

Preparing a Road Map for Developing a management plan for the Lower Amudarya Biosphere Reserve

Transfer project in the framework of the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme

Alisher Shukurov

Chief expert for Monitoring International Projects of the Main Department of Forestry Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of Uzbekistan

e-mail: alisher.shukurov@gmail.com

Executive summary

The ecosystem of riparian forests (Tugai) is of great importance for Uzbekistan. Well-being of the population residing in the area adjoining the riparian forests largely depends on the wealth of this ecosystem. With this regard, the Government of Uzbekistan created a first Biosphere Reserve in the lower delta of Amudarya river in the Republic of Karakalpakstan (Lower Amudarya State Biosphere Reserve - LABR) in 2011. Purposes of this Biosphere Reserve are: protection and restoration of landscapes, flora and fauna of the riparian forests, other natural resources and ecosystems typical for the territory of the Biosphere Reserve, sustainable use of natural resources and social well-being of the local community and promotion of environmental education.

The Biosphere Reserve concept of the Man and the Biosphere (MaB) programme of UNESCO is a new instrument for managing the protected areas in Uzbekistan. At the moment, fulfilment of the functions of a BR is restricted with the absence of an officially approved management plan.

The purpose of this Transfer Project (TP) is to provide a contribution to improved conservation of the globally significant biodiversity of the lower Amudarya delta in the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

The objectives of the Transfer Project are:

- To support strengthening the management system of the Lower Amudarya Biosphere Reserve through preparing a Road Map (RM) for developing a Management Plan for the Lower Amudarya Biosphere Reserve (LABR).
- To analyse the current status of management planning for protected areas in the country and to propose recommendations to improve it.

Partners in this TP were the Administration of Lower Amudarya Biosphere Reserve, the Country office of the United Nations Development Programme in Tashkent, the local Government authority of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the local community, farmers and others.

Main output of the TP is a Road Map for developing a management plan for the LABR. This RM provides guidance how to develop a Management Plan for LABR as well as for other types of protected areas in the country. The Road Map was

prepared based on the recommendations of experts and results of my own research on this topic.