

## PROJECTS REPORTING TEMPLATE FOR SAIGA-RELATED ACTIVITIES

This reporting template is designed to collate information on projects carried out by intergovernmental, international non-governmental and non-governmental organisations as well as academics and other experts working on any aspect of Saiga antelope conservation and sustainable use. Information will be compiled into a table for discussion at Saiga MOU meetings. The information will be used to: (1) monitor implementation of the [Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope \(\*Saiga spp.\*\)](#) and the associated [Medium Term International Work Programme](#); (2) support exchange of information throughout the range and beyond, and assist the identification of necessary future actions; and (3) support the implementation of CITES Decisions [14.91 \(Rev. CoP16\)](#), [14.93 \(Rev. CoP16\)](#) & [16.95 to 16.101](#).

Please complete sections as appropriate and **return to the CMS Secretariat**.

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<b>Project: Conservation of the Saiga Antelope in the Great Lakes Basin of Mongolia.</b>				
<b>Country:</b>	China	<input type="checkbox"/>	Turkmenistan	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Kazakhstan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uzbekistan	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Mongolia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	International	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Russia	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Organisation / Contact details: WWF Mongolia Program Office, 8<sup>th</sup> khoroo, Sukhbaatar district, Amar street 4, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia</b>				
<b>Duration of project:</b> from 2007 to 2021				
<b>Location(s) of main activity: Khovd and Gobi-Altai provinces, Western Mongolia</b>				
<b>Sub-species:</b>	<i>Saiga tatarica tatarica</i> *	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<i>Saiga tatarica mongolica</i> *	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Areas of work:</b>				
	Anti-poaching	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Habitat restoration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Population monitoring	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Protected area management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

\* Note that CMS Parties have adopted Wilson, D.E. & Reeder, D.M. (2005) Mammal Species of the World. A taxonomic and geographic reference. Third edition. John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, USA as taxonomic reference for terrestrial mammals through [Recommendation 9.4](#) where *S. t. tatarica* is referred to as *Saiga tatarica* and *S. t. mongolica* is referred to as *Saiga borealis*.

Ecological research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Training & capacity-building	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Education and awareness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Law enforcement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Alternative livelihoods	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trade issues	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Socio-economic research	<input type="checkbox"/>	Captive breeding	<input type="checkbox"/>
Range mapping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reintroduction/release	<input type="checkbox"/>
Habitat research	<input type="checkbox"/>		

For each box ticked, please provide brief details in the project summary box below

**Project Summary:**

Mongolian Saiga (*Saiga borealis*) is an endemic to Mongolia. It is registered by IUCN as “very rare”, and listed as such in the Mongolian Red Data Book. The species is extremely vulnerable to habitat competition with livestock, poaching, and extreme natural disasters such as cold winters and drought and infectious disease. The Mongolian saiga, whose total number had dropped down as low as 800 individuals in 2002, has indeed been recovering during the past decades thanks to generous support from WWF Network and MAVA Foundation. However, the population is still in alarming condition and, regrettably, showing a declining trend. The Mongolian saiga occupies only 27 percent of its formerly known habitats. The last population estimate counted over 3000 animals, 70 percent decline from 2014 due to goat plague outbreak during 2016/2017 and harsh winter in 2017/2018.

The studies show that the market demand for saiga horn - the main driver for poaching continue to be strong and “that consumers of traditional Chinese medicine are willing to pay high prices for wild-sourced animal products because they believe that these products are more potent” (Theng, Glikman, Milner-Gulland, 2018). It is expected that the market pressure will increase by the fact that Kazakhstan, the major exporter of Saiga horn, has banned the use of saiga, their parts and derivatives until 2020, except for scientific purpose. As only male saiga have horns, this causes massive sex skewed ratios in populations that are leading to reproductive collapse.

In parallel, the Mongolian saiga is also facing the loss of habitats due to overgrazing and competition with livestock for critical habitats (breeding and calving ground).

The project funded by the MAVA Foundation which provided crucial support for the period 2007-2019 in the fields of law enforcement, the mobilizing of support for Saiga conservation from local populations, and the establishing of livestock free rangelands in cooperation with local decision makers and herders. The long term goal of the Saiga conservation project is to maintain and restore the Mongolian Saiga in the Great Lakes Basin and to extend its range to its former habitats.

**Planned Activities:**

Planned activities are: 1) strengthen law enforcement through improving the Saiga Ranger Network and develop other law enforcement measures as recommended in the evaluation carried out in 2015;

2) Ensure smooth implementation and monitoring of pasture management plans of soums and use of reserve pasture through supporting the environmental sustainable development units in the soums; 3) Maintain support for Eco Clubs and consolidate clubs in key saiga habitats; and 4) Conduct feasibility study on introduction (relocation) of Mongolian saiga (*Saiga borealis*) to

ensure its long term viability.

**Achievements to date:**

- The project represents one of the most effective and successful implementation of a Species Conservation Action Plan in Mongolia.
- During last decade, number of Mongolian saiga antelope reached to 14,000 and its range increased by 13% in 2014 thanks to the continuous efforts of WWF-Mongolia with financial support from MAVA Foundation and other stakeholders. Unfortunately, at the end of 2016, the saiga population was once more severely reduced to about 5,000 by the end of March 2017 due to outbreak of goat plague. Since then, the plague severity has reduced but the condition still remains alarming.
- An effective network of saiga rangers is in place with appropriate structure identified based on of saiga poaching and evaluation of rangers' performance. The Saiga ranger network is highly respected in the region and are knowledgeable with environmental conservation, conservation biology, government policy on conservation, conservation legislations, public relations, data collection, protected area management and monitoring techniques.
- Twenty five reserve pasture and local protected areas covering 462,775 ha (38.5% of the saiga habitat) has been taken under "State" protection status. This means WWF-Mongolia has secured healthy pasture and reserve area for saiga and other wildlife. Reserve pastures also prevent the area from being exploited, allowing free movement of saiga without disturbance and habitat fragmentation from mining related activities.
- A sub-commission on Prevention of Environmental Crimes in Mongolia was established in August 18, 2017 with a decree (A/205) by the Minister of Justice and Home Affairs under the National Crime Prevention Coordination Commission with an effective coordination and support by WWF-Mongolia. The sub-commission is to serve as a partnership platform of governmental agencies to reduce environmental crimes. Representing organizations in the sub-commission include Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Ministry of Mining and Heavy Industry, Customs Office, State Specialized Inspection Agency, National Authority for Border Protection, National Police Agency, National Prosecutor's Office, Judicial General Council, Environmental Department of Mayor's Office and WWF Mongolia. At its first meeting in September 2017, the Sub-commission approved an annual work plan (2018) integrating activities of the member bodies. It is the first time that government bodies are to work under a common workplan to work together to prevent environmental crimes nationwide.

The important works in work plan are:

- Conduct mobile training at border points on identification of wildlife parts, CITES policy and procedure of the case handling according to new Law on Violation.
- Establish regular cooperation between Mongolia and China on exchanging information on wildlife related cases
- Establish single data base on wildlife related illegal activities within Government agencies
- Organize anti-trap campaign throughout Mongolia
- Conduct regular awareness raising activities on wildlife related illegal activities via media, training, and campaigns.

For more information: <http://mongolia.panda.org/en/news/?uNewsID=313813>

- During 2018, the national sub-commission against environmental crimes in Mongolia and its member bodies jointly organized awareness campaigns with 5 TV broadcasts/documentaries, 35 TV interviews, 47 radio interviews, 6 newspaper interviews, 8 video awareness clips, 10 media news, 60 awareness poster announcement and 1 press conference on environmental crime prevention. Local branches of the sub-commission were established in Uvs, Khovd, Gobi-Altai and Bayan-Ulgii aimags in ASER Mongolia in order to promote collaborations of law enforcement agencies against environmental crimes.
- A total of 184 customs officers and inspectors at five border crossing points to China and Russia in western Mongolia gained knowledge on how to handle cases in accordance with newly adopted regulations, what is CITES policy and list, how to identify wildlife parts of the CITES listed species. Instructing team of the mobile training consisted of six trainers and facilitators from Ministry of Justice and Internal Affairs, General Authority for Border Protection, National University of Mongolia, Customs General Administration, Office of the Prosecutor General of Mongolia and General Agency for Specialized Inspection was successfully organized by WWF-Mongolia in close cooperation with the Sub-commission on Prevention of Environmental Crimes and the training is expected to strengthen the law enforcement and improve the detection of the environmental crimes at border customs in Western Mongolia.  
<http://mongolia.panda.org/en/news/?uNewsID=329430>
- One month campaign on prevention of environmental crimes was initiated by the National Police Agency in May 2018 with support from member organizations of the Sub-commission on Prevention of Environmental Crimes including WWF-Mongolia. During the campaign, a total of 5 full documentaries were produced and aired 114 times, 35 live discussion TV programmes broadcasted through 20 TV channels, 26 TV news, 118 portal and newspaper news, 47 radio talks in 6 channels were conducted at national level and 74 news at local level. In total, with duplicated number, 17,883,429 people received those awareness news, documentaries and discussions via TV channels and online communication tools.
- A documentary named “Fasting Comes after Feasting” about a sad sensational true story of a tradeswoman who got involved in trafficking of the Mongolian saiga horn (now in Chinese jail) was finalized and ready for launch. The documentary is aimed to increase the awareness of the citizens on negative consequence of illegal trade of wildlife products and poaching and prevent citizens to get involved in such activities. Launching of the documentary was delayed due to the sensitivity of the issue. Finally, WWF Mongolia and National Police Agency have come to a conclusion that the documentary can be disclosed to the public at the ownership of the National Police Agency.
- Saiga Ranger`s Network is equipped with necessary field equipment and restructured with 2 new rangers. For more information:  
<http://mongolia.panda.org/en/?uNewsID=321031>
- 726,770 ha covering key biodiversity areas including the habitat of Snow leopard, Mongolian saiga and Argali sheep was approved as a Local Protected Area by respective Local Citizen`s Representative Meetings in ASER Mongolia. Of these, 363,155 ha, 174,428 ha areas do cover the core habitat of Mongolian saiga. For more information:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDg9RQ2fPzE&t=674s>

- In 2016, WWF Mongolia started an initiative called “Great Gobi 6” or “GG6”, in order to create a well-recognized brand by bringing stakeholder efforts together for conservation of six iconic species of Gobi namely, Wild Bactrian Camel, Gobi Bear, Wild Ass, Takhi horse, Saiga antelope and Goitered Gazelle. WWF Mongolia sees that protecting these species is unique opportunity to conserve Gobi ecosystem as a whole. The GG-6 initiative has been joined by more provinces and national and international organizations including some significant international conservation communities such as Takhi Group International, Wild Camel Protection Fund (England), and Prague Zoo among others. One of the remarkable impacts of the initiative is that provincial governments managed to allocate and spend state budgets on conservation of these iconic species. As an example, the Environment Department of Gobi-altai aimag expended MNT125 mln. (~USD 52,000) in 2017 for GG6 related activities. For more information: <http://mongolia.panda.org/en/news/?uNewsID=313830>
- Annual Saiga Day was celebrated in two stages. For the first stage, a week-campaign for saiga conservation announced among 11 eco-clubs with over 400 school children members within the saiga range areas. Under this campaign, kids started monitoring of 10 natural springs, those are important water source for saiga and other wild species. According to the eco-club members, surrounding areas around most of the natural springs were abundant with livestock and wildlife wastes and carcasses. So, they removed the wastes and maintained water discharges with stones to prevent from entering any solid wastes. Supporting this eco-club initiative, the WWF-Mongolia called for water source protection project proposals for small grants and selected the best project proposals for the Mongolian Saiga Day, April 28, 2018. The event was participated by 66 members from 11 eco-clubs.
- “One Day in the Life of a Ranger” is being organized in the Mongolian Saiga antelope range soums/counties ASER Mongolia. The annual activity is organized amongst 1000 eco-club children on the occasion of Mongolian Saiga Day. During the week, children undertake activities such as raising public awareness on the values of Saiga, providing accurate information about Saiga, and organizing essay competition among schools. One of the most awaited activity for children is a field trip to get acquainted in the Saiga habitat to give children the most detailed and insightful information on the Saiga. The team comprised of children and Saiga rangers. The rangers are the main heroes of the event in their efforts to make children experience what it is truly like to be a ranger. They give a great presentation on how to monitor the animals, observe their habitat changing depending on livestock movements and how to use GPS. Based on their findings at a field trip, children come together to discuss on their contributions to protect endangered species, namely Mongolian Saiga. For instance, in 2018, eco-club members with rangers identified a natural spring in poor condition and where Saiga usually access to water. The surrounding area of the spring was abundant by livestock and wildlife wastes and carrions. So, they removed the wastes and maintained water discharges by stones to prevent from entering any solid pollutants such as solid wastes. After the field trip, the event participants discussed and planned activities for protection of the open water bodies. Thanks to these activities, three sources of springs were fenced and their runoff increased. Recent automatic camera footages prove that many wild animals, especially Mongolian Saiga, were drinking from the springs.
- As a follow up initiative came up during the “One Day in the Life of a Ranger”, children’s forum held from 7 to 8 December, 2017. Children had a packed, productive, and energetic two days where representatives from 16 children’s eco clubs came together

in Gobi-Altay province for the “Mini Parliament” Forum, supported by WWF-Mongolia. The purpose of the forum was to discuss and bring specific problems and barriers of the wildlife and its conservation to decision makers` attention. The event was attended by 43 school children and 8 representatives from the local Governmental Organizations such as Child, Family and Youth Development Department of Gobi-Altay province, Environment and Tourism Department, and Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Monitoring Department, as well as the Aimag’s Citizen’s Representative Khural. For more information: <http://mongolia.panda.org/en/news/?uNewsID=319651>

- In 2009, WWF-Mongolia saved a degraded spring called Tungalag by building a protective enclosure around with active involvement of locals it so that livestock could no longer step over the most sensible part of the spring. Since that time the spring gradually reborn and length of the generated downstream has reached to 4.6 kilometers which has been much appreciated by local communities. The enclosure of Tungalag Spring has been expanded this year by **4 hectares** due to the spring`s enlargement. In 2018, there was an added scientific bonus: automat cameras installed by WWF-Mongolia proved endangered Mongolian Saiga antelope was drinking water from the spring downstream, as domestic animals do. That was our first footage of Mongolian Saiga antelope captured from such a close proximity. Using the footages a video was prepared to disseminate conservation message to broader audiences. The link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EWDCcvsgCY>
- WWF Mongolia continues its effort of protection and rehabilitation of degraded water sources in Saiga range areas. The activity can also be seen as an important adaptation work to climate change. In 2018, two more springs namely, Shagshigiin bulag and Nuden bulag were protected by building enclosures around them with active involvement of ecoclub kids and local herders that added to five springs previously protected. Prior to protections, there had been significant reductions in water flows due to livestock trampling on them. Additionally, the enclosure of the most successful Tungalag Spring has been expanded this year by 4 hectares by cause of the spring`s enlargement. Another recent highlight is the fact that ecoclub kids (7 ecoclubs) were able to raise fund totaling MNT 21,110,000 from 83 herders by presenting their proposals to protect 7 important springs in Saiga range. Some of the herders even made 3 year commitments. The ecoclubs will start their proposed works in the beginning of the May, 2019.
- WWF Mongolia tested a different approach in communication with local herders in which a local person disseminate conservation message to his/her local fellows on horse and camel rides. A campaign called "Horsemen" was organized in 20-23 September, 2018. A team of 40 horsemen were involved in a four-day journey, and they met about 500 herders from 228 families who lived in the saiga range and presented ecological importance of pasture and Mongolian saiga, and exchanged views on pasture use. The team of horsemen wrapped up their work and made a plan for future. Based on the plan, in early December, another team of 10 camel riders including Saiga Rangers had a journey of more than 100 km and distributed information and promotional materials to 60 locals of 20 households and patrolled the area for illegal hunting and habitat surveys. Traditionally, camels used as a respected mean of transport and herders were glad to see the men riding camels for these purposes. The teams themselves had great satisfaction and expressed their willingness to attend further such activities.
- From first days of February the condition in Altay Sayan ecoregion in Western Mongolia has become particularly critical because of the frequent snowfalls that blanketed the short and scarce standing grasses on which the herbivores depend. Therefore, the WWF

Mongolia has started emergency actions to protect globally endangered Mongolian saiga antelope and wild ungulates. Locally produced hay was delivered and placed in the Shargyn gobi, Khuisiin gobi where population of Mongolian saiga occurs.

**Reports / Publications / Information material:**

**Publications**

Chimeddorj, B., E. Sergelen, B. Buuveibaatar. 2016. Effects of human disturbance on the distribution and movements of saiga antelope in western Mongolia. *Saiga News*. 21: 35–37.

Pruvot, M., A.E. Amanda, S. Strindberg, D. Batchuluun, B. Buuveibaatar, B. Chimeddorj, G. Bayandonoi, Kh. Bodisaikhan, S. Batkhuyag, N. Jamiyankhuu, J. Tserenjav, B. Batzorig, C. Hollinger, D. McAloose, S. Munkhduuren, B. Ganzorig, M. Mahapatra, M, Selvaraj, S, Parida, F. Njeumi, R. Kock, S. Enkhtuvshin. *Under review*. Outbreak of Peste des Petits Ruminants in Critically Endangered Mongolian Saiga and other wild ungulates. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*.

Rey-Iglesia, A., J. Hjort, B. Buuveibaatar, M. Dalannast, B. Chimeddorj, G. Espregueira-Themudo, P.F. Campos. *In preparation*. Genetic diversity of the endangered Mongolian saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica mongolica*): insights into conservation.

B. Chimeddorj, B. Batsaikhan, Sh. Enkhtuvshin and B. Buuveibaatar. 2019. Trends in saiga poaching in Mongolia. *Saiga News*. 24: 12-13.

**Handbooks & News**

- Two handbooks namely a “CITES Reference Book” and a “Guidebook for the Identification of Parts and Organs of Flora and Fauna species” were published. All copies were distributed to related law enforcement agencies, in particular, custom services at the border points in Western Mongolia. These books are to help inspectors and customs officers to identify prohibited animal and plant parts at custom points quickly and guide them how to proceed such cases, thus improving law enforcement on threatened species, especially the species listed in Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) appendices.
- 3,000 copies of National magazine titled the Nagoon (“Green” in English) were distributed to locals in Mongolian part of ASER that raises issues regarding the harms of illegal hunting and trade, current situation of this type of crimes in Mongolia, interviews with the people who got involved in the illegal hunting and trade crimes, the current legal environment and pressing issues.

**Collaborators:** This project is closely connected to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, regional and local authorities (Aimag, Soum and Bag level).

The MOU between WWF and WCS is operational.

Good cooperation between WWF-Mongolia and Department to Combat Organized Crime under the National Police Agency started to ensure an effective control and monitoring of wildlife trade through establishing network of informants.

**Budget available: 220,000 Euro**

<b>Current sponsors: MAVA Foundation</b>
<b>Past sponsors: MAVA Foundation</b>
<b>Information contributed by: Chimeddorj Buyanaa</b>
<b>Date report submitted:</b> _____ 18/March/2019
<p><b>Other:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A negative attitude of herders towards Mongolian saiga increased in relation to the outbreak of the goat plague raised in 2016 and 2017. Main cause to negative attitude was caused by misleading information that Saiga spreads the goat plague. In this regard, WWF Mongolia initiated a campaign titled “Let`s help Mongolian Saiga to survive” with its own emergency fund and additional financial support from Saiga conservation alliance. For more information: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/wwfmongolia/photos/pcb.1584016014978847/1584010481646067/?type=3&amp;theater">https://www.facebook.com/wwfmongolia/photos/pcb.1584016014978847/1584010481646067/?type=3&amp;theater</a>.</li> <li>• The Saiga poaching cases and attempts of illegal trade of Saiga horn happen repeatedly during the last 3 years. The offenders are unknown. More focus is required to increase the involvement of local people and herders, to engage them as informants on wildlife poaching and illegal trade cases. Therefore, WWF Mongolia PO adopted a strategic approach to strengthen community based law enforcement through creating informants’ network and establish close collaboration between civilians and relevant enforcement agencies e.g. General Police Authority through encouragement and motivation of people with special focus on globally and regionally endangered wildlife species.</li> <li>• Mongolian saiga population fluctuated dramatically in last few years due to devastating stochastic events like harsh winter and disease outbreak. Currently, the best solution to reduce the extinction risk of the remained population of Mongolian saiga which is already few in number is to establish backup population that are separate from the main population. In this regard, WWF-Mongolia has started a collaboration with Czech University of Life Sciences of Czech Republic on conducting necessary surveys and risk assessment for the Mongolian saiga reintroduction programme. Accordingly, first research proposal was provided by the university to conduct research to find out the patterns of use of water and feed resources by Saiga, and to detect patterns of competition with other wild and domestic ungulates. A multidisciplinary study was proposed including habitat use, water quality analysis, diet selection by DNA metabarcoding, and nutritional requirements. In addition, WWF-Mongolia is also discussing the possibilities with the National University of Mongolia to conduct other necessary studies for identification of potential sites for reintroduction of the species to safeguard from the extinction.</li> </ul>