

Important Bird Area conservation and capacity building in Central Asia



Annual report for the period 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008 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 2008

Darwin Initiative Annual Report

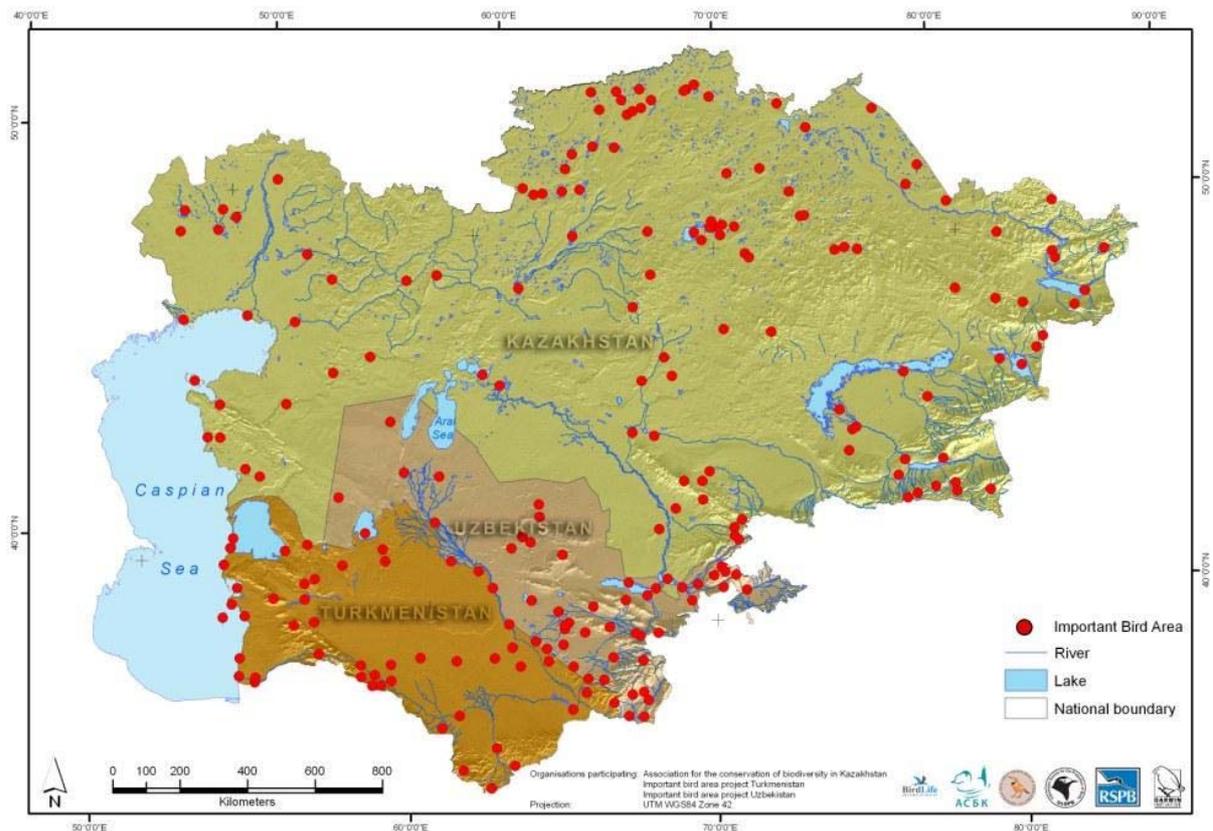
Darwin Project Information

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 2007 to 31 st March 2008, Annual report #3
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 2008

1. Project Background

Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan stand at a crossroads of several migration routes and encompass the centre of the Central Palaearctic 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.



Map 1: The three project countries showing all confirmed IBAs for the project countries (red)

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.

2. Project Partnerships

Also during this third 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 and second 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 latter was even increased in year 3 to address higher then expected inflation in the project countries but also unplanned / unexpected capacity shortfalls within 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, inventory book compilation etc.) with relevant BirdLife staff. The RSPB provided also logistical support with travel arrangements, shipments of equipment etc. Plus the RSPB also in year 3 provided 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 August 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. A planned side event at CBD's upcoming COP 9 was postponed because it happened to early to present/launch the inventory publication which because of technical reasons only can be printed in August 2008.

As in previous years also in the last project year 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 – both have led to a decision taken by the RSPB Council in March 2008 to continue the support of the project partners with core funding and core technical assistance for another 5 years (and potentially longer for Kazakhstan).

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) was approached by Wetlands International and BirdLife International to be the implementer of the GEF-co-funded "Wings over Wetlands"-Project (WoW-Project) in the Central Asian and Caucasian region. The project covers more than 119 countries and has a budget of 12 Million USD (Please find further details under www.wingsoverwetlands.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.
- ACBK now has been subcontracted by WI and from 1st January 2008 until 31st December 2009 is implementing the WoW component on Training and Awareness raising for the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan as well as the Caucasus and the European and Western Siberian part of Russia. For details see the project website given above.
- 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.
- The Secretariat of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) works through the IBA project structures to lobby Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan joining the Agreement. Plus AEWA regularly supports ACBK technically and financially (see below).

Kazakhstan:

- The Secretariat of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) contracted ACBK during 2006 and 2007 (with continuation in 2008) to set up a working group on "Globally threatened steppe breeding wader species". The working group was nominated and formally will be founded in

autumn 2008 under the UK Darwin Initiative project “Conserving a flagship steppe species: the critically endangered Sociable Lapwing”. The outcomes of the work can be seen under www.tsbwwg.org

- After ACBK and RSPB have been assisting the “GEF/UNDP wetlands project” with the development of two modern management plans (first such management plans in Kazakhstan ever) the cooperation continued in 2007 with the joint development of the first national single species action plans. ACBK and RSPB helped with developing identification material for Kazakhstan’s first bird watching hide in the Korgalzhyn Nature Reserve.
- 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. In 2007 the key legal preparation documents have been prepared by ACBK and it is likely that by the end of 2009 it will be legally designated. One of the three clusters is an IBA. 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 – the full GEF proposal is currently being finalized by a GEF consultant and submitted in 2008.

Uzbekistan:

- The Uzbekistan Zoological Society (UZS) in the project years 1 and 2 has been working closely with the GEF/UNDP “Nuratau protected area development project” (Tienshan mountains). After the end of the project UNDP Uzbekistan has asked for assistance (technically) with a new GEF/UNDP project on the conservation of the Turgai Forests in the Amur Darya delta of Katalpakstan. As a result of this a first study tour to UK Protected Areas and visitor centres will be conducted in summer 2008 (for PA managers from the project region and conservation officials) with the technical and financial help of the RSPB.

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. IBA project staff is constantly advising the project in technical issues, both parties regularly exchange information and are currently preparing the first bird fieldguide in Turkmen language.
- 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. The development of the proposal is still underway and planned to be submitted to GEF end of 2008. The objectives still remain the same and would be supporting the long-term conservation of IBAs in Turkmenistan. A formal role of the Turkmenistan IBA project and the RSPB is foreseen.
- Turkmenistan has joined the Ramsar Convention in January 2008. The Turkmenistan IBA project has become a key driving force to join and implement the Ramsar Convention in the country. The IBA coordinator Eldar Rustamov has been nominated Head of the national Ramsar Working Group.

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 is regularly met and informed about the project progress by ACBK.
- 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

The general project progress was good and almost all planned activities have been completed in the estimated time. In Annex 4 to Annex 5 you see the results in maps and tables. The main publication that presents most of the project outcomes and outputs (IBA inventory book for Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in Russian and English versions) is currently under production.

In project year 3 increased 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 various sources (see chapter 6) this component could significantly be enlarged in 2007 now 12 student wildlife/birdwatching clubs have established in Universities / Higher Schools and constantly being supported with equipment and methods. An average number of 100 students is subject to regular training –theoretical and practical. A first measurable outcome is the participation of 10 local student wildlife / birdwatching clubs in IBA monitoring work and environmental education work in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

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 September 2008.

Most of the output level indicators and assumptions still hold true; also the figure estimates.

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 in 2007 was the official opening of the first IBAs in two public events in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan (attended by Deputy Minister for Nature Protection and the UK Ambassador)
- Newsletters are regularly compiled and printed in all three project countries. Due to higher printing costs than estimated currently only one edition per year is produced and disseminated – in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan bi-lingually.
- 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 recent European Partnership meeting of more than 40 European conservation organisations in Riga/Latvia in November 2007. The project was presented by a talk.
- A project steering group meeting was held in May 2007 in Almaty where a) the project progress and efficiency was discussed but also the upcoming activities prepared and planned.
- A fundraising training workshop was held for all key project / organisational staff (11 staff) in Ashgabat in December 2007
- A number of 6 funding applications have been developed and submitted since then with 4 of them approved, one still awaiting approval and one rejected (see chapter 6)
- All financial and technical reports have been compiled and submitted in time to Darwin

Output 2: Assessment of existing data and information

- The process of checking for and assessing existing data for potential IBAs was completed by June 2008. An average of 40 Percent of all IBA's per country could be designated based on already existing data.

Output 3: fieldworkers introduced and equipped

- This component was already completed in project year 2
- Since the project from the beginning invested heavily in finding and training the “next generation” of conservationists through the network of 12 student wildlife and birdwatching clubs this process continues and by the help of various donor’s the students could be equipped with adequate optics, literature and other necessary gear.

Output 4: new data collected through fieldwork

- Fieldwork and data collection was completed in January 2008. 219 IBAs have been identified, documented in the BirdLife WorldBirdDataBase (WBDB), digitized boundaries for all IBAs have been completed in a GIS (see also Output 5). All IBAs together cover 20 Million ha.
- 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 through formal meetings and trainings but also informally

Output 5: Compilation and publication of IBA inventory

- In all three project countries IBA project assistants have been employed from early 2007 onwards to assist the national IBA care-takers with with technical database and GIS work. With co-funding from CIM (See chapter 6) an international GIS Trainer could be hired from January 2007 who is based in Tashkent/Uzbekistan and how trains and assists the national IBA project assistants. By March 2008 all 219 IBA maps have been completed and prepared for further use
- The content and chapters have been agreed with BirdLife International, the description of all 219 IBAs is completed on both languages (Russian and English). All GIS maps are completed in both languages. Currently the authors write the remaining chapter. The production and editing of the texts will be completed by June/July 2008 and the book printed afterwards (6 copies, two language versions per country)
- 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 September 2008 – additionally to the national book launches. More then 80 to 90 conservation organisations will be present there.

Output 6: Conservation strategies for IBAs developed

- In a workshop attended by 15 participants from all three project countries plus RSPB and also the The Secretariat of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) the framework of a Regional IBA Conservation strategy was developed. As soon as the IBA data is further analysed and the book publications are completed this will be “fine-tuned” in national workshops, presented and published.

Output 7: Increase public awareness

- Official and public Inauguration ceremonies for the first designated IBAs where conducted in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan:
- **Kazakhstan:** the Korgalzhyn Nature Reserve IBA” was officially opened in a public ceremony with governmental officials, UNDP and more then 20 journalists attending.
- **Turkmenistan:** the “Turkmenbashy Bay” was launched in June 2007 in a large public ceremony with the Deputy-Minister for Nature Conservation and UK Ambassador attending.
- UK Consulate in Almaty (Kazakhstan) has requested to post exhibition panels in their buildings. Previously the panels have been displayed at the UK Embassy in Ashgabat/Turkmenistan
- In each country national press is regularly informed about the project progress by press briefings, press conferences and press releases (to a lesser extend 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. Only in Kazakhstan the campaign reaches about 10,000 participants each year.
- The amount of local groups/initiatives of the host country partners developed significantly (2 in Turkmenistan, 5 in Uzbekistan and 5 in Kazakhstan). These groups already conduct IBA site monitoring activities and also environmental education activities.

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 in 2007 more than 12 student wildlife clubs were established in Universities in the project countries and constantly being supported with equipment and methodological trainings

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 September 2008.

Most of the output level indicators and assumptions still hold true; also the figure estimates.

3.3 Standard 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	3/45*		7/65
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	3		9
8	Working visits by RSPB project coordinator**	8	6	6		20
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)	2/50				2/50
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	10		24
15A	At least 8 national press releases in each of the host countries (total of 24)	2	6	6		14
15B	At least 10 local press releases in each of the host countries (total of 30)	2	4	6		12

16A	6 newsletters published for each of the host countries	2	2	2	6
16B	Estimated circulation of each newsletter in the host countries is 500	500	500	500	1500
17B	3 dissemination networks to be extended (partner's local group networks – up to 30 new local groups)	3	5	4	12
18A	At least 10 national TV programmes / features in each of the host countries	1	3	8	12
19A	At least 15 local TV programmes / features in each of the host countries	2	2	8	12
19B	At least 15 national radio interviews/ features in each of the host countries	4	4	12	20
19C	At least 15 local radio interviews / features in each of the host countries	2	2	8	12
23	Co-funding raised from other sources for project work		£ 75,000	£ 80,000	£ 155,000

*10 from Kazakhstan, 25 from Uzbekistan and 10 from Turkmenistan. Since usually the students which attend training are the same so overall number is not increased

** 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> * (e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	Detail (title, author, year)	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (E.G. CONTACT ADDRESS, WEBSITE)	Cost £
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	-
Low budget documentary on student training	10 copies to be shown during student training courses or prior to establishment of	IBA Project of the Uzbekistan Zoological Society	Dr. Roman D. Kashkarov Important Bird Areas (IBA) of Uzbekistan Project Coordinator Off. 89, 1 Niyasov St.,	-

	local student wildlife clubs		700095 Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan	
Turkmenistan IBA newsletter*	Newsletter No 1/2007, Print run 500 copies plus pdf version	IBA Project Turkmenistan / Ministry of Nature Protection	<i>Eldar Rustamov, Turkmenistan IBA project, 2001 Street, House 59, Office 38, Ashgabat</i>	-
First IBA material from Turkmenistan and Central Asia*	Print run 1,000, hardcover publication	IBA Project Turkmenistan / Ministry of Nature Protection	<i>Eldar Rustamov, Turkmenistan IBA project, 2001 Street, House 59, Office 38, Ashgabat</i>	-
ACBK newsletter*	Newsletter 1/2007	ACBK	<i>Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan (ACBK), Office 210, 40 Orbita-1 Almaty 050043, Republic of Kazakhstan</i>	-

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 February 2008 100 % of all candidate IBAs have been confirmed, all datasets are entered into the database of BirdLife International and GIS boundaries have been defined. The project is on track re the timetable to complete and publish the inventory by July / August 2008
- **capacity building –organisational and personnel:** the project partners as organisations significantly increased their managerial capacity but also their technical capacity as professional conservation organisations. A good indicator to measure is increased fundraising progress of the partners, project extensions by donors, approaches by international agencies for example in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan (IUCN, AEWA, German Development Service GTZ etc.). Student clubs are already now in a position to regularly take part in IBA monitoring and partners recruit new project staff from clubs (GIS assistant from Kazakhstan, field staff of the Darwin Sociable Lapwing project in Kazakhstan, IBA assistant in Uzbekistan)

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.

First significant progress has been made in Kazakhstan with the development of the Altyn Dala Reserve that is about to be designated as Protected Area (by the end of 2009). The site covers 490,000 ha and one of the clusters is an IBA.

4. Monitoring, evaluation and lessons

The Project Steering Group (PSG) during its regular meetings and also in between monitors the success of the project against the indicators outlines in the project logframe. At the inception meeting of the project it has been agreed to use these indicators to measure success of the project. The achievements were and are 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 the two previous 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)

The review of last report was positive and no major issues were raised.

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 is 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 16,000 € grant on equipment which allowed the project to purchase further optics, fieldguides and outdoor gear for student training purposes.
- The Rufford Small Grant Programme provided £5,000 for student training work and IBA site monitoring in Uzbekistan
- The UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programme in Kazakhstan granted ACBK 50,000 USD for student training work and IBA site monitoring in Kazakhstan

7. Sustainability

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 with conservation officials again to the public during two official IBA inaugurations in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

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 the network of BirdLife International 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 Society for the Protection of Birds - UzSPB” has been established and registered in 2007 – endorsed by the current project partner (Uzbekistan Zoological Society) which has a purely scientific and lesser conservation profile. UzSPB will (with the support from the RSPB) develop in a democratically managed membership organisation with local groups and will give a home to all people that took part in the IBA work and want to support its implementation on the ground. The foundation of UzSPB was a milestone for nature conservation but also civil society development in Uzbekistan.

Because the implementation of this Darwin project went so successful the board of the RSPB has decided in March 2008 to continue the core financial support (core office and staff costs) but also the technical support (organisational development, technical project implementation, fundraising etc.). This landmark decision ensures the sustainability of this Darwin project in a very important way.

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.

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

Provide details of dissemination activities in the host country during the year, including information on target audiences. Will dissemination activities be continued by the host country when the project finishes, and how will this be funded and implemented?

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 IBA inaugurations in	Decision makers in the project countries. Mostly on ministerial level. Also UNDP,

Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan	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

Table 3 Project expenditure during the reporting period (Defra Financial Year 01 April to 31 March)

Item	Budget (please indicate which document you refer to if other than your project application)	Expenditure	Balance
Rent, rates, heating, overheads etc			
Office costs (eg postage, telephone, stationery)			
Travel and subsistence			
Printing			
Conferences, seminars, etc			
Capital items/equipment			
Others			
Salaries (project coordinators, assistants, accountant time, student and trainee salary payment fees)			
TOTAL	£36,803.00	£35,018.35	£1,784.15

For all budget items a change was requested (Increase in salaries, rents and office costs; a decrease in capital items and conferences).

*The variation higher than 10 % of the finally agreed budget relate to positions “rent” and “office costs”. This has been caused mainly by increased inflation in all three project countries especially in rents and office communication costs in the last budget year.

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](#) (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here)

This Darwin project managed to identify and designate 219 IBAs in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. Together these 219 IBAs cover almost 20 million hectares of steppe, semi-

desert, desert, mountain and extensive wetland habitats, an area almost equal to the land surface of the UK.

The IBA publication, the information and lobby work that has been done around it and the regular training and support of more than 100 conservation students and conservation volunteers in the three project countries open a major window of opportunity for conservation in Central Asia.

First measurable results are already visible with the first IBAs about to be legally protected by 2009 in Kazakhstan.

List of Annexes:

- Annex 1** - Report of progress and achievements against Logical Framework for Financial Year: 2007/2008
- Annex 2** - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK in its original version
- Annex 3** - Overall project workplan showing all objectives and activities
- Annex 4** – The map of all IBAs designated for the project countries, all Protected Areas and also the first IBA designated for legal protection in Kazakhstan (Altyn Dala Reserve)
- Annex 5** – A “country-by-country” table with amount of IBAs and size
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- Annex 12** – A selection of photo images from various project events
- Annex 13** Press clippings from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against Logical Framework for Financial Year: 2007/08

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2007 - March 2008	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 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"> • the formal establishment of a Protected Area on a key IBA in Central Kazakhstan for 2009 • increased public acknowledgment and reference of IBAs in national / regional meetings and conferences 	<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 10 will be discussed • Close liaison with CBD focal points to include IBA work in National Reports to CBD COP 10 but also NBSAP updates
<p>Output 1. Project management and coordination structure is established and sustained</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 per country/year is produced and disseminated.</p>	
<p><i>Activity 1.3. Hold regular co-ordination meetings of the steering group</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A project steering group meeting was held in May 2007 in Almaty where a) the project progress and efficiency was discussed but also the upcoming activities prepared and planned.</i> 	
<p><i>Activity 1.5.</i> <i>Keep regular contact with international technical IBA advisers (BirdLife</i></p>		<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</i> 	

<i>Secretariat).</i>		<i>project coordinator Michael Brombacher who attended the last European Partnership meeting of more than 40 European conservation organisations in Riga/Latvija in November 2007. 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 than estimated currently only one edition per year is produced and disseminated – in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan bi-lingually.</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 in 2007 was the official opening of the first IBAs in two public events in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan (attended by Deputy Minister for Nature Protection and the UK Ambassador)</i>
<i>Activity 1.8. Conduct training on project planning and fundraising</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A fundraising training workshop was held for all key project / organisational staff (11 staff) in Ashgabat in December 2007</i>
<i>Activity 1.9. develop and submit joint follow-up projects to potential fundraisers</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A number of 6 funding applications have been developed and submitted since then with 4 of them approved, one still awaiting approval and one rejected (see chapter 6)</i>
<i>Activity 1.10. Compile interim and final technical and financial project reports</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>All financial and technical reports have been compiled and submitted in time to Darwin</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 process of checking for and assessing existing data for potential IBAs was completed by June 2008. An average of 40 Percent of all IBA's per country could be designated based on already existing data.</i>
<i>Activity 2.6. Collect all existing data in country and abroad and assess quality.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The process of checking for and assessing existing data for potential IBAs was completed by June 2008. An average of 40 Percent of all IBA's per country could be designated based on already existing data.</i>
Output 3. Existing and potential fieldworkers are introduced to	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

IBA work, trained and equipped		
<i>Activity 3.1. Train field staff in ornithological field methods required for IBA fieldwork</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This component was already completed in project year 2</i> • <i>Since the project from the beginning invested heavily in finding and training the “next generation” of conservationists through the network of 12 student wildlife and birdwatching clubs this process continues and by the help of various donor’s the students could be equipped with adequate optics, literature and other necessary gear.</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>Fieldwork and data collection was completed in January 2008. 219 IBAs have been identified, documented in the BirdLife WorldBirdDataBase (WBDB), digitized boundaries for all IBAs have been completed in a GIS (see also Output 5). All IBAs together cover 20 Million ha.</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 through formal meetings and trainings but also informally</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 5.1 Build up a Geographical Information System (GIS)</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In all three project countries IBA project assistants have been employed from early 2007 onwards to assist the national IBA care-takers with technical database and GIS work. With co-funding from CIM (See chapter 6) an international GIS Trainer could be hired from January 2007 who is based in Tashkent/Uzbekistan and how trains and assists the national IBA project assistants. By March 2008 all 219 IBA maps have been completed and prepared for further use</i>

<i>Activity 5.2 Digitize IBA boundaries and link database and GIS to visualize inventory results</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>In all three project countries IBA project assistants have been employed from early 2007 onwards to assist the national IBA care-takers with technical database and GIS work. With co-funding from CIM (See chapter 6) an international GIS Trainer could be hired from January 2007 who is based in Tashkent/Uzbekistan and how trains and assists the national IBA project assistants. By March 2008 all 219 IBA maps have been completed and prepared for further use</i>
<i>Activity 5.3. Process IBA data, analyse and compile inventory. Publish and disseminate IBA inventory for each country</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The content and chapters have been agreed with BirdLife International, the description of all 219 IBAs is completed on both languages (Russian and English). All GIS maps are completed in both languages. Currently the authors write the remaining chapter. The production and editing of the texts will be completed by June/July 2008 and the book printed afterwards (6 copies, two language versions per country)</i> <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 September 2008 – additionally to the national book launches. More than 80 to 90 conservation organisations will be present there.</i>
Output 6. Conservation strategies for IBAs in the region are developed and their implementation prepared	IBA Action Plans adopted by all governments by t⁴	Activities have been completed in time / Indicator appropriate
<i>Activity 6.1. Start to prepare and consult with key stakeholders a national conservation strategy for key IBAs</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>In a workshop attended by 15 participants from all three project countries plus RSPB and also the The Secretariat of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) the framework of a Regional IBA Conservation strategy was developed. As soon as the IBA data is further analysed and the book publications are completed this will be “fine-tuned” in national workshops, presented and published.</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
<i>Activity 7.2. Inform local population close to IBAs about key conservation issues</i>		<i>Through an annual information campaign that is linked to a “bird of the year” campaign in a number of local regions (in Kazakhstan 10, in Uzbekistan 6 and Turkmenistan 3) information is disseminated about IBA work on a regional and local level during various information meetings. In</i>

	<i>Kazakhstan more than 10,000 people are reached through this campaign.</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 Almaty have requested to post exhibition panels in their buildings. Most of 2007 panels were 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 a lesser extent in Turkmenistan where press outputs are limited due to controlled political system)</i> • <i>The amount of local groups/initiatives of the host country partners developed significantly (2 in Turkmenistan, 5 in Uzbekistan and 5 in Kazakhstan).</i> • <i>Official and public Inauguration ceremonies for the first designated IBAs were conducted in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Kazakhstan: the Korgalzhyn Nature Reserve IBA” was officially opened in a public ceremony with governmental officials, UNDP and more than 20 journalists attending.</i> ○ <i>Turkmenistan: the “Turkmenbashy Bay” was launched in June 2007 in a large public ceremony with the Deputy-Minister for Nature Conservation and UK Ambassador attending.</i>

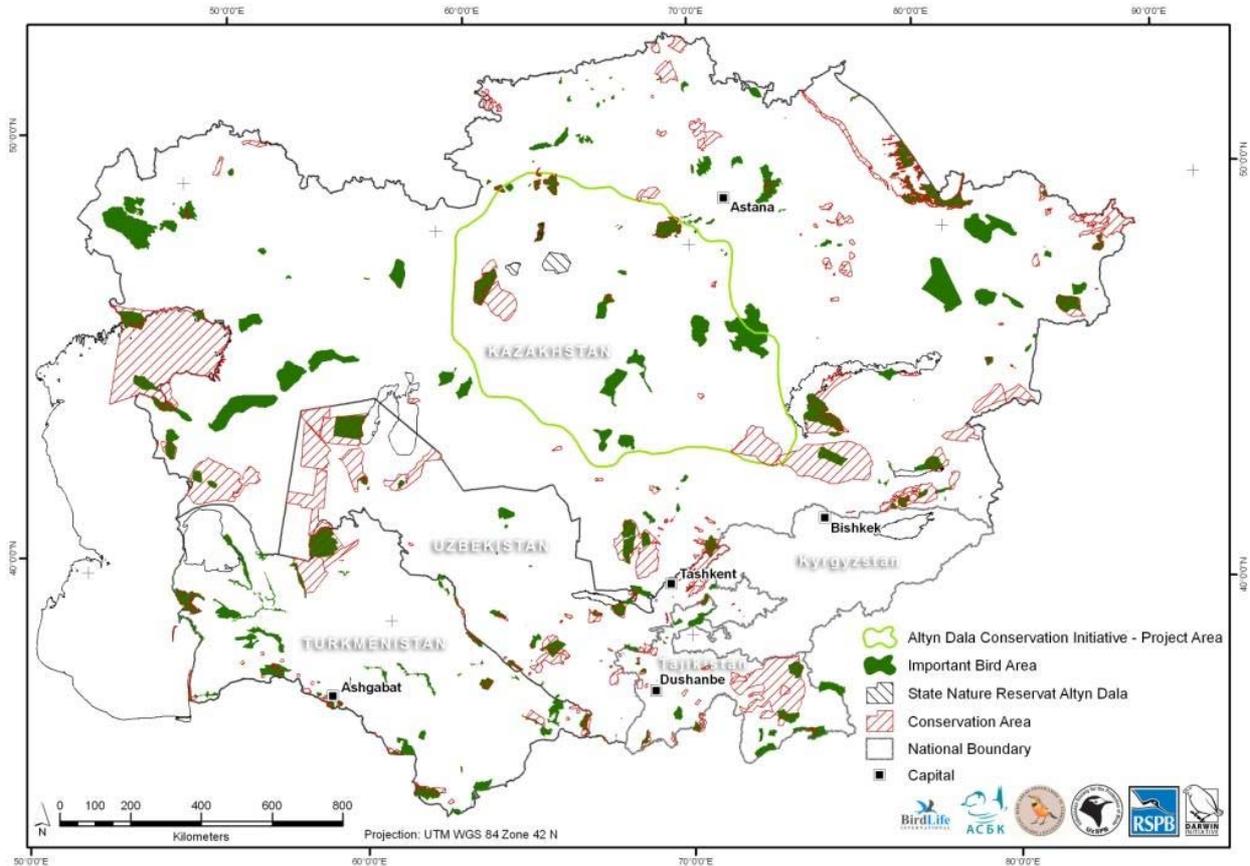
Annex 2: 14_061_Project's full current logframe

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
<p>Outputs</p>			
<p>Project management and coordination structure is established and sustained</p>	<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>		

Annex 3: Overall project workplan (please see extra file)

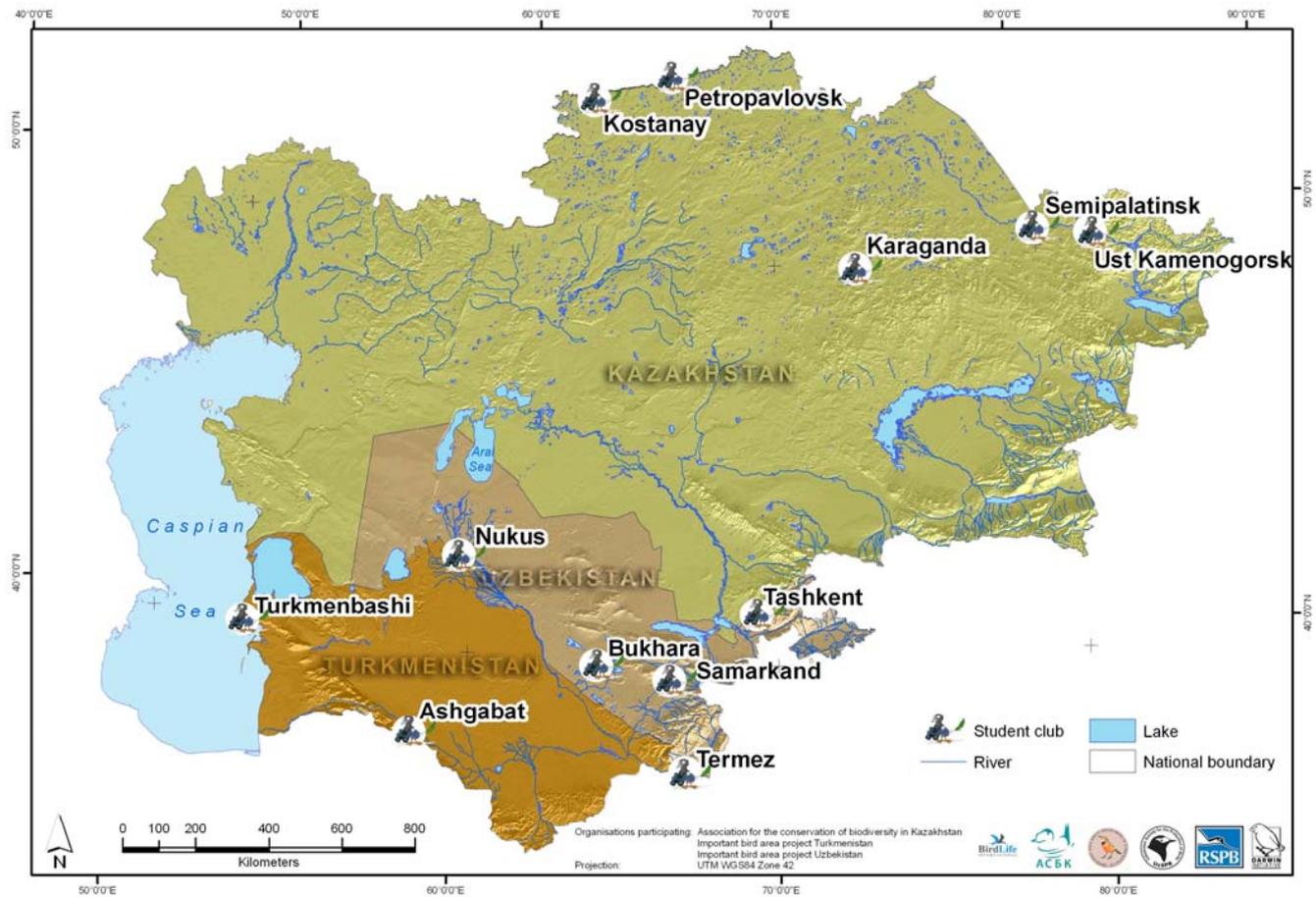
Annex 4 – The map of all IBAs designated for the project countries, all Protected Areas and also the first IBA designated for legal protection in Kazakhstan (Altyn Dala Reserve)



Annex 5 – A “country-by-country” table with amount of IBAs and size

	Confirmed IBAs	Total in ha
Kazakhstan	121	14,8 Mio
Uzbekistan	48	1,8 Mio
Turkmenistan	50	4,3 Mio
Total	219	20,9 Mio!

Annex 6 – Map showing all student clubs established in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan



Checklist for submission

	Check
Is the report less than 5MB? If so, please email to Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk putting the project number in the Subject line.	yes
Is your report more than 5MB? If so, please advise Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk that the report will be send by post on CD, putting the project number in the Subject line.	
Do you have hard copies of material you want to submit with the report? If so, please make this clear in the covering email and ensure all material is marked with the project number.	Yes, will be send by post
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table?	yes
Do not include claim forms or communications for Defra with this report.	yes