 73 in 2023; for KSWP it was 56 in 2022 and 61 in 2023.</p> |
| 2.0 | Strengthening of GFC network in Central Asia | 2.1 | Statement of cooperation between the six members and GFC with goals and milestones | <p>Statement of cooperation between GFC and its members: When NGOs join the GFC, they should state their intention for cooperation with other GFC members. Also, GFC members state their agreement with GFC's mission and vision. The mission of the Global Forest Coalition is to advocate for the conservation and restoration of forest ecosystems, through defending and promoting respect for the rights, territories, traditional knowledge and sustainable livelihoods of the Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women that co-exist with them. All our members agreed to work in accordance with the mission and vision of the GFC including: Protect real forests, and the people dependent on them; Protect the rights of forest peoples; Protect the rights of forest peoples; Forests are key to the climate crisis; and Biodiversity through cultural diversity.</p> |

| Component | | Deliverable | | |
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| # | Description | # | Description | Results for Deliverable |
| | | | | Implementation of the CEPF project in Central Asia helped all 12 GFC members from the region to cooperate and to follow GFC's mission and vision. |
| 2.0 | Strengthening of GFC network in Central Asia | 2.2 | Report on network activities, including reports on meetings, cross-visits, and names of assigned champions | Our network mostly communicated in the virtual space, through Zoom meetings and webinars. At the same time, as planned, we had 5 cross-visits. In spring 2022, we had an opportunity to meet all members of our network visiting Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. In autumn 2023, we visited Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, organizing workshops for involved NGOs and local communities. We prepared written reports on each of our visits with detailed descriptions of tasks, participants, and achieved results. Our champions were assigned from the Kyrgyzstan team, where Ms. Evgenia Posntova carried out a fantastic engagement for all possible stakeholders in the Kassan-Sai area. During our cross-visits, we saw that communities around Kassan-Sai KBA were inspired, involved, and facilitated to protect the biodiversity of KBA. |
| 3.0 | Partnerships and Mainstreaming | 3.1 | MoUs or other documents establishing partnerships between involved NGOs and governmental counterparts | During the project implementation, there were developed and signed two memorandums of understanding. The first memorandum was about cooperation and interactions between the Administration ("Akimat") of the Raiymbek District of the Almaty Region of Kazakhstan and the Public Association "Karaganda |

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| # | Description | # | Description | Results for Deliverable |
| | | | | <p>Ecocenter" on October 19, 2022. The memorandum formally recognizes the intention of both organizations to work together on the environmental problems of the KBA, especially in the field of conservation and management of biodiversity and forests of the area. The second memorandum was concluded between the AKMENA Public Association and the administration of the Ala-Buka District of the Jala-Abad Region of Kyrgyzstan after meetings in September - October 2023.</p> |
| 3.0 | Partnerships and Mainstreaming | 3.2 | Three actions plans on sustainable management of KBAs with participation of government representatives and local communities | <p>Two Action Plans were developed for Narynkol and Kassan-Sai KBAs in December 2023 - January 2024 after all consultations, meetings, and workshops with local communities living within and around both KBAs and with the participation of international experts from the Global Forest Coalition. Action Plans were formed based on an analysis of the biodiversity values of the KBAs. The developed Action Plans for the protection and sustainable use of the KBAs are open for funding by government agencies, non-governmental organizations, commercial entities, international environmental organizations, and other national and foreign partners, as well as for the inclusion of these proposals in local programs and development plans. The Plans are different and cover the priority issues determined for each territory</p> |

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| # | Description | # | Description | Results for Deliverable |
| | | | | during the work of our teams with local communities, administrations, NGOs, and representatives of businesses. Both plans are presented in the attachments to this report. |
| 4.0 | Improved public awareness and stakeholder engagement surrounding management of Narynkol, Kassan-Sai and Dashtyjum KBAs | 4.1 | Baseline of public awareness surrounding each KBA | <p>Both teams developed public awareness materials for local communities living within and around KBAs. The materials were distributed through mass-media and information channels: publications, video, posts in Instagram and Facebook. There were released articles on the biodiversity of the project area</p> <p>https://ratel.kz/outlook/priglasit_gostej_v_jurtu_kto_eto_sdelat_ranshe_kyrgyzstan_ili_kazahstan</p> <p>https://livingasia.online/2023/10/13/razvivat-turizm/</p> <p>Information about past events is posted on the Instagram page</p> <p>https://www.instagram.com/p/CxkbOoItU85/?igshid=MzY1NDJmNzMyNQ</p> <p>https://www.instagram.com/p/CxkUX_Jt5_m/?igshid=MzY1NDJmNzMyNQ</p> <p>List of publications on the project for the reporting period:</p> <p>https://ecostan.kg/green-skills-lab/649-jekologicheskoe-nasledie-prigorodov-bishkeka-sohranenie-ili-razrushenie-jekoforum-sela-i-fotovystavka-v-selelebedinovka.html</p> <p>ECOLOGICAL ACTIONS</p> |

| Component | | Deliverable | | |
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| # | Description | # | Description | Results for Deliverable |
| | | | | <p>09/13/2023</p> <p>"ECOLOGICAL HERITAGE OF BISHKEK SUBURB: PRESERVATION OR DESTRUCTION" VILLAGE ECO-FORUM AND PHOTO EXHIBITION IN THE VILLAGE OF LEBEDINOVKA</p> <p>http://ekois.net/category/thematicheskie/ekologicheskie-aktsii/</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/photo.kg/posts/pfbid02jSkiNEWekYtNApanSqCAoaRAb5FecZYTRMCPcyynA1cjqJmArTSo59f3KjcayQ7el?locale=nl_NL</p> <p>https://eco.akipress.org/news:1984130/?f</p> |
| 4.0 | Improved public awareness and stakeholder engagement surrounding management of Narynkol, Kassin-Sai and Dashtyjum KBAs | 4.2 | Report on design and inception of three public awareness campaigns, including pictures of publicity materials and reports on events | <p>Three public awareness campaigns were developed in 2022 during the travel of project coordinators in the region and shared materials with the concept of KBAs. We shared all materials with the project coordinators. Our teams from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan developed KBA-specific materials. In Kazakhstan, there were prepared and disseminated materials for public awareness related to biodiversity (an Atlas of key species of biodiversity of the local territory), and materials for ecotourism: Booklets on working in the Guest House Association, Rules of conduct in the guest house, Rules for assigning categories to guest houses in Kazakhstan, Hotel room cleaning technology, National standards of the Republic of Kazakhstan for tourist and excursion services;</p> |

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| # | Description | # | Description | Results for Deliverable |
| | | | | <p>General requirements for Guest Houses; Regulations of the Ecotourism Information Resource Center under the Kazakhstan Tourism Association, First aid kit composition, etc.</p> <p>In Kyrgyzstan, also there were developed public awareness materials: posters, leaflets, publications. AKMENA public association also organized a photo exhibition in Bishkek on problems of nature conservation in Kyrgyzstan, including highlighting the Kassan-Sai KBA issues. Materials on Kassan-Sai KBA were disseminated in Ala-Buka District widely.</p> |
| 4.0 | Improved public awareness and stakeholder engagement surrounding management of Narynkol, Kassan-Sai and Dashtyjum KBAs | 4.3 | Prepared awareness materials and documents on environmental values and management of KBAs | <p>Awareness materials about the values of Narynkol KBA in Kazakhstan and Kassan-Sai KBA in Kyrgyzstan were prepared by professional biologists and experts, working in the area of nature conservation: Dr. Victoria Kovshar in Kazakhstan and Dr. Sergey Kulagin in Kyrgyzstan. They are highlighted in the reports and transformed into information and public awareness materials such as the Atlas of Key Species in the Raiymbek Region of Kazakhstan; posters and leaflets with information about species and ecosystems in Kyrgyzstan.</p> |
| 4.0 | Improved public awareness and stakeholder engagement surrounding management of Narynkol, | 4.4 | Stakeholder engagement plan between GFC and its NGO partners and other direct stakeholders | <p>Our Stakeholder Engagement Plan includes:</p> <p>For the successful implementation of this project, the GFC made the following obligations:</p> |

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| # | Description | # | Description | Results for Deliverable |
| | Kassan-Sai and Dashtyjum KBAs | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a). Stakeholder mapping and coordination of partner activities; b). Regular communication with all project members and allies; c) Immediate solving of all problematic issues arose during project implementation (situation in Tajikistan). d). Build capacities for the project partners. c). Timely pay all invoices. d). Implement the grievance mechanism. e). Coordinate work of the partners through monthly calls and regular reports. |
| 4.0 | Improved public awareness and stakeholder engagement surrounding management of Narynkol, Kassan-Sai and Dashtyjum KBAs | 4.5 | Grievance mechanism drafted by each partner NGO for relevant stakeholders | <p>We developed the Grievance Redress Mechanism for our team in Central Asia, and both our teams in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan developed their own Grievance Redress Mechanisms in Russian and in Kazakh languages in Kazakhstan and in Russian and Kyrgyz languages in Kyrgyzstan.</p> <p>In Kazakhstan the contact information for GRM:</p> <p>NGO "ECOCENTER" 100024, st. Tattimbeta 15-4, Karaganda, Kazakhstan Phone: +7 7212 31 44 55, e-mail: ecocenter2010rk@gmail.com, website: www.ecocenter.kz</p> <p>Contact information for the following persons for filing complaints:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grant recipient: |

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| # | Description | # | Description | Results for Deliverable |
| | | | | <p>Directly responsible person in Kazakhstan: Meruert Kurmasheva: mikaecocenter@mail.ru</p> <p>In Kyrgyzstan, there is following statement: If you want to become part of our team and make your contribution, you can contact our local coordinator Soronkulov Gamal by phone/whatsapp: 0552 260101 Or to the National Project Coordinator in Kyrgyzstan: Evgenia Postnova by phone/whatsapp: 0(553)406062. If you think that the Project could work better (you have suggestions), or you want to file a complaint if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project has a negative impact on nature/local community • One of the project employees behaves inappropriately, etc. |

Tools, products or methodologies that resulted from the project or contributed to the results:

We have a list of methodologies

2 Conservation Action Plans for KBAs: Action plans were developed using the strategic planning elements. Both action plans have originated from the analysis of the KBA values for biodiversity and an understanding of the environmental and cultural significance of the areas. Our teams formulated the main environmental objectives of the Action Plans and defined specific, measurable, and time-bound objectives for the conservation of KBAs. The teams described in detail the main threats and existing problems for the conservation of the KBAs and prioritized existing risks depending on their severity and impact on biodiversity. Then, together with local communities and based on their feedback, our teams defined strategies for KBA conservation taking into account the interests of people and nature. Teams described possible conservation actions, developed a timetable for the implementation of the Action Plan, formed coalitions from interested stakeholders, and assessed budgetary needs and potential sources of funding. The teams also developed a monitoring plan and implementation assessment, risk management strategy, communication and information sharing, responsibilities, and reporting.

Gender analysis methodology is a method that includes the following components:

- critical assessment of the different roles of women and men (girls and boys) to understand what they do, what resources they have, and what their needs and priorities are in a particular context;
- searching for the underlying causes of gender inequality; and
- identifying gender-sensitive variables to achieve positive change for the most vulnerable groups.

Gender analysis was carried out by both teams in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and gender-disintegrated data were collected during workshops and meetings. Our gender experts in both countries worked with local communities to engage more women and vulnerable groups in conservation activities. Women in project areas were more active and during the project implementation, there were established women groups in villages near Kassan-Say KBA.

Our partners working with local communities shared with them the methodical materials. Our Kyrgyzstan team brought the equipment for local partners, which is used at two schools for water monitoring in Kassan-Sai, and carried out training for school students and teachers during our visit to the area in September 2023. They passed equipment for data collection and analysis, materials, and methodological manuals to two schools near Kassan-Kai KBA. Our Kazakhstan team shared the educational materials on biodiversity with teachers of the Raiymbek District of the Almaty Region.

Our team from Kyrgyzstan also shared methodologies and materials on agroforestry and nursery management, fish pond establishment in the places of gold-mining carriers, and methods for the conservation of rare ancestors of cultural trees - wild pears and apples. The team also communicated with local businesses, which found minerals in the district, which can be used as fertilizers by local communities.

Both teams shared materials on organizing ecotourism and cultural tourism in local communities, focused on engagement, and developed plans for tourism development together with local communities and administrations. The strategy for tourism development in the Raiymbek District of the Almaty Region in Kazakhstan was submitted to the government for financing of local initiatives and greatly supported by local businesses with their hospitality startups established in the neighborhoods of the Narynkol KBA. In Kyrgyzstan, the team organized a workshop on ecotourism development with five local communities, the administration of Ala-Buka District, and possible investors from Uzbekistan who are interested in sustainable tourism development in this area of Kyrgyzstan. All these efforts should give results shortly. Ecotourism materials and plans were shared with all project members.

Grievance Redress Mechanisms were developed by both teams and GFC with contact information: indication of three levels of contact, because it may not always be convenient to file a complaint with the project's grantees, especially if the problem is related to one of the performers. We took into account local specifics and provided in addition to email, the telephone numbers of coordinators in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The information on grievance redress mechanisms was presented in Kazakh and Kyrgyz languages for stakeholders in both countries.

All materials will be submitted also in the tab "Other Information".

PORTFOLIO INDICATORS

| Portfolio Indicator Number | Portfolio Indicator Description | Expected Numerical Contribution | Expected Contribution Description | Actual Numerical Contribution | Actual Contribution Description |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| 5 | 5 partnerships and networks formed or strengthened among civil society, and with government and communities, to leverage complementary capacities and maximize impact in support of the ecosystem profile | 1 | Network between GFC and its members in Central Asia | 1 | Our network in the region expanded from 6 to 12 members, including more members from Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan and we also have new members from Uzbekistan in our network. We continue our communication and cooperation on conservation initiatives. We organized an online meeting for all members from the region in December, where we discussed the further steps, our communication, and conservation initiatives for 2024. The Global Forest Coalition currently looking for resources to organize in-person meetings during 2024. All members submitted their reports on activities in the area of biodiversity and forest conservation in 2023 and they intend to continue their conservation work in 2024. We also look for financial support of our members and coordination of network activities in the region in 2024 and next years. |

| Portfolio Indicator Number | Portfolio Indicator Description | Expected Numerical Contribution | Expected Contribution Description | Actual Numerical Contribution | Actual Contribution Description |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| 6 | At least 20 local organizations receiving CEPF grants demonstrate improved organizational capacity | 6 | Karaganda Ecocenter, Socio-Ecological Fund, Aleyne+, BIOM, KSWP, and Noosfera | 6 | All 6 organizations, involved in the project, received support from our project in the first year of project implementation. However, only 4 organizations, which were declared, participated in the project execution from the beginning to the end. At the same time, we had one more NGO - AKMENA - who joined our project in the first year and actively participated in its implementation until the end. |
| 4.5 | Number of conservation issues of concern to civil society that are the subject of public debate | 3 | Importance of KBAs: Narynkol, Kassan-Sai, Dashtyjim | 2 | In 2022, we started to work in 3 KBAs - Narynkol, Kassan-Sai, and Dashtijum. However, we worked in Dashtijum KBA only first half of the year. Due to several reasons, we stopped our work in Tajikistan and focused on 2 KBAs: Kassan-Sai in Kyrgyzstan and Narynkol in Kazakhstan. We worked with communities and local administrations. Together with local communities, we developed two Action Plans for Kassan-Sai and Narynkol KBA management. Our teams started to look |

| Portfolio Indicator Number | Portfolio Indicator Description | Expected Numerical Contribution | Expected Contribution Description | Actual Numerical Contribution | Actual Contribution Description |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| | | | | | for funding to start the Action Plan's implementation. |
| 5.2 | Number of regional thematic experience sharing events that allow for informal and formal networking in the hotspot | 1 | Networking meeting among GFC members in Central Asia | 1 | A networking meeting in Central Asia was organized in December among all members from the region. In September 2023, during the trip to the region, we also had a chance to communicate with all members from the region - in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan - where we organized several workshops with members and local communities around KBAs. |
| 5.3 | Number of new networks or partnerships for conservation that are created and/or strengthened | 1 | GFC network in Central Asia | 1 | During 2022 and 2023 the quantity of GFC members doubled (from 6 in the beginning of the project till 12 in the end of the project). We invited all GFC members in the region to our webinars and to the annual regional GFC meeting in December 2023. Every GFC member has comparative advantages that we plan to use after finish of this project in the continuation of GFC work in Central Asia. BIOM from Kyrgyzstan is strong in |

| Portfolio Indicator Number | Portfolio Indicator Description | Expected Numerical Contribution | Expected Contribution Description | Actual Numerical Contribution | Actual Contribution Description |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| | | | | | <p>environmental legislation, gender issue and establishing of microreserves. Kyrgyz Wildlife Conservation Society and Aleyne + (also from Kyrgyzstan) are both strong in implementation of ornithological projects. AKMENA from Kyrgyzstan is strong in coordination of different actors and implementation of environmental projects. Ecocenters from Karaganda and Karkaraly (both from Kazakhstan) are strong in environmental education and eco-tourism. Socio-Ecological Fund, Kazakhstan is strong in media work and environmental legislation. Noosfera from Tajikistan is strong in protection of biodiversity and the development of biocultural protocols. Youth Ecological Center and Foundation to Support Civil Initiatives (both from Tajikistan) Tajikistan are strong in implementation of environmental projects. Ecomaktab and Ecolog (both from Uzbekistan) are</p> |

| Portfolio Indicator Number | Portfolio Indicator Description | Expected Numerical Contribution | Expected Contribution Description | Actual Numerical Contribution | Actual Contribution Description |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| | | | | | strong in environmental journalism and work with local communities. We look for funding to organize face-to-face regional meeting where different NGOs can share their experiences with other members. |
| 5.5 | Number of KBAs where programs are delivered to primary/secondary learners | 1 | Narynkol KBA, Kazakhstan: 5,000 students from 22 schools of the Raiymbek District | 2 | Teachers from all 22 schools in the district attended training on conducting additional environmental education in schools with more than 6,000 students. They also received digital and printed educational and methodological materials for use in school curricula in the area of ecological education. |
| 6.2 | Number of local civil society organizations receiving grants that demonstrate improved organizational capacity | 6 | Karaganda EcoCenter, Socio-Ecological Fund, Aleyne+, BIOM, KSWP, and Noosfera | 6 | In 2022, we started to work with all 6 NGO partners and transferred funds for their work as it was declared in our proposal budget. However, starting from the second half of 2022 we reduced the number of our partners to four. The reasons for the reduced number are explained in detail in our reports and corresponding sections of |

| Portfolio Indicator Number | Portfolio Indicator Description | Expected Numerical Contribution | Expected Contribution Description | Actual Numerical Contribution | Actual Contribution Description |
|----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| | | | | | this final report. We received approval from CEPF before we excluded the team from Tajikistan and focused more on work in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. |
| 6.3 | Number of local civil society organizations receiving grants that demonstrate improved understanding of and commitment to gender issues | 7 | Karaganda Ecocenter, Socio-Ecological Fund, Aleyne+, BIOM, KSWP, and Noosfera, plus GFC | 7 | All our partners participated in our gender webinars and workshops; we had 4 gender experts in our project in 2022 who received the funds for gender work in the project. In 2023, the team from Tajikistan stopped participating in the project activities and the GFC did not transfer funds to gender experts in Tajikistan. All other experts and organizations got funds for the work on gender issues for 2 years, including an international expert from the GFC. |
| 2.3 | Number of KBAs without official protection status with improved management | 3 | Narynkol, Kassan-Sai, Dashtijum | 2 | We started to work in three KBAs - Narynkol, Kazakhstan; Kassyn-Sai, Kyrgyzstan, and Dashtijum, Tajikistan. In the first spring of 2022, we visited all three KBAs, met with local communities, and drafted the preliminary |

| Portfolio Indicator Number | Portfolio Indicator Description | Expected Numerical Contribution | Expected Contribution Description | Actual Numerical Contribution | Actual Contribution Description |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| | | | | | plans for our activities and the activities of local teams. However, the work in Tajikistan was stopped due to problems with coordination and geopolitical problems on the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Both KBAs - Narynkol and Kassan - do not have official protected status, but both territories have high biodiversity values. We worked with communities in both KBAs to help develop KBAs conservation plans and deliver the methods for sustainable management of biodiversity resources. |

GLOBAL INDICATORS

Protected Areas

Protected areas that have been created and/or expanded as a result of the project. Protected areas may include private or community reserves, municipal or provincial parks, or other designations where biodiversity conservation is an official management goal.

| Name of Protected Area | WDPA ID* | Latitude | Longitude | Country | Original Total Size (Hectares) ** | New Protected Hectares *** | Year of Legal Declaration or Expansion |
|------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|---------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| | | | | | | | |

*World Database of Protected Areas

**If this is a new protected area, 0 should appear in this column

*** This column excludes the original total size of the protected area.

Key Biodiversity Area Management

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) under improved management—where tangible results have been achieved to support conservation—as a result of the project.

| KBA Name | KBA Code | Size of KBA | Number of Hectares with Improved Management |
|----------|----------|-------------|---|
|----------|----------|-------------|---|

Production Landscapes

Production landscapes with strengthened management of biodiversity as a result of the project.

A production landscape is defined as a site outside a protected area where commercial agriculture, forestry or natural product exploitation occurs.

| Name of Production Landscape | Latitude | Longitude | Hectares Strengthened | Intervention |
|------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------------------|--------------|
|------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------------------|--------------|

Benefits to Individuals

- **Structured Training:**

| Number of Men Trained | Number of Women Trained | Topics of Training |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 75 | 103 | <p>In Kazakhstan, the training was provided to schools in the Raiymbek District of the Almaty Region. More than 50 teachers took part in the training they received materials for dissemination in their schools on electronic disks and used them in their teaching practices during related lessons on nature protection. The subject of the training was related to the value of biodiversity of the district and Narynkol KBA specifically.</p> <p>In Kyrgyzstan, members of the team developed methodical materials for training on the values of biodiversity. They prepared leaflets, handouts, posters, and other public awareness materials. They met with 7 communities in the neighborhood of Kassan-Sai KBA. Materials were disseminated to administrations of Ala-Buka District and all involved villages with a population of more than 15,000 people. Materials also were delivered to two schools, which are involved in public</p> |

| Number of Men Trained | Number of Women Trained | Topics of Training |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---|
| | | awareness campaigns. The topic of the training was related to biodiversity value of Kassan KBA. |

- **Cash Benefits:**

| Number of Men – Cash Benefits | Number of Women – Cash Benefits | Description of Benefits |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| | | Participants received materials for dissemination at schools, in villages, and in local communities around both KBAs in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. In Kyrgyzstan, two schools got equipment for water quality measurement and educational materials. Besides, the Kyrgyzstan team provided equipment and materials to participatory groups for the creation of a fish pond and fruit tree nursery. |

Benefits to Communities

| | |
|--|---|
| View the characteristics column below with the following corresponding codes: | View the benefits column below with the following corresponding codes: |
| 1- Small Landowners | a. Increased Access to Clean Water |
| 2- Subsistence Economy | b. Increased Food Security |
| 3- Indigenous/ Ethnic Peoples | c. Increased Access to Energy |
| 4- Pastoralists / Nomadic Peoples | d. Increased Access to Public Services |
| 5- Recent Migrants | e. Increased Resilience to Climate Change |
| 6- Urban Communities | f. Improved Land Tenure |
| 7- Other | g. Improved Use of Traditional Knowledge |
| | h. Improved Decision-Making |
| | i. Improved Access to Ecosystem Services |

| Community Name | Community Characteristics | | | | | | | Type of Benefit | | | | | | | | | Country | Number of Males Benefitting | Number of Females Benefitting |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | a | b | c | d | e | f | g | h | i | | | |
| Communities around Narynkol KBA in Kazakhstan and Community around Kassan-Sai KBA in Kyrgyzstan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Kyrgyzstan | 7424 | 7724 |
| Ecotourism Tour Operators in Raiymbek District of Almaty Region in Kazakhstan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Kazakhstan | 15 | 17 |
| Teachers of Raiymbek District of Almaty Region, Kazakhstan | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Kazakhstan | 7 | 24 |

Characteristics of "Other" Communities:

- Teachers of Raiymbek District of Almaty Region, Kazakhstan: Teachers of Raiymabek District (geography, natural history, chemistry)

Policies, Laws and Regulations

| | | | |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| View the topics column below with the following corresponding codes: | | | |
| A- Agriculture | E- Energy | I- Planning/Zoning | M- Tourism |
| B- Climate | F- Fisheries | J- Pollution | N- Transportation |
| C- Ecosystem Management | G- Forestry | K- Protected Areas | O- Wildlife Trade |
| D- Education | H- Mining and Quarrying | L- Species Protection | P- Other |

| No. | Name of Law | Scope | Topics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|-------|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| | | | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

“Other” Topics Addressed by the Policy, Law or Regulation:

| No. | Country/ Countries | Date Enacted/ Amended | Expected impact | Action Performed to Achieve the Enactment/ Amendment |
|-----|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--|
| | | | | |

Companies Adopting Biodiversity-friendly Practices

A company is defined as a for-profit business entity. A biodiversity-friendly practice is one that conserves or uses natural resources in a sustainable manner.

| Name of Company | Description of Biodiversity-Friendly Practice | Country/Countries where Practice was Adopted |
|--|--|--|
| Raiymbek District Administration of Almaty Region in Kazakhstan | <p>Developed strategic plan for Sustainable Tourism Development in Raiymbek District of Kazakhstan. This plan was used for application to governmental programs and funds and is currently at the stage of consideration.</p> <p>We found that there are already small businesses in the district focused on cultural tourism and the construction of tourist facilities for different types of tourists, mostly for local consumers.</p> | Kazakhstan |
| Ala-Buka District Administration | <p>Campaign to develop sustainable tourism with the involvement of local communities in Kassan Sai.</p> <p>Our team proposed and discussed with local communities the concept of community-based tourism in the Kasan-Sai destination that might cover the needs of local communities living in cities and the neighbors from the Fergana Valley of Uzbekistan, including ethnocultural tourism; local history tourism, covering historical, ethnographic and other aspects; and ecological tourism.</p> | Kyrgyzstan |
| Jamaat "Kara-Tobo" Forester Shabdraimov Kurmanaly | <p>Creation of a demonstration pond as an example of landscape biorecultivation.</p> <p>This is work on the reclamation of disturbed lands by using former mining pits located near the river as places to grow native fish species. This creates an alternative to wild fishing, will help create additional income for local villagers and restores the environment. Residents are interested in consultations and preparation of project proposals for land reclamation by creating fish ponds.</p> | Kyrgyzstan |
| Women Group on the Development of Ecotourism Initiatives around Kassan-Say KBA | <p>Helped to improve recreation areas "Ishtamberdi" and "Altyn Ordo" under the leadership of local activists, general improvement of the territory, decorative design, installation of a solar shower, and improvement of hygienic conditions; as well as expansion of the nursery, installation of a hydraulic ram and also the introduction of a separate waste collection system, general improvement of the territories.</p> | Kyrgyzstan |

Networks and Partnerships

Networks/partnerships should have some lasting benefit beyond immediate project implementation. Informal networks/partnerships are acceptable.

| Name of Network/Partnership | Year Established | Country/Countries | Established by Project? | Purpose |
|--|------------------|--|-------------------------|--|
| Central Asian Partnership of the Global Forest Coalition | 2022 | Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Tajikistan; Uzbekistan | Yes | The network of GFC was operated in the region of Central Asia from the Central Office. During this project implementation, the network was significantly expanded due to the engagement of new members from four countries in Central Asia. Members from Uzbekistan were not represented in the network in the past. Besides, the new members from all other countries of the region also joined a network. The network is connected with the global initiatives of the GFC, but at the same time presents regional interests, which are mostly related to the conservation of fragile forest ecosystems in the countries of the region, threatened biodiversity, and involvement of women and other land shareholders in biodiversity conservation. Although we stopped our project component in Tajikistan, we invited all three NGOs who are currently members of the Global Forest Coalition - "Noosfera", Youth Ecological Center, and Foundation to Support Civil Initiatives in Tajikistan - to participate in our webinars on capacity building. Our new members from Uzbekistan - "Ecomaktab" and "Ecolog" also participated in the capacity building webinars. |

Sustainable Financing

Sustainable financing mechanisms generate funding for the long-term (generally five or more years). These include, but are not limited to, conservation trust funds, debt-for-nature swaps, payment for ecosystem services (PES) schemes, and other revenue, fee or tax schemes that generate long-term funding for conservation.

| Name of Mechanism | Purpose | Date Established | Description | Country/ Countries | Project Intervention | Delivery of Funds? |
|--------------------------|--|-------------------------|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Small grants. | We could not develop a sustainable financing mechanism. We - as a group - and our partners applied more than for 25 project proposals, including medium IKKI grants, Global EBA Fund, and others. Our partners got several small grants and continue currently work with local communities around KBAs and we are looking also for opportunities to get grants | 2022 | Incentive schemes in both countries for the development of sustainable tourism using the governmental support mechanisms and local and regional investors, who are interested in the tourism initiatives. | Kazakhstan;Kyrgyzstan | Created a mechanism | Grants received by both partner groups in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan helped to increase the capacity of locally involved NGOs and supported community groups in developing practical initiatives on the ground: bio-recultivation of damaged landscapes, establishment of sustainable tourism facilities, waste management, biodiversity conservation. |

| Name of Mechanism | Purpose | Date Established | Description | Country/ Countries | Project Intervention | Delivery of Funds? |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| | for regional work. | | | | | |

Globally Threatened Species

Globally threatened species (CR, EN, VU) on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, benefitting from the project.

| Genus | Species | Common Name (English) | Status | Intervention | Population Trend at Site |
|----------|----------------|-----------------------|--------|---|--------------------------|
| Neophron | percnopterus | Egyptian Eagle | EN | Species monitoring. During Kassan-Sai KBA survey there was a confirmed presence of the Egyptian Vulture (Globally EN) in the project area. | Unknown |
| Marmota | menzbieri | Menzbier's Marmot | VU | Menzbier's Marmot is a globally Vulnerable species, occurring at the Kassan-Sai KBA. Species habitat protection, species monitoring This species is found in high altitudes of the Kassan-Sai KBA, but a special survey on the species studies was not conducted | Unknown |
| Pyrus | korshinskyi | | CR | Kazak or Bukharian Pear - Pyrus korzhnisky - Globally Critically Endangered - is found in Kassan-Sai KBA, where there are several critical habitats of this species. This species is under threat at the Kassan-Sai KBA, where critical habitats occupied by pear's communities have been destructed by golden mining activities. | Decreasing |
| Malus | niedzwetzkyana | | EN | Malus niedzwetzkyana, or Niedzwetzky's apple, is a globally threatened tree species, an ancestor of cultural sorts of apples. It is found within Kassan-Sai KBA. The local population is under threat due to development of golden-mining activities. | Decreasing |

| Genus | Species | Common Name (English) | Status | Intervention | Population Trend at Site |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------|--|--------------------------|
| Sibiraea | tianschanica | | CR | Sibiraea tianschanica is a threatened plant species occurring in the Narynkol KBA. The species was found on the KBA, but its population trend is unknown. | Unknown |
| Aquila | heliaca | Asian Imperial Eagle | VU | Asian Imperial Eagle - Aquila heliaca - is found breeding in the Narynkol KBA. But the current status of its population is unknown. | Unknown |
| Falco | cherrug | Saker | EN | Saker Falcon - Falco cherrug - is found in the Narynkol KBA, where it can breed. The current status and population trends of Saker Falcon in Narynkol KBA are unknown. However, the general trend in Kazakhstan is decreasing. | Decreasing |
| Streptopelia | turtur | European Turtle Dove | VU | European Turtle Dove - Streptopelia turtur - is found in the Narynkol KBA during migration. The current status and population trends within KBA are unknown. | Unknown |
| Panthera | uncia | Snow Leopard | VU | Snow Leopard - Panthera uncia - is found in the Narynkol KBA, where its habitats are located in the boundary between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and China. The habitats are difficult to access. The current status of snow leopard in the area is unknown. | Unknown |

LESSONS LEARNED

We had several lessons learned arose from the project implementation:

1. Management Problems and Geographic Area of Project Implementation Narrowing:

At the beginning of the project, we had three teams of partners in 3 countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan with a grant of around 150,000 for 2 years for all teams and work on three KBAs, management, and coordination. However, in the first year, we figured out that we had a problem with project coordination for Tajikistan with a lack of communication and feedback. The coordinator and team from Tajikistan did not respond to any of our letters, members from Tajikistan did not participate in our monthly coordination workshops and they did not present the first report about the project activities. We figured out that we were not able to ensure the project implementation in Tajikistan without a well-established communication mechanism and we had no tools to guarantee the active participation and delivery of project tasks to Dashti-Jum KBA.

After consultation with the leadership of the Global Forest Coalition, we decided that we have no enough resources to facilitate work in Tajikistan and there is a need to narrow the focus to two countries and two KBAs: Narynkol in Kazakhstan and Kassan-Sai in Kyrgyzstan.

This solution allowed us to focus more on two countries and their KBAs, where the feedback mechanism worked well.

2. Voluntary participation of all members of the Global Forest Coalition in the implementation of the project.

When we drafted the project proposal, practically, all members from Central Asia, that were involved in biodiversity conservation were invited to participate in our project. In spring 2022, we met with all members and agreed on their roles and responsibilities. All members agreed with our implementation plan and their roles. However, one of the teams from Kyrgyzstan (Aleine+) let us down by not fulfilling their obligations on the project. After consultation with all members from Kyrgyzstan and with the management of the GFC, we decided to allow Aleine + itself to determine its future participation in the project. We continued to invite them to all our meetings, but they did not respond and did not participate in the project activities without an explanation of their position. Therefore, we did not assess CSTT and GTT at the end of the project for this team.

So, this is a lesson learned for the GFC, not all members can be responsible, responsive, and engaged due to internal reasons, which cannot be controlled or managed externally.

3. Implementation of the communication plan and capacity building:

We prepared a communication plan and plan for capacity building of involved members from Central Asia. The informal meetings on the project implementation were carried out every month after the coordination of the date, time, and meeting agenda with all involved partners. We also prepared a calendar plan for webinars related to capacity building on different issues, coordinating the plan with all participating members and inviting to webinars all members from Central Asia. However, the participation of all members was challenged due to technical issues: power outages in some places, bad internet connection, etc.

To solve this issue, we shared all materials of meetings (including written minutes of monthly coordination meetings) and materials of webinars (including all presentations on issues discussed) with all involved members.

4. Gender Engagement and Improvements: participation of women in the project implementation.

Central Asia is a region, where historically mostly men are involved in the decision-making process. We could see this during our first meeting in the Raiymbek District of the Almaty Region in Kazakhstan. Our coordinators communicated with the administration of the Raiymbek region in Kazakhstan to invite stakeholders for the first meeting, and they invited only men. Later, our coordinators established communication contacts with other interested stakeholders and the gender participation was more balanced. Besides, we figured out that in business related to tourism (hospitality, restaurants, recreation activities) men and women take part at equal rates. Our gender experts in Kazakhstan included a session on gender rights in their training program for local communities, which was conducted by gender expert Ms. Kuralai Karakulova. Various materials have been prepared and videos on human rights and women's rights have been disseminated. Participants received information about how human rights appeared, what rights are, why the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women appeared, etc. Participants said that the discussions during the training about human rights were very useful for them and that they received such information for the first time. Materials on gender issues were disseminated in Kazakh and Russian languages.

In Kyrgyzstan, the project gender expert developed a questionnaire in Russian and Kyrgyz languages, which was used by deputies of villages in the Kasan-Sai River Basin to meet with communities in their villages and collect gender-disaggregated data. To support the activities of the women's eco-group in Kassan-Sai KBA, the gender expert also prepared information and training materials for dissemination (posters, infographics), which were used during all visits to the project area. The prepared materials include gender aspects of climate change, as well as environmental management. Additionally, an analysis of successful practices involving women was carried out using the example of participants from EECCA countries (Armenia, Georgia, etc.). The team from Kyrgyzstan also prepared and shared a presentation on the gender aspect of climate change adaptation. They helped local communities to establish a group of women activists around Kassan-Sai KBA, who actively participated in the development of the Action Plan for KBA and in all activities related to sustainable management of biodiversity in the area.

Analysis of the Gender Tracking Tool at the beginning and the end of project implementation indicated the changes and improved knowledge and inclusion of gender issues in NGO's policies and management.

5. Importance of large regional mechanisms for biodiversity financing and working directly with civil society organizations

There are many nature conservation initiatives in Central Asia, that work directly with governmental organizations through established implementation mechanisms in the framework of environmental conventions, including CBD, CMS, Ramsar Convention, CITES, and many others. However, civil society organizations are rarely involved in implementation due to some constraints. Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund is one of few organizations, that works directly with people (non-governmental and business organizations) involving them in the decision-making, strengthening horizontal ties, and promoting a bottom-up approach to biodiversity conservation. The recognition of biodiversity hotspots creates real

mechanisms of immediate support to the threatened species and ecosystems through the involvement of people depending on ecosystem services in such places. The regional approach provides opportunities for pooling limited resources for conservation, coordination of efforts across multiple countries, and leveraging expertise and best practices suitable for specific ecosystems. In our case, these are threatened ecosystems in the biodiversity hotspot in the mountains of Central Asia.

We are thankful to CEPF for this approach, attention to community engagement and participation, grassroots connections and local knowledge, and opportunities for advocacy and awareness raising in the on-the-ground projects. The CEPF approach creates the ability to reach marginalized and underserved communities directly depending on biodiversity and ensure their participation in decision-making regarding nature conservation. This is exactly, what the Global Forest Coalition tries to achieve. Support of our project by CEPF allowed us to increase the capacity of the GFC in the region of Central Asia and we intend to continue our work with all partners (existing and new) soon.

We assume that the CEPF approach has significant importance for biodiversity conservation through collaboration with civil society organizations. We hope that this initiative and CEPF's involvement in biodiversity conservation in Central Asia will be continued soon, supporting biodiversity conservation within formally protected KBAs and within areas that do not have legal protection. We hope that our GFC team and our partners from Central Asia will be able to collaborate with CEPF to strengthen community involvement (including attention to gender issues) for biodiversity conservation and sustainable management. We hope that such collaboration will be of mutual interest and help us to strengthen and increase our biodiversity conservation network in Central Asia.

6. Benefits for capacity building in the area of biodiversity conservation around KBAs.

We started the project with a "0" point and a lack of experience in working within KBAs with local communities in Central Asia; although we had already initiatives on forest conservation in the region. Over 2 years, we had the opportunity to build the capacity of our members in the region. We established a regional biodiversity-focused network with increased partnerships from four countries of the region instead of three before the project started. We achieved our goal of strengthening the GFC network in Central Asia. We started and continued the public awareness campaign on forest conservation, biodiversity issues, and KBA conservation and management through existing mass media and information channels in the region. In partnership with involved members, we figured out how to mainstream biodiversity issues in conservation planning within and around KBAs and developed the Action Plans for two KBAs with a clear vision, targets, and perspectives for both involved KBAs - Narynkol in Kazakhstan and Kassan-Sai in Kyrgyzstan.

As a result of project implementation, we have enhanced capacity for conservation actions, strengthened governance and policy frameworks, involved local communities in decision-making on the future of KBAs, and improved biodiversity outcomes at the local, national, regional, and global scales.

SUSTAINABILITY/REPLICATION

Success Stories from the Project activities:

1. Engaged Communities and Increased NGO Capacity

As a result of the project implementation, more than 20,000 people from local communities in the Raiymbek District of the Almaty Region in Kazakhstan and the Ala-Buka District of the Jalal-Abad District in Kyrgyzstan were informed about the values of biodiversity in Narynkol and Kassan-Sai KBAs. There were facilitated activities of community grassroots organizations and participation of people in the development of Action Plans for the sustainable management of biodiversity resources within and around KBAs.

All involved members of GFC from the region received training on capacity-building issues and biodiversity management in person (during visits of project coordinators in the countries of the region and online through organized webinars). Members also had an opportunity to share their experience and skills on specific issues of environmental NGO operations and management.

The measurement of capacity with CSTT at the beginning and the end of the project indicated increased capacity of involved members.

2. Gender Involvement and Women's Participation

Our gender experts in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan developed their plans on capacity building and the involvement of women in the conservation of KBAs. They met several times with communities, established communication contacts, developed education and public awareness materials in local languages, and disseminated them in the project area. They achieved good results and were supported by active women from communities who actively continued conservation work with local communities.

Example from our Champions in Kyrgyzstan:

Work was carried out with the women's group "Ishtamberdi" to prepare materials for a project for the development of ecotourism in the Kassan-Sai KBA. The development of materials was carried out by the group itself and was organized on the principle of participation of all interested stakeholders. The project involves the development of a recreation center "Ishtamberdi" under the leadership of women's environmental activists in the village of Terek-Sai. They have one hectare of private land, a yurt, a trailer, electricity, a solar shower, and a washing machine. The group was started by 3 women but now includes around 10 members. The group needs support in the form of infrastructure development and training about local species of animals and plants to improve their skills as local tour guides who will share the knowledge with other community members.

3. Capacity building programs

We applied such tools for capacity building as direct communication with all involved members and communities and prepared public awareness materials, webinars, and thematic meetings.

Examples of the capacity building program are provided in the attachment as prepared presentation and disseminated materials.

4. Conservation Action Plans for KBAs

We discussed the main points for Action plan development during the session on strategic planning issues. Our teams applied these tools during participatory development and design of Action Plans with a focus on the needs of each KBA in the project. Action Plans are attached to the report (in Russian).

5. Improvement of Financial Situation:

We had modest success with this task, although as a whole team and all partners involved in the project implementation we prepared many project proposals, but rewards had mostly local impacts. However, even this additional funding allowed us to continue working with communities.

6. Ecotourism Promotion and Stakeholder Engagement

Opportunities for ecotourism development were recognized as important assets for biodiversity conservation in communities surrounding both KBAs of interest. Plans, programs, and proposals were prepared to develop these initiatives in both countries. We intend to continue our support to communities that promote sustainable ecotourism in both areas.

7. Strengthening the GFC Network in Central Asia

We established and almost doubled the GFC network during the project implementation. We continue to communicate and cooperate with our partners on issues of forest and biodiversity conservation in the region and strengthen local networks of safeguards around KBAs.

8. Public Awareness Component

Various tools were applied: mass media, publications, information sharing in different languages, workshops, webinars, printed materials for dissemination, etc. Many people took part, including teachers, administrations, communities, businesses, women groups, and school students. The wide auditorium was covered with local effects as well.

Example: The master class was organized at the local forestry for youth from school No. 18 in the village of Terek-Sai, Kyrgyzstan: 17 people took part in the master class, of which 9 were girls and 8 were boys. This master class was duplicated by the forestry for the education of school student groups on the basics of forestry.

Challenges were described in detail above. Here, we could highlight again the following:

1. Optimization of the geographic scope of the project and stopping of project activities in Tajikistan.
2. The exit of the Aleine+ team from project implementation.
3. Remoteness of KBAs from locations where the members of NGOs involved live.
4. War between Russia and Ukraine - impact on money transfer from Europe to some local banks in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan
5. Structural challenges at GFC that happened in 2023, when the previous Executive Director of the GFC left her position and the replacement took time.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS/STANDARDS

Our safeguard actions for two selected KBAS - Narynkol in Kazakhstan and Kassan-Sai in Kyrgyzstan - were described in the Action Plans for both KBAs prepared together with local communities and other interested stakeholders.

For Narnkol KBA in Kazakhstan, our safeguard plan will consider the following activities:

An integral part of ecosystems is the animal world. Animals are not only components of wild nature, they play a vital aesthetic role, shaping visitors' interest in nature and wild animals, which has enormous, exceptional educational significance. Our partners proposed

biodiversity conservation in Narynkol KBA through the development of several activities: through the creation of mechanisms to protect and maintain the ecological integrity of valuable natural assets; education and public awareness using existing channels of information sharing in schools, in local mass media and through support of conservation activities by local administrative bodies; negotiation of business activities that environmentally friendly. In Narynkol KBA, any activity must be carried out in compliance with the requirements ensuring protective measures of plant and animal diversity, especially rare and valuable species of animals.

The set of safeguard measures includes:

- organizing the protection of habitats, breeding sites, feeding areas (grazing sites of ungulate species, etc.), and places where animals are concentrated;
- defining measures to ensure the protection of animal breeding areas in Narynkol;
- organizing and scheduling agricultural work (haymaking) in such a way as to prevent the death of newborn ungulates, destroying the nests of valuable hunting-game species (pheasants, partridges, ducks) and broods of birds;
- carrying out biotechnical measures to improve the living conditions of animals, involving and motivating local hunting organizations;
- conducting annual censuses of animal numbers in partnership with local birdwatcher clubs and organizations (in Almaty);
- installation of signs for the protection of wildlife around existing camps and tourist areas;
- regular updating of information about the state of the animal world.

After evaluation and thorough study of the situation, our team from Kazakhstan suggests the development of initiatives supporting sustainable tourism in the Narynkol area. Cultural, historical, and ecotourism (birdwatching, flower-watching, nature observation, and appreciation) are recognized as a key driver of economic and social development in the area. The unique geographical location of the Raiymbek region, well-developed infrastructure, the presence of a significant number of archaeological and historical monuments, as well as the diversity of landscape-climatic zones and untouched corners of wild nature have created great opportunities for the development of tourism in the district. The tourism industry creates benefits for local communities. Tourism development creates motivation to protect and improve valuable natural, historical, and cultural assets. Since tourism development is planned in the Raiymbek region, an Action Plan provides opportunities not only for obtaining economic and social benefits but also to include issues of preserving the biological diversity of the region, as the main resource on which tourism development will be based. Stakeholders were defined as local administrative structures, schools with their education potential, and representatives of local businesses who already started their tourist activities or were just planning start-ups.

For Kassan-Sai KBA our Safeguard Plan includes:

- Study of the flora and fauna of KTB Kasan-Sai. Widely informing the population about the environmental value of the KTB and the benefits associated with its conservation.
- Strengthening the capacity of local public organizations (with a special emphasis on women's and youth movements) in the management and conservation of biodiversity resources (species and ecosystems).
- Preservation of existing areas of tugai forests along the Kasan-Sai River. Creation of community micro-reserves and special protected natural areas of local importance.
- Preservation of the biodiversity of existing and restoration of disturbed herbaceous ecosystems on the territory of the Kasan-Sai KTB through step-by-step optimization of pasture load, creation of remise/micro-reserves and introduction of methods of environmentally friendly livestock husbandry, and improvement of pasture condition;

- Technical and biological reclamation of disturbed landscapes in the floodplain of the Kasan-Sai River.
- Supporting the use of agro-ore deposits and ameliorant minerals to restore the quality and increase soil fertility in the KTB territory and its surroundings.
- Strengthening public control over the conservation of Kasan Say, as well as the process of issuing licenses and companies' implementation of their Reclamation Plans.
- Development of Ecotourism, Agroforestry, Aquaculture, Sustainable Livestock, and other (alternative to mining) ways of generating income for the local population, ensuring sustainable use of natural resources.

Local safeguards are interested in activities for sustainable management of their natural resources, providing them with ecosystem services: clean water, productive landscapes, ensuring income from husbandry and agroforestry, sustainable tourism, and other environmentally friendly activities. Local communities understand the value of Kassan-Sai KBA, but they need technical, informational, and financial support for start-up activities, for the development of their businesses, sharing of knowledge and new technologies.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

First of all, our team and the GFC are very thankful for the valuable support of the CEPF for our project and the opportunity to work with our teams in the region on biodiversity issues in two Key Biodiversity Areas: Narynkol in Kazakhstan and Kassan-Sai in Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, we would like to highlight the following issues:

1. Seeking additional financing to continue to work with communities:

As the project results showed us, it is difficult to implement a project for the engagement of people in conservation just in 2 years. We are seeking additional resources to continue the work with communities to implement the drafted Action Plans for KBA's management. We suppose that it should be a combination of small, medium-sized, and large projects that help communities establish community-based mechanisms for conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity within and around KBAs. This is a long-term task, which will require investment from 5 to 10-15 years. At present, we are at the beginning of the way, during which we need to change existing practices and help communities invest in sustainable management of territories to achieve long-term impacts.

2. Enhancing Communication and Collaboration for Biodiversity Conservation in the Central Asian Region.

It would be important to organize a meeting of teams, supported by CEPF in Central Asia to analyze the first stage of projects' implementation in Central Asia, and to facilitate knowledge sharing, networking, and collaboration among various CEPF projects. It would be also great to establish regular communication channels and platforms to foster ongoing exchange of experiences, lessons learned, and best practices among project implementers. We assume that it will be great to know the champions from the region and share their results and practices. Taking into account, the variety of nations involved it would be good to have regular (annual or bi-annual) meetings, including through the web platforms on information and knowledge exchange and best-practice sharing.

3. Long-term Engagement of Local Communities:

Develop and implement long-term mechanisms to ensure sustained engagement of local communities in conservation efforts. Forge partnerships with environmental NGOs to strengthen community involvement and participation in conservation initiatives, leveraging their grassroots connections and expertise.

4. Establishment of the Coordination Office in the Region.

Support for the establishment of a coordination office in Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan to serve as a hub for CEPF activities and aid for project implementation in the Central Asian region. The coordination office can facilitate communication, provide logistical support, and serve as a focal point for stakeholders involved in CEPF-funded projects. Leverage possible resources for the office activities from the ongoing initiatives in the region.

5. Gratitude to all people from CEPF, supporting activities, and our project implementation:

This is an expression of gratitude from all our team members to project coordinators from CEPF and Conservation International. We appreciate your timely support and immediate reactions to our questions and concerns. Our gratitude to Ms. Caroline Borek at Conservation International, Ms. Lizza Protas at Almaty Office of WWF, and Dr. Daniel Rothberg from Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund. We greatly appreciate your timely responses to our concerns and the timely transfer of the project resources to the GFC office.

We hope that we maintain strong relationships with CEPF and continue to work on biodiversity issues with local communities, leading to enhanced conservation outcomes and sustainable management of biodiversity in the region.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

| | |
|--|--|
| Total Amount of Additional Funding Actually Secured (USD) | \$45,000.00 |
| Breakdown of Additional Funding | Counterpart Funding AKMENA, Kyrgyzstan - 25,000 USD Karaganda Ecocenter, Kazakhstan - 20,000 USD |

INFORMATION SHARING AND CEPF POLICY

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. For more information about this project, you may contact the organization and/or individual listed below.

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