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The Ustyurt Landscape Conservation Initiative

This initiative is made possible by the American people through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) / SCAPES – Sustainable Conservation Approaches in Priority Ecosystems Program

Photo: Igor Shpilenok



SCAPES Annual Meeting, Luray, VA
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Ustyurt Landscape Conservation Initiative

Implemented by a consortium of partners:

- Pact (SCAPES Leader)
- Fauna & Flora International
- BirdLife International
- ACDI/VOCA

To promote the long-term sustainable management of the Ustyurt landscape in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, through the delivery of a landscape scale approach, using a keystone species – the critically endangered saiga antelope – as a flagship, aimed at reconciling the conservation of the ecosystem with local sustainable development.



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Image: Google Earth



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Key fauna of the Ustyurt

Mammals

Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica* (CR)
 Goitered Gazelle *Gazella subgutturosa* (VU)
 Ustyurt Urial *Ovis orientalis arkal* (VU)
 Manul *Otocolobus manul* (NT)
 Kulan *Equus hemionus* . extinct on Ustyurt
 Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* – extinct on Ustyurt



Birds

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* (EN)
 Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulate* (VU)
 Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* (VU)
 Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* (VU)
 Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* (VU)

Photo: Maria Karlstetter



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Targets

- Saiga
- Bird communities
- Ecosystem connectivity

Poaching

Mass die-offs

Degradation

Disturbance

Industrial & infrastructure development

Climate change

Photo: Maria Karlstetter



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4 Objectives

To improve ecological and social scientific understanding of the Ustyurt landscape.

To reinforce the capacity of state agencies involved in the conservation of the Ustyurt.

To engage with and support local communities to participate positively in conservation while improving the quality of their lives.

To engage with the private sector to mitigate their impact on the Ustyurt landscape.

Photo: Maria Karlstetter

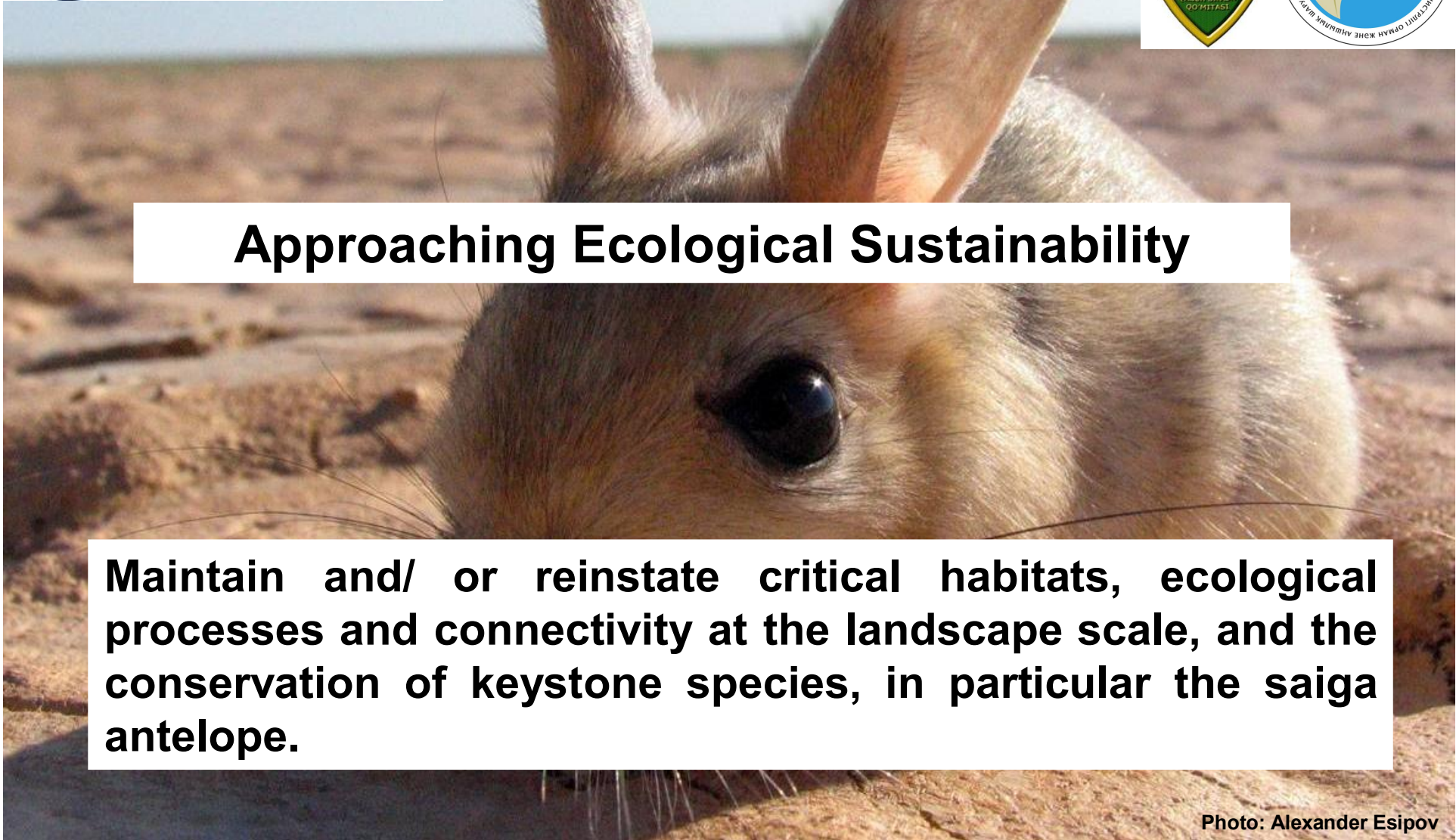


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Approaching Ecological Sustainability

Maintain and/ or reinstate critical habitats, ecological processes and connectivity at the landscape scale, and the conservation of keystone species, in particular the saiga antelope.

Photo: Alexander Esipov



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Challenges

- Capacity deficiencies
- Political obstacles
- Socio-economic dependencies
- Biological knowledge
- Long-term funding
- Operational hurdles

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Key interventions

- Landscape baseline ecological survey
- Biodiversity monitoring strategy
- Socio-economic and demographic survey
- Development of alternative livelihoods
- Strengthen capacities for anti-poaching
- Inter-departmental and transboundary cooperation
- Integration of conservation into land use plans
- Develop offset schemes for industries

Photo: Maria Karlstetter



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Successes

- Re-designation of Saigachy reserve in Uzbekistan
- Training for customs officers, local and border police
- Satellite collaring of saiga on the Ustyurt
- Crossborder and inter-departmental collaboration
- Darwin Initiative on addressing illegal trade in saiga

Photo: Maria Karlstetter



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Critical questions

Will we be able to address poaching and tackle illegal trade of saiga adequately?

Will we be able to influence future infrastructure and oil and gas development to keep ecological connectivity?

How do we get the information base needed to advise the development process properly?

How much human disturbance is too much?

Photo: Igor Shpilenok



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**Thank
you**

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