

Development of a community-led GIS-based data repository and a concept for participatory biodiversity monitoring in Chon-Kemin National Park, Kyrgyzstan

Transfer project in the framework of the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme

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Executive summary

Kyrgyzstan is a small mountainous country with a rich biological and cultural diversity. In Kyrgyzstan there is a protected areas network, consisted of zapovedniks (state nature reserves), national parks and zakazniks (nature reserves) established for ex-situ conservation. Chon-Kemin National Park is one of the national parks in the country, established in 1997 aimed to conserve biodiversity, maintain forestry activities in buffer zone and promote tourism in Chon-Kemin valley. Currently, as many of protected areas in the republic, Chon-Kemin national park is experiencing various types of problems, such as limited financial support for conservation purposes, lack of mutual understanding with local communities, low level of technical and human capacity, bad data management etc.

My home organization, the Rural Development Fund in a partnership with the State Agency on Environment and Forestry of the Kyrgyz Republic has been implementing Community Joint Forest Management (CJFM) Project with a financial support of the Chirstensen Fund. The CJFM Project aims to develop and test a model for cooperation among local communities, local government, and the public forestry agency in sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation. In a frame of CJFM Project forest parcels of the Chon-Kemin NP (530 ha) were given to a local community "Karool-Dobo meikyn jamaaty" for joint management and conservation. For promoting community joint forest management model the local community and the NP need practical tools, such as community-based monitoring, community-based inventory etc. This transfer project was designed and implemented as a part of this CJFM Project.

The goal of the Transfer Project was to strengthen participatory biodiversity and natural resources conservation efforts in Chon-Kemin NP. In order to achieve the goal two objectives were set: first to develop a community-led GIS-based biodiversity and natural resources data repository and to develop a participatory biodiversity monitoring concept to Karool-Dobo community and to the Chon-Kemin NP, for continued future use in community joint forest management.

Within the transfer project a CMP Open Standard Conceptual Model for community forest management and biodiversity conservation of Orto-Kaiyndy community forest in Chon-Kemin NP was developed. The pilot local community had been taking active part in developing of the conceptual model and it was incorporated into the Management Plan of Orto-Kaiyndy community forest.

With a participation of representatives of local community maps of biodiversity and natural resources were produced. The process of community mapping was carried out in three steps: preparatory stage, where community-mapping methodology was developed, preliminary data was collected and base maps produced. In the second stage the local community representatives were trained and they conducted data collection on site using GPS devices. The data were discussed by the local community and cross-checked by our team and external experts for reliability and accuracy. At the final stage of participatory mapping process the collected data was processed in ArcGIS software.

Developing of a participatory monitoring concept or methodology was one of the objectives of the transfer project. The methodology for conducting biodiversity and natural resources monitoring by local communities is based on the Drivers-Pressures-State-Impacts-Responses (DPSIR) framework of EEA.

This report captures also some information on using knowledge and skills earned from participating in the KTF Program.