

Module Proposal



TZ module: **Supporting protected areas to contribute to the conservation of ecosystem services in Mongolia**

Project number: **2023.2203.0**

Submission of a
Offer for a TC follow-up module

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List of abbreviations

AV	<i>Commission Manager (Auftragsverantwortlicher)</i>
BACCP	<i>Biodiversity and Adaptation to Climate Change Project</i>
BIOFIN	<i>The Biodiversity Finance Initiative</i>
CBD	<i>Convention on Biological Diversity</i>
CD	<i>Capacity Development</i>
CTF	<i>Conservation Trust Fund</i>
GEF	<i>Global Environmental Facility</i>
IUCN	<i>International Union for Conservation of Nature</i>
LTE	<i>Long-term Expert</i>
MET	<i>Ministry of Environment and Tourism</i>
NGO	<i>Non-governmental organization</i>
SPACES	<i>Supporting Protected Areas for the Conservation of Ecosystem Services</i>
STE	<i>Short-term Expert</i>
STREAM	<i>SusTainable Resilient Ecosystem and Agriculture Management</i>
TEI	<i>Team Europe Initiative of the EU Commission</i>
TNC	<i>The Nature Conservancy (non-profit and international conservation organization based in the USA)</i>
UNDP	<i>United Nations Development Programme</i>

1. Short description

Module title	Supporting protected areas to contribute to the conservation of ecosystem services in Mongolia
Core area	Protecting our livelihoods - environmental and natural resources
Area of intervention (initiative, area, if applicable)	Biodiversity and forest protection
Development cooperation programme	The program is under revision
Development cooperation programme objective	The program is being revised, a program goal has not been defined.
Core problem	Mongolia's new protected areas act has not yet been implemented due to the lack of practical implementing provisions with regard to the participatory implementation of sustainable and gender-sensitive management concepts.
Module Objective	In the landscapes of selected protected areas in Mongolia, reformed, sustainable and gender-sensitive management concepts have been implemented with the support of the local population.
Contribution to the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda	The project contributes to achieving the goals of improving the living environment and maintaining the ecological balance by 2030, as enshrined in Mongolia's vision for sustainable development.
Target group	Rural population around protected areas and employees of protected area administrations, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and their departments for protected area management and forests.
Lead executing agency	<i>Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET)</i>
Methodological approach (including instruments)	Advice on the operationalisation of the new Protected Areas Act, promotion of concrete reform approaches in the areas of forest, waste, tourism and co-management as well as support for protected area-related environmental education and communication using two international LTE, four national LTE, three EH, STE, financing and material assets.
Key outputs	1) Operationalization of the Protected Area Act, 2) Implementation of forest, waste, tourism and co-management in selected protected areas, 3) Environmental education and environmental communication.
Cooperations	None
Duration	From 03/2024 to 02/2028 (4 years)

2. Positioning the module

2.1 Positioning the module within the DC programme or the strategic framework

Following the withdrawal of the decision in the BMZ 2030 process to end bilateral cooperation with Mongolia, BMZ is currently working on an adjustment of the country strategy followed by a programme revision. The TC module "*Supporting Protected Areas for the Conservation of Ecosystem Services (SPACES II)*" builds capacities for protected area management and advises the national policy dialogue in the areas of nature conservation and natural resource use, including forest management. It advises local protected area administrations on protected area management and promotes awareness among all relevant stakeholders of the need to protect ecosystems and biodiversity. This objective continues to correspond to the current needs in the focus area of biodiversity in Mongolia.

Like its predecessor, this follow-up module is part of Mongolia's country portfolio and is assigned to Action Field 1 "Biodiversity" under core topic 5 "Protection of our natural resources". It also contributes to Action Area 2 "Forest Protection" as well as to Initiative Topics 5 "Protection against Climate Risks/Loss and Damage from Climate Change" and 4 "Restoration of Ecosystems and Nature-Based Solutions". The follow-up module is assigned to the Team Europe Initiative (TEI) 127 *Sustainable natural resource management and value chain development ("Green Economic Growth")*.

The module proposal focuses on the nexus of ecosystem conservation-resource management-climate adaptation and contributes to the implementation of relevant international and national strategies (see below). It addresses relevant causes of conflict in the protection and use of natural resources in the rural areas reached. The project is suitable for strengthening the resilience of the local population in and around protected areas, both economically and socially.

The proposed approaches support the achievement of SDG 13 (climate action) and 15 (life on land). The module contributes to the medium-term national implementation strategy of the 2030 Agenda (*Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision 2030*) and the national long-term strategy "*Vision 2050*", in particular to goals 6 "*Green Development*", 8 "*Regional and Local Development*" and 2 "*Human Development*". It also supports Mongolia in the implementation of international conventions on biodiversity conservation and climate protection. The approaches are in line with BMZ's sector strategies, in particular with the BMZ-supported CBD initiative (2021) "*Global Framework for Biodiversity, WHP*" (2022) and with the concept for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity for Sustainable Development "*Biological diversity – our shared responsibility*" (2022) as well as the forest action plan of German development cooperation "*One World Needs Forests*" (2017).

2.2 Other development measures in the module's specific area of intervention

On behalf of BMZ, KfW engaged as part of the *Biodiversity and Adaptation to Climate Change Project* (BACCP II PN: 2016.67.054, BACCP III PN: 2018.68.272) to support improved protected area management in Mongolia, taking climate change into account, while improving the living conditions of the local population. Phase IV has been promised. The

geographical focus of BACCP II and III is on the west and southwest of the country. Possible synergies with the TC module exist at the output level. KfW can promote investments that facilitate the implementation of TC-induced approaches, especially in the area of waste management, but also in the areas of tourism, forest management and environmental education and communication.

In 2022, the EU's increased engagement in Mongolia in the field of action "Biodiversity" led to a TEI focusing on sustainable forest management and the development of forest and agricultural value chains, as well as to the signing of the *EU-Mongolia Forest Partnership*. The first EU project assigned to the TEI is STREAM (*SusTainable Resilient Ecosystem and Agriculture Management*), the forestry part of which will be implemented until April 2024 as a co-financed component of the predecessor module SPACES I. The EU plans to continue STREAM from May 2024. *GIZ is pursuing the opportunity to implement the forestry and vocational training components as co-financed components of the TC module SPACES II via a Multi-Partner Contribution Agreement (output level).*

At the time of writing, a *Conservation Trust Fund* (CTF) is being prepared in collaboration between the Government of Mongolia and international organizations, in particular *The Nature Conservancy* (TNC), to mobilize and manage resources and implement long-term conservation programs in the context of sustainable development. The CTF will be an independent, legally anchored financing system to achieve long-term conservation goals. The CTF is part of the "Initiative Eternal Mongolia", a project coordinated by the Mongolian government and TNC to finance sustainability (*Project Finance for Permanence*). The establishment of the CTF was based on contributions from numerous other partners, such as SPACES I, the *Wildlife Conservation Society*, the *Mongolian Biodiversity Future Foundation*, the *Mongolian Biodiversity Future Foundation*, the Mongolian component of the *Biodiversity Finance Initiative* , implemented by UNDP through the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) *with funds from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV)* (BIOFIN) and selected government agencies (*Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Ministry of Economy and Development, Bank of Mongolia*). Similar to BACCP, the CTF could finance investment measures and ongoing costs for management approaches initiated by the TC module (output level).

In the first phase, BIOFIN identified financing needs and methods for the management and conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services. In the current second phase, BIOFIN is working on questions about the use of *natural resource fees* and the CTF. Synergies result from joint work on improving financing mechanisms for protected areas (output level).

The Hanns Seidel Foundation supports ranger training in protected areas in questions of environmental law and law enforcement. Synergies will arise in the dissemination of the new legislation, in particular with regard to the possible management of forests in protected areas (output level).

No negative interactions are expected.

Transducer	Project	Expected synergies at the impact levels
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BMZ / KfW	BACCP	Financing investments to support management initiatives in the fields of waste management, forest management, tourism and environmental education and communication (output level).
EU	- TEI - EU-Mongolia Forest Partnership- STREAM	EU co-financing of the SPACES TC module resulted in an additional SPACES component in the field of sustainable forest management; EU plans to continue from 05/2024 (output level)
TNC	Eternal Mongolia Initiative, <i>Conservation Trust Fund</i>	Financing investments to support management initiatives in the areas of waste management, forest management, tourism and environmental education and communication (output level).
GEF/UNDP	BIOFIN	Improvement of financing mechanisms for protected areas (output level).
BMZ / Hanns Seidel Foundation	Environmental project	dissemination of the new legislation, in particular with regard to the possible management of forests in protected areas (output level).

3. Problem and potential analysis (related to the module)

Initial situation in the intervention area: Mongolia is the nineteenth largest country in the world (1,564,116 km²) and has the lowest population density with two inhabitants per km². With an extreme continental climate, the diverse ecoregions are habitats for a variety of animal and plant species. This biodiversity and the associated ecosystem services form the cultural and, in addition to mineral resources, the economic basis for the country's population and development. To protect this diversity, the government established 120 special protected areas (22 strictly protected areas, 36 national parks, 48 nature reserves, 14 natural monuments) on 21% of the country's surface area (32.8 million ha). Local administrations also established 1,416 local protected areas on 15.5% of the country's area (24.3 million ha). The legal framework for the protected area system was provided by the National Law on Special Protected Areas (1994). The legal status covering buffer zones enclosing protected areas is defined in the National Buffer Zones Act (1997).

The protected area legislation is flanked by national environmental laws and programmes, including *Mongolia's Sustainable Development Vision 2030*, *Vision 2050 – Long-term Development Policy of Mongolia*, the Forest Law (2007) and the National Biodiversity Programme 2015-2025. Mongolia has also ratified the International Conventions on Biological Diversity, on International Trade in Endangered Species and on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and the Framework Convention on Climate Change. This means that the legal requirements for the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity are formally met.

Nevertheless, Mongolia's biodiversity is increasingly endangered despite extensive protected areas. The unsustainable use of natural resources poses a danger. The forest zones are not

managed sustainably and inefficiently (value creation). Sharply increasing livestock populations lead to overgrazing with biodiversity loss and desertification as consequences. Hunting, habitat loss and food competition from livestock endanger the continued existence of wild animal species. The mineral resource economy contributes to the endangerment due to high land requirements. In some places heavily frequented by tourists, unregulated waste and wastewater disposal pollutes the environment. Climate change is another threat. The annual mean temperature rose by 2.07°C from 1940 to 2013. An increase of 5.0°C to 7.5°C is forecast by the year 2100. Manifestations of climate change are also an increase in precipitation in winter and a decrease in summer, as well as an increase in extreme weather events. Shifts in ecosystems and an increase in pest infestation as well as forest and steppe fires are to be expected. The impairment of ecosystem services due to unsustainable resource use and climate change is also a substantial impairment of the livelihoods of the population, especially the rural population (approx. 33%), of which approx. 35% live below the poverty line.

The protected area system is not in a position to adequately counteract these threats: (i) The financing of the protected areas is consistently inadequate and unsustainable. The national budget is usually the only source of funding for protected area administrations. Over 90% of this is used for salaries. However, the existing Protected Areas Act does not allow the protected areas to be self-financed. (ii) Protected areas are not required and do not have the capacity and competence to develop and implement evidence-based management concepts (protected area ordinance, management plans). The protected area administration shares territorial responsibility for the protected areas with the neighbouring local authorities, so no one is really responsible for efficient management. There are also no national responsibilities for biodiversity monitoring, as a basis for evidence-based action, while the protected area administrations are encouraged to do so, but currently without corresponding specifications or standards. (iii) The participation of the population is insufficiently regulated and suboptimal, because (iv) the use of natural (forest) resources in protected areas to improve the livelihoods of the neighbouring population is only possible to a very limited extent and (v) tourism concepts are not sufficiently geared towards the promotion of the local economy. Finally, (vi) it is not possible to complement the limited state capacities in the field of protected area management by non-governmental initiatives (co-management or *delegated management*). In addition, the protected area administrations and other stakeholders are not sufficiently able to effectively communicate to visitors and the local population about the need for nature conservation and the resulting measures.

The MET has recognized these weaknesses and has therefore drafted a new protected areas act that addresses the above-mentioned weaknesses, which was recently submitted to the government to enable a vote in parliament. The law is expected to be passed before the start of the module's term.

In 2011, a law to promote gender equality was passed. Since 2015, an anti-discrimination law has prohibited gender discrimination. A strategy to promote gender equality in the environmental sector was adopted by the MET in 2014. The implementation of this legal framework should be strengthened.

Derivation of the module objective: The new Protected Areas Act of Mongolia, which has been submitted to the government, has not yet been implemented due to the lack of practical implementing provisions with regard to the participatory implementation of sustainable and gender-sensitive management concepts (core problem). Therefore, these implementing regulations must be developed and piloted so that they can then be implemented nationally with the help of the piloting experience. The module goal is to implement reformed sustainable gender-sensitive management concepts in the landscapes of selected protected areas in Mongolia with the support of the local population.

Causes and evaluation of changeability: The weaknesses of the Mongolian network of protected areas have been recognized and have led to the development of a new protected areas act. This is expected to be adopted this year (2023). However, there is a lack of appropriate practical implementing provisions for operationalising the law, management concepts of the protected area administrations based on them and the political and social pressure to implement the reforms consistently. A lack of awareness among professionals and the population about the need to protect ecosystems is an obstacle to change processes. These causes can be changed within the framework of the planned TC module.

Climate change reduces ecosystem services and reduces biodiversity in and around protected areas. This cause can only be changed to a very limited extent and only indirectly by the TC module. The possibilities of adapting to or counteracting the effects of climate change have so far only been worked on in rudimentary ways by the Mongolian government and other donors. Climate change thus poses a risk to the sustainability of the TC module.

Overgrazing is one of the biggest problems for biodiversity conservation in Mongolia, inside and outside the protected areas. There are currently no solutions in sight, and there is a lack of political will to address this problem, which affects the basic cultural and economic understanding of the population. This problem has therefore so far only been dealt with in rudimentary form by the Mongolian government. A number of projects by other donors have addressed the issue, but so far without significant success. Overgrazing thus poses a further risk to the sustainability of the TC module.

Results achieved so far: In the previous module, the development of the new Protected Areas Act was supported by policy advice and pilot projects were carried out on sustainable forest management, sustainable ecotourism geared to the local economy, solving the waste problem in protected areas, raising awareness and generally strengthening park management. This led to the draft law, which is now available but has not yet been published, which, on the basis of the above-mentioned pilot projects, addresses essential problems of the protected area network in a solution-oriented and evidence-based manner, as well as to model solutions at the local level (strategy document waste in Khovd, ecotourism concept and thinning).

4. Objectives, impact assumptions, indicators and partners of the module

4.1 Objectives, target group, results hypotheses and indicators

Module objective: In the landscapes of selected protected areas in Mongolia, reformed sustainable gender-sensitive management concepts have been implemented with the support of the local population.

Module target indicators:

1. 5 gender-sensitive implementing ordinances of the revised Law on Protected Areas Management have come into force.

Baseline: 0 gender-sensitive implementing provisions (The reform of the law on protected area management has not yet been adopted.)

Target value: 5 gender-sensitive implementing provisions are in force (07/2025 one implementing regulation, 07/2026 three implementing regulations, 07/2027 five implementing regulations).

2. Timber and non-timber products in a pilot forest in the limited use zone of a protected area are used legally and sustainably by men and women on the basis of 3 use agreements.

Base value: 0 (so far, there are no user agreements that regulate legal and sustainable use)

Target value: 3 user agreements (02/2027)

3. The proportion of parents out of 1,500 children addressed, each represented by one parent, who have taken part in annual Children-Parents' Days and who are in favour of the preservation of the respective protected area, will increase to 60%.

Base value: 20%, i.e. 300 (before participation in parent-child days)

Target value: 60%, i.e. 900 (2026, after participation in parent-child days)

The baseline and target values of module target indicators 1-3 are provisional. They will be reviewed in the first year of implementation and adjusted if necessary in the first report.

It was not possible to use the indicators of the implementation strategy of the 2030 Agenda because the project is too fragmented and the indicators of the implementation strategy are too aggregated.

Target groups

The overarching target group of the TC module is the rural population living in protected areas as well as in peripheral zones around and corridors between the protected areas. It is highly dependent on the use of natural resources. 33% of Mongolia's population, i.e. about 1,033,500 people, live in rural areas. 35% of the rural population lives below the poverty line. Almost a third of the rural population, i.e. more than 300,000 people, live as nomads traditionally from livestock breeding. 95% of the country's inhabitants are ethnic Mongols; 5% are ethnic minorities of various Turkic peoples, mainly Kazakhs and Altai Uriankhai. They live

without restrictions on cultural and religious practices and without ethnic restrictions on the use of natural resources, especially in western Mongolia, and are involved in project planning and decision-making processes with equal opportunities where relevant.

The project is supporting the implementation of the new protected areas act on a pilot basis in the two selected protected areas "Khan Khentii" and "Tarvagtai Nuruu" as well as in the area of waste management in the Khovd region. The project operationalises approaches with a view to implementing them across the country. This benefits the entire overarching target group.

The specific target group is the resident population of the two selected protected areas, in particular the part of the population (including the management and employees of logging companies and sawmills) that is involved in the use of natural resources in the protected areas, especially forest resources. Here, about 5,000 families are directly affected.

Through participatory processes and the promotion of income-generating sustainable resource use, the needs of the target group are taken into account in the planning and implementation of the TC module on an equal footing. At the same time, an active partnership is emerging to protect ecosystem services.

Women are usually involved in political bodies and decisions in Mongolia. They are therefore naturally involved in the work of the TC module. The participation of women is further strengthened, especially through the inclusion of gender-specific bodies in legislative processes supported by the project. However, since women are often more dependent on the use of natural resources due to a lack of alternative income opportunities, the TC module will design support activities specifically selected with and for women and thus specifically promote the participation of women in economic processes.

The target group of the measures in the areas of waste management, co-management, and environmental communication and education are experts from the authorities involved in the protected areas (> 600 people) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), in particular the 25 governmental and non-governmental institutions that are part of the *My Green Mongolia* network, as well as, for example, the visitors to the two protected areas advised (their number, however, is more likely to be in the thousands than in the tens of thousands). However, the scope of the measures goes beyond this, as they are aimed at the general public, especially young people.

As intermediaries, the TC module uses MET staff, specialists and managers, in particular employees of the Department of Protected Area Management and the local protected area administrations, as well as the staff of the newly created National Forest Agency assigned to the MET. In addition, there are employees of the local administrations involved in protected area and buffer zone management and other institutions or organizations such as buffer zone committees, NGOs and tourism companies that work with the selected protected areas.

Assumptions of impact:

Output 1 aims to operationalise the revised Protected Area Act by means of associated implementing ordinances. The assumption of impact is that the innovations intended by the new Protected Areas Act (see Chapter 5.2, Output 1) have been concretised and

operationalised with the help of implementing ordinances to such an extent that they can be put into force in a binding manner (module target indicator 1) and contribute to a more efficient management of the protected areas. The potential of the intended innovations to actually contribute to improved management of protected areas has been proven by international experience (guidelines of the *International Union for Conservation of Nature*, IUCN, on protected area management and the binding agreed action plans of the Convention on Biological Diversity (*Convention on Biological Diversity*), CBD)). The assumption here is that the government will succeed in passing the legislative reform of the Protected Areas Act by the beginning of 2024 at the latest and then in adopting new implementing ordinances in a timely manner, with the participation of external experts.

Output 2 is aimed at improving the implementation of forest, waste, tourism and co-management in the selected protected areas. The central assumption here is that the protected area management of selected protected areas uses the open spaces, requirements and approaches of the legislative reform, including the new implementing regulations, to make important management areas more efficient and to allow more (economic) participation of the population and organised civil society (module target indicator 2). Previous experience with the implementation of corresponding pilots in the run-up to the legislative reform (see SPACES module reports and annual reports of the SFF-funded EH associated with SPACES) proves the willingness of protected area management to seize opportunities for improvement. The assumption here is that private and civil society actors are willing to cooperate (forest use, waste management) and take responsibility (co-management) under the changed framework conditions.

Output 3 aims to establish a tested integrated approach to environmental education and communication at the national level. The impact hypothesis is that environmental education and communication help to mobilise political support for the implementation of the new Protected Areas Act and the improved management concepts based on it, to increase the acceptance of protected areas among the population (module target indicator 3) and thus to reduce the pressure on protected areas (evidence: IUCN handouts and CBD action plans). Environmental education and communication with a focus on working with children and young people also has an indirect effect at the level of their parents and thus sensitizes them to biodiversity conservation and the sustainable management of protected areas (IUCN Handbook on Protected Area Management).

The BMZ's strategic guidelines were taken into account.

4.2 Executing agency and partner structure

The **lead executing agency** of the TC module is the Mongolian Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET).

When the contract is awarded, the lead executing agency, the *Ministry of Environment and Tourism*, is given the right to demand the services to be provided to it directly from GIZ. GIZ and the political executing agency will regulate the details in an implementation agreement. The BMZ can exercise its rights under the mandate, in particular those under the General Treaty, without the consent of the political executing agency.

The MET is responsible for policies, laws and regulations in the areas of the environment, biodiversity, protected areas, forests, environmental impact assessments and water. Capacity and coordination weaknesses (procedural uncertainty, conflicts of competence, insufficient staffing as well as a lack of training and management experience) affect the work of the MET.

The institution of the downstream partner structure is the Department of Protected Area Management, which belongs to the MET. It is responsible for 31 regional protected area administrations with 120 national protected areas. Its tasks are the development, operationalisation and implementation of the legal and political framework in protected areas and the technical support of protected area management. It provides guidelines and technical instructions for this purpose. Insufficient capacities and competencies are limiting factors for the work of the department management and the eight specialist employees.

Due to the focus of the module on forest management in protected areas, a central partner structure is the MET Forestry Agency, whose task is the sustainable management and in particular the sustainable economic valorisation of forests. The forestry agency is only in the process of being established. Its organisational structure and in particular its role in the management of forests in protected areas is not yet clearly defined, but as a key player in the sustainable management of forests, it is an important strategic partner for the module, also as a counterweight to the more protection-oriented Department of Protected Areas Management.

Other institutions of the downstream partner structure are the protected area administrations of the two selected protected areas. They consist of a director, an administrative department, specialists, rangers and non-technical assistants. Their financial and human resources are inadequate. Skills gaps among local staff are striking. The administrations lack the professional, financial and technical capacity for effective management of protected areas (CD requirements). A comprehensive strengthening of these administrations overwhelms the module, which therefore concentrates on supporting the protected area administrations in the priority areas of forest, waste, tourism and co-management for the module.

Provincial and district administrations as well as buffer zone committees for the two selected protected areas as well as in the Khovd region (waste management) are also among the institutions of the downstream partner structure. While local government agencies must follow national government regulations on access to and use of natural resources, they still have direct authority over local ecosystem management. This allows districts to determine the location and extent of the consumption of many biological resources, e.g. in grazing activities. However, most local governments lack the capacity to do so.

The Department of Public Administration and Management of the MET, as an institution of the downstream partner structure of the FC module, is another partner of the TC module. This applies, for example, to the regulatory work of the MET, the management of relevant databases and international cooperation.

Other partners include universities, NGOs and projects from other donors, especially those that *have joined forces in the "My Green Mongolia" network*.

5. Design of the module

5.1 Methodological approach and duration

Duration: From 03/2024 to 02/2028 (4 years)

Strategy: The module's *Capacity Development* (CD) strategy encompasses all three levels of capacity development. The strategic capacity development is aimed at the specialists and managers of the Ministry of the Environment. This essentially involves an efficiency-oriented redesign of the legislation on Protected Areas Management. At the level of organisations, protected area administrations and a local government will be empowered to make selected areas of Protected Areas Management (management of natural resources, ecotourism, environmental education, co-management and municipal waste management including waste from protected areas) more efficient on the basis of the amended legislation. Within the framework of selected value chains, private and civil society structures are enabled to perform their roles more efficiently and in a self-determined manner. Local and national initiatives as well as private and civil society associations are strengthened in order to influence social dialogue and the improvement of the framework conditions. This also includes dialogue and exchange between the state, the private sector and civil society, as well as between the national and municipal/local levels, in order to strengthen the commitment to preserving the environment as a livelihood. Through consulting, (*on-the-job*) training and education, including the exchange of experience, the actors at all levels are strengthened in the exercise of their individual tasks, responsibilities and rights. This concerns the members of the committees for the redesign of the legal framework, the state, municipal, private and civil society actors in Protected Areas Management and value chains, as well as the local population on the periphery of the protected areas. In value chains, communication and coordination between the actors at the different stages up to marketing are to be strengthened in order to generate higher revenues.

A do-no-harm approach is followed in all outputs. Women are specifically promoted and qualified to derive greater benefits from their economic activities, also through a higher depth of added value. Emphasis is also placed on strengthening their digital skills in order to be able to use modern solutions to increase value creation and improve marketing. Gender-sensitive planning is carried out for all activities. Context- and conflict-sensitive monitoring is set up, especially in the transition from unregulated use of natural resources in protected areas to sustainable regulated use by local actors under the supervision of Protected Areas Management.

Instrument use:

The staff deployment of the module includes two international and four national LTE, 3 EH and STE.

The AV (LTE) takes over the management and monitoring of the project, the process design as well as the capacity and organisational development and the coordination with FZ and donors. Successful political advice (legal framework, protected areas) and capacity development of the managers of the MET (Output 1) requires a relationship of trust and, according to experience, is continuous and with fluctuating intensity. It requires neutrality and seniority

and is therefore also carried out by the AV. The AV works together with a national LTE, which builds cultural, linguistic and professional bridges to the partner. A second international LTE is responsible for the activities related to Outputs 2 and supports the AV in project management. A national LTE assists professionally, linguistically and culturally. At the level of the protected areas, three EHs advise the protected area administrations and local stakeholders and support the implementation of an environmental communication strategy at the local level in the respective protected areas (Output 2, 3). The AV is consulted on political content. Advice on the implementation of an environmental communication strategy for the protected area system (Output 3) is provided by a national LTE and STE. Another national LTE is working on the topic of integrating climate change into Protected Areas Management. In order to achieve all outputs, STE is used for specific tasks. Financing will be allocated as local grants in variable amounts to NGOs for accompanying activities in all three outputs. The cost-effectiveness of the use of instruments results from the concentration on national experts and the mobilisation of synergies with national and international financial instruments such as the national *Conservation Trust Fund*.

Output 1 aims to operationalise the revised Protected Area Act by means of associated implementing ordinances. Related implementing provisions, which are intended to take equal account of women and men, are: i.) management of forests in restricted use zones of protected areas, also to promote poverty reduction ii) introduction of protected area regulations (including environmental and climate impact assessment), iii) co-management of protected areas to promote human rights, inclusion, anti-corruption and integrity, iv) self-financing of protected areas, v) participation of the local population in the management of protected areas (inclusion, safeguarding of the human rights), vi) evidence-based management approaches, vii) territorial responsibility for management units, viii) quality standards of operators in protected areas and ix) biodiversity monitoring within protected areas (digitalisation). The gender sensitivity of the ordinances is strengthened by increased participation of committees with a gender focus, e.g. *Women's Caucus* of the Mongolian Parliament, National Gender Expert Group, Gender Equality Council of the MET, in the drafting process of all regulations. In the context of output, operationalized means that the implementing regulations have been adopted, made available to the interested public and implemented on a pilot basis. The pilot implementation includes the testing of the implementing regulations at the level of selected protected areas, including monitoring and the development of recommendations for any necessary clarifications. The project provides support in this area by providing organisational, technical and methodological advice to the committees and committee members, including facilitating (organising, financing) an international and regional exchange of experience, logistical and financial support for the work of the committees, in particular by providing technical and financial support for the moderation of stakeholders participation. In addition, there is financial support for the dissemination of the texts at the level of the selected protected areas, technical and organisational support for the training of their local state, civil society and private management actors, as well as expert advice on implementation monitoring and the development of clarifications for the efficient implementation of the implementing regulations.

Output 2 aims to improve the implementation of forest, waste, tourism and co-management in selected protected areas. This applies to the protected areas "Khan Khentii" and

"Tarvagtai Nuruu", in which the areas of forest management, tourism and environmental education and communication, which are central to the module, are supported. The area of waste management is being worked on as an example in the province of Khovd, in the far west of the country, while co-management approaches are being strengthened nationwide, regardless of geographical location. The starting points for all areas are the amended Protected Areas Act and the implementing ordinances drawn up for this purpose. Central starting points for this are a variety of CD measures. For (i) employees of the protected areas in the selected areas and (ii) civil society and private actors of the relevant value chains in and around the protected areas "Khan Khentii" and "Tarvagtai Nuruu", the CD focuses on a sustainable increase in value creation under the framework conditions - changed by the implementing regulations of the new protected areas act. (iii) A municipality and an operator will be supported in the development and implementation of a concept for the sustainable management of an improved landfill (separation of organic material, inorganic material and ash, including the recycling of plastic and aluminium) that also absorbs waste from at least one protected area. In addition, (iii) NGOs are supported by CDs in the process leading up to the formal commissioning of the co-management of protected areas by the Ministry (transfer of management responsibility to the non-governmental sponsor) and the further process of implementation.

Output 3 aims to ensure that a tested integrated approach to environmental education and communication is available at the national level. Integrated approach means that coordinated environmental campaigns and activities are aimed at several *stakeholders*, in this case the general public as well as political decision-makers, children and their parents and protected area visitors. Is available at the national level means: Environmental campaigns are taken over by the national initiative "*My Green Mongolia*". Central to this are CD approaches in the landscapes of the protected areas "Khan Khentii" and "Tarvagtai Nuruu". The CD on Environmental Education and Communication is aimed at (i) the protected area administrations themselves, (ii) rangers (including volunteer rangers), (iii) staff of information centres and (iv) schools and eco-clubs. All groups are supported in terms of environmental education, media campaigns and public relations. The first two groups focus on forest management, evidence-based management approaches, biodiversity monitoring, gender, environmental education, tourism and waste. In the latter two groups, the focus is on the implementation of gender- and climate-sensitive environmental education programmes in the buffer zones of the protected areas.

Outputs	Main activities	Timeframe/ Milestones	Instruments used (number/order of magnitude)
Output 1	- Technical advice and logistical support of the MET in the finalization of the Protected Area Act, if necessary - Logistical support and technical advice to the relevant working groups (incl. gender experts) - Technical and technical advice on logistics and moderation of stakeholder participation - Organization of the regional exchange of the participants of the ministerial working groups - Training of local staff of selected protected areas	08/2024: Committees for the development of the relevant implementing regulations have been established 08/2026: Implementing regulations are submitted to the Minister 02/2028: Recommended clarifications on the implementing regulations have been submitted to the MET.	International LTE: 41 FKM National LTE: 106 FKM STE: 30 FKM Materials and equipment: XXX EUR Financing: XXX EUR
Output 2	- Development of concepts for environmentally friendly tourism- Technical support for the presence of the protected area administrations in social media - Advice to the protected area administration on the development of a climate-sensitive pilot management plan for a forest- Technical support for a neighbouring municipality in the integration of a waste management concept - Technical advice to strengthen emerging co-management initiatives in protected areas and the emerging CTF	02/2025: Management concepts have been developed 09/2025: Landfill management concept agreed with stakeholders 02/2027: Management concepts have been implemented and monitored	International LTE: 26 FKM National LTE: 266 FKM STE: 70 FKM EH: 60 FKM Materials and equipment: XXX EUR Financing: EUR XXX
Output 3	- Technical advice to improve the concepts of the information centres - Capacity development for staff of information centres and protected areas in the field of environmental campaigns - Technical advice and financing of training programmes for the rangers - Technical advice and financing of gender- and climate-sensitive environmental education programmes (for schools and eco-clubs) - Supporting the protected area administrations in environmental education media campaigns and public relations work	02/2026 Concepts for and competencies of the staff of the information centres developed 02/2027: Training programs for rangers carried out 02/2028: Environmental education programmes and campaigns carried out	International LTE: 26 FKM National LTE: 221 FKM STE: 73 FKM EH: 22 FKM Materials and equipment: XXX EUR Financing: EUR XXX

5.2 Ensuring the long-term effectiveness of the measures (outcomes)

Advice on the implementation of the new Protected Areas Act through the development of implementing regulations is largely evidence-based, either on the basis of the preparatory work carried out as part of the previous module or by pilots in at least three protected areas as part of the new module planned here. It can therefore be assumed that the implementing provisions will thus be practicable and thus long-lasting.

Adapted sectoral management models (forest management, tourism, waste disposal, environmental education and communication) for selected protected areas are consistently integrated into the respective protected area ordinances and management plans and are thus anchored in the long term.

The institutional safeguarding of the concepts for environmental education and communication by the "My Green Mongolia" network ensures their sustainable nationwide implementation.

The above-mentioned anchoring of the project results and the CD measures carried out by the project at the individual and organisational level (see Chapter 5.1) ensure that the TC module is stringently geared towards sustainability.

5.3 Partner inputs, combined financing

	Concretization	Estimating the value
Combined financing	-	-
Partner inputs	secondment of MET staff (18 FKM); Office space for GIZ staff in project areas, including supply services	

5.4 Commission value and detailed cost estimate

The contract value also includes costs for participation in the *Sector Network Rural Development Asia* (SNRD) and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, South Caucasus and Afghanistan – Green (SENECA Green) with the aim of ensuring the technical quality and knowledge management required for the implementation of the contract. The contract value may also include costs for interim and final evaluations of the project as an essential instrument for monitoring the success and accountability of the German TC.

The preparation and follow-up of the project is also part of the contract. The preparatory costs of the measure are booked for the project after it has been commissioned. If not commissioned, these costs will be booked to the Study and Skilled Workers Fund (PN: 14.3506.4-024).

The preparation and evaluation of projects is carried out in accordance with the procedure agreed between BMZ and GIZ and carried out by GIZ on behalf of BMZ.

A detailed overview of costs is presented in Appendices 3 a "Cost estimation and cash outflow by financial year" and 3 b "Cost-output allocation".

6. Assessment of the results and risks of the module

6.1 Assessment of results

General impact: The project is designed to achieve results in all three dimensions of sustainability. By implementing the principle of "protection through use", the focus is on sustainable management while at the same time economically valuing the potential of protected areas. The legislative reform will enable the financial resources generated in this way to remain in the protected areas, to finance management tasks and to implement management models. In addition, it is ensured that social impacts for disadvantaged population groups, especially women, are generated through income increases and capacity building to improve their power to represent their interests, with an impact on human rights, gender equality, inclusion, poverty reduction and the reduction of inequalities. The institutionalization of co-management promotes the reduction of corruption and integrity

In the area of monitoring and evidence-based planning, digitized procedures are consistently used.

There is a strong interaction between economic and ecological effects. The sustainable participation of the poor population in the use of resources improves their living conditions. The positive social and economic effects of the project in turn provide a framework for the sustainable protection of ecosystems and their services. The effects of the TC module support Mongolia in achieving Goals 2.1 (Sustainable Economic Development), 2.2 (Sustainable Social Development) and 2.3 (Environmental Sustainability) of Mongolia's Sustainable Development Vision 2030 and many of the sub-goals listed therein (e.g. ecosystem balance, conservation of natural landscape and biodiversity, ensuring the sustainability of ecosystem services, developing ecotourism regions and products; end poverty by creating sustainable sources of income). This serves to achieve the SDGs, in particular SDG 15 (Protect terrestrial ecosystems... and promote their sustainable use, and put an end to the loss of biodiversity) and SDG 13 (Combating climate change and its impacts...).

Economic impact: The project helps to make use of the economic potential of natural resources and tourism in protected areas, which has so far been largely untapped, in order to finance them and improve the living conditions of the neighbouring population. Through the evidence-based management plans of the forests in the protected areas (which affect most of the country's forests), which are geared towards sustainability, this can also contribute to a continuous safe supply to the sawmills. This would provide significantly improved framework conditions there, with the potential to drastically increase investment in the sector and thus value creation.

Ecological impact: All measures of the TC module aim to improve the framework conditions for the sustainable development of protected areas and thus the protection of ecosystems and their services. In this way, the TC module contributes to the achievement of Mongolia's national ecological goals (see, among others, Sustainable Development Vision 2030, Vision 2050; National Biodiversity Programme 2015-2025) and supports the country in achieving international goals and commitments (including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework).

Social impact: The creation of alternative income opportunities improves the economic situation of the poor rural population. The integration of alternative forms of management into management plans of protected areas and buffer zones promotes the equal design of the use of natural resources. At the local level, women are particularly dependent on the use of natural resources due to the lack of alternative sources of income. Their equal participation in the planning and decision-making processes for project design as well as their more intensive participation in economic processes through funding activities developed with them and for them strengthens their social position in society. Unintended negative effects are not to be expected. The focus on forest use in protected areas resolves the conflict between environmental protection and poverty reduction and mobilises synergies between environmental protection and economic development. The participation of all interest groups through participatory planning and decision-making processes has a balancing function in the social power structure. In addition, at the political level, e.g. in the ongoing revision of the legal framework for protected area and buffer zone management, the TC module ensures that existing deficits in terms of equal participation in these processes as well as in the use of resources are compensated. It also contributes to gender mainstreaming and the implementation of the gender strategy for the environmental sector.

Conclusions for the design of the module: The analysis of the effects makes it clear that the project conception is largely guided by sustainability principles and socio-economic issues (*safeguard* and gender). The core elements are: (i) the integration of all measures into implementing regulations, protected area regulations and the management plans of the protected areas and (ii) consistent evidence-based use of the potential of protected areas for local development in a sustainability-oriented manner, (iii) the sustainable financial and institutional anchoring of the measures, (iv) the anchoring of the principles of biodiversity conservation through protected areas in the social context of the Mongolia through environmental education and communication and (iv) the extensive transfer of planning and implementation responsibility to the Protected Areas Management or including co-management structures, and thus (v) ensuring the participation of the local level in planning, implementation and in the generated economic and social added value.

Identifiers and markers are summarised in table form in Appendix 4a.

6.2 Assessment of the risks to the effectiveness of the module

Political risks: Mongolia is considered a model for a democratic transformation process, but at the same time it is characterized by political instability. Since 1992, there have been about 20 changes of government. This represents a high risk for the continuity of reform processes with little influence. This also applies to the current legislative process for the new Protected Areas Act. On the one hand, the law has not yet been passed (due to the elections in 2024, a delay would deprive the TC module of an essential business basis at least until 2025), and on the other hand, there is no guarantee that the (possibly new) political staff of the MET will still be interested in substantial cooperation of the TC module in the drafting of the implementing regulations even after the election. The TC module counteracts the risk through continuous and close policy advice.

Implementation risks: See Political risk. The frequent exchange of information between decision-makers and decision-makers is a risk for the implementation of the project and cross-sectoral cooperation. At the political level, this risk is high and can be influenced to a small extent. However, intensive advisory work at regional and local level counteracts the risk, so that this implementation risk can be classified as medium overall. In addition, advice in the areas of waste management and co-management depends on civil society and private actors being interested in implementing the concepts developed by the project. However, this seems to be ensured by the contacts in advance and the participation of the stakeholders in the development of the concepts, so that the risk is classified as low. In the future, Mongolia will have a number of external financing instruments (e.g. CTF) at its disposal to finance the network of protected areas. The TC module could also benefit from this with regard to the implementation of the management models. However, since it has been shown that the mobilisation of these funds is very time-consuming, not very transparent and very much geared towards the particular interests of MET staff, the TC module was designed in such a way that it is largely self-financed and therefore the high risk that funds cannot be mobilised via the financing instruments is not decisive for the success of the project.

Risks for long-term anchoring: Climate change and overgrazing pose a high risk to the sustainability of the project's impacts. The TC module counters this risk by contributing to emission reduction and adaptation capacities by protecting carbon sinks in protected areas and promoting alternative resource use, and by raising awareness of the problem of overgrazing through public relations work, also at the political level. However, in order to be able to counteract the climate risk to a greater extent, more extensive support from the Mongolian government is required, which is not yet foreseeable. The risk is therefore classified as high and the ability to be influenced as low.

Environmental and social impact: The risk that disadvantaged groups (rural poor) cannot be sufficiently involved in planning and decision-making processes is low, as there has been a lack of concrete implementing regulations in the legislative framework despite the declared will. The political advice on the formulation of the new law, its implementing provisions, the protected area ordinances and management plans and the participatory methods used by the TC module for this purpose mitigate this risk. It is classified as low with medium susceptibility.

Corruption risks: Mongolia is listed in *Transparency International's* Corruption Index (33 out of 100 in *Transparency International's 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index*). There is a risk that corruption, securing individual advantages and particular interests will also affect the project, which will have a negative impact on implementation and the degree to which goals are achieved. Curbing corruption in the project environment may tie up human resources and attention, which then have to be diverted from other tasks. The project uses its potential to contain these risks through joint management with the partner organisations, transparent operation planning and implementation, and addressing the risk at appropriate events. The risk at this level is estimated to be medium, with a high degree of influence.

The **overall risk** and the ability to be influenced are assessed as "medium".

Risk	Classification*	Influenceability*	Risk management measure
Political risks			
Political instability and lack of continuity	3	1	Policy advice
Implementation risks			
Fluctuation of responsible and decision-makers Mobilisation of external civil society and private actors Implementation deficiencies in financial instruments	2	2	Advisory work at all levels Selection of approaches that can work without external funding
Risks for long-term anchoring			
Climate change, overgrazing	4	1	Measures to reduce emissions and strengthen adaptive capacity Public Relations
Environmental and social impact of the measure (unintended effects)			
Disadvantaged groups not sufficiently involved in planning and decision-making processes	1	2	Political advice and method selection
Corruption Risks (VI063)			
Corruption esp. in investments	2	3	Joint management with partner organisations, transparent operational planning/implementation, addressing the risk
Overall risk	2	2	

*) Levels: 1=low, 2=medium, 3=high, 4=very high

6.3 Attestation

After examining alternative options, the TC measure described and its implementation modalities correspond to the optimal relationship between the purpose pursued by the TC measure and the means to be used. The country strategies and development cooperation programmes as well as binding thematic steering documents of the BMZ were taken into account in the planning.