



United Nations Development Programme
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY



Date: 2 March 2000

To: Mr. Kenneth King
Assistant CEO

Attention: Program Coordination

From: Rafael Asenjo
GEF Executive Coordinator

Subject: **Submission of Medium Size Project Brief for GEF contribution:**
*Conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah, its Natural Habitat and
Associated Biota in the I.R. of Iran.*

Enclosed is a project brief for Conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah, its Natural Habitat and Associated Biota in the I.R. of Iran submitted to UNDP by Department of the Environment, Islamic Republic of Iran. Please note that the project has been endorsed by the GEF national operational focal point in Iran.

In accordance with the operational guidance for the preparation and approval of medium-sized projects, we are submitting this to the GEF Secretariat for action by the Chief Executive Office (CEO). We understand that the Secretariat will recommend to the CEO that the project be submitted to the Council for approval, that it be returned for revision or that it not be developed further.

We are simultaneously circulating copies to UNEP/GEF, World Bank/GEF, STAP and the Biodiversity Convention Secretariat for comments to the GEF Secretariat. We expect to receive these comments within 15 working days. Therefore, we look forward to receiving the CEO's decision on or before 24 March 2000 but understand that the project will not be formally approved, even if the CEO has endorsed it, until the Council has reviewed it [within the following 15-day period], namely by 14 April 2000.

Thank you and best regards.

cc: Ahmed Djoghlaif, UNEP
Lars Vidaeus, World Bank
Madhav Gadgil, STAP
Rohit Khanna, UNEP/GEF
Mark Griffith, UNEP/STAP
Hamdallah Zedan, CBD

PROJECT SUMMARY

PROJECT IDENTIFIERS	
1. Project name: Conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah, its Natural Habitat and Associated Biota in the I.R. of Iran.	2. GEF Implementing Agency: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
3. Country in which the project is being implemented: Islamic Republic of Iran (I.R. Iran)	4. Country eligibility: CBD ratification: 6 August 1996 GEF participant since 25 May 1994
5. GEF focal area(s): Biodiversity	6. Operational program/Short-term measure: This project falls within the Arid and Semi-Arid Ecosystems Operational Programme. Experience from this project will provide the first scientific data on the Critically Endangered Asiatic cheetah <i>Acinonyx jubatus venaticus</i> on which a conservation programme can be based. It will also be of help to indigenous communities and environmental protection agencies in other countries in establishing effective management partnerships to protect and sustain their endangered species and habitats. GEF and the Government of the I.R. of Iran, as well as other governments and non-governmental organisations, will also learn valuable management lessons for protection and sustainable use of fragile arid land biomes— an important thematic area of Biological Diversity COP guidance.
<p>7. Project linkage to national priorities, action plans, and programs: The project's <u>aim</u> is fully in line with the Iranian constitution and legislation. Article 50 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran defines environmental protection as a duty for all legal and real persons, and prohibits all activity— economic or otherwise— that may result in irreparable damage to the environment. The national Environmental Protection Act of 1974, following the UN Conference on the Human Environment (1972), established the Department of the Environment (DOE) as a trans-ministerial authority in the Office of the Prime Minister (now Office of the President of the Republic). The DOE is thus one of the oldest and strongest environment authorities in the developing world. Recently, the Government of the I.R. of Iran has joined the Convention to Combat Desertification and is thus engaged to invest special attention and resources for environmental protection and rehabilitation in its arid and semi-arid zones. The Asiatic cheetah (<i>Acinonyx jubatus venaticus</i>), along with the Jebeer gazelle (<i>Gazella bennetti</i>) and the Persian wild ass (<i>Equus hemionus onager</i>), is among the endangered species of the Irano-Turanian biome, which covers most of the country and half of its protected areas.</p> <p>The DOE is currently finalising the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) of the I.R. of Iran, under the Biodiversity Enabling Activities funded by GEF. As the NBSAP and this project share the same biodiversity objectives and participatory approach, they are expected to interact closely and profitably.</p> <p>The project strategy fully embraces the main tenets of the National Strategy for Environment and Sustainable Development. The document has as one of its main goals the forging of new models of sustainable development and management of natural resources that combine an ecosystem perspective with community-based satisfaction of social and economic needs. Chapter Six of NBSAP calls for, <i>inter alia</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "... preparation of a management plan based on the [protected] areas' ecological capabilities and socio-economic needs of the surrounding population... as a prerequisite for management practices." [Strategy One]; • "NGOs should... act as advisory and controlling bodies in relation to... protected areas." [Strategy Four]; • "... ecotourism in [protected areas] for economic gain should be promoted, as well as resource protection through proper management practices...." [Strategy Five]; <p>Mapping biodiversity and zoning protected areas according to biophysical capabilities, compatible and non-compatible activities of people living in the peripheries, and the needs of ecotourism; maximising community participation in management of protected areas; identifying the actual and proposed protected areas of various categories; and preparing management plans for protected areas. [Objectives and Plans of Action of same].</p>	
8. GEF national operational focal point and date of country endorsement: Mr. Amir Khizi, Director-General for International Economic Affairs & Specialised Agencies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 30 January 2000	

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES	
<p>9. Project rationale and objectives:</p> <p>Conservation of the Asiatic cheetah (<i>Acinonyx jubatus venaticus</i>) in the I.R. of Iran and the related complex of rare and endangered wild species and their natural habitats with the support and collaboration of local communities.</p>	<p>Indicator:</p> <p>(In the short-to-medium term) improvement in quantity and quality of natural habitat for the cheetah and increases in related animal and plant species</p> <p>(In the long term) presence of a sustainably viable population of the Asiatic cheetah in the I.R. of Iran with local community support and collaboration. Removal of the cheetah from the IUCN list of Critically Endangered Species.</p>
<p>10. Project outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Better understanding of crucial biotic territories for the Asiatic cheetah and related species in the I.R. of Iran, and enhanced knowledge of cheetah population dynamics, behaviour and survival factors. 2. Improved management of the crucial biotic territories by governmental and non-governmental persons with relevant interests and concerns (stakeholders) in order to rehabilitate over-grazed habitat and ensure better protection for cheetahs and their prey. 3. Enhanced sustainable well being of the human communities living within or in proximity of such natural habitats. 4. Enhanced awareness and support of the government and civil society of the I.R. of Iran on relevant issues and concerns, in particular regarding the prevention of non-habitat-related threats to the Asiatic cheetah (e.g. illegal hunting and killing of cheetah and related species) among most relevant groups (local peri-desert communities, nomadic herders, hunters, youth). 	<p>Indicators:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of crucial biotic territories where it is necessary to improve protection of the species and manage the habitat and biota; report describing and justifying specific management recommendations for such territories. 2. Rehabilitated grazing lands for cheetah prey species in crucial biotic territories with cheetahs and prey species recovering under better protection resulting from Collaborative Management Plans (including land-use zoning, resource-use regulations, land-rehabilitation initiatives, etc.) and related socio-economic initiatives 3. Self-assessed well-being of relevant communities; trends in family income of relevant groups; trends in human morbidity and mortality; incidence of social conflicts; presence of local initiatives that couple sound environmental management with local income generation and well-being (e.g. health and socio-cultural benefits); enhanced <u>equity</u> in the distribution of costs and benefits of environmental management. 4. Decrease in the number of intentionally killed cheetahs and related species; governmental regulations (e.g. hunting permits) fully in line with the acquired knowledge of the Asiatic cheetah and related habitats and species; local hunting and off-take rules also in line with the acquired knowledge.

<p>11. Project activities to achieve outcomes (including cost in US\$ '000):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification of at least four crucial biotic territories for the cheetah in the I.R. of Iran by gathering, analysing and monitoring data on cheetah, its population dynamics, behaviour, survival factors, habitat and related biota, especially principal prey species. (This will involve advice and training to be carried out in collaboration with the IUCN Cat Specialist Group, and provision of specialised equipment) (US\$260,000) 2. Promoting and supporting Collaborative Management (CM) processes in biotic territories of crucial importance as habitats for the cheetah and the related complex of species. (This presupposes the recruitment, training and deployment of "process facilitators", whose training will be carried out with the technical support of the IUCN Collaborative Management Working Group. It will also involve the development of a document of Process Guidelines, fully adapted to Iranian conditions. Networking and exchange visits among the involved local communities will be promoted) Providing technical and financial support to the plans and initiatives developed in the collaborative management processes. (In particular, to initiatives that couple sound environmental management, such as grazing regimes which permit habitat recovery in crucial biotic territories and restoration of grazing areas outside protected areas, with local income generation and well-being [e.g. health and socio-cultural benefits]; initiatives that eliminate major habitat threats; and initiatives that enhance equity in the distribution of costs and benefits of environmental management.) (US\$ 325,000). 3. Developing a National Action Plan for the Asiatic cheetah and its associated biota and habitat, including a synthesis of the plans in the crucial biotic territories, a social communication campaign, relevant [new] policies and regulations, links with other national initiatives (e.g. the NBSAP and the "Living with the Desert" programme), a resource mobilisation strategy and – as necessary – links with conservation initiatives of bordering countries (especially Pakistan and Turkmenistan). A Joint International/National Advisory Group will assist in the task. (US\$80,000) 	<p>Outputs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Biotic map and parameters identifying at least four crucial biotic territories for the cheetah and its prey species, including linking corridors; assessment of current cheetah population size, dynamics, behavioural descriptors and other factors essential for conservation purposes; monitoring reports on the impact of management plans and socio-economic initiatives on the cheetah and related biome and habitat. 2. Trained facilitators deployed and Collaborative Management processes effectively in place among the key stakeholders in at least four crucial biotic territories (lists of CM indicators are available in the existing literature¹). Management plans and related socio-economic initiatives financed and implemented in the crucial biotic territories. 3. A National Action Plan for the Asiatic cheetah and its associated biota and habitat, developed with the assistance of a joint International/National Advisory Group. A national communication strategy – as part of the plan – developed and in the course of implementation (as far as resources allow). New national policies and regulations in line with conservation purposes. Preparation concept papers and/or project documents for conservation of biodiversity of Iran [and region].
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<p>4. The Social communication campaign is another important activity within the project (US\$30,000)</p> <p>5. IUCN coordination and management will consist in organizing IUCN's technical support and assisting in the overall management of the project (US\$ 30,000)</p>	<p>4. Guidelines, reports of the workshops and technical advice</p>
<p>12. Estimated budget (in US\$): PDF-A: 25,000 MSP: 725,000 Co-financing (in kind) \$ 690,000, including: ➤ \$210,000 (personnel, equipment, transportation, communication and administrative and research facilities provided by DOE) ➤ \$ 20,000 (personnel and facilities provided by the Iranian NGO) ➤ \$ 50,000 (personnel and training and research facilities provided by Iranian Universities) ➤ \$ 40,000 (technical backstopping and materials provided by IUCN) ➤ \$ 200,000 (time, facilities and local knowledge and skills of local stakeholders and community members in crucial biotic territories) ➤ \$ 140,000 (personnel and support initiatives provided by local and national Authorities and Governmental Agencies) ➤ \$ 30,000 (coordination and management provided by IUCN) Total PDF and Project Costs: 1,440,000</p>	
<p>INFORMATION ON INSTITUTION SUBMITTING PROJECT BRIEF</p>	
<p>13. Information on project proposer: Department of the Environment - a trans-ministerial authority in the Office of the Prime Minister (now Office of the President of the Republic) is by law in charge of all wildlife management and protected areas (except Forest Parks) in the I.R. of Iran. (See Annex) The DOE will contract for part of the work an Iranian NGO and obtain the technical support of the IUCN – The World Conservation Union. Specific collaboration will be established, as needed, with Iranian Universities, research agencies and other Local Authorities and Government Agencies.</p>	
<p>14. Information on proposed executing agency (if different from above): Several Iranian NGOs have been contacted by the DOE and are ready to take part in the initiative. After approval of the GEF funding, one of them will be selected on the basis of criteria such as quality of past work and experience in participatory methods and collaborative management processes. IUCN – The World Conservation Union is an international entity comprising states, governmental and non-governmental organisations, whose main mission is assisting societies to conserve their biodiversity and use their natural resources in ways that are both sustainable and equitable. Together with UNEP and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), IUCN launched the World Conservation Strategy in 1980. IUCN's Cat Specialist Group, part of the Species Survival Commission, and its Collaborative Management Working Group include major international expertise of relevance to this project.</p>	
<p>15. Date of initial submission of project concept:</p>	

INFORMATION TO BE COMPLETED BY IMPLEMENTING AGENCY:

16. Project identification number: IRA/00/G35

17. Implementing Agency contact person: Mr. Tim Boyle, Regional Coordinator, UNDP/RBAP/GEF
Tel: +1 212 906-6511, Fax: +1 212 906-5825

18. Project linkage to Implementing Agency program(s):

- a) Iran's National Strategy for Sustainable Development and Environment formulated with UNDP support under the Capacity 21 funding window
- b) The GEF funded Biodiversity Enabling Activities project which is under way with the major objective of formulating a Biodiversity protection strategy
- c) The Department of Environment's ongoing research and actions to conserve Cheetah in its natural habitat

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

The Islamic Republic of Iran (I.R. Iran) lies on a triangular plateau encompassing a land area of 1,648,000 square kilometers. The country is located in the Palearctic realm and is considered the cradle of many genetic resources in the world. Over 50% of the country is covered by mountains, 30% by deserts and 10% inland waters. The climate ranges from Sub-Tropical to Alpine. Such geographic and climatic variations sustain over 500 species of birds, 160 species of mammals and 7,000 to 10,000 plant species. At present, the protection of the country's biodiversity is at best carried out in protected areas.

Conservation of nature, particularly animals is one of the important advises of Islam as formal religion of country. Article 50 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran defines environmental protection as a duty for all legal and real persons, and prohibits all activity - economic or otherwise - that may result in irreparable damage to the environment. In the international arena, I.R. Iran played a leading role in the international wetland movement by hosting in Ramsar (I.R. Iran, 1971) the International Conference that adopted The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The I.R. Iran is now an active member of Convention on Biological Diversity. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs co-ordinates the country's environmental issues with the international community and is the GEF Focal Point for the country.

The National Environmental Protection Act of 1974, following the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, established the Department of the Environment (DOE) as a trans-ministerial authority in the Office of the Prime Minister (now Office of the President of the Republic). The DOE is thus one of the oldest and strongest environment authorities in the developing world. DOE is the Focal Point for Environment in I.R. Iran and acts as Secretariat of the Environment High Council (EHC). The President of the Republic is the EHC chairman and the Ministers of Industry, Agriculture, Housing and Jihad-e Sazandegi (Construction Movement) are its members. The EHC is the highest environmental policy decision-making body in the I.R. Iran. From 1997, H.E. Mrs. Dr. Ebtekar – the first woman Vice-President in the last 20 years – became Head of the Department.

Following the extirpation of the Asiatic lion *Panthera leo persica* and the Caspian tiger *P. tigris virgata*, the Asiatic cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus venaticus* and the Persian leopard *P. pardus saxicolor* are the remaining species of large cats in the I.R. of Iran. The cheetah, which formerly ranged from Arabia to India, is known to survive only in the I.R. Iran, and, probably, in neighbouring areas of Pakistan. Dependent for food on gazelles *Gazella spp.* and wild sheep *Ovis vignei*, which, in turn, depend on ample grazing and water, the cheetah is a flagship for biodiversity in the arid and semi-arid regions. Its conservation depends on restoration of the damaged ecosystem and rehabilitation of prey populations and thereby promotes biodiversity.

Project rationale and objectives

The project will lay the foundations for conserving a complex of rare and endangered wildlife species of international importance and their natural habitat in the I.R. of Iran. The flagship species is the Asiatic Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus venaticus*), once prevalent in South and Southwest Asia, now limited only to parts of the semi-arid biomes of the I.R. of Iran and the adjoining Balochistan Province of Pakistan. The 1996 IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals lists the Asiatic cheetah as "Critically Endangered". Principal prey species of the cheetah are also included in the Red List, such as wild sheep (*Ovis vignei*), classed as "Vulnerable" on an international scale, and the Jebeer gazelle (*Gazella bennetti*), classed as at Lower Risk but dependent on conservation. However, both the gazelle and the sheep are considered to be endangered in Iran.

Given continued conservation efforts in the medium-to-long term (five to 30 years) the project aims to establish a sustainable, viable population of the Asiatic cheetah in the I.R. of Iran. Within the two-year span of the project (and compatible with climatic variations) the project aims to initiate improvement in the extent and quality of natural habitat and enhancing the rehabilitation of related biodiversity-relevant animal and plant species (including cheetah prey species). This will be achieved by acting on the two current main threats to the Asiatic cheetah in the I.R. of Iran, namely habitat degradation, and direct killing and off-take of species from the wild (including cheetah prey species). Initiatives will take place in both crucial biotic territories and at national level (also with potential international linkages).

An important strategic element in the proposed action is the involvement of a variety of stakeholders in Collaborative Management (CM) processes at local level, beginning with the resident and nomadic communities and local representatives of the Department of the Environment (DOE). As far as possible, the negotiation processes will pursue the coupling of environmental responsibilities (via management plans) and socio-economic benefits related to support for cheetah conservation (via Community Green Funds and specific initiatives) for all the persons involved. At national level, emphasis will be on improved national policies (e.g. on hunting permits and benefit-sharing of hunting fees) and on a social communication campaign to enhance ecological awareness and awareness of biodiversity-related benefits among key relevant groups (e.g. peri-desert communities, nomadic herders, hunters, youth).

This project – which falls within the GEF Arid and Semi-Arid Ecosystems Operational Programme – complements and enriches current activities of the DOE and various ministries in the country (e.g. the Plan and Budget Organisation, the Jihad-e-Sazandehi Ministry and the Agriculture Ministry). Experience from the project will help local communities and environmental protection agencies in other countries to establish similar effective management partnerships to protect and sustain their endangered species and habitats. The GEF and the Government of the I.R. of Iran, as well as other governments and non-governmental organisations, will also learn valuable management lessons for protection and sustainable use of fragile arid land biomes— an important thematic area of Biological Diversity COP guidance.

Current situation

The I.R. of Iran is facing the imminent extinction of several native flora and fauna species, including the flagship species, the Asiatic cheetah. Two main reasons account for this phenomenon. The first is habitat disturbance and degradation, including desertification in large parts of the country. National parks and other protected areas have been hard-hit, with the maximum destruction occurring between 1978 and 1990. The second is direct killing of wildlife (particularly game animals and migratory waterfowl) and off-take for commercial uses. Under such pressure, some species are already absent from Iran (including the Persian lion *Panthera leo persica*, which survives only in India), while the Caspian tiger (*P. tigris virgata*) disappeared about 30 years ago from the whole of its range in Iran and neighbouring countries and is considered Extinct. Other species, among them the Asiatic cheetah, are close to extinction².

Habitat degradation

About 96% of the natural habitat of the I.R. of Iran has been altered by spreading agriculture, industries, human settlements, mining and infrastructures. Increasing numbers of livestock, introduced with no consideration for the capacity of the range and the season, has also been important in degrading pasture and lowering densities of ungulates, which are the principal prey of cheetahs. Almost all-rural people resident within the habitat of the Asiatic cheetah have goats, sheep and camels. This has been a hindrance to conservation of wildlife for quite some time, but today livestock grazing has become a widespread commercial venture, and overgrazing, including within protected areas, is common (with recurrence to commercial feeding in the dry season). Desertification has been sweeping much of the region where cheetahs are found, turning large areas into degraded environments of little or no economic or wildlife value. In such conditions, protected areas become a most obvious choice for the grazers. Today, the areas inhabited by the cheetah represent the few fragmented habitats left in the I.R. of Iran, which still support wildlife. Much of these areas is between 100-600 meters in altitude and characterised by ranges of low hills with scant vegetation. The woodlands are mostly gone, the rivers are dry, except after heavy rains, and very few wild sheep, goats, asses, gazelles and cheetahs remain. Fortunately, since 1990, the dry-land habitat appears to have recovered to some extent, resulting in a slow increase of the herbivore population that had fallen to near zero in some areas.

Non-habitat-related threats

Direct killing of wildlife in the I.R. of Iran paralleled the increasing abundance of firearms and the use of vehicles for hunting, which is a traditional way of life for many Iranians. Most of them are not aware of the importance of the cheetah and its prey in the ecological system, and illegal hunting appears only a minor offence to them. In addition to illegal killing, nearly one million hunting gun licenses are issued yearly, with an annual quota of 300 bullets provided by the State (although hunting of cheetah is banned). To this should be added the commercial exploitation of certain species, e.g. gazelles, leopards, falcons, bustards, partridges, waterfowl and crocodiles, which are all too

often over-harvested from the wild. Given the small number of animals that survive, poaching is a very serious threat facing the cheetah. In each population there may be only 1-15 animals. In the light of the uncertain sex ratio, poaching of any of them could easily undermine the long-term survival of the entire population in the I.R. of Iran. Unfortunately, control of poaching is difficult; for instance, the cheetah area is rich in commercially and industrially important minerals, which are being exploited by the Department of Mines. Mining itself is not a direct threat, but the construction of road networks makes cheetah areas accessible to people, including poachers.

The small population of the Asiatic cheetah in the I.R. of Iran, with an associated small number reported in the neighbouring Balochistan province of Pakistan, is the only one remaining in the world (no quantitative data is currently available). The cheetah's main prey species, Jebeer gazelle (*Gazella bennetti*), goitred gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*), and wild sheep (*Ovis vignei*) formerly had a geographic distribution similar to that of the cheetah, but they have suffered a substantial reduction in both range and number in the past 20 years. The relative reasons and importance of habitat loss and reduction in ungulate biomass and number of cheetah may differ from region to region and needs to be thoroughly investigated. The scant information available suggests that the cheetah is at present thinly distributed throughout the central plateau region of the I.R. of Iran.

Expected project outcomes

The goal of this project is the conservation of the Asiatic cheetah along with a related complex of rare and endangered wildlife species of international importance, and their natural habitats. This can only be done on the basis of in-depth analysis of the biological and social causes currently threatening them. The project site can be defined as the Dasht-e-Kavir (including parts of Esfahan, Khorasan, Semnan and Markazi provinces) - a large area of desert and shrub steppe, which is the last stronghold of the cheetah in Asia. From our understanding of the Asiatic cheetah ecology, this stronghold serves as a "source" for remnant populations in other parts of Iran, as well as, possibly, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Turkmenistan. For a huge area such as this, MSP funds, or even a sizeable FP, could not cover the entire site. However, since the main threats to the cheetah relate to human conflicts near the few, scattered settlements, and threats to the arid ecosystems (e.g. from over-grazing) mainly relate to unsustainable resource utilisation in the same localities (and obviously the cheetah and habitat threats are closely linked), the MSP funds will be targeted most closely to the vicinity of settlements. As the cheetah exists at such low population densities in this highly arid region, and as the ecosystems are so fragile, concentrating project activities around settlements can have dramatic results.

In such "crucial biotic territories" only a combination of appropriate local environmental management and the removal of non-habitat-related threats can improve the chances of survival for the cheetah and its associated biota. As widely recognised in the I.R. of Iran, improved natural resources management needs the concurrence and contribution of both governmental and non-governmental persons with relevant interests and concerns (stakeholders). Similarly, the reduction in non-habitat-related threats requires both more effective policies and enhanced awareness and concern of society as a whole. A combination of all these factors is what this project is expected to achieve.

Local collaborative management plans - including land-use zoning, resource-use regulation, land rehabilitation initiatives, etc. - will be developed and implemented, together with a number of socio-economic initiatives for the sustainable well-being of the human communities living within or in proximity to the natural habitats³. The latter may include Community Green Funds to develop alternative livelihood sources, benefit-sharing of income from hunting, small eco-tourism projects, and so on. Emphasis will be placed on two initiatives to eliminate major habitat threats: an initiative that enhances equity in the distribution of costs and benefits of environmental management; and an initiative that links sound environmental management with local income generation and well-being. This project will finance both the promotion and support of collaborative management processes and - at least in their start-up phases - the resulting management plans and socio-economic activities. It is expected that more environmentally sustainable patterns of local development will be pursued, and that the relevant human communities will have their income and well being improved according to both subjective and objective indicators (social sustainability).

In parallel with the local activities, the project will enhance the awareness and support of the government and civil society of the I.R. of Iran on relevant issues and concerns. Illegal hunting and killing of cheetah and related species are expected to diminish as a result of three main factors: enforcement of improved governmental policies and

regulations; coupling of wildlife presence with economic benefits for the local communities (through various mechanisms developed in the collaborative management processes); and enhanced ecological awareness in key target groups (local peri-desert communities, nomadic herders, hunters, youth). The project will provide the needed stimulus, as well as technical and financial support, to set all three factors in motion and developing new project concepts and/or documents for conservation of Iran's Biodiversity.

Activities and financial inputs

The project will begin with research to identify crucial biotic territories for the Asiatic cheetah in the I.R. of Iran by gathering and analysing relevant information on the cheetah and its principal prey species, their population dynamics, behaviour, habitat, related biota, main threats and survival factors. Biological studies will involve radio-telemetry to identify cheetah range and movements, and thereby indicate crucial biotic territories and necessary linkages. Assessment of prey population status and conservation needs will be carried out, along with studies to provide a basis for improving habitat so that wildlife populations can recover. The specific aim will be to construct a cheetah biotic map, identifying crucial biotic territories and corridors to link them, and assessing all factors essential for conservation of the cheetah. This will involve the active collaboration and sharing of baseline and monitoring information between the DOE staff in charge of this project and existing studies of the biology of the Asiatic cheetah and its habitat. Where necessary, the research and analysis will be carried out with assistance provided by the IUCN Cat Specialist Group. As a result of this analysis, an appropriate number (minimum four) of crucial biotic territories for the cheetah and related biota will be identified, and a report will describe and justify a list of management recommendations for each one of these territories. The cost involved in this biological component of the project will amount to **US\$260,000**. This will in part supplement the existing DOE budget for applied research (**20,000 US\$**).

In each of the selected crucial biotic territories, a facilitator will promote and support an in-depth participatory environmental and social situation analysis. Biologists, wildlife managers, local communities, relevant governmental agencies and other stakeholders (including local administrators, traditional leaders, NGOs, the private sector, etc.) will analyse together the root causes of environmental degradation and biodiversity loss which have caused the decline in the population of the Asiatic cheetah and its prey species and the main opportunities to reverse them. The facilitator will then assist the same stakeholders in Collaborative Management (CM) processes by which they will negotiate among themselves a "shared vision" for the conservation of the cheetah and related natural resources and human communities, as well as a management plan and a related complex of socio-economic initiatives to reach that vision.⁴ Such processes can last several months before completion, and require close support and follow up.

On behalf of the project, an Iranian NGO will recruit, train, deploy and provide transport and communication support to the five facilitators who will work in the selected territories. The training will be offered not only to the facilitators, but to an enlarged audience, including government staff, NGO personnel and selected community members in the I.R. of Iran, thus enlarging the pool of people in the country who understand and appreciate the collaborative management approach. The training will be carried out by members of the IUCN Collaborative Management Working Group, who will also develop a manual of Process Guidelines for the use of facilitators and others. The manual— in the Persian language (Farsi)— will be built on the basis of lessons learned in similar processes outside and within the I.R. of Iran and adapted to the specific conditions of the I.R. of Iran and the project. The cost of this component is **US\$285,000**, of which **US\$50,000** would be managed by the Iranian NGO (recruitment and support to the facilitators, training costs, funding of local Collaborative Management processes, support to local organising activities and support to exchange visits and stakeholder travel). **US\$40,000** will be managed by the IUCN to cover the technical support for the training workshops and the production of the Process Guidelines.

Given the participatory nature of the Collaborative Management processes, at the current planning stage we can foresee their overall products only in a broad way. The management plans, for instance, may include new zoning agreements (for land-use and protected areas); activities to prevent desertification and rehabilitate degraded lands; improved enforcement of existing laws; development of new local regulations, etc. The related socio-economic initiatives may include Community Green Funds to develop alternative livelihood sources, benefit-sharing of income from hunting activities, small eco-tourism projects, and so on. The facilitators will emphasise the need to couple management rights and responsibilities (i.e. benefits and costs) and the need to enhance, rather than deplete, local income and well being, thus assuring the social sustainability of the management plans.

The project will provide technical and financial support to the collectively-developed plans and initiatives, with

emphasis on initiatives that eliminate major habitat threats; initiatives that enhance equity in the distribution of costs and benefits of environmental management; and initiatives that link sound environmental management with local income generation and well-being (social sustainability). It is expected that a variety of governmental agencies, NGOs and private entrepreneurs will respond to the identified needs according to their mandates and identified concerns and interests. A pool of financial resources made available by this project (for a total of **US\$225,000**) will provide the support not otherwise available.

Indigenous knowledge and local organisation and managerial skills will be stressed as a most important asset throughout the project. The negotiation processes will strengthen such local skills, including the capacity to accommodate different interests and concerns. In addition, networking and exchange visits among the involved local communities and stakeholders in different “crucial biotic territories” (including - as appropriate - visits to inspiring local initiatives outside the I.R. of Iran) will be promoted and supported. (To this end **US\$20,000** will be made available by the project, included in the subcontract of the Iranian NGO) The environmental and social consequences of the local management plans and accompanying socio-economic activities will be monitored in a “learning by doing” mode, leading to on-going modifications and improvements. For this purpose, a monitoring protocol will be prepared, and the local facilitators will assure that it is followed up during the implementation phases. In this phase of the initiative, the biological and social component of the project will need to collaborate very closely.

The local plans and initiatives will be integrated into a coherent National Action Plan for the Asiatic Cheetah and its Associated Biota and Habitats. Apart from management of the cheetah and associated biota and range, the Plan is expected to include a social communication campaign, relevant new policies and regulations (e.g., new hunting restrictions and a policy on benefit sharing of income from hunting), links with other national initiatives (e.g. the “Living with the Desert” programme), a resource mobilisation strategy, and – as necessary – links with conservation initiatives of bordering countries (especially Pakistan and Turkmenistan). A Joint International/National Advisory Group will assist the DOE in developing the Plan. The development of the Plan will be financed by this project (**US\$80,000**), but it is expected that the Plan itself will be implemented with national funds.

Sustainability analysis and risk assessment

The project has been developed with the active involvement of the DOE, IUCN and Iranian NGOs. Several workshops, field visits and writing sessions have involved DOE staff, NGO members and IUCN consultants (among them the Chairman of the Cat Specialist group and the founder of the Collaborative Management Working Group). Political support at local level has been investigated in potential crucial biotic territories and found entirely forthcoming (e.g. two local governors have assured their unconditional support). Interviews with local stakeholders, including DOE officials, hunters, herders, peasants, teachers and students show that the time is ripe for involving them in local consultative and decision-making processes. Some mistrust among local stakeholders still exists, but DOE officials have begun thinking about ways of compensating local stakeholders in exchange for them taking-on specific management responsibilities. Dialogue on such possibilities is already taking place. At national level, political support for both the aim and strategy of the project is strong, beginning with a renewed emphasis by the President of the Republic on participatory processes and environmental protection in the I.R. of Iran. The development of [new] national policies and regulations, especially on hunting, may encounter some difficulties, but those are likely to be overcome if the field CM plans and initiatives prove successful.

Local communities in the I.R. of Iran possess a wealth of traditional knowledge and skills for the management of the environment, including the management of pasture and scarce water resources, sustainable hunting, rangeland rehabilitation and even support to wildlife in times of climatic adversity. It is an unfortunate circumstance of the last decades that these resources have not been fully valued or tapped, and this project will provide an important opportunity to do so.

In terms of risks, abnormal climatic conditions and unexpected socio-economic change may influence in both positive or negative ways the habitat conditions and the stakeholders’ activities at the time in which the local management plans are to be implemented. This may distort the results of the monitoring and evaluation tasks.

Stakeholder Involvement and Social Assessment

Stakeholder involvement is at the heart of this project. In the crucial biotic territories, wildlife managers, local

communities, nomadic herders, government officials, environmental advocates, NGOs and local authorities will negotiate among themselves a fair share of management functions, rights and responsibilities, exploiting to the full their complementary capacities. The methodology for collaborative management that will be employed in the project is based on lessons learned in many countries, as well as in the I.R. of Iran, and will be thoroughly adapted to the socio-cultural realities of Iranian society. Importantly, project-supported facilitators will act as guarantors of the fairness of the negotiation process.

At the national level, the Project Advisory Council will allow a variety of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to interact and provide input into the National Action Plan for Conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah and the social communication campaign.

Ex-ante social impact of the negotiated management plans and socio-economic initiatives will be assessed by the stakeholders directly involved, and *ex-post* social outputs and impacts will be monitored and evaluated throughout.

INCREMENTAL COST ASSESSMENT

Conservation of the Asiatic cheetah and associated biota, as well as natural habitat, is of importance to the economic and social development of the country. While the Government and many NGOs are increasing their level of activity in this field, they nevertheless lack important elements of community participation and cheetah biology in the project. This project will therefore not result in avoided costs on the part of the I.R. of Iran; there are no baseline costs to be subtracted. The Government and NGOs will provide considerable support to the project to the tune of **US\$690,000**. This funding will mobilise and enhance national resources so that the country can benefit most fully from the GEF intervention. In addition the current biodiversity strategy and action plan project should be seen as complementary to this GEF investment.

Domestic benefits resulting from the project will be primarily environmental. Other domestic benefits will be increased experience of NGOs in community participation related to cheetah habitat, and economic benefits linked to ecotourism. Hence, no additional domestic benefits should be added to the baseline scenario.

Although the project budget includes community funds, which will be used to encourage sustainable use of local resources and to provide support for alternative livelihood, the management of the cheetah project is likely to impose costs on communities. Such an approach will facilitate the integration of communities within national efforts towards conservation and sustainable use. Adding this to the other project costs, the project budget totals **US\$1,440,000**, which consists entirely of incremental costs.

Incremental Cost Matrix

	Baseline	Alternative	Increment
Global Environmental Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Asiatic cheetah, now restricted to Iran and neighboring areas of Pakistan, is on the verge of extinction because of prey decline, degradation of habitat, inadequate protection and human persecution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of cheetah and prey distribution and biology, along with involvement of local human communities in management of the environment can ensure the long-term conservation of the cheetah, its habitat and associated biodiversity. 	Asiatic cheetah and prey survive as part of natural ecosystems and biodiversity is protected by parks and reserves.
Domestic Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local human communities derive no benefit from wildlife and protected areas Grazing lands outside-protected areas are degraded by over-grazing by domestic livestock, forcing herders to exploit protected areas to the detriment of habitats and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement of local communities in environmental management will lead to grazing regimes that protect habitat and improve livestock husbandry from which economic benefit is derived. Ecotourism can provide employment and income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Floral recovery in protected areas and surrounds as basis for ensuring biodiversity and enhanced grazing for domestic livestock. Local human communities benefit from improved grazing and

	biodiversity.	opportunities for local communities.	ecotourism.
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Costs (US\$)	<p>How much is currently spent on maintaining the present status of the cheetah?</p> <p>Cost of baseline: US\$ 600,000 per year, with a 20.9% growth rate during the 2000-2004 plan</p>	<p>Status surveys and biological studies of the Asiatic cheetah, its habitat and associated biota. (US\$370,000)</p> <p>Explore opportunities for extension of protected areas necessary to ensure conservation of the Asiatic cheetah. (US\$100,000)</p> <p>Development and enforcement of a hunting regime to prevent over-exploitation of wildlife, especially potential cheetah prey. (US\$100,000)</p> <p>Collaborative management introduction in and around crucial biotic territories for the cheetah and associated biota. (US\$ 660,000)</p> <p>Capacity building in local communities to ensure sustainability. (US\$100,000)</p> <p>Communications and information sharing network. (US\$80,000)</p> <p>Development of National Action for conservation of the Asiatic cheetah and related biota. (US\$80,000)</p> <p>Cost of alternative US\$1,490,000</p>	<p>Incremental cost US\$890,000</p> <p>Of which</p> <p>GEF US\$750,000</p> <p>Co-financing US\$690,000</p>
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OVERALL BUDGET

<i>Component</i>	<i>GEF</i>	<i>Other sources (co-financing)</i>	<i>Project total</i>
PDF	25,000	5,000 (personnel, facilities and transportation from DOE)	30,000
Biological studies DOE	230,000	55,000 (including personnel, equipment, transportation and administrative and research facilities provided by DOE) 20,000 (including personnel and training and research facilities from Iranian Universities)	305,000
Technical Support IUCN	70,000	40,000 (on-going backstopping and materials, such as media and literature, from the IUCN Cat Specialist Group and Collaborative Management Working Group)	110,000
Establishing Participatory Management (NGO Subcontract)	50,000	80,000 (including time, facilities and local knowledge and skills of local stakeholders in crucial biotic territories) 10,000 (including personnel and facilities of the Iranian NGO) 10,000 (including personnel and training and research facilities from Iranian Universities)	150,000
Technical and financial support to plans and initiatives identified by the CM processes	235,000	120,000 (including time, facilities and local knowledge and skills of local stakeholders in crucial biotic territories) 120,000 (including personnel, equipment, transportation and administrative and research facilities provided by DOE at local level) 120,000 (including personnel, equipment and service provided by local authorities and agencies)	595,000
Social communication campaign	30,000	10,000 (including personnel and facilities from DOE) 10,000 (including personnel, equipment and service provided by national authorities and agencies) 10,000 (including personnel and training and research facilities from Iranian Universities)	60,000
Development of National Action Plan	80,000	20,000 (including personnel, equipment, transportation and administrative facilities provided by DOE) 10,000 (including personnel provided by other Authorities and Governmental Agencies) 10,000 (including personnel and facilities from Iranian Universities) 10,000 (including personnel from Iranian NGOs and the society at large)	130,000
IUCN Coordination	30,000	30,000 (including management and coordination)	60,000
Project Total (PDF+Project Costs)	750,000	690,000	1,440,000

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACTIVITIES	YEAR 1												YEAR 2											
Biological survey and training support by IUCN Cat Specialist Group																								
DOE Biological Studies and monitoring																								
CM Training and production of Guidelines in Persian by IUCN CM Working Group																								
Deployment of facilitators and local situation analysis																								
CM processes in four crucial biotic territories (negotiation of management plans and socio-economic activities)																								
Exchange visits and networking among local community members and stakeholders																								
Provision of technical and financial support to the identified plans and activities																								
Implementation of the plans and activities, and on-going monitoring ("learning by doing")																								
Development of a social communication campaign on the cheetah and related biome and habitat																								
Implementation of the campaign																								
Development of the National Plan of Action																								
Promulgation and enforcement of new policy regulations																								

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

Stakeholder Identification

One of the first tasks of the CM process facilitators at local level will be the identification of stakeholders, defined as individuals, groups and organisations with different interests, concerns and capacities in the management of the natural resources at stake. The CM Process Guidelines will specify in detail methods and tools to do that. As of now, preliminary analysis of stakeholders at local level has resulted in the following being identified: herders (local and transhumant, hired labour, small herd owners, large herd owners, camel herders, who leave their animal to graze freely, and sheep and goat herders, who accompany their animals and can survey their surroundings), peasants (including peasants with land-holdings in protected areas), hunters (local and non-local, sport-oriented, subsistence-oriented, preventive killers of predatory wildlife), DOE officials, government officials with mandates related to natural resources, members of local environmental associations and local industrialists in need of water and other natural resources.

At national level the project has carried out a preliminary stakeholder analysis resulting in a list of governmental and non-governmental persons to take part in the Advisory Council.

Information Dissemination and Consultation

One of the first activities of the project will be the design and implementation of a social communication campaign on the Asiatic cheetah as the flagship species of a complex biota and habitat, its survival factors, the threats it is being subjected to, and the ways by which these threats can be mitigated and reversed, in association with human needs satisfaction and well-being. The campaign will include exhaustive information on this project. Special activities will target particularly relevant groups, such as the communities and nomadic herders in the crucial biotic territories, hunters, policy-makers, and youth.

Workshops and networking visits are envisaged to allow for consultation and exchange of experience for a small number in the neighbouring Balochistan province of Pakistan and lessons learned among local stakeholders from various crucial biotic territories, including – as appropriate – visits to relevant initiatives in other countries.

At national level, training programs in both the key biological and social methods applied in the project will be opened to a wide governmental and non-governmental audience. The Advisory Group will be consulted prior to major decisions. The National Plan for the Asiatic Cheetah and Related Biome and Habitat in the I.R. of Iran has in-built consultation mechanisms, as it will be developed as a synthesis of the local plans, rather than as a top-down initiative.

Social and Participation Issues

Currently, wildlife conservation strategies in much of the developing world follow “conventional” approaches that usually do not involve the participation of local communities in natural resource management. The I.R. of Iran is not yet an exception. Its Wildlife Act assumes that the entire responsibility for protection and management of wildlife is borne by the government alone. Policies such as these tend to separate people from any activity or concern for the protection and management of their natural heritage, which supports their lives.

This project will provide an important experiment for a change of approach, by which local communities and other stakeholders will be given a negotiated share of benefits and responsibilities in environmental management. Fairness and proportionality in associating the costs and benefits of management will be promoted with the help of trained facilitators. The environmental and social results of this novel approach will be closely monitored and evaluated and, as appropriate, the National Action Plan will provide for the translation of lessons learned into [new] relevant policies and regulations.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

On-going monitoring will be carried out on the status of the cheetah, its prey population, and habitat with a view to adjustments, as and when necessary, to ensure that the objectives of the project are achieved.

In the Collaborative Management processes monitoring and “learning by doing” activities are an essential component. At local level the facilitators will make sure that all management activities and socio-economic initiatives are regularly monitored for outputs and impacts according to a monitoring protocol agreed during the negotiation phase. The protocol will identify a set of biological and social indicators, which will be assessed at

regular intervals. On the basis of such assessment, the local initiatives will be reviewed and ameliorated. At national level, the meetings of the Advisory Council will provide occasions to review the outputs of the cheetah conservation programme and the social communication campaign, as well as progress towards the establishment of a National Action Plan for the Asiatic Cheetah and its associated Biota and Habitat. UNDP Iran will be invited to take part in such regular progress reviews.

TECHNICAL REVIEW

A technical review is not necessary for this grant proposal because it does not exceed US\$750,000.

PROJECT ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The project management structure will be organised as follows:

- The **National Project Manager** (NPM), selected by DOE and with a balanced background in both biological and social sciences, will be responsible for the overall project to the **Executive Team**. In addition to the Executive Team and Advisory Committee will provide technical backstopping.
- The **Executive Team** will be in charge of the effective running and smooth integration of project activities. It will include nine members, among whom:
 - Five members from **DOE**, with expertise on Wildlife, Natural Resources; Habitats; Public Participation, Social Communication and Planning and Liaison with International Organisations and Bodies;
 - One member from the Iranian **NGO** subcontracted for the project;
 - Two members appointed by **IUCN**, with expertise on the biology of the cheetah and Collaborative Management processes.
 - The National Project Manager, as ex-officio member.

The Executive Team will meet as necessary, and will be in charge of evaluating the funding requests for local activities in the crucial biological territories.

- The **Advisory Committee** (AC) will be established at the initiative of the Project Manager, with inputs from representatives from DOE, various Government Ministries (e.g. Agriculture Ministry, Jihad-e-Sazandegi Ministry, Foreign Affairs Ministry, Interior Ministry, Mining Ministry, Road and Transportation Ministry, Power Ministry, Plan & Budget Organisation), Iranian Universities, Iranian NGOs and IUCN and the international conservation community. The Head of DOE will appoint the Chair of the AC. The Advisory Committee will provide overall advice to the project, promote linkages between governmental and non-governmental actors and review outputs and impacts.

Letter of Endorsement (Please insert two pages)

PROJECT CHECKLIST

PROJECT ACTIVITY CATEGORIES			
Biodiversity	Climate Change	International Waters	Ozone Depletion
Protected area zoning/mgmt: ✓	Efficient production and distribution:	Water body:	Monitoring:
Buffer zone development: ✓	Efficient consumption:	Integrated land and water:	Country program:
Inventory/monitoring: ✓	Solar:	Contaminant:	ODS phaseout:
Ecotourism: ✓	Biomass:	Other:	Production:
Agro-biodiversity:	Wind:		Other:
Trust fund(s): ✓	Hydro:		
Benefit-sharing: ✓	Geothermal:		
Other:	Fuel cells:		
Asiatic cheetah biology ✓	Other		
TECHNICAL CATEGORIES			
Institution building: ✓			
Investments:			
Policy advice: ✓			
Targeted research: ✓			
Technical/management advice: ✓			
Technology transfer: ✓			
Awareness/information/training: ✓			
Other: Collaborative Management Processes ✓			

Notes and references

- ¹ See Borrini-Feyerabend, G., *Collaborative Management of Protected Areas: Tailoring the Approach to the Context*, IUCN, Gland (Switzerland), 1996.
- ² Asadi, H., *The environmental limitations and future of the Asiatic cheetah in the I.R. of Iran*, Report to IUCN Cat Specialist Group, 1997
- ³ Borrini-Feyerabend, G. (ed.), *Beyond Fences: Seeking Social Sustainability in Conservation*, 2 volumes, IUCN, Gland (Switzerland), 1997
- ⁴ Holling, C. S. (ed.), *Adaptive Environmental Assessment and Management*, John Wiley and Sons, London, 1978.
- Kothari, A., Vania, F., Das, P., Christopher, K. and S. Jha, *Building Bridges for Conservation*, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, 1997.
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- Weber, J., "Perspective de Gestion Patrimoniale des Ressources Renouvelables", in Lavigne Delville P. (ed.) *Quelle Politique Foncière en Afrique Rurale?*, Karthala-Coopération Française, Paris, 1998.

Letter of Endorsement (2 pages)



جمهوری اسلامی ایران
وزارت امور خارجه

اداره امور اقتصادی بین المللی - شماره ۶۷۲/۶۷۲ - تاریخ ۷۸/۱/۲۸ - شماره ۷۸/۱/۲۸

بسمه تعالی

نماینده برنامه عمران ملل متحد - تهران

باسلام، به پیوست متن پروژه « حفاظت از یوزپلنگ آسیایی » که توسط سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست جهت این اداره کل ارسال و نهایی گردیده است، جهت انجام پیگیری های لازم ایفاد می گردد.

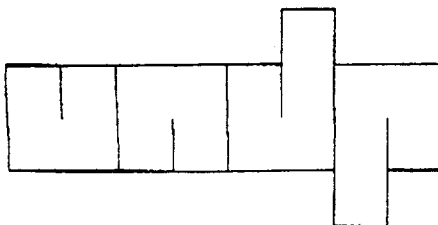
محمد رضا امیرخیزی

مدیر کل امور اقتصادی و تخصصی بین المللی


UNDP			
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ES			
RIA			
Date 30 JAN 2000			

TO: TITO SANTOS

FACSIMILE



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To: Mr. Tim Boyle Regional Coordinator, Biodiversity & Int'l Waters UNDP/ GEF- New York		Date : 30 January 2000
Cc: <i>TITO SANTOS</i>		Fax No: +1-212-906-5825
From: Mehdi Kamyab Programme Manager UNDP- Tehran		F-DP: 077
Signature: 		
Subject: Asiatic Cheetah- Endorsement letter		
Drafter: MK	Total Pages: 18	Agency: UNDP
Project: IRA/98/G41- Asiatic Cheetah		

Dear Tim,

Enclosed, please find the GEF Focal Point endorsement letter for the aforementioned initiative as well as the finalized text of the project Brief. The translation reads as follows:

" United Nations Development Programme – Tehran

Greetings,

Attached, please find the project Brief for the Protection of Asiatic Cheetah which has been forwarded from the Department of Environment and finalized at this Bureau, for your necessary follow-ups.

Mohammad Reza Amirkhizi
Director General for International Economic &
Specialized Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs"

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you need any further information.

With best regards.

Mh Boyle
REC'D JAN 31 2000