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REVIEW OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION
(Item (5) of the provisional agenda)

Nature Conservation Project

Note by the secretariat

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I. Overview and Outcome of the Project Implementation

1. As the 12th SOM adopted the NEASPEC Resolution on Nature Conservation Programme in North-East Asia and its Conservation Strategy, the process of nature conservation project was successfully finalized.
2. The adoption of the resolution was the result of a series of discussions since the Second Senior Officials Meeting in 1993, and the outcome of the first project funded by the Core Fund.

<Table 1> Process of the Project Formulation

Meetings	Discussion and Decisions
2 nd SOM, 1993	Identified "ecosystem management" as one of three priority areas of subregional cooperation
4 th SOM, 1998	Discussed a proposal on "North-East Asian Biodiversity Management Programme"
7 th SOM, 2001	Discussed a proposal on "North East Asia Nature Conservation Programme (NEANCP)"
8 th SOM, 2002	Discussed a proposal on "Nature Conservation under NEASPEC", and established Working Group on Nature Conservation
1 st WG, 2003	Identified a set of priority areas
2 nd WG/9 th SOM, 2004	Decided upon two priority areas
3 rd WG, 2004	Designed specific project approaches
10 th SOM, 2004	Decided upon a project on "Nature Conservation Programme in North-East Asia"

3. In the process leading to the adoption of the resolution and strategy, the Secretariat facilitated holding three expert group meetings to design specific project components and implementation modalities and develop the Conservation Strategy, and undertaking four pilot projects consisting of two major areas, i.e. multilateral cooperation on target species in transboundary areas and training on monitoring technique.

<Table 2> Process of the Project Implementation

Dates	Meetings and Activities
July 2005, ROK	Inception Meeting of the Project
December 2005, China	Expert Group Meeting for the formulation of conservation strategy and selection of pilot projects
July 2006, China	International Workshop on Transboundary Amur Tiger Wild Population Restoration
October 2006, Mongolia	Field Survey Training for Monitoring of Snow Leopard Population
October 2006, Mongolia	Review Meeting for Conservation Strategy
November 2006, Mongolia	International Meeting on the Establishment of Trilateral Cooperation Network towards Reducing Poaching and Trade of Snow Leopard
November 2006, Japan	Training Workshop for Younger Researchers on Conservation of Cranes and Black-faced Spoonbill in North East Asia

4. The only pending task is the development and operation of a database of the target species as there have been delays in designing the Database system and providing data inputs from national collaborating centres. National Institute of Environmental Research of the Republic of Korea plans to finalize the task by early 2008 and seeks supports from other collaborating centres for compiling data and information.

5. The Resolution of NEASPEC on the Framework for Nature Conservation Programme calls upon the member countries to initiate subregional and national actions on the basis of the agreed conservation strategy, and requests the Secretariat to consult with national collaborating centres and national experts to develop further joint actions.

6. The conservation strategy for selected feline animals and migratory birds entails both unilateral and multilateral actions. In the context of unilateral actions, the member countries are requested to undertake appropriate measure for habitat protection and promote public participation. Considering the role of NEASPEC in facilitating cooperation among its member countries, the strategy puts significant emphasis on multilateral actions. The proposed actions include encouraging joint activities in transboundary areas for protecting feline animals, undertaking joint survey, establishing conservation networks for migratory birds and undertaking joint activities for national capacity building and supporting relevant activities of NGOs.

7. In this regard, the Secretariat will continue consultations with national collaborating centres to identify follow-up actions, and assist the centres in undertaking national and subregional activities based on the conservation strategy. Furthermore, the Secretariat will seek for opportunities of collaboration with other subregional, international and UN organizations to support the efforts of national collaborating centres on transboundary cooperation and learn lessons from other subregional experiences.

8. Upon the request from the Russian Government to propose projects for a new cooperation fund of the Government and ESCAP, the Secretariat submitted to the Government a proposal on “Building Coordination Mechanisms for Nature Conservation in Transboundary Areas” as a follow-up to the conservation strategy. The proposal is attached as the Annex I.

II. Issues for Consideration

9. The Meeting may wish to provide guidance on the follow-up to the resolution and conservation strategy.

Annex I. Project Proposal submitted to the Government of Russian Federation

Project title	Building Coordination Mechanisms for Nature Conservation in Transboundary Areas
Status	It is a follow-up to the NEASPEC Resolution on Nature Conservation Programme and the Nature Conservation Strategy, outcomes of the NEASPEC project on Nature Conservation Framework which was jointly undertaken by NEASPEC member countries during 2005-2007.
Background	<p>As transboundary areas are often the periphery of major socioeconomic development, they have potentials to keep untouched nature from human activities. But this situation also causes lacking the appropriate enforcement of legal and administrative provisions pertaining to biodiversity conservation. Thus, multilateral and bilateral cooperation for the protection of natural resources and endangered species in transboundary areas have been perceived as a significant means to achieve national and global mandates on biodiversity conservation. Practical approaches for such cooperation are suggested to create coordination mechanisms between national protected areas adjoining international borders or unified protected areas such as Transboundary Protected Areas or Transboundary Biosphere Reserves, which contribute to not only coordinated actions on biodiversity conservation but also environmental confidence building among states as well as local stakeholders sharing an international border.</p> <p>Considering its immense size, the Russian Federation has many protected areas adjacent to its borders with China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Mongolia in North-East Asia. Many of the protected areas are home for endangered animals including Amur Tiger, Amur Leopard and Snow Leopard. Such protected areas include Tunkinskiy Natural Park, Dauriskiy Zapovednik and Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina Zapovednik in border areas adjoining Mongolia, Kedrovaya Pad Zapovednik, Bolshekhkhtsirskiy Zapovednik, and Khankaiskiy Zapovednik adjoining China, and Far East Marine Reserve and Khansanskii Nature Park adjoining DPRK. While neighboring countries have a number of protected areas adjacent to Russian protected areas, the institutional levels and territory sizes of the areas are not often equivalent to those of the Russian. Furthermore, the adjacent protected areas across international borders are not equipped with mechanisms for information exchange and activity coordination. As a result, tigers and leopard as well as other species are not protected by coordinated actions among the states and in turn become victims of poaching and illegal trade.</p>

In order to respond to this situation, UNESCO in consultation with officials and experts in local and national governments of China and the Russian Federation presented in 2004 to establish a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve in the Lower Tumen River Area shared by China, DPRK and the Russian Federation. While the Proposal received strong supports from all relevant authorities in both the central and local governments of the Russian Federation, it was not able to receive the same level of support from the Chinese government. Thus, it was not able to translate the proposal into an action yet.

Furthermore, UNESCAP as the secretariat of NEASPEC (North-East Asia Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation) has conducted a project to create the Nature Conservation Programme in North-East Asia, focusing on target species including Amur Tiger, Amur Leopard and Snow Leopard and a number of migratory bird species. As an outcome of the project, the Nature Conservation Strategy was put forward to the 12th Senior Officials Meeting of NEASPEC held on 22-23 March 2007 and was received the endorsement of the member countries. In reference with the target animal, the Strategy suggests promoting between states as well as local governments to build institutional and human capacity in the conservation of the target species, improve the living the condition of their habitats, and prevent poaching and illegal trade.

Based on the UNESCO proposal and Nature Conservation Strategy in North-East Asia, ESCAP wishes to undertake activities for initiating cooperation between protected areas adjacent to international borders in North-East Asia and in turn building concrete mechanisms for transboundary cooperation on nature conservation.

Goal

Initiate and enhance multilateral and bilateral efforts for the coordination of activities on the conservation of endangered species in transboundary areas of the Russian Federation with China, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and Mongolia.

Promote the process of environmental confidence building in North-East Asia through accumulating tangible results and practical experiences in transboundary environmental cooperation.

Outcome

The central and local governments of China, DPRK, Mongolia and the Russian Federation initiative coordination mechanisms for transboundary cooperation for nature conservation.

Local stakeholders of the countries build knowledge and institutional foundations for cooperation with their neighboring protected areas.

Main activities and events

The overall objective of the project is to initiate and enhance joint efforts for protecting endangered species in border areas between the Russian Federation and its neighboring Northeast Asia countries, i.e, China, DPRK and Mongolia. In order to achieve the objective, the project will carry out consultation workshops among major stakeholder groups (such as central and local governments, research institutions, NGOs and local communities), study visits to protected areas in border areas, and research on transboundary cooperation on nature conservation. And key objectives of each activity are as follows.

Consultation Workshops: To discuss the current situation of nature conservation in transboundary and the most appropriate ways to coordinate actions across national borders.

Research: To assess the status of key species in transboundary areas, the state of legal and institutional arrangement for protecting the species, and the required arrangements between countries concerned. The outcome of the assessment will be published in all languages of the countries concerned.

Total budget required

US\$ 75,000

Budget Line	Description	Budget
1100	Professional Project Staff / Consultants	5,000
1300	Research/Programme Assistants	10,000
1500	Travel	5,000
2000	Subcontracts / Grants	
3000	Group Training / Workshops	40,000
4000	Equipment	
5000	Reporting / Miscellaneous	6,372
	Subtotal	66,372
	Programme Support Cost (13%)	8,628
	Project Total	75,000

Duration

12 months.

**Other
donors**

NEASPEC member countries would make additional financial and in-kind contributions. We expect that such contributions will be made indirectly through the Core Fund of NEASPEC and directly from governments and participating institutions. Currently, the ROK and China make annual contributions of \$100,000 and \$50,000, respectively, to the Core Fund.

We expect the Russian Federation to share 75% of the total budget. The activities that require financial supports from the Russian government will include holding workshops of experts and government officials and conducting assessment of protected zones in transboundary areas and undertaking research on transboundary collaboration mechanisms. And most of the activities will be undertaken in the Russian Federation in collaboration with Russian institutions.
