Sida partner application 2026

1. Introduction

This application form is intended for partners of Centralasiengrupperna participating in the Sida funded project for 2026. It is based on the discussions held during summer 2025 and on the approved Sida application developed together with all partners. Certain questions intentionally revisit previously discussed topics to ensure coherence and traceability. When completing the form, please refer to the documents you have already submitted. You may expand the scope of activities beyond what was previously shared.

This application serves to establish a common vision for collaboration between CAG and its partners for the 2026–2028 period. It is important to note that while the questions in this document aim to describe the detailed intervention for 2026, they also take into account the long-term goals and partnership perspective for the entire programme cycle.

The expected start date of the intervention is 2026-01-01 (may be subject to change). In reality, implementation started on 2025-10-01 due to Sida's late decision and the resulting shift in the timeline. Funds allocated for 2025 amount to **60 000** SEK and funds allocated for 2026 amount to **320 000** SEK. Partners are encouraged to use the 2025 allocation to cover organizational needs, preparatory work and planning of the intervention. Any funds not used in 2025 may be carried over and used in 2026. The audit will be conducted once the first project cycle is completed.

The project is implemented within the framework of Sweden's Strategy for Support to Civil Society (CSO Strategy). The Sida programme contributes to the strategy's overarching purpose: to strengthen the capacity, independence and participation of civil society actors to promote human rights, gender equality, climate and environmental sustainability, peace and security, and inclusive democratic development. In line with this, the programme primarily focuses on Goal Area 1 (sub-goals 1.1 and 1.2) and Goal Area 2 (sub-goal 2.3) of the CSO Strategy, while also contributing indirectly to sub-goals 2.1 and 2.2. You can read more about the CSO Strategy goals in Appendixes.

We apply the Results-Based Management (RBM) framework, which emphasizes clear goals, measurable outcomes and continuous learning. We also follow the principle of Adaptive Management, meaning that activities and plans can be adjusted when conditions change, based on evidence and lessons learned. This flexibility ensures that the intervention remains relevant and effective throughout its implementation.

Partners are encouraged to plan based on their local priorities and expertise while staying within the scope jointly defined during the Sida application process.

Each question has a word limit, but you are welcome to provide more information if deemed necessary.

To complete the application you must submit the following:

1. **Narrative application** (this document).

2. **Goal and Risk Matrix** (shared separately).
3. **Budget form** (shared separately).
4. **Relevant organizational documents** such as strategic plans or other supporting materials, if present

Application guidelines:

- Font: Times New Roman
- Size: 12 pt
- Spacing: 1.25
- Language: English
- *Submission deadline:* **2025-12-29**

Title of the Project:
Sustainable management and conservation of wetlands and grasslands in the Son Kul Lake

2. Overall goal and strategic alignment (2026–2028)

This section outlines the **long-term** direction of the partnership for the 2026–2028 period. Partners are expected to describe the broader change they aim to achieve within their context and how their organization's work contributes to the goals of the Sida programme. The purpose is to understand each partner's vision, context and main priorities over the three-year period, as well as the key factors that may influence their work.

Questions

1. Describe the overall goal of your organization's planned work for the 2026–2028 period. What long-term change do you aim to contribute to in your thematic area or community? *(150–250 words)*

The overall goal of our organization's planned work for the 2026–2028 period is to strengthen the sustainable management and conservation of wetlands and grasslands in the Son Kul Lake pilot area through meaningful community engagement and enhanced multi-stakeholder collaboration. Wetlands are critical ecosystems that support biodiversity while providing essential ecosystem services and livelihoods for local communities. However, increasing pressures from economic activities, and unsustainable resource use threaten their ecological integrity.

Building on evidence of local communities' willingness to collaborate with both municipal and state authorities, our work aims to address existing gaps in community involvement in wetland and grassland management. We seek to reduce barriers that limit effective participation by promoting inclusive governance mechanisms, strengthening local capacities, and fostering trust and coordination among communities, government institutions, and other stakeholders. A key focus will be identifying and promoting practical approaches that balance wetland/grassland conservation objectives with the livelihood needs of dependent communities in the Son Kul Lake pilot area.

In the long term, we aim to contribute to a shift toward participatory, resilient, and equitable wetland/grassland governance systems. This includes improved stewardship of wetland/pastures resources, reduced degradation from human activities, and stronger alignment between conservation policies and local development priorities. Ultimately, our work aspires to ensure that wetlands/grasslands are conserved as healthy, functioning ecosystems while simultaneously supporting the well-being, resilience, and sustainable livelihoods of the communities that depend on them.

2. Explain how this goal aligns with the Sida-supported programme and contributes to promoting human rights, gender equality, democratic participation and other relevant areas mentioned in the CSO strategy in your local or national context. *(400 words)*

Our organization's goal for the 2026–2028 period strongly aligns with the Sida-supported programme and the Swedish CSO strategy by reinforcing the role of civil society as a driver of inclusive development, democratic participation, and improved living conditions for people living in poverty and vulnerability. By focusing on community-led wetland management and conservation, our work places local civil society actors and local community members, especially women and youth, at the center of decision-making processes that directly affect their livelihoods, environment, and long-term resilience.

Local communities play a critical role in enabling people, particularly marginalized and underrepresented groups, to influence and improve their own living conditions. Our approach builds on this added value by strengthening community-based organizations and informal local groups engaged in wetland/grassland use and stewardship. Through capacity building, participatory planning, and structured dialogue with local and government authorities, we create practical opportunities for democratic participation and inclusive governance. This contributes directly to Sida's objective of fostering a vibrant, pluralistic civil society with the capacity to act effectively and results-oriented.

The promotion of human rights is central to our work, particularly the rights to participation, access to natural resources, and sustainable livelihoods. Wetlands/grasslands are vital to food security, income generation, and ecosystem services for local populations. By addressing barriers to community involvement and advocating for equitable resource governance, our work supports the realization of economic, social, and environmental rights. Special attention is given to gender equality by ensuring that rural women, who are often primary users of wetland resources yet underrepresented in decision-making, are actively included in leadership roles, consultations, and benefit-sharing mechanisms.

Our work also contributes to broader democratic development, peace, and security objectives emphasized in Swedish development assistance. In contexts where competition over natural resources can exacerbate tensions, inclusive and transparent wetland governance helps prevent conflict and builds trust between communities and authorities. Strengthened local communities' engagement in environmental governance reinforces democratic foundations by promoting accountability, dialogue, and cooperation across stakeholders.

Ultimately, our goal contributes to the overarching aim of Swedish international development assistance: creating conditions for better living standards for people living in poverty and oppression. By empowering local civil society, promoting rights-based and gender-responsive approaches, and enabling communities to sustainably manage critical ecosystems, our work delivers long-term, locally anchored development outcomes aligned with Sida's strategic priorities.

3. Provide a short background and context for your planned intervention, highlighting the main challenges or opportunities that shape your work. *(120–180 words)*

The planned intervention is situated within a complex political, social, and environmental context in the Kyrgyz Republic. Following the adoption of the new Constitution in April 2021, the country has shifted toward strong presidential rule, weakening the balance of power and posing significant risks to democratic governance and the protection of human rights. Throughout 2021-2025, space for civil society and independent media further narrowed, notably through the adoption of the Law on "Foreign Representatives" (2024), which imposes restrictive requirements on noncommercial organizations and limits civic participation. These developments directly affect community-based and rights-oriented initiatives.

At the same time, Kyrgyzstan remains highly vulnerable to climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation, despite having ratified numerous international environmental and human rights conventions. These challenges are most acute in rural and mountainous regions. The project will focus on pilot communities in Kochkor district of Naryn region, which is one of the poorest areas in the country, where livelihoods are heavily dependent on natural resources. Rural communities, particularly women and youth, face limited political influence and weakened rights to land and resource governance, yet hold valuable traditional ecological knowledge that presents a critical opportunity for sustainable, community-led environmental stewardship.

4. Why is this goal important in your local or national context? Whose situation or conditions are expected to improve as a result of your work? *(150–250 words)*

In the local and national context of the Kyrgyz Republic, this goal is critically important because long-standing governance, social, and environmental challenges continue to undermine both human rights and sustainable natural resource management. Decades of centralized decision-making during the Soviet period fostered a culture of dependency on the state, weakening community initiative, environmental stewardship, and accountability. These attitudes persist today, limiting local ownership over land and natural resources and contributing to environmental degradation, particularly in rural areas.

Our work seeks to reverse this legacy by empowering local communities to actively claim their rights and responsibilities in governing, protecting, and preserving wetlands, grasslands, and associated natural resources. Through participatory capacity-building approaches, the project will strengthen community-based organizations, women, youth, herders, and other resource-dependent groups to engage meaningfully in decision-making processes and sustainable ecosystem management. This is especially important given the limited experience and preparedness of both rights-holders and duty-bearers to engage in rights-based governance.

At the same time, the project will support state and municipal authorities at local, regional, and national levels to better understand and fulfil their human rights obligations. Improved responsiveness and dialogue between communities and authorities will contribute to more inclusive and effective environmental governance.

As a result, the living conditions of rural and marginalized communities in the target areas are expected to improve through enhanced livelihoods, stronger cultural and environmental rights, and increased resilience to climate and environmental change. By fostering environmental awareness, social activism, and gender-responsive approaches, the project aims to break the cycle of ecological degradation and social vulnerability, supporting resilient communities that live in greater harmony with nature.

5. Identify key external factors or relationships that may influence the achievement of your long-term goal. *(150–250 words)*

The achievement of the project's long-term goal will be influenced by several key external factors and relationships operating at local, national, and broader systemic levels. First, the political and legal environment for civil society in the Kyrgyz Republic is a critical factor. Ongoing restrictions on nongovernmental organizations, including increased state oversight and limitations on foreign funding, may affect the scope, visibility, and sustainability of community-based and rights-oriented initiatives. Continued contraction of civic space could constrain community participation and advocacy efforts.

Second, the commitment, capacity, and stability of state and municipal authorities are central to long-term impact. Effective wetland/grassland and natural resource governance depends on constructive relationships with duty-bearers at local, regional, and national levels. Changes in political leadership, limited institutional capacity, or shifting development priorities may influence authorities' willingness or ability to engage with communities and respond to rights-based claims.

Third, environmental and climate-related factors present both risks and uncertainties. Increasing climate variability, natural disasters, and accelerating biodiversity loss may intensify pressure on wetlands and grasslands, potentially undermining conservation efforts while also increasing communities' dependence on fragile ecosystems.

Fourth, socioeconomic conditions, including poverty levels, migration, and market pressures, will shape community engagement and incentives for sustainable resource use. Economic shocks or rising exploitation of natural resources could weaken conservation outcomes.

Finally, relationships with other civil society actors, local communities, academia, media, and international partners will significantly influence success. Strong networks can amplify

community voices, support knowledge exchange, and enhance legitimacy, while weakened partnerships may limit learning, advocacy, and long-term sustainability of results.

6. How will your organization ensure that its work remains **locally anchored and accountable** to the people or communities it represents? *(150–250 words)*

Our organization will ensure that its work remains locally anchored and accountable by applying a participatory, rights-based, and community-led approach throughout the project cycle. From the design phase onward, local communities in the target areas will be actively involved in identifying priorities, defining problems, and co-developing solutions related to wetland and natural resource management. This ensures that interventions respond directly to locally identified needs, knowledge, and cultural practices rather than externally driven agendas.

We will work closely with local community-based organizations, informal groups, and traditional structures to strengthen local ownership and legitimacy. Capacity-building activities will be tailored to empower community members, particularly women, youth, and other marginalized groups, to participate actively in decision-making, leadership, and monitoring processes. Community representatives will be supported to act as focal points and advocates, enabling continuous feedback between the organization and local constituencies.

Accountability mechanisms will be integrated into implementation, including regular community consultations, public information sharing, and participatory monitoring and reflection sessions. These platforms will allow community members to assess progress, raise concerns, and influence adaptive changes to activities. Transparent communication on objectives, resources, and results will further reinforce trust and downward accountability.

In addition, our organization will maintain close collaboration with local authorities and duty-bearers to ensure alignment with local development plans while safeguarding community interests and rights. By embedding local participation, transparency, and feedback in all stages of the work, the organization will remain accountable to the communities it represents and support sustainable, locally rooted outcomes.

3. Project rationale and local context (2026)

This section describes the situation in which the project will be implemented during 2026. Partners are expected to provide a concise analysis of the local context, outlining the main challenges, needs and opportunities that their planned activities will address. The description should explain why the selected focus areas are relevant and how they relate to the organization's ongoing work and expertise.

Partners are encouraged to include relevant information about relevant factors that influence their work, as well as reflections on how these factors may affect implementation and the sustainability of results.

Questions

1. Provide a concise description of your current context and main challenges or problems that your organization aims to address in 2026. *(context for outcomes)* (150–250 words)

Our organization operates in a challenging political, social, and environmental context in Kyrgyzstan that directly affects human rights, civic participation, and sustainable natural resource governance. Since the adoption of the 2021 Constitution and the subsequent consolidation of executive power, civic space has continued to narrow. In 2024, new restrictive legislation targeting nongovernmental organizations further increased administrative burdens, state interference, and risks for organizations receiving foreign funding. These developments constrain the ability of civil society to operate freely, represent community interests, and engage in policy dialogue.

At the same time, rural and mountainous regions, particularly in Naryn oblast (the project pilot area), face deepening poverty, environmental degradation, and climate-related risks. Communities remain highly dependent on wetlands, grasslands, and other natural resources for livelihoods, yet lack secure rights, adequate representation, and meaningful participation in decisions affecting land and resource use. Weak institutional capacity among local authorities, limited experience with participatory governance, and low awareness of human rights and environmental obligations further exacerbate these challenges.

Gender inequality and social exclusion persist, with women, youth, and rural poor disproportionately affected by environmental degradation and economic insecurity while remaining underrepresented in decision-making processes. The erosion of traditional ecological knowledge and the legacy of centralized governance have weakened community stewardship and accountability mechanisms.

In this context, our organization aims in 2026 to address the interlinked challenges of restricted civic space, weak rights-based environmental governance, limited community participation, and declining ecosystem health, while strengthening local resilience, agency, and democratic engagement.

2. Explain how your planned activities in 2026 build on your organization's previous experience or ongoing work (LPF). *(context for outputs)* (100–150 words)

The planned activities for 2026 build directly on our organization's long-standing experience in community-based natural resource management, human rights advocacy, and participatory capacity building in rural areas of the Kyrgyz Republic. Through our ongoing work under the LPF, we have established trusted relationships with local communities, community-based organizations, and local authorities in the target areas, particularly in Sary-Bulak, Cholpon, and Ormon-Khan municipalities in Kochkor district of Naryn region. This work has generated practical lessons on engaging rights-holders and duty-bearers, addressing barriers to participation, and applying rights-based and gender-responsive approaches in environmentally sensitive contexts.

In 2026, we will consolidate and scale these efforts by deepening community leadership, strengthening local governance structures, and formalizing participatory mechanisms tested during earlier phases. The planned activities are informed by evidence, community feedback, and institutional learning from our current interventions, allowing us to move from pilot actions toward more systematic, sustainable, and locally anchored outcomes.

3. Identify the main opportunities that can help advance your goals (for example, new partnerships, policy changes or public interest). *(context for outcomes)* (80–120 words)

Several key opportunities can help advance our goals in the current context. First, there is growing public awareness of climate change, environmental degradation in pilot area (Son-Kul Lake), and their impacts on livelihoods, creating increased interest in community-based and sustainable natural resource management solutions. Second, despite political constraints, local authorities in rural areas increasingly recognize the practical benefits of engaging communities to address environmental and climate-related challenges, opening space for constructive collaboration. Third, existing and potential partnerships with local community-based groups, academia, and environmental experts provide opportunities for knowledge exchange, joint advocacy, and scaling effective practices. Finally, Kyrgyzstan's commitments under international environmental and human rights conventions (particularly Ramsar Convention, Convention on Biological Diversity, etc.) offer an important policy framework that can be leveraged to promote participatory, rights-based environmental governance at local and national levels.

4. List and briefly describe the key actors and stakeholders relevant to your work (such as community groups, authorities or networks). *(context for outcomes)* (100–150 words)

The key actors and stakeholders relevant to our work operate at community, local, and national levels and play complementary roles in achieving the project's outcomes. At the national level, the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic, particularly the Department of Biodiversity Protection, is a central duty-bearer responsible for

environmental policy, biodiversity conservation, and regulatory oversight. The National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic contributes scientific expertise, research, and evidence-based guidance to support sustainable ecosystem management.

At the regional level, the Karatal-Zhapyryk State Reserve is a critical partner in biodiversity protection and conservation practice. Local self-governments of Ormon-Khan, Cholpon, and Sary-Bulak, together with Kochkor District Authorities, are key actors in local planning, land use decisions, and implementation of development and environmental policies.

At the community level, local residents in the target municipalities, including members of the "Save Son-Kul" Initiative Group, are primary rights-holders and stewards of natural resources. Local schools, including administrations, teachers, and students, are important partners for environmental education, awareness raising, and fostering long-term environmental responsibility among younger generations.

4. Project goals and expected results (2026)

This section defines what your organization aims to achieve during 2026 within the framework of the Sida-funded programme. It focuses on the specific results expected within the year and how these results contribute to your organization's long-term goal described in Section 2.

The structure follows the Results-Based Management (RBM) logic:

– Impact – the long-term change your work contributes to (beyond the project period).
– Outcome – the medium-term changes in behavior, capacity or practices among your target groups that occur as a result of your work.
– Output – the immediate results of your activities, such as trainings, publications or established processes.

When describing results, please keep the language clear and measurable. Use qualitative and quantitative indicators wherever possible and ensure consistency with the Goal and Risk Matrix.

Questions

1. State your main objective for 2026 and explain how it contributes to your organization's long-term goal and to broader change in your community or sector. *(outcome)* (150–250 words)

The main goal for 2026 is to enhance community-based governance and management in the pilot municipalities of Ormon-Khan, Cholpon, and Sary-Bulak in Kochkor district of Naryn region, enabling responsible, inclusive, and sustainable stewardship of the wetland and grassland ecosystems of the pilot area of the Lake Son-Kul, an internationally recognized Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA). This will be achieved by enhancing the capacity of local communities, community-based organizations, and local authorities to collaboratively plan, monitor, and implement conservation and resource management activities using participatory, rights-based, and gender-responsive approaches. The objective also includes fostering environmental awareness, knowledge sharing, and social mobilization to promote long-term stewardship of biodiversity and natural landscapes.

This 2026 objective directly contributes to our organization's long-term goal of ensuring sustainable wetland conservation and resilient, empowered communities by establishing locally anchored governance mechanisms, strengthening dialogue between rights-holders and duty-bearers, and institutionalizing participatory practices. By addressing gaps in knowledge, capacity, and engagement, it lays the foundation for enduring community ownership and active stewardship of natural resources.

At the broader community and sectoral level, achieving this objective will promote more inclusive environmental governance, improve access to natural resources for marginalized groups, and foster

social and ecological resilience. It supports the emergence of a culture of rights-based environmental management and sustainable livelihoods, creating a model that can be scaled or adapted in other regions of Kyrgyzstan and beyond.

2. Describe the specific results you expect from your planned activities during 2026. Focus on what will be achieved or produced. *(outputs)* (300–400 words)

During 2026, the project expects to deliver a range of tangible and measurable outputs that collectively strengthen community awareness, environmental stewardship, and sustainable livelihoods in Cholpon, Ormon-Khan, and Sary-Bulak municipalities in Kochkor district.

Increased public awareness and education - The project will organize interactive educational workshops and presentations in local schools, reaching students with knowledge about the ecological importance of Son Kul wetlands, globally threatened bird species, and biodiversity conservation. Quests, competitions, and creative activities such as poster-making, storytelling, and model-building will actively engage students and stimulate interest in conservation.

A preschool multimedia center will be established at Ormon-Khan Secondary School, equipped with a computer equipment, mobile phones and internet access, providing a platform for interactive learning modules on biodiversity, wetlands, and sustainable resource management. Student-led initiatives in digital storytelling, video reporting, and online campaigns will enhance peer and community engagement.

The **"Achyk Okmot (Open Government)" platform**, with the active involvement of the multimedia center established at the local school in Tolok Sary-Bulak aiyl okmotu and with the support of the Association of Community Media, will facilitate direct and open interaction between community members and the heads of pilot municipalities as well as the Kochkor District State Administration. As part of the initiative, two live broadcasts will be organized on social media (Instagram), enabling residents of the pilot areas to openly discuss environmental issues, community development priorities, and local governance concerns.[1]

An annual "Wetlands Birds" community-based festival coinciding with International Biodiversity Day will celebrate local biodiversity and promote conservation awareness through cultural and educational activities.

Additionally, the project will produce and distribute informational materials such as brochures, leaflets, and posters to improve community understanding of the ecological, cultural, and economic values of Son Kul wetlands and Ramsar sites.

Strengthened capacity and stakeholders' engagement - Field researchers and staff of the Karatal-Zhapyryk State Reserve will receive training on participatory biodiversity monitoring using specialized identification guides developed with the National Academy of Sciences.

[1] *Additional activities with the support of Green Grants Fund (GGF) as contribution to the project*

Participatory mapping and monitoring of wetlands and grasslands will be conducted with local communities, strengthening skills in assessing pasture capacity, monitoring ecosystem health, and documenting the use of pastures by domestic and wild animals.

A national round table will convene stakeholders to exchange experiences, share best practices, and develop actionable recommendations for improved community participation and wetland management.

The project will support the development of a strategic fundraising framework aimed at mobilizing diversified financial resources to scale up activities for the sustainable management of water resources, including wetlands. This activity will include an assessment of existing funding gaps, mapping of potential donors and financing instruments (e.g. international donors, climate finance mechanisms, private sector, and blended finance opportunities), and identification of priority investment areas related to wetlands, water security, climate adaptation, and ecosystem-based solutions.

ISDS together with the Department for the Preservation of Biodiversity and Specially Protected Natural Territories under the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic will initiate the establishment and support the functioning of an Interdepartmental Working Group to coordinate practical measures for the protection, restoration, and sustainable use of wetlands (WBUs), ensure effective implementation of obligations under the Ramsar Convention, and facilitate the integration of wetland-related issues into national climate and water policies and strategies. The Working Group will involve representatives from civil society and state institutions (Academy of Sciences of the KR, Ministry of Agriculture, etc.).

Building community resilience and alternative livelihoods - Local community members, with particular focus on women and youth, will receive training in business planning, value chain development, and sustainable production practices using a Gender Action Learning System (GALS) approach. At least two to three alternative income-generating initiatives, including beekeeping, poultry, horticulture/gardening, and ecotourism, other initiatives prioritized by community members, will be implemented, reducing pressure on wetlands and dependence on traditional cattle breeding.

Collectively, these outputs will enhance local knowledge, strengthen participatory governance, and promote sustainable livelihoods, laying the foundation for long-term conservation and resilience of the Son Kul wetlands and grasslands.

3. Outline the main activities that will lead to these results. *(outputs)* (300–400 words)

During 2026, the project will implement a series of targeted activities designed to achieve the expected outputs in awareness raising, capacity building, and community resilience for sustainable wetland and grassland management in Cholpon, Ormon-Khan, and Sary-Bulak municipalities.

1. Public Awareness Raising and Education

1.1 The project will conduct educational workshops and presentations in local schools to teach students about the ecological importance of Son Kul wetlands, globally threatened bird species, and biodiversity conservation, with practical insights provided by experts from the Karatal-Zhapyryk State Reserve. Quests, competitions, and creative activities, including poster-making,

storytelling, and model-building, will engage students actively and stimulate interest in environmental stewardship.

1.2 A preschool **multimedia center** will be established at Ormon-Khan Secondary School, equipped with computers, projectors, and internet access. The center will host interactive learning modules, digital content, videos, and presentations on biodiversity and sustainable resource management. Student-led initiatives such as digital storytelling, video reporting, and online campaigns will promote wider community engagement.

1.3 Organize and facilitate two interactive online public dialogues through the **"Achyk Okmot (Open Government)" platform** to strengthen transparency, citizen engagement, and accountability at the local level.

1.4 An annual **"Wetlands Birds" festival**, timed with International Biodiversity Day, will celebrate local biodiversity and raise awareness through cultural and educational activities.

1.5 Additionally, **informational materials,** such as brochures, leaflets, and posters, will be produced and distributed to strengthen public understanding of the ecological, cultural, and economic value of Son Kul wetlands and Ramsar sites.

2. Capacity Building and Stakeholder Engagement

2.1 Conduct a **training for field researchers and staff** of the Karatal-Zhapyryk State Reserve on participatory biodiversity monitoring, including waterfowl birds' identification in wild and tracking of ecological indicators.

2.2 **Mapping and participatory monitoring activities** will involve local communities, Karatal-Zhapyryk State Researve staff and NAS scientists in assessing pasture capacity, monitoring pasture conditions, and documenting the use of pastures by domestic and wild animals.

2.3 A **national round table** "Participation of local communities in the conservation of the Ramsar sites: best practices, challenges, lessons learnt and solutions" will be convened to share lessons, highlight best practices, and jointly develop actionable recommendations for improved community participation and wetland management.

2.4 A strategic fundraising framework aimed at mobilizing diversified financial resources to scale up activities for the sustainable management of water resources, including wetlands will be developed. Project proposals will be developed and submitted for proposed donors for funding.

2.5 Establishment and operational support of an *Interdepartmental Working Group on wetland conservation and climate integration* in partnership with the Department for the Preservation of Biodiversity and Specially Protected Natural Territories under the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic. The Working Group will serve as a Coordination Platform for relevant ministries, agencies, and stakeholders to align and implement practical measures for the protection, restoration, and sustainable use of wetlands. The activity will focus on strengthening intersectoral coordination to ensure the effective implementation of Kyrgyzstan's obligations under the Ramsar Convention and to facilitate the systematic integration of wetland-related considerations into national climate change, water management, and biodiversity policies and strategies. ISDS will provide technical and organizational support to the working group, including facilitation of meetings, agenda setting, and coordination of inputs from participating institutions.

3. Building Community Resilience and Alternative Livelihoods
Training for community members, particularly women and youth, will focus on **business planning, value chain development, and sustainable production practices** using the **Gender Action Learning System (GALS)** approach. The project will support two to three alternative livelihood initiatives, including beekeeping, poultry, horticulture/gardening, and ecotourism, and other economic initiatives prioritized by community members to reduce pressure on wetlands and decrease reliance on traditional cattle breeding.

These activities collectively aim to strengthen local knowledge, build governance capacity, foster sustainable livelihoods, and ensure the long-term protection and resilience of Son Kul wetlands and grasslands.

4. Explain what changes in knowledge, skills, behavior or policy you expect among your target groups by the end of 2026. *(outcomes)* (300–400 words)

By the end of 2026, the project expects to achieve measurable changes in knowledge, skills, behaviors, and policies among the key target groups in Cholpon, Ormon-Khan, and Sary-Bulak municipalities, contributing to long-term conservation and sustainable management of Son Kul wetlands and grasslands.

1. Changes in Knowledge:
Local communities, including women, youth, and herders, will have improved understanding of the ecological importance of wetlands, the role of Son Kul as an International Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA), and the global significance of threatened waterfowl species. Students and community members participating in educational workshops, field visits, and multimedia initiatives will gain practical knowledge of biodiversity conservation, sustainable resource use, and participatory governance processes. Local authorities and municipal institutions will increase their awareness of community rights, conservation obligations, and strategies for collaborative environmental management.

2. Changes in Skills:
Target groups will develop enhanced technical and practical skills. Community members will acquire the ability to monitor and assess pasture and wetland conditions, apply participatory mapping methods, and engage in sustainable livelihoods such as beekeeping, horticulture, poultry, and ecotourism. Field researchers and staff of the Karatal Zhapyryk State Reserve will strengthen their competencies in biodiversity monitoring, species identification, and ecological data collection. Students will gain skills in environmental reporting, and digital storytelling.

3. Changes in Behavior:
The project expects shifts in behaviors toward more sustainable and conservation-oriented practices. Community members will reduce pressure on wetlands and grasslands by adopting alternative income-generating activities, adjusting traditional livestock management practices, and participating actively in local governance and decision-making. Schools and youth groups will demonstrate increased engagement in biodiversity protection, awareness campaigns, and environmental stewardship initiatives. Local authorities will adopt more inclusive and participatory approaches in policy planning, monitoring, and resource management.

4. Changes in Policy and Governance Practices:
By fostering dialogue and collaboration through the national round table on Ramsar sites, the project will contribute to improved policies and institutional practices that integrate community participation in wetland conservation. Recommendations from knowledge-sharing platforms and stakeholder meetings are expected to inform municipal and national decision-making, ensuring that policies increasingly reflect rights-based, participatory, and sustainable resource management principles.

Collectively, these outcomes will result in empowered communities, more informed and capable local authorities, and a stronger culture of environmental stewardship. This foundation will enhance long-term conservation of Son Kul wetlands, support sustainable livelihoods, and strengthen resilience to climate change impacts while fostering inclusive governance and community ownership of natural resources.

5. List the indicators you will use to measure progress and explain how you will verify these results. *(indicators / verification)* (100–150 words)

To measure progress, the project will use the following indicators:

- **Knowledge and Awareness:** Number of students and community members demonstrating increased understanding of wetland ecosystems, biodiversity, and conservation practices (verified through pre- and post-training surveys, quizzes, and feedback forms).
- **Skills and Capacity:** Number of community members and field researchers trained in participatory monitoring, pasture assessment, and sustainable livelihoods (verified through training attendance records, practical exercises, and competency assessments).
- **Behavioral Changes:** Number of households adopting alternative income-generating activities and sustainable livestock practices; participation of communities in conservation initiatives (verified through household surveys, site visits, and monitoring reports).
- **Policy and Governance:** Number of local authorities adopting participatory approaches or policy recommendations from round tables (verified through official meeting minutes, policy documents, and follow-up reports).

Verification will combine quantitative data, field observations, and documented qualitative evidence from workshops, trainings, and stakeholder meetings.

6. Describe how your work will strengthen broader actors within civil society. For example, by building leadership, collective organizing, advocacy or community networks.
(outcome → impact) (250–350 words)

The project will contribute to strengthening broader civil society actors, particularly on a local level, in pilot areas and overall in Kyrgyzstan by building leadership, fostering collective

organizing, enhancing advocacy capacities, and expanding community networks around wetland conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

1. *Leadership Development:* Through targeted training and capacity-building initiatives, local community members, especially women and youth, will gain practical skills in environmental governance, participatory monitoring, and sustainable resource management. By taking active roles in workshops, field monitoring, and awareness campaigns, these individuals will emerge as local leaders capable of guiding their communities in conservation and advocacy efforts. Strengthened leadership will also empower communities to engage confidently with municipal authorities and decision-making processes.

2. Collective Organizing: The project will support community-based organizations (CBOs) and initiative groups, such as the "Save Son-Kul" group, in coordinating conservation activities and managing locally-led livelihood projects. By facilitating participatory planning, joint field monitoring, and community festivals, the project will strengthen social cohesion, collective action, and shared responsibility for environmental stewardship. Communities will learn to work together to identify local priorities, implement solutions, and respond collectively to environmental challenges.

3. Advocacy and Policy Engagement: Engagement with local authorities and national stakeholders through trainings, round tables, and knowledge-sharing platforms will build capacity for evidence-based advocacy. Civil society actors will be able to use research, monitoring data, and field experience to influence policy decisions, promote participatory governance, and ensure that community voices are included in planning and conservation policies.

4. Network Building: By connecting schools, CBOs, local authorities, and research institutions such as the National Academy of Sciences and the Karatal-Zhapyryk State Reserve, the project will foster durable networks that facilitate information sharing, joint problem-solving, and replication of successful practices across regions. These networks will enhance the collective capacity of civil society to address environmental, social, and economic challenges.

Collectively, these outcomes will strengthen the ability of civil society actors to operate effectively, advocate for sustainable resource management, and sustain community-led conservation initiatives. Over time, this will contribute to a more vibrant, resilient, and interconnected civil society capable of promoting inclusive environmental governance and long-term social and ecological resilience.

7. Describe any specific internal institutional-capacity results your organization aims to achieve in 2026. Explain briefly how these internal improvements will support the implementation and achievement of your 2026 results. *(200–300 words)*

In 2026, our organization aims to achieve several key internal capacity results to strengthen its ability to implement the Son Kul wetlands project effectively and ensure high-quality, sustainable outcomes.

1. Enhanced Project Management Capacity: We will improve internal systems for planning, monitoring, and reporting on project activities. This includes establishing clear workflows, timelines, and accountability mechanisms for staff involved in awareness raising, capacity building, and livelihood initiatives. Strengthened project management will enable timely delivery of activities, ensure alignment with objectives, and improve overall efficiency in achieving results.

2. Technical and Thematic Expertise: Staff will receive specialized training in biodiversity monitoring, wetland and grassland management, and participatory approaches to community engagement. Field team will enhance their technical skills in ecological data collection, participatory mapping, and monitoring of waterfowl species. These improvements will directly support accurate, evidence-based interventions and strengthen the quality of capacity-building programs for local communities and authorities.

3. Knowledge Management and Documentation Systems: We will develop structured systems to document lessons learned, best practices, and community experiences from all project components. Improved knowledge management will facilitate the replication of successful approaches, support adaptive management, and strengthen reporting to stakeholders, donors, and policymakers.

4. Strengthened Internal Coordination and Collaboration: The organization will enhance mechanisms for cross-departmental collaboration and coordination with partners, including the Karatal-Zhapyryk State Reserve, NAS, and local municipalities. This will ensure integrated planning and implementation, enabling synergies across awareness raising, capacity building, and livelihood interventions.

5. Strategic Fundraising and Resource Mobilization: The organization will strengthen its capacity in strategic fundraising to secure resources for future initiatives. This includes developing proposals, cultivating donor relationships, and diversifying funding streams. Improved fundraising capacity will build institutional resilience, enabling the organization to expand its conservation and community development activities beyond 2026.

By achieving these internal capacity results, the organization will be better positioned to deliver high-quality project outputs, respond effectively to challenges, and support long-term community empowerment and wetland conservation. Enhanced institutional capacity will also strengthen accountability, transparency, and sustainability of interventions, contributing directly to the successful achievement of all 2026 results.

8. Describe any baseline information you already have and, if needed, how you collect it. *(baseline for outputs/outcomes)* (80–120 words)

The project builds on existing baseline information collected through previous assessments, community consultations, and environmental studies in the Son Kul pilot area. Key data includes local community demographics in 3 pilot municipalities, poverty levels, dependency on natural resources, current livestock grazing practices, and the state of wetland and grassland ecosystems. Information on local awareness, attitudes toward conservation, and existing community networks has also been gathered through surveys, focus group discussions, and interviews with community members, schools, and local authorities. Additional baseline data on biodiversity, including key waterfowl species and pasture conditions, is obtained from the Karatal-Zhapyryk State Reserve and the National Academy of Sciences. These sources provide a foundation for measuring changes in knowledge, skills, behaviors, and ecosystem management.

9. Note any assumptions that must hold true for your expected results to be achieved. *(assumptions)* (60–100 words)

The project's expected results assume that local communities, including women and youth, remain willing to engage in capacity-building activities and adopt sustainable practices. It also assumes continued cooperation and support from local authorities, the Karatal-Zhapyryk State Reserve, and the National Academy of Sciences. Stable security and political conditions in the region, as well as reasonable access to project sites, are necessary for effective implementation. Additionally, sufficient funding and timely delivery of project resources must be maintained to ensure planned activities, such as training, field monitoring, and livelihood initiatives, can be executed as scheduled.

5. Theory of change

This section summarizes the logic behind your planned intervention. It explains how your organization believes change will happen, how your activities (outputs) will lead to results (outcomes) and contribute to the long-term goal (impact).

The purpose is to describe, in a clear and concise way, the reasoning that connects what you do with the changes you expect to see. The theory of change should reflect your organization's understanding of local realities, the role of different actors and the assumptions that underlie your work. This section also serves as a bridge to the Goal and Risk Matrix, which presents the same logic in a more structured format.

Questions

1. Explain why you believe your planned activities will lead to the expected results. What is the link between what you plan to do and the change you hope to achieve? *(outputs → outcomes)* (150–250 words)

The planned activities are designed to create a clear and direct pathway from outputs to outcomes, grounded in the local context and informed by existing knowledge of community needs and ecological conditions. By implementing educational workshops, field visits, multimedia learning, and awareness campaigns, the project will increase knowledge and understanding of wetland ecosystems, biodiversity, and sustainable practices among local students, youth, and community members. This knowledge forms the foundation for behavioral change, motivating communities to adopt environmentally sustainable practices and engage actively in local governance.

Capacity-building initiatives for community members, local authorities, and field researchers are expected to strengthen their practical skills in participatory monitoring, pasture management, and biodiversity conservation. These enhanced skills will enable target groups to implement evidence-based practices, monitor environmental conditions effectively, and manage resources collaboratively. Community-led alternative livelihood projects will reduce pressure on wetlands and grasslands, linking economic resilience to environmental stewardship.

Stakeholder engagement through a national round table and networking activities ensures that lessons learned, best practices, and community voices inform decision-making at local and national levels, promoting inclusive governance and policy change.

The Theory of Change assumes that empowered, knowledgeable, and skilled communities, combined with supportive local authorities and coordinated stakeholder networks, will adopt sustainable behaviors, strengthen environmental governance, and improve livelihood resilience. In turn, these changes will contribute directly to the long-term goal of conserving Son Kul wetlands, protecting biodiversity, and enhancing the well-being of local communities.

2. Describe in your own words how change happens in your area of work. What are the key steps or processes that lead from your activities to the broader change you aim for? *(outputs → outcomes → impact)* (150–250 words)

Change in the Son Kul wetland context happens through a combination of awareness, capacity building, community engagement, and practical action that together create sustainable social and ecological outcomes. The process begins with *strengthening knowledge and awareness:* educational workshops, school activities, multimedia learning, field visits, and awareness campaigns equip students, youth, and community members with a clear understanding of wetland ecosystems, biodiversity, and the consequences of unsustainable practices. Increased awareness motivates communities to adopt conservation-minded behaviors and participate in local decision-making.

The next step is *capacity building and skills development*. Training local authorities, community members, and field researchers in participatory monitoring, resource management, and sustainable livelihoods strengthens their ability to act effectively. These skills enable communities to monitor

pasture and wetland conditions, implement alternative income-generating activities, and engage meaningfully with local governance structures.

Behavioral and institutional changes then emerge: communities reduce pressure on wetlands through sustainable livestock practices and new livelihoods, while local authorities and stakeholders adopt more participatory, inclusive approaches to resource management. Collaboration through round tables, knowledge-sharing networks, and festivals reinforces these behaviors and strengthens collective action.

Over time, these processes lead to *broader impact:* healthier wetlands and grasslands, protected biodiversity, improved community livelihoods, and enhanced resilience to climate change. Empowered, informed, and organized communities, working in partnership with authorities and civil society actors, create a sustainable system in which environmental stewardship and socio-economic development reinforce each other, securing the long-term well-being of both people and ecosystems.

3. Identify the actors or systems whose behavior or decisions must change for your outcomes to occur (for instance, local authorities, communities, networks or institutions). Explain how you plan to influence or collaborate with them. *(outcomes)* (150–250 words)

The successful achievement of our outcomes depends on changes in behavior and decisions across multiple actors and systems. Local communities, including women, youth, and herders, must adopt sustainable practices, participate actively in governance, and engage in alternative livelihoods that reduce pressure on wetlands and grasslands. We plan to influence these groups through educational workshops, field visits, competitions, multimedia learning, and capacity-building initiatives, creating opportunities for experiential learning, skill development, and empowerment.

Local authorities and municipal institutions must embrace participatory governance, integrate community input into decision-making, and support sustainable resource management. We will collaborate with them through joint trainings, consultation sessions, and involvement in community-led monitoring and planning processes, demonstrating the practical benefits of inclusive and evidence-based approaches.

Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic, field researchers and staff of Karatal-Zhapyryk State Reserve, and scientific institutions play a critical role in monitoring biodiversity and providing credible ecological data. We will strengthen their technical capacity through specialized training, development of identification guides, and joint participatory monitoring activities, ensuring that data is reliable, actionable, and shared with communities and authorities.

Civil society networks and broader stakeholders, including CBOs, schools, and national-level organizations, must coordinate and exchange knowledge to amplify impact. We will foster collaboration through round tables, festivals, and knowledge-sharing platforms that encourage peer learning, collective problem-solving, and replication of best practices.

By engaging these actors simultaneously, the project creates a reinforcing system in which informed, skilled, and empowered communities work alongside responsive authorities and knowledgeable stakeholders, enabling sustainable environmental governance and long-term conservation outcomes.

4. Describe any assumptions your organization makes about the context, stakeholders or external conditions that support your theory of change. *(150–250 words)*

The project's Theory of Change relies on several key assumptions about the context, stakeholders, and external conditions. First, it assumes that local communities are willing and able to engage in capacity-building activities, adopt sustainable practices, and participate actively in governance processes. The effectiveness of awareness-raising, educational initiatives, and livelihood interventions depends on this willingness and the continued interest of local communities, including youth, women, and herders, in environmental stewardship.

Second, the project assumes cooperation and support from local authorities, municipal institutions, and national stakeholders such as the Karatal-Zhapyryk State Reserve and the National Academy of Sciences and Department for Biodiversity Protection under the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic. Their engagement in participatory monitoring, policy discussions, and joint decision-making is critical to ensure that community knowledge and initiatives are recognized, integrated, and sustained.

Third, the project presumes relative stability in political, social, and security conditions, allowing safe access to target communities, wetlands, and school programs. It also assumes that funding, technical resources, and logistical support are available on time to implement the planned activities effectively.

Additionally, the project assumes that community members have sufficient baseline capacity to benefit from training and that existing cultural and social structures support collective action and inclusive participation. It also presumes that broader civil society networks are open to collaboration and knowledge exchange, enabling learning and replication of best practices.

These assumptions are critical because if any are not met, for example, if local communities are unwilling to participate or authorities are unresponsive, the pathways from activities to outcomes could be disrupted, limiting the achievement of long-term conservation and community empowerment goals.

6. Project structure and implementation (2026)

This section describes how your organization will organize, manage and carry out activities during 2026. It focuses on practical aspects of implementation: how the work will be coordinated, who is responsible for what and what methods or approaches will be used. Partners should also highlight cooperation with local actors, internal management routines and any measures that ensure quality and accountability.

The section connects to Sida's expectations under project structure and implementation and will help define how outputs are produced and managed efficiently.

Questions

1. Specify the roles and responsibilities within your organization for carrying out the planned work. Who will be responsible for coordination, implementation, communication and financial management? *(120–180 words)*

In 2026, the project will be implemented through a structured management framework to ensure clear roles, accountability, and effective coordination. *The Project Lead* (Anara Alymkulova) will have overall responsibility for coordination, supervision of all activities, ensuring alignment with objectives and timelines, reporting and correspondence with CAG staff. *Project Coordinator* (Anara Momunova) will oversee implementation of specific components, including awareness raising, capacity building, biodiversity monitoring, and livelihood initiatives, providing guidance and technical support. She will also manage day-to-day activities in the target municipalities (Ormon-Khan, Cholpon, and Sary-Bulak), liaise with local authorities, schools, community groups, and Karatal-Zhapyryk State Reserve staff, and facilitate participatory workshops, field visits, and monitoring exercises. SMM specialist will be responsible for knowledge dissemination, and community engagement campaigns.

The Finance Manager (Burul Sarieva) will manage budgeting, disbursements, and financial reporting, ensuring transparency and compliance with donor requirements.

Internal management routines, including regular staff meetings, progress reviews, and monitoring of outputs and expenditures, will maintain quality and accountability.

Collaboration with local actors, including municipal authorities, schools, community-based organizations, and national research institutions, will be integral to implementation, ensuring local ownership, participation, and sustainability of the interventions.

2. Describe whether any steps are planned in 2026 to strengthen your organization's internal management, coordination or administrative systems to support effective implementation. *(150–200 words)*

In 2026, the organization plans to strengthen its internal management, coordination, and administrative systems to ensure effective implementation of the Son Kul wetlands project. First, we will enhance *project management systems* by establishing clear workflows, activity timelines, and reporting protocols, ensuring accountability and efficient monitoring of outputs and milestones. Regular internal progress meetings and performance reviews will support timely decision-making and adaptive management.

Second, *coordination mechanisms* will be improved through strengthened collaboration between program staff, finance and communication staff. Standard operating procedures will be developed for communication, documentation, and collaboration with partners, local authorities, schools, and community groups, ensuring alignment across all activities.

Third, administrative systems, including *financial management, procurement, and record-keeping*, will be upgraded to improve transparency, compliance, and efficiency. Staff will receive targeted training in financial reporting, budget tracking, and donor compliance requirements.

Additionally, the organization will focus on *strengthening strategic fundraising capacity* by developing proposals, cultivating donor relationships, and diversifying funding streams. This will enhance institutional resilience and provide a stable resource base to expand conservation and community development initiatives in the future.

Finally, *knowledge management systems* will be enhanced to document lessons learned, best practices, and community feedback, enabling continuous learning and improved decision-making. These internal improvements will strengthen organizational capacity, ensure smooth implementation, and enhance accountability, quality, and sustainability of the project's outputs and outcomes.

3. Summarize the main activities you will carry out and the planned sequence or timeline for these. *(150–200 words)*

In 2026, the project will implement a series of interlinked activities to achieve its outcomes in awareness raising, capacity building, and community resilience. The year will begin with planning and preparation, including development of training materials, multimedia content, and

informational brochures, as well as coordination with local authorities, schools, and the Karatal-Zhapyryk State Reserve.

Awareness-raising and education activities will run throughout the year, including interactive workshops and presentations in schools, biodiversity-themed quests and competitions. A multimedia center will be established at Ormon-Khan Secondary School to support digital learning and youth engagement programs, and an annual "Wetlands Birds" festival will be held to celebrate biodiversity and encourage community participation.

Capacity-building activities will include training for field researchers, reserve staff, and community members on participatory monitoring, pasture assessment, and biodiversity tracking, alongside joint mapping exercises in the pilot areas. A national round table will be organized to exchange experiences, share best practices, and develop actionable recommendations for Ramsar site conservation.

Throughout the year, the project will support alternative livelihood initiatives, training community members, especially women and youth, in business planning and sustainable production practices, with 2–3 pilot income-generating projects launched.

These activities are sequenced to build knowledge first, then strengthen skills and engagement, culminating in practical action and policy influence for sustainable wetland management.

4. Explain the methodology or approaches you will use to ensure quality, relevance and participation in your activities. *(200–400 words)*

To ensure quality, relevance, and participation in all activities during 2026, the project will employ a combination of participatory, evidence-based, and context-sensitive methodologies and approaches tailored to the needs and capacities of local communities, authorities, and stakeholders.

1. Participatory Approach: All interventions will be designed and implemented with active involvement of target communities. Local residents, including women, youth, and herders, will participate in the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of activities, ensuring that their knowledge, priorities, and cultural practices inform decision-making. Community-based organizations (CBOs) and local initiative groups, such as "Save Son-Kul," will be directly engaged in awareness campaigns, mapping exercises, and alternative livelihood projects. This approach promotes ownership, relevance, and sustainability of interventions.

2. Experiential and Interactive Learning: Educational workshops, field visits, and multimedia initiatives will emphasize hands-on learning, allowing students and community members to observe wetlands, waterfowl, and conservation practices firsthand. Competitions, storytelling, and travel notes encourage creativity, reinforce understanding, and motivate active participation. The

establishment of a multimedia center in Ormon-Khan Secondary School will provide an interactive platform for youth-led initiatives, digital storytelling, and knowledge sharing.

3. Evidence-Based Interventions: All capacity-building and monitoring activities will be guided by scientific data and methodologies. Training for field researchers, reserve staff, and communities will use standardized identification guides and participatory monitoring protocols developed with the National Academy of Sciences. Mapping, biodiversity monitoring, and pasture assessment activities will generate reliable ecological data to inform both community action and policy advocacy.

*4. Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Design***:** Activities will intentionally target underrepresented groups, particularly women and youth, ensuring equitable participation. The Gender Action Learning System (GALS) approach will be integrated into livelihood and capacity-building initiatives to strengthen inclusion, leadership, and decision-making skills.

5. Continuous Feedback and Adaptive Management: Quality assurance will be supported through regular monitoring, feedback loops, and reflection sessions with communities and stakeholders. Lessons learned will be documented and used to adjust interventions, ensuring relevance, responsiveness to local conditions, and alignment with project objectives.

6. Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration: Engagement with local authorities, schools, research institutions, and civil society networks will facilitate knowledge exchange, coordination, and alignment with policy frameworks. National round tables and festivals will reinforce collaboration, disseminate lessons, and strengthen accountability.

By combining these key methodologies/approaches, the project ensures that all activities are participatory, contextually relevant, scientifically informed, inclusive, and adaptable, resulting in high-quality interventions that lead to meaningful outcomes for wetland conservation and community empowerment.

5. If your activities involve cooperation with other organizations, institutions or community groups, describe these partnerships and coordination routines. *(120–180 words)*

The project relies on close collaboration with a range of organizations, institutions, and community groups to ensure effective implementation and local ownership. Key partners include the *Karatal-Zhapyryk State Reserve*, providing expertise in biodiversity monitoring and facilitating field-based learning; the *National Academy of Sciences*, contributing scientific guidance, participatory monitoring methodologies, and technical training; and *local schools in Ormon-Khan, Cholpon, and Sary-Bulak rural municipalities*, which serve as hubs for awareness-raising, youth engagement, and multimedia learning initiatives.

Community-based organizations (CBOs) and local initiative groups, including the *"Save Son-Kul" group and "Tirek" women initiative group,* will actively participate in mapping, monitoring, and alternative livelihood projects, ensuring that interventions reflect local priorities and knowledge. Coordination with municipal authorities and Kochkor district administration will facilitate participatory governance, policy support, and integration of project recommendations into local planning.

Regular coordination routines will include joint planning meetings, progress reviews, technical consultations, and field visits. Monthly internal team meetings and quarterly partner coordination sessions will ensure alignment, effective communication, and adaptive management. Additionally, a national-level round table and knowledge-sharing platforms will reinforce collaboration, strengthen networks, and promote replication of best practices.

6. Explain how your organization will ensure inclusiveness and equal participation of different groups, including women, youth and marginalized communities, in planned activities. *(150–200 words)*

The project will ensure inclusiveness and equal participation by intentionally designing activities that target and empower women, youth, and marginalized community members. In all awareness-raising and educational activities, workshops, competitions, and field visits will prioritize the active involvement of these groups, ensuring their voices are heard and their perspectives incorporated. The multimedia center and youth engagement programs will provide platforms for young people to participate in digital storytelling, reporting, and advocacy initiatives, fostering leadership and agency.

In capacity-building and livelihood interventions, the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) approach will be integrated to promote gender equality and equitable decision-making within households and community groups. Training sessions will be scheduled flexibly to accommodate women's and youth's availability, and targeted support will be provided to help them access resources and opportunities for income-generating activities.

The project will also engage local authorities and community leaders to create inclusive governance spaces where women, youth, and marginalized groups can contribute to planning, monitoring, and conservation decision-making. By combining targeted outreach, participatory approaches, and gender-responsive methodologies, the project ensures that all community members have meaningful, equitable opportunities to participate, benefit from interventions, and influence outcomes.

7. Explain how your organization will manage and monitor progress during implementation, including how decisions are made and issues are addressed. *(150–200 words)*

Monitoring project progress will be conducted according to a jointly agreed plan between ISDS and CAG, covering detailed documentation routines, evaluation mechanisms, and monitoring processes. This includes economic and administrative oversight to ensure transparency, accountability, and efficient use of resources. Rigorous internal supervision will be supported by accurate record-keeping, regular reporting, and active communication between ISDS and CAG.

Right-holders will be engaged in evaluation processes through participatory methodologies, ensuring their perspectives and experiences inform project assessments. Combined with other verification sources outlined in the project goal matrix, this approach will allow us to measure progress toward achieving the project's objectives.

Continuous monitoring will assess the project trajectory and developments, enabling timely identification of challenges or deviations. Where necessary, strategic interventions will be implemented to realign activities, strategies, and methods with project goals. This adaptive management approach ensures that outputs and outcomes remain relevant, effective, and responsive to local conditions while maintaining accountability to communities and stakeholders throughout the project cycle.

8. If relevant, mention any external experts, consultants or service providers you plan to engage in 2026 and briefly describe their roles. *(150–200 words)*

In 2026, the project will engage several external experts and service providers to enhance technical quality, knowledge transfer, and implementation effectiveness. Biodiversity and ecological experts from the National Academy of Sciences/Institute of Biology will provide specialized training for field researchers and staff of the Karatal-Zhapyryk State Reserve, and community members on participatory monitoring of waterfowl species, wetland and grassland ecosystems, and pasture assessment. They will also assist in developing identification guides, monitoring protocols, and data collection methodologies.

Educational and multimedia consultants (National Association of Community Media) will support the establishment and operation of the multimedia center at Ormon-Khan Secondary School, developing interactive learning modules, digital content, and youth engagement tools such as video reporting and digital storytelling platforms.

Livelihood and business development specialists will provide training and mentorship to local community members, particularly women and youth, on sustainable production practices, business planning, and value chain development for alternative income-generating activities such as beekeeping, poultry, horticulture, and ecotourism.

Finally, event facilitators and knowledge management consultants will support the organization of a national round table, community festivals, and workshops, ensuring participatory discussions,

documentation of lessons learned, and dissemination of best practices. These external engagements will complement internal capacity, strengthen technical expertise, and ensure high-quality, impactful project implementation.

7. Target groups and participation

Brief explanation

This section defines who your organization aims to reach through its planned activities in 2026 and how these groups will be meaningfully involved in the process. Partners are expected to describe both primary target groups (those directly engaged or benefiting from the activities) and secondary target groups (those indirectly influenced by the project, such as decision-makers, institutions or communities).

The description should also explain how the project ensures equal participation and representation of women, youth and marginalized groups, in line with the principles of inclusion and rights-based approaches.

Questions

1. Identify your primary target groups for 2026. Who will directly take part in or benefit from your activities? *(outputs)* (80–120 words)

The primary target groups for 2026 include local communities in the Ormon-Khan, Cholpon, and Sary-Bulak municipalities, with particular focus on women, youth, herders, and community-based organizations such as the "Save Son-Kul" Initiative Group and "Tirek" Women Initiative Group. School students and teachers will also be directly engaged through educational workshops, competitions, field visits, and multimedia learning activities. These groups will gain knowledge, skills, and capacity to actively participate in biodiversity conservation, sustainable resource management, and alternative livelihood initiatives.

Additionally, local authorities, municipal institutions, and the Karatal-Zhapyryk State Reserve are considered primary target groups, as they will directly benefit from capacity-building, participatory monitoring, and collaboration mechanisms. By engaging these actors, the project strengthens governance, decision-making, and implementation of sustainable conservation practices. Inclusion and gender-responsive approaches will ensure equitable participation of women, youth, and marginalized community members in all project activities.

2. Identify your secondary target groups. Who will be indirectly affected or influenced by the results of your work? *(outcomes)* (80–120 words)

The secondary target groups include the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology/Department for Biodiversity Protection, national research institutions, and other governmental and civil society stakeholders involved in environmental governance and policy-making. These actors will be indirectly influenced by the project through strengthened collaboration, access to participatory monitoring data, and evidence-based recommendations for wetland and biodiversity management. By observing and supporting community-led initiatives, alternative livelihoods, and inclusive governance practices, these institutions can integrate lessons learned into broader policies and programs. The project promotes gender-responsive and rights-based approaches, ensuring that outcomes consider the needs and perspectives of underrepresented groups while influencing institutional practices at local and national levels.

3. Estimate, if possible, the number of people or groups you expect to reach directly and indirectly. Provide separate estimates for women, men and youth if applicable. *(150–250 words)*

In 2026, the project is expected to reach a substantial number of individuals and groups both directly and indirectly across the three target municipalities.

Primary target groups – local communities:
The total population of the three municipalities is approximately 44,705 people: Ormon-Khan (31,785), Cholpon (10,276), and Sary-Bulak (2,644). Direct participants will include school students, teachers, youth, herders, and community-based organizations, estimated at 4,000–5,000 individuals, with targeted engagement of women, men, and youth. Specifically, women will constitute roughly 48–50% of participants, men 50–52%, and youth (ages 15–29) approximately 30–35% of the direct participants. Staff/field researchers of Karatal Zhapyryk State Reserve (15 employees) will be reached directly through participation in the training and monitoring activities of the project.

Secondary target groups – stakeholders:
The project will directly engage approximately 30 key stakeholders at the local and national levels, including municipal authorities, Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology officials, and academic researchers through participation in the proposed round table. Equal representation of women and men will be encouraged.

Indirect reach:
Through community outreach, awareness campaigns, festivals, and multimedia initiatives, the project is expected to indirectly influence the broader population of around 40,000–42,000 residents across the three municipalities, enhancing understanding of environmental rights, participatory governance, and sustainable resource management.

These estimates reflect targeted inclusion and gender-responsive approaches, ensuring equitable participation of women, youth, and marginalized groups while maximizing overall community impact.

4. Explain how your organization ensures equal access and participation of women, youth and other under-represented or marginalized groups, including how they are involved in planning, decision-making or evaluation. *(outcomes)* (150–250 words)

We will ensure equal access and participation of women, youth, and other underrepresented or marginalized groups through a combination of inclusive design, targeted engagement, and participatory approaches. During the planning phase, community consultations and focus group discussions are conducted to identify the needs, priorities, and challenges of these groups. Their input directly informs the design of project activities, ensuring relevance and accessibility.

Throughout implementation, gender-responsive methodologies such as the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) are integrated into capacity-building, livelihood, and environmental initiatives. Training sessions, workshops, and participatory monitoring exercises are scheduled flexibly to accommodate women's and youth's availability, and culturally appropriate facilitation methods are used to encourage active contribution. Community-based organizations and local initiative groups, including women's and youth networks, are empowered to lead activities, share knowledge, and mentor peers, reinforcing agency and leadership skills.

In decision-making processes, women, youth, and marginalized groups are actively included in governance structures, committee meetings, and consultations with local authorities. Their perspectives shape conservation strategies, alternative livelihood projects, and community-based monitoring initiatives.

For evaluation and learning, participatory methodologies are employed, allowing these groups to provide feedback, assess progress, and suggest improvements. By embedding inclusion at all stages—planning, implementation, decision-making, and evaluation—the project ensures equitable participation, strengthens local ownership, and promotes sustainable and socially just outcomes.

5. Are there any barriers that could limit participation (for example, language, geography, social norms, disability or safety concerns)? How will your organization address these barriers? *(150–250 words)*

Several barriers could potentially limit the participation of women, youth, and other marginalized groups in the project. Social and cultural norms may restrict women's mobility or limit their involvement in public decision-making processes, while youth may lack opportunities to influence

community governance. Language barriers may also affect engagement, particularly for materials or workshops conducted in technical or non-local terminology.

To address these barriers, the project will implement several strategies. Flexible scheduling and local delivery of activities will minimize travel challenges. Community mobilizers and facilitators will ensure that sessions are culturally sensitive and inclusive, encouraging women and youth to participate actively. Multimedia tools, visual aids, and translation into local dialects will be used to overcome language and comprehension barriers. Field visits and workshops will be adapted to accommodate participants with disabilities, and safety protocols will be enforced for all activities.

By proactively identifying and mitigating these barriers, the project ensures equitable access, meaningful participation, and the empowerment of all target groups in decision-making, conservation, and livelihood initiatives.

6. How will your organization collect feedback from target groups during implementation, and how will this information be used to improve activities? *(monitoring of outputs/outcomes)* (150–250 words)

We will collect feedback from target groups using a combination of participatory and structured mechanisms to ensure that insights from women, youth, marginalized groups, and other community members are incorporated throughout project implementation. Participatory workshops and focus group discussions will be conducted regularly, allowing participants to express their experiences, challenges, and suggestions regarding awareness-raising activities, capacity-building sessions, and livelihood interventions.

Field staff, community mobilizers, and teachers involved in the project will act as continuous feedback channels, observing participant engagement during workshops, school activities, field visits, and festivals, and documenting any issues or barriers encountered. Youth and women participating in multimedia and digital storytelling initiatives will also provide feedback on learning content and methods.

All collected feedback will be systematically analyzed and integrated into adaptive management processes. Regular team meetings and quarterly review sessions with CAG staff will assess progress, identify areas for improvement, and adjust activity design, scheduling, or content to better meet community needs. Feedback from right-holders will also inform policy advocacy, ensuring that the perspectives of local communities influence decision-making and implementation strategies.

By embedding structured and participatory feedback mechanisms, the project maintains responsiveness, relevance, and continuous improvement while strengthening accountability to target groups.

8. Risk analysis and adaptation

Brief explanation

This section identifies potential factors that could affect the achievement of planned results during 2026 and outlines how your organization will prevent or respond to them. Risks may be internal (related to management, staffing or resources) or external (linked to political, social, environmental or security conditions).

The focus is on practical risk management: recognizing potential challenges early, proposing mitigation measures and describing how your organization remains flexible and ready to adjust plans when conditions change. The information here will directly inform the risk column in the Goal and Risk Matrix.

Questions

1. Identify the main external and internal risks that could affect your work in 2026, including any contextual, operational or institutional risks specific to your target groups, location or organization. *(150–200 words)*

Risk 1: The political climate in Kyrgyzstan becomes turbulent and civil society is negatively affected. The Law on "Foreign Representatives" signed on April 2, 2024 established new burdensome requirements for NGOs.

Risk 2: Kyrgyzstan faces major challenges of corruption in all sectors, incl. environment/natural resources management.

Risk 3 (primary target group): There is lack of trust to and collaboration of local communities with local/national authorities.

Risk 4: State authorities do not provide adequate support and acknowledge the rights of local communities to be engaged in environment/wetland protection and management.

2. Describe the measures your organization will take to reduce or manage these risks. *(150–200 words)*

Risk Management 1: ISDS and CAG will continuously perform a contextual assessment of political developments in Kyrgyzstan and outline proactive and direct measures in case of shifting political situations.

Risk Management 2: ISDS and CAG will work in a transparent and accountable manner to engage key stakeholders in the project activities. ISDS has an elaborate anti-corruption policy, which will be used in the project.

Risk Management 3 (primary target group): ISDS continuously work to build trust and mutual collaboration between local communities and state/local authorities.

Risk Management 4:

(1) ISDS will strengthen the capacity of local communities to claim their rights for sustainable management of wetland ecosystems and resources.
(2) ISDS will build close interaction among different stakeholders: government officials, CSOs, academia and local communities as direct users of natural resources for effective solving of the conservation of biodiversity.

3. Explain how your organization will monitor changes in context and integrate lessons learned into planning and decision-making during 2026. *(150–200 words)*

We will monitor changes in context through a combination of ongoing observation, data collection, and stakeholder engagement. Project staff will maintain regular contact with local communities, schools, and municipal authorities to identify shifts in social, environmental, or political conditions that may affect project implementation. Participatory monitoring activities, such as community-led biodiversity mapping, pasture assessments, and livelihood project tracking, will provide real-time insights into ecological, economic, and social changes.

Lessons learned will be systematically captured through weekly (ISDS staff) and monthly reflection meetings (joint meeting of ISDS and CAG), quarterly reports, and feedback collected from target groups via surveys, focus groups, and workshops. Monthly review sessions with partner organizations (ISDS and CAG) will analyze trends, successes, and challenges, ensuring that findings are integrated into activity planning, resource allocation, and adaptive management strategies.

By maintaining flexible implementation plans and embedding a culture of continuous learning, our organization will respond to evolving community needs, environmental conditions, and policy changes. This approach ensures that project activities remain relevant, effective, and aligned with long-term goals, while maximizing impact and accountability to local stakeholders.

4. What internal routines or decision-making processes are in place to ensure that lessons learned from risks or changes are integrated into planning? *(150–250 words)*

Our organization has established structured internal routines and decision-making processes to ensure that lessons learned from risks, challenges, or contextual changes are systematically integrated into planning and implementation. *Regular team meetings* are held at multiple levels,

such as ISDS weekly coordination meetings, monthly planning sessions with participation of ISDS and CAG key staff. These meetings provide forums to discuss progress, identify emerging risks or deviations, and evaluate the effectiveness of ongoing activities.

Documentation and reporting routines are central to capturing lessons learned. ISDS staff and facilitarors maintain detailed records of workshops, field visits, participatory monitoring, and stakeholder interactions. Reports summarize successes, challenges, feedback from participants, and recommendations for improvements. Lessons learned are synthesized and shared with all relevant staff and partners to inform adaptive decision-making.

Our organization follows a *risk-informed and adaptive management approach*, where emerging issues, such as environmental changes, socio-political shifts, or barriers to participation, are analyzed, and strategies are revised accordingly. Decision-making authority is clearly defined: the Project Lead coordinates implementation adjustments, the Project Coordinator provides technical guidance, monitors activities, and ensures that lessons learned are integrated into planning. Regular internal meetings and review sessions allow the team to discuss challenges, assess progress, and make evidence-based decisions.

Additionally, *feedback loops from right-holders and stakeholders* are integrated into planning processes, ensuring that community perspectives directly shape project modifications. By institutionalizing these routines, we will ensure continuous learning, responsiveness to changes, and alignment of interventions with project goals, maintaining accountability and enhancing overall effectiveness.

9. Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Brief explanation

This section describes how your organization will monitor progress, measure results and use learning to improve the project during 2026. Monitoring and evaluation are central to Results-Based Management, ensuring that activities, outputs and outcomes are tracked systematically and that information is used for reflection and adjustment.

Partners are encouraged to outline practical methods for collecting data, verifying results and sharing lessons internally and with stakeholders. The focus should be on simple, effective routines that make it possible to assess progress, identify challenges and adapt implementation when necessary.

Questions

1. Describe how your organization will monitor progress toward expected results, including how data will be collected, stored and analyzed. *(monitoring of outputs/outcomes)* (150–200 words)

Our organization will monitor progress toward expected results through a structured Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system aligned with results-based management principles. Data on *outputs* will be collected using activity reports, attendance lists, training records, photographs, and documentation of materials produced (e.g. educational content, monitoring guides, and livelihood plans). *Outcome-level data* will be gathered through pre- and post-activity surveys, knowledge and skills assessments, focus group discussions, and participatory feedback sessions with community members, women, youth, and other target groups.

The Project Coordinator will be responsible for *regular data collection* during implementation. All data will be systematically *stored in both digital and hard-copy formats,* following agreed documentation routines to ensure accuracy, confidentiality, and accessibility. The Project Lead and Project Coordinator will analyze data on a monthly and quarterly basis to assess progress against indicators, identify gaps, and track changes in knowledge, behavior, and participation.

Learning will be integrated through regular reflection meetings (on a monthly base) with ISDS and CAG key staff, where findings are discussed and used to adapt activities, timelines, or methods. Key lessons learned will be shared with stakeholders through reports, meetings, and knowledge-exchange events, ensuring continuous improvement and accountability throughout 2026.

2. Who in your organization will be responsible for monitoring and documentation of activities and results? *(provide role descriptions)*

Responsibility for monitoring and documentation of activities and results will be clearly assigned within the organization to ensure accountability and data quality. The *Project Lead* will have overall responsibility for the monitoring framework, ensuring that indicators, reporting schedules, and documentation requirements are followed and aligned with donor expectations. The Project Lead will review progress reports, validate results, and lead reflection and decision-making based on monitoring findings.

The *Project Coordinator* will be responsible for day-to-day monitoring and documentation. This includes collecting activity data from the field, maintaining monitoring tools, compiling reports, and tracking progress against outputs and outcomes. The Project Coordinator will also support outcome monitoring through surveys, focus group discussions, and participatory feedback mechanisms.

The Project Coordinator with the help of Community/Training Facilitators will collect primary data at community level, such as attendance lists, training evaluations, observation notes, and photo documentation. They will ensure timely submission of accurate information and facilitate feedback from right-holders.

The *Finance Manager* will support monitoring by maintaining financial records and ensuring consistency between programmatic and financial reporting. Together, these roles ensure a coordinated, reliable, and transparent monitoring and documentation system.

3. How will your organization monitor progress toward the internal institutional-capacity results? *(150–200 words)*

Our organization will monitor progress toward internal institutional capacity results through a combination of qualitative and quantitative assessment tools embedded in our management and learning systems. Clear capacity indicators will be defined at the beginning of 2026, covering areas such as project management efficiency, coordination and communication routines, financial and administrative compliance, knowledge management, and strategic fundraising capacity.

Progress will be tracked through regular internal reviews, including monthly management meetings and reflection sessions, where staff assess performance against agreed benchmarks. Tools such as internal checklists, workplans, fundraising trackers, and staff self-assessments will be used to measure improvements in systems, skills, and processes.

Documentation of internal processes, such as updated procedures, reporting templates, fundraising strategies, and partnership records, will serve as key sources of verification. Feedback from staff and partners (including ISDS and CAG) will be collected to assess whether internal improvements are supporting smoother implementation and higher-quality outputs.

Findings from these monitoring processes will inform adaptive management decisions, enabling our NGO to strengthen systems, address gaps, and reinforce capacities that directly support effective project delivery and long-term institutional sustainability.

4. How will you analyze and use the collected information to make decisions or adjustments during implementation? *(150–250 words)*

We will analyze and use collected monitoring information through a structured and participatory decision-making process to support adaptive management throughout implementation. Data from activity reports, surveys, participatory monitoring, financial records, and feedback mechanisms will be compiled by the Project Coordinator and reviewed regularly by the Project Lead. Both quantitative data (e.g. participation numbers, training completion, livelihood initiatives launched) and qualitative data (e.g. feedback from communities, focus group findings, observation notes) will be analyzed to assess progress toward outputs and outcomes.

Weekly/monthly internal review meetings will examine trends, identify delays, gaps, or unintended effects, and assess whether activities are achieving the expected results. Monthly reflection sessions with staff of ISDS and CAG will deepen analysis by comparing results against indicators and assumptions outlined in the theory of change and goal matrix.

Based on this analysis, ISDS management will make evidence-based decisions to adjust activity design, timelines, resource allocation, or methodologies. For example, training content may be adapted if knowledge gaps persist, or outreach strategies revised if participation of women or youth is lower than expected.

Lessons learned and decisions taken will be documented and communicated to staff and partners, ensuring transparency and continuous learning. This systematic use of information strengthens responsiveness, improves quality, and ensures that implementation remains aligned with project goals and changing contextual realities.

5. Describe how your organization will share findings and lessons from monitoring and evaluation within your team or with other stakeholders. *(150–250 words)*

Our organization will share findings and lessons from monitoring and evaluation through structured internal communication and stakeholder engagement processes to promote learning, accountability, and continuous improvement. Internally, monitoring results and lessons learned will be discussed during regular team meetings, monthly progress reviews, and monthly reflection sessions. These forums will allow staff to jointly analyze successes, challenges, and risks, and to agree on necessary adjustments to activities, methods, or timelines. Key insights will be documented in internal reports, brief learning notes, and updated workplans that are accessible to all team members.

With external stakeholders, findings will be shared through coordination meetings, workshops, and knowledge-exchange events, including meetings with local authorities, community-based organizations, schools, and partner institutions such as the Karatal-Zhapyryk State Reserve and the National Academy of Sciences. Community feedback sessions will ensure that right-holders are informed of progress and can validate or challenge findings.

At the national level, lessons learned and evidence from participatory monitoring will be disseminated through a national round table, policy discussions, and summary briefs, supporting broader learning and advocacy on community-led wetland conservation. Formal narrative and financial reports will be shared with ISDS and CAG, ensuring transparency, mutual accountability, and informed decision-making.

6. Does your organization plan to carry out any specific evaluation or review during 2026 (for example, mid-year assessment, internal reflection or external review)? *(150–250 words)*

Yes, our organization plans to carry out several structured evaluation review processes during 2026 to support learning, accountability, and adaptive management. A mid-year internal review will be conducted to assess progress toward planned outputs and outcomes, review assumptions and risks, and identify any necessary adjustments to activities, timelines, or resource allocation. This review

will be led by the Project Lead with participation from the Project Coordinator, and relevant partners, including ISDS and CAG.

In addition, ongoing internal reflection sessions will be integrated into regular management routines. Monthly progress meetings and reflection workshops will allow the team to analyze monitoring data, community feedback, and implementation challenges, ensuring continuous learning and timely decision-making.

Findings from all evaluations and reviews will be documented and shared internally and with stakeholders, and will directly inform planning for subsequent phases, strengthening both project quality and institutional capacity.

7. How do you ensure that feedback from target groups or participants is systematically included in the learning process? *(150–250 words)*

Our organization ensures that feedback from target groups and participants is systematically included in the learning process through clearly defined feedback mechanisms and structured reflection routines. Feedback is collected regularly through participatory workshops, focus group discussions, surveys, and informal consultations with community members, women, youth, teachers, and local stakeholders involved in project activities. These methods are designed to be inclusive and accessible, allowing participants to openly share experiences, challenges, and suggestions.

Community/training facilitators document feedback after each major activity using standardized templates, ensuring consistency and traceability. This information is compiled by the Project Coordinator and integrated into monthly monitoring summaries and progress reports.

During monthly team meetings and reflection sessions, participant feedback is reviewed and discussed in relation to planned outputs and outcomes. The team jointly identifies patterns, emerging issues, and opportunities for improvement. Where necessary, adjustments are made to activity design, facilitation methods, timing, or outreach strategies.

Feedback is also shared back with communities through follow-up meetings, reinforcing accountability and trust. By embedding participant feedback into monitoring, reflection, and decision-making processes, the organization ensures that learning is continuous, responsive, and grounded in the lived realities of the people the project serves.

8. As part of your organization's learning and reflection, how will you observe and document signs of sustainability—for example, local ownership, long-term use of results or continued engagement of participants? *(learning → impact)* (120–180 words)

As part of our learning and reflection processes, we will systematically observe and document signs of sustainability using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Indicators of sustainability will include local ownership of activities, continued use of tools and knowledge, and sustained engagement of communities beyond individual project events.

The project staff will monitor whether community members, schools, and local institutions continue to apply biodiversity monitoring practices, use educational materials, and independently organize awareness or conservation-related initiatives. Evidence such as community-led meetings, locally maintained monitoring records, integration of project content into school curricula, and follow-up actions by local authorities will be documented through observation notes, photographs, meeting minutes, and short case studies.

Periodic reflection sessions with community representatives, women's groups, youth leaders, and partner institutions will assess perceived relevance, motivation, and willingness to sustain activities. We will also track whether trained participants assume leadership roles, share knowledge with peers, or mobilize local resources.

These observations will be consolidated into learning briefs and annual reflection reports, helping the organization assess long-term impact potential and refine strategies that strengthen sustainability and local ownership.

10. Co-funding

Brief explanation

This section gathers essential information about your organization's readiness to implement the 2026 activities and its plans for ensuring financial sustainability through co-funding. A detailed institutional assessment will be carried out separately through the FACT process, while this section focuses on immediate implementation capacity and co-funding strategies.

Co-funding is a collective responsibility within the Sida-funded programme. It refers to financial or in-kind contributions from partners, other donors or organizational resources that complement Sida's support. Partners are encouraged to identify realistic sources of co-funding that align with their planned activities and overall mission.

Questions

1. Explain how your organization approaches co-funding. What measures are in place or planned to secure additional financial or in-kind contributions during 2026–2028? *(150–200 words)*

Our organization approaches co-funding as a strategic and shared responsibility that strengthens financial sustainability, institutional resilience, and ownership of results. For 2026–2028, we will

apply a diversified co-funding strategy that combines financial contributions, in-kind support, and institutional partnerships aligned with our conservation and community development mandate.

For 2026, we have already secured additional co-funding, including USD 17,000 from the Green Grants Fund and USD 5,000 from the Climate Action Network for the EECCA region / Bread for the World. These resources will be used to: (1) strengthen our organizational capacity in strategic networking and advocacy related to water management, including wetlands and Ramsar sites; and (2) build the capacity of community initiatives in pilot municipalities, supporting local leadership, participation, and practical conservation actions.

In parallel, we are strengthening strategic fundraising capacity through donor mapping, proposal development, and relationship building with bilateral donors, foundations, and international climate and biodiversity funds. Additional in-kind contributions will be mobilized from local authorities, schools, research institutions, and protected area administrations through provision of venues, staff time, technical expertise, and logistical support.

Co-funding targets are integrated into annual planning and budgeting, ensuring effective implementation in 2026 and reduced reliance on a single funding source over time.

2. List the potential or confirmed sources of co-funding relevant to your planned work (for example, grants, service contracts, membership fees, volunteer time or partnerships). Are they public or private? *(150–200 words)*

Our organization's planned work for 2026–2028 is supported by a mix of confirmed and potential co-funding sources, including both public and private actors, financial and in-kind contributions.

Confirmed sources (official request letters will be submitted to justify the funding sources):

- Green Grants Fund (private) – USD 10,000, supporting strategic networking and advocacy related to water management and wetlands at the regional/Central Asian level.
- Climate Action Network for EECCA / Bread for the World (private) – USD 5,000, supporting strategic networking and advocacy related to water management and wetlands at the regional/Central Asian level.
- Green Grants Fund (private) – USD 7,000, allocated to building capacity of community initiatives in pilot municipalities.
- Community in-kind contributions – volunteer time from local residents, participation in monitoring, awareness campaigns, and community-led activities (private/local).
- Local authorities, schools, and protected area administrations – provision of venues, staff time, technical support, and logistical assistance (public/local).

Potential sources:

- Foundations and environmental funds supporting community-based conservation projects (private/international).
- Partnerships with national research institutions and NGOs for joint monitoring, training, and capacity-building activities (public/private).
- Local private sector or eco-tourism initiatives that may contribute in-kind support or co-finance pilot livelihood projects (private/local).

These diversified co-funding sources collectively enhance the project's financial sustainability, reduce dependency on a single donor, and strengthen local ownership and participation.

3. Have you already applied for, or do you plan to apply for, additional funding from other donors for similar or complementary activities? If yes, please specify. *(150–200 words)*

Yes, our organization has actively pursued and continues to explore additional funding opportunities to complement and expand the planned activities. For 2026, we successfully secured co-funding from the Green Grants Fund (USD 10,000) and Climate Action Network for EECCA / Bread for the World (USD 5,000) to strengthen strategic networking on water management. Secured co-funding from the Green Grants Fund (USD 7,000) to build the capacity of community initiatives in pilot municipalities.

In addition, we plan to apply for further support from environmental foundations, and international climate and biodiversity funds that align with our mandate in wetland and grassland conservation, community-led resource management, and climate adaptation. Potential sources include organizations supporting Ramsar site conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and youth and gender-focused environmental initiatives.

These funding applications will focus on activities complementary to the Sida-supported program, such as scaling up community-based monitoring, expanding educational and awareness campaigns, and developing additional alternative livelihood initiatives for rural communities. By diversifying funding sources, the organization aims to enhance financial sustainability, strengthen local ownership of interventions, and ensure the continuity of capacity-building and conservation efforts beyond the Sida-supported project timeframe.

11. Budget summary

Brief explanation

This section provides an overview of how your organization planned and structured its budget for 2026. The detailed budget form will be submitted separately, but the information here should explain how the budget was developed and how cost-effectiveness and accuracy were ensured. The aim is to confirm that the budget realistically reflects the planned activities and expected results.

Questions

1. Provide a short explanation of how the budget was developed, including what factors or references were used to calculate main costs (for example, experience from previous projects, consultations or current market prices).

The budget for 2026 has been developed through a careful and participatory planning process, ensuring that it accurately reflects the planned activities and expected results. Key factors considered included experience from previous projects, including similar biodiversity conservation, community capacity-building, and alternative livelihood initiatives, which provided benchmarks for staffing, training, and operational costs.

We conducted consultations with national and local stakeholders to identify realistic resource needs for community engagement, awareness-raising, monitoring, and participatory activities. Current market prices for equipment, training materials, travel, and venue rentals were verified to ensure cost accuracy. Costing also incorporated allowances for contingency, ensuring flexibility to respond to unforeseen challenges or changes in the field context.

Efforts were made to maximize cost-effectiveness, including leveraging in-kind contributions from local authorities, schools, and and using local expertise wherever possible. Each budget line was cross-checked against the project's activity plan, outputs, and expected outcomes to ensure alignment between financial resources and project objectives.

This approach ensures that the 2026 budget is realistic, transparent, and fully supports the delivery of project goals while adhering to principles of efficiency, accountability, and sustainability.

2. Describe how your organization ensured cost-effectiveness and realism in the budget planning.

Our organization ensured cost-effectiveness and realism in budget planning by applying several practical and evidence-based measures. First, unit costs were carefully reviewed against current local market prices for goods, services, travel, and equipment, ensuring that estimates reflect actual expenses in the project areas. Previous experience from similar conservation, capacity-building, and livelihood projects provided reliable benchmarks for staff time, training, and operational costs, helping to avoid under- or over-estimation.

Second, consultations with local stakeholders were conducted to identify realistic needs for activities such as community workshops, monitoring, and awareness campaigns. This collaborative approach also helped optimize resource allocation by identifying opportunities for in-kind contributions, such as venue provision, technical support from local authorities, and voluntary participation from communities.

Third, the budget incorporated flexibility for contingencies to address unforeseen circumstances without compromising core activities. Efficiency measures were also applied, such as combining travel for multiple purposes, leveraging local expertise, and integrating training and awareness activities to reduce duplication of costs.

Through these methods, the budget was structured to be both realistic and cost-effective, directly aligned with the planned outputs and expected outcomes, ensuring prudent use of resources while supporting high-quality project implementation.

3. Were staff members, volunteers or community representatives involved in the budgeting process? If yes, describe briefly how their input was used.

Yes, staff members and community representatives were actively involved in the budgeting process to ensure accuracy, relevance, and local ownership. Project staff provided detailed estimates for personnel time, training sessions, fieldwork, and operational costs based on their direct experience with similar activities. Community representatives contributed insights on practical needs, such as local transport, venue availability, and timing of workshops, which helped refine cost estimates and ensure logistical feasibility.

Their input also informed the allocation of resources for community engagement, awareness campaigns, and participatory monitoring activities, ensuring that the budget realistically reflected the local context and priorities. By incorporating these perspectives, the budget accounts for both financial and in-kind contributions, enhances efficiency, and strengthens community ownership of

project activities. This participatory approach ensured that planned expenditures align closely with actual needs on the ground while supporting inclusive and effective project implementation.