**Terms of reference for the scientific analysis about the designation of a geopark in the Aksy rayon of the Jalal- Abad Oblast within the frame of the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)**

# Brief information on the project

The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. It contributes to the GIZ programme objective of creating sustainable employment and better income opportunities within the framework of sustainable economic development for both sexes and all population groups, especially young people and including people with disabilities and members of ethnic minorities in Kyrgyzstan. In line with national strategies, the IRDP contributes to the development of regions, fostering the development of economic clusters. The target group is the rural population in the Jalal-Abad region, in particular producers, small and micro entrepreneurs, their employees, and underemployed persons. The focus is on young people, women, members of ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. The Kyrgyz Ministry of Economy is the political executing agency.

**The overall objective** of the IRDP is to contribute to a reduction of poverty in rural areas through economic and social development initiatives.

**The specific objective** is the improvement of income opportunities of the rural population in southern Kyrgyzstan with a focus on Jalal-Abad Oblast to stimulate the local economy and social development.

With a geographical focus on Jalal-Abad Oblast, but not limited to its borders, it aims to achieve the specific objective through three interrelated outputs:

**Output 1** aims to strengthen producers/cooperatives and tourism networks within the production clusters in order to increase efficiency and competitiveness in agriculture and tourism by improving their degree of organization and co-operation, thus enabling them to coordinate their efforts in production, processing, tourism packages, and marketing.

**Output 2 aims** to make services supporting social and economic development available for the rural population by increasing the variety, number, and quality of services for rural businesses, with a focus on agriculture and tourism, and for the social needs of the population.

**Output 3** aims to improve the capacities of local authorities, the civil society and the private sector to jointly implement projects through creation of an ongoing dialogue between the private and public sectors as well as civil society to identify and jointly implement measures that improve the framework conditions for socio-economic development. Core implementation elements are Grant Agreements with civil society organisations / NGOs which participate in calls for proposals. The contracted NGOs / CSOs mainly implement activities for Output 1 and Output 3, while the IRDP team implements complementary activities under Output 2. All outputs together are expected to lead to bottom-up production clusters.

# Context

One main goal of the IRDP and the associated activities, also in tourism, is, among others, to create jobs and increase income opportunities for the local population, and eventually, to improve the economic situation of the people in the mid and long term and to mitigate migration tendencies, especially from rural areas.

At the given moment, the public and private sectors have started to recognize the great potential that the different rayons have to develop sustainable tourism much further. One of those potential perspectives lies in the development of certain territories as geoparks. The public sector supports this development. However, it emphasizes and promotes sustainable growth that considers all pillars of sustainable development (ecological, economic, and social).

Against this background and with a view to future tourism growth (new regions, new segments, and new products), IRDP would like to get evaluated the potential of areas in the Jalal Abad Oblast to be designated as a Geopark with a perspective to apply for a UNESCO Global Geopark Status in the mid-term.

UNESCO defines Geoparks as a single, unified geographical area where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education, and sustainable development. Their bottom-up approach of combining Biodiversity conservation with sustainable development while involving local communities is becoming increasingly popular.

In general, a geopark is an area where the geo-heritage and all heritage components like archaeological, ecological, historical, tangible, and intangible cultural or even industrial elements, can be used as a tool to improve the infrastructure of rural areas and communities through the development of geo-tourism, which stimulates the development or improvement of the tourism value chain.

This can contain:

* Improvement of access to the designated area (e.g., roads, cycling, hiking paths)
* Development of new tourism products
* Training of local people to work in the tourism sector and enhancement of involvement of locals in the labour market
* Development and improvement of accommodation facilities
* Development and improvement of the local food supply chain
* Creation of possibilities for education on local geology, geography, culture, tradition, flora, and fauna by establishing museums or cultural/information centres and excursions.

Local communities should valorise their territories and become more involved in their economic and social development but also in the preservation of local natural and cultural heritage and their protection. With this approach, the local population can benefit directly from the revenues generated through geo-tourism.

The designation of geoparks and their strategic marketing as tourist destinations presents numerous opportunities for the economic growth of Jalal Abad Oblast. This potential is particularly significant for rural and economically disadvantaged regions, as tourism serves as a promising source of income for local communities. In this endeavor, PA "Destination Jalal-Abad" is poised to take on a leading role in the management process.

PA “Destination Jalal-Abad” as a Destination Management Organization is the main actor which pushed tourism development in Jalal-Abad oblast (hereinafter DMO). DMO is based in the city of Jalal Abad and started operating at the beginning of 2021. Currently, it has 60 members, mainly from the private sector. Associated members are from the public sector and the local university. In the medium and long term, the DMO is expected to drive, coordinate and manage the development of tourism in the Jalal Abad Oblast as a central body and in cooperation with the national and local public sector, the private sector, educational institutions, the civil society and other tourism stakeholders.

1. **Goal of the ToR**

The goal of this ToR is to find an organization to conduct a comprehensive scientific study about the historical heritage of global significance of Aksy rayon, as well as study and describe biodiversity, and cultural and historical diversity to prepare the basis for the creation of a geopark. As a final result, a 5-year road map has to be elaborated and handed over to the DMO and the respective actors from the public sector.

1. **Time and amount of work**

IRDP plans to hire a contractor for the anticipated contract period from **16.10.2023 to 15.11.2023** withatotal of 45 days for all experts and the project manager.

The contractor has to do field trips (from Bishkek or Osh) to and within the Aksy Rayon. The amount of km is up to 4500km.

The contractor’s *team* has up to 45 field trip days in total.

1. **Services to be provided**
   1. **General assessment** of the geological and cultural heritage potential, archaeological and historical sites, cults and biodiversity in order to define the territory of the future geopark in Aksy;
   * desk review: consultation with specialists; analysis of available materials describing geological and cultural heritage, tangible, and intangible cultural elements, and objects, archaeological and historical sites, biodiversity and cults; development of forms for inventories; and development of classifications of geological and historical diversity sites.
   * develop a detailed description of all objects and analysis of the collected data according to UNESCO Geo Park requirements (are requirements met and what needs to be done to meet them within 3 years)
   * analysis of existing legal framework on national, oblast and the rayon level to designate areas as geoparks (legal feasibility), provide suggestions for actions that need to be done to have a legal basis for the establishment of a geopark territory
   * analysis, of what kind of financial instrument from the public sector for the implementation of the project can be allocated for a period of 5 years and to whom (e.g., national, regional, or local development funds) (financial resources
   * analysis of planned economic development measures in the region that might cause conflicts about land use or support the establishment of a geopark
   1. **Field work**: During fieldwork, it is essential to identify and describe potential tourist activities, which later will be developed into tour products, such as trekking, hiking, bird watching, geo and cultural guided tours, etc.
   * Visiting geological, historical and cultural heritage sites, sacred places and cults;
   * Gathering of data on settlements, protected areas and other areas that can be included in the future geopark;
   * analysis and description of the tourism value chain including the economic, environmental, social dimensions and institutional capability (analysis of status quo of access to area, local infrastructure, service providers, service quality, connectivity to other regions or countries/cross border, especially Uzbekistan)
   * Stakeholder consultation with the public and private sector (with the Department of Tourism on a national level, within the frame of Public Private Dialogs with Tourism Coordination Councils on Rayon and Oblast levels, management of protected areas, forest agencies, local NGOs) in Jalal Abad and Bishkek to discuss the idea of establishing a geopark
   * Analysis of capability, capacity, and resources of the public sector to manage a geopark together with the community and make suggestions for Human Capacity Development measures (e.g., trainings)
   * Work with the district registers (cadastres) to carry out a preliminary estimate of the boundaries of the potential geopark. As a source of information, it is also recommended to consult the Portal of geoinformation and climate data of the Kyrgyz Republic (nsdi.kg, Портал геоинформации Кыргызской Республики )
   * Collection of data on mining sites; analysis of possible conflicting areas and economic interests
   * Catalogue of local food producers, food supply;
   * Description of locations for potential geopark infrastructure, its design
   * Confirmation of the international significance of selected geological, cultural and historical heritage sites with the involvement of leading scientists from the Institute of Geology and History of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic
   1. **Organise and conduct meetings**, **workshops** with the local population and local authorities in Aksy rayon to present the aims and objectives of the geopark, the concept of UNESCO Geoparks. The meetings and workshops are the means to raise awareness among local populations, government structures and the private sector on geopark initiatives, benefits and opportunities created by geoparks for local businesses to thrive and promote sustainable tourism in the region.
   2. **Present and collect feedback** and comments from relevant tourism stakeholders, including, but not limited to oblast and rayon administrations, local authorities, DMO, tourism service providers and local people who are not involved in the tourism sector, and academia on the identified boundaries of potential geopark.
   3. **Develop a roadmap for the establishment** of geopark based on identified boundaries and discussions with local authorities and relevant government institutions, including Jalal Abad oblast administration, Aksy and Chatkal rayon administrations, Department of Tourism, the relevant department of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Control of the Kyrgyz Republic; the road map should be for 3 years in detail and for 2 further years more briefly and suggest how to set up a geopark to promote tourism development within a reasonable and manageable area in the Jalal Abad oblast in coordination with GIZ-projects in Kyrgyzstan, including a detailed road map for 3 years to set up a geopark with an explicit mid-term goal to apply for the UNESCO Geopark status.
   4. **Provide a final report** on the work and processes carried out
2. **Deliverables:**
   1. The final report (up to 50 pages, in English) has to include

* Detailed description of activities done
* Research approach and results
* Detailed description of all sites that are suitable for being a geopark
* Proposals on geopark boundaries and their justification
* Detailed description of all tourism-related business entities (Value Chain)
  1. Organize min 2, up to 3 full day workshops for awareness-raising events at ayil aimak level and 1 half-day workshop at the oblast level in Jalal Abad city are organised and conducted, for up to 400 people in total/in sum
  2. Roadmap of geopark (in Russian Language) establishment and development with a 3-year road map, incl. a detailed, visualized description for 3 years (2024 – 2026) (what, who, where, when, how, why - results/goals -, development of tourism, estimated budget, budget sources and responsible actors from the public and private sector, DMO);

The final report and the roadmap must be written in a very comprehensive and easy to understand for everybody. The documents are meant to be for a broad audience and *not* for the scientific community. The documents should serve as a work basis for the DMO, the public sector and other involved parties and thus the documents have to be appropriate for the non-scientific audience.

1. **Required qualifications and education of experts:**

**Project Manager**

* Qualification: University Degree in Geology or Geography (2.1.1)
* Language: Kyrgyz, Russian fluent. English is an asset (2.1.2)
* General professional experience: 18 years in the sphere of science (geography or geology) (2.1.3)
* Specific professional experience: (2.1.4)
  + 5 years in developing geoparks according to UNESCO standards in Kyrgyzstan or Central Asia
  + Experience in the elaboration of road maps to develop geoparks
  + Experience in sustainable tourism development
* Leadership/management experience: 2 years of experience as a team leader (2.1.5)
* Regional experience: work in the Jalal Abad Oblast (2.1.6)
* Development cooperation: work experience with international organizations (2.1.7)
* Other: Project management (2.1.8)

**Expert 1: Biologist**

* Qualification: University degree in Biology (2.2.1)
* Language: Kyrgyz, Russian fluent, English is an asset (2.2.2)
* General professional experience: 10 work experience as a biologist (2.2.3)
* Specific professional experience: in describing and cataloguing flora/fauna (2.2.4)

**Expert 2: Historian**

* Qualification: University degree in History or Ethnography (2.3.1)
* Language: Kyrgyz, Russian fluent, English is an asset (2.3.2)
* General professional experience: 10 years in the spheres, where Kyrgyz history played a main role (2.3.3)
* Regional experience: Special expertise in the history of Jalal Abad Oblast (2.3.4)

**Expert 3: Tourism Expert**

* Qualification: University Degree in Tourism, Management or Tourism value Chain analysis (2.4.1)
* Language: Russian and Kyrgyz fluent, English is an asset (2.4.2)
* General professional experience: 8 years in tourism sector (2.4.3)
* Specific professional experience: (2.4.4): Diverse experience in tourism value chain analysis and development (to be proven in the CV)

1. **Requirement for the organization**
   1. Experience in developing geoparks according to national and/or UNESCO-standards
   2. Experience in developing and promoting sustainable tourism
   3. Experience in implementing similar initiatives and projects, incl. passporting of tourism sites and entities (natural cultural, historical sites, service providers)
   4. Experience in the development of strategic documents
   5. Experience in organising and conducting awareness-raising events and workshops
2. **Proposal requirements** 
   1. registration certificate of organization or expert
   2. financial proposal which indicates the total anticipated costs (expert days/honorary, travel costs, accommodation, per diems)
   3. full CVs that refer to all requirements of point 7
   4. technical proposal, including a rough description of the overall approach, goals and proposed methodology, including methods for quality assurance, time schedule (when, what, where, how many people), max. 4 pages (1.1.1)
   5. rough content of meetings days mentioned under point 5.3 with the following, basic information: appr. date: what will be done (content) why (objective, goals), how (method/instrument/tool), duration (1.1.2)
3. **Other:**

* All materials received by the Contractor during the execution of this TOR from the GIZ Programme and/or its partners cannot be transferred to third parties without the written consent of the GIZ Programme and/or its partners.
* All tax and social charges for this assignment will be included in the contract amount and are the responsibility of the Contractor.
* The Contractor will receive additional information on the reporting requirements.
* The organisation must generally refrain from inciting violence or hatred and from unlawful discrimination against persons or groups on the basis of race, ethnicity or religion. Such an obligation applies to all activities of the organisation, including those outside the scope of this contract.