



Implemented by:



In cooperation with:



Enhancing Transboundary Conservation Efforts between Chon-Kemin State Natural Park and Ile-Alatau National Park

CONTEXT

The Chon-Kemin (Kyrgyzstan) and Ile-Alatau (Kazakhstan) protected areas share a common border and form a single, vital ecosystem in the Northern Tian Shan. Despite their biological unity, these areas are managed by separate national authorities. To secure habitats for key transboundary species - it is essential to coordinate conservation efforts and bridge the gap between national management strategies.

OBJECTIVES

The project aims to institutionalize transboundary cooperation by developing a collaborative long-term management framework, harmonizing monitoring techniques, building technical capacity among PAs' staff to protect the shared ecosystem. Project implemented in 2023—2024.

IMPLEMENTATION

Key activities included:

- **METT Assessments** to establish PAs' performance baselines and identify resource gaps.
- **Synchronized Wildlife Surveys** for transboundary monitoring of snow leopards and ungulates using unified camera-trap and census protocols.
- **SMART System Integration** to implement a standardized digital patrol database to unify anti-poaching and biodiversity reporting across borders.
- **Capacity Building** of field staff in digital monitoring and standardized wildlife observation.
- **Joint Planning** to harmonize management strategies into a single transboundary Plan of Actions.
- **Institutional Formalization** ratifying a bilateral **MoU** to secure long-term cooperation.



FINDINGS

- **Regulatory Gaps.** While international and regional treaties provide sufficient supportive strategic framework for cooperation, national sub-legal acts lack explicit mandates requiring border-adjacent PAs to engage in transboundary activities.
- **Institutional & Jurisdictional Asymmetry.** METT highlights a discrepancy in administrative autonomy. PA directors lack the delegated authority to formalize cross-border operational decisions without high-level ministerial approval.
- **Funding Disbalance.** Significant disparity in government financing of the two PAs and the lack of dedicated budget lines for cross-border operations is a barrier to sustainable transboundary cooperation.
- **Technical Capacity Asymmetry.** While both PAs utilize SMART, a significant gap exists in fundamental field skills. One PA faces systemic underfunding, resulting in a lack of standardized field expertise compared to the other more established PA. Thus, PAs cannot generate a unified “common operational picture”.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Amend national PA regulations to explicitly mandate collaboration with neighboring transboundary counterparts. Integrate transboundary management objectives into formal job descriptions and performance indicators of PA directors.
- MoU and the “Five-Year Joint Action Plan” must be elevated from PA to ministries' level as a legally binding framework.
- Both countries should ensure the budgets of the respective PAs include dedicated, permanent funding lines specifically for the implementation of activities outlined in the Joint Action Plan.
- National authorities should fully integrate SMART tool into operating procedures, supported by comprehensive training at both ministerial and PA levels. PAs must coordinate their system configurations to ensure data compatibility, enabling seamless exchange and unified analysis.
- Engage local communities and water user groups in watershed planning processes.

