

Process Framework for Involuntary Restrictions

CEPF Grant 110779

Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan

Advancing Conservation in Kazakhstan's Dzungaria Ecological Corridor

Kazakhstan

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8. Project background

The Dzungaria Corridor, a priority region of CEPF, includes the key biodiversity areas (KBAs) of the Zhongar-Alatau State National Nature Park, the Altyn-Emel State National Nature Park, and the Upper Kokuksu State Nature Sanctuary. (The administration of Altyn-Emel SNNP has formal responsibility for Upper Kokuksu SNS.) The region, particularly Upper Kokuksu SNS, is home to the endangered Semirechensk Salamander (*Ranodon sibiricus*), which is threatened by habitat destruction and disturbance – from under-controlled livestock grazing, from climate change, and from degraded freshwater quality – and by the invasive, predatory American mink (*Neovision vision*). The state national nature parks lack the capacity to respond to these threats, the Upper Kokuksu sanctuary lacks a site management plan, and there is no national species action plan to guide a response.

ACBK’s response will address this issue broadly across the Dzungaria Corridor, while focusing on the Upper Kokuksu SNS and the land immediately outside the sanctuary – still part of the KBA, but not formally protected. The land outside the sanctuary is used for livestock pasture and hunting. Thus, ACBK will:

- Engage the administrations of Altyn-Emel and Zhongar-Alatau, as they have a close partnership based on similar geographies and species, with a focus on drafting the first ever site management plan for Upper Kokuksu.
- Study the ecologies of the salamander and the mink.
- Assess water quality and climate change in relation to these two species and the three reserve areas.
- Develop a national species action plan for the salamander.
- Promote local awareness of the value of protected areas, the importance of endangered species, and the importance of local environmental stewardship in the Akimat Region, Eskeldy District, and subordinate villages.
- Engage a local hunting company, Kazankol, to work as a partner in better land management.
- Engage communities near to the village of Tekeli (north of Upper Kokuksu) to improve their livestock grazing practices through a pasture management plan.

ACBK’s work on the site management plan for the Upper Kokuksu SNS may result in better enforcement of existing regulations on livestock grazing inside the SNS or may lead to new regulations. These regulations may also impact ongoing, technically illegal activities such as dumping of waste, timber felling, and hunting inside the sanctuary. In this sense, the site management plan could “restrict” people from using the land and resources inside the sanctuary.

As the project evolves, particularly in terms of identifying locations of the salamander and pollution of freshwater habitat, ACBK will work with Altyn-Emel (and by implication, Upper Kokuksu) and Zhongar-Alatau to propose mechanisms to strengthen these three protected areas. This could include, beyond

regulations noted above, expansion of boundaries or creation of “islands” of protected zones that are geographically separate from the reserves.

9. Participatory implementation

ACBK has ensured that it has proper representative support as it developed this proposal, including endorsements from:

- Nurlan. Muratov, Deputy Chairman, State Committee on Forestry and Wildlife (15 September 2020)
- B. Tokanova, Acting Head of the Department, Government agency Department of Village Agriculture of the Eskeldy district (18 September 2020)
- Zh. Zhatkanov, Head of the Department, Government agency Department of Village Agriculture of the Kerbulakskiy district (16 September 2020)

ACBK will work with regional authorities and community members in the city of Taldykorgan), district authorities and community members in the city of Tekeli, and local authorities and community members in the villages of Karabulak and Saryozek. There will be consultations with stakeholder groups, particularly livestock owners who graze their cattle within the Upper Koxsu KBA, and hunters.

As noted above, ACBK may make recommendations to protected area authorities to ensure protection of the target salamander species and its habitat. Such recommendations would apply to protected areas which already have requisite legal authority to limit activities within their boundaries. Such recommendations could lead to new regulations or new impositions of existing regulations, or changes in reserve boundaries. ACBK will conduct consultations with requisite stakeholders to ensure their understanding and agreement.

Specifically, this will include detailed consultations with local stakeholders to understand:

- Current land use requirements (e.g., for grazing, hunting, other).
- Possibilities for alternative zones of land use, if restrictions were put in place.
- The varying needs of different “classes” of users, such as men, women, old versus young, hunters, livestock owners, livestock herders, nearby residents, further distanced users and owners, etc.
- Economic, social, legal, or other constraints pushing people toward [or away from] a particular land area or land use.

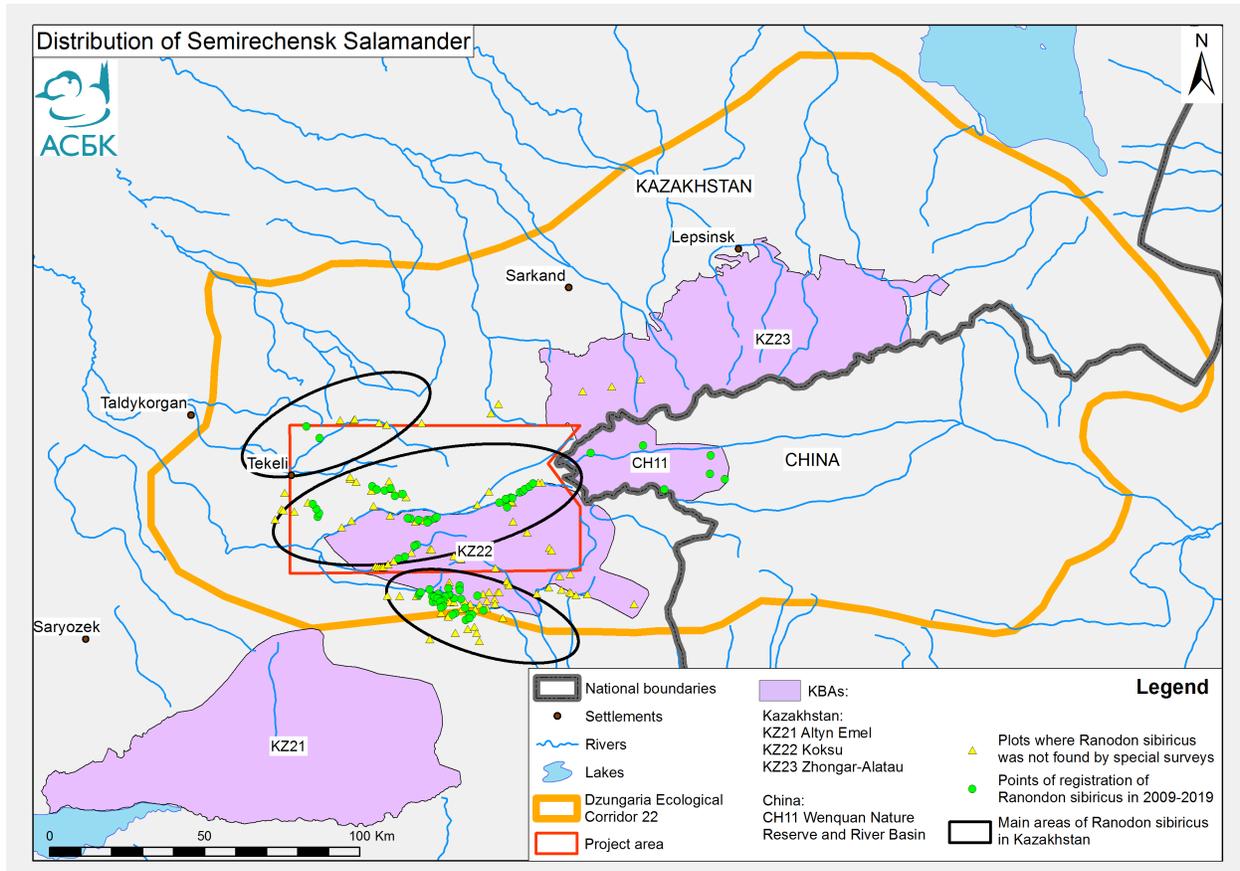
As any plan develops, these “classes” of stakeholders will be engaged:

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

There will also be outreach activities to schools and a local awareness campaign to improve people’s understanding of the importance of the reserves to local human well-being.

10. Criteria for eligibility of affected persons

Eligible “affected” persons include the approximately 150 households living within 30 kilometers of the Upper Koksou State Nature Sanctuary that engage in hunting or pasturing of livestock. This area is indicated in the figure below.



11. Measures to assist the affected persons

Anticipated “effects” are largely about denying people the ability to do things they are already not supposed to be doing: no further grazing of livestock in reserve boundaries or in designated freshwater sites; no illegal extraction of resources from the reserves or disposal of waste. Similar, “effects” might require, again, what is already required: better monitoring and reporting from within hunting concessions.

Further, depending on the results of proposals to improve the management of the reserve areas, boundaries may be expanded.

Measures to assist these people will be via two mechanisms.

The first is in the form of Pasture Management Plans in the upper reaches of the the Koksou river.

In late autumn 2021, the Pasture Team (Artem Khrokov, Tatyana Duysebayeva and an Independent expert will travel from Almaty to Tekeli/Karabulak to meet with Local Government (Akimat) and local Stakeholders (farmers) to listen, learn and introduce the project process of creating a Pasture Management Plan with up to 40 stakeholders. We will work with local livestock farmer cooperatives or CSOs to ensure appropriate engagement of the right people.

The Pasture Management Plans will address issues such as:

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

Development of these plans will be done in a way that maximizes transparency and knowledge-sharing and that builds on both farmers deep understanding of sustainable practice. Ultimately, the Pasture Management plans must be approved by District Authorities and implemented by relevant Village Authorities; thus, by rule, these authorities will ensure that ACBK followed a consultative process. Rational grazing approach will be also affected positively on hunting areas and production of wildlife. Wildlife management on hunting areas will benefit from improving monitoring.

The second mitigation measure will be a function of the updated reserve management plans. By example:

- It is possible that existing boundaries and rules will be better enforced, thereby limiting people from grazing (or dumping trash) in the reserve areas.
- It is possible that existing boundaries will be expanded in a non-exclusive way (boundaries expanded, but certain activities still allowed).
- It is possible that existing boundaries will be expanded in an exclusive way (boundaries expanded and no activities allowed).

In these cases, ACBK will facilitate discussions with reserve managers and local government to explore mitigation measures. These could include, by example, identifying alternative locations for grazing or alternative locations or methods for waste disposal, such that no “harm” comes to these stakeholders.

12. Conflict resolution and complaint mechanism

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

- Post information in Kazakh and Russian local languages in the “akimat” office of the Tekeli town and villages of Karabulak, and Saryozek, at the reserve offices, and at our own offices in Almaty.
- Explain our activities at all stakeholder meetings.
- Create fliers about the project’s objectives and planned activities. These fliers will include contact information for ACBK staff. We will distribute these fliers at all stakeholder meetings.

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

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

- Artyom Khrokov, Project Manager, Project Manager, ACBK, artyom.khrokov@acbk.kz, +7 747 153 6907
- Sergey Sklyarenko, Science Director, ACBK, sergey.sklyarenko@acbk.kz, +7 701-221-3315
- Kalyk Bayadilov, Director General, Altyn-Emel SNNP, altynemel.kadr@mail.ru, +7 (72840) 45209
- Lina Valdsmit, RIT country coordinator, v.lina78@mail.ru
- Lizza Protas, RIT Team Leader, WWF-Russia, lprotas@wwf.ru
- CEPF Executive Director: cepfexecutive@conservation.org

13. Implementation Arrangements

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

- Artyom Khrokov, Project Manager
- Tatyana Duysebayeva, salamander research scientist
- Alyona Krivosheyeva, site management specialist
- Alan Aldashev, communications specialist
- Talgat Kisebayev, monitoring specialist
- *To be determined*, pasture specialist