



# Conservation of Iranian Wetlands

2014 Annual Report

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Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project Annual Report - 2014

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**Dr. AhmadAli Keikha**

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

CIWP	Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project
DoE	Department of Environment
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IR Iran	Islamic Republic of Iran
LP	Lake Parishan
LU	Lake Urmia
LUB	Lake Urmia Basin
MoJA	Ministry of Jihad Agriculture
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoA	Minutes of Agreement
MoE	Ministry of Energy
Mol	Ministry of Interior
MRT	Ministry of Roads and Transport
MP	Management Plan
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NPD	National Project Director
NPM	National Project Manager
NWCSAP	National Wetlands Strategy & Action Plan
RRC-CWA	Ramsar Regional Center for Central and West Asia
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SPAC	Office of Strategic Planning Affairs and Control of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran
SW	Shadegan Wetland
SIPA	Senior International Project Advisor
SNPA	Senior National Project Advisor
TE	Terminal Evaluation

ToR	Terms of Reference
TRAC	Target for Resource Assignment from the Core
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WA	West Azerbaijan
WPA	Wetland Protected Area
IPCM	Integrated Participatory Crop Management
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
WWD	World Wetland Day
DRM	Drought Risk Management
JICA Japan	Japan International Cooperation Agency
GIS	Geographical Information System

## 1. Executive Summary

The first phase of Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project (CIWP) ended in April 2013 and a scale-up phase was approved and started in May 2013. This second phase aimed to take CIWP successful pilot to a large scale and establish wetland management plans and inter-sectoral coordination structures for 10 important Iranian wetlands, put in place a strong wetlands ecosystem management legislative platform, and share CIWP and other wetlands management initiatives, knowledge and lessons learnt with the entire region of South and central Asia.

The main activities both for CIWP scale-up and sustainable agriculture projects, during the reporting period, continues to include a) implementation of integrated management plans of LU,LP and SW, including LUB Drought Risk Management plan through establishing monitoring mechanisms in DoE , b) support and follow-up on Alternative Livelihoods, socio economic issues and engagement of civil society through cooperation with NGOs and private sector (Gharagheshlagh case study), for finalizing the Alternative Livelihood Proposal of Gharagheshlagh villages, c) conduct the international technical round table “Towards a solution for Iran’s drying wetlands”, d) Introduce sustainable agriculture practices to 41 villages in Lake Urmia’s basin, e) Raise local community awareness and an understanding of their important role in using sustainable agricultural techniques and in restoring Lake Urmia, and f) Review water-harvesting options and have at least one pilot in three key islands of Lake Urmia.

The main objective of CIWP scale-up project is envisioned to replicate the CIWP’s achievements at a broader national level whilst sustainable agriculture project seeks to establish sustainable agriculture towards improvement of Lake Urmia’s situation. The total 2014 planned budget for both afore-mentioned projects encompassed USD 3,083,126 secured by UNDP-TRAC, national co-financing and a generous contribution by the Government of Japan.

The main achievements of the CIWP activities during the scale-up phase could be summarized as follows:

- I. Horizontal up-scaling initiated to establish ecosystem approach for management of 7 new wetlands,
- II. Improved technical capacity at national level through training and engaging wetland secretariats at provincial level and NGOs,
- III. Introducing the approach and lessons learned into a number of regional countries,
- IV. Local farmers of 41 villages were provided with IPCM techniques and local communities of the villages were also introduced to the significance of their role in Lake Urmia restoration and establishment of sustainable agriculture through capacity building activities by local NGOs.

## 2. Introduction

The Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project (CIWP) is a joint initiative between the Government of Islamic Republic of Iran (led by the Department of Environment), Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which started in 2005 and was scheduled to end in April 2013. However, in response to a recommendation of the Terminal Evaluation a scale-up phase was approved by the Department of Environment and UNDP to ensure that CIWP's results are systematically up-scaled both vertically and horizontally, and thereby to achieve greater sustainability.

While the underlying aim of first phase of the project was to conduct a pilot and demonstration conservation operation, which could be adopted by the Government and applied to the other national wetlands, the scale-up phase will take CIWP successful pilot to a large scale and establish wetland management plans and inter-sectoral coordination structures for 10 important Iranian wetlands (7 new wetlands+3 CIWP demonstration sites). In addition, this phase will put in place a strong wetlands ecosystem management legislative platform and inter-sectoral administrative structures at national level supporting implementation of the "Ecosystem Approach" in important Iranian wetlands and share CIWP and other wetlands management initiatives, knowledge and lessons learnt with the entire region of South and central Asia.



An overview of the scale-up project is provided in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Overview of the Project**

Project Title	<i>Conservation of Iranian Wetlands</i>	
<b>Project Duration</b>	<b>CIWP Scale-up:</b> <b>Initial duration period:</b> 20 months (May 2013 to Dec 2014) <b>Revised duration period:</b> by the end of Dec 2015	<b>Sustainable Agriculture to Save Lake Urmia:</b> 1 Year (Mar 2014 to Feb 2015)
<b>Project Budget(USD)</b>	UNDP TRAC: 298,000 Gov.IR of Iran: 500,000 Ramsar Regional Center for West and Central Asia: 50,000 (Mainly in-kind)	Japan Gov: 1,000,000 Gov.IR of Iran: 1,660,000
	<b>Total: USD 848,000 (for duration of May 2013- Dec 2014)</b>	<b>Total: USD 2,660,000</b>
<b>Executing Entity</b>	Iranian Department of Environment (DoE)	Ministry of Jihad Agriculture (MoJA)
<b>Cooperating National Agencies</b>	The Ministry of Energy (MoE)	The Ministry of Energy (MoE)
	Office of Strategic Planning Affairs and Control of the Government of the IR Iran (SPAC)	Office of Strategic Planning Affairs and Control of the Government of the IR Iran (SPAC)
	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)
	Ministry of Jihad Agriculture (MoJA)	Ministry of Jihad Agriculture (MoJA)
	Ministry of Roads and Transportation (MRT)	Ministry of Roads and Transportation (MRT)
<b>Implementing Agency</b>	Ministry of Interior (MoI)	Ministry of Interior (MoI)
	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

The goal, objectives and intended outcomes of the scale-up phase as well as sustainable agriculture project are summarised in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Project's Goal, Outcome and Outputs**

	<b>CIWP scale-up phase</b>	<b>Sustainable Agriculture</b>
<b>Project Goal</b>	To enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of Iran's system of wetland protected areas (WPAs) as a tool for conserving globally significant biodiversity	To establish Sustainable Agriculture practices in Lake Urmia basin through modelling and up-scaling local community engagement as a contribution towards restoration of LU.
<b>Main Outcome</b>	Model management system designed and being implemented by DoE and other local stakeholders at WPA demonstration sites based on CIWP achievements and lessons learnt to effectively address the most significant 'internally arising' threats.	Contribution in lake Urmia restoration via modelling local community engagement in sustainable agriculture practices and biodiversity conservation of critical species.
<b>Output 1</b>	Ecosystem based wetland management plans and inter-sectoral coordination structures established for 10 (7 new wetlands + 3 demonstration sites) important Iranian wetlands through taking CIWP successful pilot to a large scale	Agricultural land of 41 villages (an average 1000 ha each village) in Lake Urmia basin introduced to sustainable agriculture practices resulting at least 35% water saving
<b>Output 2</b>	Strong wetlands ecosystem management legislative platform and inter-sectoral administrative structures are in place at national level supporting implementation of the "Ecosystem Approach" in important Iranian wetlands	Local community awareness and capacities for their role in LU restoration and sustainable agriculture raised
<b>Output 3</b>	Sharing CIWP and other wetlands management initiatives, knowledge and lessons learnt with the neighbouring countries	Water harvesting options reviewed and at least one piloted in the three key islands of Lake Urmia ensuring sustainable wildlife water supply

### 3. Progress in attaining Project Outcomes

The project witnessed major events in 2014, with the end of the first phase and beginning of a new scale-up phase for replicating CIWP's achievements at a broader national level. Besides, a new project was specifically designed and added to CIWP to channel previous efforts in establishment of sustainable agriculture towards improving the situation at Lake Urmia (LU). This document provides a detailed progress report of the scale-up phase as well as sustainable agriculture project based on expected outputs.

#### 3.1. Progress in implementing the CIWP scale-up phase (Jan-Dec 2014)

Main Outcome: Model management system designed and being implemented by DOE and other local stakeholders at WPA demonstration sites based on CIWP achievements and lessons learnt to effectively address the most significant 'internally arising' threats.

##### 3.1.1. National Wetland Management System Model

**Output 1:** Ecosystem- based wetland management plans and inter-sectoral coordination structures established for 11(8 new wetlands + 3 demonstration sites) important Iranian wetlands through taking CIWP successful pilot to a large scale

#### a. Building Capacity of Provincial DoE Staff

In follow-up with two previous training sessions conducted on ecosystem-based wetland management, during the reporting period, another 5-day training session was held with the presence of 31 experts from 15 provincial DoEs. At the same time, from 12-16 April in Hormozgan province, 30 experts of wetland secretariats from 14 provincial DoEs were also provided with the capacity building training sessions. In close cooperation with Habitats Office and with the aim to enhance the skills of wetland secretariats experts, the training sessions continued to include the following main components; a) impact assessment of policies on wetland protected areas, b) familiarization with GIS, c) Reporting Professionally, d) Public awareness, e) Power-Point presentation and Management of Meetings.

Furthermore, with the broad goal of exchanging and sharing the experiences of previous demonstration sites with other secretariats, on August 12<sup>th</sup> a workshop was held in Tehran with presence of secretariats of (LU, LP & SW) demonstration sites and new sites (Zarivar, Hamouns, Alagol, Almagol Ajigol complex, Mighan, Helle, Harraye Minab and Choghakhor wetlands) as well as experts from Ardebil and Isfahan DoEs.

## **b. Close Collaboration with DoE's Habitats Office**

The progress on collaboration with DoE's Habitats Office during the reporting period comprising of the three following main sub-activities:

1. National Budget Allocation
2. Cooperation in developing Management Plans for 7 new wetlands
3. Coordination Meetings

### **1. National Budget Allocation**

CIWP with close coordination and collaboration with Habitat Office monitored the annual expenditure against 2014 work plan for the activities such as prioritized wetlands management planning based on ecosystem approach, water requirement, baseline studies and public awareness at DoEs provincial level. Also the budget allocation-related issues were mutually discussed and solutions agreed were proposed by both parties. Moreover, they agreed on the second budget allocation planning for Local DoEs.

### **2. Cooperation in developing Management Plans for 7 new wetlands**

During the year, the process of management planning for priority wetlands was facilitated through joint collaboration between CIWP and Habitat Office. For instance, the cooperation with Zabol governor and authorities, Director Generals of Sistan & Baluchistan DoE and Natural Resources and MENARID project continued to be strengthened through implementation of weekly-coordination meetings in order to come up with mutual agreements on the necessity of management planning development for Hamoun wetland. The similar coordination meetings with the presence of experts from consultancy engineering company were held for three other wetlands; Zarivar, Helleh and Mighan.

**3. Coordination Meetings** The conducted meetings, more than 100 sessions, vary across the contexts. The main area of discussions on joint planning and follow-up initiatives between CIWP, Habitat Office and other related DoE office at national level are outlined as follows:

- Secretariats' workshops,
- Budget planning for current year,
- Management planning workshops for provincial wetlands in terms of logistics and technical issues, e.g. Zarivar wetland,
- Discuss implementation modality of the management plans of protected areas
- Review the results of Secretariats Workshop
- LU awareness raising,
- Revision of LP management plan,
- Development of joint reports for national and international events
- Present the 2014 work plan package of CIWP
- Make revision on the TORs of CIWP Office.  
It was proposed to incorporate the revised TORs in ecosystem approach.
- Negotiate general issues on wetlands in a meeting with National Project Director

It is worth mentioning that during this period, CIWP provided Habitat Office with a document including all CIWP publications to be included in the national report of the Ramsar Convention.

### c. Supporting provincial DoEs to develop Management Plans for 7 New Sites

In close collaboration with Habitats Office during the reporting period, three rounds of capacity building workshops have been conducted for provincial DoEs' experts to become familiar with ecosystem approach and the management planning processes.

Aiming at developing the management plans for the 7 new sites, CIWP jointly worked with Habitat Office to hold Management Planning Workshops for the prioritized wetlands including Choghakhor (in Chaharmahal & Bakhtiari), Zarivar (in Kurdistan), Hamouns (in Sistan o Baluchestan) , Mighan (in Markazi Province), Helle (in Bushehr), Alagol, Almagol & Ajigol wetlands (in Golestan Province) and Harray Minab (in Hormozgan province). The process has been started for all 7 wetlands while the process does not reflect the same level of progress in all wetlands. The below table represent the detailed information on each wetland management plan progress:

Wetlands	# of conducted workshops	Participants	Workshops' contents
<b>Choghakhor</b>	2	All wetland management stakeholders including governmental sectors, NGOs and Local communities	<p><b>Inception workshops:</b></p> <p>Mainly focused on participatory assessment of wetland values and services, issues and threats, as well as agreement on a vision and goal and defining the next step or developing management plans.</p> <p><b>Second workshops:</b></p> <p>Through root-cause analysis, main threats and problems identified and strategic objectives developed. In line with the developed objectives and considering the current constraints, the action plan was also determined.</p>
<b>Zarivar</b>	2		
<b>Hamouns</b>	2		
<b>Mighan</b>	1		
<b>Helle</b>	2		
<b>Alagol, Almagol &amp; Ajigol</b>	2		
<b>Harray Minab</b>	1		

Upon completion of each workshop, the reports on workshop have been submitted by secretariats to CIWP's consultants for further review and perusal.

**d. Ensure Implementation of Management Plans at Previous Demonstration Sites (LU, LP and SW)**

The below table reflects the most important meetings held during the year to take a leap towards the implementation of management plans at previous demonstration sites:

Session Topic	Session Contents	Participants
<b>LU Saving Working Group</b>	To come up with solutions to secure budget required for 19 prioritized projects	CIWP, Government authorities,
<b>1<sup>st</sup> local management committee for Gharagheshlagh wetland</b>	To nominate the members of local management committee.	Project experts and local stakeholders (in Bonab)
<b>Saving Lake Urmia</b>	To become familiar with possible methods of saving Lake Urmia	National Project experts, foreign experts from Russia, America, Germany, Belgium and Tajikistan, Minister of Energy, DoE experts and LU Saving WG
<b>Progress made on “managing the level of LU” and “Establishing LU DRM”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To Review the results of studies and progress made on establishing LU DRM and practical methods for saving this lake.</li> <li>- To reach a concrete decision on benefiting from the findings of JICA’s visit to LU and cooperate with this agency. The agreements of the meeting:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Immediate establishment of DRM Website</li> <li>o Providing the consultant with GIS zoning and salt areas of the Lake</li> <li>o Modeling the possible methods for managing the level of the lake considering the following points:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Maintaining the natural status of the lake (in case of rivers flowing into the lake)</li> <li>o Provisioning the future status of the lake with two</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Project DRM consultant (Dr.Morid,Tarbiat Modarres University), CIWP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>development trends (0 and 5%)</li> <li>○ Modeling with varying volumes of accessible water for different levels</li> <li>○ Modeling of dividing the area of the lake</li> </ul>	
<b>Saving LU</b>	To discuss the actions taken by DoE towards saving LU and cooperation between DoE and the commission	National Project Manager, Head of DoE, LU saving Committee and experts of Habitats Office
<b>Drafting a proposal on “Contribution to restoration of Lake Urmia by modeling local community engagement in sustainable agriculture practices and critical biodiversity conservation”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To determine the primary location of sites and their density based on current data provided by agriculture consultant for each province.</li> <li>- To discuss the sources and uses of water in these sites and methods of establishing IPCM.</li> <li>- To determine the primary location of demonstration sites</li> </ul>	Project agriculture consultant, UNDP program analyst and project team
<b>Using the project results in the WG.</b>	To present the achievements of project to LU Saving Working Group	Sharif University lecturers and members of the working group
<b>Meeting on Lake Parishan local management committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To review and discuss the problems and issues which caused delay or hindered implementation of the agreements</li> <li>- To providing viable solutions</li> <li>- To review the work plan and activities of local committee for conservation and restoration of LP</li> </ul>	Fars DoE Director General, CIWP's National Project Manager, Technical Deputy of Fars DoE, The advisor of regional water authority of Fars Director General and the other members of the committee

In addition to the scheduled meetings, CIWP continued to ensure that management plan implementation for three previous demonstration sites is properly in place through organising, arrangement and holding several meetings with a variety of stakeholders and government authorities.

**e. Support secretariats on 3 demonstration sites (LU, LP and SW) in monitoring and revision of Integrated Management Plans**

Aiming at supporting secretariats in monitoring and making revision on MPs, CIWP organized several meetings with Senior National Consultant and Habitats Office to further discuss the revision of LU management plan. The detailed management plan revision including communications, proper awareness-raising and data collection /analyses were also discussed. Although the revision of the LU management plan was not started, it was agreed to hold a workshop on the revision of LP management plan.

As such, a two-day workshop with close coordination of the Fars DoE Provincial Office and Habitats Office was held for revision of Lake Parishan integrated management plan. The workshop was well-attended by the members of local committee and representatives of the provincial committee. In this workshop, the implementation progress of the prioritized activities and main barriers to proper implementation were discussed by the participants. It was also agreed to complete this process by a revision committee comprising of main stakeholders.

**f. Provision of support and follow-up on Alternative Livelihoods solutions through cooperation with NGOs**

Damoon NGO continued to be the main implementing partner of CIWP in 2014 and all interventions in the reported area of alternative livelihood solutions were conducted in tripartite approach among CIWP, EA DoE for Gharagheshlagh and respective partner from Damoon NGO.

The Alternative Livelihood Proposal of Gharagheshlagh villages” Capacity building of wetland stakeholders to adopt environmental friendly livelihood” proposed by Damoon, reviews the implementation of livelihood-related prioritized activities on Gharagheshlagh management plan.

In this respect and in line with CIWP objective with regards to alternative livelihood solutions, a technical meeting was held with the director of finance at Keshavarzi bank to discuss about possible and viable cooperation opportunities on Green banking project between two parties and to review the financing options for Gharagheshlagh alternative livelihood proposal. After participatory selection of the livelihoods, proposals will be submitted to Bank Keshavarzi by local communities to benefit from special direct loan opportunities providing more simplified loan payments.

**g. Introducing ecosystem approach tools to NGOs, universities and research centers**

The “National Congress of Soil and Environment “which was held in Urmia University provided CIWP an opportunity to present the achievements of the project on establishment of ecosystem approaches in LU. In a similar way, a meeting aiming to portray the current problem of Zayanderood was held by Isfahan NGOs and Academia, during the meeting CIWP presented the findings of its project for the entire pilot wetlands.



Furthermore, representatives of NGOs, Zagros project and Habitats Office were invited to participate in several meetings to both involve them in implementation of MPs and encourage them to present their experiences in management planning process.

During the reporting period, CIWP conducted a series of organised coordination meetings with DoE Office of education by which the proposal of Abangah NGO, “systematic education of wetland-related issues to the students” was reviewed by DoE Office of education expertise.

In view of the above, national project manager and experts accompanied a group of environmental journalists to visit Horalazim and Shadegan wetlands. This visit aimed at familiarizing the media with wetland ecosystems and their functions. They were also acquainted with management structure of Shadegan, Integrated Management Plan and progress made. This visit included meetings with Governor and other authorities of Shadegan wetland to discuss about importance of wetlands, their values and services and their significant roles in local communities livelihood. This resulted in a lot of media coverage.

#### **h. Regular planning and follow ups on work plan and project document activities**

The entire activities on regular planning, project documentation and work plan continue to consist of both conducting several meetings and developing essential reports. The main held meetings included but were not limited to a) steering committee meetings, b) CPAP meeting, c) MENARID project (financial software) Mid-term evaluation meeting, d) regular staff meetings on monthly and quarterly project progress, e) meeting with international experts of UNESCO, MoE deputy and DoE experts on water management issues, f) working group meetings namely, Knowledge Sharing and Alternative Livelihoods working group, g) international Project Directors meeting, h) provision of MENARID team’ findings on environmental -friendly green houses during their field visit in China, and i) meeting with Charmahal-Bakhtiari Deputy Governor and Director of Regional Water Company to review and discuss EIA of Sabz-Koh Tunnel.

The aforementioned meetings resulted in a number of valuable reports outlining the achievements of the department during the reporting period. Although the following reports do not represent the total number of developed reports, it reflects the impacts of organized meetings in goal setting, objective achievements and, experiences and expertise involvements.

The considerable reports are outlined in the below table:

1	•2013 Planning Package
2	•general report on project activities, achievements, budget, staff and assets
3	•Bilingual monthly report, (published on website and shared with the related stakeholders)
4	•Report on SIPA mission including proposed suggestion by SIPA on work plan revision, sustainable agriculture work plan and a strategy CIWP future.
5	•Quarterly Progress Report
6	•Revised Project Work plan and Budget plan (shared with UNDP)
7	•Report on “Refresh Plan Workshop” for CIWP: 2015-2019
8	•Final draft of Project Strategic Document (PSD 2015-2019)
9	•Project calendar of events to be used for monitoring and evaluation plan
10	•Project scale-up bi-monthly report (shared with project partners)
11	•The minutes of 15 <sup>th</sup> meeting of Project Steering Committee as the concrete reference for extending CIWP for more 5 years(by the end of 2019)

#### **i. Promote public awareness through media engagement and other tools**

Ensuring that the public have access to the most updated information regarding progress on conservation of wetlands, CIWP enhanced public awareness through several interventions. CIWP actively supported the WWD ceremony in East Azarbayjan in February 2014. Upon completion of the WWD ceremony, a press conference was organized and nominated wetland champions were introduced to the media. CIWP also participated in the International Environmental Exhibition from 12-16 February to actively disseminate the outcomes of the project and took part in wetland-related debates. During the reporting period, several mass information materials have been distributed among NGOs, local communities, education universities, provincial DoEs and governmental organizations such as MFA, MOJA, MOI, MOE.

The distributed information materials include a) Ramsar leaflet on Wetlands and Agriculture, b) calendar and badge and c) brochure on biodiversity of Islands for International Day of Biodiversity.

Ensuring that current issues and status of wetlands in Iran is acknowledged by all key actors, NPM interviewed with several national and international press and media such as Aljazira TV Channel, Jame-Jam, Etemad, Kelide Siasat, Khorasan, Iran Newspapers and IRNA, ISNA, Mehr and Nasim, Tasnim news agencies. In this regards, CIWP continues to update CIWP website in terms of publishing bilingual project news, reports, most updated flyers and DoE’s wetland-related news. Meanwhile, CIWP held

several meetings with national documentary film makers and presented information needed for a documentary film on water resources crisis.

### 3.1.2. National Wetland Structures and legislative platform

**Output 2:** Strong wetlands ecosystem management legislative platform and intersectoral administrative structures are in place at national level supporting implementation of the “Ecosystem Approach” in important Iranian wetlands

#### a. Embedding and Advocating CIWP Guidelines at National and Local Levels

Embedding and advocating CIWP guideline at national and local level has been devised with the aim to support implementation of the “Ecosystem Approach” in important Iranian wetlands. In this respect, wetlands water requirement guidelines as well as Lake Parishan wetland baseline studies, LU baseline studies and children’s story book on wetlands have been published within the reporting period.

It is noteworthy that in line with the afore -mentioned output, CIWP endeavored to convince both Tarbiat Modarres University’s authorities and DoE's Office of education to incorporate ecosystem-based wetland management modules into the curriculum lessons and DoE's annual calendar of education, respectively. As such, two modules on “ecosystem based management of wetland protected areas” and “ecosystem based management of basins” were proposed for Masters courses of water management and it is envisaged that the modules would be incorporated in to the lessons plan upon endorsement by university authorities.

Moreover, CIWP greatly contributed to figure out the possibility of linking the existing wetlands database to the GIS-based data bank which is being developed by Khajeh Nasir University for DoE. The other valuable achievements which could be referred to are finalization of Gurigol management plan and publication of The Economic Evaluation of Biodiversity Report 2013.

#### b. Advocating and sharing knowledge on technical aspects of wetlands ecosystem management

Strategic knowledge sharing is acknowledged within CIWP as the building blocks of strengthening the partnership with CIWP stakeholder. In light of this approach , the following main activity undertaken by the team members include distribution of products including CIWP guidelines, LU Integrated Management Plan, Manual for Determining the Water Requirements of Wetlands ,Project Calendar and leaflets among national and provincial stakeholders in the watershed modeling workshop<sup>1</sup>, secretariats workshop, Government Week Exhibition, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> . Held at Tarbiat Modarres University

**c. Strengthening implementation mechanisms of ecosystem approach in related high-level decision making structures**

As clearly the role of knowledge sharing was pointed out in the previous activities and in follow-up with the above-mentioned activities, several public awareness-raising materials and CIWP publications were distributed in an exhibition held for the Cabinet members. These publications were also provided to head of DoE's Office to be distributed among governmental organizations.

**d. Study and introduce mitigation measures including alternative livelihoods**

During the reporting period, CIWP conducted several surveys and negotiations with key actors such as NGOs and Keshavarzi Bank to explore different mitigation measures leading to a feasible plan on alternative livelihoods of the inhabitants. CIWP also reviewed the Green Banking Project undertaken by Keshavarsi bank and discussed the mutual cooperation on securing funds for alternative livelihood practices around threatened wetlands.

**e. Reviewing and modifying wetlands conservation and management related rules and regulations, and structures**

CIWP demonstrated a significant role in modifying the act of parliament on "Conservation, restoration and sustainable use of wetlands", through participating in Parliament's agriculture and natural resources commission and managed to persuade the commission to review and approve four articles of the respective act. It was also agreed to add two new definitions for Wetlands Sustainability and NWCSAP to the wetland act. In parallel, CIWP participated in Infrastructure, Industry and the Environment Commission to defend the Conservation, Restoration and Management of Wetland's bill. The revised act has been shared with parliament to be ratified in plenary session of parliament. Currently, the act is being reviewed by the cabinet to be submitted to the parliament as a bill.

**f. Institutionalizing the implementation of management plans in budget planning of responsible governmental organizations with emphasis on LU, LP, SW**

Given the fact that secured budget is of paramount importance in any project implementation, in a meeting with Habitats Office on implementing the approvals of LU Rescue Commission, budget allocation policy to provincial DoEs was discussed.

Subject to above, a proper monitoring on national budget and expenditures were considered as a critical factor to institutionalizing the management plan implementation.

### 3.1.3. Knowledge Sharing at Regional Level

**Output 3:** Sharing CIWP and other wetlands management initiatives, knowledge and lessons learnt with the neighbouring countries

#### a. Exchanging Knowledge & Experiences with Neighboring Countries

To further strengthen the partnership and cooperation between neighboring countries, involving experiences, expertise and key actors of all neighboring countries continue to remain the main source of knowledge and experience sharing. In this respect, both section of the Sustainable Agriculture Development Toolkit and the Wetlands' Parliament act was translated in English to be shared with international experts.

#### b. Supporting co-management of Trans-boundary Wetlands with neighboring countries

To ensure that Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan have the same understanding of Hamoun wetland issues, as one of the trans-boundary wetlands within the country, an Afghan delegation comprising of Water & Energy Deputy and other experts visited Iran in April 2014.

Following this field visit, both parties agreed to base their partnership on co-management to improve the situation of wetlands and inhabitants' livelihoods especially due to cultural, historical and ecosystem similarities between the two countries.

#### c. Regional Training and Exchange Visits

Within the reporting period, a field visit was carried out to Lake Van Basin (LVB) in Turkey in order to get acquainted with agricultural activities, water management systems in LVB and its satellite wetlands. In the light of this objective, CIWP achievements and publications were also presented at Van University in Turkey.

In addition, during Wetlands International Round Table (WIRT), CIWP presented the acquired lessons learned and approaches to a number of international experts participated in WIRT. The results of WIRT were presented by DoE in the technical committee meeting of "water high council" held on 17<sup>th</sup> August with presence of representatives from different national ministries such as MoE, DoE, MoJA, Mol and MPO. It was decided to prepare a legal document incorporating the feedbacks from other ministries, to present for approval of High Council of Water.

#### d. Close Cooperation with International Organizations for Exchanging Best Practices

To benefit from best practices, CIWP enhanced its cooperation with international organizations. As such, CIWP subscribed to Ramsar Forum and as an active member has occasionally provided the forum with related news and publications. CIWP also closely worked with Springer Publishing and provided three briefing documents on Parishan, Urmia and Shadegan wetlands to be incorporated in the Springer encyclopedia. During the reporting period, CIWP participated in both the Ramsar pre-COP meeting and

Asian symposium of wetlands, demonstrated a strong presence on “Conference of Convention on Biodiversity” and “The Man and the Biosphere meeting” held by UNESCO through presenting the achievements of “the establishment of ecosystem approach” and “LP and LU biosphere reserve”, respectively.

**e. Support holding a workshop entitled "Towards a Solution for Drying Lakes" in cooperation with DoE and UNDP**

During the meeting held between head of DoE and UNDP Resident Representative, both parties agreed to hold a joint roundtable on practical solutions for saving drying wetlands. As such, the international technical round table “Towards a solution for Iran’s drying wetlands” was held at the joint invitation of the Department of Environment, Islamic Republic of Iran and UNDP Iran from 16-18 March 2014. The round table focused on two wetlands of international importance, Lake Urmia and the Hamoun wetlands, recognizing the current and critical threats to the continued survival of these sites, and their strategic importance to the economy, livelihoods and biodiversity of Iran.

The round table was attended by 33 national technical experts who had particular experience of Lake Urmia or the Hamouns, and 11 international technical experts with relevant experiences from other countries. The three-day session was divided into plenary and breakout sessions, as well as a one-day field visit to Hamouns and Urmia to meet the following objectives:

1. To review the driving forces causing the drying of the two specific wetlands and the actions that have so far been undertaken to address the issues.
2. To share experience and international best practice approaches for the restoration of drying wetlands.
3. To recommend a series of steps to the Government – taking into account known logistical, institutional and budgetary limitations – which can then be shaped for quick implementation.

In the closing ceremony of this event which was attended by high-level authorities such as head of DoE , Head of LU Saving commission, Deputy minister of interior and UNDP Resident Representative, the initial recommendations for Urmia, Hamoun and other wetlands of the country were presented. These practical solutions were finalized and delivered to the Department of Environment in April 2014. A report including the results of the roundtable was broadly shared with the head of DoE, high-level ministers and organizations.

### 3.2. Progress in implementing the Sustainable Agriculture for Saving Lake Urmia (Jan-Dec 2014)

Main outcome: Contribution in Lake Urmia restoration via modelling local community engagement in sustainable agriculture practices and biodiversity conservation of critical species

#### 3.2.1. Saving Water for the Lake through Public Participation and Sustainable Agriculture

**Output 1:** Agricultural land of 41 villages (an average 1000 ha each village) in Lake Urmia basin introduced to sustainable agriculture practices resulting at least 35% water saving

##### b. Organizing local formation of trained farmers

This activity was designed in order to form pioneer farmer groups in each village through which sustainable agriculture techniques are implemented in farms and orchards of project sites. To achieve the above task, 41 trust building workshops were held at all project sites and as a result 1650 farmers were prepared to cooperate and participate in the implementation of Sustainable Agriculture project at farm level. Subsequently, project executive companies organized *82 Farmer Reference Clusters (2 clusters for each village)* through inception missions to each village and introducing Sustainable Agriculture Project and its importance on restoration of Lake Urmia to villagers. The Farmer Reference Clusters are implementing SA techniques and will exchange best practices and lessons learned with other farmers to sustain and mainstream SA in their village.

##### c. Conducting initial baseline agriculture field studies

Project executive companies together with a national non-governmental company were assigned to collect baseline data. To complete this task data collection sheets/forms including a) Internal farm-level monitoring of the sites covered by IPCM; b) Recording characteristics of sites covered by IPCM; c) Recording key environmental data to plan cropping patterns according to IPCM criteria; d) Recording activities performed at site-level were prepared. Afterwards, baseline studies of 41 villages were fully accomplished which provides an important input in preparation of a comprehensive Crop Pattern Plan for Lake Urmia Basin.

##### d. Developing implementation programme and Methodology approval for sustainable agriculture in each village

This activity is an important requirement to implement sustainable agriculture technique at farm level. In this regard, necessary guidelines and documents were prepared through several meetings with participation of project executive consultant, MoJA research center experts, project executive companies and local farmers. The main outcomes developed under this activity are summarized below:

- ✓ The step-by step guideline for implementing the IPCM sustainable agriculture model in LU basin.
- ✓ 5 technical and extension guidelines to be used by local trainers and facilitators.

- ✓ Legal and financial documents for contracting governmental and non-governmental associations for implementing the program.
- ✓ Participatory Design Matrices (PDMs) which are modification of agricultural practices towards sustainable agriculture for the main crops cultivated in project fields. Documents were approved by MoJA research center.
- ✓ 34 Participatory Action Plans (PAPs) for the main crops cultivated in project fields were developed, based on approved PDMs to make suitable and doable modifications on agricultural practices to meet project objectives (Saving 35% water consumption and 40% fertilizers as well as 20% increase of farmers income). PAPs were utilized in seeding stage of autumn crops.
- ✓ Developing Participatory Action Plans for orchards are in progress.

**e. Implementation of sustainable agriculture programme including the 9 IPCM techniques**

Several meetings were held with project consultant to initiate sustainable agriculture in restoration of Lake Urmia project through which priority farms were selected and IPCM training workshops were organized. Besides, two separate Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops were held in West and East Azerbaijan provinces (30th of April and 1st of May) with presence of provincial and local MoJA managers, experts and directors of local farming associations. In these workshops, the main IPCM strategies and techniques were explained including some hands-on practices. In total, 100 people were trained during the 2 workshops.

In order to implement IPCM techniques a Governmental Coordination Body (GCB) including Project Steering Committee as well as 4 Provincial Executive Committees and 12 local Executive Committees were organized. The GCB with the assistance of National Executive Consultant and 10 local implementing companies are carrying out the implementation of IPCM techniques. The IPCM techniques including farm preparation (modification of farm's shape, slope and plot length), conservation tillage, preparation and application of biological fertilizers and modified crops are implemented for autumn crops which have already resulted in significant water saving on seeding stage. Besides, the implementation of IPCM techniques for orchards is initiated as well.

41 TOT workshops and meeting are implemented in which 620 trainers in West Azerbaijan and 180 trainers in East Azerbaijan were trained.

**f. Project coordination, monitoring, reporting and regular follow ups (includes Office expenses and possible staff requirement)**

In this regard, the following main activities were carried out:

- ✓ Two technical experts were recruited for coordination as well as monitoring and evaluation of SA project.
- ✓ Monthly, bimonthly, quarterly and progress reports were prepared and submitted to UNDP and other project stakeholders.
- ✓ Coordination meetings and field visits including:
  - 1) Terms of Iran-Japan cooperation for restoration of Lake Urmia in the framework of LU integrated management plan was discussed in a meeting with presence of



representatives from Japan's Embassy, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, West Azerbaijan DoE Director General, CIWP and Habitats Office.

- 2) The signing ceremony for the "contribution in Lake Urmia restoration via modeling local community engagement in sustainable agriculture practices and biodiversity conservation of critical species" project.
  - 3) Japan Ambassador, the UNDP team, SIPA and CIWP had a field visit to action plan workshop at Qara-gheshlagh village of Mahabad as well as Kaniborazan wetland and DoE guard station.
  - 4) Deputy Director of Japan Ministry of Environment had a field visit from Sustainable Agriculture Project sites.
- ✓ Two progress reports were prepared and submitted by Senior International Project Consultant (SIPA) in his visits to CIWP and project sites.
  - ✓ One mid-term participatory monitoring workshop was held in West Azerbaijan with participation of all project stakeholders and the report was submitted to in charge organizations to carry out necessary follow ups and coordination's.

**g. Developing and implementation of monitoring and evaluation program including monitoring equipment**

A contract is signed with a professional team from Tarbiat Modarres University and Agricultural Engineering Research Center to establish Project Precision Monitoring System (PMS) in selected farms and orchards implementing sustainable agriculture practices. The PMS is established, the data is constantly collected and analyzed and the results will be published by the end of harvesting season. The results of this study will demonstrate the actual percentage of water saving through implementation of sustainable agriculture practices. Besides, GIS mapping of farmlands owned by Reference Farmers Cluster in each village is fully implemented to monitor the efficacy of Sustainable Agriculture practices on water saving at project zones.

**3.2.2. Raising awareness of local communities to ensure their participation in the program**

**Output 2:** Local community awareness and capacities for their role in LU restoration and sustainable agriculture raised

**a. Developing and implementation of sustainable agriculture Training of Trainers program**

Wildlife Protection Association of Kaniborazan in cooperation with clergies and imam Jome's developed an awareness raising pamphlet which resulted in publication and disseminated of 200 booklets on Islamic and religious statements on saving water and environmental protection. The booklets are used as a reference by clergies in the lectures they give for the public targeting restoration of Lake Urmia. Besides, 10 TOT sessions were held in which some 50 school teachers and

700 students were trained on local community role in restoration of LU and sustainable agriculture. Trained teachers are disseminating the message to their students and the public.

**b. Production and dissemination of informative and training materials on local community role in restoration of Lake Urmia and sustainable agriculture**

MoU was signed with 10 NGOs on awareness raising program for different target groups. Below are the main activities and achievements carried out by the aforementioned NGOs:

- a) Experience exchange between farmers to understand the importance of applying sustainable agriculture practices through: a) study tour to damaged farms due to LU crisis with participation of 41 farmers and b) study tour to successful sustainable agriculture pilot sites with participation of 41 farmers.
- b) 200 booklets were produced by Green Tourism Association of Kaniborazan and disseminated among farmers participating in study tour to enhance their knowledge on local community role in restoration of LU.
- c) 10 preparatory meetings were held for 100 women in project sites. In result 2 capacity building and awareness raising workshops were held and 41 women were trained on local community role in restoration of LU and sustainable agriculture.
- d) 2 training posters for school children on local community role in restoration of LU and SA are produced and applied in training sessions provided by NGOs.
- e) 600 posters to call for photo, poem, painting and memories festival were published and disseminated. This festival will mobilize the public whom are concerned for restoration of Lake Urmia.
- f) Production of an educational film for school children is under progress.

**c. Documentation of best practices and lessons learned to develop a model for further advocating and up-scaling of sustainable agriculture at basin level**

In this regard, two Professional documentary films including a) Educational documentary and b) a documentary film on the implementation process of sustainable agriculture project are under production through contracting a well-known documentary film maker (80% completed). Besides, documentation, publication and dissemination of SA best practices and lessons learned for different target groups including farmers, women and students are in progress.

**3.2.3. Biodiversity protection focusing on the island Habitat of two main endangered IUCN red list species**

**Output 3:** Water harvesting options reviewed and at least one piloted in the three key islands of Lake Urmia ensuring sustainable wildlife water supply

**a. Reviewing impacts of drying lake on biodiversity of the 3 main islands of the lake**

A baseline study on climate and microclimate condition of Lake Urmia 3 main islands as well as their biodiversity condition is conducted and its report is developed. Besides, a comprehensive report on drought condition and the impact of water shortage on biodiversity of 3 main islands is prepared.

**b. Reviewing possible alternative wild life water supply in the key islands including water harvesting option**

Feasibility studies of potential locations for the construction of Rainwater Harvesting Surfaces were completed and the location of these structures was finalized.

**c. Implementation of at least one pilot alternative wild life water supply**

Detailed map of the structures of Rainwater Harvesting Surfaces is prepared and construction of the structure is initiated.

### 3.3. Unanticipated Activities

With the aim to up-scale Sustainable Agriculture project, the management of 22 new villages (new 15,400 ha) along with 12 satellite new villages (new 8,400 ha) adjacent to the current 41 villages (new 30,000 ha) were incorporated into the 2015 Sustainable Agriculture proposal. The project seeks to ensure that the IPCM practices have been sustainably established in the area and the approach of previous non-volunteer farmers will be moderately increased to benefit from IPCM model. As a result, the total farm land supported by the project in 2015 will be reached to 53,800 ha (23,800 ha new farmlands; sustainability support to the original 30,000ha) in 75 villages. The total number of direct beneficiaries in the second phase, 2015, would be 22,000 farmers (110,000 households); 300 local cooperative experts; 2,000 government experts and 100,000 local communities. This phase also strives to ensure that the lessons learnt from Sustainable Agriculture will be disseminated within a wide range of audiences at the Lake Urmia basin level.

Whilst the Lake Urmia basin consists of more than 3,000 villages, the project is merely focused on 75 villages. This illustrates the need for further social mobilization which is expected to be carried out through a new output under the name of “social mobilization output”. The social mobilization output is expected to carry the IPCM message to the entire basin encouraging more farmers to adopt this model and thereby increase the volume of water saved resulting in rejuvenation of the Lake Urmia.

## 4. Financial Overview

### 4.1. Financial overview as of the beginning of the projects to date

The below table is provided to illustrate the expenditures incurred from the beginning of the Project Scale-up (phase II) and CIWP Restoration of Lake Urmia period to date, May 2013 to Dec 2014, against planned budget disaggregated by source of funding. However, in 15<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting held in July 2014 it was agreed to extend the project scale-up (phase II) by the end of December 2015 with the aim to reinforce the achievements of the project.

Fund	Total Budget USD	Duration	Expenditure up to Dec2014 USD
IRI. GOV*	2,330,000	2013-2014	2,687,,000
UNDP- (TRAC) Project Scale-up, phase II	298,000	2013-2014	219,561
Japan Gov.	1,000,000	Mar2014- Feb2015	496,940

Table 3: Expenditures against planned budget, May 2013-Dec2014

\* National budget includes all cash and in-kind expenditures. In-kind expenditure refers to infrastructures, accommodation and transportation facilities, meeting venues etc. Actually, national budget is part of government's commitment to the project and governmental organizations such as MoJA have allocated their budgets based on approved project work plans.

### 4.2. Financial overview during the reporting period

The budget breakdown below represents the earmarked funds received during the 2014 to implement both scale-up and CIWP Restoration of Lake Urmia. The total 2014 planned budget for both aforementioned projects encompassed USD 3,053,126 secured by UNDP-TRAC, national co-financing and generous contribution by Government of Japan. Given the fact that, the I.R.I Government contributed 68% of the required fund for implementing the projects during the year, it is recognised that **international** resource mobilisation must be reinforced to facilitate the fund-raising process and lessen the burden of project expenditure from the I.R.I Government.

The below table also reflects the planned budget for 2015 which represent a decrease by 66% in secured fund compared to 2014. This lay stress once more on the importance of increasing the fund resources through direct or indirect coordination with big traditional donors in the area of environmental conservation.

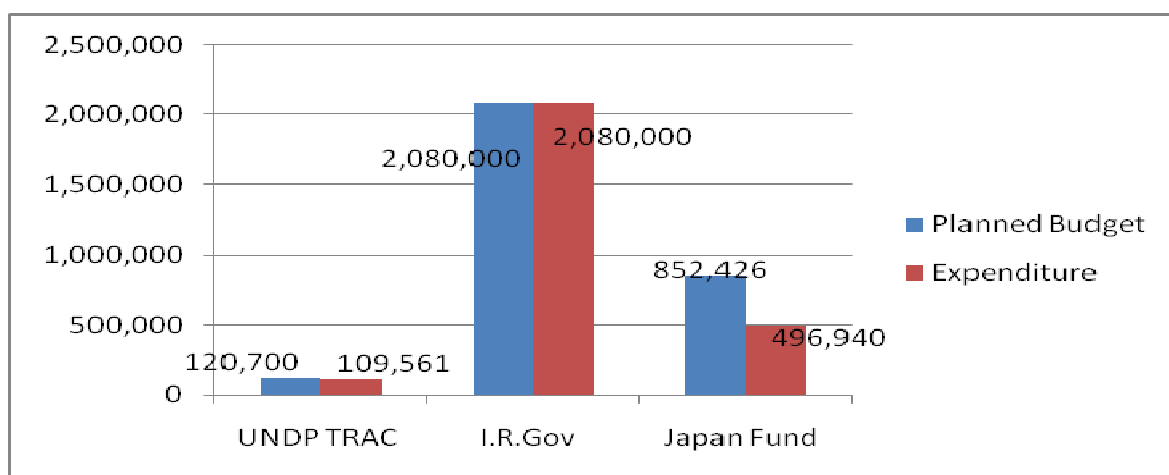
Fund	2014 Planned Budget	2014 Expenditure	2014 Balance	Implementing rate	Planned Budget for 2015
<b>UNDP TRAC</b>	120,700	109,561	11,139	91%	75,000
<b>I.R.Gov</b>	2,080,000	2,080,000	0	100%	1,340,000
<b>Japan Fund</b>	852,426	496,940	355,486	58%	428,986
<b>Ramsar Regional Centre*</b>	30,000	18,450	11,550	60%	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,083,126</b>	<b>2,704,951</b>	<b>378,175</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>1,843,986</b>

Table 4: Expenditures against planned budget, Jan- Dec 2014

- \* Ramsar Regional Centre budget was mainly earmarked to close collaboration activities with CIWP and included in-kind expenditure refers to infrastructures, accommodation and transportation facilities, meeting venues etc.

The below chart clearly portray the actual expenditures against planned budget during the reporting period:

Chart1: Expenditure against Planned Budget in 2014 (USD)



## 5. Challenges and Issues

The primary challenges and issues may in particular be outlined as follow:

1. The received fund has been mostly contributed by National funds which normally results in late disbursement of the fund to the end user, i.e. CIWP implementing partners,
2. To come up with viable fund-raising mechanism through which earmarked fund could be secured by other sources than national funds,
3. The need for human resources management considering the existing constraints, in the sense that more effective motivation mechanism to be established,
4. The need for establishing a balance between the workload of the new project in mid-2014 and the number of CIWP staff; as a result some activities were merged together,
5. Assuming less water is available in planning due to climate change impacts, making revision to the “water use strategies” remained a challenge to include environmental flows. As of then, the integrated management of wetlands needs continues and urgent roll out of the CIWP capacity building in ecosystem-based approaches.

## 6. Lessons Learned and Good Practice

During the reporting period and along with implementation activities, the role of national awareness-raising through conducting national awareness campaigns in water conservation is easily understood. Implementation of CIWP activities has been leading to the establishment of close collaboration between MOJA and DoE as two major governmental executive body of this project. As of then, the optimal use of local communities and governmental organisations' capacities has been established and the created synergy has provided both MOJA and DoE the ability to outperform even its best individual organization.

It is also acknowledged that the formulation of new act on "Conservation, restoration and sustainable use of wetlands" has had a significant effect on the legislative councils and parliamentarians' approach in the area of water and wetland conservation.

Furthermore, developing an early warning system for drying wetlands using remote sensing, vulnerability assessments, assessments of dam development plans, and dynamic monitoring mechanisms is highlighted as the main components of lessons learned.

## 7. The Way Forward

Iran hosts the most important wetlands of the Middle East. These dynamic and highly productive ecosystems directly and indirectly support the livelihoods of millions of Iranians and a rich biodiversity. They provide vital ecosystem services that are crucial for sustainable development and human security and well-being. Despite these remarkable benefits, the consequences of wetland degradation and destruction are already apparent throughout Iran, and are having severe consequences for human security and biodiversity. A specific problem for wetlands is that they are greatly affected by upstream land and water management practices (sometimes tens or hundreds of kilometres away), particularly in terms of the impacts on water quantity and quality.

In view of the above, the primary goal of the CIWP has been set to “improve the condition of Iran’s wetland ecosystems as measured by area, livelihoods and biodiversity”. Achieving this goal, CIWP formulated the Strategy of the Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project (CIWP) 2015-19 to address the critical threats currently facing Iran’s wetlands. It is an aspiration document which will be used to secure support from national government sources, international donors and technical partners, and will be further elaborated in annual Business Plans as funding becomes available.

This new Strategy builds on successful experiences to achieve even greater impact and stronger partnerships. It up-scales existing approaches and adds new ones, with the aim of reversing the current trend in wetland loss and degradation. UNDP and the Department of the Environment continue to be in particular lead partners, supporting the core costs of the CIWP office and assuring effective project management. Project governance will be through the existing CIWP Steering Committee.

The Strategy will be delivered through 3 integrated Outcomes: a) *Better wetland management*, b) *improved policies and plans*, and c) *more public support* to ensure that, first, Iran’s wetlands are better managed through up-scaling successful ecosystem-based approaches and applying new tools, second, wetland-friendly development policies and plans have been established and last but not the least, Iran’s wetlands are benefiting from increased public participation, support and knowledge.



## 8. Conclusion

In support of DoE and in close collaboration with local stakeholders, CIWP continued to contribute the achievements of two main outcomes for “Scale-up” and “Lake Urmia restoration via modelling local community engagement in sustainable agriculture practices and biodiversity conservation of critical species” projects. CIWP took the ownership of all duties regarding achievements of Lake Urmia restoration and management system within its own role during the reporting period.

Recognising the fact that effective management of water resources and related wetlands in inland and trans-boundary basins require a holistic approach at basin scale, formal agreements, excellent and win-win communications, the capacity of national NGOs, provincial DoE staff was strengthened through conducting several ecosystem-based wetland management workshops. In light of this, CIWP also supported DoE provincial organisations to develop management plans for new sites and coordinated with Afghan high-ranking delegation to exchange the experience and best practices between the two countries.

CIWP also have shared its achievements with Ramsar convention secretariat and neighbouring countries. This was reinforced by participating in cross-border activities such as attending Ramsar pre-COP meeting and Asian symposium of wetlands.

During the reporting period, agricultural land of 41 villages based in Lake Urmia introduced to sustainable agriculture practices through local community awareness-raising, conducting initial baseline agriculture field studies, implementation of sustainable agriculture programme in villages and completion of feasibility study of potential locations for construction of Rainwater Harvesting Surface.

CIWP will continue the documentation and dissemination of scale-up and sustainable agriculture projects’ lessons learned with the aim to ensure that DoEs provincial, respective stakeholders and local communities have access to the lessons learned and best practices with respect to water saving and Management Planning as the base-line survey and pre-requisition for upcoming strategic planning in both areas.

During the year, the I.R.I Government remained the primary national donor contributing 68% of the total earmarked fund required for implementing the CIWP projects. Given the fact that, budget allocation by the government is a time consuming process and sometimes leads to late release of the fund to the implementing partners, it is recognised that the international resource mobilisation need to be reinforced to both facilitate the fund-raising process and lesson the burden of project expenditure from the I.R.I Government.