



MEDIUM-SIZED PROJECT PROPOSAL
REQUEST FOR GEF FUNDING

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GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

AGENCY'S PROJECT ID: P082599
COUNTRY: Tajikistan
PROJECT TITLE: Dashtidzhum Biodiversity Conservation Project
GEF AGENCY: The World Bank
OTHER EXECUTING AGENCY(IES): None
DURATION: 3 years
GEF FOCAL AREA: Biodiversity Conservation
GEF OPERATIONAL PROGRAM: Mountain Ecosystems (OP 4)
GEF STRATEGIC PRIORITY: Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Areas
ESTIMATED STARTING DATE: August 1, 2004
IMPLEMENTING AGENCY FEE: US\$0.146 million

Table with 2 columns: GEF PROJECT/COMPONENT and FINANCING PLAN (US\$). Rows include Project (750,000), PDF A (25,000), Sub-Total GEF (775,000), CO-FINANCING (Dashtidzhum Leshoz 33,000, National Biodiversity Conservation Center 21,000, NGO Noosfera 40,500, Grant Beneficiaries 103,750), Sub-Total Co-financing (192,750), Total Project Financing (942,750). Includes footnotes about parallel program activities and preparation costs.

CONTRIBUTION TO KEY INDICATORS OF THE BUSINESS PLAN: Support sustainable protected areas management in 80,000 ha.

RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT:

Mr. U. Shokirov, Minister, National Focal Point Date: 11/07/2002
Mr. Abduvokhit Karimov, Chairman, State Committee for Environmental Protection and Forestry Date: 31/05/2004

This proposal has been prepared in accordance with GEF policies and procedures and meets the standards of the GEF Project Review Criteria for a Medium-Sized Project.

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# **MEDIUM-SIZED PROJECT**

**Tajikistan:**

**Dashtidzhum Biodiversity Conservation Project (DBCP)**

## **PROJECT BRIEF**

June 2004

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

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BSAP	Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
DBCP	Dashtidzhum Biodiversity Conservation Project
EA	Environment Assessment
EE	Ecological Expertise
EIA	Environment Impact Assessment
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GoT	Government of Tajikistan
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IDA	International Development Association
IUCN	International Union or the Conservation of Nature
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSP	Medium-Sized Project
NBCC	National Biodiversity Conservation Center
NEAP	National Environmental Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
Noosfera	Local NGO and Project Proponent
OM	Operational Manual
PCC	Project Coordination Committee
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PM	Monitoring Plan
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SA	Social Assessment
SCEPF	State Committee for Environment Protection and Forestry
SDCGP	Sustainable Development and Conservation Grants Program
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
WB	World Bank

**Tajikistan: Dashtidzhum Biodiversity Conservation Project (DBCP)**  
**MEDIUM-SIZED PROJECT BRIEF**

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**PROJECT SUMMARY**

<b>1. Project Name:</b> Tajikistan Dashtidzhum Biodiversity Conservation Project	<b>2. GEF Implementing Agency:</b> The World Bank
<b>3. Country in which the Project is Implemented:</b> Tajikistan	<b>4. Country Eligibility:</b> Ratified Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on 12 February 1997.
<b>5. GEF Focal Area(s):</b> Biodiversity Conservation	<b>6. Operational Program/Short-Term Measure:</b> Operational Program #4: Mountain Ecosystems
<p><b>7. Project linkage to national priorities, action plans, and programs:</b></p> <p>Conservation of Tajikistan’s biodiversity is a stated national priority for the Government of Tajikistan (GoT). The activities included under the proposed Dashtidzhum Biodiversity Conservation Medium-Sized Project are in conformation with the goals and strategic directions of the following national strategy documents:</p> <p><i>Poverty Reduction Strategy Program.</i> National development priorities identified in the Tajikistan’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Program (PRSP) include accelerated growth, provision of basic social services, targeted support for the poor, and improved governance. For the agriculture sector and rural development, the Government’s strategy supports the efficient use of and access of the poor to land, water, financial and other resources, aiming to create new job opportunities and improve access to basic rural services. The PRSP also highlights the regional dimension to poverty, with the highlands facing special difficulties, especially in the South-East mountain areas. For the environment, the PRSP emphasizes the need to address natural disasters, water pollution, soil degradation, deforestation and biodiversity conservation.</p> <p><i>Country Assistance Strategy.</i> The Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) indicates the need to improve access to services in rural communities and to strengthen the local institutional framework for sustainable development. In support of these objectives, the CAS recommends that the Bank help Tajikistan in mobilizing grants and external financing for piloting programs that promote sustainable management of natural resources and alleviate poverty and meeting its global environmental commitments.</p> <p><i>National Action Plans and Programs.</i> The national strategy for biodiversity conservation as documented in the 2003 National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan and related documents (i.e., State Ecological Program for 1998-2008, the 2002 National Strategy for Combating Desertification, the 2003 National Action Plan for Climate Change Mitigation) calls for afforestation, improved pasture management, strengthening of protected areas management, as well as for fulfilling of obligations under international agreements to which Tajikistan is a signatory, such as the Convention on Biodiversity Conservation (1997), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) (1997), the Framework Convention on Climate Change (1998), the Convention to Combat Desertification (1997), and the Convention on Wetlands (2000).</p>	

**8. GEF national operational focal point and date of country endorsement:**

Two endorsement letters were received:

On November 7, 2002 from Mr. U. Shokirov, Minister of Environment and on May 31, 2004 from Mr. Abduvokhit Karimov, Chairman of the State Committee for Environmental Protection and Forestry. Endorsement letters are attached in Annex 11.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

### 9. Project Rationale and Objectives:

*Project rationale.* Dashtidzhum is a mountainous area in southern Tajikistan with altitude ranging from 700 to 3,000 meters above sea level (masl). It comprises diverse elevations, land cover patterns and land use types. Its gradient altitude allows the existence of wide variety of regions and ecological grounds that house a very diverse flora and fauna of regional importance. Dashtidzhum is divided into two protected areas: strict nature reserve (Zapovednik) and species management area (Zakaznik). The Dashtidzhum strict nature reserve is located on the southwest slopes of the Darvaz Range and is featured by rugged mountainous landscape, and covers 19,700 hectare (ha). The Dashtidzhum species management area is located on the southeast slopes of the Hazratishoh Range and covers 53,323 ha. The proposed project focuses on the Dashtidzhum Zakaznik because its globally significant biodiversity is threatened by the unsustainable management of the productive landscape and the increasing trend of socio-economic pressures. The total area of the Dashtidzhum project site (herein Dashtidzhum territory) covers approximately 80,000 ha, including 53,323 ha of protected area and 26,677 ha of buffer zone, with different types of land use. While many activities are restricted in the Zapovednik (core zone), the project will aim at reducing the threats in the Zakaznik and surrounding landscape. Nonetheless, several project activities will cover the whole territory of Dashtidzhum, e.g., GIS system, resource inventory, public awareness, etc. For details on the project area, please refer to Annex 2 and 3.

The Dashtidzhum territory contains various endemic, rare and endangered flora and fauna species of regional and global significance. Some 800-1,000 species of vascular plants can be found in the protected zone, including 22 endemic species (e.g., *Fissidens karataviensis*, *Crocus korolkovii*, *Crataegus darvasica*, *Prunus darvasica*, *Tulipa tubergeniana*, *Anemone bucharica*, *Eremurus roseolus*, *Iris darvasica*, *Rosa longisepala*); 39 species listed in the Red Data Book (e.g., *Bunium persicum*, *Prunus darvasica*, *Ficus carica*, *Allium suworovii*, *Juno Nicolai*); 3 relic species (e.g., *Ostrowskia magnifica*, *Ficus carica*, *Juglans regia*); and 11 species of global importance (e.g., *Aspicilia oxneriana*, *Hordeum bulbosum*, *Fritillaria regelii*, *Tulipa subquinquefolia*, *Punica granatum*, *Ficus carica*). The area contains 19 species of wild fruit plants (e.g., *Pistacia vera*, *Celtis caucasica*, *Prunus bucharica*, *Crataegus pontica*, *Cerasus verrucosa*, *Rhus coriaria*), which are important as genetic resources for agriculture. The protected area also provides habitats for key faunal species such as the markhur or screwed-horn goat (*Capra falconeri*), brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), and mountain sheep (*Ovis vignei bochariensis*). The vertebrate fauna is represented by nearly 200 species, including over 28 species of mammals, 180 species of birds, 2 species of amphibious. The diversity of invertebrates is believed to exceed 5,000 species

The unique and high-value biodiversity of the area is under serious threat resulting from unsustainable agriculture practices; socio-economic pressures; overuse and illegal uses of forest, range, and wildlife; insufficient integration of biodiversity considerations into local land use plans; weak institutional and human capacity; and limited public awareness. The project area also serves as an important refuge for regional flora and fauna, avoiding fragmentation and isolation of habitats.

**Project Objective.** The global environmental objective is to demonstrate and provide for replication of in-situ conservation of globally significant biodiversity of the Dashtidzhum Zakaznik. In support of this objective, the project will assist in: (i) supporting protected areas management planning and monitoring activities; (ii) strengthening capacity to protect globally important flora and fauna species and ecosystems; (iii) supporting local population in the Zakaznik surroundings to adopt environmentally friendly economic activities compatible with biodiversity conservation objectives; (iv) raising public awareness on conservation issues; and (v) involving local communities and NGOs in the decision making process.

**10. Expected outcomes.** The project would have a positive global benefits by conserving biodiversity in one of the Central Asian regions with globally significant wildlife and numerous threatened and endemic species. Specifically, the project would have the following outcomes:

- *Improved status of threatened biodiversity.* The project will increase the quality of the ecosystems (2-3 indicator species of flora and fauna will be identified as part of the baseline survey soon after implementation commences).
- *Strengthened institutional and technical capacities for protected area management.* The project would assist in the adoption of a protected areas management plan based on broad consensus and support from local communities and in the establishment of effective protected areas management administrations, with staff capable of implementation the protected areas management plan in close collaboration with local communities, public sector institutions and NGOs. By working closely with the State Forestry Department Tajikless, the National Biodiversity Conservation Center, and the State Committee for Environment Protection – all part of a larger effort to secure sustainable biodiversity conservation, and by developing and disseminating best practices, the project will support improve the current national protected area system in Tajikistan.
- *Improved sectoral integration.* The project would contribute to the establishment of effective replicable models of integrated and participatory natural resources management within the national protected areas system.
- *Improved adoption of sustainable use of natural resources.* The project would increase public awareness and support for adoption of sustainable agriculture and land use practices at the local and national level.

**11. Project activities to achieve outcomes:**  
(including cost in US\$ of each activity):

Project activities	Outcome indicators
<b>Component A: Strengthening Protected Areas Management Capacity (Total: US\$244,000; GEF: US\$208,000; Leshoz/Noosfera/National Biodiversity Conservation Center (NBCC): US\$36,000)</b>	
<p><i>A.1. Zakaznik Management Plan (GEF: US\$54,000).</i> It will support preparation of a protected areas management plan, including conduction of relevant technical studies, assessments and field investigations. It will also support the development of long-term plans for biodiversity monitoring and financial sustainability using consultation and public disclosure procedures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>③ Management and zoning plan developed based on broad stakeholder consultation.</li> <li>③ Legal documents for the Zakaznik management plan completed, approved and adopted by the State Committee for Nature Protection and Forestry.</li> <li>③ Boundaries of the different Zakaznik's zones demarcated.</li> <li>③ Financial mechanisms for payment of visitor and natural resources user fees established.</li> </ul>
<p><i>A.2. Strengthening Capacity of Protected Areas Management Institutions (GEF: US\$80,000; Leshoz: US\$20,000; Noosfera/NBCC: US\$7,000.</i> It will support improvements of the protected area infrastructure (e.g., such civil works for refurbishing of Leshoz building), and provision of office equipment, vehicles, and other essential basic equipment. In addition, this component will support training activities, study tours, and capacity building for the Zakaznik staff in technical and social issues for biodiversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>③ Leshoz and Botanical Institute buildings rehabilitated.</li> <li>③ Leshoz equipped with the necessary communication means, office equipment and facilities.</li> <li>③ Transportation equipment procured;</li> <li>③ Nature museum built and equipped.</li> <li>③ Zakaznik staff trained in protected areas management and biodiversity conservation.</li> <li>③ Study tours conducted.</li> <li>€ Guiding materials developed and in use by</li> </ul>

<p>conservation inside and outside of the protected areas.</p>	<p>Zakaznik staff and visitors.            ③ Leshoz and Environmental Inspectorate staff received relevant suppliers( e.g., uniforms, communication means, binoculars)</p>
<p><i>A.3. Biodiversity Baseline and Monitoring (GEF: US\$74,000; Leshoz: US\$8,000; NBCC: US\$1,000)</i>            This sub-component will support the setting up of a biodiversity baseline and the design and piloting of a biodiversity monitoring system. It will finance basic laboratory equipment, basic GIS system, field surveys, and publication.</p>	<p>③ Field investigations conducted and biodiversity baseline established.            ③ Zakaznik GIS system and biodiversity database created.            ③ Biodiversity monitoring plan prepared.            ③ Zakaznik’s staff trained in biodiversity monitoring and GIS.            ③ Report(s) on Zakaznik’s biodiversity published.            ③ Relevant office and laboratory equipment for biodiversity monitoring purchased and provided.</p>
<p><b>Component B: Community Involvement on Protected Areas (Total: US\$597,250; GEF: US\$479,000; Subprojects beneficiaries: US\$103,750; Noosfera/Leshoz/NBCC: US\$14,500).</b> This component will provide technical assistance and sub-grants to eligible communities/beneficiaries to carry out carry out community-based investments identified by the communities to improve use of natural resources.</p>	
<p><i>B.1 Training and Community Support in Preparing Grant Proposals (GEF: US\$19,000; NBCC/ Noosfera/Leshoz: US\$4,000).</i> Within this subcomponent a special group of technical experts will be selected to: (i) conduct training and seminars for introduction of SDCGP in the settlements located within the project area; (ii) provide assistance to the communities and other sub-project beneficiaries in preparation of project proposals; and (iii) conduct technical evaluation of the proposed sub-projects.</p>	<p>③ Small grant program (SGP) information dissemination and training seminars conducted, potential subproject beneficiaries kept informed about SGP.            ③ Advisory and technical services delivered to communities.            ③ Advisory services on environmentally friendly agricultural and/or alternative income generating activities.            ③ Sub-projects are technically evaluated and feasible sub-projects presented to the PIU/ evaluation committee.</p>
<p><i>B.2 Sustainable Development and Conservation Grants Program(GEF: US\$415,000; Subproject beneficiaries: US\$103,750).</i> This sub-component will provide sub-grants to eligible communities for supporting economic activities compatible with biodiversity conservation. Financial support will be provided for the following areas: (i) environmentally friendly income-generating activities; (ii) sustainable forestry management including community forestry and strengthening forest nurseries capacities; and (iii) public awareness on biodiversity conservation.</p>	<p>③ Small Grant Program implemented, including 300 small-scale; 28 medium-scale and 8 large-scale sub-projects.            ③ Mini-nurseries (Leshoz and Botanical institutes as well as private nurseries) are rehabilitated and expanded and produced variety of trees that correspond to the structure of native species.            ③ Forestation of critical areas is implemented.            ③ Capacity for production of tree seedlings and fruit trees increased.            ③ Mitigation measures for local natural disasters implemented by the communities.</p>
<p><i>B.3. Information dissemination and replication activities (GEF: US\$45,000; Noosfera/Leshoz/ NBCC: US\$10,500).</i> The sub-component will support: (i) workshops at the local and national</p>	<p>③ Local and national workshops held during project implementation period.            ③ Communication strategy developed and implemented.</p>

<p>levels; (ii) creation and maintenance of the project web site; (iii) preparation and publication of different brochures and newsletters; and (iv) conduction of information campaigns and study tours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>③ Project website made operational.</li> <li>③ Project stakeholders well informed about the project objectives, activities and results.</li> <li>③ Project activities coordinated with the other biodiversity conservation efforts in the region.</li> <li>③ Informative papers with regard to project objectives and results prepared, published and disseminated.</li> <li>③ Study tours conducted.</li> <li>③ Program for information dissemination prepared and implemented.</li> <li>③ Local population and NGOs effectively cooperate with Leshoz administration in Zakaznik management.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Component C. Project Management and Monitoring (Total: 101,500; GEF: US\$63,000; Noosfera/NBCC: US\$38,500)</b></p>			
<p>This component would assure smooth implementation and adherence to World Bank procurement, disbursement, financial management procedures and guidelines. It would finance incremental operating cost of the NGO, financial audit services, household surveys, and other monitoring and evaluation activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>③ Project implemented according to agreed timetable.</li> <li>③ Key project management and implementation personnel engaged.</li> <li>③ Consistent involvement in project implementation of all interested stakeholders secured.</li> <li>③ Monitoring and evaluation system established.</li> <li>③ Project accounting system set up.</li> <li>③ Annual financial audits conducted in a timely manner.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>12. Estimated budget (in USD):</b></p>			
<p><b>Sources of funding</b></p>	<p><b>Preparation</b></p>	<p><b>Implementation</b></p>	<p><b>Total</b></p>
<p><b>GEF</b></p>	<p>25,000</p>	<p>750,000</p>	<p>775,000</p>
<p><b>Beneficiaries</b></p>	<p>--</p>	<p>103,750</p>	<p>103,750</p>
<p><b>Noosfera</b></p>	<p>2,500</p>	<p>38,000</p>	<p>40,500</p>
<p><b>Leshoz</b></p>	<p>3,000</p>	<p>30,000</p>	<p>33,000</p>
<p><b>NBCC</b></p>	<p>--</p>	<p>21,000</p>	<p>21,000</p>
<p><b>TOTAL</b></p>	<p><b>30,500</b></p>	<p><b>942,750*</b></p>	<p><b>973,250</b></p>
<p>* Parallel activities under the Lake Sarez Risk Mitigation Project supporting the objectives of the proposed project (valued at US\$200,000) are not included in the budget.</p>			
<p><b>13. Information on Project Proposer:</b></p>			
<p>The Republican Environmental Association “Noosfera” was established in 1999 and was officially registered in the Tajik Ministry of Justice under order # 484 dated May 12, 1999. Noosfera’s main areas of activities are: (i) support in preparing and implementing various environmental protection and biodiversity conservation plans and programs; (ii) scientific investigations, design works in mentioned areas; and (iii) promoting environmental education and public awareness. Noosfera has experience in managing environmental projects and in working in cooperation with various international institutions (e.g., UNEP, UNDP, GRID Arendal and World Bank). Most of its members were involved in the preparation of the Tajikistan Biodiversity Strategy.</p>			
<p><b>14. Information on proposed executing agency (if different from above):</b> As above</p>			
<p><b>15. Date of initial submission of project concept:</b> February 14, 2003</p>			
<p><b>16. Project Identification Number:</b> P082599</p>			
<p><b>17. Implementing Agency contact person:</b> Mr. Neimatullo Safarov, Director, Noosfera</p>			

### **18. Project Linkage to Implementing Agency Program(s):**

The proposed Project is consistent with the World Bank Environmental Strategy, which supports the protection of fragile ecosystems and environmental management, and the Regional Biodiversity Strategy, which calls for combining improved ecosystem management with local income generating activities.

The proposed Project is in line with the 2003 Country Assistance Strategy (CAS), which emphasizes the importance of furthering the Government development and poverty-reduction agenda by improving access to services in rural communities and strengthening the local institutional framework for sustainable development. The main areas of World Bank support as identified in the CAS are: (i) formulation of the National Environment Action Plan; (ii) mobilization of grants and external financing from the donor community and the Global Environmental Facility to help Tajikistan meet its global environmental commitments; and (iii) preparation of specific pilot programs that promote sustainable management of natural resources and alleviate poverty. Consistent with the CAS, the proposed Project has a strong focus on the poorest area of the country; supports human and institutional capacity-building at the local level; contributes to environmentally friendly income generation activities; and contributes to the country's environmental agenda.

The World Bank's comparative advantage relative to other donors comes from its ability to work at all levels of Government, to retain a comprehensive macro-view, to focus on policy and capacity building, and to provide assistance at the central and local levels. The World Bank is well positioned to implement this Project for the following reasons: (i) it has experience in promoting biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources (i.e., there is a related ongoing biodiversity conservation operation in the Tien Shan Mountains, which has a strong focus on alleviating poverty in the mountain areas and on soil improvement and biodiversity conservation); (ii) its ability to provide cross-sectoral support and cooperation in the formulation and implementation of environmental projects; and (iii) its ability to take a more holistic approach and balance biodiversity conservation and people's needs.

Parallel activities in support of the proposed Project objectives are being and will be supported under the IDA-financed Community Agriculture and Watershed Project (CAWP) and IDA-financed Lake Sarez Risk Mitigation Project (LSRMP) and its associated JSDF-financed Reducing Poverty in High Mountain Environments Around Lake Sarez project. The overall objective of the CAWP is to help reduce rural poverty and improve livelihoods of rural communities in selected watersheds, by supporting productive activities aimed at increasing incomes in a sustainable manner while reducing the pressure on the environment and ensuring the preservation of fragile mountain lands and ecosystems. The experience gained under this project on land management will be transferred to the project area. The overall objective of the LSRMP and the JSDF project is to support poor and vulnerable communities of the valleys of Bartang and Panj to mitigate the risks of natural resources hazards and support alternative income generating activities, respectively.

The Bank will also work create synergies with other donor-supported programs aiming at reduce human pressures in the project area: small hydro-power project to be supported by the Islamic Development Bank, and irrigation rehabilitation and land improvements to be supported by ADB. The Japanese Government is also supporting a small grant program to support locally-based economic development activities. During project implementation, efforts will be made to leverage funds from this program in the project site.

## TAJIKISTAN:

### DASHTIDZHUM BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION PROJECT (DBCP)

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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##### 1. Project rationale and objectives

Although Tajikistan is small in land area, it contains a wealth of species, ecosystems and landscapes. The ecosystems range from high mountain forests and meadows to lowland desert, grasslands, and woodlands. In order to protect the country's rich biological diversity, Tajikistan with its meager financial and human resources created a network of protected areas, comprising four nature reserves (zapovedniks), species management protected areas (zakasniks) in 14 locations and two national and historical natural parks. This network covers the major ecosystems in the country. In 1992 a National Park for the conservation of several types of landscapes (high mountain deserts, glaciers, lakes, juniper forests, mountain steppes and alpine meadows) was established in the eastern part of the country. By 1993 the country established the Shirkent Natural Historical Park for the protection and conservation of ancient cultural landscapes, unique rocks, dinosaur footprints and juniper forests.

Currently Tajikistan's rich mountain flora and fauna species of global significance are under severe threats. Pastures, for example, which host over 3,000 plant species face threats from localized over-grazing. The wild-growing fruit plants of Tajikistan represent a unique genetic resource for agriculture. Forest areas, which at present cover only 3% of the country's territory, have decreased by about 15% over the past 10 years as a result of excessive logging for firewood. Furthermore, the protected areas are deteriorated due to the recent civil conflict and agricultural expansion.

The Government of Tajikistan (GoT) has expressed its commitment to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the country. Biodiversity conservation and related measures such as afforestation, improved pasture management, and soil conservation and protection are considered national priorities as documented in the following strategies/programs: the State Ecological Program for 1998-2008 (prepared in 1997), the Governmental Measures for Implementation of the State Ecological Program (dated 1998), the National Strategy for Combating Desertification (dated 2002), the Strategy for Climate Change (dated 2002), the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan (dated 2003), and the draft National Environment Action Plan. Despite its scarce financial resources, Tajikistan has created and is maintaining a network of globally important protected areas. Among such areas is Dashtidzum zakaznik, which is well known by its various and unique endemic, rare and endangered flora and fauna species of regional and global significance (see Annex 2). The zakaznik contains also many species of wild fruit plants, which are important as genetic resources for agriculture, and provides habitats for key faunal species such as the markhur or screwed-horn goat (*Capra falconeri*), brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), and mountain sheep (*Ovis vignei bochariensis*).

Dashtidzhum is a mountainous area in southern Tajikistan with altitude ranging from 700 to 3,000 meters above sea level (masl). The area is located between 37°40' and 38°20' north latitude and between 70°00' and 70°20' east longitude. It comprises diverse elevations, land cover patterns, and land use types. While the core area of Dashtidzhum territory features undamaged natural environments, a part of the territory has experienced changes as a result of agriculture activities.

Dashtidzhum is divided into two protected areas: a strict nature reserve (Zapovednik) zone and a species management area (Zakaznik) zone. The Dashtidzhum strict nature reserve is located in the southwest slopes of the Darvaz Range and is featured by rugged mountainous landscape. It covers about 19,700 ha. The climate is arid with hot summers and mild winters. The hydrological network is relatively dense and includes numerous small rivers, few of which are perennial. Water streams are mainly concentrated in the pebble zone and show low water discharges on the surface, except during the rainy season when flash flooding is common. The Pyanj River and the Obi-Niou River are the main watercourses in the area of the strict nature reserve. The Dashtidzhum species management area is located on the southeast slopes of the Hazratishoh Range and covers 53,323 ha. This territory is characterized by a more contrast relief and a much denser hydrological network, with similar climatic patterns and natural ecosystems than the strict nature reserve. Many local ecosystems, especially in mountain zone, represent wildernesses since anthropogenic interventions have been very limited.

The proposed Project focuses on the Dashtidzhum Zakaznik. Its globally significant biodiversity is threatened by anthropogenic pressures and the high extent of ecosystem fragmentation. The total area of the Project site covers approximately 80,000 ha: 53,323 ha of species management area (Zakaznik) itself and 26,677 ha of its surroundings/buffer zone with different types of land use. (For details see Annex 3). Although project activities will focus on the whole territory of Dashtidzhum, some will be restricted to the Zakaznik and its buffer zone.

The Dashtidzhum Zakaznik contains various endemic and endangered flora and fauna species of regional and global significance (For details see Annex 2). More than 1,500 plants and fauna species recorded in the Zakaznik are considered endemic to Central Asia and several species are listed in the Tajikistan Red Data Book. The Project area is also rich in wild-growing fruit plants, which represent unique genetic resources including apples, pears, apricots, mulberries, cherry plums, plums, walnuts, almonds, grapes, currant, sea-buckthorn berries, among others.

The Dashtidzhum Zakaznik was established in 1972 for the protection of endemic species and genetic resources. The protected site has permanent staff, including forest guards, and receives funds from the state budget. The staff conduct activities to maintain the status of biodiversity, to protect most important flora and fauna species, and to enforce the existing forest legislation. Despite these efforts, due to economic difficulties and high level of rural poverty, the situation of the Zakaznik and its surroundings is worsening. The Zakaznik administration currently lacks the adequate capacity and financial resources to perform its responsibilities, e.g., conduct biodiversity monitoring and evaluate trends in the status of endemic species, control natural resources use within the Zakaznik surroundings, prevent forests fires, and carry out necessary afforestation works in the buffer zone. However, there is strong commitment from the of State Committee for Environment Protection and Forestry (SCEPF) and the Dashtidzhum Leshoz to improve this situation and to create an effective Zakaznik management. Without external support, the situation in the Zakaznik will deteriorate further, and globally and regionally important species will be lost forever.

The proposed GEF Medium-Sized Project will demonstrate and provide for replication of in-situ conservation of globally significant biodiversity of the Dashtidzhum Zakaznik. In support of this objective, the project will assist in: (i) supporting protected areas management planning and monitoring activities; (ii) strengthening capacity to protect globally important flora and fauna species and ecosystems; (iii) supporting local population in the Zakaznik surroundings to adopt environmentally friendly economic activities compatible with biodiversity conservation objectives; (iv) raising public awareness on conservation issues; and (v) involving local communities and NGOs in the decision making process.

Project activities under Components A and B will promote the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) work program on mountain biodiversity (decision VII/27, items 2.1-2.3) by focusing on improvement of the legal and organizational-economic mechanisms of the project area for

conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, providing alternative livelihoods for the population of the project area, as well as introduction of traditional ways of nature management. These components will allow to identify indicators of biodiversity dynamics, conduct monitoring and assessment of factors affecting biodiversity, promote new types of indicators to assist in the forecasting of the state of ecosystems for long period and promoting stable control over the state of ecosystems, flora and fauna species of global importance. The project will provide opportunities for education, training, exchange of experience mainly on the implementation of small grants program so that local communities will take active part in project implementation and harmonization of the activity with sustainable use of biodiversity, which is fully in line with the provisions of the CBD work program.

The GoT and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) are jointly undertaking measures to safeguard the global biodiversity values of the country. At present there are several NGOs actively involved in improving in-situ biodiversity conservation in various areas of the Tajikistan, and are working closely with the State environmental institutions.

The proposed Project will take an integrated approach to ensure sustainable land use within the buffer zone and protect the Zakaznik's important biodiversity, while contributing to improving livelihoods and reducing rural poverty in the settlements located in the Zakaznik's surroundings. By supporting afforestation activities and environmentally friendly economic activities, the proposed Project will create synergies between various GEF focal areas, including biodiversity (by promoting conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in agriculture), sustainable land management (by reducing land degradation), and climate change mitigation (by increasing vegetative cover).

Tajikistan has signed and ratified a number of international conventions including: Biodiversity Conservation (1997), Climate Change (1997), and Desertification Prevention (2001); and thus it is eligible for GEF assistance.

## **2. Current Situation**

Natural disasters and unsustainable use of natural resources by local population are the major threats to the biodiversity of Dashtidzhum territory. Uncontrolled cutting of trees for fuel wood, overgrazing of fragile mountain ecosystems, unsustainable hunting and harvesting of wild fauna and flora, and limited alternative livelihood opportunities have contributed to the deterioration of the environment. External anthropogenic disturbances from surrounding territories, particularly from upper Dashtidzhum are significant and need to be further considered. In addition to the above-mentioned factors, weak institutional capacity of the Dashtidzhum reserve has limited extend of biodiversity conservation activities.

The Dashtidzhum territory is famous for its richness in endangered and rare species of flora and fauna as well as fossils found in Cretaceous rocks. The primary object of biodiversity conservation is the corkscrew-horned goat or Tajik markhur (*Capra falconeri*). Its local population is the largest in Central Asia, and was formerly found throughout the mountains from Kashmir to Afghanistan but now it is greatly reduced in population and range. The number of Tajik markhur is small and remains at the level of approximately 200 animals. Illegal hunting and other disturbances have led to the declining trend in the number of the Tajik markhur. Another object of biodiversity conservation is the snow leopard. There are some episodes of snow leopard observation in high mountains, although this specie is extremely rare and tend to appear in the areas with very limited or no disturbance. Many other species of mammals and other animals are subject to anthropogenic pressures, thereby their population become less viable. Harvesting of wild flora has also led to increased pressure on rare and endangered floral species.

The population in the Zakaznik's surroundings is over 9,000 people. The average size of household is about 7 members. There are 1,279 households registered at the Jamoat's level, living in 28 relatively small

villages (called Kishloks) belonging to Dashtidzhum and Yol municipalities (called Jamoats). About 30% of the population of each Jamoat is concentrated in the center of the Jamoat: the villages Yol and Dashtidzhum. About 80% of the population are farmers. The annual household income ranges between US\$233-US\$333 (about US\$2.7-3.9 per household member per month).

Agriculture is the main economic activity. Due to climatic and geographical characteristics of the region, the agricultural activities are limited to livestock breeding, wheat production on small slope land plots, and fruit gardening. Agriculture production is however at the level of subsistence. There is significant dependency on nature resources: over half of the households collect wild fruits (58%) and herbs (52%); close to half of the households collect wild nuts, mainly walnuts and pistachio (46%); and one of every 12 households collects mushrooms (8%).

Factors contributing to the deterioration of the natural resources in Dashtidzhum can be summarized as follows:

- *Human pressure and unsustainable use of natural resources by local population.* The current economic difficulties have resulted in the radical reduction of the state support to the local population and increased rural poverty. Average monthly income per household is US\$21. As in other parts of the country, people impoverished by the shortage of income and food and the lack of alternative heating energy sources have turned to the land and are using it more intensively. Over the past few years, there has been increasing an ecological deterioration of forests and land, mainly due to unsustainable logging for fuel wood and building material, overgrazing of fragile mountain ecosystems, unsustainable hunting and harvesting of wild fauna and flora, and limited alternative livelihood opportunities for the people in the surrounding area of the Zakaznik. Within the Zakaznik territory itself, many of the same unsustainable practices are also taking place but to a lesser extent.
- *Natural disaster risks.* The Zakaznik is located in a disaster prone area with frequent landslides, mudflows and avalanches. For example, in 1992, 300 houses in Dashtidzhum village were washed out by mudflows resulting in many casualties and forest damage. Forest fires (natural and man-made) pose another risk to biodiversity. In 1998, 240 ha of mountain forest were burned. Illegal logging and overgrazing have increased the risk to these natural hazards. In addition, they have reduced water retention capacity of the soil, resulting in crop water deficits.
- *Weak institutional capacity and deteriorated infrastructure.* The management capacity of the Zakaznik is very weak. Because of the lack of specialized staff, neither planning nor monitoring activities are being carried out. Staff of the Zakaznik lack of the basic means to carry out biodiversity inventory and supervision.
- *Limited involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making process regarding the management of the Zakaznik's natural resources.* No efforts have been made so far to involve local stakeholders in the management of the protected area.

### ***Baseline Course of Actions***

During recent years, there has been an increased understanding of the importance of biodiversity values: the services it provides to the country (e.g., agriculture, forestry, hunting, recreation, tourism), and the impacts on people's livelihoods. As a result, Tajikistan had adopted several national policy documents on biodiversity conservation. The GoT has undertaken a number of measures to promote natural resources conservation and is implementing several programs for this purpose. The GoT is committed to further protect and enhance the environment of the country and has recognized biodiversity conservation and improved soil protection and water management as two important environmental priorities.

The Government has identified the reasons for biodiversity losses and developed the following strategies/action plans for biodiversity conservation and protected areas management:

- ③ The Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) was adopted by the Government in 2003 (Order No 392 dated 01/09/2004). The BSAP addresses conservation and restoration of key ecosystems, habitats, species and their genetic resources; and provides recommendations for integrating biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of biological resources into other sectors planning. It calls for the expansion of forest areas, the rehabilitation of the grassy ecosystem, the establishment of protected areas and protected ecological networks, and the improvement of biodiversity monitoring. The BSAP has assigned high priority to the following areas: (i) building institutional and human capacity of the relevant governmental agencies and authorities, especially at the local level; (ii) mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation in sectoral policies, namely forestry and agriculture; (iii) sustaining the use of pastures and conserving their biodiversity; (iv) conserving and restoring important nature habitats and implementing species-specific programs; (v) furthering development of biodiversity monitoring; and (vi) improving public awareness, environmental education, training and public participation in biodiversity conservation.
- ③ National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Desertification . This document identified a number of measures to prevent soil degradation, including various capacity building activities, monitoring of soil degradation trends, soil improvements activities as well as measures to prevent landslides and mudflows. It also gives high priority to further afforestation activities on the sloppy lands and degraded agricultural lands.
- ③ National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (Order No 259 dated 06/06/2003). The proposed activities to combat climate change include afforestation. This document recognizes that by increasing the country forests cover, it would be possible to increase the rate of carbon sequestration by vegetation and soils, and thus contribute to climate change mitigation. It goes further in proposing rehabilitation of existing forests on the area of about 4,000 ha, and increasing areas with new forests on about 20,000 ha.
- ③ The State Ecological Program (approved in 1997, Order No 296). It calls for conservation of mountain environments through the establishment and support of protected areas and improved in-situ wildlife management. Furthermore, the program recognizes environmental public awareness as one of most important way to prevent further ecological degradation, and recommends that national environmental authorities conduct a series of activities in this regard. As a follow up, in 1997 the GoT approved a special national program on ecological awareness and education.
- ③ The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (approved by the Parliament in June 2002). It identifies sound agricultural practices, restoration and rational use of natural resources, and better water resources management as national priorities.
- ③ The National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP). The draft NEAP identifies several priority actions to be undertaken to protect the biodiversity heritage of the country, including establishment of protected areas in the mountain regions., increased forest cover and improved agricultural practices. The draft NEAP also suggests the planting of fast growing trees for supplying fire wood, improvement of the institutional capacities of existing nature reserves, and soil improvement on agricultural lands.

Practical steps to conserve biodiversity include the following environmental investments and administrative measures related to the Project's objectives:

- ③ Country's protected areas have been increased since 1991 by about 1,500,000 hectares (ha), raising the area under protection from 0.3% to 26%.

- ③ National authorities have been investing in agriculture and rural development to improve rural services and protect the productive environment. It is expected that by the end of FY04, the World Bank Board will approve the Community Agriculture and Watershed Project, which would have a strong focus on investments in most poor mountain areas, and specifically on land improvements and on conservation of plant species that are important as genetic resources for agriculture.
- ③ The GoT and State Forestry Service (Tajikless) are committed to continue providing budgetary support for existing protected areas, including Dashtidzhum Leshoz. Annual budgetary support is about US\$8,000 and it is expected to continue in the future.
- ③ The State Forestry Service Tajikless invests in afforestation of 2,000-3,000 ha per year. This is far less than what is considered necessary, but nonetheless substantial under current economic conditions.
- ③ The local authorities annually conduct planting of trees campaigns. In the project area for example, in 2003 the district hucumat, jamoats and leshoz authorities invested about US\$15,000 in planting of trees.
- ③ The Government has reorganize recently the institutional systems for environment protection and forestry and created a new State Committee of Environment Protection and Forestry (SCEPF). The new chairmanship of this institution is fully committed to Project implementation and to providing its support through the National Ecological Fund.
- ③ The GoT has recently created a special National Biodiversity Conservation Center (approved by Order No 392 dated 01/09/03), which operates under the auspice of the SCEPF. This institution gets budgetary support and is the main coordinating body in the area of biodiversity. The total budgetary support for 2004 for this Office is 60,000 Somoni.

Tajikistan is committed to fulfill its obligations under several international agreement for conserving biodiversity to which the country is signatory: the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (1997), Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn) (1997), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1998), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (1997), and the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar) (2000).

National legislation for biodiversity conservation is largely in place and is being strengthened. Important pieces of legislation include: the Environmental Protection Law (1993), the Law on Fauna Protection and Use (1996), the Protected Areas Act (1996), the Forest Code (1999), Law on Environmental Impact Assessment (2003), and other important framework environmental regulations. The SCEPF takes the lead in the development and implementation of the environmental policy, including biodiversity conservation.

### ***Summary Overview of Other Projects and of the GEF Portfolio***

The proposed project would build synergies and will be associated with other on-going or planned activities in the region, particularly with the following projects:

**Sarez Lake Risk Mitigation Project (LSRMP).** The ongoing LSRMP is helping alert and prepare vulnerable people in case of a disaster associated with an outburst flood from Lake Sarez and other frequent natural hazards such as mudslides, avalanches, and seasonal floods. The US\$4.2 million project is funded by an IDA credit and contributions from the Government of Switzerland, Aga Khan Development Network, USAID, and the GoT. Under the framework of the LSRMP, the GoT with the assistance from the World Bank has obtained a Japanese Social Development Fund (JSDF) grant in the amount of US\$1.6 million to support communities in the Bartang and Panj valleys. The project would also improve security of the population through protection of basic socio-economic infrastructure, such as slope stability

measures, anti-avalanche stonewalls, etc. In addition, it will support priority investments and income-generating opportunities identified by the local communities and strengthen the linkages between socio-economic development and disaster mitigation measures which are being carried out under the LSRMP.

**Community Agriculture and Watershed Project (CAWP).** This IDA/GEF-funded project scheduled to go to the Board in mid-June 2004 aims to help reduce rural poverty and improve livelihoods of rural communities in 4 selected watersheds, by supporting productive activities aiming at increasing incomes in a sustainable manner while reducing the pressure on the environment and ensuring the preservation of fragile mountain lands and ecosystems. Although the CAWP and the proposed Project are located in different geographic regions, the proposed Project will build on the experience gained and technical assistance to be provided under CAWP.

**GEF Central Asia Transboundary Biodiversity Project** is under implementation in the Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. The objective of this project is to conserve unique and threatened ecosystems of the West Tien Shan. This project is relevant to the biodiversity conservation issues in Tajikistan because: (i) it is being implemented in the West Tien Shan, which is linked to the Pamir and Tien Shan mountains of Tajikistan; (ii) focal activities of the project include support to protected-areas management and improved management of natural resources that communities depend upon to a considerable extent for income and subsistence; (iii) the project supports sustainable income-generating activities for local communities. The Proposed of the proposed project is currently participating of some training activities conducted under this GEF project. Lessons learned in the implementation of this project have been incorporated in the proposed project design, e.g., socio-economic context can not be ignored if biodiversity conservation policies are to be viable, the need to provide incentives to local communities to participate in biodiversity conservation activities.

**GEF In Situ/On Farm Conservation of Agricultural Biodiversity (Horticultural Crops and Wild Fruit Species) in Central Asia Project.** The purpose of the project is to provide farmers, institutes and local communities with knowledge, methodology and policies to conserve globally significant in-situ/on-farm horticultural crops and wild fruit species in Central Asia. Its will contribute to achieve sustainable agricultural development, food security and environmental stability. The project has a particular focus on traditional local varieties of fruit crops maintained by farmers and their wild relatives growing in forests, and on the enhancement of farmers' and community capacities to conserve in-situ horticulture diversity. Project implementation is expected to start in the second half of 2004.

**GEF Development of the Econet for Long-term Conservation of Biodiversity in the Central Asia Eco-regions Project.** The main objectives of the project are: (a) to establish an information management system (GIS), combining existing data on biodiversity and natural resource (at the regional scale), existing system of protected areas, economic development (traditional, recent, planned and probable alternatives), together with newly obtained data through limited targeted research to fill key gap; (b) to elaborate and achieve agreement for a regional "Econet" development plan implementation; and (c) to establish the necessary legal, institutional, technical and financial capacities and mechanisms within the region to allow the effective joint implementation of the Econet plan. The project is under implementation.

Cooperation with the GEF CA Econet project will be ensured by maintaining permanent exchange of information and trying to harmonize procedures for the establishment of a GIS system. The activities within Dashtidzhum MSP would be seen as a part of the overall program for creating the Ecological network at the local level. Such cooperation it is expected to be efficient since the National Focal Point for the Econet project is the National Biodiversity Conservation Center, which is a strong collaborator for the proposed Project.

**UNDP GEF Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development of the Gissar Mountains in Tajikistan MSP (stage PDF A implementation).** The proposed MSP to be implemented by UNDP focuses on: institutional capacity building of the protected areas management in the project site; improvements of biodiversity conservation policy and regulatory framework; supporting alternative and environmentally friendly activities of the local population.

During the preparation phase of the proposed Project, intensive consultation with the representatives from the above mentioned UNDP GEF projects took place, and agreement was reached that both projects will establish permanent exchange of information and cooperation in areas of common interests, such as biodiversity inventory and monitoring of agriculture genetic resources, creating of ecological network at the local level, piloting protected areas management activities, among others. Other recommendations for the proposed Project and the UNDP GEF project include: (i) to ensure permanent exchange of information; (ii) to harmonize procedures for development of management plan and adopt common activities for strengthening institutional capacities of country's existing protected areas; (iii) to jointly prepare and conduct national conferences/workshops to share results of project implementation; (iv) to develop joint biodiversity monitoring programs; and (v) to invite their experts to participate in workshops and seminars, and other information dissemination and knowledge transfer events.

### **3. Expected Project Outcomes**

As mentioned above, the current activities in the Dashtidzhum Zakaznik are not sufficient to remove the threats to globally significant species and habitats. Without GEF support, the fragile mountain ecosystems and biological species of global importance could be lost, as the Government is not able to fund improvements in protected area management in the near future. Without strengthening the Zakaznik management capacity and providing support to integrate rural development and conservation, it will be achieve conservation of biodiversity and balance biodiversity conservation with people's needs. The proposed Project would provide an opportunity for GEF to be a catalyst for action to bring about the successful integration of biodiversity conservation and land management practices, and pilot a comprehensive approach to Zakaznik's protected areas management. The GEF resources would complement other government and donor programs targeting poverty alleviation, rural development and biodiversity conservation.

The proposed Project would ensure that rural development is consistent with biodiversity conservation goals of the globally important resources of the Zakaznik, by supporting measures for community involvement in sustainable natural resources management. Its operational objective is to establish participatory management of the Zakaznik, with strengthened protection of areas inside the Zakaznik and its buffer zone of highest biodiversity value. The Project will also promote a positive public attitude towards preserving biodiversity values, by engaging local communities and NGOs in establishing sustainable land use and management practices.

**Outcome indicators.** The key outcome indicators will comprise:

- *Improved status of threatened biodiversity.* The project will increase the quality of the ecosystems (2-3 indicator species of flora and fauna will be identified as part of the baseline survey to be established soon after implementation commences).
- *Strengthened institutional and technical capacities for protected area management.* The project would assist in the adoption of a protected areas management plan based on broad consensus and support from local communities and in the establishment of effective protected areas management administrations, with staff capable of implementation the protected areas management plan in close collaboration with local communities, public sector institutions and NGOs.

- *Improved sectoral integration.* The project would contribute to the establishment of effective replicable models of integrated and participatory natural resources management within the Dashtidzhum Zakaznik.
- *Improved adoption of sustainable use of natural resources.* The project would increase public awareness and support for adoption of sustainable agriculture and land use practices.

#### **4. Activities and Financial Inputs Needed**

As mentioned above, the project would be based on the baseline activities described above and would also be associated with the IDA-funded Lake Sarez Risk Mitigation Project (LSRMP) and its associated JSDF project, as well as with the IDA-funded Tajikistan Community Agriculture and Watershed Project.

***Project Objective.*** The global environmental objective is to demonstrate and provide for replication of in-situ conservation of globally significant biodiversity of the Dashtidzhum Zakaznik through protected areas management activities and piloting support adoption of community-based management approached to natural resources. The proposed Project will assist in: (i) supporting protected areas management planning; (ii) strengthening capacity to protect globally important flora and fauna species and ecosystems; (iii) promoting sustainable use of natural resources by local population in the Zakaznik surroundings compatible with biodiversity conservation objectives; (iv) raising public awareness on conservation issues; and (v) involving local communities and NGOs in the decision making process.

***Project Components.*** The proposed Project includes three components. The paragraphs below provide a description of each component.

*Component A. Strengthening Protected Areas Management (Total: US\$244,000; GEF: US\$208,000; Leshoz/ Noosfera/ National Biodiversity Conservation Center: US\$36,000).*

*Activity A.1. Zakaznik Management Plan (US\$ 54,000, GEF)* Under this activity a protected areas management plan will be developed and implemented. The management plan would: provide a description of the characteristics and uniqueness of the protected site; identify and analyze the threats and issues endangering the site; identify management concepts such as a vision, management goals and objectives, management strategies, and action plan.

*A.2. Strengthening of Protected Areas Management Capacity (GEF: US\$80,000; Leshoz: US\$20,000; Noosfera/ NBCC: US\$7,000).* The Project would support improvements in the protected area infrastructure, including provision of office equipment, civil works for refurbishing of Leshoz and Botanical Institute buildings, provision of vehicles and other essential equipment. The absence of enforcement capacity in the protected area seriously compromises the effectiveness of biodiversity conservation. Poaching, illegal cutting and overgrazing are considered as the most pressing factors. The Project will support activities that will lead to a significant improvement in the zakaznik's resource protection capability. This will include: training, study tours and capacity building for the Leshoz and environmental authorities staff in technical and social issues of biodiversity conservation inside and outside protected areas, installation of GIS system for improved biodiversity conservation and management.

*Activity A3. Biodiversity Baseline and Monitoring (GEF: US\$74,000; Leshoz: US\$8,000;NBCC: US\$1,000).* This sub-component will support the setting up of a biodiversity baseline and the design and piloting of a biodiversity monitoring system. It will finance compilation of research in the project area, conduction of field surveys to fill gaps, purchase of basic laboratory equipment and basic GIS system, field surveys, and publication of reports/brochures and training material. Lack of up-to-date and sufficient information about the biodiversity and the population of "flagship" species compromises successful

conservation measures. Under this activity, limited targeted research will be conducted to update existing information regarding the general status of biodiversity and population of several flagship species such as markhor, snow leopard, urial sheep and cobra. This will include also the data on structure, status of existing groups, dispersal and reclamation of new territories, migration patterns, number of population, home range size and types in different age and sex groups, diet in various location. To sustain informational baseline, a monitoring system and a GIS database for biodiversity will be designed and piloted. The database will also serve for training purposes for Zakaznik staff, biodiversity specialists and students, and will provide information and produce awareness raising materials for the public. The project will support activities for improving the storage, management, and distribution of biodiversity information to decision-makers and the general public. The GIS and Biodiversity database components will be implemented by National Biodiversity Conservation Center.

*Component B: Community Involvement on Protected Areas (Total: US\$597,250; GEF: US\$479,000; Subprojects beneficiaries: US\$103,750; Noosfera/Leshoz/NBCC: US\$14,500).*

*Activity B.1 Training and Community Support in Preparing Grant Proposals (GEF: US\$19,000; NBCC/Noosfera/Leshoz: US\$4,000)* Within this subcomponent a special group of technical experts will be selected to: (i) conduct training and seminars for introduction of SGP in the settlements located within the project area; (ii) provide assistance to the communities and other sub-project beneficiaries in preparation of project proposals; and (iii) conduct technical evaluation of the proposed sub-projects. Before the Project starts, an initial training course will be organized for the Technical experts that would be hired at the both level – national and local from various institutions and NGOs.

*Activity B.2 Sustainable Development and Conservation Grants Program (GEF: US\$415,000; Subproject beneficiaries: US\$103,750).* The main purpose of the Sustainable Development and Conservation Grants Program (SDCGP) is to demonstrate linkages between rural development, tourism and biodiversity conservation. The goals of the SDCGP are to: promote sustainable use of natural resources and environmentally-friendly agriculture practices, increase public awareness on the state of the Dashtidzhum Zakaznik, increase local understanding on land degradation issues, and increase local participation in the decision-making process associated with the management of the Dashtidzhum Zakaznik. The SDCGP will focus on activities associated with biodiversity conservation issues in the project zone. It will promote cooperation in zakaznik management between local communities and authorized bodies. Apart from afforestation, the SDCGP will support several alternative environmentally friendly income-generating activities aiming at reducing the pressure on the zakaznik's natural resources. It is understood that during the implementation of this component, best natural resources management practices will be piloted and tested in the context of Tajikistan, which could latter on be replicated under sectoral community-driven programs and project planned for the future.

An Operation Manual for the SDCGP has been drafted to regulate all procedures related to the implementation of the program. The Operational Manual will determine dissemination and announcement of the program, composition of the evaluation committee, eligibility criteria for sub-projects, as well as procedures for application and monitoring and evaluation. The draft Operational Manual was prepared based on the findings of the social assessment and lessons learned from the implementation of small grant programs in Romania, Slovakia, Moldova and Central Asia. The key lessons learned from ongoing experience embodied in the SDCGP are the following:

- (i) *Strong stakeholders/communities participation.* Small grant programs require broad information dissemination in order to ensure active stakeholders and communities participation. The program also calls for the organized participation from Rayon and Jaomat representatives in the Project Coordination Committee.

(ii) *Demand Driven*. The preparation activities involved the conduction of a comprehensive social assessment of all kishloks in the Zakaznik area. The social assessment allowed to identify communities needs and focused priorities, and the most suitable and realistic activities at the level of the kishlak that could be supported by the project.

(iii) *Partnership building*. This has been built into the project design by providing opportunities to develop small scale economic and biodiversity conservation activities and establishing reciprocal agreements with local communities in the form of limited resource use and contribution to conservation activities.

(iy) *Ensuring transparency*. This requires not only to provide information dissemination on the SDCGP itself, but also dissemination of the projects implementation results, lessons learnt, as well as with regard to PCC's activity and its decisions with regard to projects selection and approval. The project design calls for clear fiduciary procedures and well defined monitoring and evaluation systems. In addition, the project calls for an transparent review process.

(v) *Capacity Building*. The project will support the activities of a special Group of Technical Experts (well-trained) to provide training to potential sub-grant beneficiaries and technical assistance in preparation of grant sub-project proposals, grant applications and all related sub-project documents.

Successful proposals must demonstrate that they:

- Reduce potential negative impacts on the biodiversity and/or support sustainable use of natural resources.
- Result in positive environmental impacts on the Dashtidzhum ecosystem.
- Help create sustainable livelihoods and opportunities for those who live, own and depend on biodiversity conservation.
- Improve the livelihoods of local population.
- Bring direct benefits to local community's members.
- Are compatible with the recommendations of the Zakaznik's management plan and its buffer zones.

Eligibility criteria for grant funding will include:

- Focus on target communities or community groups living in the Zakasnik's or its buffer zone.
- Must be financial viable.
- Maximize the use of local resources.
- Use proven technologies.
- Do not substitute for Leshoz's activities.
- Must be environmentally friendly with no significant negative environmental impacts.
- SDCGP's beneficiaries should have legal rights (either long-term lease or own the land) to the area intended for reforestation activities.
- Proposals for training on investments will be considered only, if that would be provided for more than ten persons in a settlement, who need such kind of activities.
- Operational expenditures should not exceed 10% of the total cost of the investment.

The SDCGP would support a range of activities compatible with the overarching biodiversity conservation objective of the overall project. Three main categories are:

- Environmental-friendly economic activities. The SDCGP will support economic activities compatible with biodiversity conservation. Possible options to be supported under the SDCGP may include: rehabilitation of small irrigation systems; improvements in soil fertility; improvements in pastures management; development of alternative income generating

activities (e.g., fish-breeding farms, beekeeping, collection of medicinal herbs and plants, traditional handicrafts; and promotion of eco-tourism among others.

- Promoting sustainable forestry management and use. Grants will be offered to local communities for the protection and rehabilitation of existing forests, as well as afforestation activities. Possible options include: protection, and rehabilitation of existing forests; planting of fast growing and industrially used species of trees; contour planting of trees of economic value (like walnuts and pistachios); planting of woodlots (poplar, willow, or other) for fuel, building materials and windbreaks; tree planting for soil erosion and gully control and landslides prevention; afforestation of degraded agricultural lands; creation, expansion and/or improvements of forest nurseries; and collecting non wood forest products.
- Environmental education and public awareness. Grants will be offered to finance activities that aims to promote environmental education, increase awareness concerning the protected areas management and biodiversity conservation, and promote understanding and support for project activities. Possible options include: development of environmental educational programs and training materials for schools (primary, secondary), families, women, and community centers including teachers' training programs; organization and conduction of field trips; purchase of teaching manuals, books, and brochures for local schools; creation of exhibitions, videos, posters, brochures, guidelines; establishment of schools natural museums; and development of thematic publications. Primary beneficiaries of these grants would be the schools located in the project area as well as local environmental NGOs.

*Activity B.3. Information dissemination and replication activities (GEF: US\$45,000; Noosfera/Leshoz/NBCC: US\$10,500).* Under this activity, a comprehensive campaign to rise awareness and educate local stakeholders about current and sustainable natural resources use practices and environmentally friendly agricultural practices will be conducted. In addition, activities for disseminating project results and lessons learned will be organized during the life of the Project. Target groups will be: local population and local enforcement authorities both from Leshoz and from environmental authorities. This sub-component would also support activities to exchange experience with other regions of the country and with other countries, thus further strengthening replication impacts of the project outcomes. It is proposed to organize a series of workshops at the local and national level, support creation and maintenance of the project web site, finance preparation and publication of different biodiversity conservation information materials and conduction of information campaigns. During project implementation efforts will be made to work together with Afghanistan to establish a protected area next to Zapovednik, 50-100 km downstream of the Zakaznik.

*Component C. Project Management and Monitoring (Total: US\$101,500; GEF: US\$63,000; Noosfera/NBCC: US\$38,500).*

This component would assure smooth implementation and adherence to World Bank procurement, disbursement, financial management procedures and guidelines. It would finance incremental operating cost of the NGO, financial audit services, household surveys, and other monitoring and evaluation activities. The NGO will provide in-kind contribution by providing office for the project management team and office equipment. A small Project Implementation Unit will be established within the NGO to coordinate project activities. The NGO will ensure strong physical presence in the project site and will be hosted by Dashtidzhum Leshoz. The Project would finance training of financial management and procurement specialists before project launch, and will finance an independent final evaluation of project results, including household surveys and focus groups. Throughout the project, efforts will be made to facilitate the effective monitoring and reporting of the project experiences and results, so as to provide a basis for lessons learnt and further replication of similar activities in other parts of Tajikistan. As part of the monitoring and evaluation system, the project will use the Protected Areas Management Effective tool. The total project cost is estimated at US\$942,750 of which US\$750,000 would be financed by the GEF; US\$30,000 by Dashtidzhum Leshoz; US\$38,000 by Noosfera; US\$21,000 from NBCC; and US\$103,750

from grants beneficiaries. Cost for project preparation is estimated at US\$30,500, and was funded by a GEF preparatory grant of US\$25,000. The project stipulates that all sub-project beneficiaries should contribute with at least 25% of the value of the sub-project. In the project area, there will be associated financing of various activities related to project objectives from other sources, including Japanese Social Development Fund Project (at the level of US\$150,000), and the Lake Sarez Risk Mitigation Project (at the level of US\$50,000). The additional sources for Component B are not reflected in the project budget.

## 5. Sustainability analysis, risk assessment and project replicability

The project is expected to be institutionally, financially, and environmentally sustainable in the long-term. However, there are several potential factors which could influence or hinder the achievement of the overall project objectives, which are presented in the table below:

### Project Risks and Their Mitigation Measures

Risk	Rating	Mitigation Measures
Political instability	M	Politically the project region is stable, but the situation in the border with Afghanistan must be monitored very closely. Visit of foreign experts will be planned in advanced in order to meet safety requirements.
Institutional uncertainty	M	Project design has received support at both national and local levels. The recent institutional changes within the Ministry for Nature Protection and Tajikless will not affect project implementation. Representatives of SCEPF will participate in the PCC.
Misunderstood objectives	L	The project's objectives have been clearly expressed during project design and will continue to be presented through mass media to local communities. Additionally, a series of seminars at the local level will be organized at the initial stage of project implementation.
Lack of institutional support	M	Responsible authorities at both local and national levels have been deeply involved in project design and are fully committed to project objectives. The representatives from local offices of the newly created SCEPF would be members of the PCC and would provide relevant institutional support. Similarly, district and jamoat authorities will nominate representatives to the PCC and be directly involved in project implementation. Although at present there is strong Government support to the project, at mid-term review, the Bank will require commitments from the local participating institutions to continue providing support to key government departments after project completion in order to ensure sustainability of project activities. Any operational support will be provided on a declining basis.
Lack of co-financing for small grant program	L	In-kind contributions from beneficiaries contribution will be accepted under the project, given the lack of cash in the project area. Beneficiary will have responsibility for implementation of small grant activities, which will create a strong sense of ownership and trust. The PIU will assign a full-time staff to monitor the implementation of the SDCGP.
Long-term financial sustainability of project activities	M	Implementation of the SDCGP will be closely supervised by the Bank to ensure grants generate long-term financial sustainability. Alternative sustainability measures will be sought and their implementation supported by raising awareness among donors working in Tajikistan on the importance to support socio-economic development opportunities in the Dashtidzhum region. Efforts will be directed to include a program for integrating development and conservation in the Dashtidzhum region in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Program Credit being designed for Tajikistan.

Risk Rating: L=low; M=medium; H=high

*Financial sustainability* and the long-term sustainability of the project results will be enhanced by providing support for the development of a financial and fund-raising strategy and for providing the legal

basis for the protected areas management administration to generate its own revenues. It is clear that protected areas in Tajikistan can not depend entirely on government funds, and the park administrations will need to develop the necessary skills to raise funding from the donor community on the basis of progress on their performance. With regard to the SDCGP sub-projects, their financial feasibility will be a critical eligibility criteria. Since the SDCGP will support implementation of alternative sustainable livelihoods, the project will place a great emphasis on further sustainability of the implemented activities. The sustainability of the project outcomes is also supported by the high replication potential of the lessons to be learned during the project.

*Institutional sustainability.* The project's operational sustainability is ensured through wide involvement of relevant stakeholders during the preparatory stage, which will also be maintained through out the implementation stage, both through the PCC and stakeholders consultations as well as through the project management. The institutional sustainability will be addressed through capacity building of the participating rural population, oblast and district environmental authorities, and Leshoz.

*Environmental sustainability* is addressed through the protected areas management framework and attention to biodiversity and land management. The project will try to establish a replicable model relevant for other mountain ecosystems.

*Replicability.* The proposed Project will help demonstrate and provide for replication of in-situ conservation of globally significant biodiversity. Project design has built on the on-going experience and lessons learned from the Central Asia Transboundary Biodiversity Project. The regional project has assisted in building a strong regional cooperation between Tajikistan and other Central Asian countries to strengthen protected areas. Technical and social standards for protected areas management and well as approaches to public awareness of biodiversity and training material to increase capacity on biodiversity conservation developed under the regional project will be replicated through this project in Tajikistan. The successful implementation of the project will serve as a model for replication for other mountainous protected areas in Tajikistan and neighboring Afghanistan. As the Zakaznik is very representative of the Tajikistan's mountain landscape, and faces problems similar to other protected areas in the country, the potential for replicability of lessons learned in the country is high. This particular protected area is a strong candidate for pilot activity because: (i) it is in relatively better shape, (ii) has an on-going Government program in surrounding areas, and (iii) it is supported by international institutions, which mitigate some of the risks. The project will support: (a) conduction of a conference at the national level and two local workshops to present the results of the project implementation and lessons learnt; (b) preparation and publication of dissemination material reflecting the project results, including the results of the SDCGP and lessons learnt; (c) study tour to the project site and the West Tien Shan Mountains (regional project) for the national protected areas staff; and, (d) establishment of a special project web site within the NBBC.

It should be noted that at present, no other donor is working in the project area because of its remoteness and insufficient understanding of its biodiversity value and tourist potential. Increasing donor support will be promoted during project implementation, particular for the formulation of a regional project with Afghanistan.

## **6. Incremental cost assessment**

The full Incremental cost assessment is presented in Annex 7.

**Overview.** The general objective of the GEF Alternative is to demonstrate and provide for replication of in-situ conservation of Dashtidzhum Zakaznik's globally significant biodiversity. The GEF Alternative will: (i) support protected areas management planning; (ii) strengthen capacity to protect globally important flora and fauna species and ecosystems; (iii) promote sustainable use of natural resources by local population in the Zakaznik surroundings compatible with biodiversity conservation objectives; (iv) raise public awareness on conservation issues; and (v) involve local communities and NGOs in the

decision making process. The GEF Alternative intends to achieve these outputs at a total incremental cost of US\$1.17 million to be financed by the GEF (US\$775,000), Dashtidzhum Leshoz (US\$30,000), National Biodiversity Conservation Center (US\$21,000), NGO Noosfera (US\$38,000), grant beneficiaries (US\$103,750), and parallel programs (US\$200,000). The GEF Alternative should be seen as complementary to ongoing projects and programs in the Dashtidzhum territory.

**Baseline Scenario.** As shown above, the Dashtidzhum territory is subject to a number of pressures from human activities, which are threatening the ecological sustainability and integrity of Dashtidzhum's ecosystem. In the absence of GEF assistance for addressing short-term and long-term threats to biodiversity values, Tajikistan is unlikely to guarantee adequate protection of the Dashtidzhum's ecosystem. Although attention for attention to protected areas management is expected, existing government resources and programs will not be sufficient to address environmental issues associated with deterioration of globally significant biodiversity. Tajikistan is undertaking a number of domestically and externally funded programs and activities to ecosystems management biodiversity conservation in the project. The Baseline Scenario consists of the following investments during the project life:

- *Government support for protected areas management.* Due to severe budget constraints, the Government's program on protected areas management and biodiversity conservation in the project site is very limited. The Government has allocated US\$8,000 in the 2004 budget to cover salaries of the Dashtidzhum Leshoz staff. Total government contribution for protected areas management is estimated at US\$20,000 during the project life.
- *Protected areas management activities supported by the Dashtidzhum Leshoz.* The National legislation allows forest enterprises to conduct its own economic activities that comprise selling of fuel wood, collecting and selling various non wood forest products, fruits, medical herbs, etc and to keep obtained financial resources for various internal activities. Such activities can provide essential financial resources for Leshozes that might be used for various activities, including afforestation works, prevention of forest fires, biotechnological measures, biodiversity monitoring. In 2003 Dashtidzhum Leshoz has spent for these purposes about US\$4,400. It is expected that the same level of annual investments will occur during the life of the project. Thus total Government contribution will amount US\$8,800
- *Afforestation programs funded by the National and Regional Ecological Funds.* During the past years these Funds have provided limited financial assistance for the local communities and for Dashtidzhum reserve and Zakaznik to conduct afforestation activities, including buying of tree seedlings. The level of financial assistance during year 2003 was US\$1,500. Total investments amounted to about US\$3,000. It is expected that during the next two years, similar activities will be carried out. Total value of community-based afforestation program will amount US\$6,000.
- *Afforestation activities supported by local authorities.* During 2003, afforestation works were commissioned by the Shurobod Hucumat and by two Jamoats within the project area, totaling US\$2,900. These institutions are committed to continue providing similar level of support in the future, and thus their contribution could be estimated at the level of about US\$8,700.
- *Sustainable development programs supported by donors and IFIs.* A number of rural development and land conservation activities in the project areas are being financed by Jamoat Development Committees formed by the UNDP Multi-donor Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Development Program (RRDP), and the Aga Khan Foundation. These

projects are financing mostly socio-economic infrastructure activities, such as reconstruction of schools and hospitals, roads rehabilitation, natural disasters prevention measures, rehabilitation of irrigation and water supply systems. Several IFIs and donors (e.g., Islamic Bank, Kuwait Foundation, AKF) are also provide financing for bridges construction. The German NGO “Agro action” provides micro credits for local farmers for various agricultural activities and land improvements. One could estimate that about US\$100,000 would relate to GEF-project objective and GEF-project area.

**Baseline Costs.** The Baseline Scenario is therefore estimated at US\$143,500, and is based on a realistic assessment of financial resources allocated or to be allocated for activities related to the biodiversity conservation, land and forests degradation prevention, afforestation works, as well as for improving livelihoods and is consistent with the current national development goals and existing institutional capacity.

**Baseline Benefits.** The Baseline Scenario will not ensure protection of Zakaznik’s diverse and globally important mountain ecosystems, which are likely to continue to suffer from unsustainable biological resources and land use practices.

**Global Environmental Objectives and GEF Alternative.** With GEF assistance for addressing international biodiversity objectives, the Government of Tajikistan would be able to undertake an integrated conservation management program at a priority site of globally important biodiversity, which would generate both local and global benefits. The GEF Alternative would include the baseline scenario augmented with activities at Dashtidzhum Zakaznik to improve protected areas management and promote sustainable development economic activities. The GEF Alternative would achieve more effective conservation of globally-significant Zakaznik’s flora and fauna species, that represent very important genetic resources for agriculture and of soils and will promote more sustainable mountain ecosystem management. The project would also contribute to carbon sequestration through conducted afforestation, planting of new fruit tresses, mitigating further degradation of vegetation cover and reducing soil erosion. The total cost of the GEF Alternative is estimated at US\$1.32 million and will catalyze additional resources beyond the baseline scenario, totaling US\$1.17 million.

**Incremental cost.** The difference in cost between the Baseline Scenario and the proposed GEF Alternative is estimated at US\$1.17 million. This represents the incremental cost of achieving sustainable global environmental benefits. Of this amount the Government of Tajikistan and various stakeholders have committed to finance US\$0.40 million, GEF has already financed US\$25,000 for the preparatory phase. Thus, US\$0.75 million is requested from GEF. The table below summaries the project components and proposed financial plan of the incremental cost.

Incremental Cost Matrix

Component	Cost Category	Cost (in ‘000 US\$)	Domestic Benefits	Global Benefits
A. Strengthening protected areas management	Baseline	28,800	Limited capacity to plan and implement protected areas management.	
	With GEF Alternative	272,800	Increased local capacity to manage protected areas and to conserve biodiversity and increased flow of goods and environmental services at the local level	Sustainable integrated conservation management at a priority site of globally important biodiversity

	Increment	244,000		
B. Sustainable development and community involvement in protected areas	Baseline	114,700	Limited public awareness of the need for sustainable natural resources management	
	With GEF Alternative	911,950*	Increased opportunities for alternative income generation in rural communities based on sustainable management of natural resources. Reduced risk to landslides and mudslides common in the project area.	Increased awareness and use of environmentally friendly economic activities and increased local, national and international understanding of threats to globally significant biodiversity. Contribute to carbon sequestration through afforestation activities.
	Increment	797,250		
C. Project management and monitoring	Baseline	0	Not applicable	
	With GEF Alternative	132,000		Information sharing with other regions within Tajikistan and Central Asia
	Increment	132,000		
Total	Baseline	143,500		
	With GEF Alternative	1,316,750		
	Increment (GEF)	1,173,250 (775,000)		

**Note:** (\*) It includes US\$200,000 from parallel programs supporting project development objectives

## 7. Budget

GEF incremental project costs are broken down into expenditure categories as shown in the following budget table. Detailed budget breakdown is included in the Annex 7.

**Table 2: Project Budget by Disbursement Categories**

<b>Category</b>	<b>GEF</b>	<b>Other sources</b>	<b>Project total (US \$)</b>
Consultant Services	174,020	14,500	181,020
Goods	64,360	26,000	90,360
Civil Works	17,900	220,000	237,900
Small Grants	415,000	103,750	518,750
Workshops / Training	46,560	6,500	53,060
Operational costs	32,160	22,000	54,160
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>750,000</b>	<b>192,750</b>	<b>942,750</b>

## 8. Implementation plan

The duration of the project is 3 years. Noosfera will have overall responsibility for project implementation. A small Project Implementation Unit would be established within Noosfera to handle procurement, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation functions.

Project implementation will be guided by a multi-sectoral Project Coordination Committee (PCC) comprised of representatives from: the SCEPF, including its regional offices in Shurobod and Dashtidzhum; Shurobod District Administration, Jamoats Administrations, and the NGO community.

**Table 3: Project Implementation Plan**

№	Activity	2004		2005				2006				2007	
		3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2
<b>A.</b>	<b>Strengthening Protected Areas Management</b>												
<b>A.1</b>	<b>Development of the Zakaznik's management plan</b>												
1.	Employment of consultants		■				■						
2.	Procurement of field and other equipment	■	■	■			■	■					
3.	Field works			■	■	■		■	■	■			
4.	Zakaznik's area subdivision and mapping				■	■	■	■	■				
5.	Development of guidelines for nature management regulation			■	■	■	■	■	■				
6.	Development of guidelines for the zakaznik						■		■	■	■	■	■
7.	Translation and publication of guidelines and management plan			■	■	■			■	■			
8.	Publication of management plan											■	■
<b>A.2</b>	<b>Strengthening of protected areas management capacity</b>												
1.	Refurbishment of buildings of leshoz and nature museum			■	■	■	■		■	■			
2.	Maintenance, rehabilitation and small constructions for biodiversity conservation purposes			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
3.	Procurement of different types of equipment, supplies, transport and other goods for leshoz and zakaznik supply		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
4.	Trainings on protected areas management, etc.					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
5.	Study tours on biodiversity conservation and protected areas management					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
6.	Publication of booklets with lecture materials						■	■	■	■			
<b>A.3</b>	<b>Biodiversity baseline and monitoring</b>												
1.	Employment of consultants on biodiversity research	■	■	■				■	■				
2.	Field works and biodiversity research				■	■	■		■	■			
3.	Procurement of field equipment, GIS equipment and nature museum equipment				■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
4.	Database, web-site and its updating			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
5.	Preparation of survey materials and their translation and publication						■	■	■		■	■	■



## 9. Stakeholder involvement and public participation plan

The summary of the Social Assessment (SA) conducted for this project is presented in Annex 6.

The SA reveals that there is an overwhelming expectation of positive impacts from the project: more than 2/3 of the surveyed respondents indicated that it would be beneficial for their households. The benefits listed by the respondents include: general economic revitalization by infrastructure improvement, protection of natural resources and forest, agriculture improvement, and creation of jobs in public works activities and protected area maintenance. Respondents expect benefits will materialized in 3-5 years. No negative impacts from the proposed project have been identified by the respondents.

The project has been developed in a participatory manner through wide range of consultations, meetings and workshops conducted during the preparation phase, and involving various stakeholders, e.g., the state and local authorities, local branches of environmental and forest authorities, representatives of local communities, the scientific community, the administration and staff of the protected area and the public at large. A household survey (covering 360 households in the protected area) was conducted to assess the conditions, perception, level of awareness and needs of local communities.

The information about the project itself and about its goals and proposed activities was broadly disseminated at workshops and meetings organized at the local and national levels during the period August 2003 -March 2004. Extensive consultative meetings were held during project preparation and the outcomes of these meetings directly fed project design. The meetings assisted in clarifying the role of the different stakeholders in project design and implementation, in broadening the original project scope to combine support for biodiversity conservation with local initiatives to support sustainable livelihoods, and in identifying potential implementation problems and opportunities/mechanisms for addressing them. The project designed also benefited from direct feedback provided by UNDP Tajikistan and local environmental NGOs.

The participatory process assisted in identifying the role of different stakeholders and in attaining high level of support from the project. Villagers are expected to continue to participate in the project activities and contribute for successful project implementation.

The project will continue to implement the same participatory approach adopted during the design phase. For that purpose, a special plan for community involvement has been designed, which includes four elements:

- Setting up of a Project Coordination Committee (PCC). During the SA, local population shared their concerns that some safeguards need to be put in place to guarantee the successful implementation of the project (in order to inspiring a feeling of stability, financial security and effectiveness and gain public support) and suggested the setting of a PCC. This body was perceived as the “main protector of their interests” during project implementation. The PCC will involve local and national governmental authorities, representatives from forestry enterprises and jamoats, and will have the overall responsibility for overseeing project implementation.
- Development and implementation of an information campaign. The main goals of this campaign are to:
  - Continue motivation and support for the project, promote participation in project implementation and avoid any kind of tension in the future. This will answer to the survey conclusion that there is insufficient/or erroneous information, and unawareness of the essence, main activities and stages in the implementation of the project.

- Inform about potential positive and adverse project impacts and the range of needed mitigation measures.
- Prepare and distribute materials of the significance, importance and uniqueness of biodiversity in the region. The materials will be developed in accordance with surveyed preferences of local people and measured educational level.
- Supporting public consultation and consensus building. The project will launch public consultations for key decisions potentially affecting people's livelihoods, such as: establishing the legal framework of protected area regime, which may impose restrictions on access and use of the area, limit some economic activities, but also offer also opportunities to local communities; and identifying options for sustainable protected areas management, given the widespread opinion that biodiversity conservation objective exclude use of natural resources in protected areas.
- Implementation of the Sustainable Development and Conservation Grants Program. The successful implementation of this program calls for the provision of training. A special group of technical experts would be formed to conduct training and seminars for introduction of SDCGP and provide technical assistance to project beneficiaries in preparation of project proposals. The special group will avoid raising false expectation regarding prospective opportunities to be provided under the framework of the project and will familiarize potential participations with the entire program.

The above mentioned elements were included into project design to ensure broad stakeholders contribution to the decision-making process, taking into account stakeholders potential in terms of education, skills and awareness. Project implementation will pay special attention to stakeholder's participation in the decision-making process connected with:

- Development of protected areas management plan for protected area. Through awareness raising and series of public consultation, stakeholders groups would provide their input during the planning process, including formulation of park vision and operational management goals, identification of threats and mitigation measures, selection of internal zoning schemes, identification of actions to achieve the management goals.
- Implementation of SDCGP through forming technical experts group that will shape project proposals together with potential grant beneficiaries and direct involvement of PCC in evaluation of sub-project proposals and final selection. In addition, the proposed large-scale grants will be implemented only after consensus and agreement with local governments (jamoats) is reached. The draft OM of the SDCGP predetermines in a very clear manner the interaction between stakeholders and PIU at different phases of implementation of the SDCGP.
- Monitoring activities, since wide stakeholders group would provide feedback on project implementation through the planned surveys.

Noosfera PIU will ensure full participation of stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring of the project. The PIU with the support of consultants will carry out socio-economic surveys to monitor project progress and measure the impacts of project activities compared to the initial socio-economic baseline survey carried out during the preparatory phase and intended project outcomes.

## **10. Monitoring and evaluation plan**

Monitoring and evaluation is one of the activities to be carried out under Component C of the project. Project monitoring and evaluation will be carried out by Noosfera in collaboration with the SCEPF.

Monitoring will be an ongoing activity, involving data collection and assessment of the project's implementation, and will involve project staff and stakeholder meetings to review project results. The

evaluation will include data on performance indicators and analysis of stakeholder participation in project implementation. In addition, the project will be subject to the standard World Bank monitoring requirements.

The performance indicators and the monitoring and evaluation process will be incorporated into a detailed Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to be prepared in the first 3 months of project implementation that will cover environmental and social issues.

The monitoring and evaluation plan should include

- Monitoring field visits will be carried out at least once a year jointly by the World Bank and Project Team.
- Quarterly project progress report to be submitted to the World Bank and PCC.
- Annual project reports, reflecting: (i) the status of project implementation, problems encountered, actions suggested for overcoming these problems; (ii) the current state of project indicators; and (iii) the costs incurred to date for each project component and estimated costs of completion. This report is designed to obtain the independent views of the main stakeholders of a project on its relevance, performance and the likelihood of its success.
- Procurement reports describing the progress of procurement activities against the procurement plan, deviations from this plan, reasons for them, and remedial actions

## **11. Implementation arrangements**

The project will be implemented over a period of 3 years: between July 1, 2004 and June 30, 2007. A Project Coordination Committee (PCC) will be established for providing overall project oversight, advice and reinforcing coordination. In addition, the PCC will also serve as a mechanism for conflict resolution of natural resources management issues within the protected areas territory. Noosfera will have overall responsibility for project management and coordination. Implementation of project activities will be performed by respective beneficiaries. A small Project Implementation Unit will be established to handle procurement, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation functions. The rules and procedures for Financial Management and Procurement are presented in Annex 11 and 12.

A small **Project Implementation Unit (PIU)** will be established within Noosfera. The PIU will have strong physical presence at the project site and will be housed at the Dashtidzhum Lashoz. Noosfera will select and will assign among its members staff to work as part of the PIU. Expertise not available within Noosfera will be procured on competitive basis following World Bank procedures and rules. The PIU will:

- Be responsible for overall project coordination and management, financial management activities, procurement management, and monitoring and evaluation.
- Jointly with Dashtidzhum Lashoz, it will organize implementation of the SDCGP.
- Be responsible for implementation of the participation plan.
- Act as the secretariat of the PCC, and will be responsible for preparation of meeting agenda, work plans, budgets, implementation schedules, information on subproject proposals, monitoring and progress reports, evaluation studies, and comments on policy and other project issues.
- Conduct procurement according to World Bank guidelines and procedures, seeking inputs on terms of reference, technical specification from the direct project beneficiaries.

- Conduct financial transactions, reporting and auditing in accordance with World Bank guidelines and procedures.
- Provide basic information and guidance to all project stakeholders, and exchange information on experiences with other similar programs, both nationally and internationally.
- Update and adjust operational procedures and associated documents.
- Conduct financial transactions, reporting and auditing in accordance with World Bank guidelines and procedures.
- Prepare project progress reports.

**A Project Coordination Committee (PCC)** will be established to provide overall guidance and support for project implementation. The PCC will consist of 7 representatives from district authorities, local/jamoat administrations, leshoz and local environmental authorities and the NGO community. Noosfera will act as the Secretariat of the PCC. The PCC will meet at the beginning of the project, and every 3 months thereafter to evaluate project progress and agree on strategies and new directions to take in project implementation.

The PCC will have the following main responsibilities:

- oversee the activities of the Noosfera-PIU, including the review and approval of PIU work-plans and budgets.
- support, guide any policy or legal/regulatory aspect needed to facilitate successful implementation of the project;
- provide overall guidance on the implementation of the SDCGP, including selection and approval of sub-projects and evaluation of its results.

