

**REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN
FOREST PROTECTION AND REFORESTATION PROJECT
PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT TF051351**

**COMPONENT B: DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN
FORESTRY**

Annex IV

Draft Access Restriction Process Framework

Introduction

The Government of Kazakhstan has requested Bank support for a forestry project to develop cost effective and sustainable environmental rehabilitation and management of forest lands and associated rangelands, with a focus on the Irtysh pine forest, the dry Aral Seabed, and saxaul rangelands. The project is intended to reduce or prevent land degradation, with a focus on restoring and maintaining tree and other vegetative cover. Benefits will include increased amenity values of restoring and preserving Kazakhstan's limited forest cover, increased recreation values, preservation of pasture and arable land, increased biodiversity, improved sheltering from wind, improved air quality, as well as the wood and fodder products themselves. Socially, the project also will increase local employment and initiate participatory approaches to natural resource management. The project will be financed by a blend of a International Bank for Reconstruction and Development loan, a Global Environment Facility Grant, and regular Government funds.

According to World Bank guidelines, projects potentially associated with restrictions of access to nature resources require an “Access Restriction Process Framework”, in accordance with Operational Policy OP 4.12 on Involuntary Resettlement. While no actual relocation of people is proposed for the project areas, OP 4.12 is relevant because the project will operate in areas where restrictions of access may adversely affect vulnerable persons by curtailing their legal or illegal incomes, at least on a temporary basis. For the most part, these restrictions will be voluntarily negotiated with the vulnerable people affected through the consultative processes described in this framework. The *Access Restriction Process Framework (ARPF)* describes the project components potentially associated with restrictions of access, the people likely to be affected, and the participatory processes by which the project was prepared and will be implemented. It provides guidelines on the criteria for determining “affected people”, the form of mitigation measures included in the project design for vulnerable people, the institutional arrangement implementing these mitigation measures, how conflicts will be resolved including grievance procedures, and monitoring and evaluation procedures. The process framework commits the Government to this participatory process and guidelines. For the purpose of this framework, “vulnerable people” refer to poor or otherwise disadvantaged people who depend upon forest resources for subsistence or cash income, and who could not easily pursue other options that would fulfil their basic needs if access to those forest resources is curtailed.

Participatory Project Preparation Process

- **Identification Phase:** During initial sector analysis and project identification, the Bank team and government officials consulted with wide range of stakeholders in the project

areas as well as in Astana and Almaty, both on an informal basis, as well as in a series of workshops and formal meetings in 2002 and 2003. Regional working groups were established in Semipalatinsk and Kyzylorda.

- **Preparatory Phase:** During the preparatory phase in 2004 and 2005, broad public participation was encouraged. Both social and institutional assessment, the economic analysis, and the rangeland consultancies collected data to identify groups potentially affected by the project. These consultancies, as well as the community involvement consultancy, the environmental assessment consultancy, and the fire management consultancy interviewed stakeholders including primary forest and rangeland users during field visits. These discussions contributed to a more in-depth understanding of the state of the resources, the interests of the resource users, the de jure and de facto restrictions of access. Workshops in November 2004 on community involvement included preliminary discussion of the access restriction process framework. The range of participants included representatives of the oblast and rayon administration, leaders and specialists of the forestry agencies at all levels, representatives of NGOs and initiative groups, local akims of key rural municipalities but as well members the World Bank project preparation team, leading staff of firm coordinating project preparation, and specialists from other components. Further workshops are planned for late March 2005, which along with a review of the overall project design and the draft environmental assessment, will also include a review of the draft Access Restriction Process Framework.

Project Components

Overall, the project is likely to actually increase the access of local people to natural resources, and would impose increased restrictions for only limited areas, as part of participatory resource management schemes. Grievances will be handled in accordance with Kazakhstan legislation, with additional informal mediation assistance provided by project-financed Support Teams. In addition to the participatory natural management activities that would directly result from the project, existing restrictions applicable to the project areas may also affect the reputation of the project. Project components involving potentially involving restrictions of access are described below:

Irtysh Pine Forests Component – Context. The project supports the rehabilitation and effective management of 642,000 ha of damaged Irtysh pine forest, including replanting of fire damaged areas, in the northeast Kazakhstan (Pavlodar and East Kazakhstan Oblasts). There are about 126,000 people currently living in and around the reserves that make up the Irtysh pine forest, Ertis Ormany and Semey Ormany. Historically, many of the local people were employed in forestry activities, although during the 1990s the number of forest related jobs decreased significantly. Nevertheless, a significant number of local people continue to be employed in forestry, either as staff of the orman or as temporary labourers, especially during the last few years as public investment in forestry has begun to increase. Small private sawmills in many villages process local timber for sale. Local people also rely on the forests for fuelwood, for which they pay nominal, affordable fees. Burned areas are sometimes used for grazing. Some 28% of the population is below the official poverty level of US\$1737 per household, and the population continues to decline due to migration. In addition to the rural population, the towns of Semipalatinsk and Pavlodar, each with about 300,000 inhabitants, use forest resources. Small private houses not connected to district heating use fuelwood. Both rural and urban people collect fruits and mushrooms not only for recreation, but in the case of poorer families, for subsistence and cash incomes, although quantitative data on the extent of this activity and its importance to livelihoods is not

available. There are also significant numbers of people engaged as temporary labourers in illegal logging operations, although specific quantitative estimates are not available.

Irtysh Pine Forests –impacts related to logging, and project response. Current government regulations allow logging only for sanitary felling of burned areas and thinning of dense tree stands. The concessions undertaking this work hire local people. The project will increase the support for thinning operations, and the employment directly generated by this is likely to more than offset any decrease in employment associated with reductions in salvage logging due to improved forest fire management. In addition, the project is supporting a feasibility study on the potential use of forest products from thinnings and other forest management for the development of processing and market enterprises. If they prove to be feasible, such enterprises could further increase local employment. The feasibility study will include a consultative process to consider issues related to existing village sawmills, to explore either (a) prospects for the sawmills' long-term sustainability on a legal and environmentally sound basis, or if that appears unlikely (b) possible steps to ensure that people currently obtaining livelihood from the sawmills have good opportunities to obtain comparable livelihood from other, new enterprises. Social Forestry Support Teams (comprising a forestry specialist, a community mobilization specialist, and a business development specialist) established under the project will help to facilitate access of vulnerable forest users, (including people dependent on small sawmills for their livelihood) to income generation opportunities. Individuals running commercial entities engaged in illegal logging are likely to have other livelihood opportunities if enforcement of forest regulations increases. They often hire socially marginalized persons such as the unemployed, homeless etc. as temporary laborers. It is beyond the scope of the project to solve the overall unemployment and other social issues in the project area, especially in the towns. However, some 6,000 additional persons may be employed for an average of three months each, mostly in thinning operations. If this employment is directed toward households most in need, the project could potentially benefit up to 60% of households below the poverty line in the Irtysh pine project areas.

Irtysh pine forests – impacts related to other uses. The project is likely to increase the supplies of fuelwood as a byproduct of improved forest management, although increasing supplies of coal and electivity combined with urbanization is likely to reduce the demand for fuelwood in the future in any case. The need to protect forest seedlings or reduce risks of forest fires may lead to some restrictions on grazing, but the sparse human population means that there are ample grazing areas outside of forests, and no adverse impacts on livelihoods from this are anticipated. No restrictions of access for fruit and mushroom gathering are anticipated. The project will also support a pilot initiative in participatory forest management in a few villages, through which local people would obtain rights to a share of forest products in exchange for undertaking specific protection and/or management responsibilities. This initiative will include a provision for supporting forest-based and other livelihoods alternatives to enable participating households to forego livelihood activities that would not be consistent with the forest protection and management responsibilities. Social Forestry Support Teams will help to mediate any conflicts that might arise between vulnerable users of the PFM areas, and government agencies or other stakeholders.

Improvement of Saxaul Rangeland Management Component – context. The project supports 30 demonstrations in Kzyl Orda Oblast which for each demonstration involves herder agreements to enable restoration and development of about 200 ha of saxaul rangelands, community management of grazing pressures, and provision of livestock watering wells or comparable support for some 2500-7500 ha of associated rangelands. Each

demonstration would involve anywhere from one to ten rural households. During the 1990s, livestock numbers declined drastically. They are now increasing gradually, but past arrangements for managing rangelands (by large state and cooperative farms) are no longer in place and some rangelands are at risk of degradation in the future. The 1990s shortage of other sources of fuel led to increased harvest of saxaul woodlands. The government imposed a ban on the harvesting of saxaul in 2002, but local people in remote areas have no alternative but to continue to use saxaul for fuel on a subsistence basis. A strong cultural demand for saxaul for charcoal cooking leads to a continued commercial market in saxaul as well, often in violation of official rules, but these enterprises generally do not involve vulnerable people.

Improvement of Saxaul Rangeland Management Component – impact. The only direct restriction of access resulting from the project will be negotiated restrictions imposed for rehabilitation on the 200 ha plots of saxaul rangelands in the thirty demonstration sites. Participating herders will define these restrictions and impose them on themselves, in exchange for the support for wells for livestock (or equivalent) in an associated 2500-7000 ha area of rangelands. These wells would make accessible a larger area of saxaul rangelands, thereby allowing more rotational grazing. The process of identification of demonstration sites will avoid sites that would be subject to traditional use by other, non-participating herders. The small size of the 200 ha plots for rehabilitation means that the project will not have any appreciable impact on access to saxaul for fuelwood. Rangeland Support Teams (comprising a rangeland specialist and a community mobilization specialist) established under the project will help to mediate any conflicts that might arise between vulnerable users of the demonstration areas, and government agencies or other stakeholders. On the broader issue of the ban on saxaul harvesting, the project includes support for policy analysis and stakeholder consultations on this issue resulting in recommendations by December 2006, which is likely to lead to an easing of those restrictions, especially restrictions affecting the more vulnerable, subsistence users.

Planting on the Dry Aral Seabed. This component would develop methods to plant the Dry Aral Seabed. It does not have any risk of adverse impacts on livelihoods, because it will take place far from existing settlements. It will benefit local people by increasing employment opportunities.

National Improvements in Policy, Information, and Organization. This component will increase the capacity for policy and public expenditure analysis, improve the information facilities, and develop human resources and organizational management. It is theoretically possible that it may indirectly result in policies associated with restrictions of access or improved enforcement of existing restrictions, but in general this component is likely to increase forestry agency interactions with stakeholders, improve transparency and good governance, and foster participatory approaches.

Competitive Grant Program. The project establishes a competitive grant program for small innovative forest development subprojects (e.g. timber usufruct sharing, ecotourism, value addition processing of birch, community involvement in reforestation or environmental education, tungai floodplain protection, etc.) to be implemented by NGOs, state forest enterprises, research agencies, or the private sector. The operational manual will include procedures to identify any subproject that might result in restrictions of access affecting vulnerable people. Any subprojects with the potential for such restrictions would be required to assess the extent of potential impacts, and incorporate conflict management, mitigation, and monitoring measures into the subproject design as appropriate.

Allocation of Implementation and Review Arrangements.

The Project Director will have overall responsibility for implementing the project, including Access Restriction Process Framework. The Project Direct will receive support from the Social Forestry Support Team for the Irtysh pine forest component, from the Rangeland Support Team for the saxaul rangelands component, and from the Competitive Grant Program Manager and grant recipients for the competitive grants component. The regional working groups in the Irtysh pine forest area and in Kzyl Orda (comprising project stakeholders including representatives of local governments and NGOs), and the National Project Advisory Committee will be available to provide advice and to assist in conflict management should grievances or other problems arise.

Monitoring

The results framework includes yearly monitoring of the number of people directly employed for project activities under each component. The socioeconomic evaluation at mid-term and completion will include additional estimation of the impacts of the project on poverty, including consideration of whether incremental jobs are going disproportionately benefiting those below the poverty line, whether there have been changes in resource access restrictions affecting poor, impact of competitive grant subprojects on vulnerable persons, etc. Other actions outlined under the above Access Restriction Process Framework will be monitored as part of the contract management of various consultancies (e.g., feasibility study on potential use of forest products for enterprise development, Forest Support Team, Rangeland Support Team), and overall Bank supervision (compliance with project covenant on Access Restriction Process Framework).

