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The Global Support Initiative to Indigenous Peoples and Community-Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCA-GSI)

Title of Workshop:

Regional ICCA Knowledge Sharing & Capacity-building Workshop for Central and West Asia

Level: Regional

Place: Ysyk-Köl Lake, Kyrgyzstan

Date: 11-14 June 2017



Background:

In its role for improving the recognition, support and overall effectiveness of ICCAs in at least 26 countries, the Global Support Initiative to Indigenous Peoples and Community-Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCA-GSI) organized a regional workshop in Kyrgyzstan for multi-level actors from the Central and West Asia regions. The regional workshop was aimed at enhancing the capacities of all concerned actors in promoting and strengthening ICCA recognition and support in the regions.

Workshop Participation:

The 4-day workshop was co-organized by ICCA-GSI partners, the GEF Small Grant Programme (SGP) and the ICCA Consortium, along with two NGOs, CENESTA (Iran) and the Green Line Eco (Kyrgyzstan). Participants included the SGP and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country teams and CSOs from ICCA-GSI participating countries in the region (Georgia, Iran, Jordan and Kyrgyzstan) as well as Armenia, Tajikistan and Turkey. They were joined by representatives from other ICCA-GSI partners, namely, the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Global Protected Areas Programme (IUCN GPAP) and United Nations Environment Programme's World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP WCMC).

Workshop Activities and Discussion Points:

The main activities of the workshop was to raise the awareness and build the capacities of the national teams in (i.) developing practical tools for ICCAs, including country work plans; (ii.) local legislation and policy pertaining to ICCAs; and (iii.) networking, advocacy, empowerment and increased awareness for ICCAs.

- I. Development of country action plans on ICCAs
 - a. Each country team was asked to make a presentation about current policy, practice, conditions and prospects of the ICCAs in their respective countries.
 - b. As the next step, the country teams produced 'speaking maps' that graphically displayed the prospective proxy locations of different ICCA types in respective regions.

- c. Presentations were followed by a Q &A session and the transpiring discussions helped the country teams to further develop their action plans.
- II. Presentations on the Assessment of ICCAs in the region – by ICCA Consortium
 - a. Existing ICCA concepts and practices
 - b. Threats
 - c. Opportunities
 - III. Presentations on ICCA-GSI
 - a. Goals, procedures and the timeline - by GEF SGP
 - b. World database of Protected Areas and the ICCA Registry - by IUCN
 - IV. Field trip to local models of potential ICCAs in the Ysyk-Köl region
 - a. Participatory engagement in identifying which type of ICCA were the sites being visited
 - Defined ICCA: ICCAs that improve recognition, foster respect and address emerging issues (e.g. adaptation to climate change)
 - Disrupted ICCA: ICCAs that need the revival of Traditional Knowledge (TK), healing processes, community defense mechanisms and support next generations/youth.
 - Desired ICCA: ICCAs that need community organization/mobilization, mapping of boundaries, development and utilization of new laws



- b. Sites visits
The participants were divided into two (2) groups and each group visited 2 sites.

Group 1 site visits included:

- A high-altitude summer pasture in Jyrgalan Valley of Ysyk-Köl region where a small community runs an eco-tourism business and horse-milk based health treatment programs.
- A local community in Lipenka village that runs a social enterprise on restoration of endemic fish species of the Ysyk-Köl Lake such as Marinka (*Schizothorax*) and Osman (*Diptychus*). This is a project supported by the Community Development and Knowledge Management for Satoyama Initiative (COMDEKS) that was delivered through SGP.

Group 2 site visits included:

- Manjly-Ata sacred site comprising nine springs that are revered by local people. It is located near Kadji-Sai Village on the southern shore of Ysyk-Köl Lake. Pilgrims visit this sacred site seeking blessing, good fortune, cure from various health problems, the major of which is infertility. There is a sacred site guardian who voluntarily takes care of a sacred site and who is appointed by the local community. The pilgrims come from all over the country to visit Manjly-Ata, it is considered to be the most well-known sacred site in the southern Ysyk-Köl area.

- This group also visited a local community in Kara-Bulun Bay of Ysyk-Köl region, which is working to conserve endemic species of fruit and berries and to restore 100 hectares of degraded land via introducing drip irrigation and sustainable agriculture practices among local farmers. This is also a project that was supported by COMDEKS.



c. Conclusions from post-visit discussions:

- The **core of any ICCA is a community** and that it is a community (and not the outsiders) who identify whether a particular place is an ICCA or not.
- The visited ICCAs do not seem to meet all the ICCA criteria, but rather can be seen as ‘Disturbed ICCAs’ (that had all three characteristics in the past, but do not today due to some disturbances) or as ‘Desired ICCAs’ (that never had all three characteristics but have the *potential* of developing the three characteristics through new, or newly effective, community engagement).

Outcomes:

As a result of this workshop, there is improved and shared understanding among the participants on the various types of ICCA and its potential for biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods. There is also better understanding of the ICCA-GSI goals, timelines, procedures and the type of support that are provided by the partner organizations such as SGP, ICCA Consortium, IUCN and UNEP WCMC. Moreover, country action plans were developed for each pilot country in the region (Georgia, Iran, Jordan and Kyrgyzstan) that captures country-specific goals and objectives, main activities, target regions and the responsible parties/stakeholders.

The [ICCA-GSI](#) is a multi-partnership initiative that is delivered by the UNDP-implemented Small Grants Programme ([SGP](#)) and funded by the Government of Germany, through its Federal Ministry for the Environment, nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety ([BMUB](#)). Key partners include the United Nations Environment Programme’s World Conservation Monitoring Centre ([UNEP WCMC](#)), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature’s Global Programme on Protected Areas ([IUCN GPAP](#)), the [ICCA Consortium](#) and the Secretariat of the Convention of Biological Diversity ([CBD](#)).

