

## Evaluation of the Nature Conservation Potential of the North Aral Sea



Cliffs at dried Aral Sea bottom. Photo: S. Schmidt

### Background

The northern shore of Little Aral Sea (project site) is situated in the temperate desert of Eurasia and belongs to the geobotanical region of Kazakh-Dshungarian deserts. The shore line of the northern Aral Sea that is evenly faced by declining water level is characterized by a diverse combination of landscapes that represent fauna and flora of the region. Along the plateau the steep cliffs of up to 100 m height are rich of paleogene and neogene fauna and flora sediment deposits. It is a very sensitive ecosystem with many endemic species.

The government of Kazakhstan plans to establish a protected area at Little Aral Sea. The Ministry of Agriculture has requested advice and cooperation by German institutions for the identification and implementation of the new protected area.

### Project

At a first mission in September 2012 to Little Aral Sea geobotanical mapping along six transects at the northern shore has been done and interviews were made with relevant stakeholders. They were also integrated in the discussion and planning process during the project. Within the scope of the project the following measures were taken:

- Evaluation of the Nature Conservation Potential of the North Aral Sea between Aralsk and Kulandyr;
- Analysis of political frame conditions and stakeholder agenda against the establishment of a protected area in the region;
- Assessment of appropriate protected area category for the pilot site;
- Development of a comprehensive feasibility study.

The Ministry of Environment of Kazakhstan assesses the potential of development of nature tourism in the region of Little Aral Sea as high.

- Target country/ region: Kazakhstan
- Duration: 10.08.2012 - 31.05.2013
- Implementing organisation: Michael Succow Foundation;  
[www.succow-stiftung.de](http://www.succow-stiftung.de)
- Project number: 22729
- Beneficiary: Ministry of agriculture of Kazakhstan ([www.minagri.kz](http://www.minagri.kz)); Eurasian University L. Gumilev ([www.enu.kz](http://www.enu.kz)); Geoinformation centre "Terra" ([www.gis-terra.kz](http://www.gis-terra.kz))