

Important Bird Area conservation and capacity building in Central Asia



**Annual report for the period 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2007
for the project funded by:**



UK contract party is



**The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
in partnership with:**



**Ministry for Nature Protection of
Turkmenistan / Turkmenistan
Society for Nature Conservation**



**The Association for the Conservation
of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan**



Uzbekistan Zoological Society

April 2007

Darwin Initiative Annual Report

Darwin Project Information

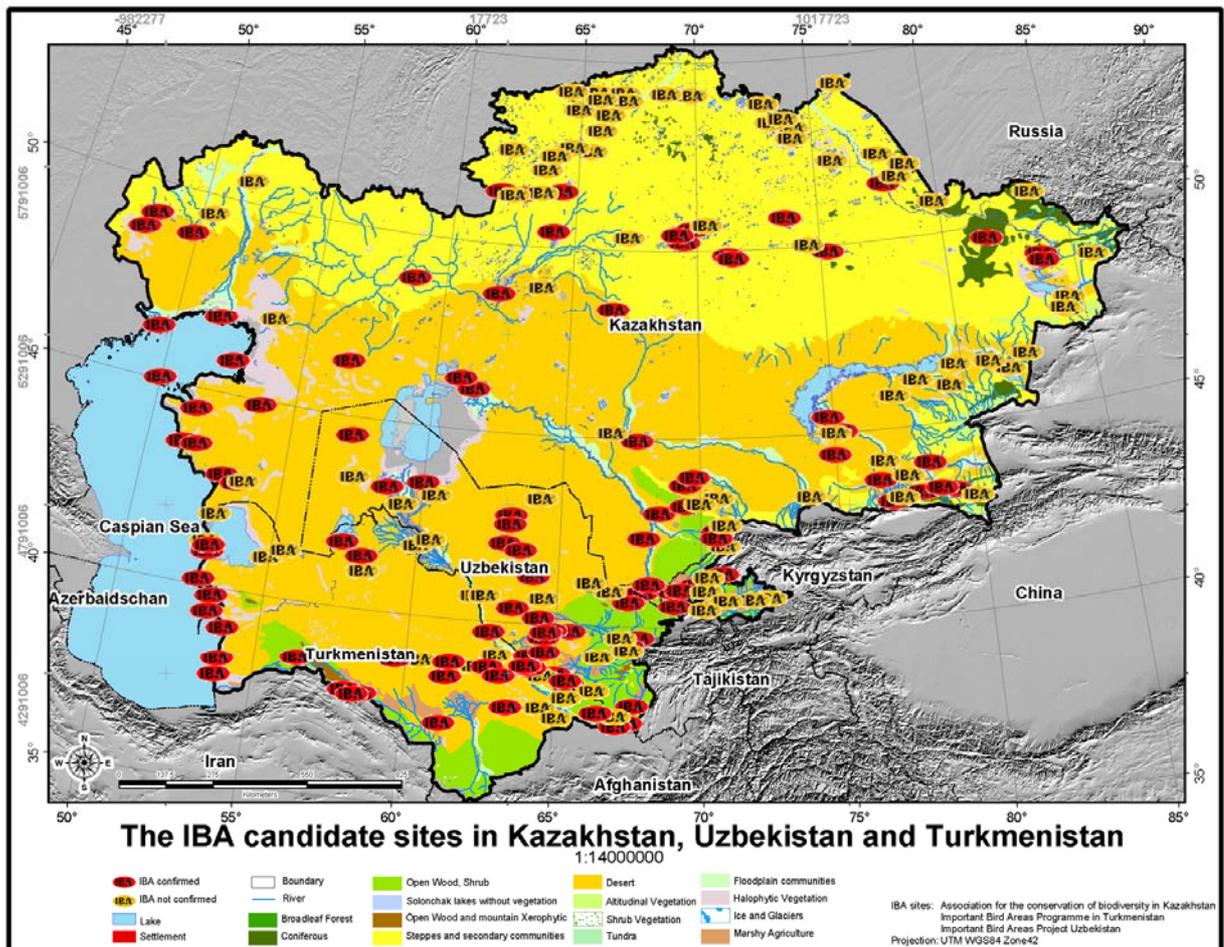
Project Ref Number	14-061
Project Title	Important Bird Area conservation and capacity building in Central Asia
Country(ies)	Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan
UK Contract Holder Institution	The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), UK
UK Partner Institution(s)	The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), UK
Host country Partner Institution(s)	Kazakhstan: The Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan (ACBK) Uzbekistan: The Uzbekistan Zoological Society (UZS) Turkmenistan: Ministry of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan / Turkmenistan Society for Nature Conservation
Darwin Grant Value	£193,593
Start/End dates of Project	1 st November 2005 / 31 st October 2008
Reporting period (1 Apr 200x to 31 Mar 200y) and annual report number (1,2,3..)	1 st April 2006 to 31 st March 2007, Annual report #2
Project Leader Name	Michael Brombacher
Project website	www.iba.uz for Uzbekistan and still under construction www.acbk.kz
Author(s), date	Michael Brombacher, Sergey Sklyarenko (KAZ), Roman Kashkarov (UZB) and Eldar Rustamov (TUR), Almaty 30 th April 2007.

1. Project Background

Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan stand at a crossroads of several migration routes and encompass the centre of the Central Palaeartic Flyway. Millions of birds migrating annually through this area depend on wetlands, forests and oases as vital stopover sites before crossing the vast inhospitable deserts and mountain massifs that form the southern border of this region. Central Asia holds at least 540 bird species, of which 17 are globally threatened species (three critically endangered, two endangered, 12 vulnerable) and 11 near-threatened species.

This project is a new initiative for Central Asia although it is based on methodology that has been successfully implemented in many countries and regions across the World. The project was developed as an outcome of the regional project development workshop held in May 2004. This project is focused on Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan because of their shared habitat structure and biodiversity. These linkages will enable more cost-effective implementation of training and other project methodologies, and will build cooperation and regional conservation capacity. This project runs in line with separate fundraising activities for the parallel implementation of planned IBA work in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The IBA process developed by BirdLife International is a worldwide initiative proven to identify, protect and monitor a network of critical sites that conserve the world's birds and other key biodiversity. Selected using standard criteria, IBAs are sites that hold internationally significant populations of threatened and congregatory birds. Due to the diverse habitats required to sustain the populations of birds, IBAs have been proven to support other globally important biodiversity as well. The unique strength of the IBA process is that after site identification is complete, the process provides a framework for local, national and international actions to ensure the sustainable management of these priority sites for conservation. Furthermore, it strengthens the conservation capacity at local, national and regional levels through a combination of training, experiential learning and networking efforts. This process has been proven during many other comparable projects delivered by the RSPB and BirdLife International partners to build sustainable conservation capacity from a local to national and international levels. The Darwin Initiative has previously supported some of these initiatives



Map 1: The three project countries showing all remaining IBA candidate sites (yellow) and already confirmed IBAs (red)

2. Project Partnerships

During this second reporting period the collaboration between the host country partners and the RSPB (the UK project partner and contract holder) remained close, cooperative, collaborative, fruitful and also very flexible - as in the first project year. The RSPB continuously provides various advise in the field of a) financial management; b) project management as well as c) technical issues but also additional in-kind and cash contribution to the project.

The RSPB continuously assists with facilitating relevant contacts to other UK based organisations (mainly with the BirdLife International Secretariat in Cambridge) to link up the Central Asian project staff on various issues (database management, advanced IBA criteria

application, site monitoring methods etc.) with relevant BirdLife staff. The RSPB provided also logistical support with travel arrangements, shipments of equipment etc. Plus the RSPB provides additional in-kind contribution in form of 20 % staff time of Geoff Welch (RSPB project officer) who assists with IBA data evaluation and checking, database training and compilation of chapters for the full IBA inventory publication which is due by summer 2008.

Additionally the RSPB provides regular updates on CBD related issues and wherever can, tries to link up the IBA work with the Convention. Partners provide inputs to the regular National CBD reports and contribute with this Darwin project to the implementation of the CBD's Programme of Work on Protected Areas. In a recent visit to Turkmenistan RSPB staff and national project staff discussed the idea of having a side event at CBD's next COP 9 being held in Germany in May 2008.

Since no major delays or problems occurred during the reporting period, the partnership didn't face major challenges. Nevertheless through the implementation of this project the RSPB increased its own experience and capacity as a supporting partner for conservation organisations in Central Asian and further increased its efficiency.

The project partners have management to establish various formal and non-formal contacts/cooperation with other relevant national or international conservation initiatives in the region/in their countries:

General:

In February 2007 ACBK (project partner in Kazakhstan) has been approached by Wetlands International and BirdLife International to be the implementer of the GEF-co-funded "Wings over Wetlands"-Project in the Central Asian and Caucasin region. The project covers more than 119 countries and has a budget of 12 Million USD (Please find further details under www.flywaysproject.org). It aims to strengthen and streamline wetlands conservation in the target countries by a number of activities (mainstreaming management, training local caretakers, policy and advocacy work) and complements excellently the objectives of this Darwin project. ACBK already has contacted all relevant projects (mostly UNDP/GEF funded/implemented projects) in the region in order to synchronize and coordinate the implementation of WoW activities with them.

In all three project countries the National Project Coordinators are continuously key advisers to government on Avian Flu issues using material and expertise provided by contacts throughout the project period (RSPB, BirdLife and AEWA) – even if outbreaks this year have been less in the region.

Kazakhstan:

- Kazakhstan has joined the Ramsar Convention in January 2007. ACBK in partnership with two Ministries and two GEF-funded project has become a key driving force to join and implement the Ramsar Convention in the country.
- Two of the most important IBAs in Kazakhstan have modern management plans (first such management plans in Kazakhstan ever) that have been developed through a successful partnership between ACBK and RSPB (which provided the technical expertise and funds) and the "GEF/UNDP wetlands project".
- ACBK and the GEF/UNEP/International Crane Foundation (ICF)-funded project on the conservation of the Siberian Crane have signed an agreement on data sharing, joint training and information activities etc.
- A successful partnership between ACBK as well as the RSPB, WWF International and the Frankfurt Zoological Society (Germany) has managed to put a territory of 490,000 ha on the list of Kazakhstan's Protected Areas Development Plan for the next two years. This first step is part of a large scale steppe biodiversity conservation initiative (Altyn Dala = Golden Steppe) for Central Kazakhstan that features IBAs as a component to establish a network of protected areas in this region. As part of this initiative ACBK and RSPB have jointly with

UNDP Kazakhstan developed a GEF project application of 2 Mio USD to support the “Altyn Dala” implementation.

Uzbekistan:

- The Uzbekistan Zoological Society (UZS) has working closely with the GEF/UNDP Nuratau protected area development project (Tianshan mountains) on data sharing and monitoring activities in this area. Jointly funded fieldtrips have been conducted.
- Currently a cooperation is negotiated with a new project on the conservation of the Turgai Forests in the Amur Darya delta of Katakalkpakstan.

Turkmenistan:

- In February 2007 first contacts have been established between the Turkmenistan IBA project team and the UNDP/GEF “Khazar Reserve Biodiversity Project” – a project supporting a protected area on the Caspian Sea coast. A number of issues for joint cooperation has been discussed and agreed (joint training efforts, joint publications, conservation planning etc.). An agreement is currently under negotiation.
- Also since February 2007 RSPB and Turkmenistan IBA project staff assist with the development of a new GEF project proposal on the further development of the country’s Protected Areas network.

Contacts to CBD focal points;

A special effort is continuously made to inform the CBD focal points in each country through regular personal contacts and the provision of project updates. In Turkmenistan Nature Protection Minister Makhtumkuli Akmuradov (CBD focal point) is met regularly by national project staff and almost quarterly by RSPB project coordinator Michael Brombacher. The CBD focal point in Kazakhstan was invited to a large reception in Astana which he attended. Also the Uzbekistan project staff holds regular contact to the CBD focal point Borij Alikhanov who is the Head of the State Committee for Conservation of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

3. Project progress

Please find a detailed description of all activities conducted during this project period in the following section:

3.1 Progress in carrying out project activities

Output 1: Overall project management

- In all three countries regular co-ordination (formal and non-formal) meetings with key governmental but also other non-governmental bodies are conducted. A highlight was the presentation of the IBA project to five Central Asian Nature Protection/Environment Ministers during their last meeting in Ashgabat in November 2006. The IBA project was formally and officially endorsed by them in the minutes of the meeting.
- Newsletters are regularly compiled and printed in all three project countries. Due to higher printing costs then estimated currently only one edition per year is produced and disseminated – in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan bi-lingually. The Uzbekistan IBA Project has already produced a website that will also be accessible in English end of summer 2007.
- Regular contacts are kept to key staff at the Secretariat of BirdLife International by the national project coordinators but also by the RSPB project coordinator Michael Brombacher who attended the last European Partnership meeting of more than 40 European conservation organisations in Ljubljana/Slovenia in October 2006. Two highly attractive exhibition panels during a fair have been displayed there and raised a lot of attention.

Output 2: Assessment of existing data and information

- The new BirdLife web-based IBA database has been launched in January 2007 and right after that project staff from Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have been attending a 5- days training by RSPB for induction.
- The IBA criteria application handbook has been compiled and printed in English and Russian and disseminated to fieldworkers and volunteers in all three project countries.
- Existing data relevant for IBA work is continuously being assessed and collected by project staff. A partnership has been established with a Swiss/UK project team that compiles the first Central Asian Bird field guide (together with a UK publisher). They currently assess all trip reports available in the internet and elsewhere and provide the Darwin IBA project with relevant data. This data is continuously used for IBA identification.

Output 3: fieldworkers introduced and equipped

- As indicated in the annual report #1 it turned out that senior field staff requires less training than expected and a stronger focus needs to be laid to train students and younger ornithologists and conservationists due to a complete lack in these sphere
- Therefore in all three project countries regular student training workshops and supporting activities have been conducted (one-week formal training course in each country) and constant inclusion of students into IBA fieldwork alongside senior staff.
- A low budget film documentary film (please see Annex 17) was produced by the Uzbekistan project team. The film is how at training events but also prior to the establishment of student wildlife clubs in order to attract students to participate in IBA work.
- A author's handbook for IBA project staff, fieldworkers and volunteers has been compiled in English and Russian and disseminated
- A Russian translation of a fieldwork methods book will be produced as part of the project (translation already done by the BP Conservation Programme) and re-print currently underway using external funds.

Output 4: new data collected through fieldwork

- About 60 (in all three project countries together) potential IBAs have been observed and assessed against the set of IBA criteria data collected in the last project year.
- Out of a candidate site list of potentially total 213 IBAs in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan by end of March 114 sites have officially been confirmed as IBAs (53 %). These sites have been documented in the IBA database but also presented in an interim report to key project stakeholders in the country.
- ACBK has produced a hardcover publication of first IBA site accounts to better visualize the first outcomes of the project. The IBAs already have digitized boundaries.
- Regular contact to BL Secretariat is kept by the RSPB project coordinator but also by the national project coordinators.
- Regularly fieldworkers inform (wherever possible and feasible) local stakeholders (hunters, fishers, shepardmen etc. into IBA work.

Output 5: Compilation and publication of IBA inventory

- The content and chapters of the final IBA inventory publication has already been agreed. The layout format is currently being standardized and agreed with the Secretariat of BirdLife International and first chapters have been already been written (in Russian and English)
- It already has been agreed with RSPB and BirdLife International to launch the IBA inventories and related conservation strategies during the BirdLife world conference being held in Buenos Aires/Argentina in October 2008 – additionally to the national book launches. More than 80 to 90 conservation organisations will be present there.

Output 7: Increase public awareness

- Project launches have been conducted in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan (Uzbekistan already in the last project year):
- **Kazakhstan:** jointly with the UK Embassy the project was presented at a large reception (party related to 80th birthday of Queen Elizabeth II) in the capital Astana (attended by the Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan and more than 400 guests from ministries,

embassies and business) linked to a large (more than 20 attendees) press conference (together with UK Ambassador and Darwin Sociable Lapwing project).

- **Turkmenistan:** the project was launched during the latest meeting of all five environment /nature conservation Ministers held in Ashgabat in November 2006. The same time the project office in Ashgabat was officially opened with Minister for Nature Protection attending the ceremony
- UK Embassies in Ashgabat (Turkmenistan) and Astana (Kazakhstan) have requested to post exhibition panels in their buildings. Currently panels are displayed at UK Embassy in Ashgabat.
- In each country national press is regularly informed about the project progress by press briefings, press conferences and press releases (to a lesser extent in Turkmenistan where press outputs are limited due to controlled political system)
- Through an annual information campaign that is linked to a “bird of the year” campaign in a number of local regions (in Kazakhstan 8, in Uzbekistan 6 and Turkmenistan 3) information is disseminated about IBA work on a regional and local level during various information meetings
- The amount of local groups/initiatives of the host country partners developed significantly (1 in Turkmenistan, 3 in Uzbekistan and 2 in Kazakhstan).

Have the activities been carried out in the manner and time planned?

Activity 3.5 “Production of a pocket fieldguide” is currently under production (images purchased, texts written and first layout already done) but not finished yet. This is the single delay of completion of a project activity. It is planned to complete it by September 2007. Budget funds have been used largely to purchase bird plates (including copyright). The remaining layout and printing costs are already budgeted in external funding proposals (for Turkmenistan) or will be funded by organisational own funds/or RSPB where necessary. The reason’s for the delay has been heavy involvement with IBA fieldwork and also student’s training activities as well as and underestimate of time required for a high quality pocket guide production.

3.2 Progress towards Project Outputs

The general project progress was good and almost all planned activities have been completed in the estimated time. Extra efforts have been made in building capacity among students and young conservationists and also in this field significant progress has been made. By gathering co-funding from the German CIM secondment programme (see chapter 6) this component could significantly be enlarged and in 2007 more than 12 student wildlife clubs will be established in Universities in the project countries and constantly being supported with equipment and methods.

This project is on track for the full completion of the IBA inventory planning to be published in summer 2008 and presented at the BirdLife International World Conference in Buenos Aires in October 2008.

Most of the output level indicators and assumptions still hold true; also the figure estimates. The only exception is the percentage of IBAs that could be completed by using existing data which in real terms was lower (closer to 30 Percent).

3.3 Standard Output Measures

Table 1 Project Standard Output Measures

Code No.	Description	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Year 4 Total	TOTAL
4A, 4B	9 weeks of ornithological field methodology training delivered to 30 students (10 from each host country)	1/20	3/45*			4/65
5	1 five-day training in UK in IBA database application (1 training/ 3participants)		1			1
7	3 IBA information posters in national languages produced and disseminated	2	1			3
7	IBA criteria application manual produced in English and Russian		1			1
7	IBA author's guidelines and data entry forms manual produced in Russian and English		1			1
8	Working and training visits to the project countries by UK fieldwork trainer Geoff Welch		6			6
8	Working visits by RSPB project coordinator*					
9	Modern management plans for 2 key IBAs produced in Kazakhstan (funded outside this project)		2			2
12A	IBA database established and maintained in all three project countries		3			3
14A	3 two-day workshops organised by project trainers to train 75 project field staff in standardised data sampling (1 workshop and 25 field staff per host country)	2				2
14B	24 meetings / seminars/ launch events /press conferences to be attended at which finding from Darwin project work will be presented (8 per country)	5	7			12

15A	At least 8 national press releases in each of the host countries (total of 24)	2	6	8
15B	At least 10 local press releases in each of the host countries (total of 30)	2	4	6
16A	6 newsletters published for each of the host countries	2	2	4
16B	Estimated circulation of each newsletter in the host countries is 500	500	500	500
17B	3 dissemination networks to be extended (partner's local group networks – up to 30 new local groups)	3	5	8
18A	At least 10 national TV programmes / features in each of the host countries	1	3	4
19A	At least 15 local TV programmes / features in each of the host countries	2	2	4
19B	At least 15 national radio interviews/ features in each of the host countries	4	4	8
19C	At least 15 local radio interviews / features in each of the host countries	2	2	4
23	Co-funding raised from other sources for project work		£ 75,000	£ 75,000

*10 from Kazakhstan, 25 from Uzbekistan and 10 from Turkmenistan

** RSPB project coordinator is currently seconded to ACBK and spends all time in the region

In Table 2, provide full details of all publications and material produced over the last year that can be publicly accessed, eg title, name of publisher, contact details, cost. Mark (*) all publications and other material that you have included with this report.

Table 2 Publications

<i>Type</i> *	Detail	Publishers	Available from	Cost
(e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	(title, author, year)	(name, city)	(E.G. CONTACT ADDRESS, WEBSITE)	£
Uzbekistan IBA Newsletter	Newsletter No 1/2007, Print run 500 copies	IBA Project of the Uzbekistan Zoological Society	Dr. Roman D. Kashkarov Important Bird Areas (IBA) of Uzbekistan Project Coordinator Off. 89, 1 Niyasov St., 700095 Tashkent,	-

			Republic of Uzbekistan phone: (+998 71) 393 14 02 mobile: (998 90) 315 03 96) e-mail: <i>roman.kashkarov@iba.uz</i>	
Low budget documentary on student training	10 copies to be shown during student training courses or prior to establishment of local student wildlife clubs	IBA Project of the Uzbekistan Zoological Society	Dr. Roman D. Kashkarov - Important Bird Areas (IBA) of Uzbekistan Project Coordinator Off. 89, 1 Niyasov St., 700095 Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan phone: (+998 71) 393 14 02 mobile: (998 90) 315 03 96) e-mail: <i>roman.kashkarov@iba.uz</i>	
Turkmenista n IBA newsletter	Newsletter No 1/2006, Print run 500 copies plus pdf version	IBA Project Turkmenistan / Ministry of Nature Protection	<i>Eldar Rustamov,</i> <i>Turkmenistan IBA</i> <i>project, 2001 Street,</i> <i>House 59, Office 38,</i> <i>Ashgabat</i> <i>Phone: 00993-12-</i> <i>390488</i> andrei_kas@mail.ru	-
Newsletter of the local Turkmenbas hy initiative group of the Turkmenista n IBA project	Newsletter 1/2006	Turkmenbashy (Caspian Coast) initiative group of Turkmenistan IBA project	<i>Dr. Mirra Gauser via</i> <i>Eldar Rustamov,</i> <i>Turkmenistan IBA</i> <i>project, 2001 Street,</i> <i>House 59, Office 38,</i> <i>Ashgabat</i> <i>Phone: 00993-12-</i> <i>390488</i> andrei_kas@mail.ru	-
Turkmenista n IBA Poster	Print run 500	IBA Project Turkmenistan / Ministry of Nature Protection	See above	-
First IBA material from Kazakhstan and Central Asia	Print run 1,000, hardcover publication	Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan	<i>Association for the</i> <i>Conservation of</i> <i>Biodiversity in</i> <i>Kazakhstan (ACBK),</i> <i>Office 210, 40 Orbita-1</i> <i>Almaty 050043, Republic</i> <i>of Kazakhstan</i> <i>email:</i>	-

Guidelines for authors and	Workshop material for student training workshop (Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan) in Russian and English	Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan	See above	-
IBA criteria handbook	Final IBA criteria and guidance in Russian and English	Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan	See above	-

3.4 Progress towards the project purpose and outcomes

Significant and measurable progress has been made towards the achievement of the project purpose in two ways:

development of Important Bird Area (IBA) inventories: by end of March 53 % of all candidate sites have been confirmed and the project is on track re the timetable to complete and publish the inventory by July 2008

capacity building –organisational and personnel: the project partners as organisations significantly increased their managerial capacity as organisations but also their technical capacity as professional conservation organisations. Plus a large number of young and well trained (through this project but also through the Darwin Sociable Lapwing project) students and post-graduates emerged out of the project and are already important as field researchers but also staff for the project partner organisation (for example Anna Ten from Uzbekistan took part in March 2006 training and is now full-time IBA project assistant).

The purpose level assumptions still hold true and the indicators are also still adequate towards measuring outcomes.

3.5 Progress towards impact on biodiversity, sustainable use or equitable sharing of biodiversity benefits

In all three project countries IBAs are acknowledged by governmental conservation authorities as a tool to improve and increase the current system of Protected Areas. Ownership of IBA conservation is sought to be increased when the full and detailed inventory will be produced and launched together with the governmental conservation authorities by July 2008. It is very likely that IBAs will be included as candidate sites for future Protected Areas development in the three project countries and will have a real chance to be protected in the future.

4. Monitoring, evaluation and lessons

The Project Steering Group (PSG) during its meetings monitors the success of the project against the indicators outlined in the project logframe. At the inception of the project it has been agreed to use these indicators to measure success of the project. The achievements will be discussed during PSG meetings and any necessary adjustments will be made accordingly.

To demonstrate that the outputs and outcomes contribute to the project purpose own reports/data but also external reports and data are constantly collected and assessed.

Lessons learned from this year's work / adjusting of future plans:

As indicated in last year's report a much stronger focus needs to be laid onto training activities for students / young ornithologists and conservationists. This issue was addressed already successfully in this project year by multiplying co-funding (see chapter 6).

5. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

Three issues have been raised in last years evaluation of the annual report:

- the lack of an exit strategy / weak sustainability (this has been outlined in more detail in this report in chapter 7)
- better technical assessment of technical quality of project operations: key technical documents have been produced in English and Russian. English versions are attached to this document. All other technical outputs such as IBA datasets are assessed by BirdLife International and need to meet their (high technical) standards.
- a simple set of criteria to monitor the capacity of the host countries partners was requested: this set has been developed and filled in (please see Annex 4)

6. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

The project has very successfully managed to attract further co-funding that extends the project's capacity significantly in the field of training young biology students, ornithologists and conservationists:

Project money could be used as co-funding (8,000 GBP, 30 % of all costs) to a full-time position of a "Conservation Education Coordinator" funded 70 % by the German governmental secondment programme CIM (see www.cimonline.de). In addition to this CIM fully funded a GIS and Data Management trainer who will be based full-time in the Tashkent project office but train the project partners in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in GIS software application and site boundary digitisation. CIM also provided the project with a 26,000 € grant on equipment which allowed the project to purchase further optics, fieldguides and outdoor gear for training purposes.

7. Sustainability

The project's aim to built sustainability is built on three pillars:

Close cooperation with governmental conservation authorities:

In all three countries project teams and the RSPB project coordinator keep regular and formalized contact to key governmental conservation authorities. The IBA project has been presented to a Environmental Minister's Meeting in Ashgabat in November 2006 (also Achim Steiner, Director of UNEP attended this meeting and was informed about the IBA project. He offered to write a foreword in the publications). In all countries the national project coordinators regularly meet and inform conservation authorities, discuss further project implementation,

inclusion of IBAs into national protected areas development plans etc.). A good indicator of this close partnership is the frequency of joint project publications.

Institutional sustainability

In all three countries significant capacity has been built with the project partners. ACBK in Kazakhstan is now a stable and professionally managed conservation organisation that is able to manage medium and large-scale projects. ACBK is close to full-fill the criteria of becoming a BirdLife partner and also addressing the issue of sustainable financial stability. Being part of this network will ensure ongoing support but also engagement of ACBK in IBA conservation in Kazakhstan. An indicator for this is that ACBK has been approached by Wetlands International to implement components of a very large GEF funded conservation project.

The situation is similar –to lesser extend though- in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Emerging from the IBA project team currently the “Uzbekistan Bird Conservation Society - UBCS” is under foundation aiming to become a leading conservation organisation – endorsed by the current project partner (Uzbekistan Zoological Society) which has a purely scientific and lesser conservation profile. In Turkmenistan the local project team in Turkmenbashy (Caspian Coast) currently aims to register as an independent NGO which would be a milestone for non-governmental conservation in Turkmenistan.

Outreach activities

In all three countries the profile of the project is good – especially within the conservation community but also with governmental conservation authorities. Meetings are usually very well attended, also by governmental officials. IBAs are regularly quoted in the governmental reports to the CBD and the project partner contacted/invited to participate in related workshops etc.

Regular press work makes journalists now about the partners and also IBA work. The press outputs of the Uzbekistan project team are extraordinary (see Annex 15). IBAs are now a “brand” in conservation.

Exit strategy:

The project will produce a distinct output which is the full inventory of IBA in the project countries. The project also has invested heavily in capacity building within the project partners. The close cooperation with governments, the high managerial capacity of project partners and the ongoing logistical, technical and to a certain extend financial support from the RSPB and BirdLife International will significantly ensure the implementation of the projects outputs and recommendations.

8. Dissemination

The following dissemination activities have been conducted during the project year:

In all three countries:

Activity	Target audience
Regular press releases, press conferences (the project is featured in TV programmes and in Uzbekistan even made it to the main news programme)	Broader audience interested in conservation issues in the project countries
Regular edition of a project newsletter that broadly is disseminated within the country	People working in conservation (governmental, non-governmental or science community)
Official and prominent launches in all countries in project year 2	Decision makers in the project countries. Mostly on ministerial level. Also business community and Embassy staff attended launches – important contacts could be

	established.
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Future dissemination activities:

Dissemination activities have been designed to be implemented on a low-cost basis and can easily be continued after the end of the project. Newsletters are now being produced on a lower-cost basis and in future more and more will be disseminated electronically. Press work will be continued and website of the organisations will become a major tool for information. In addition to this the partner's network in the project countries will increase and also undertake dissemination activities on the local level.

9. Project Expenditure

Please expand and complete Table 3.

Table 3

10. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project during the reporting period (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes

I agree for ECTF and the Darwin Secretariat to publish the content of this section:

Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are an effective tool worldwide in site and species conservation. The European Union respects the quality and effectiveness of this biodiversity conservation tool and protects IBAs through EU legislation (NATURA 2000). More than 10,000 IBAs have already been identified in the world and national conservation organisations are engaged in monitoring and protecting them.

A conspicuous gap of the global IBA map was Central Asia. This gap is being largely closed by this project with already 53 Percent of all potential IBA confirmed by now (after half of its project period having passed). In more than 100 countries IBAs are protected by governments and monitored and cared about by national conservation organisations which are part of a larger network – BirdLife International. The host-country partners in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and

Uzbekistan develop well and increase significantly their technical and managerial capacity to be leading conservation organisations in their countries.

A major effort has been made to identify and train biology students to become the future generation of conservationists in the project countries (currently the lack of young biologists/conservationists is a major obstacle in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan): More than 65 students already have been participated in training activities and currently 12 student wildlife clubs are established as part of this project using additionally gained external funding.

List of Annexes:

- Annex 1** - Report of progress and achievements against Logical Framework for Financial Year: 2006/2007
- Annex 2** - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK in its original version
- Annex 3** - Overall project workplan showing all objectives and activities
- Annex 4** – Simple assessment grid to show capacity of host-partners organisations
- Annex 5** – IBA criteria application manual (A4 print out in English)
- Annex 6** – CA IBA project: guidelines for authors and data entry forms (A4 print out in English)
- Annex 7** – Kazakhstan IBA interim report (A4 print out, in Russian)
- Annex 8** – First IBA results for Kazakhstan and Central Asia, hardcover report (A4 print out, in Russian)
- Annex 9** – Uzbekistan IBA interim report (A4 print out, in Russian)
- Annex 10** – Turkmenistan IBA interim report (A4 print out, in Russian)
- Annex 11** – Second Uzbekistan IBA project newsletter (A4 print out, in Russian and Uzbek)
- Annex 12** – First Turkmenistan IBA project newsletter (A4 print out, in Russian and Turkmen)
- Annex 13** – First newsletter of local Turkmenbashy (Caspian Coast) IBA initiative group (A4 print out, in Russian)
- Annex 14** – Turkmenistan IBA project poster (A2 print out, in Russian)
- Annex 15** – A selection of photo images from various project events

- Annex 16** Press clippings from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan
- Annex 17** radio and TV clippings from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan
- Annex 18** low budget documentary film on students training work produced by the Uzbekistan IBA project team

Annex 1: 14 061 Report of progress and achievements against Logical Framework for Financial Year: 2006/07

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2006 - March 2007	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Goal: <i>To draw on expertise relevant to biodiversity from within the United Kingdom to work with local partners in countries rich in biodiversity but constrained in resources to achieve</i></p> <p><i>The conservation of biological diversity,</i></p> <p><i>The sustainable use of its components, and</i></p> <p><i>The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources</i></p>		<p><i>Please see chapter 3.5 of the report</i></p>	<p><i>(do not fill not applicable)</i></p>
<p>Purpose</p> <p>To strengthen conservation capacity in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan through the development of Important Bird Area (IBA) inventories, providing the basis for consistent and coordinated conservation action</p>	<p>IBAs acknowledged in each of the three countries National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In all three project countries IBA will be referred to in 4th National Reports for the COP 9 of the CBD • Ministry of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan is interested in host a side event on IBA work in the country during COP 9 • All Environment / Nature Conservation Ministers of the project country formally endorsed the project during their last meeting in Ashgabat November 2006 • ACBK could lobby the formal establishment of a Protected Area on a key IBA in Central Kazakhstan between 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever possible IBA will be included as candidate sites on the governmental Protected Areas development programmes • With all governmental conservation authorities side events for the CBD COP 9 will be discussed • Close liaison with CBD focal points to include IBA work in National Reports to CBD COP 9 but also NBSAP updates
<p>Output 1.</p> <p>Project management and</p>	<p>Expected outputs are delivered according to project plan</p>	<p>All activities have been completed in time. Due to higher printing costs then originally estimated and budgeted only one newsletter</p>	

coordination structure is established and sustained		per country/year is produced and disseminated.
<i>Activity 1.5. Keep regular contact with international technical IBA advisers (BirdLife Secretariat).</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regular contacts are kept to key staff at the Secretariat of BirdLife International by the national project coordinators but also by the RSPB project coordinator Michael Brombacher who attended the last European Partnership meeting of more than 40 European conservation organisations in Ljubljana/Slovenia in October 2006. Two highly attractive exhibition panels during a fair have been displayed there and raised a lot of attention.</i>
<i>Activity 1.6. Edit a newsletter</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Newsletters are regular compiled and printed in all three project countries. Due to higher printing costs then estimated currently only one edition per year is produced and disseminated – in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan bi-lingual. The Uzbekistan IBA Project has already produced a website that will also be accessible in English end of summer 2007.</i>
<i>Activity 1.7. Keep regular contact with relevant governmental and non-governmental bodies in each project country</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In all three countries regular co-ordination (formal and non-formal) meetings with key governmental but also other non-governmental bodies are conducted. A highlight was the presentation of the IBA project to five Central Asian Nature Protection/Environment Ministers during their last meeting in Ashgabat in November 2006. The IBA project was formally and officially endorsed by them in the minutes of the meeting.</i>
Output 2. Existing available data on the status of the region's species and habitats is collected, processed and analysed	≥ 50% of IBA shadow list dataset compiled from existing data	All activities have been completed in time / Indicator number had to be corrected. Approximately 30 % of all identified IBAs were based on existing data.
<i>Activity 2.1. Run database coordination by national project coordinators</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The new BirdLife web-based IBA database has been launched in January 2007 and right after that project staff from Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have been attending a 5- days training by RSPB for induction.</i>
<i>Activity 2.3.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The IBA criteria application handbook has been compiled and printed in English and Russian and disseminated to fieldworkers and</i>

<i>Collate IBA data application guidance in a handbook in national languages and disseminate</i>		<i>volunteers in all three project countries.</i>
<i>Activity 2.6. Collect all existing data in country and abroad and assess quality.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Existing data relevant for IBA work is continuously being assessed and collected by project staff. A partnership has been established with a Swiss/UK project team that compiles the first Central Asian Bird field guide (together with a UK publisher). They currently assess all trip reports available in the internet and elsewhere and provide the Darwin IBA project with relevant data. This data is continuously used for IBA identification.</i>
Output 3. Existing and potential fieldworkers are introduced to IBA work, trained and equipped	Number of trained IBA fieldworkers in region increased ≥ 70 by t⁴	Apart from Activity 3.5. (see explanation below) all activities have been completed in time / Indicator is appropriate
<i>Activity 3.1. Train field staff in ornithological field methods required for IBA fieldwork</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>As indicated in the annual report #1 it turned out that senior field staff requires less training than expected and a stronger focus needs to be laid to train students and younger ornithologists and conservationists due to a complete lack in these sphere</i> <i>Therefore in all three project countries regular student training workshops and supporting activities have been conducted (one-week formal training course in each country) and constant inclusion of students into IBA fieldwork alongside senior staff.</i> <i>A low budget film documentary film (please see Annex 17) was produced by the Uzbekistan project team. The film is how at training events but also prior to the establishment of student wildlife clubs in order to attract students to participate in IBA work.</i>
<i>Activity 3.4. Compile and disseminate methodological guidance in Russian and national language</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>A author's handbook for IBA project staff, fieldworkers and volunteers has been compiled in English and Russian and disseminated</i> <i>A Russian translation of a fieldwork methods book will be produced as part of the project (translation already done by the BP Conservation Programme) and re-print currently underway using external funds.</i>
<i>Activity 3.5. Compile a basic field guide in Russian and national languages</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>This activity is currently under production (images purchased, texts written and first layout already done) but not finished yet. This is the single delay of completion of a project activity. It is planned to complete it by September 2007. Budget funds have been used largely</i>

		<i>to purchase bird plates (including copyright). The remaining layout and printing costs are already budgeted in external funding proposals (for Turkmenistan) or will be funded by organisational own funds/or RSPB where necessary. The reason's for the delay has been heavy involvement with IBA fieldwork and also student's training activities as well as and underestimate of time required for a high quality pocket guide production.</i>
Output 4. New data on the status of the region's species and habitats is gathered through field work	Comprehensive IBA dataset, augmented with new field data finalised by t³	All Activities have been completed in time / Indicator appropriate (in the last version of the revised application –it was approved from the reserve's list- a mistake occurred. It should say by t⁴
<i>Activity 4.3. Carry out fieldwork in potential IBAs. Most of the sites will be surveyed more than once during project period</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>About 60 (in all three project countries together) potential IBAs have been observed and assessed against the set of IBA criteria data collected in the last project year.</i>
<i>Activity 4.4. Fieldworkers to introduce hunters, rangers, and herdsmen to IBA programme</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regularly fieldworkers inform (wherever possible and feasible) local stakeholders (hunters, fishers, shepardmen etc. into IBA work.</i>
<i>Activity 4.5. Send field data to national project coordinator</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Out of a candidate site list of potentially total 213 IBAs in Turkmenistan. Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan by end of March 114 sites have officially been confirmed as IBAs (53 %). These sites have been documented in the IBA database but also presented in an interim report to key project stakeholders in the country.</i>
<i>Activity 4.6. Constantly actualise IBA list and publish interim update reports</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ACBK has produced a hardcover publication of first IBA site accounts to better visualize the first outcomes of the project. The IBAs already have digitized boundaries.</i>
<i>Activity 4.7. Keep regular contact to international technical advisers at BirdLife Secretariat.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regular contact to BL Secretariat is kept by the RSPB project coordinator but also by the national project coordinators.</i>
Output 5. An IBA Inventory for each country is compiled, published and disseminated	Inventory sent to key decision makers by mid t³	Activities have been started earlier then planned / Indicator appropriate (in the last version of the revised application –it was approved from the reserve's list- a mistake occurred. It should say by t⁴
<i>Activity 5.3. Process IBA data, analyse and compile inventory. Publish and</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The content and chapters of the final IBA inventory publication has already been agreed. The layout format is currently being</i>

<i>disseminate IBA inventory for each country</i>		<p><i>standardized and agreed with the Secretariat of BirdLife International and first chapters have been already been written (in Russian and English)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>It already has been agreed with RSPB and BirdLife International to launch the IBA inventories and related conservation strategies during the BirdLife world conference being held in Buenos Aires/Argentina in October 2008 – additionally to the national book launches. More than 80 to 90 conservation organisations will be present there.</i>
Output 7. Public awareness of national nature value, its conservation and IBA protection is increased	Number of local partner groups increased to 30 by t⁴	Activities have been completed in time / Indicator appropriate
<p><i>Activity 7.1. Conduct a national project launch</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Project launches have been conducted in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan (Uzbekistan already in the last project year):</i> <i>Kazakhstan: jointly with the UK Embassy the project was presented at a large reception (party related to 80th birthday of Queen Elizabeth II) in the capital Astana (attended by the Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan and more than 400 guests from ministries, embassies and business) linked to a large (more than 20 attendees) press conference (together with UK Ambassador and Darwin Sociable Lapwing project).</i> <i>Turkmenistan: the project was launched during the latest meeting of all five environment /nature conservation Ministers held in Ashgabat in November 2006. The same time the project office in Ashgabat was officially opened with Minister for Nature Protection attending the ceremony</i>
<p><i>Activity 7.2. Inform local population close to IBAs about key conservation issues</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Through an annual information campaign that is linked to a “bird of the year” campaign in a number of local regions (in Kazakhstan 8, in Uzbekistan 6 and Turkmenistan 3) information is disseminated about IBA work on a regional and local level during various information meetings</i>
<p><i>Activity 7.3. Inform on nationwide scale on IBA conservation issues</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>UK Embassies in Ashgabat (Turkmenistan) and Astana (Kazakhstan) have requested to post exhibition panels in their buildings. Currently panels are displayed at UK Embassy in Ashgabat.</i> <i>In each country national press is regularly informed about the project progress by press briefings, press conferences and press releases (to</i>

	<p><i>a lesser extend in Turkmenistan where press outputs are limited due to controlled political system)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The amount of local groups/initiatives of the host country partners developed significantly (1 in Turkmenistan, 3 in Uzbekistan and 2 in Kazakhstan).</i>
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Annex 2: 14 061 Project's full current logframe

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
<p>Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To draw on expertise relevant to biodiversity from within the United Kingdom to work with local partners in countries rich in biodiversity but poor in resources to achieve the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources 			
<p>Purpose</p> <p>To strengthen conservation capacity in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan through the development of Important Bird Area (IBA) inventories, providing the basis for consistent and coordinated conservation action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IBAs acknowledged in each of the three countries National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The region's political and social environment remain stable to ensure continued IBA conservation efforts
Outputs			
Project management and coordination structure is established and sustained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expected outputs are delivered according to project plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project reports 	
<p>Existing available data on the status of the region's species and habitats is collected, processed and analysed</p> <p>Existing and potential fieldworkers are introduced to IBA work, trained and equipped</p> <p>New data on the status of the region's species and habitats is gathered through field work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≥ 50% of IBA shadow list dataset compiled from existing data Number of trained IBA fieldworkers in region increased ≥ 70 by t⁴ Comprehensive IBA dataset, augmented with new field data finalised by t³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IBA database records Training reports IBA database records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turnover of trained project staff is minimal

<p>An IBA Inventory for each country is compiled, published and disseminated Conservation strategies for IBAs in the region are developed and their implementation started Public awareness of national nature value, its conservation and IBA protection is increased</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory sent to key decision makers by mid t³ • IBA Action Plans adopted by all governments by t⁴ • Number of local partner groups increased to 30 by t⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement letters • Governmental announcements • Project partners membership records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments remain open to collaboration
<p>Activities</p>	<p>Activity Milestones (Summary of Project Implementation Timetable)</p>		
<p>Project management and coordination structure is established and sustained</p>	<p>Yr 1: Project steering group established; Key staff employed and inducted; project equipment, and other resources purchased; Project development and fundraising training provided. Yr 1-3: Steering group meetings held; Regular newsletter produced.</p>		
<p>Existing available data on the status of the region's species and habitats is collected, processed and analysed</p>	<p>Yr 1: Bespoke IBA database created; IBA criteria and thresholds adapted for region; IBA data application guidance disseminated; Project staff trained in standardised data sampling; IBA shadow list compiled; Yr 1-3 Existing regional conservation status data collated, processed, analysed and stored in IBA database.</p>		
<p>Existing and potential fieldworkers are introduced to IBA work, trained and equipped</p>	<p>Yr 1: 75 fieldworkers trained in ornithological methods; Fieldwork equipment and resources purchased; Fieldwork methodology guide and basic field guide compiled and translated with 4400 copies disseminated to project staff and other participants.</p>		
<p>New data on the status of the region's species and habitats is gathered through field work</p>	<p>Yr 1: 75 fieldworkers, including local & regional IBA Coordinators inducted in fieldwork implementation; Fieldwork plan prepared. Yr 1-2: >100 Potential IBA sites surveyed and data processed.</p>		
<p>An IBA Inventory for each country is compiled, published and disseminated</p>	<p>Yr 2: GIS training provided for 3 staff. Yr 2-3 IBA boundaries digitised and linked to IBA database through GIS; Inventory compiled. Yr 3: IBA inventory published, publicised and 4000 copies disseminated</p>		
<p>Conservation strategies for IBAs in the region are developed and their implementation started</p>	<p>Yr 3: 9 National workshops held to identify and document conservation strategy within identified IBAs; National IBA Action Plan developed and its adoption to National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and subsequent implementation sought.</p>		
<p>Public awareness of national nature value, its conservation and IBA protection is increased</p>	<p>Yr 1: project launch held in all 3 countries. Yr 1-3: local and regional population kept informed through c.36 meetings, c.54 press releases, etc. Yr 3: Workshop held to discuss how local traditions can help promote nature conservation in IBAs</p>		