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# International Outlook for Privately Protected Areas

Country Profile: KAZAKHSTAN

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## Introduction:

This country profile is part of a study by the International Land Conservation Network (ILCN) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) summarizing the **legal, policy, and institutional mechanisms used to establish and incentivize privately protected areas (PPAs) in 30 understudied countries.**

PPAs contribute to the achievement of global conservation goals and biodiversity targets by contributing to landscape-scale conservation, connectivity and ecological-representativeness of protected areas.

For the purposes of this profile, an area is considered a PPA if it conforms to the definition agreed upon by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Generally speaking, a PPA's protection must be recognized and durable (with long term conservation intent); it must be governed by a private or non-governmental entity; and it must be governed and managed to meet the general conservation standards of a protected area (PA) as laid out by the IUCN.<sup>1,2</sup> **Note: Alongside currently existing mechanisms in these countries, this study also references mechanisms that represent *potential opportunities for the creation of PPAs.***

The data in this profile is based on a 2018 desk review of law and policy documents, government reports, publications by multi-lateral organizations, scholarly literature, and other sources. For 28 of the 30 country profiles, data was reviewed by a volunteer in-country expert. We are grateful to these experts, whose names and the profiles they reviewed are listed in the appendix to the [International Outlook for Privately Protected Areas summary report](#).

Finally, this profile is intended to be a living document, which will be updated periodically as more information is submitted and time and resources allow. If you have a contribution, please contact the authors at [landconservation@lincolnst.edu](mailto:landconservation@lincolnst.edu).

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<sup>1</sup> Mitchell, B.A., Stolton, S., Bezaury-Creel, J., Bingham, H.C., Cumming, T.L., Dudley, N., Fitzsimons, J.A., Malleret-King, D., Redford, K.H. and Solano, P. (2018). *Guidelines for privately protected areas*. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 29. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. xii + 100pp.

<sup>2</sup> Dudley, N. (ed.) (2008). *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. x + 86pp. WITH Stolton, S., Shadie, P. and Dudley, N. (2013). *IUCN WCPA Best Practice Guidance on Recognising Protected Areas and Assigning Management Categories and Governance Types*, Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 21. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN

# KAZAKHSTAN (Republic of Kazakhstan, or Қазақстан Республикасы)

## Outlook for Privately Protected Areas

The ILCN and UNDP would like to thank the following volunteer for reviewing this document for accuracy to the best of her ability:

1. Vera Voronova, CEO of the Association for the Conservation Biodiversity of Kazakhstan

## I. Country Overview

### *Land Area*

Kazakhstan is the ninth largest country in the world with an area of 270,000,000 hectares (ha). Almost the size of Western Europe, Kazakhstan is endowed with an enormous diversity of mountain ecological systems due to high altitude zones.

Kazakhstan has an exceptionally low population density of just 5.7 people per square mile.<sup>3</sup> Population centers are in the northern, western, and southern border provinces, and in the cities Almaty and Astana. The inland Caspian Sea lies at Kazakhstan's southwestern extent. The southern and eastern borders are mountainous, where interior plains, deserts, and steppes meet the Altai and Tien Shan ranges.

Kazakhstan's four major ecological systems include: forest (2 per cent of the country), steppe (28 per cent), desert (32 per cent), and mountain (7 per cent). The rest comprises pastures (8 per cent), fallow lands (4 per cent), and agricultural land.<sup>4</sup> Two major migration routes cross the Kazakh territory i.e. the West Siberian-African and Central Asian-Indian.<sup>5</sup>

The Kazakh landscape is under threat, as pastoral livelihoods have lost ground to agricultural and urban development, and changes in grazing patterns have destabilized many of the ecosystems in the steppes and plains.<sup>6</sup>

### *Land Ownership and Tenure*

The Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic became independent with the dissolution of the USSR in 1991-1992. Land ownership in Kazakhstan remains strongly influenced by decisions made in the Soviet period. Allotment of land in that period depended heavily on the State, through collective farms, which were dissolved in the 1990s. However, the State is still the primary landholder.

Though rare, when the State grants private ownership of agricultural land, or a long-term lease of the same, the transaction is registered in the State's *immovable property registration system*. No registration

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<sup>3</sup> 5.7 persons/sq km. Kazakhstan Livestock Sector Brief. FAO. AGAL. Accessed online at: [www.fao.org/ag/againfo/resources/en/publications/sector\\_briefs/lrb\\_KAZ.pdf](http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/resources/en/publications/sector_briefs/lrb_KAZ.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Environment and Water Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan. 2014. The Fifth National Report on Progress in Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Accessed online in 2018 at <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/kz/kz-nr-05-en.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. P.4

<sup>6</sup> International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). The Kazakh Steppe: Conserving the world's largest dry steppe region. [https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/us\\_size\\_kazakh\\_concept\\_note\\_final\\_apr\\_1.pdf](https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/us_size_kazakh_concept_note_final_apr_1.pdf)

is required for the sale of apartments or private buildings, or for the transfer of lands that have already been disposed by the State to the private market.<sup>7</sup>

The *Land Code of 2003* legalized private property holding for the first time in Kazakhstan's history. The code recognizes seven land-use categories, as listed below:

1. Agricultural land
2. Land settlements (cities, towns, and villages)
3. Land for Industry, transport, communications, and other non-agricultural purposes
4. Land for protected areas, with ecological, health, recreational, historical & cultural value
5. Forest land
6. Groundwater resources
7. Reserve Land (land held by the national government, to be disposed for the purposes of development, constituting a "special land fund" to provide a base from which to allocate new agricultural landholdings)

A 2011 bill allowed companies of up to 50 per cent foreign ownership to lease agricultural land for up to 10 years, and a 2016 bill allows for a 25-year lease to foreign companies for mining and agriculture.<sup>8</sup>

Presently, only 1-2 per cent of agricultural land is privately owned, according to estimates by officials in the country.<sup>9</sup> The remainder (well over 90 per cent) of agricultural land is leased from the State, or sub-leased through an intermediary but still remain under State ownership. The situation is no different for forest land. In 2013, private forests covered a mere 397 ha in the entire country.<sup>10</sup> Citizens acquired this small number of private forest properties by making payments—in full or in installments—to regional and municipal governments that decided to sell plots in their jurisdiction, as allowed by the 2003 Land Code.

Changes in land use are strictly regulated by the State under the present Land Code, even after land has passed into private ownership. If the owner of land purchased from the State wishes to change the land use of his/her property to a more lucrative one, he/she is obliged to pay the Government a sum equal to the difference between the land as valued for its new use and its valuation under the former use.<sup>11</sup>

### *Protected Areas in Kazakhstan*

By the measures of the World Database on Protected Areas, 8,929,500 ha (3.31 per cent) of land in Kazakhstan is protected.<sup>12</sup> Land conservation is largely centralized under the direction of the national government, though regional and local governments also play a role. In general, state conservation efforts

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<sup>7</sup> United States Agency for International Development (USAID). 2005. Kazakhstan Land Administration Report. p. iv. Accessed online at [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/Pnadc696.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadc696.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). The Kazakh Steppe: Conserving the world's largest dry steppe region. [https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/us\\_size\\_kazakh\\_concept\\_note\\_final\\_apr\\_1.pdf](https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/us_size_kazakh_concept_note_final_apr_1.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Sholk, Dena. Kazakhstan's Land Reforms. June 15, 2016. The Diplomat. Accessed online at [thediplomat.com/2016/06/kazakhstans-land-reforms/](http://thediplomat.com/2016/06/kazakhstans-land-reforms/)

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Environment and Water Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan. 2014. The Fifth National Report on Progress in Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. P. 43. Accessed online in 2017 at <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/kz/kz-nr-05-en.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Republic of Kazakhstan. 2003. Land Code of 2003. Ch 1 Article 9 Pt. 5. FAOLEX. Accessed online at <http://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC043145/> on September 2017.

<sup>12</sup> UNEP-WCMC and IUCN. 2017. Protected Planet: The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA), Cambridge, UK: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN. Accessed online at: [www.protectedplanet.net](http://www.protectedplanet.net)

outweigh private, civic, and community conservation by design. Kazakhstan’s land code states this quite explicitly, asserting that “Earth’s protected areas are state owned and not subject to privatization.”<sup>13</sup>

The table below lists the legal status for each type of protected area recognized by the Government of Kazakhstan, per Chapter 4 of the *2006 Protected Areas Law* [Table 1]. Each PA is registered either as the possession of a state-owned corporate entity or the national or regional government. The three different categories of natural garden—functionally, smaller natural areas with high profile natural features for which to charge admission—are treated as state enterprises. Gardens of zoological, botanic, and dendrological interest are maintained by state enterprises created for the express purpose of their management. The biodiversity-oriented protected areas at the national level—natural park, natural reserve, and wilderness area—are granted full legal status as state agencies. In this case, the agency is granted permanent tenure to state-owned land. These institutions may serve as the guardians of monuments and preserves, which do not have state-owned corporations for the express purpose of their individual management.<sup>14</sup>

Table 1: *Categories of Protected Area in the Republic of Kazakhstan*

PA Category	National Government	Regional Government	Legal Status
Zoological gardens	Yes	Yes	State Enterprise
Botanic garden	Yes	Yes	State Enterprise
Dendrological garden	Yes	Yes	State Enterprise
Natural preserve	Yes	Yes	State Guardianship
Natural monument	Yes	Yes	State Guardianship
Preserved area	Yes	No	State Guardianship
Natural park	Yes	Yes	State Agency
Natural reserve	Yes	No	State Agency
Wilderness area	Yes	No	State Agency

Kazakhstan’s protected areas legislation is undergoing a continual evolution. A series of adjustments were made to the system from 2010 to 2013. Other categories are under consideration, such as the introduction of legislation on Biosphere Reserves and Transboundary Biosphere Reserves to align with the UNESCO framework.<sup>15</sup>

The 2003 Land Code prohibits the transfer (lease or sale) of specially protected natural areas, except for small areas needed for the development of tourism facilities.<sup>16</sup> Activities can be conducted in protected areas for the following purposes: scientific, cultural, educational, tourist and recreational, and limited economic purposes. Article 46 of the *2006 Protected Areas Law* specifies the leasing procedures for permitted private enterprises in protected areas.<sup>17</sup> Land use around protected areas may also be restricted by buffer zone status.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Republic of Kazakhstan. 2003 Land Code of 2003. Ch. 13, Article 122 (Land of Protected Natural Areas).

<sup>14</sup> Jashenko, Roman, Head of UNESCO Chair for Sustainable Development, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. 2016. Kazakhstan legislation for Biosphere Reserves. Presented at the Workshop on the East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network in Lima Peru. Accessed online at [http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/images/5\\_Roman\\_Jashenko\\_Kazakhstan.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/images/5_Roman_Jashenko_Kazakhstan.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Republic of Kazakhstan. 2003. Land Code of 2003. Ch. 13, Art. 23, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Republic of Kazakhstan. 2006. Law No. 175-3 on protected areas. FAOLEX. Accessed online at [www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC069040/](http://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC069040/)

<sup>18</sup> 2003 Land Code provides for buffer zones (Article 123)

## *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)*

Kazakhstan submitted its NBSAP to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1999. The country's blueprint at the time, acknowledged that non-government organisations and private sector have little effect on the conservation and use of biological diversity, and called for the alteration the legal framework surrounding this matter. A post-2010 NBSAP is yet to be submitted by the Kazakh government.

Additionally, Kazakhstan's latest National Report to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity was submitted in 2014. It stresses upon the "Zhasyl damy" or Green Development strategy for the country's future. The strategy was launched in 2010, reaffirmed in 2013, and is still ongoing. It emphasizes the importance of renewable energy resources. It also includes short case studies of recent conservation projects, noting the financial contributions of international governmental and non-governmental organizations. However, the 2014 Report does not identify private entities as key land owners or managers for protected areas.

## **II. Law and Policy for Private Land Use**

### *Privately Protected Areas*

There is no formal definition for privately protected areas in Kazakhstan's legislation, nor any government incentive to create biodiversity management plans on private land. Given the relative novelty of private ownership in Kazakhstan's land market, structures for private landowners to protect their land are not advanced. State regulation and control in the sphere of protected areas is one of the general precepts governing the current protected areas legislation.<sup>19</sup> This notion is reinforced elsewhere in the 2003 Land Code, in Chapter 13, which reads: "Earth's protected areas are state owned and not subject to privatization."<sup>20</sup>

### *Easements*

The 2003 Land Code describes the legal position of easements in Kazakhstan, defining an easement as "the right of limited use of other people's trust land, including the passage, transportation, installation and maintenance of necessary communications, hunting and other purposes."<sup>21</sup> Limited rights to use other person's land is permissible, and may be initiated by the landholder with any other legal entity. Though easements for the purposes of conservation are not outlined in this definition, the law may provide some basis for their enactment throughout the Country at some time.

### *Hunting*

Hunting is a principal element of the economy and culture in Kazakhstan. An immense land area is devoted to for-profit hunting ranges throughout the Country. A full 120 million ha—44.2 per cent of the Kazakhstan's land area—is leased to hunting farms, of which there are only about 675.<sup>22</sup> In 2013, the users of these farms invested about USD 12 million into their development.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Republic of Kazakhstan. 2006. Law No. 175-3 on protected areas. FAOLEX. Accessed online at [www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC069040/](http://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC069040/). Ch. 1 Art. 3 Pt. 2. And Ch. 1 Art. 11.

<sup>20</sup> Republic of Kazakhstan. 2003 Land Code of 2003, Ch. 13, Article 122 (Land of Protected Natural Areas)

<sup>21</sup> Republic of Kazakhstan. 2003 Land Code, Chapter 1, Article 12, part 38

<sup>22</sup> Ministry of Environment and Water Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan. 2014. The Fifth National Report on Progress in Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Accessed online in 2017 at <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/kz/kz-nr-05-en.pdf>. P. 8.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid..

Hunters in Kazakhstan invest financial resources into the development of hunting farms, including payments for rangers and patrol cars for the protection of wildlife. The number of hunting farms, their investment in technical and physical infrastructure, and the maintenance cost of these farms, has increased within the last few years. Hunting farms, under standard contracts, are obliged to protect not only hunting species, but also rare and endangered species.<sup>24</sup>

However, there are a number of gaps in the regulatory framework which puts hunting farms in a vulnerable position. These include: lack of compensation in case of withdrawal of hunting lands for state needs; lack of payments to hunting farms for damage of wildlife or ecosystems in their areas (all payments are made to the state budget); lack of incentives for the protection of rare species, etc.<sup>25</sup>

With appropriate amendments to the legislation, it is possible that these hunting ranges could not only be vital for the economy of Kazakhstan but can also be an important element of land conservation strategy in Kazakhstan, given their geographical scope and the needs of hunters for functioning ecosystems.

### **III. Financial Incentives for Privately Protected Areas**

There are no direct financial incentives offered for developing or managing privately protected areas in Kazakhstan. However, below is a brief overview of the status of financial resources available for protected areas in Kazakhstan, a financial incentive i.e. payment for ecosystem services, and a financial instrument i.e. grants, which are currently being utilized in Kazakhstan for protected areas. These aspects can be also utilized and are relevant for privately protected areas.

#### *Government Financing of Protected Areas*

Chapter 6 of the *2006 Protected Areas Law* assumes three funding sources for protected areas: state budget funds; the funds of institutions for the protection of nature (registered with the state); and private sources, such as grants, special protected area funds, and voluntary contributions by legal persons.<sup>26</sup>

At present, the financial resources available for biodiversity conservation in Kazakhstan do not meet the needs of the existing protected area system, in part due to the relatively immense land area that merits protection. In order to scale up conservation efforts in recent years, the Republic has solicited the support of international organizations and NGOs. According to a 2016 budgetary review by the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN), the total financial gap for biodiversity conservation in Kazakhstan until 2020 amounts to 158 billion KZT or 55 per cent of the current funding.<sup>27</sup>

Such a situation underscores the need for alternative financial tools that make conservation viable for landowners, hunting range managers, and ecotourism companies.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid. P. 96

<sup>25</sup> Ibid P. 97

<sup>26</sup> 2006 Protected Areas Law

<sup>27</sup> United Nations Development Programme. UNDP. 2016. *The biodiversity financial needs assessment in Kazakhstan*. Shalakhonova A.A. Astana – 2016, 52 pages. Accessed online at [https://www.biodiversityfinance.net/sites/default/files/content/knowledge\\_products/Financial\\_needs\\_assessment.pdf](https://www.biodiversityfinance.net/sites/default/files/content/knowledge_products/Financial_needs_assessment.pdf)

## *Payments for Ecosystem Services*

Payments for ecosystem services (PES) have not reached its full potential in Kazakhstan, but have been in trial for at least seven years. PES involves the valuation of market services provided by natural systems, such as water filtration. Funds collected from companies, institutions, and individuals that rely on those services can be paid out to landowners and stewards of land that protect the natural systems supporting these services.

In 2011, the Kazakhstan Ministry of Environment (MOE), the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) launched a joint pilot project to explore PES for the country.<sup>28</sup> The CAREC lead the pilot, which used funds from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to test PES for river-basin land and water management. A 2013 pilot estimated the value of ecosystem services for the forested Karkaraly National Park, a protected area in the arid Karaganda Region. The study found that more than USD 86 million were generated by ecosystems in that area alone.<sup>29</sup>

Recent amendments to the *Forest Code of 2003* will do much to help PES develop in Kazakhstan.<sup>30</sup> The new legislation now recognizes the value of forest ecosystem services and legitimizes voluntary PES. A related mechanism, termed biodiversity offsetting, has also been included in these amendments, creating an opportunity for developers to pay for restoration associated with unavoidable development impacts.

## *Grants*

Between 2008-2013, a Steppe Conservation program, sponsored by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), sponsored a range of initiatives. Approximately USD 2.5 million from GEF, UNDP, and non-governmental organizations were offered to match over USD 10 million, plus USD 10 million of in-kind contributions, made by the Kazakh government.<sup>31</sup> This was one of many individual projects funded through intergovernmental organizations.

UNDP and GEF were also major funders of Kazakhstan's national strategy to meet the Aichi Biodiversity Targets set by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The project, "Planning conservation of biological diversity at the national level to ensure realization of the CBD Strategic Plan by the Republic of Kazakhstan for the years 2011-2020," operated from 2012-2014 and was funded by many sectors, including GEF, UNDP, the Kazakhstan Government, and NGOs.

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<sup>28</sup> Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe. OSCE. 2011. "OSCE promotes conservation payment for ecosystem services in Kazakhstan". Accessed online at <http://www.osce.org/astana/82272>

<sup>29</sup> Ministry of Environment and Water Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan. 2014. The Fifth National Report on Progress in Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. P. 2-14.

<sup>30</sup> [United Nations Development Programme - The Biodiversity Finance Initiative. BIOFIN. 2017. "New laws pave the way for innovative finance to protect biodiversity in Kazakhstan". Accessed online at http://www.biodiversityfinance.org/news-and-media/new-laws-pave-way-innovative-finance-protect-biodiversity-kazakhstan](http://www.biodiversityfinance.org/news-and-media/new-laws-pave-way-innovative-finance-protect-biodiversity-kazakhstan)

<sup>31</sup> UNDP/GEF/ Kazakhstan Government/ NGOs project on Steppe Conservation and Management. 2008-2013. Accessed online at [http://www.kz.undp.org/content/kazakhstan/en/home/operations/projects/environment\\_and\\_energy/steppe-conservation-and-management.html](http://www.kz.undp.org/content/kazakhstan/en/home/operations/projects/environment_and_energy/steppe-conservation-and-management.html)



## IV. Organizations relevant to Private Land Conservation in Kazakhstan

### *Governmental*

- The Agency for Land Resources Management in the Republic of Kazakhstan is a central coordinating and governing body for land management and related technologies in Kazakhstan.<sup>32</sup>
- The Ministry of Environment and Water Resources coordinates water management for Kazakhstan's agricultural lands, in addition to fulfilling the roles typical of a state environmental agency.
- The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for improving legislation for and supervising national water, forest, wildlife, and nature conservation area governance.<sup>33</sup>
- The Kazakh Committee for Forestry and Wildlife is an important state partner for multinational and non-governmental organizations supporting conservation activities in the country.<sup>34</sup>
- The Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative (ADCI) is a state-led collaboration involving FZS, Flora and Fauna International, RSPB and ACBK, and Kazakh Committee for Forestry and Wildlife (see below).

### *Non-governmental*

- UNDP has been widely involved in conservation initiatives in Kazakhstan. UNDP recently supported the Buiratau State National Nature Park, Altyn Dala State Nature Reserve and the drafting of a new PA legislation.<sup>35</sup> Through its Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN), UNDP is attempting to build a sound business case for increased investment in the management of ecosystems and biodiversity, with a particular focus on the needs and transformational opportunities at the national level.<sup>36</sup>
- The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a partnership of internationally-operating agencies that directs funds toward solving challenging environmental issues. The GEF has been a major source of external funding for land conservation in Kazakhstan.
- The Kazakhstan: Man and Biosphere (MAB) National Committee is an element of UNESCO's international Biosphere Reserves program.<sup>37</sup> The Committee works to develop the national network of reserves and to integrate it with global and regional networks, as well as to institute international best practices.
- Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK) is the BirdLife International partner in Kazakhstan since 2015.<sup>38</sup>
- The Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia has supported the piloting of PES in Kazakhstan, and has been involved in many conservation initiatives within and in the surrounding countries of Kazakhstan.<sup>39</sup>
- Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative (TGCI) brings together the IUCN Regional Secretariat, Commissions, and institutional members to promote conservation and sustainable

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<sup>32</sup> The Agency for Land Resources Management . Access online at [www.auzr.kz](http://www.auzr.kz).

<sup>33</sup> The Ministry of Agriculture. Access online at [mgov.kz](http://mgov.kz).

<sup>34</sup> The Kazakh Committee for Forestry and Wildlife. Access online at <http://fhc.kz/en/>.

<sup>35</sup> United Nations Development Program. "Steppe Conservation and Management." Accessed online in 2017 at [www.kz.undp.org/content/kazakhstan/en/home/operations/projects/environment\\_and\\_energy/steppe-conservation-and-management.html](http://www.kz.undp.org/content/kazakhstan/en/home/operations/projects/environment_and_energy/steppe-conservation-and-management.html)

<sup>36</sup> United Nations Development Programme - Biodiversity Finance Initiative. BIOFIN. Accessed online in 2018 at [https://www.biodiversityfinance.net/sites/default/files/content/knowledge\\_products/Flyer\\_Mgl.pdf](https://www.biodiversityfinance.net/sites/default/files/content/knowledge_products/Flyer_Mgl.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. "Kazakhstan: MAB National Committee". Accessed online in 2017 at [www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/biosphere-reserves/asia-and-the-pacific/kazakhstan/mab-national-committee-kazakhstan/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/biosphere-reserves/asia-and-the-pacific/kazakhstan/mab-national-committee-kazakhstan/)

<sup>38</sup> The ACBK website. Access online at [www.acbk.kz](http://www.acbk.kz) .

<sup>39</sup> The Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia. Access website at [www.old.carecnet.org/](http://www.old.carecnet.org/)

natural resource management in the steppes of northern Kazakhstan. The TGCI cooperates internationally with other professionals in community conservation management and temperate grasslands.<sup>40</sup>

- The Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) is a Germany-based NGO with international operations focused on species and habitat conservation. In Kazakhstan, FZS cooperates in the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative.<sup>41</sup>
- The Saiga Conservation Alliance (SCA) is involved in initiatives in Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and Russia to protect the saiga, a critically-endangered ungulate.<sup>42</sup>
- Flora and Fauna International is involved in a large landscape conservation project on the Ustyurt Plateau, an important saiga habitat spanning the border of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

## V. Case Study

### *Altyn Dala [Golden Steppe] Conservation Initiative*

The Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative involves diverse stakeholders in the creation of a new protected area in Central Kazakhstan. The Golden Steppe, to which Altyn Dala refers in Kazakh, is a crucial temperate grassland habitat for the critically-endangered saiga population. The Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK), a leading conservation organization in the country and a national BirdLife partner, partnered with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) and Fauna & Flora International.

The initial focus of the Initiative has been on a five million ha pilot area, called Irgyz-Turgai-Zhylanshyk (ITZ), which encompasses the former range of the Betpak-Dala saiga antelope population, the largest population in Kazakhstan.<sup>43</sup> In November 2012, the government established a new PA: the Altyn Dala State Reservat, with an area of 489,776 ha. Subsequent efforts will focus on establishing a corridor to link Altyn Dala Reserve with the Irgyz-Turgai Reserve through new state PAs, commercially-managed hunting areas, and privately managed lands. NGOs have been instrumental in developing the new protected area agreements, and are also supporting the training for rangers and management support.<sup>44</sup>

There is only one example of managing land as a “private” protected area within the Altyn Dala conservation Initiative. With support from international partners, ACBK started managing hunting areas of 343,500 ha in 2009. Those hunting areas are located between the two abovementioned protected areas and play a role of an ecological corridor. No hunting is allowed in that area, and a team is permanently based there for scientific research and antipoaching control.

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<sup>40</sup> International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). The Kazakh Steppe: Conserving the world's largest dry steppe region. Accessed online at [https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/us\\_size\\_kazakh\\_concept\\_note\\_final\\_apr\\_1.pdf](https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/us_size_kazakh_concept_note_final_apr_1.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> FZS page for Kazakhstan programs. Access online at <https://fzs.org/en/projects/kasachstan/>

<sup>42</sup> SCA website. Access online at <http://saiga-conservation.org/>.

<sup>43</sup> Stephanie Ward, Geoff Welch and RSPB, 2014. „Conserving Kazakhstan's golden treasures on a breathtaking scale“. Accessed online at <https://thecoloqist.org/2014/sep/19/conserving-kazakhstans-golden-treasures-breathtaking-scale>

<sup>44</sup> Frankfurt Zoological Society. A future for the "Serengeti of the North". Accessed online in 2018 at <https://fzs.org/en/projects/kasachstan/>