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ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES
POUR L'EDUCATION, LA SCIENCE ET LA CULTURE

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CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

CONVENTION CONCERNANT LA PROTECTION DU PATRIMOINE
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MISSION REPORT / RAPPORT DE MISSION

Golden Mountains of Altai (Russian Federation) (768 rev)
Montagnes dorées de l'Altai (Fédération de Russie) (768 rev)

10-15 May 2012

10-15 Mai 2012

This mission report should be read in conjunction with Document:
Ce rapport de mission doit être lu conjointement avec le document suivant:

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MISSION REPORT

***Reactive Monitoring Mission
Golden Mountains of Altai World Heritage Property
Russian Federation
10 - 15 May 2012***



Ukok Plateau (Credit: EMC2I).

**Guy DEBONNET (UNESCO World Heritage Centre)
Hervé LETHIER (IUCN Expert)**

June 2012

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LIST OF ACCRONYMS

ASNR	Altaiisky Strict Nature reserve
BR	Biosphere Reserve
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GMA	Golden Mountain of Altai
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KNSR	Katunsky Strict Nature reserve
LTNM	Lake Teletskoye Nature Monument
MAB	UNESCO Program “Man and Biosphere”
MNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MBNP	Mount Belukha Nature
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NHPF	Natural Heritage Protection Fund
OG	Operational guidelines
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
SNP	Saylyugemski National Park
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UQZNP	Ukok Quiet Zone Nature Park
WHC	World Heritage Centre

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Finally, the mission would like to thank D. Bardach, UNESCO Representative in the Russian Federation, and his staff, for their assistance throughout its visit.

Each of them contributed greatly to facilitate the work of the mission and enabled it to report on the evolution of the situation since the last reactive monitoring mission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Golden Mountains of Altai World Heritage Property is located in southern Siberia in the territory of the Altai Republic and consists of five separate components in three geographical areas: the Altaisky Strict Nature reserve and Lake Teletskoye Nature Monument; the Katunsky Strict Nature reserve and the Mount Belukha Nature Park; and the Ukok Quiet Zone Nature Park on the Ukok Plateau. The property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1998 under criterion (x).

At its 30th session (Vilnius, 2006), the World Heritage Committee expressed concern over reports about plans for constructing a natural gas pipeline from Russia to China, which would go through the Ukok plateau and one of the components of the property. Following reports that work on the pipeline was to commence in 2012, the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session requested the State party to invite a new reactive monitoring mission to determine the status of the pipeline project, to meet with the pipeline developers and to evaluate the possible impacts of the proposed pipeline on the OUV of the property.

From 9 to 15 May 2012, a joint World Heritage Centre / IUCN monitoring mission visited the property and had discussions with the Ministry for Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) and the authorities of the Altai Republic, the managers of the different components of the property and various stakeholders, including representatives of local communities and environmental NGOs. Unfortunately the pipeline developer, Gazprom refused to meet with the mission team, in spite of the mission's request that the State Party set up such a meeting. The mission reviewed the status of the pipeline project, the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the 2007 mission and the state of conservation of the property.

Gas pipeline project

The mission was informed by the federal and regional authorities that no final decision has been made on the pipeline project. According to the State Party report, the pipeline developer Gazprom has prepared an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) "Substantiation report for investments of the Altai project". No copy of this document was provided to the mission but officials of MNRE noted that this EIA was to be considered as an internal document by Gazprom as part of its review of the potential investment in the pipeline project and therefore it had not been submitted to the Ministry. They stressed that in line with the federal legislation, a detailed EIA on the pipeline project would have to be submitted by Gazprom for review by the relevant control agency of MNRE and that a decision on the project would be based on the results of this EIA. As so far no details on the project design, nor an EIA has been submitted, they considered that the project was only at an initial stage. They further noted that no final agreement had been reached with China on the economic conditions of gas delivery. They also mentioned that the Ministry for Natural Resources and Environment in a reply to a letter of an environmental NGO dated July 2011 had expressed the opinion that the construction of the pipeline across the property would be a violation of Russia's international obligations to the Convention and that MNRE considered it advisable to study alternative routes.

The mission notes that documentation available includes a map which shows that the planned route will cross the Ukok Quiet Zone Nature Park (UQZNP), one of the five components of the property. The document states that first supplies are planned for 2015 and that specific feasibility studies of supply routes have been completed.

The mission further received reports that in 2011 Gazprom contractors have started preparatory topographical and geographical survey work, including permafrost drilling in UQZNP and also hired specialists to inventory key cultural and historical heritage sites along the pipeline route. While the authorities of the Altai Republic stated they were not

aware of such works, the mission was presented with photographic evidence of such works and this was also confirmed by representatives of local communities. The mission was further informed that these works were undertaken without the necessary authorisations and that the regional prosecutor confirmed the illegality of these works following an appeal by environmental NGOs, but that the Ministry of Forestry of the Altai Republic did not take action to stop them.

The mission visited the area where the works had been undertaken, including the area of a major fire, which according to environmental NGOs was caused by the survey work, but could not confirm that this fire was linked to the works that were undertaken.

The mission was further informed by environmental NGOs that Gazprom had informed them that alternative routes for the pipeline through Mongolia and Kazakhstan in order to avoid crossing the property could not be considered.

The mission concludes that while Gazprom has not yet submitted the relevant documentation of the Altai gas pipeline project to the federal authorities to obtain the authorisation for the pipeline to cross the property, it has advanced on the preparatory work project since the 2007 mission. This preparatory work represents a significant investment and included survey work inside the property. Furthermore, Gazprom does not seem willing to consider alternative routes, as was requested by the World Heritage Committee and suggested by MNRE. The mission also notes the strong concern from representatives of the local and indigenous communities that the project would affect the cultural significance of the Ukok plateau, which includes ancient burial sites and cultural monuments and which is regarded a sacred area.

Implementation of the recommendations of the 2007 monitoring mission

The mission discussed and reviewed the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the 2007 mission. It was informed that Management Plans had been developed for all components of the property, including a zoning plan of the nature parks. In addition a general management strategy 2009 - 2015 for the overall property has been developed, which foresees the implementation of many of the 2007 mission recommendations. The mission noted the high management standard of the ASNR and KSNS, managed by the federal authorities. However, it considered that in spite of efforts by the regional authorities to improve the situation, management capacity of the UQZNP and Belukha Mountain Nature Park (BMNP) remains insufficient. Staffing numbers have increased slightly but remain insufficient, and nature park inspectors continue to lack the necessary legal authority to perform their protection mandate. The mission was also informed that special regulations were developed for the management of the fifth component of the Property Lake Teletskoye Nature Monument (LTNM), which includes the part of the lake not included in the ASNR.

In terms of tourism, studies have been undertaken to determine the acceptable levels of tourism pressure in the different components including maximum numbers for alpinists wanting to climb the Belukha mountain. The mission team was also informed that a special monitoring group on the anthropological influence of the recreation zones around Lake Teletskoye has been established. However an overall sustainable tourism strategy for the entire property has not yet been developed.

Significant progress has also been made in increasing transboundary cooperation in protected area management. In 2011 a transboundary reserve was established between the KSNR and the Katon-Karagaysky National Park (KKNP) in Kazakhstan, with BMNP as one of the buffer zones. The State Party is also negotiating a cooperation agreement with Mongolia. The Altai Tavan Bogd National Park in Mongolia borders the Eastern part of UQZNP and the newly established Saylyugemsky National Park (SNP) in the Altai

Republic. Officials of MNRE estimated that this agreement could be signed by the end of the year.

The mission was informed that data on monitoring of iconic wildlife species, and also monitoring of climate change, are gathered in a common database with scientific support of academic institutions.

The 2009-2015 management strategy for the site also foresees work on the transboundary extension of the property with Mongolia, China and Kazakhstan, including also the new SNP mentioned above and the re-nomination of the property under cultural criteria. The authorities of the Altai Republic, including the Minister for Culture voiced their strong support for this.

The mission concluded that significant progress has been made on the implementation of the recommendations of the 2007 mission and welcomed the fact that the management strategy for the property refers to these recommendations and foresees a clear timeline until 2015 for their implementation. The mission considers, however, that additional efforts are needed to strengthen the management capacity of the regional protected areas in terms of staffing, budget and regulatory powers as well as on developing a clear regional vision on tourism, that optimizes the remarkable cultural and natural interests of the protected areas of the Altai region and widely, of the Altai wilderness.

Conclusion and recommendations

The mission concludes the OUV of the property continues to be preserved and that significant progress has been made on the implementation of the recommendations of the 2007 reactive monitoring mission. The mission in particular welcomes the fact that the management strategy for the property refers to these recommendations and foresees a clear timeline until 2015 for their implementation.

The mission takes note of the affirmation by the State Party that no official decision had been made on the Altai gas pipeline project and that such a decision will be based on an EIA in accordance with the Russian legislation but is concerned that in spite of this affirmation, the pipeline developer Gazprom is conducting preparatory work on the pipeline route, including inside the World Heritage property in violation of the protected area legislation.

The mission re-affirms the conclusion of the 2007 mission that any decision to go forward with the gas pipeline project through the property would constitute a threat to its OUV and represent a clear case for inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The mission therefore recommends that the State Party be urged to :

- a) Make an unequivocal decision to abandon the construction of the Altai gas pipeline through the property, as requested by the World Heritage Committee in Decision 33 COM 7B.27;
- b) Ensure that no further preparatory works for the pipeline are undertaken within the property;
- c) Ensure that the pipeline developer Gazprom considers alternative routes for the proposed pipeline, avoiding the property;
- d) Ensure that EIAs are submitted to the World Heritage Centre for any infrastructure development in or around the property which could affect its OUV, in line with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;

The mission considers that Federal Law No. 365-FZ dated 30 November 2011 significantly weakens the protection status of Strict Nature Reserves and therefore could affect the OUV of World Heritage properties in the Russian Federation. The mission further notes the weak legal status of the regional nature parks, a problem that has also been observed in other World Heritage properties in the Russian Federation which comprise regional protected areas.

The mission therefore recommends also that the State Party be requested to:

- e) Take appropriate legal measures to maintain a high level protection of the World Heritage properties on its territory, in accordance with Paragraph 15(f) of the Operational Guidelines;
- f) Address all legal issues concerning natural properties in the Russian Federation, which are composed of federal and regional protected areas, through a comprehensive national legal framework for the protection and management of natural World Heritage properties.

The mission proposes that the following recommendations be made to the State Party in order to further strengthen the protection and management of GMA World Heritage Property:

- g) Ensure the implementation of the 2009-2015 general management strategy for the property and set up the Coordination Council to coordinate the management across the property;
- h) Strengthen the management capacity of UQZNP and BMNP in terms of staffing and budget;
- i) Ensure that the inspectors of the nature parks are provided with the necessary legal authority to perform their protection mandate at the level of the Altai Republic and in line with new federal legislation which makes this possible ;
- j) Assess the impacts of grazing on the biodiversity in the traditional use zone of the UQZNP and develop a policy for the sustainable use of the natural resources in the traditional use zones of the nature parks in the property, in close cooperation with the indigenous communities using these areas;
- k) Develop an overall strategy for sustainable tourism of the property, which could be the basis to set the policy for sustainable tourism at the level of the Altai Republic;
- l) Further strengthen the transboundary cooperation with Mongolia and China based on the experience with Kazakhstan;
- m) Strengthen the cooperation with the civil society and in particular the indigenous communities, taking advantage of their knowledge relevant for the management of the property;

Finally the mission strongly recommends the State party to :

- n) Assess the cultural values of the Property, in consultation with ICOMOS and IUCN and consider its possible re-nomination under cultural criteria;
- o) Continue the process on extending the property, including key areas in Altai Republic, Mongolia, China and Kazakhstan.

1 BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

The **Golden Mountains of Altai World Heritage Property** (GMA) is located in southern Siberia, in the Altai-Ayan Ecoregion (**Map 1**), in the territory of the Altai Republic. It comprises the high mountainous areas of Altai, the headwaters of the Katun and Chulyshman rivers and Lake Teletskoye.



Map 1 – Altai-Sayan Ecoregion (Source : UNDP/GEF project).

The Property consists of five separate components in three geographical areas (**Map 2**) :

- Katunsky Strict Nature reserve (KSNR): IUCN category Ia, (1) ;
- Mount Belukha Nature Park (MBNP): IUCN category IV (2) ;
- Ukok Quiet Zone Nature Park (UQZNP): IUCN category IV (3) ;
- Altaisky Strict Nature reserve (ASNR): IUCN category Ia, (4) ;
- Lake Teletskoye Nature Monument (LTNM): IUCN category III



Map 2 – Golden Mountains of Altai World Heritage Site (Nomination file).

KSNR and ASNR have also been designated as Biosphere Reserves (BR) under the UNESCO MAB programme (respectively in 2000 and 2009). Quite surprisingly, Lake Teletskoye has not yet been designated as a Ramsar site, in spite of being the second largest lake in Russia.

The Property is located approximately 700 km south of Novosibirsk, in the Altai mountains of the Altai Republic, in southernmost Siberia. It covers a total of 1,620,938 ha, 1,002,000 ha being strictly protected (**Table 1**).

Cluster	Surface (ha)
Altaisky State Nature Reserve	881 481
Teletskoye Lake buffer zone	93 753
Katunsky State Nature reserve	130 000
Beluhka Nature Park	262 800
Ukok Quiet Zone Nature Park	252 904

Table 1 – Surface of the components of the Property (UNDP/GEF Project).

The Property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1998 under **criterion (x)**. The Altai is the major mountain range in Western Siberia and plays a crucial role in maintaining the hydrological regime in the Western Siberian lowlands. The Altai are the source of the two major rivers of Western Siberia, the Ob and the Irtysh. The Property includes Lake Teletskoye, the second largest lake in Russia, after Lake Baikal. The lake has the third highest biodiversity in Central Asia and is in a pristine state. The Golden Mountains of Altai represents the most complete sequence of altitudinal vegetation zones in Central Siberia, from steppe, forest-steppe, mixed forest, subalpine vegetation to alpine vegetation. One of the components of the site, ASNR, harbours more than 1400 vascular plants, of which 17 % are endemic. The Altai is also a major global centre of origin of the montane floristic assemblages in northern Asia, which have subsequently spread into Central Asia and has as such global significance in understanding the evolution of the vegetation in Central Asia. The site is also an important habitat for endangered animal species. It plays a key role in the conservation of the snow leopard, a globally endangered species, as the Gobi-Altai population serves as a core source for dispersing snow leopard individuals into Southern Siberia.

The IUCN evaluation of the nomination also highlighted the rich cultural heritage of the Property, and pointed out that two components, OQNP and BMNP have a particular religious and cultural significance for the indigenous people. IUCN also noted that the indigenous people co-existed with nature for millennia and that their culture has a strong affinity with the natural environment. IUCN further noted the potential of expanding the Property into neighbouring Republics and States, in particular the potential of linking ASNR with protected areas in the neighbouring Tuva and Khakassia Republics as well as the potential of a transboundary extension with protected areas in the Altai in China, Mongolia and Kazakhstan.

At the **24th session (Cairns, 2000)** the World Heritage Committee was informed about plans for the constructing a natural gas pipeline from Russia through China, which would go through the Ukok plateau, where one of the components of the Property is located. The State Party informed the World Heritage Centre that the authorities of the Altai Republic had expressed their opposition to such a project and that for this project to forward, it would be subject an impact assessment to ensure it would meet the “biological safety” of the area.

At its **30 session (Vilnius, 2006)**, the World Heritage Committee expressed concern over reports that the project was again considered and noted that the State Party was required

to provide information on the project and its potential impacts in compliance with paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines* (OG).

At the **31 session** (Christchurch, 2007), it requested a joint World Heritage Centre / IUCN reactive monitoring mission to the Property, which took place in September 2007. The report of the 2007 mission can be found on <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/768/documents/>.

Based on the findings of the mission, the Committee at its **32 session** (Quebec City, 2008) concluded that a gas pipeline which, if it were to pass through the Property, would constitute a threat to its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and would represent a clear case for inscription of the Property on the List of World Heritage in Danger. It also noted with concern that the State Party had not confirmed that the project would be abandoned and requested the State Party to provide full details of the feasibility study for the gas pipeline project including results of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

At the **35th session** of the World Heritage Committee (UNESCO headquarters, 2011), the World Heritage Centre and IUCN noted that they had received reports that work on the pipeline was to commence that year. However, at the session the State Party reiterated that no decision on the pipeline project had been taken. In its decision **35COM 7B.26** (see annex 1), the World Heritage Committee requested the State party to invite a new joint World Heritage Centre / IUCN reactive monitoring mission.

The joint World Heritage Centre (WHC) / IUCN monitoring mission was organized from 9 to 15 May 2012. The mission team was comprised of Guy Debonnet of the World Heritage Centre and Hervé Lethier, IUCN expert. In line with the decision of the Committee, the first objective of the mission was to determine the status of the pipeline project, to meet with the pipeline developers and to evaluate the possible impacts of the proposed pipeline on the OUV of the Property. Consistent with the OG, the mission also considered other issues relevant to the state of conservation of the Property and reviewed the status of implementation of the recommendations made by the 2007 mission.

In particular, the mission had to address the following key issues :

- clarify the current status of the oil pipeline project with the State Party and the pipeline developers. It has visited the Ukok plateau and verified reports on preparatory works (such as the reported erection of markers along the proposed pipeline route) and geological survey work that have been reported to have taken place and would have resulted in various impacts such as wild fires ;
- review the impacts of the proposed pipeline project on the OUV of the Property, based on the EIA, which in accordance with the State Party report, would have been conducted ;
- assess if the Property currently meets the conditions for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in accordance with the Operational Guidelines ;
- review the legal protection status of the Property, including the proposed and on-going revisions of the nature conservation legal framework and their potential impact on natural World Heritage properties in the Russian Federation, including the GMA ;
- report on identified requirements to strengthen the management effectiveness of the Property, and the capacity to effectively conserve its OUV.

The mission team had discussions with MNRE and the authorities of the Altai Republic, the managers of the different components of the Property and various stakeholders, including representatives of local communities and environmental NGOs. Unfortunately the pipeline developer, Gazprom refused to meet with the mission team, in spite of WHC requesting the State Party to set up such a meeting.

The terms of reference of the mission, the agenda of the mission and the list of people met can be found in Annexes 2, 3 and 4.

2 NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

The protected areas of the Property are governed by the national protected area legislation, in particular the federal law “*On environmental protection*” dating back to 1991 but updated in 2002, and federal law No.33-FZ “*On specially protected natural areas*” dated 14 March 1995.

The first law defines standards for environmental quality, makes provisions for the protection of biota and provides a basis for federal protected areas and activities permitted in them. The protected area law regulates the organization, protection and use of protected areas. This legislation recognizes different types of protected areas such as strict nature reserves, national parks and nature monuments at the federal level and nature parks, nature reserves and nature monuments, at the regional level.

GMA is a serial Property composed of 5 protected areas. Two components, ASNR and KSNR, are federal protected areas with the status of a Strict Nature Reserve (*Zapovednik*), corresponding to IUCN protected area category I and enjoying a high protection status where, in principle, no economic uses are allowed.

However the mission notes that there have been recent changes to the Russian legislation: through Federal Law No. 365-FZ dated 30 November 2011, a number of amendments and additions to the Federal Law N° 33-FZ have been made, making it possible to allow capital construction facilities and related infrastructure, in specifically designated plots of Strict Nature Reserves, following a list to be established for each site by the Government of the Russian Federation. The new legislation also provides for the possibility to lease out land plots for the above development activities to citizens and legal entities and establishes a federal executive body, which will be tasked with the development of a procedure for such leases.

The 3 other components have a regional protected area status : BMNP, UQZNP and LTNM. These regional protected areas have a much weaker protection status, equivalent to IUCN category IV (nature parks) or III (nature monuments). Certain uses, such as recreational use and traditional use activities, can be allowed by the regional administrations they are managed by. One of the key issues of regional protected areas, which has also been pointed out in previous World Heritage Centre / IUCN monitoring mission reports, is that in most cases, the land which is included in the nature parks has not been designated as protected area in the cadastre, and therefore continues to maintain its original land use status and continues to be under the management of another agency than the protected area agency in charge of the regional protected area. This puts these agencies in a difficult position towards the management of these sites¹.

The mission considers that the change in legislation mentioned above is weakening the protection status of Strict State Nature Reserves, the protection status being one of the three pillars of the OUV. They note that while no infrastructure developments are currently foreseen in KSNR and ASNR, this change in legislation will affect the protection status of all natural World Heritage properties in the

¹ See also the report of the 2007 monitoring mission to the Volcanoes of Kamchatka World Heritage site, which reviews this issue in detail. The report is available on <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/765/documents/>.

Russian Federation. They therefore consider that the State Party should take appropriate legal measures to maintain a high level protection of the World Heritage properties on its territory, in accordance with paragraph 15(f) of the Operational Guidelines (OG).

The mission further recalls the recommendation of previous WHC / IUCN monitoring missions to address all legal issues concerning natural properties in the Russian Federation, which are composed of federal and regional protected areas, through a comprehensive national legal framework for the protection and management of natural World Heritage properties in order to ensure the fulfilment of the State Party's obligations, under the Convention.

3 IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE PROPERTY

3-1 ALTAI PIPE LINE PROJECT

3-1-1 Conclusions of the 2007 monitoring mission

According to the conclusions of the 2007 reactive monitoring mission², the “*construction, operation and maintenance of a gas pipeline would pose a serious threat to the biodiversity of UQZNP and hence, the integrity and OUV of the World Heritage Site*”.

“Environmental risks in the construction of a gas pipeline through the Property include, for example, extensive engineering, drilling and soil movements due to the mountainous relief, geological conditions and permafrost soils. The mechanical impact along the route (pipeline and construction road) as well as impacts relating to alterations in the hydrological system and construction related pollution would probably cause damages to biodiversity that cannot be compensated by re-cultivation measures”.

Furthermore, in its decision **35 COM 7B.36**, the Committee expressed its utmost concern the State Party had not yet made an unequivocal decision to abandon the construction of the Altai gas pipeline through the Property and it reiterates that any decision to go forward with its construction would constitute a threat to the OUV of the Property and represent a clear case for its inscription on the List of World Heritage in danger.

3-1-2 Current Status of the pipeline project

The mission was informed by the federal and regional authorities that no final decision has been made on the pipeline project.

According to the State Party report, the pipeline developer Gazprom has prepared an EIA “*Substantiation report for investments for the Altai project*”. However, in spite of several requests by WHC and the mission team in advance to its visit and during it, no copy of this document was provided.

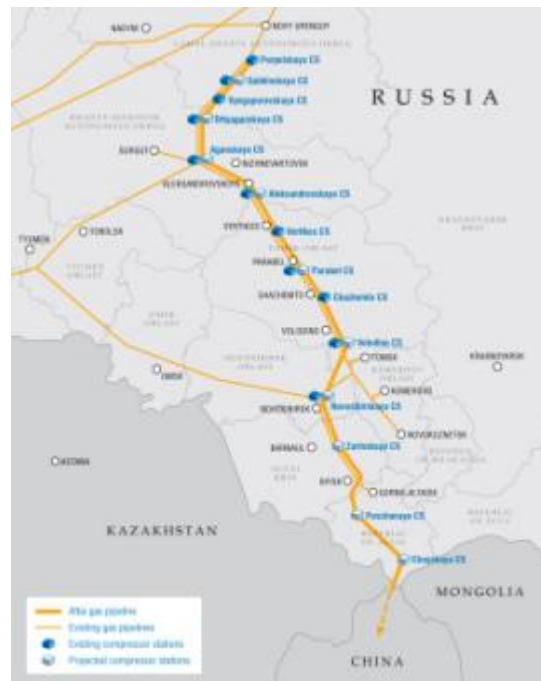
Officials of the MNRE noted that this EIA was to be considered as an internal document by the pipeline developer Gazprom, as part of its review of the potential investment in the pipeline project and therefore it had not been submitted to the Ministry. They further stressed that in line with the federal legislation, a detailed EIA on the pipeline project would have to be submitted by Gazprom for review by the relevant control agency of MNRE. A decision on the project would be based on the results of this EIA.

² This report can be found at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/768/documents/>.

As no detail on the project design, nor an EIA has been submitted so far, MNRE considers that the project is only at an initial stage. It further notes that no final agreement had been reached with China on the economic conditions of gas delivery.

The mission was also told that MNRE in a reply³ to a letter of the environmental NGO dated October 2011, had expressed the opinion that the construction of the pipeline across the Property would be a violation of Russia's international obligations to the Convention and that MNR considered it advisable to study alternative routes.

The mission notes that documentation available on the website of Gazprom⁴ reports that in September 2010 an agreement was signed, defining the *"extended majors terms and conditions for natural gas supplies from Russia to China with the China National Petroleum Cooperation"*, which sets the key commercial parameters of the forthcoming gas delivery to the Chinese market via the western route (see annex 5). The document includes a map with shows that the planned route will cross the Ukok plateau and therefore will pass through the UQZNP (**Map 3**).



Map 3: Pipeline route for the Altai pipeline project (Source : website Gazprom).

The documents states that first supplies are planned for 2015 and that specific feasibility studies of supply routes have been completed, including *"an EIA and the protection of archaeological and historic sites in the pipeline construction area with due consideration for the Altai Golden Mountains natural reservation"*.

³ A copy of the letter in Russian is available at http://www.saveukok.ru/assets/files/Uploads/2011/11/MNR-response-to-GR_rus.pdf.

⁴ See <http://www.gazprom.com/about/production/projects/pipelines/altai/>

The mission was also provided by environmental NGOs with a copy of a letter of a Gazprom contractor to the director of one of the nature parks situated on the pipeline route of November 2011, which states that the internal decision on the Altai gas pipeline project had been made by Gazprom in March 2009. The mission further received reports that the Gazprom contractors have started preparatory topographical and geographical survey work, including permafrost drilling in UQZNP and also hired specialists to inventory key cultural and historical heritage sites along the pipeline route.



Picture 1 & 2– Preparatory drilling works, Ukok plateau/World Heritage Site (WWF, June 2011).

While the authorities of the Altai Republic stated they were not aware of such works, the mission was presented with photographic evidence of such works (see Picture 1 & 2) and this was also confirmed by representatives of local communities. The mission was further informed that these works were undertaken without the necessary authorizations and that the regional persecutor confirmed the illegality of these works following an appeal by environmental NGOs, but that the Ministry of Forestry of the Altai Republic did not take action to stop them.

The mission visited the area where the works had been undertaken, including the area of a major fire (**Map 4** – yellow circle), which according to environmental NGOs was caused by the survey work, but could not confirm that this fire was linked to the works that were undertaken.



Map 4 – Pipeline planned route/yellow line.

Yellow circle shows the location of the fire (Source: WWF Russia).

The mission team in the different meetings reiterated the position of the World Heritage Committee, that any decision to go forward with the gas pipeline project through the Property would constitute a threat to its OUV and represent a clear case for inscription of

the Property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, as documented in Decisions **35COM7B.26** and **32COM7B.22**⁵.

The mission also notes the strong concern from representatives of the local and indigenous communities that the project would affect the cultural significance of the Ukok plateau, which includes old burial sites and cultural monuments and is regarded a sacred area.

The mission also recalls paragraph 172 of the OG, according to which the State Party should inform the Committee “*of its intention to undertake or to authorize in an area protected under the Convention major restorations or new constructions which may affect the OUV of the Property*”. It should also give him “*as soon as possible (for instance, before drafting basic documents for specific projects) and before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse, so that the Committee may assist in seeking appropriate solutions to ensure that the OUV of the Property is fully preserved* ».

The mission was not able to meet representatives of the pipeline developer Gazprom. The mission notes that such a meeting was specifically requested in the terms of reference of the mission and had been formally included in the mission programme agreed with the State Party. After Gazprom confirmed that the officials of this company were ready to meet it⁶, the mission was informed by MNRE that “*in accordance with phone conversation with Gazprom they don't have any agreement on the project, that's why the Gazprom management doesn't have any sense in such meeting*”⁷.

The mission regrets not having been able to meet officials from the pipeline developer company, which was specifically requested by the Committee in its decision 35 COM 7B.26. The mission considers that without this meeting, it is unable to get a clear view on the current status of the pipeline project.

Based on the information it was able to gather, the mission concludes that while Gazprom has not yet submitted the relevant documentation of the Altai gas pipeline project to the federal authorities to obtain the authorization for the pipeline to cross the Property, it has advanced on the preparatory work project since the 2007 mission. This preparatory work represents a significant investment and included illegal survey work inside the Property.

The mission recommends that the State Party be urged to ensure that EIA are submitted to the World Heritage Centre for any infrastructure development in or around the Property which could affect its OUV, in line with Paragraph 172 of the OG.

3-1-3 Environmental impacts of the proposed pipeline route on the Property and of the preparatory works already undertaken

The mission endorses fully all conclusions of the 2007 reactive monitoring mission mentioned under 3-1-1.

Furthermore, the mission notes that several other collateral effects on the Property could be generated by this project, such as growing traffic and disturbance, introduction of allochthonous species, as well as poaching and other illegal uses and activities that will be facilitated by the road access.

⁵ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/768/documents/>

⁶ Cf. Ms Vikulova/MNR, mail dated 14th May.

⁷ Note supra, mail dated 15th May.

The mission shares the view of the previous mission team and considers that the construction of the pipeline would constitute a threat to the OUV of the Property and would present a clear case for its inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The mission notes that the regional persecutor confirmed the illegality of the exploratory works that have been undertaken in the UQZNP in 2011 and considers that such works are not in accordance with the high protection standard required for a natural World Heritage Property. They further consider that also these exploratory works should be subject to an EIA, which should have been submitted to the World Heritage Centre, in accordance with paragraph 172 of the OG. However they consider that the works that have been undertaken so far did not jeopardize the integrity of the Property, nor compromise its OUV.

The mission wishes also to stress the outstanding cultural, spiritual and landscape values of this area, that should be recognized under criteria (iii), (iv), (vi) and (vii) of the OG, art. 77 (see also 3.5.3)

The mission notes that preparatory works have been undertaken in 2011 by the pipeline developed, in violation of Russia's protected area legislation and without informing the World Heritage Committee. The mission considers that the State Party should not permit any further preparatory works on the pipeline within the Property.

The mission recommends that the World Heritage Committee reiterates its position, that any decision to go forward with the gas pipeline project through the Property would constitute a threat to its OUV and represent a clear case for inscription of the Property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

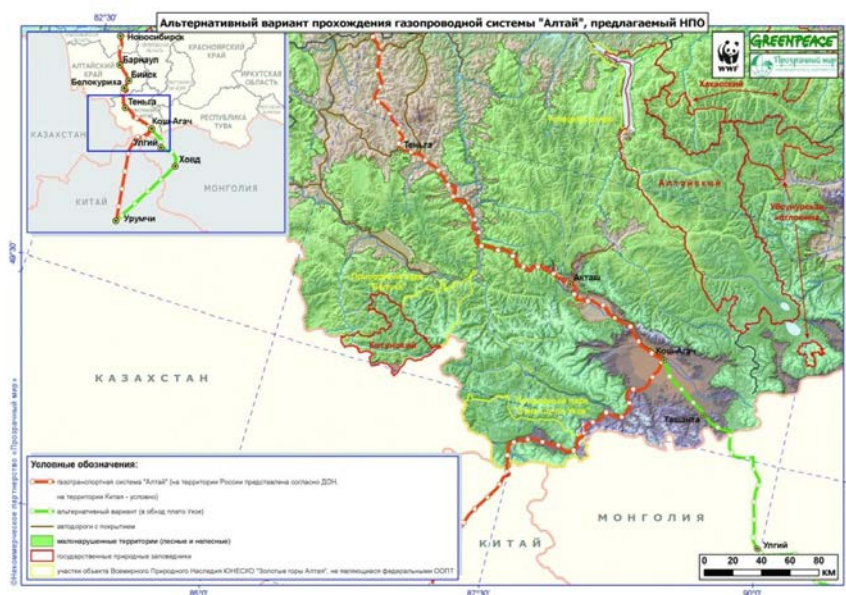
3-1-4 Alternative routes

The mission notes that according to the Gazprom information available on the internet⁸ several alternatives routes were considered and that the currently proposed route had been selected "based on the project economics and possible environmental impacts". However, it has not been possible for the team to get more information on those alternatives during its visit.

The mission was informed by MNRE that the Ministry considered it advisable to study alternative routes. It was also informed by WWF Russia of one alternative route it had recommended which would avoid crossing the Property and be acceptable from both social and economic points of view (**Map 5**).

In the absence of meeting with Gazprom officials, the mission was unable to get a better understanding of the possible alternatives that had been considered and why Gazprom decided for the currently proposed route. The mission was informed by environmental NGO that Gazprom announced it is not willing to consider alternative routes, as it was requested by the Committee and suggested by MNRE.

⁸ See <http://www.gazprom.com/about/production/projects/pipelines/altai/>



Map 5 – Alternative route (WWF, 2011).

The mission reiterates the request by the World Heritage Committee to the State Party to make an unequivocal decision to abandon any plans for the construction of a gas pipeline through the Property and considers that the State party should take the necessary actions to ensure that the pipeline developer seriously considers alternative routes without delay.

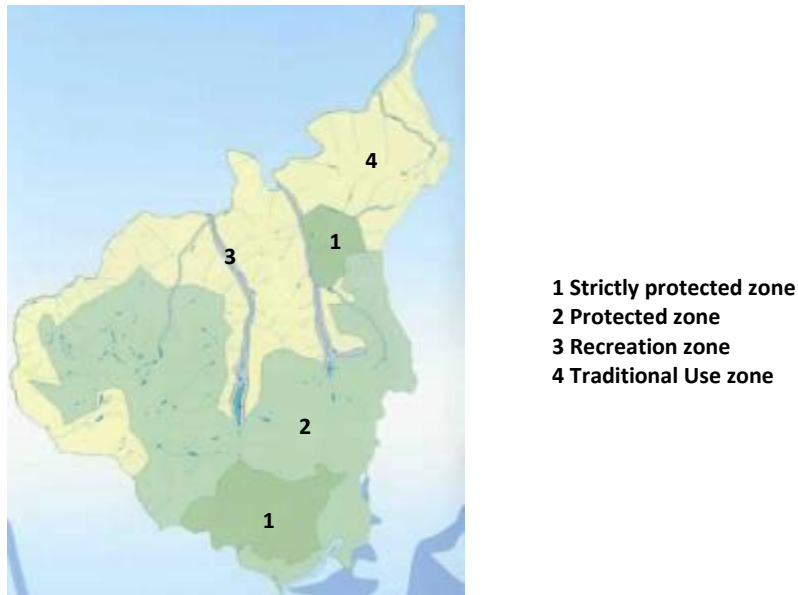
3-2 MANAGEMENT OF THE PROPERTY

3-2-1 Management of the individual components of the Property

As federally managed protected areas, **ASNR** and **KSNR** operate under the management of MNRE and under provisions of the Federal Law on Nature. A management plan was adopted for the ASNR for the period 2009-2014. KSNR completed its plan in 2008 and so far no new management plan has been developed. Both have a well organised site management authority with significant staffing levels: more than 100 persons work in ASNR and more than 70 in KSNR.

About half of the Teletskoye lake is included in ASNR. The legal status of the part not included in ASNR is somewhat unclear, as already pointed out by the 2007 mission. It was managed in the past by the Home affairs authority of the Altai Republic. In 2009 the Altaiski Biosphere Reserve was established under the UNESCO/MAB programme. The Biosphere Reserve includes ASNR as its core zone and a buffer zone which includes as the part of Lake Teletskoye. The mission was informed that in response of the recommendation of the 2007 mission, an agreement was signed in 2008 between the Home affairs authority which placed the management of the buffer zone of the Altaiski Biosphere Reserve under the authority of ASNR.

MBNP is managed by the Committee for Nature Protection and for Hunting and Fishing of the Government of the Altai Republic. Six persons work in this park. A management plan was adopted for the 2010-2014 period. The management plan foresees a zoning plan has been established, which foresees 4 different zones (**Map 6**): a strictly protected zone, a protected zone, a recreation zone and a traditional use zone. This zonation was legally established through a new decree in 2008 by the Altai Republic.



Map 6: Zoning of BMNP (Source : BMNP management authority)

UQZNP is also managed by the Committee for Nature Protection and for Hunting and Fishing of the Government of the Altai Republic. Management focuses on resource protection and research. A management plan was adopted for the 2009-2015 period. Eight staff members work on full time for this protected area (including one full time ranger).

As part of the development of the management plan, a new a zoning of UQZNP was developed with the assistance of KSNR based on an inventory of the areas most significant for biodiversity, which foresees 6 different zones (**Map 7**): a strictly protected zone covering 33250 ha, a protected zone of 75345 ha, a cultural landscape and traditional use zone of 50780 ha , a recreational zone of 94830 ha with a mass recreation subzone in the vicinity of the Tely Klyuch spring, a popular tourist destination and a sacred site for local communities and an economic zone of 40 ha.



Map 7: Zoning of the UQZNP (Source : 2009/13 UQZNP management plan).

Part of the strictly protected zone in the Tavan-Bogdo-Ola massif, where only research is permitted, has been fenced off by the border police. The economic zone covers lands where the Kalgutinsky mining factory is situated and which was excluded from the World Heritage Property and two border control posts situated in the park. The area covered by the strictly protected zone and protected zone was increased significantly compared to an earlier zonation and is based on an assessment of the biological values and the mission considers that this significantly strengthens the protection of the Property. However it is not clear to the mission if this new zonation has also been legally established. The management plan clearly specifies the allowed activities in each zone (**Table 2**). The mission notes that ground works are only permitted in the economic zone, which again clearly demonstrates the illegality of the preparatory works for the gas pipeline mentioned before.

	Strictly protected zone	Protected zone	Zone of protection of cultural landscape and traditional land use	Recreational zone	Subzone of the mass recreation	Economic zone
Control and protection	X	X	X	X	X	X
Researches and monitoring	X	X	X	X	X	X
Foot walks and tourism		X	X	X	X	
Horse travels and tourism			X	X	X	
Car journeys and transit by car road		X	X	X	X	
Building of the touristic facilities					X	
Equipment of touristic camps			X	X	X	
Construction of buildings and facilities for economic activity			X (herder huts and camps)			X
Ground works						X
Stationary recreation					X	
Fishing			X	X		
Winter grazing			X			
Economic activity						X
Use of non timber forest resources			X	X		

Table 2: Allowed types of human activity in UQZNP in the different zones (Source : 2009/13 UQZNP management plan)

As is the case in many regional protected areas, when the MBNP and UQZNP were created, the land ownership was not transferred to the management authority. This means that the original land use attribution of the land is still valid and the land remains under the management of different authorities. In the case of MBNP, most of the land is state reserve land managed by the Ust-Koksa district, with some state forest land managed by the state forest service and some agricultural land previously owned by collective farms and currently managed by the local traditional users as grazing lands.

The situation is similar in UQZNP, where 77 % of the land is state reserve land managed by the Dzhazator rural settlement, 5% of state forest lands managed by the state forest service and 18,3 % are agricultural lands currently used as grazing lands by the Dzhazator rural settlement. UQZNP also includes some industrial lands where the Kalgutinsky mining factory is situated, but, as mentioned before, this area was excluded from the World Heritage Property. The mission notes that while the land use practices in the nature parks are currently conform with the above mentioned zoning and management plan, the land tenure situation is not satisfactory, as potential land use conflicts are possible and as it gives little authority to the park management agency and could create conflicts with the other agencies in charge of managing these lands.

An important issue related to the management of the Property is the lack of legal capacity of the staff of MBNP and UQZNP to intervene. The rangers of those protected areas do not still have the rights and legal authority to control the visitors and to report on infringements. The mission was informed that new federal legislation (Federal Law dated 18.07.2011 N 242-FZ) makes it possible to the regional authorities to convey such powers to the agencies in charge of regional protected areas and that this has been done already by several regions, but not yet by the Altai Republic. The mission was also informed that, as MNBP has been now designated as a buffer zone of KSNR, rangers from KSNR can also legally operate in this area to support MBNP staff.

The mission notes that the staffing and budgets of MBNP and UQZNP remain insufficient to ensure the high management and protection status required as components of the Property..

The mission notes the significant progress made in developing management plans for the components of GMA: except for the KSNR which does not have a valid management plan, all components have one on- going. However the mission notes that most of them will be completed by 2014, and considers it may be useful to start soon the process of updating those plans for a new period.

The mission considers that the zoning which has been introduced in the management plans of UQZNP and MBNP with clear provisions on the allowed types of human activity, clearly strengthens the protection regime of these components of the Property but notes that the land tenure situation of the nature parks remains unsatisfactory. The mission recommends to clarify this situation by registering the nature parks in the land cadastre. It also recommends to further strengthen the human and financial capacities of both MBNP and UKNZ.

The mission strongly recommends that the necessary legal provisions be taken at the level of the Altai Republic, in accordance with the new federal legislation, to give the field staff of both protected areas the legal capacities to control and report on infringements⁹.

3-2-2 Management at the level of the Property

The 2007 mission recommended that an overall management framework for the Property be developed, setting out a common vision and objectives. In 2008, a general strategy for the development and management of the Property has been developed with support from the Natural Heritage Protection Fund (NHPF) and the UNDP/GEF project for protected areas in Altai¹⁰.

This general strategy was especially designed for developing measures for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and aimed at meeting the following goals :

- provide a long-term conservation of the OUV and integrity of the Property ;
- extend the area and justify additional criteria for the Property ;
- provide information about values of the Property to a wider public ;

⁹ In line with the Goal 5, Task 5.2 of the general strategy adopted in 2009.

¹⁰ The strategy was published in a booklet edited by the NHPF, which can be downloaded at <http://www.nhpfund.org/files/golden-mountains-of-altai-world-heritage-Property.pdf>

- strengthen interregional and international cooperation;
- strengthen the legal base for management of the Property ;
- optimise the management of the Property.

The strategy specifically foresees activities to implement part of the recommendations of the 2007 mission. The strategy also foresees setting up of a coordination Council for the management of the Property (Goal 7, Task 7.1), but so far this has not yet been implemented.

The mission considers that the adoption of the general management strategy is an important first step to creating the overall management framework and must be considered as a progress made since the 2007 reactive monitoring mission. It further notes that part of the activities that are mentioned in this document, have already been implemented. The mission acknowledges this significant effort towards a better long term management and preservation of the Property as a whole and recommends that the Coordination Council is set up as soon as possible. The mission also recommends that the State Party be requested to ensure the full implementation of the strategy by 2015.

The mission notes that while the general management strategy is a very useful tool, it is not sufficient as an overall management framework to ensure the protection of the Property as a *whole* as foreseen in the OG and which should include a common policy on tourism development, climate change, research, communication and other issues relevant for the property. This situation is common in Russia where most serial World Heritage Properties do not have an overall management plan that gives a clear vision of the management of the Property. This plan should be implemented by all agencies responsible for the management of the various components of the Property, at both federal and regional levels. The mission therefore reiterates the recommendation made previously for other properties, that the issue of overall management plans, management frameworks and management standards should be addressed through a national law for the management of natural World Heritage properties, in line with Goal 5, Task 5.1 of the general strategy¹¹.

The mission was also informed that as part of the project “*Expansion of the Protected Areas Network for the Conservation of the Altai-Sayan region*”, which is supported by the German Government, data on monitoring of wildlife are collected on a regular basis in ASNR and KSNR. A particular attention is given by the park and reserve administrations on the key species, like the snow leopard and the argali. This monitoring provides a good baseline for assessing the state of conservation of those species and their tendencies, at the regional level. Their demography is also surveyed at international level, in close cooperation with the experts of the neighbour countries, at the Altai Sayan ecoregion level.

The mission recommends that monitoring efforts be continued and strengthened in the future as well as expanded to all components of the Property, in order to build up a strong baseline of data, at the eco-regional level, which will provide reliable and relevant information on the state of conservation and tendencies of species and ecosystems met in the Property, in accordance with Goal 1, task 1.4 of the general strategy.

¹¹ see also chapter 2 of this report

3-3 TOURISM

Mass tourism activities are strictly forbidden in the Strict Nature Reserves¹² where only very local sustainable tourism activities are allowed in specific areas.

In the case of **ASNR**, limited tourism activities are allowed along some special trails and around the guard posts based around Lake Teletskoye. A major tourist attraction is the Korbu waterfalls, which are visited by more than 30000 tourists every year. Given these high numbers, special infrastructure (including a board walkway to the falls) and monitoring has been put in place (permanent ranger presence during the tourism season, video camera surveillance). There is also some small scale visitor accommodations in the reserve (in particular near the ranger posts) and overall tourism pressure seems to remain very low in general, and does not to affect the integrity of the Property.

The lake itself is a very popular destination, with approximately 80000 visitors a year. Most visitors stay at the Artybash village and there are some concerns about water quality around the village. However, in spite of these important numbers, tourism pressure on the lake seems to be well managed by the reserve authorities, who are now patrolling the whole lake following the inclusion of the part of the lake outside the ASNR in the newly created biosphere reserve (see 3-2-1). The mission was also informed of an agreement which was concluded between ASNR and the Altai Department of the State Inspectorate for Small Boats to ensure effective implementation of the boat legislation on the lake. As part of the agreement, a permanent check point is established during the tourism season in Yaylyu village, where the main park station is based.

In **KSNR**, there are currently three trails accessible for hiking. The annual visitor number fluctuate between 700 and 1200 visitors and , following studies, the maximum acceptable number of visitors was set at 2000 a year. Local communities were assisted in establishing four (4) tourist camps within the reserve's buffer zone and fifteen (15) agreements were concluded with members of those communities to allow them to develop regulated tourism activities in this buffer zone.

MBNP is a very well known tourist destination: it is the highest peak of Siberia, and 4 to 8 thousands of people, hikers and climbers, come to visit this park every year. In the management plan, a tourism and recreation zone is foreseen (**Map 6**). The tourism pressure has been assessed in 2008, and a quota of visitors based on the load capacity of the area which was estimated at 9000 annual visitors, has been fixed. The mission considers that this regulation can be considered as a first response to Goal 1, Tasks 1.3 and 1.6 of the general strategy.

Tourism numbers in **UQZNP** are low, in 2010 only 406 visitors were registered. It is not clear if that includes the visitors to the popular Tely Klyuch spring. During its field visit, the mission observed many signs of car tracks on the ground but a large part of this traffic may be more linked to summer grazing rather than to tourism activities.

So far, no overall tourism strategy has been elaborated for the Property. The mission considers the Altai region has a huge potential for tourism development, which could become an important driver for economic development. This potential is largely based on its pristine nature and its cultural heritage linked to the natural environment. As mentioned in the general management strategy, the MBNP and UQZNP have probably a big potential for tourism development. The mission was informed that tourism is developing rapidly in the Republic but with a general lack of planning and in an uncontrolled way. The mission therefore considers it is important that a vision for tourism development is established

¹² Although the recent changes in legislation seem to open up these strict limitations, see chapter 2.

urgently for the Altai Republic and for GMA in order to preserve the Property from future degradation and/or non sustainable tourism activities in all components. Such a strategy should be developed in accordance with Goal 8, Tasks 8.5 and 6 of the general strategy.

The mission reiterates the recommendation to develop an overall tourism strategy for the Property, which could be the basis for a reflection on an overall policy of tourism development for the Altai Republic, promoting its rich natural and cultural heritage.

3-4 OTHER THREATS

3-4-1 Wild Fires

According to data provided by satellite monitoring on the 2000–2009 period, 17 928 fires were recorded in the Altai Sayan eco-region, with a total burned area of more than 8.3 Million ha. In this eco region, more than 1 100 fires occurred in non-forest areas and up to 6 000 fires in forest areas annually. The mission was informed that in ASNR, more than half of the fires are caused by local population (56 %) and the largest areas damaged by fires in the whole eco-region are found in this protected area¹³.

As mentioned before, the mission was also informed about a major fire which occurred last year in UQZNP (see **Map 4**). According to environmental NGOs, this fire was caused by the pipeline survey work, but the mission could not confirm that this fire was linked to the works that were undertaken.

The mission notes the potential impacts of fire on the Property. While it is known that the majority of rare and vulnerable vascular plant species listed in the Red Book of Russia¹⁴, are in fact fire resistant, their safety depends to a large extent on fire severity and their populations return to their original states very slowly. Furthermore, frequently repeated fires may cause their complete elimination, especially fires of high intensity that occur in steppe areas where they lead to significant changes in the structure of plant communities and the ecosystem. Fires may also impact fauna and lead to the destruction of conditions which are essential for bird nesting. Those impacts could affect the integrity of the Property in the long term and compromise its OUV. The mission notes that the UNDP/GEF Project “Biodiversity Cooperation in the Russian Part of the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion recently published a report on the impacts of wildfires in the ecoregion”, which provides useful recommendations on how to develop fire management strategies for the protected areas¹⁵.

The mission was informed on some on-going efforts to increase the capacity to deal with wildfires in the Property. In ASNR, fires are monitored on a daily basis through access to a satellite monitoring system. Cooperation agreements were also developed with the Altai Air service for Forest Protection and with the Altai Department of the Federal Ministry of Civil Defense, Emergency Situations and Natural Disasters Relief for fire monitoring and fire response. In KSNR, several ranger stations also have been equipped with fire-fighting equipment.

The mission concludes that it should be of high priority to monitor the wild fire situation in the field and to develop a comprehensive plan to prevent damages on flora biodiversity

¹³ A.A. Onuchin, 2012 – Fire danger mitigation: a strategy for protected areas in the Altai Sayan eco-region, Krasnoyarsk 2012, 61 p. See http://www.altai-sayan.com/about/publ/STRATEG_engl.pdf

¹⁴ Note supra.

¹⁵ See note 14

and reduce the effects of fire on the Property in general, in accordance with Goal 8, Task 8.1 of the general strategy, taking into account the recommendations of the above mentioned study.

The mission recommends the State Party to establish a fire management strategy for the Property, to facilitate fire control and protection, in particular in the most exposed areas, like UQZNP and other steppe areas.

3-4-2 Grazing

Both nature parks include agricultural lands which are used by the local communities for grazing and the management plan foresees zones for traditional use for this activity. In particular in UQZNP grazing is an important traditional socioeconomic activity. While the main threats to biodiversity and landscape in this cluster would be uncontrolled development of tourism as well as poaching and collect of medicinal plants¹⁶ and construction of large infrastructures like the pipeline project, grazing may also degrade the ecosystem, compromise the integrity of the Property and affect its OUV which is founded on the presence and distribution of rare and endangered flora species in particular.

The mission did not have the time to look at this issue in details, but during the field visit it has observed signs of overgrazing in part of the Ukok Plateau. The mission recommends that the impacts of grazing be assessed in the traditional use area of UQZNP (**Map 7**), in close cooperation with the local communities. This assessment would be also useful for improving knowledge on climate-dependent desertification in steppe terrain in association with direct anthropogenic impact such as cattle grazing. It should lead to the development of a policy for the sustainable use of the natural resources in this part of the Property, in accordance with Goal 1, Task 1.6 and Goal 3, task 3.1 as well as Goal 8, Tasks 8.4 to 6 of the general strategy.

The mission recommends that the impacts of grazing on the biodiversity affecting the traditional use zone of the UQZNP be assessed and a policy for the sustainable use of the natural resources in the traditional use zones in the Property be developed in close cooperation with the indigenous communities using these areas, and in accordance with Goal 1, Task 1.2¹⁷, 1.3¹⁸ and 1.6¹⁹ of the general strategy.

3-5 OTHER ISSUES

3-5-1 New protected areas, national and transboundary cooperation in the Altai-Sayan ecoregion

The mission notes the on-going efforts to establish new protected areas in the Altai-Sayan ecoregion²⁰.

¹⁶ See: General directions of the development of the Nature Park "Quiet Zone Ukok" for 2009-2013, Gorno-Altai, 2008, 76 p.

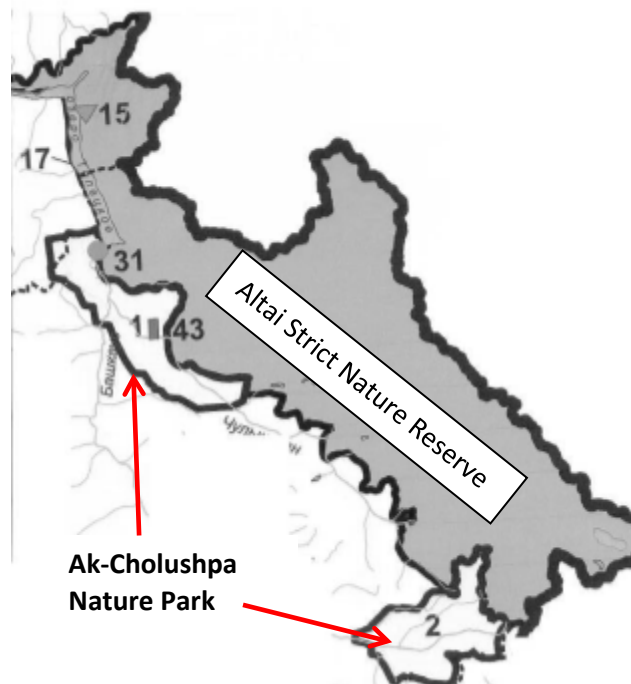
¹⁷ Decrease threats of forest fires.

¹⁸ Control of tourism activities.

¹⁹ Fostering development of alternative forms of land use.

²⁰ In the Russian part of the ecoregion this work has been supported through the project « Biodiversity Conservation of the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion », with support from UNDP/GEF and the Federal Ministry for Environment, nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, which promotes the expansion of the protected area network as a means to build resilience to climate change induced threats and protect carbon sinks. See also <http://www.altai-sayan.com/eng/index.php>.

The mission was informed of the creation of the Altaiski Biosphere Reserve in 2009. This biosphere reserve includes ASNR as core zone ; its buffer zone includes LTNM but also several protected areas in the Khakassia Republic and Tuva Republic. The mission was further informed that a new nature park has been created by the Altai Republic, the Ak-Cholushpa Nature Park. Two components of this new regional park border ARNR, the valley of the Chulyshman river, the main tributary to Lake Teletskoye, and the Kalbakaya area in the southern part of ASNR (**Map 8**).



Map 8 – Location of the Ak-Cholushpa Nature Park (Source : Altai Republic).

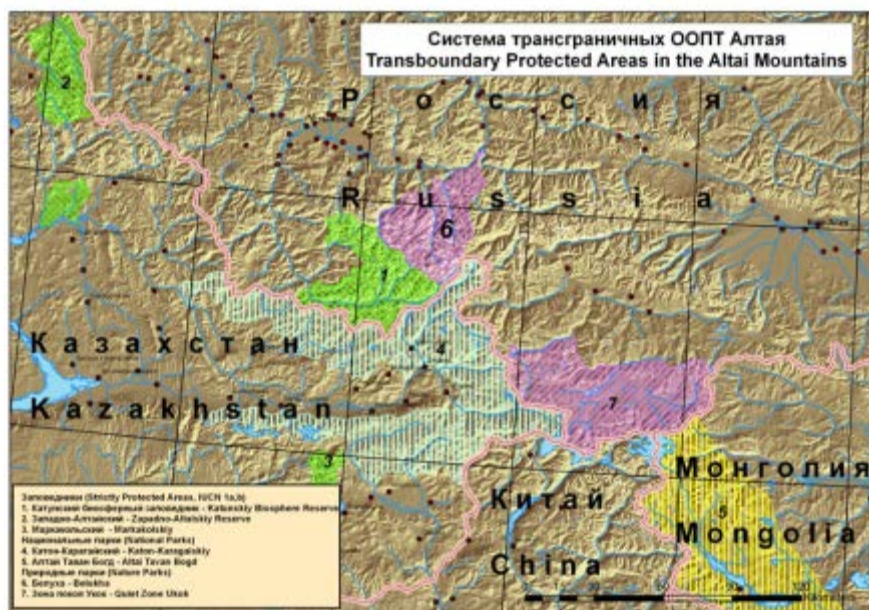
The mission strongly welcomes the creation of the Altaiski Biosphere Reserve, which will contribute to the increased cooperation with protected areas bordering ASNR in the Khakassia and Tuva Republics. The mission also welcomes the creation of the Ak-Cholushpa Nature Park by the Altai Republic, which will provide additional protection to the southern part of Lake Teletskoye and further strengthen the integrity and protection of ASNR.

The mission was further informed of the creation of a new national park in the southern part of the Altai Republic, the Saylyugemsky National Park (SNP). This new national park is composed of three components. The Argut component is adjacent to MBNP, while the Saylyugemsk component protects a mountain area with high biodiversity on the border with Mongolia and east of UQZNP (**map 9**).



Map 9 - Saylyugemsky National Park (Source : Altai Republic).

The mission notes that general strategy for the Property foresees to work towards the transboundary extension of the property with Mongolia, China and Kazakhstan (**Map 10** and Goal 4). In 2008, a meeting was organized in China, where representatives of the 4 countries agreed to work on this joint project. Eventually the transboundary extension could include SNP, the Katon-Karagayskiy National Park in the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kanas National Nature Reserve²¹ in China and Altai Tavan Bogd National Park in Mongolia. The mission was informed that works on the nomination files are on going in the different countries and that a regional workshop is planned to be undertaken later this year.²²



Map 10: Transboundary protected areas in the Altai mountains (Source : KSNR).

Cooperation efforts have been developed since the 2007 reactive monitoring mission to specifically link the KSNR with Katon-Karagayskiy National Park in the Republic of Kazakhstan, The mission was informed that an intergovernmental agreement was signed

²¹ Included on the tentative list of China in 2010 : <http://whc.unesco.org/fr/listesindicatives/5533>

²² Personal comment by Professor Mikhail Shishin of Altai state technical university.

on 15th September 2011 for the creation of a transboundary reserve “Altai” between KSNR and Katon-Karagaysky National Park in Kazakhstan and that similar discussions are underway with Mongolia.

The mission strongly welcomes the on-going efforts towards the establishment of transboundary cooperation between Russia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and China on the management of the Altai Mountains, and the preservation of the Altai- Sayan eco region. The mission further expresses strong support for the development of a transboundary extension of the property into the neighbouring countries, as this would further strengthen the integrity and protection of the property.

3-5-2 Climate change

In 2011, the impact of climate change on the biodiversity and ecosystems of KSNR were assessed with the UNESCO support²³. The assessment concluded that KSNR is very sensitive to climate change impacts. Impacts on biodiversity can include increasing fragmentation of alpine vegetation communities, impacts on freshwater biodiversity as a result of changes in hydrochemistry and impacts on populations of wild ungulates caused by extreme temperatures in winter. Climate change is also expected to cause an increasing number of wild fires.

In addition, as part of the project “*Expansion of the Protected Areas Network for the Conservation of the Altai-Sayan region*” (see 3.2.2), data are collected on climate change in the whole Property on a regular basis ; those data are gathered in a common database. In the framework of this project an assessment was also published in 2011²⁴.

The role of climate factor is increasing in the Altai-Sayan eco-region due to temperature fluctuations, changes in precipitation as well as instability of hydrological regime. Climate change may affect the existing ecological balance and the successional processes that already suffer from fire.

In response to this threat, a methodology common to ASNR and KSNR was created and a monitoring programme was set up²⁵ ; in 2010, an action plan was also adopted seeking at the establishment of an Altai-Sayan-Baikal connectivity conservation mega-corridor within the borders of the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and China as an adaptive response to climate change in this region²⁶. However, the state of knowledge is still far away from what is needed to monitor changes in the ecological features of the Property and in particular the impacts on the OUV of the property. For example, it is still impossible to assess how climate change impacts the snow leopard and argali, how and when those flagship species may suffer from that change.

The mission welcomes the on-going efforts to assess the impacts of climate change in both Strict Nature Reserves, and recommends to expand this programme of activities to the other components of the Property. The mission further

²³ The assessment was done in the framework of the “GLOCHAMOST” project: Global Change in Mountain Sites , Coping Strategies for Mountain Biosphere Reserves.

²⁴ Kokorin, A.O., 2011 – Climate change and its impacts on ecosystems, population and economy in the Russian portion of the Altai-Sayan ecoregion : an assessment report WWF Russia, 168 p. http://www.altai-sayan.com/about/publ/assessment_climate_altai_eng_.pdf

²⁵ UNDP/GEF Project “Arrangement of a system of long-term monitoring of changes of climate and ecosystem of the Reserves Altaisky and Katunsky”.

²⁶ Altai-Sayan Ecoregion : adapting to climate change, 2010-2011, UNDP/ICI Project “Expansion of the protected areas network for the conservation of the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion”, 18 p. and Kokorin, A.O., 2011, see reference 5 above

recommends to include adaptation measures in the future updates of the management plans of the components of the property in accordance the “Policy Document on the Impacts of Climate Change on World Heritage Properties”²⁷.

3-5-3 Cultural values

The cultural value of the Property has been often pointed out in the past and is very well known.

As mentioned above, in its technical evaluation, IUCN reported that the region has a rich cultural heritage. The UQZNP and the MBNP have particular cultural and religious values for local people. In particular, the Ukok plateau is very rich in petroglyphs and tomb mounds (Kurgan) dating back to the bronze age. It is also the place where the Ukok princess was found in the early nineties. The tombs have been preserved in the permafrost and are therefore also very vulnerable to climate change²⁸.



Map 11 - Archeological sites and areas with large concentrations of petroglyphs in UQZNP (Source : KSNR)..

The general strategy for the property recommends that the boundaries and the values of the existing property be expanded or that a separate property be nominated based on cultural criteria (Goal 2, Task 2.2). In both cases, this new nomination would strengthen the level of protection of the UQZNP and the authorities of the Altai Republic met by the mission, including the Minister for Culture, voiced their strong support for this.

The mission recommends that the feasibility of a re-nomination of the Property on the basis of criteria (iii) and (iv) be assessed in close cooperation with ICOMOS taking into account the rich cultural heritage of the property and in particular of the Ukok Plateau.

²⁷ See <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/activities/documents/activity-393-2.pdf>

²⁸ See also <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/433>.

4 ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY

4.1 STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE OUV

The property has not yet a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value which has been adopted by the World Heritage Committee. However the values which justified the inscription of the property under criterion (x) are clearly documented in the IUCN evaluation (see also chapter 1).

The mission concludes that state of conservation of the property has not significantly changed since the 2007 reactive monitoring Mission and its OUV continues to be preserved. The mission also considers that the property still benefits from a very high integrity.

The mission re-affirms the conclusion of the 2007 mission that the construction, operation and maintenance of a gas pipeline would pose a serious threat to the biodiversity of UQZNP and hence, the integrity and OUV of the World Heritage Property.

Other threats are wild fires, which number and frequency is likely to increase as a result of climate change, the impact of climate change itself, as well as the pressure on natural resources by some traditional use practices, such as grazing pressure in the traditional use zone of the UQZNP, collecting of medicinal plants and poaching²⁹. The mission notes that pressure from tourism is limited but likely to increase in only some specific parts of the property. The mission notes that several efforts are on-going to monitor and better understand these impacts. The mission considers that none of these issues are an imminent threat to the OUV.

The mission notes the high level of management of KSNR and ASNR and also notes the advances made in the management of BMNP and UQZNP since the 2007 mission, in particular to the development of management plans and a functional zoning of these nature parks. Nevertheless, the mission considers that to address the pressures mentioned above, it will be important to continue to strengthen the management capacity of the nature parks. It also stresses the importance of a sustainable tourism strategy for the property, which could be the basis for a policy on sustainable tourism for the Altai Republic.

The mission also notes that while the Strict Nature Reserves benefit of a very strict protection regime, the legal status of the regional nature parks is very weak. This problem has also been observed in other World Heritage properties in the Russian Federation which comprise regional protected areas and the mission team would like to reiterate previous proposals to address it through a specific legislation on natural World Heritage properties.

The mission further notes the new Federal Law No. 365-FZ dated 30 November 2011 has significantly weakened the protection regime of the Strict Nature Reserves in the whole country, and considers this issue should be addressed at federal level, as it affects the protection status of all natural World Heritage sites in the Russian Federation.

²⁹ However, the Mission was not able to check those issues when visiting the Property and it did not get reliable data on them.

4-2 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2007 MISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The mission discussed and reviewed the progress made in the implementation of part of the recommendations of the 2007 reactive monitoring mission.

4-2-1 Rec. 1 – Pipe line construction (See above, 3.1).

This issue is discussed in detail under § 3.1. The mission concludes that while no decision has been made on the pipeline, the pipeline developer has moved forward with preparatory works, thereby violating the protected area legislation. The mission takes note of the fact that MNRE has expressed the opinion that the construction of the pipeline across the property would be a violation of Russia's international obligations to the Convention and that it considered it advisable to study alternative routes. However the mission notes that so far no unequivocal decision has been made by the State Party to abandon any plans for the construction of the Altai gas pipeline through the Property in spite of the requests by the World Heritage Committee.

4-2-2 Rec. 2 – Management plans

As discussed under 3.2 and since the 2007 reactive monitoring mission, a general management strategy for the 2009-2015 period has been developed for the overall property, which foresees the implementation of many of the 2007 Mission recommendations and management plans have been developed for different components. The mission was also informed that special regulations have been developed since 2007 for the management of the LTNM, which includes the part of the lake not included in the ASNR.

4-2-3 Rec. 3 – Sustainable tourism strategy

In terms of tourism, the mission takes note of the studies which have been undertaken to determine the acceptable tourism pressure in the different components including maximum numbers for alpinists wanting to climb the Belugha mountain. The mission team was also informed that a special monitoring group on the anthropological influence of the recreation zones around Late Teletskoye has been established. However an overall sustainable tourism strategy for the entire property is still lacking. The mission considers that given the increasing tourism development in Altai, such a strategy is needed and should be developed urgently.

4-2-4 Rec. 4 – Monitoring system

Ecological research is one of the major management activities within the site and has been undertaken for many years. The mission was also informed that data on monitoring of iconic wildlife species, and also monitoring of climate change, are gathered in a common database with scientific support of academic institutions.

4-2-5 Rec. 5 – Integrated management between both federal and regional systems of protected areas

The mission notes that the coordination council for the management of the entire property, which is foreseen in the general management strategy has not yet been established. However it notes the increased cooperation between KSNR and MBNP and the support that has been provided by KSNR staff to the development of the management plans and zonation of MBNP and UQZNP.

4-2-6 Rec. 6 – Staffing

The mission considers that in spite of efforts by the regional authorities to improve the situation, management capacity of the UQZNP and MBNP remains insufficient. Staffing numbers have increased slightly but remain insufficient, and nature park inspectors continue to lack the necessary legal authority to perform their protection mandate, in spite of the fact that the Mission team received information that a new federal legislation enacted in 2011 makes it possible for the Altai Republic to provide them with such legal capacities.

4-2-7 Rec. 7 – Education programme

Because of a lack of time, the mission did not address this issue in detail. However, it notes that all management plans foresee educational activities and it observed during its field visit that many efforts have been developed especially in ASNR and KSNR on education and awareness. Many educational activities linked to tourism, are carried out on a regular basis and the mission visited also small museum and other visitor facilities.

4-2-8 Rec. 8 – Transboundary cooperation

As discussed under 3-5-1, significant progress has been made since the last reactive mission, in increasing transboundary cooperation in protected area management. In 2011 a transboundary reserve was established between the KSNR and the Katon-Karagaysky National Park in Kazakhstan, with BMNP as one of the buffer zones. KKNP also borders the western part of UQZNP. A joint management committee was established.

The State Party is also negotiating a cooperation agreement with Mongolia. The Altai Tavan Bogd National Park in Mongolia borders the eastern part of UQZNP and the newly established SNP in the Altai Republic. Officials of MNRE estimate that this agreement could be signed by the end of this year.

The management strategy for the site also foresees work on the transboundary extension of the property with Mongolia, China and Kazakhstan, including also the SNP mentioned above and the re-nomination of the property under cultural criteria. The authorities of the Altai Republic, including the Minister for Culture voiced their strong support for this.

4-2-9 Rec. 9 – Cooperation with the civil society

The mission is concerned that it received several reports after the mission that NGOs and civil society stakeholders had been prevented from attending the stakeholder meetings or meeting with the mission team. The mission notes the very strong interest of several civil society groups for the conservation of the property and the strong cultural attachment of local and indigenous communities to its natural heritage. The mission therefore wants to reiterate the importance of strengthening the cooperation with the civil society and in particular the local and indigenous communities, taking advantage of their knowledge relevant for the management of the property.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The mission concludes the OUV of the property continues to be preserved and that significant progress has been made on the implementation of the recommendations of the 2007 reactive monitoring. The mission in particular welcomes the fact that the management strategy for the property refers to these recommendations and foresees a clear timeline until 2015 for their implementation.

The mission takes note of the affirmation by the State Party that no official decision had been made on the Altai gas pipeline project and that such a decision will be based on an EIA in accordance with the Russian legislation but is concerned that in spite of this affirmation, the pipeline developer Gazprom is conducting preparatory work on the pipeline route, including inside the World Heritage property in violation of the protected area legislation.

The mission re-affirms the conclusion of the 2007 mission that any decision to go forward with the gas pipeline project through the property would constitute a threat to its OUV and represent a clear case for inscription of the Property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The mission therefore recommends that the State Party be urged to :

1. Make an unequivocal decision to abandon the construction of the Altai gas pipeline through the property, as requested by the World Heritage Committee in Decision 33 COM 7B.27;
2. Ensure that no further preparatory works for the pipeline are undertaken within the property;
3. Ensure that the pipeline developer Gazprom considers alternative routes for the proposed pipeline, avoiding the Property;
4. Ensure that EIA are submitted to the World Heritage Centre for any infrastructure development in or around the property which could affect its OUV, in line with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;

The mission considers that Federal Law No. 365-FZ dated 30 November 2011 significantly weakens the protection status of Strict Nature Reserves and therefore could affect the OUV of World Heritage properties in the Russian Federation. The mission further notes the weak legal status of the regional nature parks, a problem that has also been observed in other World Heritage properties in the Russian Federation which comprise regional protected areas.

The mission therefore recommends also that the State Party be requested to:

5. Take appropriate legal measures to maintain a high level protection of the World Heritage properties on its territory, in accordance with Paragraph 15(f) of the Operational Guidelines;
6. Address all legal issues concerning natural properties in the Russian Federation, which are composed of federal and regional protected areas, through a comprehensive national legal framework for the protection and management of natural World Heritage properties;

The mission proposes that the following recommendations be made to the State Party in order to further strengthen the protection and management of GMA World Heritage Property:

7. Ensure the implementation of the 2009-2015 general management strategy for the property and set up the coordination council to coordinate the management across the property;
8. Strengthen the management capacity of UQZNP and BMNP in terms of staffing and budget;
9. Ensure that the inspectors of the nature parks are provided with the necessary legal authority to perform their protection mandate at the level of the Altai Republic and in line with new federal legislation which makes this possible ;
10. Assess the impacts of grazing on the biodiversity in the traditional use zone of the UQZNP and develop a policy for the sustainable use of the natural resources in the traditional use zones of the nature parks in the property, in close cooperation with the indigenous communities using these areas;
11. Develop an overall strategy for sustainable tourism of the property, which could be the basis to set the policy for sustainable tourism at the level of the Altai Republic;
12. Further strengthen the transboundary cooperation with Mongolia and China based on the experience with Kazakhstan;
13. Strengthen the cooperation with the civil society and in particular the indigenous communities, taking advantage of their knowledge relevant for the management of the property;

Finally the mission further strongly recommends the State party to :

14. Assess the cultural values of the Property in consultation with ICOMOS and IUCN and consider its possible re-nomination under cultural criteria;
15. Continue the process on extending the property, including key areas in Altai Republic, Mongolia, China and Kazakhstan.

LIST OF ANNEXES

- ANNEX 1** DECISION 35COM 7B.26 OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE
- ANNEX 2** TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE MISSION
- ANNEX 3** ITINERARY AND PROGRAMME OF THE MISSION
- ANNEX 4** LIST OF THE MAIN PERSONS MET
- ANNEX 5** ALTAI PIPELINE PROJECT (information from Gazprom website)

ANNEX 1

**DECISION 35COM 7B.26
OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-11/35.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decisions **32 COM 7B.22** and **33 COM 7B.27** adopted at its 32nd (Quebec City, 2008) and 33rd (Seville, 2009) sessions respectively,
3. Expresses its utmost concern that the State Party has not yet made an unequivocal decision to abandon the construction of the Altai gas pipeline through the Property as requested in Decision **33 COM 7B.27**, and about reports that the construction is scheduled to go ahead this year,
4. Reiterates that any decision to go forward with the construction of the gas pipeline through the Property would constitute a threat to the Outstanding Universal Value of the Property and represent clear case for its inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, as noted in its Decision **32 COM 7B.22**,
5. Urges the State Party to submit an independent Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed pipeline to the World Heritage Centre before a decision is taken on the project, including a map showing all potential and preferred pipeline routes in relation to the Property, in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines,
6. Requests the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN reactive monitoring mission to the Property to determine the status of the proposed pipeline, to meet with representatives of the pipeline developers, and to evaluate the possible impacts of the proposed pipeline on the Property's Outstanding Universal Value,
7. Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2012**, a report on the state of conservation of the Property, including clarification of the status of the proposed pipeline and a copy of its Environmental Impact Assessment, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session in 2012, **with a view to considering, the possible inscription of the Property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

ANNEX 2

TERMS OF REFERENCE

UNESCO World Heritage Centre - IUCN Monitoring Mission
Golden Mountains of Altai
Russian Federation
May 2012

The Golden Mountains of Altai World Heritage Property is located in southern Siberia in the territory of the Altai Republic and comprises the high mountainous areas of Altai, the headwaters of the Katun and Chulyshman rivers and Lake Teletskoye. The property consists of five separate components in three geographical areas: the Altaisky Strict Nature reserve and Lake Teletskoye Nature Monument; the Katunsky Strict Nature reserve and the Mount Belukha Nature Park; and the Ukok Quiet Zone Nature Park on the Ukok Plateau. The total area covers 1,611,457 ha.

The property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1998 under criterion (x) because it represents the most complete sequence of altitudinal vegetation zones in central Siberia, from steppe, forest-steppe, mixed forest, subalpine vegetation to alpine vegetation. The site is also an important habitat for endangered animal species such as the snow leopard.

At its 30 session (Vilnius, 2006), the World Heritage Committee expressed concern over reports about the plans for the constructing a natural gas pipeline from Russia through China, which would go through the Ukok plateau and one of the components of the property. At the 31 session (Christchurch, 2007), it requested a joint World Heritage Centre / IUCN reactive monitoring mission to the property. Based on the findings of the mission, the Committee at its 32 session (Quebec City) concluded that a gas pipeline which, if it were to pass through the property, would constitute a threat to its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and would represent a clear case for inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger. It also noted with concern that the State Party had not confirmed that the project would be abandoned and requested the State Party to provide full details of the feasibility study for the gas pipeline project including results of the Environmental Impact Assessment. At the 35th session of the World Heritage Committee (UNESCO headquarters, 2011), the World Heritage Centre and IUCN noted that they had received reports that work on the pipeline was to commence that year. However, at the session the State Party reiterated that no decision on the pipeline project had been taken. In its decision 35COM 7B.26 (see annex), the World Heritage Committee requested the State party to invite a new joint World Heritage Centre / IUCN reactive monitoring mission.

Following this decision, the primary objective of the mission is to determine the status of the pipeline project, to meet with the pipeline developers and to evaluate the possible impacts of the proposed pipeline on the OUV of the property. Consistent with the Operational Guidelines (paragraph 173³⁰), the mission may also consider other issues relevant to the state of conservation of the property.

³⁰ The Operational Guidelines request missions to consider

a) an indication of threats or significant improvement in the conservation of the property since the last report to the World Heritage Committee;

b) any follow-up to previous decisions of the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of the property (see Annex 2);

In particular, the mission should address the following key issues:

1. Clarify the current status of the oil pipeline project with the State Party and the pipeline developers. Visit the Ukok plateau and verify reports on preparatory works (such as the reported erection of markers along the proposed pipeline route) and geological survey work that have been reported to have taken place and would have resulted in various impacts such as wild fires.
2. Review the impacts of the proposed pipeline project on the OUV of the property, based on the Environmental Impact Assessment, which according to the State Party report, would have been conducted;
3. Assess if the property currently meets the conditions for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, according to the Operational Guidelines.
4. Review the legal protection status of the property, including the proposed and on-going revisions of the nature conservation legal framework and their potential impact on natural World Heritage properties in the Russian Federation, including the Golden Mountains of Altai;
5. Report on any identified requirements to strengthen the management effectiveness of the property, and the capacity to effectively conserve the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

The mission team will be composed of Guy Debonnet of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and Hervé Lethier, IUCN expert. ***The mission is proposed to take place starting May 6, 2012.***

The State Party should as soon as possible propose a detailed agenda for the mission. During the mission, the mission team should be able to conduct a field visit to the property to make the necessary assessments. The field visit should include a detailed visit to the the Ukok plateau including the different places where works for the pipeline are reported to have been undertaken last summer). This part of the visit would probably be best undertaken by car. The mission team should have the opportunity, through stakeholder meetings, to exchange views and receive information from the pipeline developers as well as the different stakeholders, including representatives of environmental NGO, researchers, local communities and indigenous communities

The following documents should be submitted by the State Party to the World Heritage Centre by end March 2012 to enable the mission team to prepare for the mission:

- a. All existing assessments and Environmental Impact Assessments for the proposed gas pipeline project (including the “Substantiation report for investments for Altai project” and the 2007 report of the ecological expedition, both mentioned in the State Party report of June 17, 2011) as well as any other development planned in the property;

c) information on any threat or damage to or loss of Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and/or authenticity for which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List.

- b. The management plan for the overall property “Strategy of management and development of the objects of the World Heritage “Golden Mountains of Altai” and the Plan of action for the period up to 2015 as well as other management plans that have been developed for its individual components, including details on staffing and budgets.

Relevant information to consider the present status of the property, such as recent and past wildlife surveys, data on poaching and other monitoring data.

These documents should be provided in one of the working languages of the Convention (French or English). In case of substantial documents, at least summaries should be provided in the working language.

Based on the results of the above-mentioned assessment and discussions with the State Party representatives, the mission team will develop recommendations to the World Heritage Committee to conserve the OUV of the property and improve its conservation and management.

ANNEX 3

**Itinerary and programme for the Joint WHC-IUCN Mission to Golden
Mountains of Altai
9-15 May 2012**

9 May 2012	
	Arrival of UNESCO/IUCN delegation to Moscow Night flight to Barnaul in the Altai Krai
10 May 2012	
	Arrival Barnaul Airport at 6 am Transfer to Gorno Altaisk, Altai Republic by road (300 km) lunch in Gorno-Altaisk Meeting with the Chairman of the Duma of the Altai republic Stakeholder Meeting Discussion of the field visit programme Transfer to Inta (by train, duration - 8 hours) departure time 17:02, arrival time Inta 01:25 Accommodation in the hotel Kiwi Lodge in Gorno Altaisk
11 May 2012	
	Field visit to the property by helicopter: Flight to Okok Quiet Zone and landing at Ukok Plateau Aerial reconnaissance of the Ukok Plateau and the areas affected by fire Flight over the Belugha Nature Park Flight over the Katunsky Strict Nature Reserve Lunch at Ust-Koksa Flight to the Altaisky strict Nature reserve and aerial reconnaissance of Lake Teletskoye Accommodation in the hotel Kiwi Lodge in Gorno Altaisk
12 May 2012	
	Visit to Altaisky Strict Nature Reserve and Lake Teletskoye by road and boat Discussion with ranger staff, visit of the headquarters of the reserve and discussion on monitoring and surveillance and outreach activities, visit of the Korbu waterfalls Accommodation in the hotel Kiwi Lodge in Gorno Altaisk

13 May 2012	
	Meeting with experts, park and reserve staff, other officials and stakeholders Presentation and discussion of mission findings Lunch Cultural presentation Return to Barnaul by road (300 km) Accommodation at Barnaul airport hotel Preparation of mission recommendations
14 May 2012	
	Return flight to Moscow and tranfert to Hotel Akadimiskaya Meeting with the Director and CLT specialist of UNESCO Moscow Office Lunch Meeting at Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and presentation and discussion of mission findings Meeting with WWF and Greenpeace at WWF Office Accommodation Hotel Akadimiskaya in Moscow
15 May 2012	
	Departure mission team from Moscow

ANNEX 4

LIST OF THE MAIN PERSONS MET
(official meeting, 14th May, morning)

Yu. V. Antaradonov, First Deputy of the Chairman of the Government of the Altai Republic.

I. I. Belekov, Chairman of the State Assembly of the Altai Republic.

T. A. Gigel, Deputy of the Chairman of the State Assembly of the Altai Republic.

M. A. Terekhov, Minister of Forest of the Altai Republic.

O. N. Yeremeyeva, Deputy of the Chief of the Altai Republic United Government Staff.

V. Ye. Konchev, Minister of Culture of the Altai Republic.

V. L. Yanykanova, Chairman of the Committee of Agricultural Policy, natural resources management and rural area development.

Yu. V. Sorokin, Minister of Regional Development of the Altai Republic.

B. K. Alushkin, National head (El Bashchi) of the Altai people.

V. K. Manyshhev, Deputy Minister of Forests of the Altai Republic.

N. P. Kondratyev, Deputy Minister of Regional Development of the Altai Republic.

E. V. Babrashev, Chairman of the Public Chamber of the Altai Republic.

B. Ya. Bedyurov, National poet of the Altai Republic, the Chairman of "The Union of Poets of the Altai Republic", non-governmental organization.

V. V. Takhanov, Deputy of the Minister of Agriculture of the Altai Republic.

T. M. Sadalova, Senior specialist of the Minister of Culture of the Altai Republic.

L. N. Yefimov, Head of Kosh-Agach municipal region

V. A. Chekonov, Chief of the Altai family of dyus.

V. I. Sumachako, President of the Small-Numbered Peoples Association.

K. D. Sakitova, Expert of public relations management of the work of the Government of the Altai Republic.

I. V. Kalmykov, Director of the Altai Reserve.

A. V. Zateyev, Director of the Katun Reserve.

I. V. Sailankin, Director of "The Belukha" Natural Park.

S. T. Maikhiyev, Director of "The Ukok Quiet Zone" Natural Park.

V. G. Babin, Rector of Gorno-Altai State University.

ANNEX 5

ALTAI PIPELINE PROJECT (information from Gazprom website)

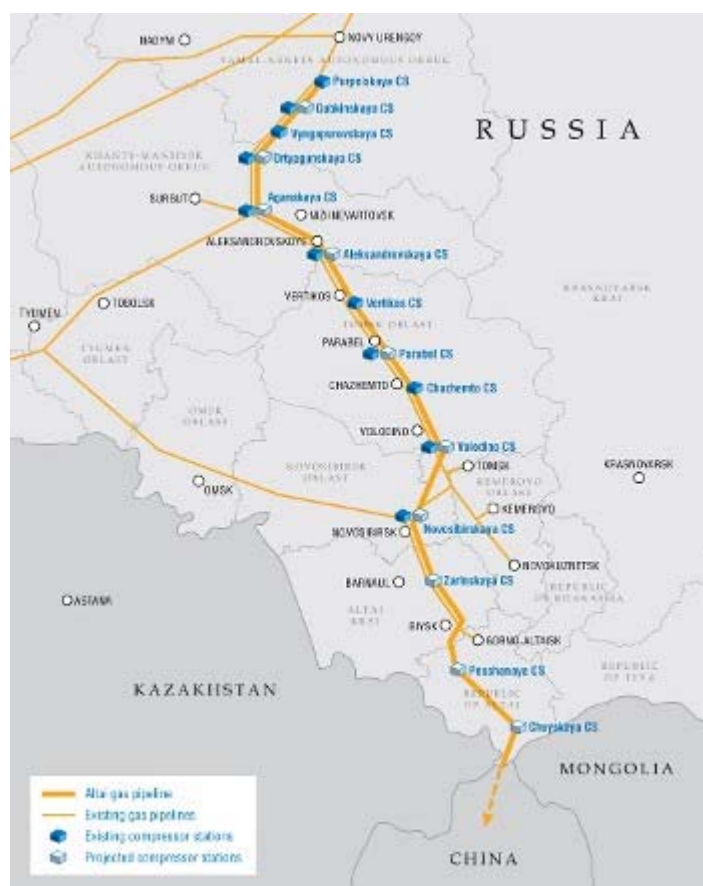


Altai project

Strategy

The strategy of Gazprom as a global energy company envisages access to new promising markets. The demand for Russian gas in Asia-Pacific countries, primarily China, is highly potent.

Gazprom diversifies its exports by entering the Chinese market. The relevant obligations on gas supply to China will not affect the contracts that have already been concluded with other purchasers of Russian gas. Gazprom possesses sufficient gas resources and production capabilities to meet these obligations.



Altai project

Chinese market

In 2010 indigenous gas production and consumption in China amounted to 94 and 106 billion cubic meters respectively. Besides, the consumption rates are growing and dramatically surpassing the

extraction rates. According to the forecasts by domestic and foreign experts, in 2020 China's gas demand may reach 300 to 400 billion cubic meters.

Commercially, it is essential for Gazprom that natural gas is pegged to petroleum product prices and supplied under long-term contracts. Among the advantages are also relative consumer proximity (China is much closer than Europe) and the absence of transit countries en route.



Special attention will be paid to environmental issues during Altai gas pipeline construction

History and current status

Gazprom and China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) signed the Agreement of Strategic Cooperation on October 14, 2004. The Agreement covers examination of the issues relative to the arrangement of natural gas delivery from Russia to China by Gazprom as well as exploration of opportunities for joint gas processing and gas chemical projects in eastern Russia and in third countries.

On March 21–22, 2006 Gazprom and CNPC signed the Protocol on natural gas supplies from Russia to China. The document sets forth the accords reached in relation to gas supply schedule, volumes, routes and pricing principles.

On July 7, 2006 the Coordinating Committee for the Altai project was established.

On September 21, 2006 Gazprom and the Republic of Altai signed the Cooperation Agreement aimed at arranging joint activities to expand the Unified Gas Supply System to Russia's Far East and to implement large-scale gas projects, primarily the Altai gas pipeline construction.

On June 24, 2009 Igor Sechin, Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation and Wang Qishan, Vice Premier of the People's Republic of China signed the Memorandum of Understanding to cooperate in the natural gas sector.

On October 13, 2009 in furtherance of the accords reached earlier, Gazprom and CNPC signed the Framework Agreement on basic terms and conditions for natural gas supply from Russia to China. The document specifies the volumes, directions and startup date for gas supplies, and links the price formula with the oil basket index.

On September 27, 2010 Gazprom and CNPC signed the Extended Major Terms and Conditions of Natural Gas Supplies from Russia to China. The document sets the key commercial parameters of the forthcoming natural gas delivery to the Chinese market via the "western" route: the volumes and the timeframe for export startup, the take-or-pay level, the supplies buildup period, the guaranteed payment level. The export contract is expected to be signed in mid-2011. First supplies are planned for late 2015. Under the agreements reached the contract period will be 30 years and the supply volume upon reaching design capacity – 30 billion cubic meters a year.

By now, the specific feasibility studies of supply routes have been performed and the investment rationale has been completed for the project.

Technical features

For the supply of the said gas amounts the new Altai pipeline system is planned for construction within the existing transmission corridor from Western Siberia to Novosibirsk with follow-up extension to the Russian-Chinese border. The 2,600-kilometer gas pipeline will be constructed with the use of 1,420-millimeter pipes as well as modern and powerful compressor stations ensuring high efficiency and reliability of export supplies.

Environmental aspect

The environmental aspect will be a priority for Gazprom when constructing the Altai gas pipeline as well as other projects.

Gazprom possess a long-standing and unique experience in engineering and constructing gas transmission systems in a challenging environment with the use of the most advanced and reliable systems for environmental protection, control and monitoring.

All possible options of the pipeline placement were considered at the route planning stage. The selection of the route was conditioned not only by the project economics, but the possible environmental impacts as well.

The Investment Rationale included such items as the Environmental Impact Assessment, Protection of Archaeological and Historic Sites in the Pipeline Construction Area with due consideration for the Altai

Golden Mountains natural reservation and regulatory opportunities for carrying out business activities in specially protected natural areas.

Pursuant to the Guidelines for Assessing the Environmental Impact caused by the planned business and other activities, the public hearings were held in the Russian Federation based on the Investment Rationale. Taking part in the hearings were representatives from the Association of Indigenous Minorities of Northern Russia, Siberia, the Far East as well as from other public organizations. The hearings participants generally approved the Altai project. The Investment Rationale for the Altai project fully observed the comments and proposals made by the participants.

The Altai project will pass the corporate and state environmental evaluations. Maximal transparency will be ensured during the project development and execution with an input from research and ecological communities and mass media.

Social aspect

The Altai project will improve the reliability of gas supplies to the region, create jobs, and considerably replenish the regional and local budgets through the relevant tax allocations.

The ongoing gasification process will improve the environmental situation in Gorno-Altai and its suburbs, where dozens of coal-fired boiler houses are polluting the air especially in winter.

The Cooperation Agreement between Gazprom and the Altai Republic Administration stipulates Gazprom's financial participation in regional social projects.

The Agreement provides, inter alia, for gas supplies to regional settlements, reconstruction of roads, bridges and the Gorno-Altai airport runway. Gazprom will train pipeline maintenance staff at local higher education institutions. The Company is going to finance other social projects as well.

Regional aspects

The future Altai gas trunkline will run through six Russian constituents: the Republic of Altai, the Altai Krai, the Novosibirsk Oblast, the Tomsk Oblast, the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug and the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug – Yugra.

The gas pipeline construction project will materially influence the economic development of the said areas and raise their investment appeal.

Natural gas utilization will considerably improve the living conditions in the region, the environmental situation and enable to create a number of greenfield high-efficiency production enterprises and industries, increase the competitive ability of the products.

From the social aspect, the Altai project will result in higher rates of employment among the local population including at the companies producing equipment and components for the gas industry, construction industry, etc.

The cooperation between Gazprom and Russian regions hinges on the previously signed Cooperation Agreements and Gasification Accords as well as special agreements planned for conclusion over the pipeline construction period.

These documents and the applicable legislation will regulate the compensatory, environmental and charitable actions coordinated with regional authorities.

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