



PROJECT INFORMATION

Conservation and use of the saiga antelope in Kazakhstan: advising at local and national level

Updated: July 2025



A ranger from the Tabigi Orta association monitoring saiga antelopes.

Source: Aibat Muzbay

Background

At the beginning of this century, the saiga antelope was almost extinct in the steppes and deserts of Kazakhstan. This was mainly due to poaching for meat and the illegal trade in horns for traditional Asian medicine. After more than 20 years of intensive conservation efforts, populations have rebounded in several areas. As a result, conflicts with farmers are increasing. In the Ustyurt region, however, the population is still very small, so further efforts are needed for the population to recover. The goal is to achieve this recovery through a combination of state protection measures and a community-based approach.

Project details

The project aims to expand the community-based conservation of the saiga antelope in the Ustyurt region and to secure it in the long term. Targeted advice will enable the Wildlife Conservation Association to develop its structures and processes further, involve new activists, and establish additional member organisations. This allows larger areas of the saiga antelopes' habitat to be covered. As part of the planned training, the association's rangers will learn to use a digital monitoring system and how to take veterinary samples in the event of increased saiga mortality. This enables improved monitoring of the populations and supports cooperation with the authorities in implementing the necessary measures. The project team and the association will also develop financial mechanisms to secure the protection measures and incentives for the conservation of the saiga antelope. These include tourism offers and the sustainable use of the saiga antelope and other species through hunting. The analysis of replicability will help to anchor the approach at a national level.

Project country: Kazakhstan

Duration: 05/2025 – 10/2026

Beneficiaries: Wildlife conservation organisations in villages in the target region, their association "Tabigi Orta", other local initiative groups and individuals as well as the government of Kazakhstan (Committee for Forestry and Wildlife of the Ministry of Environment)

Implementing organisation: Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union Germany (NABU) e.V.

Project number: 3725 44 0015

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Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP)

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