



Photo: Igor Shpilenok

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## The Ustyurt Landscape Conservation Initiative

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

Photo: Igor Shpilenok



SCAPES Annual Meeting, Luray, VA  
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## Ustyurt Landscape Conservation Initiative

Implemented by a consortium of partners:

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

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

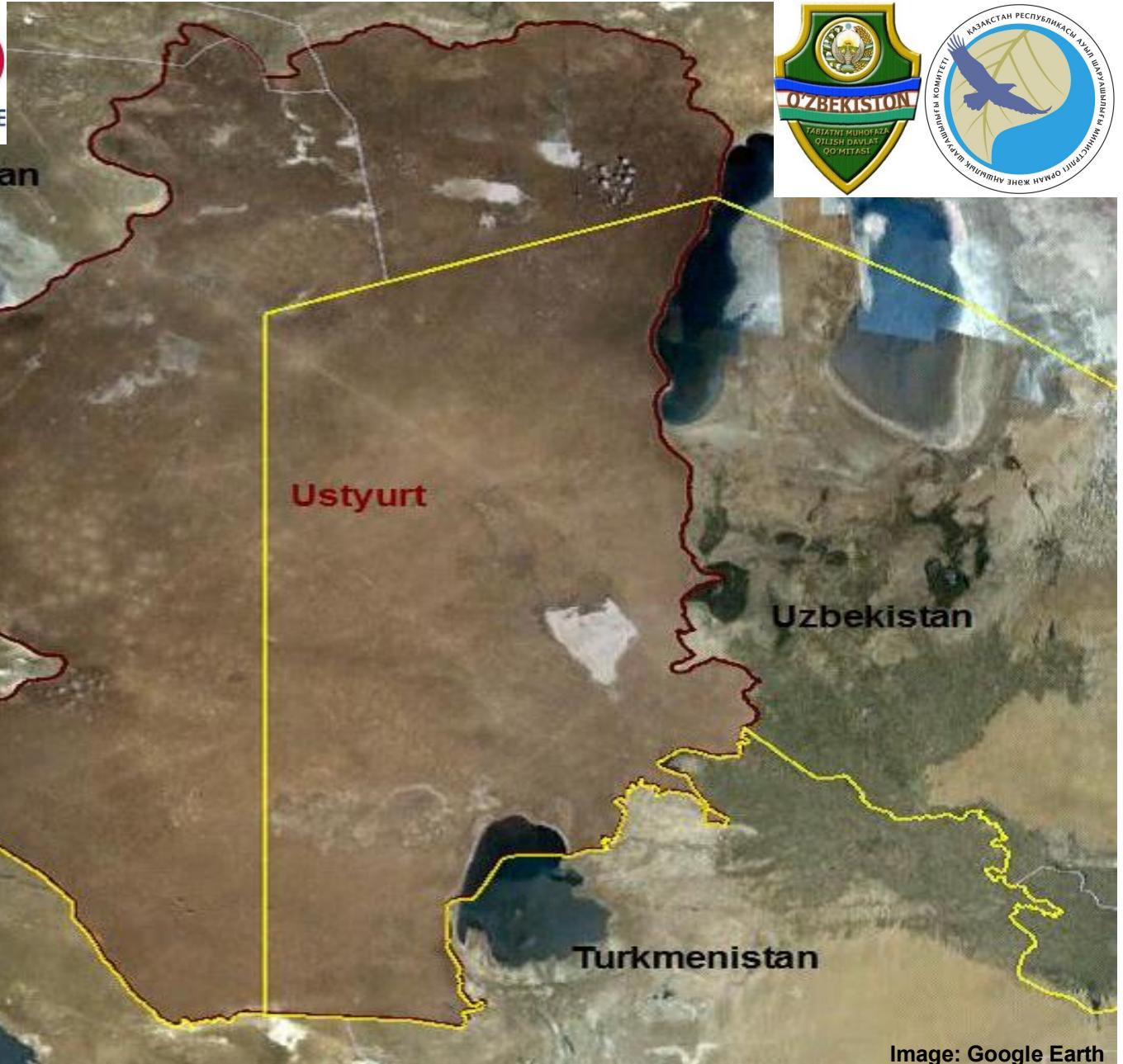
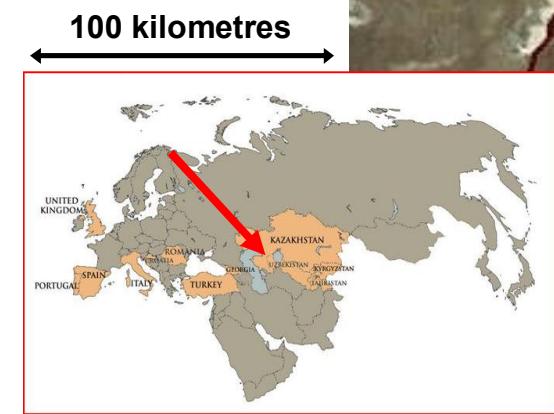


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## Key fauna of the Ustyurt



### Mammals

Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica* (CR)

Goitered Gazelle *Gazella subgutturosa* (VU)

Ustyurt Urial *Ovis orientalis arkal* (VU)

Manul *Otocolobus manul* (NT)

Kulan *Equus hemionus* . extinct on Ustyurt

Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* – extinct on Ustyurt

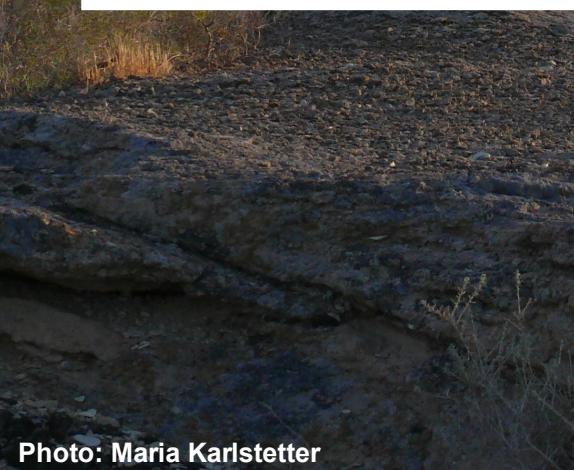


Photo: Maria Karlstetter



### Birds

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* (EN)

Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata* (VU)

Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* (VU)

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* (VU)

Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* (VU)



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## Targets

- Saiga
- Bird communities
- Ecosystem connectivity

Climate  
change



Poaching

Mass die-offs

Degradation

Disturbance

Industrial &  
infrastructure  
development

Photo: Maria Karlstetter



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## 4 Objectives

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

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

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

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

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## Approaching Ecological Sustainability

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

Photo: Alexander Esipov



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## Challenges

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



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## Key interventions

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

Photo: Maria Karlstetter



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## Successes

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

Photo: Maria Karlstetter



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## Critical questions

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

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

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

**How much human disturbance is too much?**

Photo: Igor Shpilenok



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Thank  
you

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