Improved forest conservation and sustainable natural resource use through collaborative management in Childukhtaron Reserve, Tajikistan

Transfer project in the framework of the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme

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Executive summary

The project area, Childukhtaron Reserve (State Nature Reserve, IUCN category IV), is one of three Reserves in Tajikistan which contain the country's most valuable walnut-maple forests (NBSAP 2003). Located 270 km to the southeast of Dushanbe in the Darvaz Mountains, the 14,600 ha reserve was established in 1959 to conserve mid-mountain forest ecosystems, part of which form the fruit and nut forests.

The overall project goal was to bring together the Forestry Service Unit and local people for improving forest conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in the Childukhtaron reserve.

This project was implemented over a 12 month period from December 2013 to December 2014. It primarily focused on increasing the capacity of the local Forest Service Unit and building local support for the protection of fruit and nut forest in the reserve. The project activities for the Forest Service Unit included: conducting needs assessments, training and provision of basic equipment, monitoring and practical actions for better protection of fruit and nut forest. It also aimed to provide local people with fruit driers, training on using mini fruit driers and investigating market access through dialogue and meetings. For this purpose, FFI conducted a needs assessment in 2009 and a discussion meeting with the Forestry Management Unit team at the start of project.

During the implementation of project activities, the main partners were the NGO - Zan va Zamin, Ganji Tabiat, the Agency for Forestry under the Government of RT and the local Forestry Management Unit. In the implementation phase of the project the Forestry Management Unit was provided the necessary equipment for monitoring, agreement signed between FFI and local Forestry Service Unit on the purposeful use of equipment. Also, local Forestry Service Unit team gained knowledge of using GPS, compasses, tape measures, computer and cameras. In addition, the local community were provided with fruit driers, in order to make them value the threatened fruit trees economically and protect them better.

Finally, I have understood that one year is not sufficient to achieve the desired project goal and objectives. The result of using the fruit driers by the community and market access needs at least 2-3 years. The local community need time to adopt new equipment and compare it with traditional ways of fruit drying and selling. The result of increasing the income of the local community and the quality of dry fruits will be seen only after next year’s harvest. In addition, the Forestry Management Unit has 2-3 years to conduct their monitoring in the same areas, in order to compare with previous data and for analysis. The experiences will be shared with other projects which may contribute to support the conservation and sustainable use of forests in Tajikistan.