

КЫРГЫЗ РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫНЫН
ЭКОЛОГИЯ жана ӨЗГӨЧӨ
КЫРДААЛДАР МИНИСТРЛИГИ



МИНИСТЕРСТВО ЭКОЛОГИИ
И ЧРЕЗВЫЧАЙНЫХ СИТУАЦИЙ
КЫРГЫЗСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ

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30 марта 2004 № С05/1069
На Ваш №

**To: Mr. Joop Stoutjesdijk
Task Team Leader, Senior Irrigation Engineer
Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Unit
Europe and Central Asia Region**

**The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433
USA**

Letter of Endorsement

Hereby I confirm full support by the Ministry of Environment and Emergencies (MEE) of the Kyrgyz Republic for the GEF Medium Size project proposal to be blended into the Natural Disaster Mitigation Project.

Despite its relatively small size, Kyrgyzstan is important from an environmental and biodiversity point of view. Over 4,500 species of higher plants and over 500 species of vertebrates along with 2,000 species of fungi and over 3,000 insect species are located in the country.

As you know, the Kyrgyz Republic has a number of hazardous waste tailings and dumps, most of which are located in the Mailuu-Suu area. The current condition of these tailings impoundments and waste dumps is leading to adverse consequences such as contamination of groundwater, river water, and soil. This can have serious long-term environmental effects, although data is sketchy at present. We expect that fish and bird species that migrate and use the riverine environment have been adversely affected due to the high levels of radon and other

industrial wastes in the Mailuu-Suu River, which is a transboundary river that flows into the Syr Darya. For example, about 80% of all Kyrgyz birds of prey species are found in the higher mountain areas above the Mailuu-Suu valley, which use the river water both in the Kyrgyz and Uzbek part of the Mailuu-Suu River for consumption of several fish species. In turn, fish that have consumed contaminated river bed (benthic) fauna have become a pathway of pollutants that pose a risk to the birds, as well as population that eat the fish. This makes a GEF intervention important as regional cooperation in this particular situation plays an important role for the biodiversity along the river.

To improve the current situation in the region, the Kyrgyz government through MEE recently took several concrete steps to coordinate and discuss the tailings and waste dumps rehabilitation issues with neighboring countries, particularly Uzbekistan. Since 1999, several ministerial level meetings between the two countries were convened, as well as working groups of scientists, geologists and engineers, to identify joint activities to protect the environment in transboundary territories. An important protocol was signed in July 2002, with the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks agreeing to cooperate more closely on issues related to tailings in Mailuu-Suu. As a follow-up, an Uzbek delegation made a visit to Mailuu-Suu late November to carry out field work in order to better understand the environmental situation of the Mailuu-Suu valley.

The proposal aims at improving the current water quality in the Mailuu-Suu river system, which eventually flows to Aral Sea Basin, by supporting incremental activities aimed at keeping the transboundary pollution loads within the applicable standards and keeping the riparian countries informed about the water quality in the Mailuu-Suu River. This will be achieved by isolating river water from contaminated waste dumps in order to reduce hazardous discharge, and establishing baseline water quality monitoring and early warning systems. The project will also support activities to further facilitate already existing dialogue on

transboundary environmental threats related to uranium mill tailing and waste dumps in Mailuu-Suu and enhance effective coordination between regional neighbors in case of emergencies.

We thank you for your consideration and looking forward to your support.

Sincerely,

Minister

GEF National Focal Point

For the Kyrgyz Republic

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Akmatallyev', written in a cursive style.

T. Akmatallyev