

# Addendum to the UNDP-GEF Project Document Entitled “Conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah, its Natural Habitat and Associated Biota”

## 1. Project Background and Rationale for Phase II

Phase I of the project entitled “Conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah, its Natural Habitat, and Associated Biota in the Islamic Republic of Iran” (CACP) was designed to implement emergency protection measures to address habitat degradation and non-habitat-related threats in five known cheetah habitats around the Dasht-e-Kavir, the Great Salt Desert on the central Iranian plateau. Phase I was also aimed at carrying out an in-depth analyses of biological and ecological, social and economic factors and root causes that at the time were threatening the survival of cheetahs, their prey and habitats. Additional goals of the project were improved wildlife and habitat management, policy level legislative and regulatory changes, and the improvement of the livelihood of local people living in the vicinity of the five project sites. A stated project strategy was to promote the participation of local communities in order to eliminate threats to the cheetah and its prey, and to reduce the number of human/wildlife conflicts. These objectives were lofty and not commensurate with the scale of the resources available in a medium-sized GEF project (i.e. a project with GEF co-funding of upto \$ 750,000).

Phase I cheetah project sites in the Dasht-e-Kavir included parts of Semnan and Yazd provinces, a vast area which was believed to be the stronghold of the Asiatic cheetah and serving as a source population for remnant populations in other parts of Iran and possibly neighbouring countries. It was clear that a medium or even a full-sized GEF project could not cover such a huge area, and hence the CACP concentrated on the main threats which were described as “human-related conflicts of interests near the few, scattered settlements, and threats to the arid ecosystems (e.g. from over-grazing) mainly relating to unsustainable resource utilisation in the same localities”. The rationale was that the cheetah and habitat threats are closely linked. GEF funds were therefore targeted most closely to the vicinity of settlements, where “dramatic results” were expected.

Phase I of the Asiatic cheetah conservation project concluded in December 2008 and culminated in the fielding of a terminal evaluation mission over late November and early December 2008. An explicit finding of the terminal evaluation (TE) mission has been to the effect that ***“the initial phase of project implementation has clearly contributed to saving the Asiatic cheetah from extinction”***. The independent terminal evaluation also established that ***“the conservation of the Asiatic cheetah has definitely created more national and international awareness than any other wildlife conservation project in the region. In Iran, the CACP has generated wide interest among young researchers for cat, carnivore and wildlife conservation and research in general, and it has the potential to help spread this interest across the national borders to the whole region”***. The evaluators rightly pointed out to the long-term nature of challenging conservation contexts such as is the case with the Asiatic cheetah in Iran

and recommended the inception of a new implementation phase. The decision to undertake the second phase of this project was taken subsequent to the TE and in consultation with project partners at the DoE and the MFA.

## **2. Threats, Project Strategy, and Logical Framework**

### ***2.1 Threats***

The phase I project document recognizes ***two categories of threats***. The ***first*** are those resulting in habitat degradation. Increased population growth, especially over the past three decades, has resulted in more widespread agriculture, industries, human settlements, mining and infrastructures. Increasing numbers of livestock, was also considered to have been important in degrading pasture and lowering densities of ungulates, which are the principal prey of cheetahs. Almost all rural people resident within the habitat of the Asiatic cheetah have goats, sheep and camels. The Phase I project document suggested that “livestock grazing has become a widespread commercial venture, and overgrazing, including within protected areas, is common”. It also postulated that “desertification has been sweeping much of the region where cheetahs are found, turning large areas into degraded environments of little or no economic or wildlife value. In such conditions, protected areas become a most obvious choice for the grazers”.

The ***other*** category of threats identified in the phase I project document are described as non-habitat-related threats. Direct killing of wildlife, including of cheetahs and in particular of cheetah prey, is associated with an increasing abundance of firearms and the use of vehicles for hunting. To this should be added the commercial exploitation of certain species, e.g. gazelles, leopards, falcons, bustards, partridges, waterfowl and crocodiles, which are all too often over-harvested from the wild. Several of the areas where cheetahs are found are rich in commercially and industrially important minerals, which are being exploited by private and public sector mining companies. Mining itself is not a direct threat, but the construction of road networks makes cheetah areas accessible to people, including poachers.

Other than the reference to population growth, which was a root cause lying beyond the phase I resources and mandate to address, the phase I project document offered no information on the underlying causes of threats to cheetah, related fauna, and their habitat. However, the project document does note that both threats and underlying causes are dynamic in nature and are temporally subject to change. Drought over the expanded cheetah habitats is a looming systemic threat, which again lies beyond the scope of the current intervention and is normally tackled by the DoE at the national and provincial levels with regard to seeking and securing requisite emergency funds and the implementation of drought mitigation measures.

New and emerging threats include increased incidences of traffic accidents and rare cases of inadvertent poisoning of cheetahs in cases where other carnivore predators such as wolves have been intended as targets. Regrettably, there are instances where cheetahs are still being hunted by poachers as trophies. Amongst the latter three threats, road accidents are easier to detect and report and point to a speeding up of inter-city road network construction and/or a thriving cheetah population which in itself may be a cause for increased traffic-related mortalities.

By and large, however, poaching and livestock overgrazing still remain as the dominant threats. The actors involved in hunting are manifold, the underlying causes of their actions, and their targets likely to be diverse. These include urban and local recreational hunters, as well as herders who undertake recreational or opportunistic hunting. Another category of local hunters might engage in poaching activities due to income poverty. Yet, poverty as a root cause, is again a systemic threat that falls outside the scope of the current interventions.

As regards overgrazing and the competition for resources between domestic livestock and wild ungulates that constitute the main prey of the cheetah, the importance of this threat is irrefutable and phase I interventions have to some extent addressed the latter. It is also a complicated issue because of the history and administration of grazing rights in Iran. Historically, a large proportion of the rural population was nomadic or semi-nomadic, but in recent decades government policy has enforced settlement of most herding communities, such that only a small proportion of nomads remain. Economic development and urbanization has had two impacts on herding. Firstly, many herders have abandoned their former livelihoods for alternative forms of employment. On the other hand, some individuals have capitalized on economic opportunities by building up large commercial herds, and employ poor, and often immigrant shepherds to tend them. Most rural families still own livestock. For example, many households own 20-25 sheep or goats, no matter what their primary source of income. These are often tended collectively in herds of several hundred. Interestingly, over the past few years, there have been reports of large herds belonging to state and para-state organizations and institutions. Camels are especially problematic because they are often left untended, and ownership can be hard to establish.

It is not possible to know exactly how many licenses have been issued by FRWO and for how many heads of cattle, sheep and goat as these licenses have been issued many years ago. For example, single licenses belonging to a dead herder may be currently used by many of his herding sons. Also, it is certainly the case that herders have larger numbers of animals than they hold permit for - licensing is not very strictly enforced, though spot checks do take place when a new shepherd or herder is in the area. The cost of licenses is negligible. Although legislation regarding issuance of licenses is clear, it is hardly enforced or enforceable as traditional holders of entitlement fall outside the scope of the legislation. Also, the designation of national park boundaries comes after the establishment of rights to graze. There has been some dialogue between DOE and FRWO about purchasing the grazing rights which fall within National Park boundaries. In fact, during phase I implementation DoE has proceeded to purchase some rights and this trend is likely to continue over phase II implementation as part of DoE's co-funding. However, procurement of rights thus far has not resulted in a satisfactory resolution of the issue – in some cases the herder communities have continued to utilize areas where the grazing rights

have been purchased. In most project sites, there is zonation which is intended to limit grazing by domestic livestock. For example, at Kavir grazing is limited to the Conservation Area, which accounts for about one third of the total area. Similarly, at Bafgh the core zone of the Conservation Area is supposed to be free from grazing. There are also temporal restrictions, with grazing being typically available for only 4 months of the year. Under these circumstances, certainly the potential for overgrazing and competitive exclusion of wild ungulates exists. To make matters worst, the FRWO-determined carrying capacity normally exceeds the carrying capacities of these highly arid systems.

It seems likely that in times of abundant rains, competition between livestock and wild ungulates is only locally problematic, and that there are adequate areas unused by livestock to allow prey populations to recover from historical lows resulting from hunting. This general conclusion may not be valid for Khar Touran, where herding is a much more significant issue. Moreover, during periods of drought, such as 1998-2000, the potential for competitive exclusion becomes much more significant.

The ultimate limit to co-existence of livestock husbandry and harvesting natural resources including wildlife on the one hand and maintaining healthy habitats and wildlife populations on the other hand is the ecological carrying-capacity of these arid and semi-arid areas where the cheetahs live. The bottleneck will not be the good years with enough precipitation, but the years of drought when both wild and domestic ungulates are in urgent need of fodder. The bad years define the long-term average threshold of anthropogenic land-use in regard to livestock husbandry. The local people – despite being vocal in their support for cheetah conservation – are mainly concerned about their economic future and an improvement of their livelihood, and such an improvement is very difficult to achieve building on a traditional local economy and through meager project resources.

## **2.2 Project Strategy**

Asiatic cheetahs are ecologically different from their better-known conspecifics in the African savannah. This has been established during phase I implementation of the CACP and mainly reflects the results of the Rapid Surveys. The good habitats (and distribution areas beyond the five CACP sites) and the most important prey has been established.

Phase II of the CACP project builds upon the period 2001-2008 and will be implemented over four years (2009-2012). Given the project context and identified threats, the goal of this project will remain the same as phase I implementation:

*“the in-situ conservation of the Asiatic cheetah along with a related complex of rare and endangered wildlife species of international importance, and their natural habitats.”*

Securing this goal assumes continued conservation efforts in the medium-to-long term (5 to 30 years), by which time a sustainable, viable population of the Asiatic cheetah and associated wildlife species will have been established in their natural habitat in the I.R. of Iran. A framework for the continued, post-project conservation effort will be established through formulation of a National Action Plan for the cheetah. A National Action Plan (NAP) has so far not been developed, but policies and regulations have been adopted to better serve the conservation of the Asiatic cheetah. An Action Plan could be a very

useful instrument to advance species conservation in a collaborative approach. But it is not more than an instrument and only helpful if it is used to guide the co-operation and implementation of actions and as an instrument to regularly review the status of the work and progress made. Thus far, the absence of a NAP has not been a big shortcoming for the conservation of the cheetah in Iran. However, the inception of phase II of the CACP will provide an opportunity to review and discuss the findings and experiences of Phase I and to incorporate the lessons learnt into a NAP.

The operational expanse of the proposed phase II implementation has increased from an already vast area of 3.8 million hectares covering 5 key cheetah habitats to a massive 7 million hectares covering 10 fragmented and remote habitats over the five provinces of Yazd, Isfahan, Semnan, North Khorasan and Kerman. The 10 project habitats collectively represent over 50 % of DoE's protected areas. Against this backdrop, today, the majority of the threats remain the same compared to the inception juncture of phase I (i.e. September 2001) - albeit these threats have been to varying degrees mitigated across the five initial project sites of phase I.

Effective conservation planning of the Asiatic cheetah is still profoundly limited by a lack of detailed basic data, on the cheetah itself and on its prey species. There is no detailed biological/ecological knowledge available based on robust (statistical) methods that is analysed and reported according to scientific standards. This observation is also valid for the monitoring of cheetahs and their prey. Clearly, it might be risky to base decisions on anecdotal observations or personal opinions rather than robust scientific data. There is still no reliable population estimate of the Asiatic cheetah. Addressing these needs requires a tiered approach at multiples sites with a variety of methodologies. In addition, many sites still lack comprehensive socio-economic data. It would be very valuable to resurrect this research after it was abandoned in phase I. However, until such time that all scientific studies and applied research are satisfactorily concluded, the most effective way to ensure the integrity of the cheetah habitats is to sustain and if possible to augment physical protection and to find ways to engage the local communities to assume a share of conservation responsibilities. Clearly though, the great challenge in planning phase II of the CACP is not *what* to do, but *how* to do it (i.e. *the* important scientific and technical aspects that determine the methods or procedures to be applied to reach the goal and objectives).

Based on the aforementioned analyses, the following inter-related components/outcomes are proposed. Capacity-building is a cross-cutting theme across the three components:

1. **Research and Scientific Monitoring: better understanding of crucial biotic territories for the Asiatic cheetah and related species in Iran, and enhanced knowledge of cheetah population dynamics, behaviour and survival factors:**

The CACP has provided a lot of new information over the past seven years, but much of this information remains hypothetical or anecdotal and leaves room for speculation and interpretation. Phase II will rigorously advance the field research on cheetahs and their prey according to recognised scientific standards and with the aim to produce robust scientific knowledge worthy of publication in scientific journals. Knowledge of cheetah population

dynamics, behaviour and survival factors is still rudimentary. These aspects cannot be properly studied without applying adequate methods (e.g. radio-telemetry, systematic camera-trapping etc.). During Phase I, only two cheetahs and two leopards were radio-tagged (by WCS) with additional scientific information being produced by Iranian Cheetah Society.

The precise research topics are yet to be agreed upon among the partners (CACP, international scientific organisations such as WCS and Panthera, and Iranian universities or other research institutions). Research topics could include feeding ecology, social organisation and land tenure system and large-scale population structure according to a meta-population concept (e.g. it is important to know how the different “subpopulations” are related to each other).

Thus far, there is no reliable monitoring system for the cheetah or for its main prey species on population level in place. Monitoring of wildlife populations is an important, but difficult and often underestimated endeavor and therefore an under-budgeted task in conservation projects such as the CACP. This in large part explains the difficulties of phase I implementation in the systematic monitoring of its activities.

The most promising approach to a quantitative estimation of the cheetah population is camera trapping. Phase II will rigorously apply systematic capture-recapture camera trapping. However, camera trapping alone will not be sufficient to survey the status and development of the cheetah in Iran. As long as the population structure, individual or group home range sizes and the social set-up (e.g. group composition) of the Asiatic cheetah is not really understood, it will be difficult to interpret the pictures gained from camera trapping. Considering the specific land-tenure system of cheetahs and the possibility of (seasonal) migration between “cheetah areas”, it will be difficult to simply apply capture-recapture protocols as used for other large cats. Hence, a robust monitoring of the cheetah meta-population requires a better understanding of basic parameters of cheetah biology and ecology in Iran (e.g. by means of radio-telemetry studies) and the use and comparison of a diversity of methods, from simple track counts to molecular (genetic) analyses.

At all stages scientific research will be applied in nature and will act a means to an end. For example, the hunting of prey is still one of the most significant threats preventing the recovery of cheetah populations in Iran. To some extent, this issue might be informed by understanding the long-range movement patterns of species such as gazelles. Understanding such movement patterns might assist in delineating where hunting pressure and other threats are greatest so that suitable interventions can be planned. Similarly, the impacts of livestock grazing in protected areas, such as competitive exclusion of wild prey species, is poorly understood, and might be informed by a dedicated research effort.

In terms of measuring project impacts, Cheetah prey census have been conducted in 8 habitats/project sites primarily by the DoE in summer/autumn 2009 based on "minimum" estimated population. These figures, albeit scientifically suspect and non-consistent in the

manner in which they were established, will form the basis of measuring project impacts (i.e. the baseline).

Phase I of CACP has neglected to integrate the work of the guards in the PAs into a more general and consistent research approach. The project start was promising with the Rapid Biological Surveys. The guards were integrated in this work and received training in field techniques. But the enthusiastic work during the initial years dwindled over the years. This was a consequence of the management problems of the CACP and of changing priorities of respective NPDs and NPMs, but also due to a lack of continuous training to benefit the guards and secure their involvement in research activities. In implementing Phase II, the guards will receive regular training to understand the principles of monitoring and the importance of camera-trapping as a robust method for estimating populations. Furthermore, the guards will receive regular feedback regarding their work and effort in order to better appreciate the importance of and quality of their own contributions. Considering the central role of the guards regarding the (quality of) monitoring, their continuous training and motivation would be crucial.

2. **Enhanced Protection:** Improved management of crucial habitats by relevant governmental and civil entities to rehabilitate over-grazed habitats and ensure better protection for cheetahs and their prey:

In relation to poaching, the key underlying causes has related to the low likelihood of capture and punishment, the increasing ease of access to protected areas as national infrastructure expands and motorized transport becomes more affordable, and the ready availability of weapons and ammunition, supported by a tradition and culture of hunting. The ready availability of hunting licenses can lend a patina of legality to the activity, but the lack of a license is unlikely to deter the hunters. Thus, during the implementation of phase I, augmented physical protection of the cheetah habitats has to some extent been effective in mitigating poaching activities. This strategy is likely to continue in parallel with more serious efforts to engage the local communities in fulfilling conservation responsibilities, albeit phase II will have to work hard in formulating appropriate incentive mechanisms for a full or partial partnership with local communities through activities that move beyond straightforward sensitization and awareness raising activities. A risk in sustaining the support of the local people are the high expectations in regard to generating income through the PAs (e.g. through eco-tourism), which might, if they get frustrated, decrease the local support and result in higher indirect threats to the survival of cheetahs.

As discussed above, the underlying cause of potential herding-cheetah conflicts is the complex and confusing regulatory environment. It is appropriate, therefore, that the project works with FRWO to clarify grazing rights in the project area such that conflicts are minimized. The basis for such work may include purchasing of rights, mutual agreements regarding limits of rights, and the possible introduction of conservation contracts.

The guards play a central role regarding the efficiency of the protection function, and it is absolutely crucial to keep their training and equipment, and therefore their moral and their esteem in the local population at a high level. During Phase I implementation, these guards have been educated in “physical protection” and survey techniques in several training workshops. The motivation of the guards however declined strongly as a consequence of problems with the delays in salary payments and lack of feedback. Furthermore, the guards performance was constrained by insufficient personal equipment and lack of transport and communication means. Phase II shall put the guards at the center of the protection function and work consistently to raise their morales.

Protected Areas are managed by the DoE through provincial and local administrators. Park boundaries are flagged, and all parks have at least one ranger station. Most of the PAs seem well established and accepted by the local population. In certain cases, the establishment of the PAs or ranger stations has brought an immediate gain to local neighbours, such as better access to water or electricity. On the other hand, the land use-conflicts are not yet all resolved. In particular, within the Touran biosphere reserve, land use conflicts over grazing rights are on-going. The PA guards seem to be somewhat ambivalent in regard to their relationship with the local people. In particular, senior staff or chief guards seem unable to balance the requirements of “protection” (keeping local people away from the PAs to avoid overgrazing or poaching) with that of “co-operation” (integrating local people into park management and hence helping to provide incentives to local communities). Phase II shall improve the conservation effectiveness of the guards through:

- (1) refreshed and continued training (e.g. a training workshop every year, covering various topics);
- (2) better and well-maintained equipment (uniforms, personal equipment, communication, transport);
- (3) provision of feedback on game guards performance.
- (4) Integrating the PA staff (managers, chief guards, guards) into the participatory work with the local communities, and integrating selected villagers into the PA work (e.g. as guides) in order to strengthen mutual understanding and trust.

3. **Awareness and Education:** Enhanced awareness and support of government and civil society on relevant issues and concerns, in particular prevention of non-habitat-related threats to the Asiatic cheetah (e.g. illegal hunting and killing of cheetah and related species) among most relevant groups;

In the wake of Phase I implementation, the level of awareness among DoE staff (e.g. park administration, guards) is high, and so is the level of awareness of local people and representatives of the media. Public awareness and support has been continuously improved during Phase I through meetings, media work, and the release of educational material. The work in schools and the production of educational materials have led to increasing awareness of and support from the Ministry of Education. NGOs (partly through SGP projects) played an important

role in awareness building and education at local level, whereas the national awareness raising was a consequence of the activities of the project Secretariat. Today, the public interest in the fate of the cheetah and the arid and semi-arid ecosystems that it inhabits is remarkable. However, much work remains to be done and the work is sensitive in nature at the local level for the reasons delineated above. Phase II will treat Education and Awareness as work-in-progress. Phase II will also endeavor to carry out a ***gender disaggregated*** systematic investigation on the opinion or commitment of local people and stakeholders and the respective roles of men and women in conservation.

## 2.3 Logical Framework

### **Intended Outcome as stated in the Country/ Regional/ Global Programme Results and Resource Framework:**

Mitigation and adaptation to climate change and providing energy for sustainable development; integrating global environment commitments into development planning and developing implementation capacities as well as .promoting sustainable land/water and biodiversity management in critical ecosystems

### **Outcome indicators as stated in the Country/ Regional/ Global Programme Results and Resources Framework, including baseline and targets.**

Amount of financing raised to fund energy efficiency and energy conservation technologies; Number of new regulations on wind energy and market stimulation measures; Timely preparation and submission of country reports; Number of participatory models for sustainable use of biodiversity; Number of multi-sectoral and integrated watershed planning mechanisms.

### **Applicable key results from UNDP's Strategic Plan:**

**Primary Affiliation:** Environment and Sustainable Development; **Key Result Area:** Catalyzing Environmental Finance

## Partnership Strategy

The sudden expansion in the operations of a small project staffed with a few individuals imposes major coordination and communication challenges as well as mammoth logistical challenges. To meet these challenges, the project shall forge robust partnerships with the DoE provincial offices and ensure that project and DoE game guards working in these habitats fulfill their duties in harmony (e.g. through spot checks by CACP). Phase II will hold a meeting of all potential partners to review the organisational and co-operation structures and the lines of communication. Given the lessons of Phase I implementation, it will define a clear and simple organisational structure for the CACP with clearly defined communication protocols. The Steering Committee mechanism will be abolished in phase II and all cross-sectoral, administrative and political matters will be coordinated through ad-hoc efforts of the NPM/NPD with concerned sectoral actors. A forum, in the form of a Project Implementation Coordination Committee, to augment internal (i.e. DoE HQ and provincial level) coordination/partnership building and to raise field-level concerns and logistical requirements will also be articulated and convened regularly. In addition, an effective mechanism to facilitate coordination/communication with “international project partners” (e.g. a network of international partners that is actively informed about the progress of the CACP and individually contacted/consulted whenever needed) will be put in place.

## Project title and ID (ATLAS Award ID):

Intended Outputs	Output Targets for year 1	Indicative Activities Over 4 Years	Responsible parties	Inputs
<b>1. Research and Monitoring</b>	Estimation of prey population in 3 selected habitats based on “concentration point census”;  Design, testing and mass production of Camera traps and radio collars;	1.1. Needs assessment for the type and location of biological, ecological and demographic studies to be undertaken;  1.2. Conservation planning based on collected field data and targeted studies and the formulation and	CACP and sub-contractors	TRAC: \$ 150,000

<p>2. Enhanced Protection</p>	<p>Publication of at least 2 scientific articles in 2009;</p> <p>Employing at least 8 game guards;</p> <p>Purchasing of at least 2 vehicles for cheetah habitats;</p> <p>Construction of at least 3 game guard stations in new areas;</p> <p>Convening at least 6 game guard training workshops;</p> <p>Fielding of at least 100 man days of mission to cheetah habitats to</p>	<p>execution of a strategy and action plan (NAP);</p> <p>1.3. Formulating and executing new research-oriented partnership arrangements with national and international partners, including NGOs and academia;</p> <p>1.4. Collection of field data based on agreed protocols and subject to CACP's consistent oversight and monitoring;</p> <p>1.5. Synthesis and publication of research findings as well as workshops and seminars to discuss and disseminate findings;</p> <p>2.1. Addition of 20 new game guards over and above the existing human resources of phase I;</p> <p>2.2. Regular training of game guards and proactive monitoring of their performance as well as provision of quarterly feedback on performance;</p> <p>2.3. Monitoring and enforcement of livestock grazing within the 10 project sites based on the FRWO licenses</p>		<p>TRAC: \$ 275,000</p>
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<p>3. Education and Awareness Raising</p>	<p>undertake targeted studies and for provision of management oversight;</p> <p>Cooperation with at least 2 CBOs;</p> <p>Publication of at least 2 educational/advocacy products;</p> <p>Number of meetings with local and regional government officials;</p> <p>Number of published articles in national and local mass media;</p> <p>Number of media interviews;</p>	<p>issued and expulsion of free range camels;</p> <p>2.4. Addition of 7 new game guard posts across the 10 project sites as well as provision of clothing, footwear and personal equipment and the procurement of 7 SUVs and 30 motorcycles;</p> <p>2.5. Procurement of land/grazing rights within project sites;</p> <p>2.6. Establishment of constructive ties with other governmental institutions to address conflicts between development and wildlife conservation;</p> <p>3.1. Socio-economic studies in habitats with data/information gaps;</p> <p>3.2. A gender disaggregated study on the opinion or commitment of local people and stakeholders and the respective roles of men and women in conservation and drafting an operation Strategy and Action Plan to implement this component;</p> <p>3.3. Identification of amenable CBOs,</p>		<p>TRAC: \$ 75,000</p>
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their systematic empowerment and formulation of joint advocacy/ awareness raising programmes;

3.4. Regular meetings and negotiations with local/district/provincial authorities as well as the private sector and other sectoral representatives at the local level;

3.5. Regular updating of the website and publication of the “Cheetah Quarterly Newsletter”;

3.6. Capacity-building aimed at livestock herders to implement a conservation-friendly grazing programme within cheetah habitats;

3.7. Maintaining constructive relationship with the media;

### **3. Management Arrangements, Communication and Mechanisms for Partnership Buildin**

#### ***3.1. Organisational and Project Monitoring Arrangements***

The sudden expansion in the operations of a small project staffed with a few individuals imposes major coordination and communication challenges as well as mammoth logistical challenges. To meet these challenges, the project shall forge robust partnerships with the DoE provincial offices and ensure that project and DoE game guards working in these habitats fulfill their duties in harmony (e.g. through spot checks by CACP). The project also needs to ensure an integrated and consistent approach to conservation planning within the 10 designated habitats - though each might be subject to different threats or else face varying scale of threats- as well as free flow of information between all governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

During Phase I, the CACP has suffered from a number of organizational or conceptual shortcomings which are not crucial to the survival of the cheetah, but might have hampered the co-operation between partners or the continuous monitoring and review of the project. One of these shortcomings pertains to reporting and communication. The various management and communication problems, combined with the fact that several of the foreseen organisational structures were not established or did not properly function, the lack of a Log-Frame as a control instrument together with the inconsistent reporting had a negative impact on the continuous monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system of the CACP.

Phase II will hold a meeting of all potential partners to review the organisational and co-operation structures and the lines of communication. Given the lessons of Phase I implementation, it will define a clear and simple organisational structure for the CACP with clearly defined communication protocols. The following core organisational structures will however be constituted: (1) CACP management team with clearly defined responsibilities and contacts, led by the NPM with oversight provided by a Project Board (see below); (2) Cross-sectoral administrative/political co-ordinations through ad-hoc meetings of the NPM/NPD with concerned sectoral actors; (3) An effective mechanism to facilitate coordination/communication with international project partners (e.g. a network of international partners that is actively informed about the progress of the CACP and individually contacted/consulted whenever needed); 4) a regularly convened forum to augment internal (i.e. HQ and provincial level coordination) coordination and to raise field-level concerns and logistical requirements. Over and above these mechanisms, the CACP shall develop a reporting and communication concept. Reports should follow a standardised form (authorship, data, references, etc.) and be released in the final version as PDFs. An archive of all reports and documents should be established and made available (e.g. through the CACP website). All important reports in Farsi should have an English summary. Scientific publications should be advanced.

To consolidate the internal coordination function within the DoE and to flag field-level issues and concerns, including logistical, capacity and infrastructure issues, it is proposed to form and convene a

**“Project Implementation Coordination Committee”** (PICC) under the auspices of the project’s NPD, who is by default the DoE’s Deputy for Natural Environment and Biodiversity Conservation. Other Committee members would comprise of provincial DoE Director Generals and headquarters-based Director Generals with the mandate to coordinate activities and logistical issues and follow a consistent approach but yet a site-specific approach to conservation planning and execution.

In an effort to strengthen oversight, a formal approach is proposed by constituting a **Project Board**. The Board is the group responsible for making by consensus, management decisions for a project when guidance is required by the Project Manager, including recommendation for UNDP/Implementing Partner approval of project plans and revisions. In order to ensure UNDP’s ultimate accountability, Project Board decisions should be made in accordance to standards that shall ensure management for development results, best value for money, fairness, integrity, transparency and effective international competition. In case a consensus cannot be reached within the Board, final decision shall rest with the UNDP Resident Representative/Deputy Resident Representative. In addition, the Project Board plays a critical role in UNDP commissioned project evaluations by quality assuring the evaluation process and products, and using evaluations for performance improvement, accountability and learning.

Project reviews by this group are made at designated decision points (normally on a quarterly basis) during the running of the project, or as necessary when raised by the National Project Manager. This group is consulted by the Project Manager for decisions when Project Manager's tolerances have been exceeded. In terms of time, the tolerance for this project is set at a delay 1 month and in terms of the budget, the tolerance is set at 10 % (i.e. exceeding the workplan budget by 10%). Based on the approved annual work plan (AWP), the Project Board may review and approve project quarterly plans when required and authorizes any major deviation from these agreed quarterly plans. It is the authority who signs off the completion of each quarterly plan as well as the authority who authorizes the start of the next quarterly plan. It ensures that required resources are committed and arbitrates on any conflicts within the project or negotiates a solution to any problems between the projects and external bodies. In addition, it approves the appointment and responsibilities of the Project Manager and any delegation of its Project Assurance responsibilities. This group contains three roles:

*An Executive:* the individual representing the project ownership to chair the group, in this case DoE’s Deputy for Natural Environment and Biodiversity;

*Senior Supplier:* individual or group representing the interests of the parties concerned which provide funding and/or technical expertise to the project. The Senior Supplier’s primary function within the Project Board is to provide guidance regarding the technical feasibility of the project. This function would be assumed by UNDP.

*Senior Beneficiary:* individual or group of individuals representing the interests of those who will ultimately benefit from the project. The Senior Beneficiary’s primary function within the Board is to ensure the realization of project results from the perspective of project beneficiaries. This role can be performed by provincial DGs and/or representatives of local communities;

**Potential members of the Project Board are reviewed and recommended for approval during the PAC meeting.** For example, the Executive role can be held by a representative of Government Cooperating Agency or UNDP, the Senior Supplier role is held by a representative of the Implementing Partner and/or UNDP, and the Senior Beneficiary role is held by a representative of the government or civil society. Representative of other stakeholders can be included in the Board as appropriate. **Project Assurance** is the responsibility of each Project Board member; however the role can be delegated. The project assurance role supports the Project Board by carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions. This role ensures appropriate project management milestones are managed and completed. Project Assurance has to be independent of the Project Manager; therefore, the Project Board cannot delegate any of its assurance responsibilities to the Project Manager.

The day-to-day management of the project is the responsibility of the **National Project Manager (NPM)**, who ought to possess a balanced background in both biological and social sciences, as well as extensive conservation-related field experience. The NPM is accountable to the **National Project Director (NPD)**, appointed by the Head of the DOE, who supports the programme or project and serves as a focal point on the part of government. Importantly, this responsibility includes ensuring effective communications between the partners and monitoring of progress towards expected results. In the absence of a “Project Steering Committee”, the NPM will promote linkages between governmental and non-governmental actors on an ad-hoc basis.

In addition to the NPD and NPM, other key members of the project team include a **Deputy Project Manager** and **Administrative Assistant** as well as several experts in the following fields: **Conservation expert**; two **Ecology experts** one dealing with fauna and the other with flora; **Training and Capacity-building expert**; a **Driver** and finally a UNDP-based **Project Assistant**. The major bulk of biological and ecological studies is expected to be sub-contracted to external parties.

### **3.2. UNDP Cost Recovery**

General Management Service (GMS) and Implementation Support Service costs will be charged to Government contributions as per the UNDP concerned rules, procedures.

Based on the UNDP Cost Recovery Policy (see Appendix 1) the project will be charged:

- 3% GMS for Government Cost Sharing Contribution. If the project receives other contributions in future the applicable GMS rate will be applied accordingly.
- ISS will be charged based on the applicable Local Price List of the current year (see Appendix 2) for services provided in the implementation of the project.

## Implementation Support Services

The Implementing Partner may from time to time request UNDP to provide support services in the implementation of project activities in various areas such as:

- Identification and/or recruitment of project and programme personnel;
- Identification and facilitation of training activities;
- Procurement of goods and services including customs clearance;
- Travel Management Services;
- Financial Record Management;
- ICT Services; and
- Logistical support to Event Organizations.

Terms, conditions and prerequisites as stipulated in the Letter of Agreement for the Provision of the Support Services apply (see Appendix 3).

## **4. Project Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Audit**

Monitoring and evaluation serve several purposes. In the absence of effective monitoring and evaluation, it would be difficult to know whether the intended results are being achieved as planned, what corrective action may be needed to ensure delivery of the intended results, and whether initiatives are making positive contributions towards human development. Monitoring and evaluation always relate to pre-identified results in the development plan. They are driven by the need to account for the achievement of intended results and provide a fact base to inform corrective decision making. They are an essential management tool to support the UNDP commitment to accountability for results, resources entrusted to it, and organizational learning. Furthermore, both feed into the overall programme management processes and make an essential contribution to the ability to manage for development results.

Monitoring, as well as evaluation, provides opportunities at regular predetermined points to validate the logic of a programme, its activities and their implementation and to make adjustments as needed. Good planning and designs alone do not ensure results. Progress towards achieving results needs to be monitored. Equally, no amount of good monitoring alone will correct poor programme designs, plans and results. Information from monitoring needs to be used to encourage improvements or reinforce plans. Information from systematic monitoring also provides critical input to evaluation. It is very difficult to evaluate a programme that is not well designed and that does not systematically monitor its progress.

A clear framework, agreed among the key stakeholders at the end of the planning stage, is essential in order to carry out monitoring and evaluation systematically. This framework serves as a plan for monitoring and evaluation, and should clarify:

- What is to be monitored and evaluated

- The activities needed to monitor and evaluate
- Who is responsible for monitoring and evaluation activities
- When monitoring and evaluation activities are planned (timing)
- How monitoring and evaluation are carried out (methods)
- What resources are required and where they are committed

In addition, relevant risks and assumptions in carrying out planned monitoring and evaluation activities should be seriously considered, anticipated and included in the M&E framework. In general, the M&E framework has three main components:

1. Narrative component—This describes how the partners will undertake monitoring and evaluation and the accountabilities assigned to different individuals and agencies. For example, at the UNDAF or national result level, it is necessary to engage with national monitoring committees or outcome level groups (e.g. sector arrangements) as well as with UN interagency monitoring working groups. If these do not exist, there might be a need to establish such structures for effective monitoring and evaluation. In addition the narrative should also reflect:

- a. Plans that may be in place to strengthen national or sub-national monitoring and evaluation capacities
- b. Existing monitoring and evaluation capacities and an estimate of the human, financial and material resource requirements for its implementation.

2. Planning matrices for monitoring and evaluation—These are strategic and consolidate the information required for monitoring and evaluation for easy reference.

This matrix should be adapted as determined by local circumstances and conditions. In some cases, the columns could be modified to cover results elements such as outcomes, outputs, indicators, baselines, risks and assumptions separately. The need for an M&E framework applies for both programmes and projects within a programme. Therefore both programmes and projects should develop M&E frameworks in their planning stages. The project-level M&E framework should cascade from the programme level M&E framework and could contain more detailed information on monitoring and evaluation tasks that apply specifically to respective projects. Conversely, the programme-level framework builds upon the project-level frameworks. Monitoring and evaluation activities should be seen as an integral component of programme and project management. They take place throughout the programme and project cycles and should be reviewed and updated regularly (at least annually, for example at the time of annual reviews).

According to the National Implementation (NIM) guidelines, the implementing partners need to prepare and submit annual and quarterly progress reports on projects. Annual Project Progress Report (APR) should be prepared in Farsi and sent to the UNDP office by the 10th of January over the life of the project. After review of the reports by UNDP, each project will have to get the final draft of the report translated in English. While the format of the report is within the discretion of project management, the minimum requirements for the Annual Progress Report are as follows:

- Basic project information (e.g. Award Id, Start and End dates, Background, etc);
- Project performance (per output)
- Description of output (as per project document)
- Indicator of outputs (as per project document)

- Annual targets per output (as set in the beginning of the year when preparing the Annual Workplan)
- Progress made against each annual target set for 2009 with analysis of the results (e.g. how much progress has been made to attain the project outputs?, how were they achieved?, how well have they been achieved?, etc)
- Challenges encountered by the project and actions by management to resolve them;
- Lessons learnt (analysis of lessons learnt that can be usefully applied in the next stage of implementation or other projects);
- Financial Summary (Total Budget Planned at the beginning of the year and Total Expenditure by the end of the year; in USD) and analysis of delivery.

The APR should be certified by the National Project Director. As an example please see enclosed a generic format developed in Farsi in one of the UNDP projects. The template for Inventory List as well as the Project Annual Planning and Reporting Package (PARP) which includes the templates is annexed to this project proposal (Annex 4):

Annual workplan  
 Annual procurement plan  
 Monitoring Calendar  
 Quarterly workplan and progress report

The PARP package addresses the increased requirements for more efficient and effective planning, monitoring and reporting on the project resources used. The plans should be signed by National Project Director. The Inventory List of each project should be updated for the entire lifetime of the project with a separate breakdown for each year and a total cumulative amount as of 31 December of the reporting year. The updated Inventory List should be signed by National Project Director for each year.

The deadline for submission of the various sections will be communicated on an annual basis. However, to give an indication of possible deadlines, the 2010 chronological reporting schedule is attached as follows:

Deadlines for 2010 (chronological order)

Material to be submitted	Deadline for submission
Project Annual Planning and Reporting Package (PARP) a) Annual Workplan (AWP) b) Annual procurement plan c) Monitoring Calendar	05 December 09 GEF funded projects 30 December 09 for non-GEF funded projects  Additional quarterly updates in case there is need for changes.
2008 Audit Action Plan (only required from projects that have been audited in 2009)	10 January 10
2009 Annual Report (in Farsi)	10 January 10 Translation of 2009 annual report within 10 days of receiving comments from UNDP Programme Analyst but no later than the 1 <sup>st</sup> week of February
2009 Cash Balance Statement	15 January 10 (for projects using the RDP modality) 20 January 10 (for projects using the advance modality)

Updated Inventory List (for all years)	15 January 10
Project Annual Planning and Reporting Package (PARP) a) 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarterly Workplan	20 January 10
2009 NEX Audit meetings with auditors, site visits, review of files, and management responses (only applicable to projects which will be audited for 2009 or have been audited for 2008)	February to mid April 10
2009 CDR signed and returned to UNDP	15 March 10
2009 Management Responses to Audit report (only applicable to projects which will be audited for 2009)	10 April 10
Project Annual Planning and Reporting Package (PARP) a) 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarterly Progress Report b) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Workplan	10 April 10 15 April 10
Signed 2009 NEX Audit Action Plans (only applicable to projects which will be audited for 2009)	10 May 10
Mid term review of: a) Annual Workplan (AWP) b) Annual procurement plan c) Monitoring Calendar to inform UNDP of any major changes required.	15 June 10
Project Annual Planning and Reporting Package (PARP) a) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Progress Report b) 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Workplan	10 July 10 15 July 10
1 <sup>st</sup> update on the implementation status of 2009 NEX Audit Action Plans (only applicable to projects which will be audited for 2009)	20 July 10
1 <sup>st</sup> update on the implementation status of Management responses on any evaluation or reviews conducted	30 July 10
Project Annual Planning and Reporting Package (PARP) a) 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Progress Report b) 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarterly Workplan	10 October 10 15 October 10
2 <sup>nd</sup> update on the implementation status of 2008 NEX Audit Action Plans (only applicable to projects which will be audited for 2008)	10 November 10
2 <sup>nd</sup> update on the implementation status of Management responses on any evaluation or reviews conducted	20 November 10
Final date to submit any RDPs for 2009 expenditures	09 December 10
Inform UNDP of any accrual costs for 2009	09 December 10

Upon the operational conclusion of the project in 2012, this project shall be the subject of a full and comprehensive "Terminal Evaluation" as per UNDP's guidelines.

#### **4.1. Audit**

Where UNDP transfers responsibility for managing resources to third parties, governments or NGOs, UNDP must receive assurance as to whether the resources are being properly used. This assurance is

achieved through various monitoring means, of which the NGO/NIM audit exercise is one key component. The UN Board of Auditors carefully reviews the results of the annual NGO/NIM audit exercise in order to establish and report to the Executive Board the appropriateness and completeness of the expenditure recorded in UNDP books. \_

## **5. Budget and Workplan**

Total project budget includes \$ 500,000 in TRAC resources as well as about 3 billion Rials (equivalent to US \$ 3,000,000 based on the exchange rate of 2 May 2009). The budget breakdown between the three components of the project is roughly apportioned as follows: 55 % to fund “Protection”, 30 % to fund “Research and Monitoring” and finally 15 % to fund “Education and Awareness”. The detailed budget breakdown based on the general categories of expenditure is presented as per the following table:

Component	Budget Category	TRAC US \$				Government Co-funding to be determined	3rd Party Co-funding to be mobilized for 4 years	Total Funds Pledged as of date US \$ (000)
		2009	2010	2011	2012			
Research and Monitoring	Travel; International Consultants; Local Consultants; Equipment; Project Management; Audit; Monitoring/Training Terminal Evaluation Miscellaneous	2,100 N/A 21,000 12,600 12,300 N/A 2,550 N/A 4,520	4,000 N/A 32,000 10,000 13,000 N/A 7,000 N/A 4,930	1,000 N/A 0 1,500 1,500 3,000			US \$ 500,000-800,000	TRAC: 150
<b>Sub-total:</b>		55,070	70,930	7,000	17,000			
Protection	Travel; International Consultants; Local Consultants; Equipment; Project Management; Monitoring/Training Miscellaneous	3,850 N/A 35,500 23,100 22,500 4,675 4,620	5,000 N/A 55,000 76,755 28,000 7,000 5,000	2,000 N/A 0 0 0 0 2,000			N/A	TRAC: 275
<b>Sub-total:</b>		94,245	176,755	4,000	0			
Awareness Raising and Education	Travel; International Consultants; Local Consultants; Equipment; Project Management; Monitoring/Training Miscellaneous	1,000 N/A 10,500 6,300 6,150 1,275 1,260	2000 N/A 12,000 10,000 7,000 2,000 2,000	1,000 N/A 5,000 1,000	1,000 N/A 2000 3,515		N/A	TRAC: 75
<b>Sub-total:</b>		26,485	35,000	7,000	6,515			
<b>Total:</b>		175,800	282,685	18,000	23,515			

## **Annex 1: UNDP's Cost Recovery Policy**

This Annex outlines the UNDP Cost Recovery Policy for Regular Resources<sup>1</sup> and Other Resources<sup>2</sup> as approved by the Executive Board in its 98/2 and 2007/18 Decisions.

### ***5.1.1. Background***

In its decision 98/2, UNDP's Executive Board (EB) recognized the importance of Other Resources as a mechanism to enhance the capacity and supplement the regular resource base of UNDP. The Board requested UNDP to develop, implement and manage all Other Resource funded activities in an integrated, transparent, flexible and accountable manner. In recognizing the increasing level of UNDP Other Resources, accounting now for around 75 per cent of Total UNDP Resources, the Executive Board in discussions on the 2000-2001 as well as 2002-2003 support budgets, clearly indicated that Other Resources do need to cover the full cost of the services being provided to Other Resources funded programmes as well as to contribute to the overall costs of UNDP's operations.

As a multi-funded organization UNDP continues to make the case that Regular Resources provide the funding for the organization's base structure and the additional costs associated in the delivery of regular resources funded programmes. All costs associated with the delivery of Other Resources funded programmes at the country and headquarters levels are to be fully covered through cost recovery mechanisms.

The new revised cost recovery policy from Regular and Other Resources takes into consideration that:

- The costs associated with the delivery of services to programmes above the base structure shall be borne by the relevant funding sources (Regular & Other Resources) within each programme;
- Generally, there are two categories of services provided to programmes; the first of which includes general oversight, management, and quality control, while the second category includes direct services in the context of implementation; and,
- Other Resources-funded programmes benefit from UNDP's global operations (which include strategic initiatives, policy development and corporate systems) and hence should contribute to them.

### ***5.1.2. The policy***

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<sup>1</sup> Regular resources are defined as the resources of UNDP that are co-mingled and untied. These will include voluntary contributions, contributions from other governmental, intergovernmental or non-governmental sources and related interest earnings and miscellaneous income. Example: TRAC

<sup>2</sup> Other Resources are defined as the resources of UNDP, other than Regular Resources, which are received for specific programme purposes, consistent with the policies, aims and activities of UNDP and for the provision of management and other support services to third parties. Examples: GEF and GFATM funds, Government Cost Sharing, Contributions from Bilateral Donors, Contributions from Private Sector

The policy reflects two types of recovery that will be applied to the two categories of services defined below. This policy supersedes all previous policies and guidelines, whether corporate, regional or unit/country specific:

### ***General Management Support (GMS):***

Projects funded from Regular Resources are not subject to GMS fees, as these resources already pay for the basic structure of UNDP, which is designed to provide these services. For programmes funded wholly or partially from Other Resources, the recovery for these services, which are not directly attributable to project inputs or activities, is through a **percentage fee**. The Executive Board decision 2007/18 on cost recovery which the Board recently adopted at its Annual Session (11-22 June 2007) directs UNDP to adopt a rate of 7 per cent for the recovery of indirect general management support (GMS) costs for new third party contributions and trust funds. The basic 3 per cent recovery rate of indirect support costs for all government cost sharing is maintained for the time being.

GMS encompasses general oversight and management functions of UNDP HQ and CO units, and include the following specific services:

- Project identification, formulation, and appraisal
- Determination of execution modality and local capacity assessment
- Briefing and de-briefing of project staff and consultants
- General oversight and monitoring, including participation in project reviews
- Receipt, allocation and reporting to the donor of financial resources
- Thematic and technical backstopping through Bureaus
- Systems, IT infrastructure, branding, knowledge transfer

### ***Implementation Support Services (ISS):***

These are services provided mostly by Country Offices in the implementation of Regular and Other Resource-funded and projects (i.e. costs directly related to the delivery of programmes), and include:

- Payments, disbursements and other financial transactions
- Recruitment of staff, project personnel, and consultants
- Procurement of services and equipment,<sup>3</sup> including disposal
- Organization of training activities, conferences, and workshops, including fellowships
- Travel authorization, visa requests, ticketing, and travel arrangements
- Shipment, custom clearance, vehicle registration, and accreditation

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<sup>3</sup> This would include any fee to IAPSO.