

Midterm Review Report

June 2015

Version: final

CBPF: Strengthening the Effectiveness of the Protected Area System in
Qinghai Province, China to conserve globally important biodiversity

GEF Project ID: 3993

UNDP PIMS ID: 4179

Country:	China
Region:	Asia and the Pacific
Focal Area:	Biodiversity
GEF Cycle	GEF-4
Implementing Agency:	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Executing Agency:	Qinghai Finance Bureau, Qinghai Provincial Government
Other Responsible Parties:	Qinghai Forestry Department, Project Management Office
Project Timeframe:	January 2013 – December 2017 (planned)

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Midterm Review Opening Page:

Project Name:	CBPF: Strengthening the effectiveness of the protected area system in Qinghai Province, China to conserve globally important biodiversity	
GEF Project ID:	3992	
UNDP PIMS ID:	4179	
Country:	China	
Region:	Asia and the Pacific	
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	
GEF Cycle:	GEF-4	
GEF CEO Endorsement Date:	05 Apr 2012	
Prodoc Signature by Ministry of Finance of China:	30 August 2012	
Prodoc Signature by UNDP:	14 September 2012	
Implementation Timeframe:	Start: Jan 2013	Closure: Dec 2017 (planned)
Implementing Agency:	United Nations Development Programme	
Implementation Modality:	National Implementation Modality (NIM)	
Executing Agency:	Qinghai Finance Bureau, Qinghai Provincial Government	
Other Responsible Parties:	Qinghai Forestry Department, Project Management Office	
Project Cost:	USD 23,954,545	
GEF PPG Grant:	USD 100,000	
GEF Project Grant:	USD 5,354,545	
Co-Financing, Pledged:	USD 18,500,000 (includes USD 151,000 for PPG phase)	
	Government, Cash:	USD 14,602,900
	Government, In-Kind:	USD 3,897,100
Midterm Review Timeframe:	May-July 2015	
Evaluation Team:	Professor Li He, National Consultant James Lenoci, International Consultant / Team Leader	
MTR Reporting Language:	English	

The evaluation team would like acknowledge the information and feedback provided by interviewed project stakeholders, including the national project director, the director of the PMO, the UNDP Assistant Country Director and Program Manager, the RTA and CTA, the project manager, other members of the PMO, officials from provincial and sub-provincial agencies, and national and international consultants. Special thanks are also extended to the local beneficiaries of the visited communities.

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Executive Summary

Exhibit 1: Project Information Table			
Project Title:	CBPF: Strengthening the effectiveness of the protected area system in Qinghai Province, China to conserve globally important biodiversity		
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	4179	PIF Approval Date:	15 Oct 2009
GEF Project ID (PMIS #):	3992	CEO Endorsement Date:	05 Apr 2012
Award ID:	63658	Project Document (ProDoc)	30 Aug 2012
Country(ies):	China	Date project manager hired:	January 2013
Region:	Asia and the Pacific	Inception Workshop date:	18 Jan 2013
Focal Area:	Biodiveristy	Midterm Review date:	Jun-Jul 2015
GEF-4 Strategic Programs:	BD1-SP3; BD1-SP1	Planned closing date:	31 Dec 2017
Trust Fund:	GEF TF	If revised, proposed closing date:	N/A
Executing Agency:	Qinghai Finance Bureau, Qinghai Provincial Government		
Other execution partners:	Qinghai Forestry Department, Project Management Office		
Project Financing:	at CEO endorsement (USD)	at Midterm Review (USD)*	
[1] GEF financing:	5,354,545	1,876,864	
[2] UNDP contribution:	0	0	
[3] Government:	18,500,000	22,219,972	
[4] Other partners:	0	0	
[5] Total co-financing [2 + 3+ 4]:	18,500,000	22,219,972	
PROJECT TOTAL COSTS [1 + 5]	23,854,545	24,096,836	

*Actual expenditures through 31 May 2015; Actual Cofinancing through 31 Dec 2014

Project Description

As the fourth largest province in China, with a total area of 720,000 km², Qinghai serves as a significant store of the national biodiversity, exhibits some unique high altitude grassland, mountain, wetland, desert and forest ecosystems, and serves as a significant controller of the Asian monsoon system that affects the climate of 3 billion people. The province includes the headwaters of three of Asia's major rivers – the Yellow, Yangtze and Mekong rivers.

Although Qinghai lists 11 nature reserves totaling an impressive 31% of the territory, the existing protected area (PA) system lacks adequate balance – it shows significant gaps in ecosystem coverage and contains extensive overlap with other interests such as road construction, water diversion plans and herder community tenure rights. It also includes areas exhibiting serious land degradation resulting from a combination *inter alia* of overgrazing, engineering damage and climate change. Other problems facing the PA system include illegal gold mining and poaching, livestock fences interrupting wildlife migratory pathways, and aggressive pest control programmes aimed at small burrowing mammals but that also harm many collateral species.

The project was designed to directly target barriers through a series of steps that aim to enhance PA system effectiveness. The global and national biodiversity significance of Qinghai's PA system, its vital role as the catchment area for three major rivers, the nature and severity of on-going threats to the PA system and the persistence of important barriers limiting its effectiveness have led the Government to prioritize and present this project for GEF support.

The project **goal** is to strengthen the effectiveness of the PA system in Qinghai Province, China to conserve globally important biodiversity. The project **objective** is to *catalyse management effectiveness of Qinghai's PA system to fulfil its purpose of conserving globally important biodiversity*, by removing the barriers with three inter-related outcomes. The focus of the project is to strengthen the PA system in Qinghai to better protect a representative sample of its unique biodiversity and more effectively manage this PA network as a whole.

Purpose and Methodology

The objective of midterm review (MTR) was to gain an independent analysis of the progress of the project so far. The MTR aimed to identify potential project design problems, to assess progress towards the achievement of the project objective, and to identify and document lessons learned about project design, implementation, and management. The review also focused on aspects such as effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance of the project, and the likelihood that the envisioned global environmental benefits will be realized and whether the project results will be sustained after closure of GEF funding. Findings of this review are formulated as recommendations for enhanced implementation during the final period of the project implementation timeframe.

The MTR was an evidence-based assessment and relied on feedback from persons who have been involved in the design, implementation, and supervision of the project, and also review of available documents and findings made during field visits.

Evaluation Ratings

Based upon the summary outlined above, the overall outcome rating applied for the Project is **satisfactory**. Detailed ratings are tabulated below in **Exhibit 2**.

Exhibit 2: MTR Ratings and Achievement Summary Table		
Project: CBPF: Strengthening the effectiveness of the protected area system in Qinghai Province, China to conserve globally important biodiversity GEF Project ID: 3992; UNDP PIMS ID: 4179		
Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	Not Rated	The project design was, for the most part, sound, including a good combination of top-down approaches, specifically in terms of biodiversity mainstreaming, and bottom-up community-driven interventions, which are the focus of the third component. The second component is cross-cutting the other two, with the aim at improving PA management effectiveness through strengthened institutional and staff capacities.
Progress towards Results	Objective Achievement: Satisfactory	Significant midterm improvements reported in terms of capacity development; in fact, in terms of legal, regulatory, and institutional, frameworks, the end of project target has been achieved. PA management authorities continue to lack discretionary authority with respect to allocation of financing. Midterm METT assessments of the 5 national nature reserves are also improved compared to the 2011 baseline figures. There are, however, a number of inconsistencies in the tracking tool reports. The completed biodiversity baseline surveys in three targets units within the Sanjiangyuan NR are substantive scientific contributions to the knowledge base of the respective ecosystems. Conservation objectives built around these findings should be reflected in the management plans under development.
	Outcome 1 Achievement: Satisfactory	The project has done a good job facilitating high-level cross-sectoral involvement in mainstreaming biodiversity within provincial legislative and regulatory frameworks. The lack of participation of land use planning stakeholders diminishes the sustainability of the mainstreaming efforts; this should be addressed during the second half of the project. The project has also supported the preparation of the Qinghai Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (QBSAP), which has a few remaining shortcomings should be addressed in the second half of the project. Considerable resources are being allocated to an environmental information system, to be hosted by the Qinghai Forestry Department. A knowledge management strategy is lacking, however.

Exhibit 2: MTR Ratings and Achievement Summary Table

<p>Project: CBPF: Strengthening the effectiveness of the protected area system in Qinghai Province, China to conserve globally important biodiversity GEF Project ID: 3992; UNDP PIMS ID: 4179</p>		
Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
	<p>Outcome 2 Achievement: Unable to Assess</p>	<p>Significant improvements have been reported in terms of capacity development, through trainings and management planning. The MTR team, however, question whether the midterm assessment is over-rated, including the reassessed version. It is also noted that the baseline figures are likely under-estimated.</p> <p>Midterm results of PA staffing are inconsistent. Based upon METT scorecard, there has been a 5.6% decrease in PA staff for the 5 NR's assessed over the period of 2011 to 2014. And, the target is unclear, e.g., whether or not forest police should be counted.</p> <p>The project has sponsored a study on alternative PA financing; it is unclear how the recommendations from this study will be operationalized in the second half of the project. Based upon the updated information on PA financing is reported in the midterm tracking tools, it seems financing needs are significantly higher than estimated at project entry, partly due to upgrade of some of the NRs from provincial to national status. Due to a number of inconsistencies in the tracking tool entries, the reviewers are unable to assess progress made towards the financing performance indicators of this component. .</p>
	<p>Outcome 3 Achievement: Moderately Satisfactory</p>	<p>The project has done a good job initiating community driven collaborative PA management arrangements in 12 remote, Tibetan villages, spread across three types of ecosystems in the SNNR.</p> <p>Spending has been slow, and there remains a lot of work to complete in the second half of the project.</p> <p>Communication between national and international consultants should be improved to ensure optimal input of advisory services.</p> <p>There have been actions taken to address sustainability, but there is no coherent sustainability plan to date.</p>
<p>Project Implementation and Adaptive Management</p>	<p>Satisfactory</p>	<p>UNDP has provided timely strategic support for the project. With their extensive experience in human development interventions, UNDP could provide more guidance in terms of gender/minorities mainstreaming.</p> <p>High level of commitment apparent among QFD officials; during second half, they should be more proactive in ensuring that biodiversity mainstreaming is operationalized into specific budgetary frameworks.</p> <p>Technical advisory and project management functions are staffed with qualified professionals. Coordination and communication across components and among national and international consultant groups has been generally weak, however.</p> <p>Cost-effectiveness has been satisfactory, although spending on Outcome 3 has been too slow and a management response is required in the second half of implementation to rectify this. Cofinancing, mainly in-kind contributions, has exceeded the total pledged amount by midterm.</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation has been fairly weak: inconsistencies in baseline figures in strategic results framework not reconciled at inception phase; and there are several inconsistencies in the midterm tracking tool reports.</p>
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>Moderately Likely</p>	<p>Enhances sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Considerable ecological compensation disbursed by Government; ✦ Ecological conservation a key aspect to the economic development plans of Qinghai Province;

Exhibit 2: MTR Ratings and Achievement Summary Table

Project: CBPF: Strengthening the effectiveness of the protected area system in Qinghai Province, China to conserve globally important biodiversity GEF Project ID: 3992; UNDP PIMS ID: 4179		
Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Project has facilitated broad cross-sectoral involvement in mainstreaming biodiversity conservation; ✦ Improvements reported in PA management effectiveness and capacity development; ✦ Awareness among target communities has been enhanced. <p>Diminishes sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Government restrictions on staff hiring (not only for PA staff); — Land use planning not addressed in mainstreaming efforts; — Insufficient capacity at Provincial and Sub-Provincial levels on biodiversity conservation strategic planning; — Alternative PA financing techniques for improving financial sustainability of PA system have not been operationalized; — Many communities within PA system are disadvantaged and lack sufficient capacity (e.g., literacy); — Ecological resilience to climate change impacts is largely unknown.

Summary of Conclusions, Recommendations, and Lessons

Strengths and Major Achievements

Satisfactory progress towards outcomes

The project has made satisfactory progress towards outcomes, as evidenced by the following key achievements by midterm:

- ✓ Legal, regulatory, and institutional frameworks have been strengthened. The assessment of Component 1 of the Financial Sustainability scorecard has increased from a baseline figure of 15% in 2011 to 30% in 2015.
- ✓ Through capacity building and support in developing management plans, the management effectiveness of the 5 national nature reserves has improved. Increases in METT scores for the national nature reserves have ranged from 20% for the Kekexili NR to 131% for the Golmud Poplar Forest NR.
- ✓ The biodiversity baseline surveys completed for three target units within the Sanjiangyuan nature reserve are substantive contributions to the knowledge base of these ecosystems.
- ✓ Cross-sectoral advisory groups are supporting biodiversity mainstreaming for 5 sectoral plans, and also providing input to the preparation of the 13th 5-year plan.
- ✓ The project has facilitated completion of regulations and technical guidelines for (1) road construction, operation, and maintenance, and (2) electricity transmission line construction and operation.
- ✓ A comprehensive trainings needs assessment has been completed, and 440 person-days of trainings delivered to PA staff and other stakeholders. The midterm capacity development scorecard assessment is 63.6%, which is nearly a 100% increase since 2011 (the MTR team does think that the assessment is a bit overrated, however. It is also noted that the baseline figure seems a bit underestimated).

- ✓ At the end of 2014, permanent PA staff numbered 231, which is up the baseline figure of 113 in 2011. This is a noteworthy increase towards the end of project target of 360, particularly considering the current government restrictions on staff hiring across the board.
- ✓ Management plans have been developed for 8 of the 11 nature reserves in the PA system, and the following 5 have gone through two rounds of revision: Qinghai Lake NR, Kekexili NR, Qaidam Haloxylon Forest NR, Golmud Poplar Forest NR, and the Qumahe Block of the SNNR.
- ✓ Funding for PA operations has increased from USD 1.04 million per year in 2011 to USD 2.4 million in 2013-14.
- ✓ Participatory rural appraisals have been completed in the 12 pilot villages, and based upon the priorities identified in this process, collaborative PA management agreements have been signed with coordination committees formed in each of the villages, and 12 village-level collaborative management committees have been established and related management rules developed using a participatory approach.
- ✓ Participatory conservation zoning processes have been started in some of the pilot villages; a potentially replicable model that could be up-scaled in other parts of the PA system.
- ✓ Training and equipment have been provided to the participants of the pilot collaborative management arrangements, and implementation of some of the activities has started, including monitoring and patrolling, and solid waste management.

Combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches

The project design includes a good combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches to increasing PA management effectiveness and financial sustainability. Mainstreaming biodiversity in provincial sectoral plans and operationalizing specific actions in the 13th 5-year plan helps to ensure that sufficient resources will be allocated to support biodiversity conservation in the short to medium term. Considering the vast geographic scale of the Qinghai PA system, meaningful participation by local communities within and near the protected areas is essential for achieving the conservation objectives. The community driven collaborative PA management arrangements piloted by the project are intended to provide a guideline that can be scaled up under the enhanced enabling conditions facilitated by the mainstreaming efforts.

Involvement of high-level and cross-sectoral Provincial decision makers

The project has been effective in involving high-level and cross-sectoral decision makers, including the Provincial Legislative Affairs Office. These stakeholder participation arrangements increase the likelihood that the advocated biodiversity mainstreaming efforts will be operationalized into provincial regulatory and legislative frameworks.

Potential replicable models of community-driven natural resource management

There have been community collaborative PA management arrangements implemented in Qinghai prior to this project, facilitated by a number of stakeholders, including NGOs and the government. This project is working on potential replicable model that is facilitating a higher level of participation of local communities in deciding upon conservation priorities and also institutionalizing the collaborative management structures in the form of coordination committees and village regulations.

Good mix of national and international experts

There has been a reasonably good mix of national and international consultants engaged on the project. Some concerns were voiced regarding insufficient communication and coordination among the expert groups and among the three project components; these issues are addressed in the recommendations section of the MTR report.

Qualified project coordination and management

The technical advisory and project management functions are staffed with qualified professionals, with extensive biodiversity conservation experience in China.

Satisfactory efficiency (cost-effectiveness) in first half of project

The project has been judicious with respect to resource outlays, and overall cost-effectiveness has been satisfactory over the first half of the implementation phase. There are, however, concerns that spending on Outcome 3 has been too slow, and a concerted management response should be developed in the second half to ensure the intended results of this component are achieved.

Effective adaptive management

The project has done a good job adapting to changed circumstances and priorities. Some examples of adaptive management measures include:

- ✓ Extending support to the Qinghai Environmental Monitoring Center in completion of the provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan;
- ✓ Engaging the Provincial Legislative Affairs Office, to expedite biodiversity mainstreaming efforts;
- ✓ Setting up cross-sectoral advisory committees, as a means of facilitating the biodiversity mainstreaming efforts and enhancing the level of ownership by the relevant sectors;
- ✓ Introducing participatory conservation zoning to the pilot villages, having the local communities provide direct input regarding key conservation areas in their villages.

Sensitivity to culture and traditions of Tibetan communities

Tibetan herder communities have inhabited the Qinghai ecosystems long before the protected area system was demarcated. The project has exhibited keen sensitivity to the rich culture and tradition of these communities, respecting their traditional knowledge in conservation of biodiversity and cultural resources. Also, project documentation and promotional materials, including a photograph wall calendar, delivered to the pilot villages have been prepared in two languages.

Alternative livelihoods addressed as part of community driven PA collaborative management

Through an inclusive participatory approach with the pilot villages, collaborative PA management priorities have addressed alternative livelihood opportunities for local communities. This is in contrast to the top-down government run collaborative management programs.

Weaknesses and Recommendations

As outlined above, a number of achievements have been realized by midterm of the project, and satisfactory progress has been made towards the performance indicators established. There are certain weaknesses, however, that are constraining realization of sustained results following project closure.

Firstly, the strategic results framework was not critically reviewed at the inception phase, and there are a number of indicator targets that are not SMART compliant, while other aspects of the intended added value of the project are not represented. Sustainability structures are also not sufficiently integrated in the results framework.

The project has managed to assemble a group of qualified national and international consultants, but their efforts have not been optimally synergized. Internal communication should be improved to maximize input from technical consultants and service providers.

With respect to protected area management and financial sustainability, there have been some improvements reported in the management effectiveness tracking tool (METT) and financial sustainability midterm scorecard assessments, but there has been insufficient strategic focus regarding PA staffing and sustainable financing. While the project management team has started to address sustainability concerns, specific actions have not been consolidated into a coherent sustainability strategy.

The identified weaknesses, along with associated recommendations are compiled below in **Exhibit 3**. The recommendations have been formulated to support improving project effectiveness and enhance the likelihood that project results will be sustained after GEF funding ceases.

Exhibit 3: Recommendations Table		
No.	Concluded Weaknesses and Recommendations	Responsible Entities
Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project		
1.	<p>Conclusion: Some of the project performance indicators and targets are not compliant with SMART¹ criteria or do not sufficiently capture the added value of the intervention</p> <p>Recommendation: The MTR team recommends the modifications to the strategic results framework, as outlined in the separate table below. The recommended changes are to the indicators and targets; the project objective and outcomes remain the same. These recommended modifications should be reviewed and approved by the project management team, the UNDP CO, the RTA, and finally by the Project Steering Committee (PSC). Upon approval by the PSC, the modified strategic results framework should be the official version used for the remainder of the implementation timeframe and for the terminal evaluation.</p>	PMO, QFD, UNDP
2.	<p>Conclusion: Inter-linkages between project components have been generally weak, and communication and coordination among national and international consultants could be improved to ensure more effective project performance.</p> <p>Recommendation: The following actions are recommended to improve inter-linkages between project components and communication/coordination among national and international consultants:</p> <p>2a: Create a project website, primarily for internal purposes, and assign one of the PMO staff members responsible to update the site at least on a monthly basis. A working area should be established, where national and international consultants can provide concise information/feedback. Comments should be translated on a regular basis;</p> <p>2b: Deliverables produced by national and international consultants should include an executive summary that is translated from Chinese to English or English to Chinese. These deliverables, with translated executive summaries, should be uploaded to the project website within one month from finalization;</p> <p>2c: Opportunities for collaborating across project components should be discussed on a weekly basis in project management meetings, including the project manager and component managers.</p> <p>2d: Component managers should prepare annual monitoring and evaluation plans for their respective outcomes, using the strategic results framework as a guideline, but also developing interim performance indicators and targets to assist them in assessing the progress of work. Quarterly progress reports on the monitoring and evaluation plans should be prepared, translated to English, and uploaded to the project website.</p>	PMO, QFD, UNDP
3.	<p>Conclusion: Provincial and sub-provincial stakeholders have limited capacity in biodiversity conservation strategic planning and management implementation.</p> <p>Recommendation: A mentoring program should be designed and implemented to strengthen the capacity of provincial and sub-provincial stakeholders in biodiversity conservation strategic planning and management implementation. A specific group of provincial and sub-provincial staff from QFD and other departments responsible for PA management should be selected for the mentoring program. The design of the program should be adaptive, e.g., responding to opportunities for interaction as part of assignments carried out by national and/or international consultants.</p>	PMO, QFD, Relevant Provincial and Sub-Provincial Stakeholders
4.	<p>Conclusion: The project does not have a consolidated gender/minority</p>	PMO, UNDP, QFD

¹ SMART stands for: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound.

Exhibit 3: Recommendations Table		
No.	Concluded Weaknesses and Recommendations	Responsible Entities
	<p>mainstreaming plan.</p> <p>Recommendation: A plan should be developed and implemented to increase gender/minority inclusion in the collaborative management arrangements and activities piloted under component 3. The targets of this plan should be integrated into the updated strategic results framework, which is outlined below in Recommendation No. 5.</p>	
5.	<p>Conclusion: There are inconsistencies in the UNDP-GEF tracking tools, including the financial sustainability scorecard, the management effectiveness tracking tool (METT), and the capacity development scorecard. The figures included these tracking tools are integrated into some of the project performance indicators, and it would be advisable to sort out these inconsistencies and make adjustments accordingly.</p> <p>Recommendation: A thorough assessment should be made of the each of the tracking tools, for both the baseline and midterm figures. The indicators and targets of the strategic results framework should be then reformulated and/or reconciled.</p>	
Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project		
6.	<p>Conclusion: The knowledge management system (KMS) being developed by the project seems to be more of an information management system. The strategy and the value-for-money of the planned knowledge management system are unclear.</p> <p>Recommendation: A knowledge management strategy should be developed, including (1) defining the roles and responsibilities for interpreting information inputs; (2) formulating a strategy for developing management responses to ecosystem perturbations; (3) outlining roles/responsibilities and processes for interpreting PA management effectiveness; and (4) describing how PA management results and lessons learned will be disseminated. In addition to the KMS strategy, a value-for-money analysis should be carried out, comparing the costs and benefits of having an information management system hosted by the QFD to the option of expanding the existing information management system operated by the Qinghai Environmental Monitoring Centre.</p>	PMO, QFD, Environmental Protection Bureau, Provincial Finance Department
7.	<p>Conclusion: The QBSAP does not sufficiently reflect climate change impacts to biodiversity, there is insufficient description and quantification of the ecosystem services provide by biodiversity of Qinghai, and the PA staffing and funding shortfalls addressed in this project are not actionized in the QBSAP.</p> <p>Recommendation: The QBSAP should be strengthened by including: (1) actions addressing potential climate change impacts to biodiversity, (2) an itemization of the major ecosystem services and some approximate economic values, and (3) actions associated with improving the PA staffing and funding shortfalls within the Qinghai PA system.</p>	Qinghai Environmental Protection Bureau, PMO, QFD
8.	<p>Conclusion: Biodiversity mainstreaming efforts could be further strengthened. And, insufficient involvement of land use planning stakeholders diminishes the likelihood that the mainstreaming achievements will be sustained after project closure.</p> <p>Recommendation: The MTR team recommends the following actions to strengthen the biodiversity mainstreaming efforts:</p> <p>8a: Summarize results of the comprehensive review of provincial regulations into a written report, indicating which regulations were reviewed, and what steps were taken to remove conditions and/or entire regulations that are not conducive biodiversity conservation.</p> <p>8b: Work with the Provincial Land Resources Department in updating the Provincial Land Use Plan by indicating the key conservation areas highlighted in the QBSAP.</p> <p>8c: Work with at least one County Land Resources Department, in one of the areas where the pilot villages are located, and assist them in developing their county</p>	Cross-sectoral advisory committees, PMO, QFD, Land Resources Department, Provincial Legislative Office

Exhibit 3: Recommendations Table		
No.	Concluded Weaknesses and Recommendations	Responsible Entities
	<p>Key Ecological Function Area Plan. This county plan should make reference to the village level conservation zoning areas.</p> <p>8d: Identify linkages between provincial departments and academic institutions to facilitate applied research, e.g., the effects of the pylon structures used for electrical transmission developments. The project should try to fund some preliminary research as a means of operationalizing the partnerships.</p> <p>8e: Prepare a running tally of (1) specific activities added to sectoral plans that have been operationalized (approved budget and implementation started); (2) specific activities in the QBSAP that have been operationalized (approved budget and implementation started); items/activities that have already been considered for the 13th 5-year plan.</p> <p>8f: Develop specific inspection protocols for each of the new regulations and guidelines being developed, and invite inspection stakeholders to participate in the process.</p> <p>8g: Establish a tracking register for the new regulations and guidelines that are being developed, in order to document how the regulations and guidelines are being implemented in practice. The register should include a brief description of the activity/investment, the timeframe, investment value, photograph documentation, etc. The register should also include a list of environmental impact assessments that have used the guidelines in assessing biodiversity impacts and recommending appropriate mitigation measures.</p> <p>8h: Ensure that waste management provisions are included in regulations/guidelines, as many of the communities among the pilot villages in Outcome 3 have complained of poor waste management as part of infrastructure development projects.</p>	
9.	<p>Conclusion: The project has sponsored a study on alternative PA financing and revenue generation, but there has been insufficient focus to date on operationalizing sustainable financing structures, including diversion of funds collected among the varied ecological compensation programs.</p> <p>Recommendation: Based upon the findings of the MTR mission and recommendations included in reports prepared by national and international consultants, the following actions are recommended for the second half of the project in terms of strengthening the sustainable financing capacity of the PA system:</p> <p>9a: Establish a task force with relevant provincial and sub-provincial stakeholders for formulating a system for reviewing ecological compensation programs and making recommendations of how the funds are allocated. The system should include tracking how the funds are actually disbursed.</p> <p>9b: Identify a few key revenue generation options, identified in the PA financing report, and pilot them, preferably at least one in each of the nature reserves. Lessons learned from the pilot results should be consolidated into a series of case studies.</p> <p>9c: Facilitate development of a regional plan for implementing policy reforms that would lead to a more systematic and strategic approach to improving financial sustainability, especially for ecotourism and payments for ecosystem services.</p>	QFD, SNNR, PMO, Provincial Finance Department
10.	<p>Conclusion: Between 2011 and 2014, according to information in the METT scorecards, there has been a 5.6% decrease in PA staffing (permanent + temporary) of the 5 NR's assessed by the METT. Under the current situation of fairly rigid restrictions on hiring government staff, not only PA staff, alternative staffing strategies should be considered.</p> <p>Recommendation: The project should develop and implement a site level pilot of a collaborative arrangement between the government run Public Service Program and community co-management structures as means of addressing shortfalls in PA staff</p>	QFD, SNNR, PMO

Exhibit 3: Recommendations Table		
No.	Concluded Weaknesses and Recommendations	Responsible Entities
	needs.	
11.	<p>Conclusion: Nature reserve management plans do not sufficiently reflect complementary activities on the project.</p> <p>Recommendation: The following actions are recommended to strengthen the nature reserve management plans:</p> <p>11a: The plans should include biodiversity assessment protocols, building upon what was accomplished through the baseline surveys sponsored by the project.</p> <p>11b: The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) should be considered to be integrated into the management plans, as regular management tool.</p> <p>11c: The process of compiling and reporting on the monitoring and patrolling data from the community driven collaborative management arrangements in the pilot villages should be described in the plans.</p> <p>11d: Each management plan should include a specific activity that is consistent with the PA system strategy of increasing the capacity and number of PA staff on a system scale.</p> <p>11e: The plans should also indicate how the monitoring and patrolling information obtained through the Public Service Position (PSP) activities, a Government-sponsored collaborative management program.</p>	PMO, QFD, SNNR
12.	<p>Conclusion: The Government funded Public Service Position (PSP) program has not been sufficiently considered as part of a sustainability strategy for the collaborative management structures facilitated by the project.</p> <p>Recommendation: The MTR team recommends creating a task force or advisory committee, including but not limited to the following stakeholders: representatives of the provincial focal agency for the PSP program, the QFD, the SNNR Administration, and the project management team. The task force (or advisory committee) should develop a plan for linking the top-down PSP program with bottom-up project model.</p>	QFD, SNNR, PMO
13.	<p>Conclusion: Sustainability plans for Outcome 3 are not consolidated into a coherent strategy.</p> <p>Recommendation: A sustainability strategy should be developed for Outcome 3 and include, but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>13a: Assist the collaborative management coordination committees in obtaining legal status (community based organization) by end of project;</p> <p>13b: Negotiate partnership arrangements for collaborative management coordination committees after project closure (e.g., with SNNR);</p> <p>13c: Consider adjusting the flow of financial and material support extended to the coordination committees, by having the SNNR Administration disburse the funds and assets to the communities rather than the PMO. This would require an agreement between the SNNR Administration and the PMO;</p> <p>13d: Facilitate the acknowledgement of village conservation areas, through the village regulations and possibly also county land use plans;</p> <p>13e: Support the communities and the SNNR administration in preparation of annual NR management reports, thus creating a replicable model that could be continued after project closure;</p> <p>13f: Prepare simple operation and maintenance instructions for equipment provided. The instructions should be also be available in Tibetan language.</p>	PMO, SNNR, QFD, Sub-Provincial Authorities, Local Communities
14.	<p>Conclusion: Outcome 3 is an important component of the project, with 52% of the indicative implementation budget, focusing on replicable models of community driven collaborative PA management. Through the project midterm, 31 May 2015, only 27% of the indicative budget under this outcome has been spent. Also, during the course of the MTR mission, the MTR team identified a few opportunities for</p>	PMO, SNNR, QFD, Sub-Provincial Authorities, Local Communities

Exhibit 3: Recommendations Table

No.	Concluded Weaknesses and Recommendations	Responsible Entities
	<p>improvement of the performance of this component.</p> <p>Recommendation: A few additional actions recommended to strengthen the results under Outcome 3 include the following:</p> <p>14a: A cumulative work plan should be prepared for Outcome 3, extending to the end of the project. The actions outlined under the sustainability strategy recommendation should be incorporated in the plan, and allocation of resources should be carefully examined to ensure that the available funds are optimally utilized;</p> <p>14b: Livestock (and property) loss due to wildlife attacks are expected to increase under enhanced biodiversity conservation. Compensation for villagers for these losses is a type of ecological compensation, but such compensation has not been sufficiently disbursed, even though there are regulatory frameworks in place. In the pilot villages, the project should work with County officials in developing a replicable model for facilitating fair compensation arrangements;</p> <p>14c: Burning of plastic waste should be prohibited, as toxic gases and residuals have adverse health and environmental impacts. County waste collection and disposal companies should be engaged in developing waste management solutions for the pilot villages;</p> <p>14d: Based upon the surveys made with herders in the visited communities, cooperative herding is a common arrangement. Development of alternative livelihood opportunities, e.g., by trading dairy products or handicrafts, or by supporting ecological tourism development, should be considered using these existing cooperative arrangements. The cooperative herding arrangements could also to address improved collaborative ecosystem management, e.g., through agreeing to remove fences, protection of water springs, etc.;</p> <p>14e: For the cooperatives being considered in the pilot villages, supply chain analyses should be carried out to determine existing barriers, such as distance to market, storage capacities, etc., so that development support can be better focused. Also, a value chain analysis of yak wool products might be sensible, as it seems that such production is uncommon in the targeted grassland ecosystems.</p>	
Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives		
15.	<p>Conclusion: The collaborative management initiatives on the project involve synergizing traditional knowledge with international best practice to protected areas management. The lessons learned regarding traditional knowledge to biodiversity conservation have not been consolidated into informative case studies and/or other knowledge product.</p> <p>Recommendation: Traditional knowledge on conservation of biodiversity and cultural resources should be captured in one or more case studies (knowledge products) and disseminated to a broad spectrum of relevant stakeholders.</p>	PMO, UNDP, Local Communities
16.	<p>Conclusion: Collaborative management is not institutionalized within the QFD organizational structure.</p> <p>Recommendation: A separate division should be formed within the QFD for dealing with collaborative management and community relations issues.</p>	QFD, PMO

Recommended Modifications to Strategic Results Framework			
No.	Indicator	End-of-Project Target	Notes by MTR Team
Project Objective: To catalyze management effectiveness of Qinghai's PA system to fulfil its purpose of conserving globally important biodiversity			
Ob 1	Financial sustainability score (%) for national systems of protected areas:		For the terminal assessment, the scoring should be made by an independent assessor or assessment team who has not been involved in the project to date.
	Component 1 – Legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks	30% (baseline 15.4%)	
	Component 2 – Business planning and tools for cost- effective management	50% (baseline 11.5%)	
	Component 3 – Tools for revenue generation	40% (baseline 8.5%)	
Ob 2	METT scores for different PAs: SNNR Mengda Kekexili Qinghai Lake Golmud Poplar Forest	70% (baseline: 33%) 65% (baseline 54%) 65% (baseline 50%) 75% (baseline 58%) 50% (baseline 22%)	The METT should be integrated into the NR management plans as management tool. For the terminal assessment, the scoring should be made by an independent assessor or assessment team who has not been involved in the project to date. The baseline METT scores should be reviewed, as there are inconsistencies in the scorecards. The end of project targets should be based upon the reviewed METT scores.
Ob 3	Selected indicator species that are rare and threatened show stable or upward trends in numbers (including INTER ALIA wild yak, wild ass, Tibetan antelope, snow leopard, Pallas' cat, musk deer, white-lipped deer, black-necked crane, etc.)	Key wildlife populations maintained or increasing; appropriate population structure. Biodiversity assessment protocols are included in the management plans for the national NRs and approved by the PSC and QFD.	Baseline surveys were made rather late, in 2014. It will be difficult to draw statistically valid conclusions based upon end of project findings.
Outcome 1: Mainstreaming PA management into provincial development and sector planning process			
1.1	PA system and its management mainstreamed within the provincial sectoral and development planning framework at the provincial level: indicated by clear inclusion of due consideration and concrete measures for biodiversity conservation and PA development, as well as ear marked budget in the sectoral development plans at provincial levels and in the (national) 13th 5-year plan.	At least 3 sectoral plans integrate consideration of PAs and of biodiversity conservation measures	No changes recommended.
		13 th 5 year-Plan recognizes clear linkage between PAs and provincial development, and includes PA- and biodiversity-related targets and budgets	No changes recommended.
		The Provincial Land Use Plan includes key conservation areas identified in QBSAP	The effectiveness of mainstreaming would be enhanced by engaging the land use planning sector.

Recommended Modifications to Strategic Results Framework			
No.	Indicator	End-of-Project Target	Notes by MTR Team
		At least one County Land Use Plan (Key Ecological Function Area Plan) includes conservation zoning areas specified in pilot village(s) natural resource plans	Supporting one County in development of their Key Ecological Function Area Plan would provide an opportunity to institutionalize the village level zoning process piloted under this outcome.
1.2	Threats to PAs from infrastructure placement (roads, dams) and other adverse forms of land use avoided, mitigated or offset, leading to more effective conservation in Qinghai's PA system covering 251,665km ² .	Official standards for infrastructure development and operation within the PAs are developed and operationalized, with clear rehabilitation/offset mechanism.	Addressing biodiversity offsets in the provincial regulations and technical guidelines seems unreasonable. Offsets are typically complex and controversial arrangements, probably beyond the scope of the project.
1.3	PA management is supported through a cross-sectoral knowledge management system that builds upon lessons learned and facilitates decision-making processes for implementing strategic management actions.	A knowledge management strategy that is informed by a functional PA system- wide environmental information management system is approved by the PSC and by the Qinghai Provincial Government.	There was no indicator established for the knowledge management system.
Outcome 2: Increasing PA management effectiveness through strengthened institutional and staff capacities			
2.1	Capacity development scorecard (%) for the protected area system.	60% (baseline 35.5%)	For the terminal assessment, the scoring should be made by an independent assessor or assessment team who has not been involved in the project to date.
2.2	Strategic plans prepared for PA institutions and procedures and investment, and PA staff numbers and gender/minorities inclusion dramatically increased	Strategic Plan developed and adopted	Gender mainstreaming considerations should be integrated into this indicator.
	Permanent Staff Temporary Staff	360 (baseline 160 113) 150 (baseline 5) The increases include at least 25% more staff for each of the national NRs. And, at least 25% of the new hires are women or minorities.	This indicator and target should be reformulated after the completing a comprehensive review of baseline conditions and strategic objectives of this outcome.
2.3	Province's system level PA financing increased to close the existing annual financing gap of US\$ 4.6 million for basic expenditure scenario (tracked with PA financial sustainability scorecard)	USD 6.6 million per year (baseline USD 2 million per year) USD _ million per year and at least 25% increase for each national NR. (baseline USD 2.88 million)	This indicator and target should be reformulated after the completing a comprehensive review of baseline conditions and strategic objectives of this outcome.
2.4	Ratio of total PA budget spent on field operations raised to narrow spending gap	>30% of PA revenue spent on field operations (baseline <10%)	The term "field operations" is not defined, and there is no protocol for measuring this indicator. This indicator and target should be reformulated after the completing a comprehensive review of baseline conditions and strategic objectives of this outcome.
2.5	Reduction in illegal incident cases within the NRs – poaching, illegal harvesting,	Functioning policing records system with links to police/ court cases and an enhanced	Concerted efforts will be needed in the second half of the project to engage the relevant enforcement

Recommended Modifications to Strategic Results Framework			
No.	Indicator	End-of-Project Target	Notes by MTR Team
	illegal-grazing, etc.	policing mandate of NR staff.	stakeholders.
		Routine report forms designed for numerical analysis.	This should be done in collaboration with the relevant enforcement agencies, with an emphasis on adapting existing systems rather than developing new ones.
		Both criminal and administrative incidents reduced to 50% of the baseline levels.	This indicator and target should be reformulated after the completing a comprehensive review of baseline conditions and strategic objectives of this outcome.
		Incidents reduced to 50% of the baseline level in the 12 pilot villages under Outcome 3 (based upon annual PSP log books and at least one control village)	Baseline levels for the PA system have not been established due to restricted access to the information. Verification based upon tallying up incidents recorded in annual public service position (PSP) log books for the 12 villages and one "control" village.
2.6	Annual income diverted to PA management operations from eco-compensation agreements (excluding funds arising from the Sanjiangyuan Ecological Construction Plan)	>USD 1.0m (baseline 0) >USD _ million	The Government is consolidating all ecological compensation programs, so it would be difficult to measure if the Sanjiangyuan Ecological Construction Plan is excluded. This indicator is complementary to Indicator 2.4, i.e., more than USD 1 million in funds from ecological compensation agreements diverted for PA Management Operational Costs. This indicator and target should be reformulated after the completing a comprehensive review of baseline conditions and strategic objectives of this outcome.
2.7	More representative PA system approved with most of 'major vegetation types' represented (>5% coverage) in the NNR's	22 of 30 habitats (addition of desert and Qilian montane habitats, with an overall increase of 18,000,000 ha in the provincial PA system)	Scientific studies will need to be carried out in the second half of the project to verify progress towards this indicator.
Outcome 3: Demonstration of Effective PA management through community involvement in the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve (SNNR)			
3.1.1	Extent of area (ha) closed from domestic grazing	4,000 km ² (baseline 1,000 km ²)	Verification based upon village conservation zoning plans, approved by village administrations and formalized into village regulations.
3.1.2	Area of open corridors Number of cooperative herding units agreeing to remove fencing	500 km ² (baseline 0) 12	Enforcement of open corridors is impracticable for the grassland landscapes. The project could provide added value in terms of wildlife migratory dynamics by facilitating replicable models of community level agreements to remove fencing.

Recommended Modifications to Strategic Results Framework			
No.	Indicator	End-of-Project Target	Notes by MTR Team
3.1.3	Area within the PA under community co-management, coordinated under community-driven and gender-inclusive arrangements	8,886 km ² (baseline 2,440 km ²)	Verification based upon village conservation zoning plans, approved by village administrations and formalized into village regulations
3.2	Representative management objectives provide guidance for biodiversity conservation in target areas	Management objectives and biodiversity assessment protocols formulated in NR management plans and 12 village natural resource management plans	Achievement of this indicator would increase the likelihood that the collaborative management arrangements will be maintained after project closure.
	Increase in the key species number and distributions in target co-management community sites (up to 12 community field sites)	Key wildlife populations maintained or increasing in co-management areas	Baseline surveys were made rather late, in 2014. It will be difficult to draw statistically valid conclusions based upon end of project findings
3.3	Management effectiveness increased in SNNR due to co-management arrangements using the METT tracking tool	70% (baseline 33%)	For the terminal assessment, the scoring should be made by an independent assessor or assessment team who has not been involved in the project to date.
3.4	Number of private-NR or of community co-management agreements: Private enterprise management agreements Informal, non-binding, agreements Formal, legally binding, agreements	At least 1 >10 agreements >2 agreements	Project lifespan co-management agreements should not count toward this target. The aim should be to facilitate collaborative agreements that extend after project closure.
3.5	Awareness surveys among communities show increased positive attitude towards PA conservation Collaborative management coordination committees are legally registered as community based organizations	Baseline + 50% positive attitude 12	The baseline surveys were done late, and the term "positive attitude" is not specifically indicated in the reviewed reports.
Note: Proposed modifications shown in red color or strikethrough text.			

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Exchange Rate, CNY:USD (2015 June 15) = 6.1

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APR	Annual Project Report
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BD	Biodiversity
BSAP	Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
CAS	Chinese Academy of Science
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBPF	China Biodiversity Partnership and Framework for Action
CCICED	China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development
CDR	Combined Delivery Report
CEPF	Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund
CHM	Clearing House Mechanism (under CBD)
CI	Conservation International
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CNY	Chinese yuan
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CSP	Conservation Stewardship Programme
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
EA	Executing Agency
ECBP	EU-China Biodiversity Programme
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPB	Environmental Protection Bureau (under MEP)
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations
FFI	Fauna and Flora International
FWY	Friends of the Wild Yak
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
IA	Implementing Agency
IBA	Important Bird Area
IAS	Invasive alien species
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
IW	Inception Workshop
KAP	Knowledge Attitudes Practice
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MEP	Ministry of Environmental Protection
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
MYFF	Multi-Year Funding Framework

NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NPD	National Project Director
NR	Nature Reserve
NWPIB	Northwest Plateau Institute of Biology
PA	Protected Area
PMO	Project Management Office
PIMS	Project Information Management System
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PM	Project Manager
PNR	Provincial Nature Reserve
PPG	Project Preparation Grant (for GEF)
PSC	Project Steering Committee
QDF	Qinghai Department of Finance
QFD	Qinghai Forestry Department
QPR	Quarterly Progress Report
SECP	Sanjiangyuan Ecological Construction Program
SFA	State Forestry Administration
SBAA	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement
SGP	Small Grants Program (UNDP-GEF)
SGREPA	Snowland Great Rivers Environmental Protection Association
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound
SNNR	Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
TBD	To Be Determined
TOR	Terms of Reference
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP CO	UNDP Country Office
UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
USD	United States Dollar
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose of the Review

The objective of the MTR is to undertake an independent analysis of the progress of the project to date. The MTR aims to identify potential project design problems, to assess progress towards the achievement of the project objective, and to identify and document lessons learned about project design, implementation and management. The review also focuses on aspects such as effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the project, and the likelihood that the envisaged global environmental benefits will be realized and whether the project results will be sustained after closure of GEF funding.

Findings of this review are formulated as recommendations for enhanced implementation during the final period of the project implementation timeframe.

1.2. Scope and Methodology

The MTR is an evidence-based assessment and relies on feedback from individuals who have been involved in the design, implementation and supervision of the project, and also a review of available documents and findings made during field visits.

The overall approach and methodology of the evaluation follows the guidelines outlined in the UNDP Guidance for Conducting midterm reviews (MTRs) of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects¹.

The MTR was carried out by a team of one national consultant and one international consultant/team leader, and included the following activities:

- ✓ An evaluation mission to China from 3-18 June 2015; the itinerary is compiled in **Annex 1**;
- ✓ As a data collection and analysis tool, an evaluation matrix was adapted from the preliminary set of questions included in the TOR (see **Annex 2**). Evidence gathered during the fact-finding phase of the MTR was cross-checked between as many sources as practicable, in order to validate the findings.
- ✓ Key project stakeholders were interviewed for their feedback on the project; interviewed persons are listed in **Annex 3**;
- ✓ The MTR team completed a desk review of relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project progress reports, financial reports and key project deliverables. A complete list of information reviewed is compiled in **Annex 4**;
- ✓ Field visits were made to two of the twelve pilot villages. A summary of the field visit is presented in **Annex 5**;
- ✓ Survey questionnaires were developed for the interviewed village administration staff and local herders during the field visits. The questionnaires and the results of the survey are included in **Annex 6**;
- ✓ The project strategic results framework was also used as an evaluation tool, in assessing attainment of project objective and outcomes (see **Annex 7**).
- ✓ Available information regarding co-financing contributions were summarized and presented in **Annex 8**;

¹ Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects, 2014, UNDP-GEF Directorate.

- ✓ The MTR team presented the preliminary findings of the MTR at two debriefing at the end of the mission; one held in Xining, for provincial level stakeholders on 16 June and the other in Beijing, for UNDP CO staff on 17 June.

The GEF Tracking Tool for Biodiversity Projects was updated by the PMU with assistance of external consultants over the course of the midterm review, and the filled-in tracking tool is annexed in a separate file to this report.

The rationale for implementing the utilized evaluation methodology is described as follows. For Outcome 1, the focus is on mainstreaming biodiversity into provincial level sectoral plans, regulations, and the 13th 5-year plan. Achievement towards this outcome was evaluated primarily by interviewing representatives of the engaged provincial departments, review of work deliverables, and interview with project management staff and national and international consultants supporting them.

For Outcome 2, the design is centered on improving management effectiveness and financial sustainability of the protected area system. Evaluation of progress made on this component of the project was based upon the results of review of updated scorecards (METT, Capacity Development, and Financial Sustainability), interviews with PA management and staff, review of work deliverables, including draft NR management plans and PA financial sustainability studies, and interviews with project management staff, as well as national and international consultants.

Outcome 3 involves demonstration of community based natural resource management models, and, hence, the evaluation methodology included field visits to a representative number of the engaged villages, questionnaire surveys, review of work deliverables, and interviews with direct beneficiaries, representatives of local collaborative management coordination committees sub-provincial governmental stakeholders, national and international consultants, and with project implementation staff.

1.3. Structure of the Review Report

The MTR report starts out with a description of the project, indicating the duration, principal stakeholders, and the immediate and development objectives. The findings of the review are then broken down into the following categories:

1. Project strategy
2. Progress towards results
3. Project implementation and adaptive management
4. Sustainability

The report culminates with a summary of the conclusions reached and recommendations, broken down into the following categories:

- ✓ Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project;
- ✓ Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project;
- ✓ Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives;

1.4. Ethics

The review was conducted in accordance with the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluators, and the reviewer has signed the Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement form (**Annex 9**). In particular, the MTR team ensures the anonymity and confidentiality of individuals who were

interviewed and surveyed. In respect to the UN Declaration of Human Rights, results are presented in a manner that clearly respects stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.

1.5. Limitations

The review was partially limited due to inconsistencies in baseline conditions recorded in the project document, unclear justification of some of the performance targets established, and inconsistencies in the midterm assessment of the GEF Tracking Tool for Biodiversity Projects. A summary of the inconsistencies noted in the tracking tool are compiled in **Annex 10**.

The review was carried out over the period of June-July 2015, including preparatory activities, field mission, desk review and completion of the report, according to the guidelines outlined in the Terms of Reference (**Annex 11**).

There were no limitations with respect to language for review of written documentation, because the MTR team included a national consultant, a Chinese native and expert in rural development. During interviews with local herders, an interpreter supported the national consultant, as the local residents generally only spoke Tibetan.

Interviews were held with representatives from some of the key provincial stakeholders, including representatives of the Qinghai Forestry Department, Environmental Protection Bureau, Legislation Office, SNNR Administration, Transportation Department, Power Supply Department, among others. Officials from the Land Resources Department were not interviewed as part of the review process. The project has been trying, albeit unsuccessfully, to engage Land Resources on mining issues, but there has not yet been involvement by land use planners.

Due to time constraints of the MTR mission, 2 of the 12 villages were visited: Cou Chi and Duo Xiu, both located in Qumahe County. Circumstances are assumed to be largely similar in the other villages; however, environmental awareness in Cou Chi is likely the highest among the 12 pilot villages, as there have been community development support extended there for at least 10 years.

1.6. Rating Scales

Evaluated progress was rated using the six-point rating scale outlined below.

Ratings for progress towards results:

Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Project is expected to achieve or exceed all its major global environmental objectives, and yield substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as "good practice".
Satisfactory (S)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve some of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Project is expected to achieve its major global environmental objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to achieve only some of its major global environmental objectives.
Unsatisfactory (U)	Project is expected not to achieve most of its major global environment objectives or to yield any satisfactory global environmental benefits.
Highly Unsatisfactory (U)	The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, any of its major global environment objectives with no worthwhile benefits.

Ratings for project implementation and adaptive management:

Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of most of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only few that are subject to remedial action.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.
Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.

Sustainability was evaluated across four risk dimensions, including financial risks, socio-economic risks, institutional framework and governance risks, and environmental risks. According to UNDP-GEF evaluation guidelines, all risk dimensions of sustainability are critical: i.e., the overall rating for sustainability is not higher than the lowest-rated dimension. Sustainability was rated according to a 4-point scale, ranging from Likely (negligible risks to the likelihood of continued benefits after the project ends) to Unlikely (severe risks that project Outcomes will not be sustained):

Ratings for sustainability (one overall rating):

Likely (L)	Negligible risks to sustainability, with key Outcomes on track to be achieved by the project’s closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future
Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some Outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on Outcomes at the Midterm Review
Moderately Unlikely (MU)	Significant risk that key Outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on
Unlikely (U)	Severe risks that project Outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**2.1. Development Context**

Qinghai Province, with a total area of over 720,000 km², is the fourth largest province in China. It is surrounded by Gansu, Sichuan, the Tibet Autonomous Region and Xinjiang provinces. Named after one of the largest inland saltwater lakes of the world (and the largest lake in China), Qinghai is largely a plateau with an average altitude of 3000 meters above the sea level. The province is one of the least developed in the country, with about 46% of the province’s total 5.5 million people are classified as ethnic groups, with 54 ethnic groups represented. Qinghai’s natural population growth rate of almost 10% is one of the highest in the country.

As outlined in the project document, most of Qinghai is covered by grasslands (57% of the province); followed by high altitude deserts (29%), forest ecosystems (6%), wetlands (6%) and agricultural lands (around 1%). At least three WWF Global 200 Ecoregions fall inside Qinghai; including 1) the upper sections of the Mekong River, 2) sources of the Salween River and 3) Tibetan Plateau Steppe. Part of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund’s (CEPF) biodiversity hotspot “Mountains of Southwest China” also falls in Qinghai. The province’s extensive grassland ecosystems support significant populations of globally threatened species such as the Wild Yak,

Wild Ass, Tibetan Antelope, Provalskii Gazelle, *Cervus albirostris*, and the Snow Leopard. Wetlands in the province include rivers, flooded grasslands, freshwater and saline lakes. These are key habitats for migratory birds, and large populations of Black Crane, *Grus grus*, *Cygnus cunus*, *Larus brunnicephalus*, and *Sterna hirundo tibetana* depend on them. The Qinghai Lake, Zhaling Lake and Eling Lake are listed as Ramsar Sites. The Qinghai Lake area is a key habitat of the Provalskii Gazelle and the Sanjiangyuan protected area is the breeding habitat of the endemic Tibetan Antelope. The Province harbors more than 10% of the higher plant and vertebrate species recorded in China; with a total of 3000 higher plant species and 465 vertebrate species (including 56 fish, 16 amphibians and reptile species, 290 bird and 103 mammal species). There is a high level of endemism in the area: more than 50% of plant species found here are endemic to China as well as several fish and bird species. Birdlife International, for example, has identified Qinghai Mountains as one of the high priority endemic bird areas of the world and Northern Qinghai Tibetan Plateau as a “secondary area” for endemic birds.

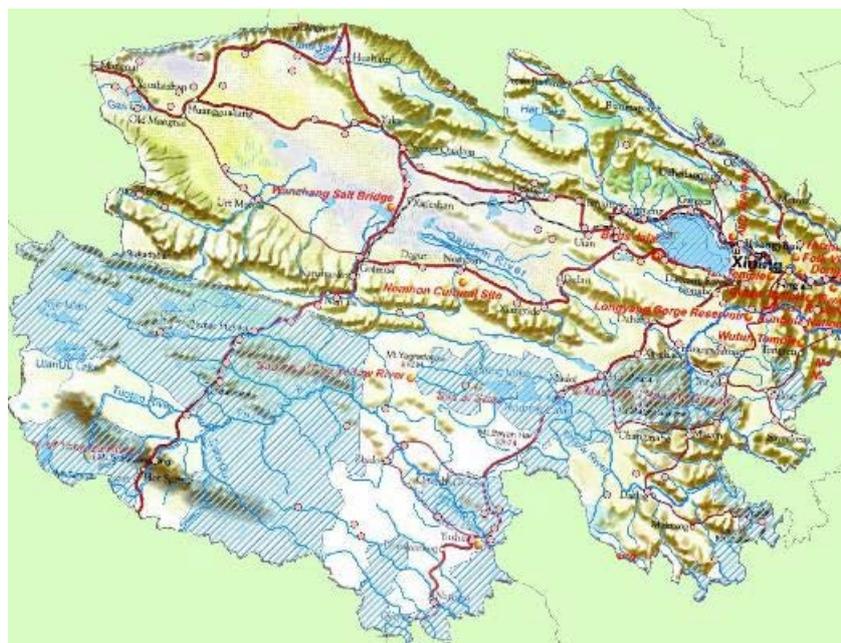
Perhaps the most valuable asset of the province is its ecological services – in the form of water catchment and regulation and climate regulation. The Qinghai plateau is the headwaters of three major rivers: the Yellow River, Yangtze, and Mekong (called Lancang in China). However, these services are largely unpaid for by the many wealthier downstream communities and sectors (industry, hydro-power, irrigation and urban water users).

Livestock herds suffered severe losses in the early 1990s due to land degradation, severe winters and disease, and in some places still have not recovered to those former levels. Even so, the pastures show evidence of severe degradation as a result of over-grazing (either present or former) and it is estimated that herd levels are currently (or were until recently) about 30% higher than sustainable levels. Degradation poses threats to biodiversity, local livelihoods and the important ecological services delivered by the province.

In order to conserve its biodiversity and ecological functions, Qinghai has established a network of protected areas (PAs), comprising five National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and six Provincial Nature Reserves (PNRs). NNRs cover 202,524.9 km² and PNRs cover 49,140 km² of the province, jointly accounting for approximately 35% of the provincial area (251,665 km²).

Of the 11 existing PAs, Sanjiangyuan NNR is the largest and most important in terms of biodiversity and the vital ecosystem services it provides, as it encompasses the source area of 3 major rivers: the Mekong, Yellow and Yangtze. The 152,300 km² reserve covers more than 60% of the whole PA system in the province and is the second largest NR in China. It comprises six isolated sections (blocks) and falls within 14 different counties; in total, it has 18 units (or conservation areas), each with its own set of core zone, buffer zone and experimental zone. The Sanjiangyuan NNR has an estimated 420,000 herding Tibetan residents in and around the NR, with 52 towns between or near its 18 conservation areas (units). The reserve is of great importance for wildlife, wetlands, water catchment functions, and cultural values. Given the huge expanse of the reserve, different units include different habitats, wildlife and other features.

The Qinghai PA system is illustrated in below in **Exhibit 4**:



Note: Protected areas shaded in blue.

Title	National / Provincial	Counties	Area (km ²)	Year of gazette	Human population	International designation
1. Qaidam <i>Haloxylon</i> Forest *	P	Delingha City	37,345	2005	0	Part of IBA
2. Golmud <i>Populus euphratica</i>	P	Golmud City	42	2000	0	
3. Kekexili	N	Zhiduo County	45,000	1995	0	
4. Keluke Lake -Tuosu Lake	P	Delingha City	1,150	2000	No data	
5. Longbao wetland	N	Yushu County	100	1984	~200 families	
6. Mengda	N	Xunhua Salar Autonomous County	173	1980	No data	
7. Qinghai Lake (Bird Island)	N	Gonghe, Gangcha and Haiyan counties	4,952	1975	Several hundred	IBA, part is Ramsar site
8. Sanjiangyuan	N	Zhiduo, Yushu, Nangqian, Chengduo, Zado, Qumalai, Jiuzhi, Banma, Maqin, Maduo, Zeku, Henan, Xinghai, Tongde, Geermu (Tuotuohe)	152,300	2000	Several tens of thousands	IBA, Ramsar sites
9. Datong Beichuan	P	Datong	1,079	2005	No data	Part of IBA
10. Qilian Mountains*	P	Qilian, Menyuan, Tianjun, Delingha	8,344	2005	No data	
11. Nomuhong	P	Dulan	1,180	2005	0	

Note: * indicates NRs that are listed but have no boundary or management structure at all.

(Source: CSIS, 2010 and QFD 2010)

Exhibit 4: Protected Area System of Qinghai Province¹

2.2. Problems that the Project Sought to Address

Although Qinghai lists 11 nature reserves totaling an impressive 31% of the territory, the existing protected area (PA) system lacks adequate balance. The system shows significant gaps in ecosystem coverage and contains extensive overlap with other interests such as road construction, water diversion plans and herder community tenure rights. It also includes areas exhibiting serious land degradation resulting from a combination *inter alia* of overgrazing, engineering damage and climate change. Other problems facing the PA system include illegal gold mining and poaching, livestock fences interrupting wildlife migratory pathways, and aggressive pest control programmes aimed at small burrowing mammals but that also harm many collateral species.

¹ Source: Project Document

The project design outlines the following barriers that were preventing the establishment of an effectively managed and sustainable PA system in Qinghai:

Barrier 1: Disconnect between PA planning and management and provincial development and sectoral planning process

Effective PA management in Qinghai had been hindered by a lack of mainstreaming of the PA system and its objectives in the province's development and sector planning process. Coordination and cooperation between different government agencies was also almost non-existent; for example, with government agencies responsible for agriculture, livestock, environmental protection, and water resources operate inside PAs alongside the local prefecture and county governments. These institutions tended to operate independently from PA management authorities, such as QFD. Sub-provincial governments also planned and implemented work inside PAs without due coordination or consideration for biodiversity conservation.

Barrier 2: Inadequate resources, and weak institutional and staff capacities for PA management

Qinghai Forest Department's institutional capacity to oversee multiple PAs and to plan and manage a large PA like Sanjiangyuan NNR with many residents, which in fact requires landscape management beyond PA boundaries, was inadequate. Also, though considerable sums of government financing has been extended to PAs, the vast majority of this amount has been allocated to infrastructure such as roads and buildings, with limited funds spent on conservation work such as patrolling and afforestation, often without proper planning.

One of the underlying causes for the insufficient financing of the PAs are a lack of understanding of actual management needs and management costs, insufficient appreciation for the economic value of the PAs' varied ecological services.

At the sub-provincial level, on-the-ground PA management is the primary responsibility of field staff provided by local governments (prefecture and county). Such staff has almost no specific training in PA management.

There was also a serious geographical representational gap in the Qinghai PA system; for example the system includes only 13 out of the province's 30 vegetation types; excluding Qilian Mountains PNR and Qaidam *Haloxylon* Forest PNR, which at the time of project design were "paper PAs", having no clearly defined boundary, management structure or staff.

Barrier 3: Limited participation and capacity of local communities in PA management

As in other parts of China, Qinghai's PAs are composed of state and community managed lands. Much of the pasture lands have been allocated to local households on long-term contracts for management and use. Effective PA management, therefore, depends on sustainable management of land by local communities. As many of the PAs were established on pre-existing community rangelands, there are potential conflicts between traditional land use rights and conservation objectives. Finding solutions to this inherent inconsistency associated with user rights and governance remains a key challenge of the province.

2.3. Project Description and Strategy

The project **goal** is to strengthen the effectiveness of the PA system in Qinghai Province, China to conserve globally important biodiversity. The project objective is **to catalyze management effectiveness of Qinghai's PA system to fulfill its purpose of conserving globally important**

biodiversity, by removing the barriers mentioned above with three inter-related outcomes. The focus of the project is to strengthen the PA system in Qinghai to better protect a representative sample of its unique biodiversity and more effectively manage this PA network as a whole. With GEF support, interventions at the level of Qinghai PA system will:

- i. Mainstream the PA system and its objectives into provincial development and sector planning framework, develop a comprehensive PA system plan with climate change adaptation strategies, and establish a knowledge management system to support biodiversity-sensitive decision-making in various sector activities and PA planning and management, strengthen the enabling legal framework, incentives and participative mechanisms, and mobilize necessary investments to support the expansion and effective management of the PA network;
- ii. Strengthen the institutional and human resource capacity to establish and maintain an effectively managed PA system over the long term and support the cost-effective and sustainable management of PAs by building up their operational capacities, and engendering necessary investments to manage threats to biodiversity. This implies directing provincial strategic planning, policy-making, legislation, funding, tools and incentive structures towards active biodiversity management of the Qinghai PA system, and linking PA development priorities toward optimizing the true value of PAs in the socio-economic development of the province and beneficiary downstream provinces.
- iii. Promote and upscale models of community co-management in PAs in selected demonstration areas/communities within Sanjiangyuan NNR. Co-management activities would support enhancement of PA effectiveness through increased community participation and co-ownership of natural resources and their sustainable utilization, improved data collection storage and analysis, and development of appropriate compensation plans for continued or enhanced provision of ecological services.

2.4. Implementation Arrangements

The project is run under the national implementation modality (NIM), in line with the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the UNDP and the Government of China, and with the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP).

The implementation agency for the project is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) China Country Office, and the Qinghai Provincial Government functioning as the executing agency and the sole cofinancing partner. The Ministry of Finance of China (MoF) is the national GEF Focal Point for the project, and the national project director (NPD) is the deputy director of the Qinghai Forestry Department (QFD). Day-to-day execution duties are delegated to the Qinghai Forestry Department (QFD), specifically the Project Management Office (PMO) which coordinates implementation of international donor projects for the department.

Strategic guidance is provided by the Project Steering Committee (PSC), which is comprised of representatives from MoF, UNDP, QFD, and representatives from related provincial departments.

2.5. Project Timing and Milestones

Key project dates are listed below:

PIF Approval:	15 October 2009
PPG Approval Date:	15 October 2009
Approval Date:	17 March 2010

CEO Endorsement Date:	05 April 2012
Prodoc Signature by Ministry of Finance of China:	24 August 2012
GEF Agency Approval Date (Prodoc Signature by UNDP):	14 September 2012
Project Inception Workshop:	25 January 2013
Midterm Review:	June-July 2015
Project completion (planned)	31 December 2017

The project concept (project identification form) was approved on 15 October 2009, the same day the USD 100,000 GEF project preparation grant was appropriated. The resulting project document was endorsed by the GEF CEO on 05 April 2012, and later that year the Ministry of Finance of China agreed to project document, on 24 August, and the UNDP signed the document on 14 September. The project manager was hired in January 2013, and shortly afterwards, on 25 January 2013, the project inception workshop was held. The start date of the 5-year project is considered to be January 2013, and the planned completion date is 31 December 2017.

2.6. Main Stakeholders

The main stakeholders involved on the project are the Qinghai government and provincial sector departments, particularly the Forestry Department, the main agency managing PAs in Qinghai Province. Other key stakeholders include the local communities within and near the protected area system, including in the 12 pilot villages under Outcome 3 of the project.

A list of the project stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities is tabulated below.

Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities
Qinghai Governor's Office	Leadership and coordination for implementation of the project
Qinghai Province Development and Reform Commission	Coordination and implementation of Qinghai's Development Plan and Sanjiangyuan Ecological Conservation Programme
Qinghai Department of Finance	Responsible for the management of dedicated account and funds of the project, including compilation and submission of budget requests, oversight of spending, supplying of commitment of co-finance, signing of the donation agreement with the Ministry of Finance on behalf of provincial government. Supervision of the implementation and management of the assets of project.
Qinghai Forestry Department	Day-to-day operational execution of the project. Management of nature reserves, wetlands and wildlife.
Qinghai Environmental Protection Bureau	Coordination of environmental issues, pollution, and CBD implementation and reporting.
Management bureaus of major NNRs (Sanjiangyuan, Kekexili, Qinghai Lake)	Protection and management of NNR, visitor control and environmental education/awareness.
Qinghai Forest Inventory & Planning Institute	Studies and planning within the forestry sector.
Qinghai Bureau of Agriculture / Department of Animal Husbandry	Responsible for grassland utilization, health and management of domestic livestock, pest control programmes, also management of aquatic products (including fisheries).
Qinghai Department of Land and Resources	Supervision and promotion of exploration and the development of Qinghai's mineral resources. Also responsible for land use planning.
Qinghai Meteorological Bureau	Monitoring of climatic factors, models of climate change, effects on vegetation, etc.

Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities
Qinghai Water Resource Department	Water security (quantity, seasonality and quality) with particular interest in safeguarding the catchments areas of the Yellow, Yangtze and Mekong rivers.
Qinghai Environmental Monitoring Center	Monitoring of environmental conditions in the province.
Qinghai Fishery Environmental Monitoring Center	Monitoring of aquatic resources in rivers and lakes.
Northwest Plateau Institute of Biology, CAS	Multi-disciplinary studies of Tibetan plateau ecosystems, including Qinghai Lake, Sanjiangyuan and Kekexili areas. Sub-contracted assistance for biodiversity baseline studies.
Qinghai Academy of Social Sciences	Multi-disciplinary studies in socio-economic development, policy analysis, culture.
Academic institutions (e.g., universities)	Sub-contracted research, specialist training workshops, post-graduate courses and programs.
Local target communities / project partners	Traditional management of grassland/rangeland, wetland and forest ecosystems. Co-management and environmental monitoring in several parts of NRs.
Other local communities	Traditional management of grassland/rangeland, wetland and forest ecosystems. Not formal partners in co-management, but communities with institutions from which the project can learn (e.g., forms of community governance, traditional use of biodiversity, pastoralism, etc.).
NGOs in Qinghai Province (e.g., SGREPA, Plateau Perspectives)	Concerns for the environment, biodiversity, and/or the welfare of local communities.
Other NGOs (e.g., Shan Shui, WWF, FFI, WCS, TNC, etc.)	Concerns for the environment, biodiversity, and/or the welfare of local communities.

2.7. Project Budget and Finance

The project implementation budget is USD 5,354,545 (GEF grant), as shown below in **Exhibit 5** broken down among the three outcomes and project management.

Exhibit 5: Breakdown of Project Budget and Financing			
Component	GEF Grant Prodoc Budget % of Total	Committed Cofinancing	
		Source	Value
Outcome 1: Mainstreaming PA management into provincial development and sector planning process	USD 550,000 10%	Government, Cash	USD 2,000,000
		Government, In-Kind	USD 990,000
Outcome 2: Increasing PA management effectiveness through strengthened institutional and staff capacities	USD 1,510,000 28%	Government, Cash	USD 6,060,000
		Government, In-Kind	USD 1,037,100
Outcome 3: Demonstration of Effective PA management through community involvement in the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve (SNNR)	USD 2,764,000 52%	Government, Cash	USD 5,820,000
		Government, In-Kind	USD 1,114,000
Project Management	USD 530,545 10%	Government, Cash	USD 722,900
		Government, In-Kind	USD 756,000
Total:	USD 5,354,545	Total:	USD 18,500,000

Source: Project Document

Sub-total Government Cofinancing, Cash USD 14,602,900
 Sub-total Government Cofinancing, In-Kind USD 3,897,100

The total amount of pledged cofinancing was USD 18,500,000, committed by the Qinghai Provincial Government, and including USD 14,602,000 in in-kind contributions and USD 3,897,100 in cash.

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Project Strategy

3.1.1. Project Design

The project design was, for the most part, sound, with the first component focusing on mainstreaming biodiversity conservation within provincial level sectoral plans and the upcoming 13th 5-year plan. The second component focuses on improvements to management effectiveness and financial sustainability of the PA system, which at the time of project development included 5 national level nature reserves (NRs) and 6 provincial level NRs. Among the 11 NRs, 10 of them are administered under the Qinghai Forestry Department, while the 11th is managed by the Provincial Environmental Protection Bureau. More than half of the implementation budget, 52% to be exact was allocated for the activities under the third project component, which includes facilitating community-driven, collaborative PA management in select pilot villages.

A few shortcomings with respect to the design include the following:

- The mainstreaming component did not include involvement of land use planning, which is critical in shaping resource conservation and exploitation priorities on both provincial and sub-provincial scales;
- Also with respect to the mainstreaming component, there is insufficient focus on developing and possibly also piloting incentives for encouraging production sector stakeholders to engage in biodiversity conservation initiatives;
- The use of scorecards to measure the degree in which management effectiveness, capacity development, and financial sustainability have improved is reasonably sensible, particularly from a project management perspective, e.g., identifying gaps that could be addressed during project implementation. But, without somehow integrating these assessment tools into the PA management structure, it is difficult to garner the level of ownership needed.
- There was a fairly weak replication strategy for upscaling the village demonstrations under the third component of the project, and there were unclear sustainability structures built in for ensuring stakeholder involvement, e.g., from the SNNR Management Bureau following project closure.

3.1.2. Results Framework

As part of the midterm review, the strategic results framework agreed upon for the project was analyzed using SMART criteria (S: specific; M: measurable; A: achievable; R: relevant; T: time-bound). The results summarized in **Exhibit 6** and discussed below.

For GEF-financed projects, objective and outline level targets for performance indicators are designed to be achievable within a project timeframe. The end of the 5-year project is assumed to be the timeframe for achieving each of the project targets.

Objective-Level Indicators and Targets: The first two objective level targets are based upon results of the UNDP Financial Sustainability scorecard and the GEF-adapted Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT). Baseline scores were established for the year 2011, and specific, numeric targets are set for end-of-project achievement. The capacity development scorecard is rather general, and it is questionable whether a specific score can be considered relevant or representative for the entire PA system. Also, there is a concern regarding objectivity of the scoring, and whether the assessed scores are representative of a particular NR or the PA

system as a whole. The third objective level indicator is based upon selected indicator species exhibiting stable or increasing populations as compared to baseline conditions. The baseline surveys were made late, in 2014, so it is doubtful that an assessment can be made at the end of the project in 2017 showing statistical differences in population size or structure.

Outcome 1 Indicators and Targets: The indicators and targets under Outcome 1 were mostly found to be compliant with SMART criteria. For indicator 1.2, the target for infrastructure standards includes a statement indicating that the developed standards should include “clear rehabilitation/offset mechanisms”. It does not seem practicable to establish rehabilitation/offset mechanisms in each standards; it might be more relevant to develop a guidance document for biodiversity rehabilitation/offsets for infrastructure projects in the province. Considerable project resources are being used to develop a knowledge management system (KMS) and the KMS will likely be one of the tangible legacies of the project. There was no performance indicator developed to capture the added value of the KMS.

Outcome 2 Indicators and Targets: With respect to PA staffing, the targets under this outcome are 360 permanent and 150 temporary staff for the PA system by the end of the project. The relevance of this target is questionable, as it does not address potential uneven hiring patterns, i.e., staffing might increase in one or two of the NR’s, but remain unchanged in others. Similarly, the target of achieving the basic level of PA financing of USD 6.6 million per year by the end of the project, also does not distinguish differences in funding among the NR’s. For example, the situational analysis included in the project document indicates that the bulk of PA funding is extended to 2 of the 11 NR’s. With respect to the indicator of narrowing the spending gap between field operations and infrastructure is relevant, but the term “field operations” is not defined, thus difficult to measure. There are also measurability concerns with respect to Indicator 2.5, as access to official statistics on illegal incidents is limited and there were no baseline figures provided. For indicator 2.6, regarding diverting income from eco-compensation agreements to PA management will be difficult to achieve if the funds from the Sanjiangyuan Ecological Construction Plan is excluded, as the government has consolidated all ecological compensation programs in recent years.

Outcome 3 Indicators and Targets: With respect to Indicator 3.1.1, it would be advisable to be more specific regarding the area closed for domestic grazing, e.g., whether the target 4,000 km² is for the 12 pilot villages or for the PA system in general. For Indicator 3.1.2, establishing 500 km² of open corridors is not particularly measurable the open grassland landscapes characteristics of large parts of the PA system. Improvement in management effectiveness of the SNNR due to co-management arrangements is the focus of Indicator 3.3; the SNNR covers a vast area (152,300 km²), and the demonstration collaborative management structures are being piloted in 3 of the 18 blocks of the reserve. It is questionable whether these pilot demonstrations can influence the management effectiveness of the entire nature reserve. For Indicator 3.5, participatory rural appraisals (PRAs) were completed in the pilot villages, but the term “positive attitude towards PA conservation” was not specifically surveyed. It would, therefore, be difficult to measure improvements by the end of the project. Also, the relevance of such an attitude survey needs to be carefully considered; e.g., there should be a sufficient gap in time between asking the similar questions to the same people.

Exhibit 6: SMART Analysis of Strategic Results Framework

No.	Indicator	End-of-Project Target	S: Specific	M: Measurable	A: Achievable	R: Relevant	T: Time-bound
Project Objective: To catalyze management effectiveness of Qinghai’s PA system to fulfil its purpose of conserving globally important biodiversity							
Ob 1	Financial sustainability score (%) for national systems of protected areas: Component 1 – Legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks Component 2 – Business planning and tools for cost- effective management Component 3 – Tools for revenue generation	30% (baseline 15.4%) 50% (baseline 11.5%) 40% (baseline 8.5%)					
Ob 2	METT scores for different PAs: SNNR Mengda Kekexili Qinghai Lake Golmud Poplar forest	70% (baseline: 33%) 65% (baseline 54%) 65% (baseline 50%) 75% (baseline 58%) 50% (baseline 22%)					
Ob 3	Selected indicator species that are rare and threatened show stable or upward trends in numbers (including INTER ALIA wild yak, wild ass, Tibetan antelope, snow leopard, Pallas' cat, musk deer, white-lipped deer, black-necked crane, etc.)	Key wildlife populations maintained or increasing; appropriate population structure					
Outcome 1: Mainstreaming PA management into provincial development and sector planning process							
1.1	PA system and its management mainstreamed within the provincial sectoral and development planning framework at the provincial level: indicated by clear inclusion of due consideration and concrete measures for biodiversity conservation and PA development, as well as earmarked budget in the sectoral development plans at provincial levels and in the (national) 13th 5-year plan.	At least 3 sectoral plans integrate consideration of PAs and of biodiversity conservation measures 13 th 5 year-Plan recognizes clear linkage between PAs and provincial development, and includes PA- and biodiversity-related targets and budgets					
1.2	Threats to PAs from infrastructure placement (roads, dams) and other adverse forms of land use avoided, mitigated or offset, leading to more effective conservation in Qinghai’s PA system covering 251,665km ² .	Official standards for infrastructure development and operation within the PAs are developed and operationalized, with clear rehabilitation/offset mechanism.					
Outcome 2: Increasing PA management effectiveness through strengthened institutional and staff capacities							
2.1	Capacity development scorecard (%) for the protected area system.	60% (baseline 35.5%)					

Exhibit 6: SMART Analysis of Strategic Results Framework

No.	Indicator	End-of-Project Target	S: Specific	M: Measurable	A: Achievable	R: Relevant	T: Time-bound
2.2	Strategic plans prepared for PA institutions and procedures and investment, and PA staff numbers dramatically increased Permanent Staff Temporary Staff	Strategic Plan developed and adopted 360 (baseline 160) 150 (baseline 5)	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green
2.3	Province’s system level PA financing increased to close the existing annual financing gap of US\$ 4.6 million for basic expenditure scenario (tracked with PA financial sustainability scorecard)	USD 6.6 million per year (baseline USD 2 million per year)	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Green
2.4	Ratio of total PA budget spent on field operations raised to narrow spending gap	>30% of PA revenue spent on field operations (baseline <10%)	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green
2.5	Reduction in illegal incident cases within the NRs – poaching, illegal harvesting, illegal-grazing, etc.	Functioning policing records system with links to police/ court cases and an enhanced policing mandate of NR staff.	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green
		Routine report forms designed for numerical analysis.	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
		Incidents reduced to 50% of the baseline level.	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green
2.6	Annual income diverted to PA management from eco-compensation agreements (excluding funds arising from the Sanjiangyuan Ecological Construction Plan)	>USD 1.0m (baseline 0)	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green
2.7	More representative PA system approved with most of ‘major vegetation types’ represented (>5% coverage) in the NNR’s	22 of 30 habitats (addition of desert and Qilian montane habitats, with an overall increase of 18,000,000 ha in the provincial PA system)	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Outcome 3: Demonstration of Effective PA management through community involvement in the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve (SNNR)							
3.1.1	Extent of area (ha) closed from domestic grazing	4,000 km ² (baseline 1,000 km ²)	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
3.1.2	Area of open corridors	500 km ² (baseline 0)	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green

Exhibit 6: SMART Analysis of Strategic Results Framework

No.	Indicator	End-of-Project Target	S: Specific	M: Measurable	A: Achievable	R: Relevant	T: Time-bound
3.1.3	Area within the PA under community co-management	8,886 km ² (baseline 2,440 km ²)	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
3.2	Increase in the key species number and distributions in target co-management community sites (up to 12 community field sites)	Key wildlife populations maintained or increasing in co-management areas	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
3.3	Management effectiveness increased in SNNR due to co-management arrangements using the METT tracking tool	70% (baseline 33%)	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green
3.4	Number of private-NR or of community co-management agreements: Private enterprise management agreements Informal, non-binding, agreements Formal, legally binding, agreements	At least 1 >10 agreements >2 agreements	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
3.5	Awareness surveys among communities show increased positive attitude towards PA conservation	Baseline + 50% positive attitude	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green

Note: The color coding is described as follows: Green indicates that the indicators and targets are SMART-compliant; Yellow indicates that there is questionable compliance with SMART criteria; and Red indicates that the indicator and/or target are not compliant with SMART criteria.

3.1.3. Gender Mainstreaming Analysis

The project does not have a specific gender strategy, and there was no evidence indicating that gender specialists were consulted during the project design and preparation phase. Most of the considerations regarding gender inclusion during the implementation phase have been on the third component of the project, village demonstrations, but in fact, there are opportunities to address gender mainstreaming in other two components as well. For example, the sectoral plans under discussion in Outcome 1 could include deliberate gender strategies, and specific actions could be recommended for inclusion in the 13th 5-year plan. The project’s results framework indicators are not disaggregated by gender or socio-economic group, including the target of increasing PA staffing.

Group/Activity	Total number	Women participation
Project Steering Committee	25	4
Project training	440 person-time	126 person-time
Rangers for 12 demonstration villages	501	40

Group/Activity	Total number	Women participation
Members for 12 demonstration villages' co-management committees	192	8
Provincial PMO	19	8
4 townships PMO	28	2
Specialists hired by this project	18	1
Legislation specialists group	7	2
Inter departments engineering management regulations specialists group	14	4
13 th five year planning specialists group	10	4
BSAP specialists group	12	2
KMS specialists group	7	2

A brief GENDER analysis is presented below.

		Midterm Assessment:
G	Gap-minded: Addressing the gaps and inequalities between women and men, boys and girls	Some gaps are identified in participatory rural appraisals (PRAs) completed in pilot villages.
En	Encompassing: Developed on the basis of participatory approaches and inclusive processes	Potential cooperatives under consideration include women groups (e.g., handicrafts).
D	Disaggregated: By sex, and wherever possible by age and by socio-economic group (or any other socially significant category in society)	Improvements could be made on disaggregating trainings provided to villagers.
E	Enduring: Having a long-term, sustainable perspective, because social change takes time	Collaborative management arrangements after project closure are not yet worked out.
R	Rights observing: In accordance with human rights laws and standards	Participatory approach to village natural resource management is highly sensitized to the culture and traditions of the local Tibetan communities.

3.2. Progress toward Results

3.2.1. Progress towards Outcomes Analysis

Objective: To catalyze management effectiveness of Qinghai's PA system to fulfill its purpose of conserving globally important biodiversity

Objective level performance indicators include Financial Sustainability scorecard results, Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scoring results for the 5 national NRs, and populations of selected indicator species for the three target units in the SNNR.

With respect to the Financial Sustainability scorecard, the baseline figures indicated in the strategic results framework do not match with those in the Excel file from 2011:

Financial Sustainability Scorecard Components	Baseline indicated in prodoc	Baseline indicated in 2011 Excel file	Midterm assessment by PMO	End of Project Target
Component 1 – Legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks	15.4%	38.5%	50%	30%
Component 2 – Business planning and tools for cost-effective management	11.5%	9.83%	19.67%	50%
Component 3 – Tools for revenue generation	8.5%	22.87%	24.56%	40%

The baseline figures should first be reconciled, and the strategic results framework updated.

Significant improvement has been concluded for Component 1 (*Legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks*), largely due to the biodiversity mainstreaming efforts under Outcome 1 of the project. There has also been some improvement in Component 2 (*Business planning and tools for cost-effective management*), although the midterm assessment is considerably short of the 50% end of project target. The alternative PA financing study sponsored by the project provides options for revenue generation, but these have not yet been operationalized. So, the improvement under Component 3 (*Tools for revenue generation*) is understandably modest.

With respect to the METT scores for the national NRs, there are also discrepancies in the baseline figures:

METT Scores for National NRs	Baseline indicated in prodoc	Baseline indicated in 2011 Excel file	Midterm assessment by PMO	End of Project Target
SNNR	33%	32%	59%	70%
Mengda	54%	54%	67%	65%
Kekexili	50%	40%	60%	65%
Qinghai Lake	58%	53%	75%	75%
Golmud Poplar Forest	22%	23%	51%	50%

The midterm METT assessment results indicate improvements from baseline figures ranging from 20% for the Mengda NR to 131% for the Golmud Poplar Forest NR. However, the midterm METT assessment has several inconsistencies and incorrect entries in it, and some of the baseline figures seem to have been either under-rated or over-rated (see **Annex 10**). If the baseline figures are questionable, then the performance targets might also need to be adjusted.

Three different versions of the midterm assessment of the GEF Tracking Tool for Biodiversity were reviewed over the course of the MTR. A summary of some of the inconsistencies observed in the tracking tool, for the third version (28 July 2015) are compiled in **Annex 10**. There remain a number of inconsistencies and mistakes in this document. In the opinion of the lead MTR reviewer, a comprehensive review should be made of the midterm tracking tool, baseline conditions, and finally, of indicators and targets established in the strategic results framework.

As indicated earlier, baseline biodiversity surveys were carried out in 2014 for the three target units in the SNNR. The MTR team question if there will be statistically relevant information by the end of the project, which is 2-1/2 years away, to support an assessment of whether the populations of these species have stable or increased in number.

Outcome 1: Mainstreaming PA management into provincial development and sector planning process

Indicative budget in project document:	USD 550,000
Actual cost incurred on this Outcome through 31 May 2015:	USD 179,174

Summary of Achievements:

- ✓ The project has made good progress with respect to mainstreaming biodiversity conservation issues into provincial sector plans. The performance target was 3 sector plans, but the project is in fact working on 1+4, i.e., 5 in total; including the Provincial Development and Reform Commission, the Forestry Department, the Animal Husbandry Department, the Environmental Protection Department/Bureau, and the Hydrologic Water Management Department.
- ✓ The project has facilitated cross-sectoral advisory groups, headed by the Provincial Legislative Office, to guide the development of sectoral plans, regulations, and also input to the 13th 5-year plan.
- ✓ As an adaptive management measure, the project has also provided support to the Qinghai Environmental Monitoring Center in finalizing the Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (QBSAP). At the time of project development, it was assumed that the QBSAP would be ready when the project started implementation, and the mainstreaming efforts would be designed around it. However, the QBSAP was not ready in time, and the project has sponsored inputs from both national and international consultants.
- ✓ With respect to regulations and guidelines, the project has already supported completion of the following ones: (1) road construction and operation, and (2) electricity transmission line construction and operation. And, they are working on developing three other ones: (3) agriculture and animal husbandry infrastructure development, (4) agriculture and animal husbandry pest control, and (5) river sand extraction.
- ✓ The development of a knowledge management system (KMS) is also included under this project component. The project has procured the software development component of the KMS; a team at the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) is working on this.

Key Deliverables:

- ✓ Qinghai Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP)
- ✓ The second draft of 'Environment Protection guideline of Road Construction'
- ✓ The first draft of 'Management Regulation of Sand Extraction in Rivers'
- ✓ The second draft of 'Environment Protection Regulation and Guidelines of Power Transmission Line Construction'

Discussion/Shortcomings:

Output 1.1: Inter-sectoral coordination and planning mechanism established to integrate PA systems and objectives into development and sectoral planning process.

As indicated earlier, there has been good progress under the activities in Output 1.1. During the second half of the project, there should be more focus on actionizing key activities into sectoral plans and the 13th 5-year plan, i.e., realizing approved budget allocation for specific biodiversity conservation activities.

With respect to the QBSAP, based upon preliminary review by the MTR team, there is insufficient focus on potential climate change impacts to biodiversity dynamics. And, the shortfalls in PA staffing and financing, which form the basis for this GEF-funded project, are not adequately represented among the proposed actions. Also, as documented in consultant reports, there is insufficient description and quantification of ecosystem services provided by biodiversity of Qinghai.

The limited involvement by land use planning stakeholders is considered a significant shortcoming, as land use planning is a critical component of biodiversity mainstreaming. More than half the territory of the Qinghai Province is delineated as Key Ecological Function Areas (see **Exhibit 7**).

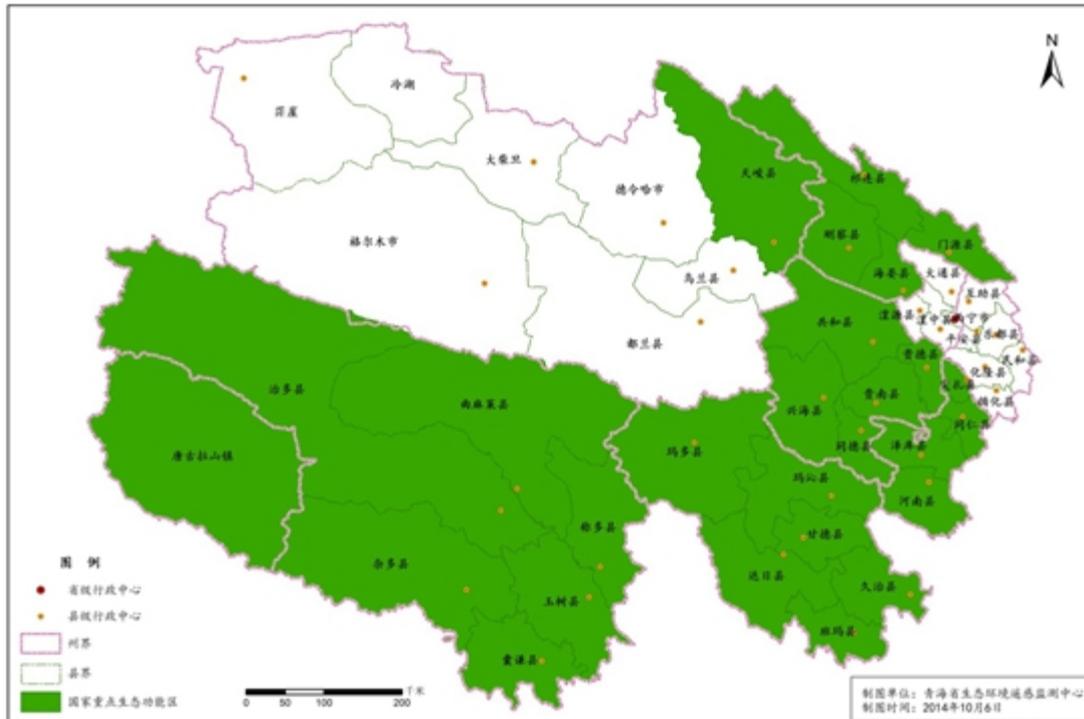


Exhibit 7: Map showing Key Ecological Function Areas in Qinghai Province

In the opinion of the MTR team, the project should engage both provincial and county level land use planners in the second half of the project.

There are also a couple of production sectors that have so far been reluctant to participate in the mainstreaming process; these include the mining and hydroelectric power sectors. The project should continue advocating involvement by these important production sectors.

Output 1.2: Institutional capacities of the provincial government built for planning, monitoring and enforcement of biodiversity management to avoid/mitigate threats to PAs

Interaction of cross-sectoral provincial departmental staff in the project activities has contributed to strengthening of both individual and institutional capacities. There are, however, capacity gaps at the provincial and sub-provincial levels, specifically with respect to biodiversity conservation strategic planning and management implementation. The QFD, which is responsible for 10 of the 11 NRs in the province, is understandably comprised mostly of forestry experts, who have not received in-depth training or extensive experience in biodiversity conservation.

With the talented pool of national and international consultants, the project has a unique opportunity to facilitate capacity building with the provincial and sub-provincial stakeholders.

Output 1.3: Knowledge management system established including climate change resilience monitoring component

Considerable amounts of resources are being invested in the development of the knowledge management system. According to a preliminary review by the MTR team, the system under

development is more of an information management system than a knowledge management system, with a heavy emphasis on software and hardware components. And there are certain features, such as transfer of data via mobile telephone, which cannot be operationalized in the remote villages at the present time. Also, it is questionable if the current capacities of the local communities, where literacy rates are low, are sufficient to support the system as collaborative monitoring and patrolling stakeholders.

The MTR team received a tour of the environmental information management system operated by the Qinghai Provincial Environmental Monitoring Center. This system was quite sophisticated and the staff members running it seem to be highly qualified. These observations raised the question of why does the QFD need a separate information management system, rather than building upon the existing one at the Environmental Monitoring Center.

The overall strategy of the KMS is also unclear. The project management team together with the project partners should develop a KMS strategy, outlining roles and responsibilities, how the system will support management processes, and how will information be interpreted and disseminated.

Outcome 2: Increasing PA management effectiveness through strengthened institutional and staff capacities
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Indicative budget in project document:	USD 1,510,000
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Actual cost incurred on this Outcome through 31 May 2015:	USD 740,287
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Summary of Achievements:

- ✓ The project has sponsored a comprehensive institutional diagnosis and training needs assessment, and trainings have been delivered on a wide range of topics, including:
 - Nature reserve management planning;
 - Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT);
 - GIS applications;
 - Computer applications;
 - Study tour to visit nature reserves in Sichuan province;
 - Study tour to Denmark on improved nature reserve management;
 - Wildlife and ecology;
 - Climate change and biodiversity conservation strategic planning;
 - METT and financial sustainability scorecard applications.

According to project management reports, there have been a total of 440 person-days of training delivered, including 127 person-days of women participants.

- ✓ A report on Investing and Financing Analysis and Creative Mechanism of Protected Areas was completed in 2014; providing analyses on improved PA revenue generation and retention.
- ✓ Management plans for 8 of the 11 nature reserves (NRs) are being developed with project support. As of the midterm, second drafts of management plans of the following nature reserves have been completed: Qinghai Lake NR, Qaidam Haloxylon Forest NR, Kekexili NR, Golmud Poplar Forest NR, and the Qumahe Block of the SNNR.

- ✓ The project also supported the preparation of the requisite supporting documentation for proclaiming 6 wetland parks and 2 desert national parks. These provide further protected area coverage in Qinghai Province.
- ✓ Together with the Wildlife and Nature Reserve Management Bureau of the QFD, the project is supporting an update to the provincial PA Development Plan (2011-2020), with special consideration of potential climate change impacts, and vegetation studies will be completed to evaluate the current representation of vegetation types within the PA system.

Key Deliverables:

- ✓ The first draft of 'Qinghai Provincial Ecological Protection Regulation for Sanjiangyuan Region'
- ✓ Qinghai PAs Costing and investment Research Report
- ✓ Qinghai Makehe Ecotourism Development Plan
- ✓ Qinghai PA Institutional and Training Need Assessment Report
- ✓ A research report of Climate Resilience and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy
- ✓ The second draft of Qinghai Lake nature reserve management plan
- ✓ The first draft of Mengda nature reserve management plan
- ✓ The first draft of Datongbeichuan nature reserve management plan
- ✓ The second draft of Kekexili nature reserve management plan
- ✓ The second draft of Qaidam Haloxylon Forest nature reserve management plan
- ✓ The second draft of Golmud Populus Forest nature reserve management plan
- ✓ The first draft of Makehe Block management plan of SNNR
- ✓ The first draft of Suojia Block management plan of SNNR
- ✓ The second draft of Qumahe Block management plan of SNNR
- ✓ The biodiversity baseline survey reports of Suojia-Qumahe Block of SNNR
- ✓ The biodiversity baseline survey reports of Makehe Block of SNNR
- ✓ The biodiversity baseline survey reports of Zhalinghu-Elinghu Block of SNNR

Discussion/Shortcomings:

Output 2.1: Systemic capacity strengthened for effective PA system management

Based upon the midterm capacity development scorecard assessment carried out by project management team with input from QFD officials, there has been a 100% improvement from 2011, when the baseline score was 35% to 2015, when the first midterm score was indicated to be 70%. Following the first draft of the MTR, the project team reassessed the capacity development scorecard, and concluded a score of 63.7%. While the MTR team concurs that the capacity of the Qinghai PA system management has been strengthened, the midterm assessments seem to be a bit over-rated. For example:

- Indicator 8 (Extent of inclusion/use of traditional knowledge in environmental decision-making) has improved from a score of 1 in 2011 to 2 in 2015. While the project is facilitating community driven collaborative management arrangements in the 12 pilot villages, there is no evidence that these efforts have resulted in inclusion of traditional knowledge in PA management decision making processes. It is too early to conclude that. Note: the reassessed score on this indicator was downgraded from 2 to 1.

- Indicator 11 (Adequacy of the environmental information available for decision-making) was improved from a score of 1 in 2011 to the maximum allowable score of 3 in 2015. One of the reasons for developing the knowledge management system is that there is inadequate environmental information for decision-making, so this midterm score is questionable. Note: the reassessed score on this indicator was downgraded from 3 to 2.
- Indicator 12 (Existence and mobilization of resources) has improved from a score of 0 in 2011 to 2 in 2015. According to interviews during the MTR mission, insufficient resources remain a concern for effective management of the PA system. Note: the reassessed score on this indicator remained unchanged at 2.
- Indicator 14 (Adequacy of the project/programme monitoring process) has improved from a score of 0 in 2011 to 2 in 2015. The MTR team has not seen evidence of improvements in monitoring processes, on the PA system scale, over this time period. Note: the reassessed score on this indicator was downgraded from 2 to 1.
- Indicator 15 (Adequacy of the project/programme evaluation process) has improved from a score of 0 in 2011 to 2 in 2015. It is unclear what evaluation has been put into place over this time period. Note: the reassessed score on this indicator remained unchanged at 2.

Output 2.2: Institutional strengthening plan adopted and operationalized

There has not been a specific institutional strengthening plan prepared. In progress reports, reference is made to the report on *Investing and Financing Analysis and Creative Mechanism of Protected Areas*. As the title implies, this report focuses on alternative PA financing.

In terms of PA staffing, the strategic results framework indicates that in 2011, the baseline year, there were 160 permanent staff and 5 temporary. According to records kept by the component manager, the total number of PA staff in 2013, when he started his position, was 113. In the 2 year period from 2013-14, there were 118 new permanent staff added, and these included 106 PA police, 8 in management, and 4 retired persons from the military who also presumably are working in enforcement. This large increase is generally considered a one-off, partially in response to negative publicity last year associated with the environmental incident at the coal mine near the Qilian Mountain NR. Otherwise, there are fairly rigid government restrictions on hiring new staff, and not only PA staff, it is an across the board policy.

The available information regarding PA staffing is compiled below in **Exhibit 8**.

Exhibit 8: Comparison of available information on PA staffing										
Nature Reserve	Prodoc Baseline, Indicator 2.2		Prodoc Target (Year 5), Indicator 2.2		End of 2014* (MTR mission interviews)		METT 2011 (attached to prodoc)		METT 20150728 (midterm assessment)	
	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary
Qinghai Lake NNR	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	40	48	20	28
Golmud poplar forest PNR	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	2	3	6	6
Kekexili NNR	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	35	15	37	20
Mengda NNR	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	25	33	52	30
Sanjiangyuan NNR	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	13	18	13	7
Sub-Total, 5 NR's in METT	160 (113**)	5	360	150	not indicated	not indicated	115	117	128	91
Other 6 NR's and other PA staff	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated
Total PA System	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	231	273	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated	not indicated

*Staff numbers for end of year 2014 provided to MTR team during mission interview with component manager.

**According to component manager, prodoc baseline of 160 permanent staff was incorrect; the correct figure is reportedly 113.

The first observation upon review of the available PA staffing information is that the baseline figures indicated in the strategic results framework are different from the baseline figures included in the METT baseline scorecards. Under indicator No. 2.2 in the strategic results framework, the permanent and temporary numbers of staff members for the PA system were indicated to be 160 and 5, respectively. However, the 2011 METT baseline scorecards indicated the permanent and temporary numbers of staff members for the 5 NR's assessed were 115 and 117, respectively. This is a significant inconsistency, one that should have been picked up at the project document validation workshop, or at least at the project inception workshop.

During the MTR mission, the MTR team was informed that the baseline figure of 160 permanent staff members recorded in the strategic results framework under indicator No. 2.2, is incorrect, and should have been 113. This number more closely matches the sum of permanent staff for the 5 NR's assessed in the METT scorecards: 115 staff. The MTR team was also informed that by the end of 2014, the numbers of permanent and temporary staff members were 231 and 273, respectively. However, based upon the midterm assessment of the METT scorecards for the 5 assessed NR's, the combined numbers of permanent and temporary staff members were 128 and 91, respectively.

If we consider the changes in staffing from 2011 to 2014 based upon the information in the METT scorecards, which contain the most detailed evidence available, the progress toward achievement of indicator No. 2.2 would be assessed as unsatisfactory, as the total number of PA staff (permanent and temporary) in 2104 has decreased by 5.6% compared to the 2011 information, and in fact, the number of permanent staff for the Qinghai Lake NR as decreased from 40 in 2011 to 20 in 2014. But, the lead MTR reviewer has rather concluded that we are unable to assess the progress made towards achievement of this indicator because of the high level of inconsistency in the information available.

We recommend that a thorough review be made of the baseline conditions, midterm circumstances, and also the relevance of the indicator targets. And, it would be advisable to prepare clear procedures for measuring progress toward the performance targets. For example, if the number of PA police hired in the last 2 years (106) is deducted from the reported permanent number of PA staff members at the end of 2014 (231), the number is 125, which closely matches the combined total of permanent staff members in the 5 NR's assessed in the METT midterm assessment (128). This raises the question of what is considered the "PA system". If the baseline figure for the permanent number of PA staff members recorded in the prodoc for indicator No. 2.2 is indeed 113, then the "PA system" seems to be the 5 NR's assessed in the METT scorecards. So, in this case, the staff from the forest bureau police should not be added to the sum.

When reviewing the relevance of the performance indicators, it would be advisable to reconcile these questions, and the performance targets should be based upon strategic PA staffing plans.

Output 2.3: Budgeting procedures and resource allocation improved, directly addressing threats to PAs

The report on *Investing and Financing Analysis and Creative Mechanism of Protected Areas* provides information on the strengths and weaknesses on PA financing, and also presents opportunities for increasing and retaining revenue. But, there is no evidence indicating that any steps have been taken to operationalize these recommendations.

PA financing remains fragmented, divided across a number of State, provincial, and sub-provincial institutions. PA management units generally do not have discretion in terms of allocation of funding and retaining revenue earned by the PAs.

In terms of PA funding from ecological compensation programs, the situation is unclear. According to interviews during the MTR mission and general knowledge of the ecological compensation programs in China, the government has increased contributions to such programs. And, as more than half of Qinghai Province is proclaimed as a key ecological function area, primarily for water catchment, considerable funds are disbursed to provincial and sub-provincial administrations, and some also directly to non-governmental landowners, as much of the grassland ecosystems are community owned/leased. But, it is unclear how much of the funding contributed for ecological compensation is diverted for PA management. According to the midterm financial sustainability scorecard assessment, the amount of “Extra budgetary funding for PA management” channeled through the government was USD 596,774 per year in 2013-14, compared to USD 2,321,900 in the baseline year, 2011.

There are additional discrepancies among the available information on PA financing. Indicator 2.3 aims to close the gap between available PA financing and estimations of what level of financing is required to achieve the basic scenario of PA management. Again, the figure presented in the strategic results framework regarding this financing gap is not consistent with the figures included in the 2011 Financial Sustainability Scorecard, which is also part of the project document. The strategic results framework indicates a USD 4.6 million financing gap; however, the 2011 Financial Sustainability Scorecard includes two different figures for this gap: USD 3.6 million and USD 3.1 million (these observations are summarized in Annex 10 of the MTR report). As part of the midterm assessment of the GEF Tracking Tool for Biodiversity Project, the project team has revised the estimation of PA financing needs. This is sensible because there are changed circumstances, i.e., some of the NR’s have been upgraded from provincial to national ones, and this means available governmental financing is different, and also because there are inconsistencies in the baseline figures. But, there are also inconsistencies with respect to the financing gap between available funds at baseline and the revised estimation of PA financing needs for the basic PA management scenario: this financing gap is indicated to be USD 2.923 million, but after cross-checking the figures, the MTR team calculates a gap of USD 14.547 million (see Annex 10). This is a substantial discrepancy, one that should be reconciled. Based upon the inconsistencies outlined above, we conclude that we are unable to assess progress made towards achievement of this indicator.

Moving on to indicator No. 2.4, which is aimed at narrowing the gap between PA funding spent on “field operations” compared to infrastructure development. Firstly, the term “field operations” was not defined in the project document, and there is not a specific line item for this term in the Financial Sustainability Scorecard. In this case, it seems sensible to reformulate this indicator, so that performance assessment can be more readily made. As part of the Financial Sustainability Scorecard, there are estimations of PA financing needs for both basic and optimal PA management scenarios, and for each of these estimations there is a separate line item for “PA site management operational costs”. In the 2011 baseline estimation, the total PA financing needs for the basic PA management scenario was USD 6.5 million, and the estimation for PA site management operational costs was USD 3 million; in this case, the estimated PA site management operational cost needs is 46% of the total estimated financing needs (see **Exhibit 9** below).

Exhibit 9: Estimations of PA system financing needs (Basic Scenario)		
Financing Item	Financial Sustainability Scorecard (2011, attached to prodoc) % of total	Financial Sustainability Scorecard (20150728 midterm assessment) % of total
Total: Estimated financing needs for basic management costs (operational and investments to be covered)	USD 6,500,000	USD 17,376,800
PA Central system level operational costs (salaries, office maintenance, etc.)	USD 500,000 8%	not indicated
PA site management operational costs	USD 3,000,000 46%	USD 2,944,000 17%
PA site infrastructure investment costs	USD 2,000,000 31%	USD 13,032,800 75%
PA system capacity building costs for central and site levels (training, strategy, policy reform, etc.)	USD 1,000,000 15%	USD 1,400,000 8%

As indicated earlier, the project team has revised the estimation for PA financing needs, because of changed circumstances and possibly under-estimated figures indicated in the 2011 scorecard. The revised estimations for the basic PA management cost scenario are compiled in **Exhibit 9**. With respect to the revised estimations, in the opinion of the lead MTR reviewer, it would be advisable to round up these figures to the nearest USD 0.5 million. Presenting such precise figures is misleading, as it infers a high degree of certainty in the estimations. But, in fact, these are only estimations of future circumstances.

The larger concern with respect to the revised estimation of PA financing needs for the basic PA management scenario is the ratio of PA site management operational costs to total financing needs; the revised estimation is 17%, which much lower than the 46% ratio in the 2011 estimation, and inconsistent and even contradictory to the overall aim of narrowing this spending gap. The lead MTR reviewer recommends that the estimation regarding PA financing needs be reconsidered, and the ratio of operational to total financing be consistent with the strategic aim of the GEF incremental funding.

The estimated PA financing needs are compared to the total finances available to the PA system. In the 2011 Financial Sustainability Scorecard, the total finances available to the system were recorded to be USD 2.829 million, which included USD 1.036 million for operations and USD 1.793 million for infrastructure development (see **Exhibit 10**).

Exhibit 10: Finances available to the PA system		
Finance Item	Financial Sustainability Scorecard (2011, attached to prodoc) % of total	Financial Sustainability Scorecard (20150728 midterm assessment) % of total*
Total finances available to the PA system	USD 2,829,800	USD 19,295,600
Available for operations	USD 1,036,300 37%	USD 7,205,000 37%
Available for infrastructure development	USD 1,793,500 63%	USD 10,540,000 55%

Note: the figures for operations and infrastructure development do not add up to 100% of total; there is an 8% shortfall

There are also inconsistencies among the baseline 2011 figures indicated in the tracking tools. For example, the source of the funding for the USD 1.793 in infrastructure development is unclear, as one line item indicates that there was no governmental funding for infrastructure development,

and there is no indication of any non-governmental investment in infrastructure. These inconsistencies are summarized in Annex 10, which indicates the specific entries in question.

The midterm assessment of the total finances available to the PA system presents substantially different circumstances. There were more than USD 19 million available finances, including USD 7.205 million for operations and USD 10.54 million for infrastructure. This raises the question of whether the estimated PA financing needs for basic PA management have been achieved between 2011 and 2014. Until the inconsistencies in the PA financing needs assessments are reconciled and appropriate performance targets are established, the lead MTR reviewer concludes that we are unable to assess performance towards achievement of this indicator.

As part of the efforts designed to improve resource allocation within the PA system, indicator No. 2.5 was formulated to represent more effective enforcement of illegal incidents. During the MTR mission, the MTR team was informed that baseline conditions for this indicator could not yet be established, because of legal restrictions in regard to confidential information within Forestry Police Bureau files. The measurability of performance with respect to this indicator is, therefore, questionable, and possible alternative indicators were discussed. Following submittal of the first version of the MTR report, the PMO provided the MTR team with information on the number of illegal incidents over the time period of 2011 through 2014 that they were able to obtain from the QFD Forestry Police Bureau. The information was summarized from annual reports provided to the PMO from the QFD Forestry Police Bureau, and the data is compiled below in **Exhibit 11**.

Exhibit 11: Number of illegal incident cases			
Year	Administrative	Criminal	Total
2011	1908	34	1942
2012	1946	22	1968
2013	1848	24	1872
2014	1143	56	1199

Data provided by PMO; summary of annual reports of QFD Forestry Police Bureau

Note: criminal cases are more severe violations than administrative ones.

Considering the total number of illegal incidents in 2011 and 2014, there has been a 62% reduction: 1942 cases in 2011 and 1199 cases in 2014. But, if criminal cases are considered, there has been a 65% increase: 34 cases in 2011 and 56 cases in 2014. This demonstrates that assessing changes at face value can result in conflicting results. For example, because criminal cases are more severe violations, one might conclude that there has been unsatisfactory progress since 2011, as there were a significantly higher number of criminal cases in 2014. Alternatively, one might also conclude that the increased number of criminal cases represents more effective enforcement, e.g., due to increased number of forestry police staff, enhanced training, provision of better equipment, etc. In fact, there were 106 new forestry police hired in the time period between 2011 and 2014. This raises a question of whether a reduction in the number of incidents is a fair measure of improved enforcement. The lead MTR reviewer has assessed other GEF projects where an opposite approach has been applied, i.e., success was defined by an increase in the number of illegal incidents reported. But, there are also downsides to that approach, because eventually one would expect a decrease. Over the short term, however, an increase is more likely. The timeframe of the project should be taken into account; for GEF projects, outcome level indicators should be achievable within the timeframe of the implementation.

There are actually three sub-targets under indicator No. 2.5, including: (1) a functioning policing records system with links to police/court cases and an enhanced policing mandate of NR staff, and (2) routine report forms designed for numerical analysis, and (3) incidents reduced to 50% of the baseline levels. In the opinion of the lead MTR reviewer, the evidence available to assess progress towards indicator No. 2.5 is limited to the incident records provided by the forestry police bureau (and, as indicated, although the total number of cases has reduced, there has been an increase in criminal cases), and there is limited information available regarding the other sub-targets. It would be advisable to review the logic behind this indicator, decide whether adjustments to the performance targets should be established, and design how performance will be measured, not only looking at the face value of the change in the total number of illegal incidents.

Output 2.4: Business case made to show economic benefits from PA functions

Progress under this output includes report on *Investing and Financing Analysis and Creative Mechanism of Protected Areas*, and associated trainings delivered.

Also, the project has sub-contracted the Foreign Economic Cooperation Office (FECO), which is affiliated with the Ministry of Environment of China, for preparing an ecotourism development plan for Makehe County. The final version of the plan was delivered in March 2015.

One of the other aims under Component 2 involves increasing the annual income diverted to PA management operations from eco-compensation agreements (excluding funds arising from the Sanjiangyuan Ecological Construction Plan); this is indicator No. 2.6, and an end-of-project target of >USD 1 million was established. As explained by the project team during the MTR mission, there have been changed circumstances since project inception, i.e., the Government has taken steps to consolidate ecological compensation programs, so it would be difficult to measure if the Sanjiangyuan Ecological Construction Plan is excluded. According to some of the figures recorded in the midterm Financial Sustainability Scorecard, the target of USD 1 million seems too low. Due to the inconsistencies in the midterm Financial Sustainability Scorecard, the lead MTR reviewer has concluded that we are unable to assess progress towards achievement of this indicator. It would be advisable to carry out a comprehensive review of baseline conditions and current circumstances, and assign appropriate performance targets.

Output 2.5: PA staff skills raised, with 200 PA staff and other participants receiving training to better meet occupational competence standards

The project has done a good job with supporting capacity building trainings for PA staff and other participants. The number of staff members who have received training is unclear, as management is reporting person-time units, as some of the same staff members have participated in different trainings. There is also no evidence of institutionalizing trainings in the PA management structure, e.g., budgetary allocation for a capacity building program. The project has supported a comprehensive trainings needs assessment, but the MTR team is uncertain how the recommendations from that activity will be operationalized, i.e., indication of how the trainings will be integrated into the long-term capacity building programme of the QFD and what budget allocations have been estimated and approved.

Output 2.6: PA system plan developed with climate change considerations

Activities under this output have included biodiversity baseline surveys for three target units of the SNNR. Also, a climate resilience and PA planning specialist was recruited in 2014, and completed a research report in December 2014. Another substantive activity to date completed under this output has been preparation of management plans for 8 of the 11 nature reserves within the Qinghai PA system. Among those 8, there have been 5 that have been processed

through two revisions. Based upon review by the MTR team, the management plans were found to be realistic and implementable. There should, however, be more input from complementary activities on the project, including how the biodiversity baseline surveys will be used to develop conservation objectives and how subsequent assessments be programmed in the plan. Also, the METT might be considered as an integrated management tool. And, linkage with the community driven collaborative management arrangements piloted in Outcome 3 for three of the 18 SNNR blocks, should be better represented in the respective management plans.

Outcome 3: Demonstration of Effective PA management through community involvement in the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve (SNNR)

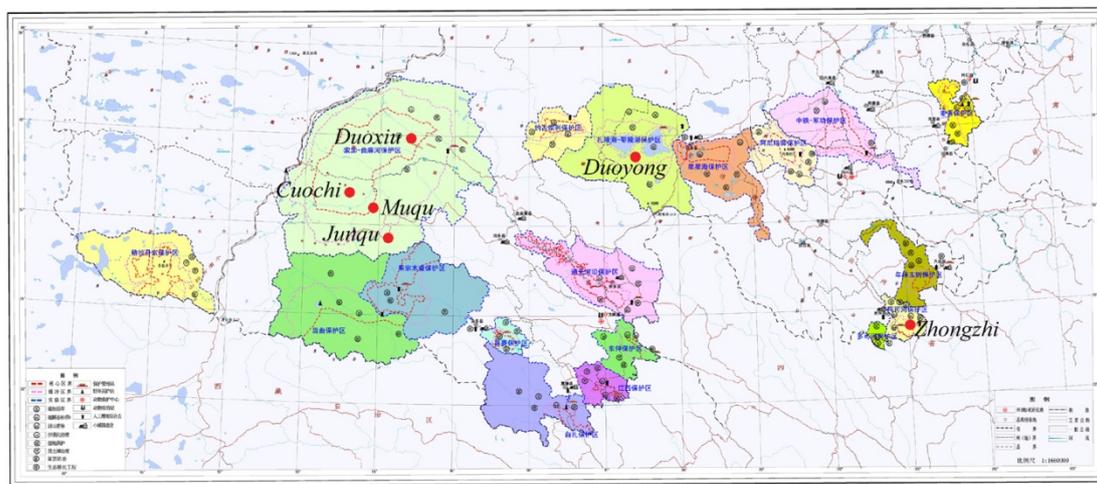
Indicative budget in project document: USD 2,764,000

Actual cost incurred on this Outcome through 31 May 2015: USD 747,524

Summary of Achievements:

- ✓ Community driven collaborative PA management arrangements are being piloted in 12 villages (see map in **Exhibit 12**), located in three different administrative blocks of the Sanjiangyuan nature reserve (SNNR), and representing three different ecosystem types: alpine grasslands, mountain forest, and wetlands.

青海三江源国家级自然保护区生态保护和建设规划区域位置及工程布局图



Source: Self midterm review report, 25 May 2015, PMO.

Exhibit 12: Map showing locations of pilot villages in the Sanjiangyuan Nature Reserve

- ✓ Participatory rural appraisals (PRAs) were carried out in the 12 pilot villages, and a team of national and an international consultant have led in-depth planning discussions with local communities, including facilitating the formation of collaborative management coordination committees in each village and introducing the concept of conservation zoning, capturing their traditional knowledge regarding biodiversity and cultural resource protection.
- ✓ Based upon community surveys and group discussions, the coordination committees came up with recommendations for demonstration activities, including monitoring and patrolling, solid waste management, alternative livelihood skills training, protection against human-wildlife conflicts/attacks, etc.

- ✓ The PMO has also capacitated the pilot villages by providing computer and monitoring equipment, and other supplies need to run the coordination committees and carry out the demonstration activities.
- ✓ Collaborative management agreements have been formulated for each of the 12 villages and signed by three parties: the village collaborative management coordination committee, the PMO, and the SNNR Management Bureau.

Key Deliverables:

- ✓ 12 village co-management committees were respectively established through herders' election (12 villages are Angla, Duoxiu, Cuochi, Lachi, Dangqu, Moqu, Junqu, Yaqu, Duoyong, Zhourang, Zhongzhi, and Gerize Villages)
- ✓ Signed respectively co-management agreements with 12 pilot villages
- ✓ Community Assessment Reports and Co-management Plans of 12 pilot villages
- ✓ The draft rules of village natural resources management of 12 pilot villages
- ✓ The draft rules of village co-management fund management of 12 pilot villages
- ✓ A draft version of 'community co-management operational Manual'
- ✓ A draft version of 'community co-management monitoring and patrolling Manual'
- ✓ A draft version of 'Community Cooperatives Manual'

Discussion/Shortcomings:

Output 3.1: PA management system in three management units covering 59,100 km² in SNNR (Makehe, Suojia-Qumahe, Zhaling-Elinghu) improved through co-management

The project has done a good job in strengthening existing collaborative management arrangements in some of the pilot villages, while initiating arrangements in other ones where there has been limited activity in the past. The results of the stakeholder surveys conducted by the MTR team in the 2 villages visited (see **Annex 6**) were generally positive, with most respondents indicating very high levels of awareness of the project and satisfaction. Some of the surveyed stakeholders, however, had difficulties distinguishing between development interventions delivered by different donors. Also, limited capacity of the residents is a concern, as the highlighted by the village leaders, indicating the low rates of literacy among their communities. Continued support will be required after project closure, and to date, there are limited sustainability structures built into the implementation activities. For example, the SNNR Management Bureau should be more involved, possibly even having the financial and material support flow through their organization rather than the PMO.

For the first 2 years of the project, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) helped mobilize the communities and facilitate the delivery of support provided as part of the demonstration activities. Due to a number of factors, including insufficient local representation, not spending enough time in the villages, conflicts with sub-provincial administrative authorities, and inconsistent advocacy, the PMO decided to cancel the contracts with three of the four NGOs; the fourth is continuing to provide some training services. Local coordination is now managed through sub-provincial level PMOs, comprising officials from county and township forestry bureaus. This solution seems practicable in the short-term, through the end of the project, but less so in the longer term, after closure, when the communities will require additional support. It is a bit of a conflict of interest having sub-provincial authorities facilitating the local communities for arrangements concluded with the same authorities. Traditionally, NGOs would be more suitable

for such a role, but there are challenges with NGOs operating in Qinghai Province in particular, due to the sensitivities surrounding the Tibetan minority communities.

Output 3.2: Monitoring and adaptive resource management systems in place

Participatory rural appraisals (PRAs) completed for each of the pilot villages provided information on local capacity and resource needs. Collaborative management plans were then formulated to reflect the capacity and priorities identified by the village coordination committees. In terms of monitoring resources, the PMO has delivered computer equipment, cameras, GPS units, binoculars, and other equipment and supplies.

Output 3.3: Piloting of eco-compensation schemes in demonstration areas to reduce biodiversity threats

The project has facilitated development of village natural resource management plans for the 12 pilot villages. Preliminary consultations and data collection have been completed, and more work is planned in the second half of the project to complete conservation zoning plans, operationalize the collaborative management agreements, and delivering further training and capacity building support.

In terms of replicability, the project plans on developing a collaborative PA management guidebook that would be disseminated to other nature reserves among the Qinghai PA system. Collaborative management specialists have been retained by the project to evaluate the effectiveness of the piloted arrangements, and to consolidate the lessons learned into the envisaged community collaborative management guidebook, as well as a community monitoring and patrolling manual.

3.2.2. Remaining Barriers to Achieving the Project Objective

The project has made some contributions to removing barriers preventing the establishment of an effectively managed and sustainable PA system in Qinghai, but there remain challenges, as outlined below.

Barrier 1: Disconnect between PA planning and management and provincial development and sectoral planning process

The project has been successful in engaging a number of the relevant provincial departments, assisting them in addressing biodiversity conservation in their sectoral plans and also supporting the development of the 13th 5-year plan.

The lack of involvement by land use planning stakeholders, both provincial and sub-provincial (county) levels, is a shortcoming that should be addressed.

Certain provincial departments that are responsible for some of the key production sectors, including mining and hydroelectric power generation, have been to date reluctant to engage with the biodiversity mainstreaming process sponsored by the project.

Barrier 2: Inadequate resources, and weak institutional and staff capacities for PA management

Among provincial and particularly sub-provincial stakeholders, there remain capacity gaps with respect to biodiversity conservation strategic planning and management implementation.

The Qinghai Forestry Department has limited control over the funding allocation provided by the Central Government for the national NRs.

Barrier 3: Limited participation and capacity of local communities in PA management

Although the project has facilitated awareness raising and capacity building activities in the 12 pilot villages, there remain socio-economic challenges, such as low rates of literacy among local residents, limited alternative livelihood opportunities, etc.

3.3. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

3.3.1. Management Arrangements

GEF Partner Agency (UNDP)

The UNDP Country Office in China has acted as implementing agency for a number of GEF-financed biodiversity projects, and has a wealth of global experience to draw from. With respect to gender mainstreaming, more strategic support would be advisable from the UNDP, to assist the PMO in integrating gender and minority development objectives into the implementation program.

The Environment and Energy program of the UNDP CO is well staffed, and has provided administrative and strategic support to the executing agency and the project management team. The Environment and Energy program manager has attended the inception workshop and steering committee meetings, and provided regular ad hoc support to the project manager and other members within the PMO. Procurement of international consultants is managed by the UNDP CO, and financial expenditures are collected and entered into the Atlas system by CO staff.

The UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisors (RTA) has been in place since the design phase of the project, and she has also provided strategic guidance (e.g., sharing best practices) to the project management team, including one visit during selection of the sites/villages to focus on in Outcome 3.

As this project falls under the China Biodiversity Partnership and Framework for Action (CBPF), there seems to have been some cross-project sharing of experiences, e.g., the PMO staff attended a CBPF workshop hosted by Ministry of Environmental Protection in Jiangsu Province on 22-24 September 2013. The staff made a presentation describing the Qinghai project. But, there has been insufficient consolidation of lessons learned among CBPF projects, e.g., with respect to biodiversity mainstreaming.

Executing Agency / Implementation Partners

The executing agency is the Qinghai Provincial Government, while technical level execution is managed by the Qinghai Forestry Department (QFD), and specifically the Project Management Office (PMO) of the QFD which also administers other international donor supported projects.

The project manager (PM) was hired in January 2013, about a week before the inception workshop, and has remained on board since that time. The PM is highly qualified, with extensive work experience in biodiversity conservation in China, including in Qinghai Province and also the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) of China. In addition to the PM, the GEF grant covers the salaries of three other members of the PMO, including the Chief Technical Officer (CTA), project interpreter/translator, and the project financial officer. There are eight other members of the PMO, including three component managers, who are paid through the governmental cofinancing contributions.

When the project first started, a different CTA was in place; a Canadian national who had been in Xining for more than 15 years working on biodiversity conservation issues. He was extensively knowledgeable of the challenges facing PA management in the province and the underlying socio-

economic challenges facing the local communities. After the first year of implementation, the contract for the CTA was not extended, presumably for reasons associated with difficulties in obtaining an updated visa for working in the province, and particularly for traveling to the Tibetan communities among the pilot villages.

The current CTA was hired in 2014 and similar to the arrangements for the first CTA, who worked 25% on the project, works part-time, i.e., 5 days per month. The current CTA is nationally recognized biodiversity expert and a staff member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. He sits on a number of national level advisory boards, so he is able to provide updated feedback on central government priorities and strategies. Communication with provincial and sub-provincial stakeholders is also, naturally, easier for the current CTA.

As a result of the change in the CTA, there does seem to have been a break down, or at least a disruption, in the coordination of the work provided by the international consultants. There have been five international consultants involved on the project, so coordination of their work with the activities by their national counterparts is critical. This should be one of the focuses during the second half of the project; ensuring maximum benefit from the inputs from the international and national experts, and taking full advantage of the capacity building opportunities associated with these collaborative arrangements.

3.3.2. Work Planning

For the period 2013-2014, a 2-year work plan was prepared by the project management office, and the plan was approved by the QFD and UNDP.

Work planning has mostly followed the activities prescribed in the project document, but the project has done a good job integrating adaptive management measures into the work plans, such as support for the provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP). The main shortfall with respect to work planning is that there have been limited inter-linkages between project components. Some examples of how work among the three components has been insufficiently inter-related include the following:

- It is unclear how the biodiversity baseline survey results will be reflected in the management plans for the NRs. How will this information be used to formulate conservation objectives?
- The scorecards included in the strategic results framework, such as the financial sustainability, management effectiveness tracking tool, capacity development scorecards, have not been used to support the needs assessment for PA staff training, and they have not been considered to be integrated into the NR management plans as regular management tools.
- One of the most common concerns voiced by the interviewed pilot village residents is safe management of wastes, much of which has been dumped at or near their lands by construction companies, including contractors building new roads. The regulations produced under Outcome 1 for infrastructure development should address waste management and also final inspection following completion of a particular infrastructure investment.

3.3.3. Finance and Cofinance

Financial Expenditures

According to available financial expenditure records, USD 1,876,864 has been spent through 31 May 2015 (see **Exhibit 13**); this represents approximately 35% of the USD 5,354,545 GEF grant.

Exhibit 13: Breakdown of Project Budget and Actual Expenditures		
<i>Component</i>	GEF Grant Prodoc Budget % of Total	Actual Expenditures* % of Total
Outcome 1	USD 550,000 10%	USD 179,174 10%
Outcome 2	USD 1,510,000 28%	USD 740,287 39%
Outcome 3	USD 2,764,000 52%	USD 747,524 40%
Project Management	USD 530,545 10%	USD 209,879 11%
Total:	USD 5,354,545	USD 1,876,864

Source: Project Document and CDRs

*Actual Expenditures reported for the period 01 Jan 2013 through 31 May 2015

For Outcome 1, approximately 33% (USD 179,174) of the indicative amount of USD 550,000 allocated has been spent. The project knowledge management system (KMS) is being developed under Outcome 1.

Approximately 50% of the indicative budget for Outcome 2 has been spent. And, approximately 27% (USD 747,524) of the USD 2,764,000 allocated for Outcome 3 has been spent by midterm. The relatively low rate of spending under Outcome 3 is a concern, as more than half of the GEF implementation grant was earmarked for this component of the project. One of the reasons for the slow spending for Outcome 3 seems to have been related to the time it took for mobilization, including assembling national and international consultants, hiring service providers to facilitate local stakeholder involvement, and working out the logistics involved in traveling to 12 remote villages, where high altitude, poor infrastructure, and seasonal weather constrains work activities. Also, there were plans to purchase vehicles¹ to support the activities under this outcome, but due to general government restrictions on procurement of vehicles, these assets were not purchased, and rather rented ones or QFD-owned ones are used. There was also a change in the component manager during the first two years of implementation of Outcome 3; the current one started in late 2014. Such staff changes also impact the rate of spending.

With respect to financial delivery, the delivery rates for 2013 and 2014 were approximately 90%², which is considered satisfactory, particularly for the first year, 2013, when it is often difficult to realize forecasted spending rates.

¹ According to the project document, the following vehicles were planned to be purchased: 3 x 4-wheel vehicles, 3 pick-ups, motor bikes.

² As outlined in annual work plans and combined delivery reports: the budget for 2013 was USD 428,453, and USD 381,881 were spent; and for 2014, USD 1,559,700 were budgeted and USD 1,405,931 were spent.

The MTR team reviewed the independent audit report¹ prepared for calendar year 2014. The audit report indicated that the combined delivery report presented fairly the expenditures occurred that year. There was an observation highlighted in the audit report regarding the long delays associated with delivery of government procured equipment.

According to the audit report, the project assets and equipment inventory had a value of USD 75,996.11 at the end of 2014; based upon purchase price figures. As vehicles were not purchased on the project, the bulk of the assets include IT equipment, office furniture, and monitoring equipment, such as cameras, GPS units, binoculars, etc., provided to the pilot villages.

Cofinancing

Cofinancing contributions have been provided by one source, the Qinghai Provincial Government. The pledged sum of USD 18,500,000 in cofinancing includes USD 14,602,900 in in-kind contributions and USD 3,897,100 in cash. According to figures provided by the PMO, the amount of cofinancing realized by midterm has been USD 22,219,972 (see breakdown in **Annex 8**), which includes USD 21,490,612 of in-kind contribution and USD 729,330 in cash. The in-kind contributions include more than USD 8 million under the Fund for Ecological Public Welfare Forest Protection for Sanjiangyuan; nearly USD 13 million for the Wetland Conservation Project (which includes wetland conservation and restoration and incentives); and nearly USD 0.65 for establishment of SNNR information management system and capacity building. The cofinancing contribution for the information management system is more than three times greater than the USD 0.19 allocated from the GEF funds for this activity.

Cofinancing contributions in cash include support for workshops and project-related logistics, PA staff trainings, ecotourism development, small-scale infrastructure constructions in the pilot villages, salary of 8 of the 12 PMO staff in the Xining office, and also provision of office facilities and services.

Cash contributions have been approximately 20% of the USD 3,897,100 pledged, and the expected total by the end of the project is USD 2,825,000, which is 72% of the committed amount. In order to achieve the USD 2,825,000 forecasted amount, cofinancing funding will need to be considerably higher during the second half of the project, compared to the first half.

In-kind cofinancing contributions, on the other hand, are expected to be nearly three times greater than the USD 14,602,900 pledged, with an additional USD 12 million from the Fund for Ecological Public Welfare Forest Protection for Sanjiangyuan, and USD 8 million from other projects financed by the Provincial Government.

3.3.4. Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

The M&E plan was developed using the standard template for GEF-financed projects. The indicated budget for the M&E plan was USD 114,000, excluding PMO and UNDP staff time and travel expenses. This sum is approximately 2% of the USD 5,354,545 GEF grant; which in the opinion of the MTR team, is low. The majority of the M&E cost covered the midterm review and terminal evaluation; at USD 40,000 apiece. Another USD 4,000 was allocated for independent financial audits. And, only USD 10,000 was allocated for Measurement of Means of Verification for Project Purpose Indicators. A number of baseline activities needed to be carried out at the start of project implementation, including biodiversity baseline surveys and participatory rural appraisals. This amount of money was clearly insufficient to cover these baseline activities.

¹ The 2014 audit was carried out by Marazs Certified Public Accountants.

As discussed in earlier sections of this MTR report, there are discrepancies within the project document, e.g., some information recorded in the strategic results framework do not match with data included in the baseline GEF tracking tool file, which was also part of the project document. In the opinion of the lead MTR reviewer, these inconsistencies should have been resolved at the project document validation workshop, or at least the inception workshop for project implementation. And, again, in the opinion of the lead reviewer, it was a mistake to wait under the midterm review to make a critical review of the baseline conditions and performance targets established; this process should have been made at the inception phase. During the MTR mission, the MTR team along the project management team spent time trying to sort out some of the assumptions and criteria used in developing the baseline and targets in the strategic results framework. But, time was limited, and there was insufficient time to sort out inconsistencies in the baseline information and within the strategic results framework. There should be a comprehensive review of the baseline conditions and a strategic review should be made of the strategic results framework, adjusting indicators and targets that better reflect the incremental reasoning behind the GEF financing. Some recommendations for adjustments to the strategic results framework are included in this MTR report, but a more thorough review should be made before finalizing a possible revision.

The component managers were found to be aware of the indicators under the outcomes they are overseeing, but they do not seem to be actively participating in the implementation of the M&E plan.

Certain development objectives are being addressed in the activities under Outcome 3; for example, women are being encouraged to participate in the collaborative management coordination committees, and literacy has been addressed as a particular concern and barrier with respect to implementing certain collaborative management activities, including monitoring. But, these development objectives have not been integrated into the project monitoring systems.

3.3.5. Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships

Stakeholder involvement among the provincial government departments has been satisfactory. The establishment of advisory groups under Outcome 1 has been a very effective approach in increasing the level of participation among provincial departments. There have been a few departments that have to date been reluctant to engage with the project; including the mining and hydroelectric sectors. These are important production sectors in Qinghai province, and it would be advisable to continue advocating involvement by relevant representatives. Also, land use planning stakeholders have not yet been meaningfully involved, both at the provincial and sub-provincial level (county).

The project has enlisted the support of some top Chinese scientists, and a number of highly qualified international experts have been engaged. Involvement of these skilled professionals offers an opportunity for the project to strengthen the capacity of provincial and sub-provincial stakeholders, particularly with respect to biodiversity conservation strategic planning and management implementation.

Involvement of non-governmental organizations has been only moderately satisfactory. Four NGOs were hired as service providers to facilitate the community driven collaborative PA management arrangements under Outcome 3, but the contracts with three of the four NGOs were discontinued in 2015, for a number of reasons, including certain objectives raised by sub-provincial authorities, concerns that the NGOs were not spending sufficient time with the pilot villages, and lower than expected knowledge of local circumstances among the Tibetan

communities. The role filled by the NGOs has been replaced by mobilizing the assistance of county and township governmental stakeholders. For the remainder of the implementation phase, this seems like a practical resolution, but there are concerns with respect to post-project support. Generally, NGOs are positioned in communities and represent potential long-term partnerships with, for example, community based organizations. These enabling conditions seem to be lacking in the pilot communities.

3.3.6. Reporting

The project has produced annual progress reports and also project implementation reviews (PIRs). There have been two PIRs produced to date, one for the period ending 30 June 2013 and the other for the period from 1 July 2013 through 30 June 2014. The progress of work and challenges faced have been reasonably well reported in the PIRs, with feedback provided by the national project director, project manager, UNDP, and the UNDP-GEF RTA. And, adaptive management changes have been reported in the PIRs and annual progress reports, and also shared with the Project Steering Committee. However, some of the concerns and recommendations included in the progress reports prepared by the international consultants do not seem to have been included in the PIRs or Steering Committee meetings.

Optimizing the contributions from the international consultants requires effective transfer of lessons learned from these experts to the relevant stakeholders, including the project management staff. Dealing with voluminous reports prepared in English is challenge, and there seems to be room for improvement in this regard. For example, the 2014 annual report from the Community Collaborative Management expert is 188 pages. The document contains a great deal of information, but does not seem to have been sufficiently shared with the project stakeholders, probably largely due to language constraints. Even though the project manager and CTA have good English skills, the component managers have less advanced skill and this has limited the flow of information.

3.3.7. Communications

With respect components 1 and 2, communication to date has been primarily delivered through meetings, workshops, trainings, and progress reports. Internet based communication has been weak. The project does not have a website; the project is supporting the development of a comprehensive information management system, but this will likely only be ready near the end of the project.

The GEF Secretariat website includes some basic information about the project and also some of the project preparation documents; the UNDP CO only includes a synopsis of the project and the project document is attached. The QFD's website includes information on the project, as does the site of the Foreign Economic Cooperation Office (FECO), which is affiliated with the Ministry of Environmental Protection of China and the focal agency for the China Biodiversity Partnership and Framework for Action (CBPF).

There has been some press coverage of the project, including the inception workshop.

Professional quality photographs have been taken of the activities undertaken in Outcome 3, and also a documentary video is under development/consideration. A story about the project was also included within the onboard magazine of a regional Chinese airline.

There has not yet been specific knowledge products prepared, for example, highlighting traditional knowledge with respect to biodiversity conservation among the Tibetan communities in the pilot villages.

3.4. Sustainability

3.4.1. Financial Risks to Sustainability

Supporting Evidence:

- + Qinghai ecological issues a Government priority;
- + Considerable ecological compensation disbursed by Government;
- + Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) set to increase through Key Ecological Function Area program;
- + Some improvement in Financial Sustainability Scorecard result;
- Government restrictions on staff hiring;
- Continued fragmented PA financing;
- Uncertain financing after GEF project for continued support of co-management structures in pilot villages.

In terms of financial risks to sustainability, there has been an increasing amount of Governmental funding to Qinghai Province for ecological conservation. With the payment for ecosystem services (PES) being worked out for the Key Ecological Function Area program, funding is expected to expand in coming years.

Through direct project support, e.g., by sponsoring preparation of PA management plans and a study on alternative financing for the Qinghai Province PA system, there has been an increase in the financial sustainability of PA management in the province, as evidenced by an increase in the Financial Sustainability Scorecard result compared to baseline conditions in 2011.

The gains made in financial sustainability are, however, partly diminished by the Government restrictions on hiring new staff. Also, PA financing in the province, and throughout China, remains fragmented, with limited discretion extended to management entities on how funding is allocated.

With respect to the community driven natural resource management demonstrations under Outcome 3 of the project, financing for continued support of the piloted co-management structures following closure of the GEF-funded project is uncertain, and this further reduces the likelihood the results attained will be sustained.

3.4.2. Socio-Economic Risks to Sustainability

Supporting Evidence:

- + Awareness among target communities has been enhanced;
- + Stakeholder ownership high among high-level QFD officials;
- + Ecological conservation a key aspect to the economic development plans of Qinghai Province (e.g., eco-tourism);
- Many communities within PA system are disadvantaged and lack sufficient capacity (e.g.,

literacy);

- Government restrictions on staff hiring;
- Unclear strategy for expanding community driven co-management piloted on project to other areas.

As stated earlier, ecological conservation is a key component to the economic development strategy for Qinghai Province, e.g., through eco-tourism based programs. This ensures that there will be sufficient economic incentives for the Government to further finance improvements in PA management. Stakeholder ownership among QFD officials at the provincial level has been high on the project, and this enhances overall sustainability. The project has also made contributions to raising awareness among local communities residing within or near PA's. These communities, however, remain some of the most remote and socio-economically disadvantaged in all of China, and it is uncertain how capacity building for the target villages (and other ones) will continue to be supported after project closure.

The Government restriction on hiring new staff is also relevant for the socio-economic dimension of sustainability. These constraints have cross-cutting impacts, e.g., by reducing the likelihood that sufficient numbers of PA staff will be available to guide the deployment of community involvement initiatives.

3.4.3. Institutional Framework and Governance Risks to Sustainability

Supporting Evidence:

- + Project has facilitated broad cross-sectoral involvement in mainstreaming biodiversity conservation;
- + Regulations and technical guidelines developed for important infrastructure activities;
- + Project is advocating inclusion of biodiversity priorities in 13th 5-year plan;
- + Project has supported completion of the Qinghai Provincial BSAP;
- + GEF-6 proposed project on PA management under development;
- Land use planning not addressed in mainstreaming efforts;
- Insufficient biodiversity-related capacity at Provincial and Sub-Provincial levels;
- PA governance structures are hampered by insufficient staffing.

The project has enabled significant contributions to an improved institutional framework for realizing more effective biodiversity conservation in Qinghai Province. Working with 8 provincial departments facilitated by cross-sectoral advisory groups, the project has helped mainstream biodiversity conservation in the respective sector plans of these departments. Also, regulations and technical guidelines are being prepared for some of the key infrastructure related activities posing threats to the ecological integrity of the PA system; including road construction, electricity transmission lines, sand and gravel extraction, etc.

The project has further supported the completion of the Qinghai Province Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (QBSAP), which establishes a guidance framework for allocating resources for biodiversity conservation in the Province. Some of the specific actions outlined in the QBSAP and in the sectoral plans will be operationalized in the 13th 5-year plan which is under preparation by Provincial governmental planners.

Sustainability is further enhanced through the prospect of additional GEF support for new PA management effectiveness strengthening project¹ that is in preparation under the GEF-6 funding cycle.

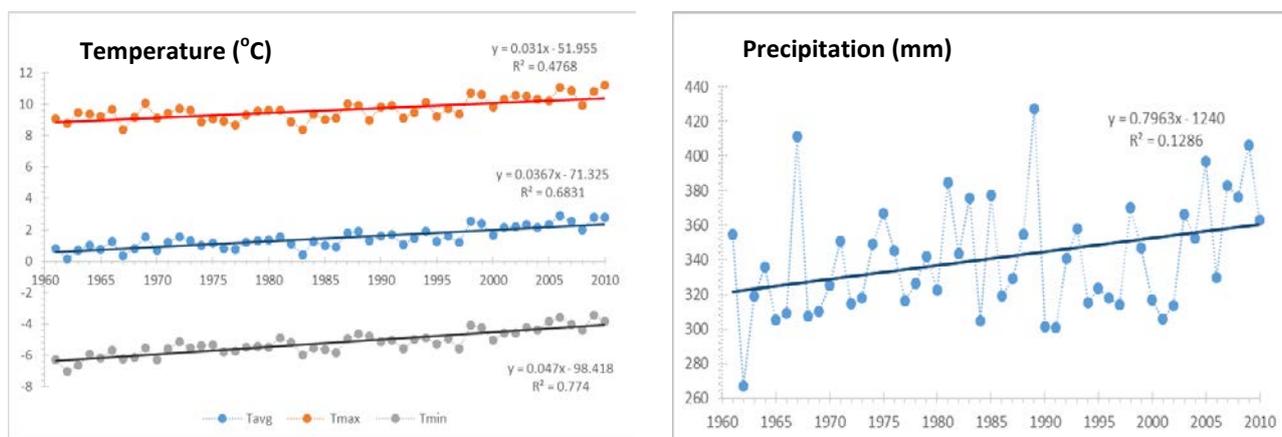
The fact that land use planning has not been addressed in the biodiversity mainstreaming efforts supported by the project diminish the likelihood that the results will be sustained, as land use planning is a critical consideration with respect to mainstreaming. Also, the limited capacity of Provincial and Sub-Provincial governmental stakeholders with respect to strategic planning for biodiversity conservation further reduces sustainability from a governance perspective. The formulation of requisite governance structures for attaining effective biodiversity conservation is also uncertain due to the government restrictions on hiring new staff.

3.4.4. Environmental Risks to Sustainability

Supporting Evidence:

- + Climate change monitoring included in Information Management System under development;
- + Project is facilitating improved waste management in pilot villages – possibly replicable model;
- Ecological resilience to climate change impacts is largely unknown;
- Water quality in this globally important catchment is affected by improper waste management;

Due to the national and global importance of Qinghai Province in terms of water catchment, there have been many studies in recent years on the potential effects due to climate change. Generally, temperature is expected to rise more significantly than the forecasted global average, and precipitation and the rate of shrinkage of alpine glaciers are expected to increase (see **Exhibit 14**).



Source: Ming Xu and Renqiang Li (presentation). The Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, CAS

Exhibit 14: Climate change trends in Qinghai, 1962-2012

Studies have also shown a strong correlation between climate change and grassland vegetation variation, revealing higher climate sensitivity at higher elevation areas of the Tibetan Plateau².

¹ Preliminary title of project proposed under GEF-6: “The Important Habitat Conservation Project for *Procapra przewalskii* and Snow Leopard of Qinghai Province in China”

² Tao, J. et al, 2015. Elevation-dependent relationships between climate change and grassland vegetation variation across the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau, *International Journal of Climatology*, Vol. 35, Issue 7.

The project is engaging some of the leading scientists in China, within the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and monitoring of climate parameters is being designed into the information management system under development. The system will enable timely assessment of potential alterations in biodiversity dynamics to the predicted climate perturbations.

Even with abundant wetland ecosystems, surface water quality in parts of the province is poor due to high salt content, for example. Many local communities depend upon spring water for potable supplies, and improper waste management, both in terms of household and livestock wastes, is threatening these scarce supplies. Waste management is one of the prime concerns of local villagers, and the project is working with the majority of the 12 pilot villages on developing improved waste management practices. Implementation of such waste management improvements will contribute an enhanced level of safe-guarding limited potable water supplies, and could provide replicable models to be up-scaled in other villages.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Major Achievements/Strengths

Satisfactory progress towards outcomes

The project has made satisfactory progress towards outcomes, as evidenced by the following key achievements by midterm:

- ✓ Legal, regulatory, and institutional frameworks have been strengthened. The assessment of Component 1 of the Financial Sustainability scorecard has increased from a baseline figure of 15% in 2011 to 30% in 2015.
- ✓ Through capacity building and support in developing management plans, the management effectiveness of the 5 national nature reserves has improved. Increases in METT scores for the national nature reserves have ranged from 20% for the Kekexili NR to 131% for the Golmud Poplar Forest NR.
- ✓ The biodiversity baseline surveys completed for three target units within the Sanjiangyuan nature reserve are substantive contributions to the knowledge base of these ecosystems.
- ✓ Cross-sectoral advisory groups are supporting biodiversity mainstreaming for 5 sectoral plans, and also providing input to the preparation of the 13th 5-year plan.
- ✓ The project has facilitated completion of regulations and technical guidelines for (1) road construction, operation, and maintenance, and (2) electricity transmission line construction and operation.
- ✓ A comprehensive trainings needs assessment has been completed, and 440 person-days of trainings delivered to PA staff and other stakeholders. The midterm capacity development scorecard assessment is 70%, a 100% increase since 2011 (the MTR team does think that the assessment is a bit overrated, however).
- ✓ At the end of 2014, permanent PA staff numbered 231, which is up the baseline figure of 113 in 2011. This is a noteworthy increase towards the end of project target of 360, particularly considering the current government restrictions on staff hiring across the board.
- ✓ Management plans have been developed for 8 of the 11 nature reserves in the PA system, and the following 5 have gone through two rounds of revision: Qinghai Lake NR, Kekexili

NR, Qaidam Haloxylon Forest NR, Golmud Poplar Forest NR, and the Qumahe Block of the SNNR.

- ✓ Funding for PA operations has increased from USD 1.04 million per year in 2011 to USD 2.4 million in 2013-14.
- ✓ Participatory rural appraisals have been completed in the 12 pilot villages, and based upon the priorities identified in this process, collaborative PA management agreements have been signed with coordination committees formed in each of the villages.
- ✓ Participatory conservation zoning processes have been started in some of the pilot villages; a potentially replicable model that could be up-scaled in other parts of the PA system.
- ✓ Training and equipment have been provided to the participants of the pilot collaborative management arrangements, and implementation of some of the activities has started, including monitoring and patrolling, and solid waste management.

Combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches

The project design includes a good combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches to increasing PA management effectiveness and financial sustainability. Mainstreaming biodiversity in provincial sectoral plans and operationalizing specific actions in the 13th 5-year plan helps to ensure that sufficient resources will be allocated to support biodiversity conservation in the short to medium term. Considering the vast geographic scale of the Qinghai PA system, meaningful participation by local communities within and near the protected areas is essential for achieving the conservation objectives. The community driven collaborative PA management arrangements piloted by the project are intended to provide a guideline that can be scaled up under the enhanced enabling conditions facilitated by the mainstreaming efforts.

Involvement of high-level and cross-sectoral Provincial decision makers

The project has been effective in involving high-level and cross-sectoral decision makers, including the Provincial Legislative Affairs Office. These stakeholder participation arrangements increase the likelihood that the advocated biodiversity mainstreaming efforts will be operationalized into provincial regulatory and legislative frameworks.

Potential replicable models of community-driven natural resource management

There have been community collaborative PA management arrangements implemented in Qinghai prior to this project, facilitated by a number of stakeholders, including NGOs and the government. This project is working on potential replicable model that is facilitating a higher level of participation of local communities in deciding upon conservation priorities and also institutionalizing the collaborative management structures in the form of coordination committees and village regulations.

Good mix of national and international experts

There has been a reasonably good mix of national and international consultants engaged on the project. Some concerns were voiced regarding insufficient communication and coordination among the expert groups and among the three project components; these issues are addressed in the recommendations section of the MTR report.

Qualified project coordination and management

The technical advisory and project management functions are staffed with qualified professionals, with extensive biodiversity conservation experience in China.

Satisfactory efficiency (cost-effectiveness) in first half of project

The project has been judicious with respect to resource outlays, and overall cost-effectiveness has been satisfactory over the first half of the implementation phase. There are, however, concerns that spending on Outcome 3 has been too slow, and a concerted management response should be developed in the second half to ensure the intended results of this component are achieved.

Effective adaptive management

The project has done a good job adapting to changed circumstances and priorities. Some examples of adaptive management measures include:

- ✓ Extending support to the Qinghai Environmental Monitoring Center in completion of the provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan;
- ✓ Engaging the Provincial Legislative Affairs Office, to expedite biodiversity mainstreaming efforts;
- ✓ Setting up cross-sectoral advisory committees, as a means of facilitating the biodiversity mainstreaming efforts and enhancing the level of ownership by the relevant sectors;
- ✓ Introducing participatory conservation zoning to the pilot villages, having the local communities provide direct input regarding key conservation areas in their villages.

Sensitivity to culture and traditions of Tibetan communities

Tibetan herder communities have inhabited the Qinghai ecosystems long before the protected area system was demarcated. The project has exhibited keen sensitivity to the rich culture and tradition of these communities, respecting their traditional knowledge in conservation of biodiversity and cultural resources. Also, project documentation and promotional materials, including a photograph wall calendar, delivered to the pilot villages have been prepared in two languages.

Alternative livelihoods addressed as part of community driven PA collaborative management

Through an inclusive participatory approach with the pilot villages, collaborative PA management priorities have addressed alternative livelihood opportunities for local communities. This is in contrast to the top-down government run collaborative management programs.

4.2. Key Shortcomings and Recommendations

4.2.1. Recommended Modifications to the Strategic Results Framework

1. **Conclusion:** Some of the project performance indicators and targets are not compliant with SMART¹ criteria or do not sufficiently capture the added value of the intervention.

Recommendation No. 1: The MTR team recommends the following modifications to the strategic results framework, as outlined below in **Exhibit 15**. The recommended changes are to the indicators and targets; the project objective and outcomes remain the same. These recommended modifications should be reviewed and approved by the project management

¹ SMART stands for: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound.

team, the UNDP CO, the RTA, and finally by the Project Steering Committee (PSC). Upon approval by the PSC, the modified strategic results framework should be the official version used for the remainder of the implementation timeframe and for the terminal evaluation.

Exhibit 15: Recommended Modifications to Strategic Results Framework

No.	Indicator	End-of-Project Target	Notes by MTR Team
Project Objective: To catalyze management effectiveness of Qinghai’s PA system to fulfil its purpose of conserving globally important biodiversity			
Ob 1	Financial sustainability score (%) for national systems of protected areas:		For the terminal assessment, the scoring should be made by an independent assessor or assessment team who has not been involved in the project to date.
	Component 1 – Legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks	30% (baseline 15.4%)	
	Component 2 – Business planning and tools for cost- effective management	50% (baseline 11.5%)	
	Component 3 – Tools for revenue generation	40% (baseline 8.5%)	
Ob 2	METT scores for different PAs:		The METT should be integrated into the NR management plans as management tool. For the terminal assessment, the scoring should be made by an independent assessor or assessment team who has not been involved in the project to date. The baseline METT scores should be reviewed, as there are inconsistencies in the scorecards. The end of project targets should be based upon the reviewed METT scores.
	SNNR	70% (baseline: 33%)	
	Mengda	65% (baseline 54%)	
	Kekexili	65% (baseline 50%)	
	Qinghai Lake	75% (baseline 58%)	
	Golmud Poplar Forest	50% (baseline 22%)	
Ob 3	Selected indicator species that are rare and threatened show stable or upward trends in numbers (including INTER ALIA wild yak, wild ass, Tibetan antelope, snow leopard, Pallas’ cat, musk deer, white-lipped deer, black-necked crane, etc.)	Key wildlife populations maintained or increasing; appropriate population structure.	Baseline surveys were made rather late, in 2014. It will be difficult to draw statistically valid conclusions based upon end of project findings.
		Biodiversity assessment protocols are included in the management plans for the national NRs and approved by the PSC and QFD.	
Outcome 1: Mainstreaming PA management into provincial development and sector planning process			
1.1	PA system and its management mainstreamed within the provincial sectoral and development planning framework at the provincial level: indicated by clear inclusion of due consideration and concrete measures for biodiversity conservation and PA development, as well as ear marked budget in the sectoral development plans at provincial l evels and in the (national) 13th 5-year plan.	At least 3 sectoral plans integrate consideration of PAs and of biodiversity conservation measures	No changes recommended.
		13 th 5 year-Plan recognizes clear linkage between PAs and provincial development, and includes PA- and biodiversity-related targets and budgets	No changes recommended.
		The Provincial Land Use Plan includes key conservation areas identified in QBSAP	The effectiveness of mainstreaming would be enhanced by engaging the land use planning sector.

Exhibit 15: Recommended Modifications to Strategic Results Framework

No.	Indicator	End-of-Project Target	Notes by MTR Team
		At least one County Land Use Plan (Key Ecological Function Area Plan) includes conservation zoning areas specified in pilot village(s) natural resource plans	Supporting one County in development of their Key Ecological Function Area Plan would provide an opportunity to institutionalize the village level zoning process piloted under this outcome.
1.2	Threats to PAs from infrastructure placement (roads, dams) and other adverse forms of land use avoided, mitigated or offset, leading to more effective conservation in Qinghai's PA system covering 251,665km ² .	Official standards for infrastructure development and operation within the PAs are developed and operationalized, with clear rehabilitation/offset mechanism.	Addressing biodiversity offsets in the provincial regulations and technical guidelines seems unreasonable. Offsets are typically complex and controversial arrangements, probably beyond the scope of the project.
		A guideline on biodiversity rehabilitation and offset mechanisms for provincial infrastructure development is completed.	Developing a separate and common guideline would be more relevant than addressing rehabilitation and offset mechanisms in individual regulations.
1.3	PA management is supported through a cross-sectoral knowledge management system that builds upon lessons learned and facilitates decision-making processes for implementing strategic management actions.	A knowledge management strategy that is informed by a functional PA system- wide environmental information management system is approved by the PSC and by the Qinghai Provincial Government.	There was no indicator established for the knowledge management system.
Outcome 2: Increasing PA management effectiveness through strengthened institutional and staff capacities			
2.1	Capacity development scorecard (%) for the protected area system.	60% (baseline 35.5%)	For the terminal assessment, the scoring should be made by an independent assessor or assessment team who has not been involved in the project to date.
2.2	Strategic plans prepared for PA institutions and procedures and investment, and PA staff numbers and gender/minorities inclusion dramatically increased	Strategic Plan developed and adopted	Gender mainstreaming considerations should be integrated into this indicator.
	Permanent Staff Temporary Staff	360 (baseline 160 113) 150 (baseline 5) The increases include at least 25% more staff for each of the national NRs. And, at least 25% of the new hires are women or minorities.	This indicator and target should be reformulated after the completing a comprehensive review of baseline conditions and strategic objectives of this outcome.
2.3	Province's system level PA financing increased to close the existing annual financing gap of US\$ 4.6 million for basic expenditure scenario (tracked with PA financial sustainability scorecard)	USD 6.6 million per year (baseline USD 2 million per year) USD _ million per year and at least 25% increase for each national NR. (baseline USD 2.88 million)	This indicator and target should be reformulated after the completing a comprehensive review of baseline conditions and strategic objectives of this outcome.
2.4	Ratio of total PA budget spent on field operations raised to narrow spending gap	>30% of PA revenue spent on field operations (baseline <10%)	The term "field operations" is not defined, and there is no protocol for measuring this indicator. This

Exhibit 15: Recommended Modifications to Strategic Results Framework

No.	Indicator	End-of-Project Target	Notes by MTR Team
			indicator and target should be reformulated after the completing a comprehensive review of baseline conditions and strategic objectives of this outcome.
2.5	Reduction in illegal incident cases within the NRs – poaching, illegal harvesting, illegal-grazing, etc.	Functioning policing records system with links to police/ court cases and an enhanced policing mandate of NR staff.	Concerted efforts will be needed in the second half of the project to engage the relevant enforcement stakeholders.
		Routine report forms designed for numerical analysis.	This should be done in collaboration with the relevant enforcement agencies, with an emphasis on adapting existing systems rather than developing new ones.
		Both criminal and administrative incidents reduced to 50% of the baseline levels.	This indicator and target should be reformulated after the completing a comprehensive review of baseline conditions and strategic objectives of this outcome.
		Incidents reduced to 50% of the baseline level. Incidents reduced to 50% of the baseline level in the 12 pilot villages under Outcome 3 (based upon annual PSP log books and at least one control village)	Baseline levels for the PA system have not been established due to restricted access to the information. Verification based upon tallying up incidents recorded in annual public service position (PSP) log books for the 12 villages and one “control” village.
2.6	Annual income diverted to PA management operations from eco-compensation agreements (excluding funds arising from the Sanjiangyuan Ecological Construction Plan)	>USD 1.0m (baseline 0) >USD _ million	The Government is consolidating all ecological compensation programs, so it would be difficult to measure if the Sanjiangyuan Ecological Construction Plan is excluded. This indicator is complementary to Indicator 2.4, i.e., more than USD 1 million in funds from ecological compensation agreements diverted for PA Management Operational Costs. This indicator and target should be reformulated after the completing a comprehensive review of baseline conditions and strategic objectives of this outcome.
2.7	More representative PA system approved with most of ‘major vegetation types’ represented (>5% coverage) in the NNR’s	22 of 30 habitats (addition of desert and Qilian montane habitats, with an overall increase of 18,000,000 ha in the provincial PA system)	Scientific studies will need to be carried out in the second half of the project to verify progress towards this indicator.
Outcome 3: Demonstration of Effective PA management through community involvement in the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve (SNNR)			

Exhibit 15: Recommended Modifications to Strategic Results Framework

No.	Indicator	End-of-Project Target	Notes by MTR Team
3.1.1	Extent of area (ha) closed from domestic grazing	4,000 km ² (baseline 1,000 km ²)	Verification based upon village conservation zoning plans, approved by village administrations and formalized into village regulations.
3.1.2	Area of open corridors Number of cooperative herding units agreeing to remove fencing	500 km² (baseline 0) 12	Enforcement of open corridors is impracticable for the grassland landscapes. The project could provide added value in terms of wildlife migratory dynamics by facilitating replicable models of community level agreements to remove fencing.
3.1.3	Area within the PA under community co-management, coordinated under community-driven and gender-inclusive arrangements	8,886 km ² (baseline 2,440 km ²)	Verification based upon village conservation zoning plans, approved by village administrations and formalized into village regulations
3.2	Representative management objectives provide guidance for biodiversity conservation in target areas	Management objectives and biodiversity assessment protocols formulated in NR management plans and 12 village natural resource management plans	Achievement of this indicator would increase the likelihood that the collaborative management arrangements will be maintained after project closure.
	Increase in the key species number and distributions in target co-management community sites (up to 12 community field sites)	Key wildlife populations maintained or increasing in co-management areas	Baseline surveys were made rather late, in 2014. It will be difficult to draw statistically valid conclusions based upon end of project findings
3.3	Management effectiveness increased in SNNR due to co-management arrangements using the METT tracking tool	70% (baseline 33%)	For the terminal assessment, the scoring should be made by an independent assessor or assessment team who has not been involved in the project to date.
3.4	Number of private-NR or of community co-management agreements: Private enterprise management agreements Informal, non-binding, agreements Formal, legally binding, agreements	At least 1 >10 agreements >2 agreements	Project lifespan co-management agreements should not count toward this target. The aim should be to facilitate collaborative agreements that extend after project closure.
3.5	Awareness surveys among communities show increased positive attitude towards PA conservation Collaborative management coordination committees are legally registered as community based organizations	Baseline + 50% positive attitude 12	The baseline surveys were done late, and the term "positive attitude" is not specifically indicated in the reviewed reports.

Note: Proposed modifications shown in red color or strikethrough text.

4.2.2. Corrective Actions for the Design, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

2. **Conclusion:** Inter-linkages between project components have been generally weak, and communication and coordination among national and international consultants could be improved to ensure more effective project performance.

Recommendation No. 2: The following actions are recommended to improve inter-linkages between project components and communication/coordination among national and international consultants:

- 2a: Create a project website, primarily for internal purposes, and assign one of the PMO staff members responsible to update the site at least on a monthly basis. A working area should be established, where national and international consultants can provide concise information/feedback. Comments should be translated on a regular basis;
- 2b: Deliverables produced by national and international consultants should include an executive summary that is translated from Chinese to English or English to Chinese. These deliverables, with translated executive summaries, should be uploaded to the project website within one month from finalization;
- 2c: Opportunities for collaborating across project components should be discussed on a weekly basis in project management meetings, including the project manager and component managers.
- 2d: Component managers should prepare annual monitoring and evaluation plans for their respective outcomes, using the strategic results framework as a guideline, but also developing interim performance indicators and targets to assist them in assessing the progress of work. Quarterly progress reports on the monitoring and evaluation plans should be prepared, translated to English, and uploaded to the project website.

3. **Conclusion:** Provincial and sub-provincial stakeholders have limited capacity in biodiversity conservation strategic planning and management implementation.

Recommendation No. 3: A mentoring program should be designed and implemented to strengthen the capacity of provincial and sub-provincial stakeholders in biodiversity conservation strategic planning and management implementation. A specific group of provincial and sub-provincial staff from QFD and other departments responsible for PA management should be selected for the mentoring program. The design of the program should be adaptive, e.g., responding to opportunities for interaction as part of assignments carried out by national and/or international consultants.

4. **Conclusion:** The project does not have a consolidated gender/minority mainstreaming plan.

Recommendation No. 4: A plan should be developed and implemented to increase gender/minority inclusion in the collaborative management arrangements and activities piloted under component 3. The targets of this plan should be integrated into the updated strategic results framework, which is outlined below in Recommendation No. 5.

5. **Conclusion No. 5:** There are inconsistencies in the UNDP-GEF tracking tools, including the financial sustainability scorecard, the management effectiveness tracking tool (METT), and the capacity development scorecard. The figures included these tracking tools are integrated into some of the project performance indicators, and it would be advisable to sort out these inconsistencies and make adjustments accordingly.

Recommendation No. 5: A thorough assessment should be made of each of the tracking tools, for both the baseline and midterm figures. The indicators and targets of the strategic results framework should be then reformulated and/or reconciled.

4.2.3. Actions to Follow Up or Reinforce Initial Benefits from the Project

6. **Conclusion:** The knowledge management system (KMS) being developed by the project seems to be more of an information management system. The strategy and the value-for-money of the planned knowledge management system are unclear.

Recommendation No. 6: A knowledge management strategy should be developed, including (1) defining the roles and responsibilities for interpreting information inputs; (2) formulating a strategy for developing management responses to ecosystem perturbations; (3) outlining roles/responsibilities and processes for interpreting PA management effectiveness; and (4) describing how PA management results and lessons learned will be disseminated. In addition to the KMS strategy, a value-for-money analysis should be carried out, comparing the costs and benefits of having an information management system hosted by the QFD to the option of expanding the existing information management system operated by the Qinghai Environmental Monitoring Center.

7. **Conclusion:** The QBSAP does not sufficiently reflect climate change impacts to biodiversity, there is insufficient description and quantification of the ecosystem services provide by biodiversity of Qinghai, and the PA staffing and funding shortfalls addressed in this project are not actionized in the QBSAP.

Recommendation No. 7: The QBSAP should be strengthened by including: (1) actions addressing potential climate change impacts to biodiversity, (2) an itemization of the major ecosystem services and some approximate economic values, and (3) actions associated with improving the PA staffing and funding shortfalls within the Qinghai PA system.

8. **Conclusion:** Biodiversity mainstreaming efforts could be further strengthened. And, insufficient involvement of land use planning stakeholders diminishes the likelihood that the mainstreaming achievements will be sustained after project closure.

Recommendation No. 8: The MTR team recommends the following actions to strengthen the biodiversity mainstreaming efforts:

- 8a: Summarize results of the comprehensive review of provincial regulations into a written report, indicating which regulations were reviewed, and what steps were taken to remove conditions and/or entire regulations that are not conducive biodiversity conservation.
- 8b: Work with the Provincial Land Resources Department in updating the Provincial Land Use Plan by indicating the key conservation areas highlighted in the QBSAP.
- 8c: Work with at least one County Land Resources Department, in one of the areas where the pilot villages are located, and assist them in developing their county Key Ecological Function Area Plan. This county plan should make reference to the village level conservation zoning areas.
- 8d: Identify linkages between provincial departments and academic institutions to facilitate applied research, e.g., the effects of the pylon structures used for electrical transmission developments. The project should try to fund some preliminary research as a means of operationalizing the partnerships.
- 8e: Prepare a running tally of (1) specific activities added to sectoral plans that have been operationalized (approved budget and implementation started); (2) specific activities in the QBSAP that have been operationalized (approved budget and implementation started); items/activities that have already been considered for the 13th 5-year plan.
- 8f: Develop specific inspection protocols for each of the new regulations and guidelines being developed, and invite inspection stakeholders to participate in the process.
- 8g: Establish a tracking register for the new regulations and guidelines that are being developed, in order to document how the regulations and guidelines are being

implemented in practice. The register should include a brief description of the activity/investment, the timeframe, investment value, photograph documentation, etc. The register should also include a list of environmental impact assessments that have used the guidelines in assessing biodiversity impacts and recommending appropriate mitigation measures.

8h: Ensure that waste management provisions are included in regulations/guidelines, as many of the communities among the pilot villages in Outcome 3 have complained of poor waste management as part of infrastructure development projects.

9. **Conclusion:** The project has sponsored a study on alternative PA financing and revenue generation, but there has been insufficient focus to date on operationalizing sustainable financing structures, including diversion of funds collected among the varied ecological compensation programs.

Recommendation No. 9: Based upon the findings of the MTR mission and recommendations included in reports prepared by national and international consultants, the following actions are recommended for the second half of the project in terms of strengthening the sustainable financing capacity of the PA system:

9a: Establish a task force with relevant provincial and sub-provincial stakeholders for formulating a system for reviewing ecological compensation programs and making recommendations of how the funds are allocated. The system should include tracking how the funds are actually disbursed.

9b: Identify a few key revenue generation options, identified in the PA financing report, and pilot them, preferably at least one in each of the nature reserves. Lessons learned from the pilot results should be consolidated into a series of case studies.

9c: Facilitate development of a regional plan for implementing policy reforms that would lead to a more systematic and strategic approach to improving financial sustainability, especially for ecotourism and payments for ecosystem services.

10. **Conclusion:** Between 2011 and 2014, according to information in the METT scorecards, there has been a 5.6% decrease in PA staffing (permanent + temporary) of the 5 NR's assessed by the METT. Under the current situation of fairly rigid restrictions on hiring government staff, not only PA staff, alternative staffing strategies should be considered.

Recommendation No. 10: The project should develop and implement a site level pilot of a collaborative arrangement between the government run Public Service Program and community co-management structures as means of addressing shortfalls in PA staff needs.

11. **Conclusion:** Nature reserve management plans do not sufficiently reflect complementary activities on the project.

Recommendation No. 11: The following actions are recommended to strengthen the nature reserve management plans:

11a: The plans should include biodiversity assessment protocols, building upon what was accomplished through the baseline surveys sponsored by the project.

11b: The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) should be considered to be integrated into the management plans, as regular management tool.

11c: The process of compiling and reporting on the monitoring and patrolling data from the community driven collaborative management arrangements in the pilot villages should be described in the plans.

11d: Each management plan should include a specific activity that is consistent with the PA system strategy of increasing the capacity and number of PA staff on a system scale.

11e: The plans should also indicate how the monitoring and patrolling information obtained through the Public Service Position (PSP) activities, a Government-sponsored collaborative management program.

12. **Conclusion:** The Government funded Public Service Position (PSP) program has not been sufficiently considered as part of a sustainability strategy for the collaborative management structures facilitated by the project.

Recommendation No. 12: The MTR team recommends creating a task force or advisory committee, including but not limited to the following stakeholders: representatives of the provincial focal agency for the PSP program, the QFD, the SNNR Administration, and the project management team. The task force or advisory committee should develop a plan for linking the top-down PSP program with bottom-up project model.

13. **Conclusion:** Sustainability plans for Outcome 3 are not consolidated into a coherent strategy.

Recommendation No. 13: A sustainability strategy should be developed for Outcome 3 and include, but not limited to, the following:

13a: Assist the collaborative management coordination committees in obtaining legal status (community based organization) by end of project;

13b: Negotiate partnership arrangements for collaborative management coordination committees after project closure (e.g., with SNNR);

13c: Consider adjusting the flow of financial and material support extended to the coordination committees, by having the SNNR Administration disburse the funds and assets to the communities rather than the PMO. This would require an agreement between the SNNR Administration and the PMO;

13d: Facilitate the formal acknowledgement of village conservation areas, through the village regulations and possibly also county land use plans;

13e: Support the communities and the SNNR administration in preparation of annual NR management reports, thus creating a replicable model that could be continued after project closure;

13f: Prepare simple operation and maintenance instructions for equipment provided. The instructions should be also be available in Tibetan language.

14. **Conclusion:** Outcome 3 is an important component of the project, with 52% of the indicative implementation budget, focusing on replicable models of community driven collaborative PA management. Through the project midterm, 31 May 2015, only 27% of the indicative budget under this outcome has been spent. Also, during the course of the MTR mission, the MTR team identified a few opportunities for improvement of the performance of this component.

Recommendation No. 14: A few additional actions recommended to strengthen the results under Outcome 3 include the following:

- 14a: A cumulative work plan should be prepared for Outcome 3, extending to the end of the project. The actions outlined under the sustainability strategy recommendation should be incorporated in the plan, and allocation of resources should be carefully examined to ensure that the available funds are optimally utilized;
- 14b: Livestock (and property) loss due to wildlife attacks are expected to increase under enhanced biodiversity conservation. Compensation for villagers for these losses is a type of ecological compensation, but such compensation has not been sufficiently disbursed, even though there are regulatory frameworks in place. In the pilot villages, the project should work with County officials in developing a replicable model for facilitating fair compensation arrangements;
- 14c: Burning of plastic waste should be prohibited, as toxic gases and residuals have adverse health and environmental impacts. County waste collection and disposal companies should be engaged in developing waste management solutions for the pilot villages;
- 14d: Based upon the surveys made with herders in the visited communities, cooperative herding is a common arrangement. Development of alternative livelihood opportunities, e.g., by trading dairy products or handicrafts, or by supporting ecological tourism development, should be considered using these existing cooperative arrangements. The cooperative herding arrangements could also to address improved collaborative ecosystem management, e.g., through agreeing to remove fences, protection of water springs, etc.
- 14e: For the cooperatives being considered in the pilot villages, supply chain analyses should be carried out to determine existing barriers, such as distance to market, storage capacities, etc., so that development support can be better focused. Also, a value chain analysis of yak wool products might be sensible, as it seems that such production is uncommon in the targeted grassland ecosystems.

4.2.4. Proposals for Future Directions Underling Main Objectives

15. **Conclusion:** The collaborative management initiatives on the project involve synergizing traditional knowledge with international best practice to protected areas management. The lessons learned regarding traditional knowledge to biodiversity conservation have not been consolidated into informative case studies and/or other knowledge product.

Recommendation No. 15: Traditional knowledge on conservation of biodiversity and cultural resources should be captured in one or more case studies (knowledge products) and disseminated to a broad spectrum of relevant stakeholders.

16. **Conclusion:** Collaborative management is not institutionalized within the QFD organizational structure.

Recommendation No. 16: A separate division should be formed within the QFD for dealing with collaborative management and community relations issues.

5. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation Mission Itinerary (3-18 June 2015)

DATE	ACTIVITY	VENUE	PARTICIPANTS
3 June Wednesday	International MTR Consultant arrives to Beijing	Beijing	MTR Consultants
4 June Thursday	AM: 9:00-10:30: Meeting with sub-contractor of KMS (Prof. Xu Ming, Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, CAS)	Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, CAS, Beijing	Prof. Xu Ming (sub-contractor) and MTR Consultant and CTA Yu Xiubo
	AM: 10:45-11:45: Meeting with Prof. Li Xinhai, sub-contractor of Baseline Survey, Institute of Zoology, CAS, Beijing	Institute of Zoology, CAS, Beijing	Prof. Li Xinhai and CTA, Yu Xiubo
	PM: 13:30-15:00 Meeting with Prof. Li Diqiang, METT evaluation Specialist, Chinese Academy of Forestry.	Chinese Academy of Forestry	Prof. Li Diqiang and CTA, Yu Xiubo,
	Flight Beijing to Xining (Flight MU4598 17:30-20:10)	Beijing-Xining	MTR Consultants together with CT A, Yu Xiubo,
5 June 5 Friday	AM: Kick off meeting with PMO	PMO	Gao Jingyu (NPD), Zhang Xueyuan (Project Director), Li Yande, Fan Longqing (Project Manager), CTA, Component managers, MTR Consultants, PMO
	AM: 10:30-12:00. Interview with Director of QFD	PMO	Gao Jingyu (NPD). Interpreter of PMO
		PMO	Zhang Xueyuan (Project Director), Interpreter of PMO
		PMO	Li Yande
	PM: 2:30-4:00 : Meeting with Wildlife Conservation and Nature Reserve Management Bureau (WENRMB) of QFD	Wildlife Conservation Bureau of QFD	WENRMB of QFD, MTR Consultants, PMO interpreter
	PM:4:00-5:30 Meeting with Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve(SNNR) of QFD	SNNR	SNNR, MTR Consultants, PMO interpreter
6 June Saturday	AM: Meeting with project manager	PMO	Project manager and MTR consultant
	PM: 2:30-4:00 Meeting with CTA	PMO	CTA, Mr. Yu Xiubo and MTR consultant
	Meeting with sub-contractor of Biodiversity Baseline Survey (Prof. Li u Wei, Northwest Institute of Plateau Biology, CAS)	Xining, CAS	Prof. Li Wei, Northwest Institute of Plateau Biology, MTR Consultants, PMO interpreter
7 June Sunday	AM: 9:00-12:00 Meeting with component managers	PMO	Liu Tianzhu Li Dongliang Guan Ming
	PM: 2:30-3:30 Meeting with Zhang Genquan, Sector mainstreaming specialist, Li Fei, Biodiversity Monitoring and Database Development Specialist	PMO	Liu Tianzhu Zhang Genquan Li Fei PMO interpreter
8 June Monday	AM:9:00-12:00 Meeting with Qinghai Provincial Office of	PMO	Provincial Office of Legislative Affairs, experts of sectors of Transportation

DATE	ACTIVITY	VENUE	PARTICIPANTS
	Legislative Affairs, to learn the development of sectoral standards and guidelines related to biodiversity conservation.		and Road Construction and Power Supply, MTR Consultants, PMO interpreter
	Meeting with Environmental Protection Department of Qinghai Province, to learn the work status of the Qinghai BSAP	Remote Information Monitoring Center of EPD	Qinghai EPD, MTR Consultants, PMO interpreter
9 June Tuesday	AM: Face to Face interview Li Shenzhi, Community Natural Resources Management Specialist.	PMO	Li Shengzhi, MTR consultants and PMO
	Telephone interview with Liang Weizhong, Community Collective Development Specialist and Deng Weijie, Nature Reserve Management Plan Specialist	Xining	
	MU2279 13:25-14:40 Fly to Yushu from Xining	Xining- Yushu City	MTR Consultants, Interpreter, PMO
10 June Wednesday	AM: Yushu-Qumalai county by car	Yushu City - Qumalai County	MTR Consultants, community participatory specialist, PMO
	PM: Meeting with leaders of Animal and Husbandry Bureau	Qumalai County	MTR Consultants, community participatory specialist, PMO
11 June Thursday	AM: Qumalai County -Qumahe Township by car	Qumahe township	MTR Consultants, community participatory specialist, PMO
	PM: Meeting with the staff of County Project Implementation Office to learn co-management activities implemented by village co-management committee in the pilot sites of Qumahe Township	Qumahe Protection Station	Qumahe Protection Station of SNNR, and township officials, MTR Consultants, community participatory specialist, PMO
12 June Friday	Field visit Qumahe to learn biodiversity significance and co-management activities and meet with members of Co-Management Committee and herders (Cuochi village)	Pilot village, Cuochi village in Qumahe township	Leaders of community co-management committee, MTR Consultants, community participatory specialist, PMO
13 June Saturday	AM: Field visit Qumahe to learn biodiversity significance and co-management activities and meet with members of Co-Management Committee and herders (Duo Xiu village)	Pilot village, Duo Xiu village in Qumahe township	Leaders of community co-management committee, MTR Consultants, community participatory specialist, PMO
	PM: Duo Xiu Village – Qumalai by car	Qumalai County	MTR Consultants, community participatory specialist, PMO
14 June Sunday	AM: Qumalai County -Yushu City	Yushu	MTR Consultants, community participatory specialist, PMO
	PM: Yushu-Xining MU2314 15:20-16:35	Xining	MTR Consultants, community participatory specialist, PMO
15 June Monday	Consolidate findings and prepare for debriefings	Xining	MTR consultant
16 June Tuesday	AM: Mission wrap-up meeting with leader of NPD and other staff	PMO	Gao Jingyu (NPD,GDD of QFD), Liu Feng (International Finance Division Head of Department of Finance), Zhang Xueyuan (Project Director), Li Yande, Fan Longqing (Project Manager), Component Managers, MTR Consultants
	Fly to Beijing from Xining MU2443 16:00-18:25	Xining-Beijing	MTR consultant
17 June Wednesday	Mission wrap-up meeting & presentation of initial findings- earliest end of MTR mission	UNDP Beijing	Dr. Ma Chaode MTR consultant
18 June Thursday	Departure of international MTR Consultant	Beijing	MTR consultant

Annex 2: MTR Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
Relevance: How does the Project relate to the main objectives of the GEF focal area, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels?			
To what extent is the principle of the project in line with national and regional priorities?	Level of participation of the concerned agencies in project activities. Consistency with national and regional strategies and policies.	Minutes of meetings, Project progress reports, national and regional strategy and policy documents	Desk review, interviews
To what extent is the Project aligned to the main objectives of the GEF focal area?	Consistency with GEF strategic objectives	GEF Strategy documents, PIRs, Tracking Tools	Desk review, interview with UNDP-GEF RTA
Synergy with Other Projects/Programs			
Have synergies with other projects/programs been incorporated in the design and/or implementation of the project.	Reference to other projects/programs	Plans, reports, meeting minutes	Desk review, interviews
Preparation and Readiness			
Were project objective and components clear, practicable, and feasible within its time frame?	Project efficiency, stakeholder involvement	Strategic results framework	Desk review, interviews
Were the capacities of the executing institution(s) and its counterparts properly considered when the Project was designed?	Project efficiency and effectiveness	Progress reports, audit results	Desk review, interviews
Were partnership arrangements properly identified and roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to Project approval?	Project effectiveness	Memorandums of understanding, agreements	Desk review, interviews
Were counterpart resources, enabling legislation, and adequate project management arrangements in place at Project entry?	Project efficiency and effectiveness	Interview records, progress reports	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Mainstreaming			
Have gender issues had been taken into account in project design and implementation?	Greater consideration of gender aspects.	Project document, monitoring reports, PIR's	Desk review, interviews
Have effects on local populations taken into account in project design and implementation?	Positive or negative effects of the project on local populations.	Project document, monitoring reports, PIR's	Desk review, interviews
Progress towards Results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?			
Assessment of progress made toward achieving the indicator targets agreed upon in the strategic results framework (see Annex 7)			
Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project's implementation?			
Efficiency: Has the Project been implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?			

Evaluation Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
The extent of achievement of Project objective and Outcomes according to the proposed budget	Percentage of expenditures in proportion with the results	Progress reports, Project Implementation Reviews	Desk review, interviews
Is the Project efficient with respect to incremental cost criteria?	Activities supported by the Project not commonly included among “business as usual” planning and development priorities	National strategies and plans	Desk review, interviews
Country Ownership:			
Are project Outcomes contributing to national and regional development plans and priorities?	Plans and policies incorporating initiatives	Government approved plans and policies	Desk review, interviews
Have the relevant country representatives from government and civil society been involved in the Project?	Effective stakeholder involvement	Meeting minutes, reports	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Have the recipient governments and co-financers maintained their financial commitment to the Project?	Committed co-financing realized	Audit reports, project accounting records, PIRs	Desk review, interviews
Have governments approved policies or regulatory frameworks in line with the Project objective?	Plans and policies incorporating initiatives	Government approved plans and policies	Desk review, interviews
Stakeholder Involvement:			
Has the Project consulted with and made use of the skills, experience, and knowledge of the appropriate government entities, NGOs, community groups, private sector entities, local governments, and academic institutions?	Active stakeholder involvement	Meeting minutes, reports, interview records	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Have relevant vulnerable groups and powerful supporters and opponents of the processes been properly involved?	Active stakeholder involvement	Meeting minutes, reports, interview records	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Has the Project sought participation from stakeholders in (1) project design, (2) implementation, and (3) monitoring & evaluation?	Record of comments and response	Plans, reports	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Financial Planning			
Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allowed management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allowed for timely flow of funds?	Project efficiency	Audit reports, project accounting records	Desk review, interviews
Has there been due diligence in the management of funds and financial audits?	Project efficiency	Audit reports, project accounting records	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Has promised co-financing materialized?	Project efficiency	Audit reports, project accounting records	Desk review, interviews
Supervision and Backstopping			
Has GEF Agency staff identified problems in a timely fashion and accurately estimate their seriousness?	Project effectiveness	Progress reports	Desk review, interviews

Evaluation Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Has GEF Agency staff provided quality support and advice to the project, approved modifications in time, and restructured the Project when needed?	Project effectiveness	Progress reports	Desk review, interviews
Has the GEF Agency provided the right staffing levels, continuity, skill mix, and frequency of field visits for the Project?	Project effectiveness	Progress reports, back-to-office reports, internal appraisals	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Monitoring & Evaluation			
Has the Project M&E plan been implemented according to plan?	Project effectiveness	PIRs, M&E reports	Desk review, interviews
Has there been sufficient focus on results-based management?	Project effectiveness	PIRs, M&E reports	Desk review, interviews
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
Is there evidence that funding for conservation related interventions have increased	Availability and amount of national and subnational budget allocation	Progress reports, PIRs, testimonial evidence	Desk review, interviews
Has institutional capacity for supporting conservation been strengthened, and are governance structures capacitated and in place?	Institutional and individual capacities	Progress reports, PIRs, testimonial evidence, training records	Desk review, interviews
Are there social or political risks that may threaten the sustainability of project Outcomes?	Socio-economic risks	Socio-economic studies, macroeconomic information	Desk review, interviews
Are there ongoing activities that pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project Outcomes?	Environmental threats	State of environment reports	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Delays and Project Outcomes and Sustainability			
If there have been delays in project implementation and completion, what were the reasons?	Sustainability of Project Outcomes	Progress reports	Desk review, interviews
Have the delays affected project Outcomes and/or sustainability, and, if so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?	Sustainability of Project Outcomes	Progress reports	Desk review, interviews
Catalytic Role:			
Explain how the Project has had a catalytic or replication effect in the country and/or region.	Reference by other projects, programs	Interview records, project fact sheets	Desk review, interviews

Annex 3: List of Persons Interviewed

Name	Organization	Position
Gao Jingyu	QFD	NPD/Deputy Chief
Dong Dehong	Wildlife Conservation Bureau, QFD	Senior Engineer
Zhang Xueyuan	PMO	Project Director
Fan Longqing	PMO	Project Manager
Yu Xiubo	Institute of Geographic Science and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Science	Chief Technical Advisor (CTA)/ Professor
Marc Foggini	Central Asia University	Former CTA
Liu Tianzhu	PMO	Manager of Component 1/ Senior Engineer
Li Dongliang	PMO	Manager of Component 2/ Engineer
Guan Ming	PMO	Manager of Component 3
Li Xufeng	PMO	Coordinator
Wen Qingqing	PMO	Assistant
Zhang Huizhen	PMO	Coordinator
Li Jinhua	PMO	Coordinator
Gao Nairui	PMO	Assistant
Lv Qingyun	PMO	Accountant
Miao Lei	PMO	Coordinator
Chen Shunchao	PMO	Coordinator
Midori Paxton	UNDP Asia and the Pacific Regional Center	Regional Technical Advisor (RTA)
Carsten Germer	UNDP China	Assistant Country Director
Chaode Ma	UNDP China	Programme Manager of Energy & Environment
Xinhua Zhao	UNDP China	Programme Associate of Energy & Environment
Zhao Haiping	Development planning and fund management division, QFD	Division Chief
Liu Feng	Finance division, Qinghai Finance Department	Division Chief
Li Ruofan	SNNR Administration Bureau	Bureau Chief
Xu Ming	Institute of Geographic Science and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Science (CAS)	KMS contractor/Professor
Li Xinhai	Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Science	Baseline survey contractor/Associate Professor
Duo Hairui	College of Nature Conservation, Beijing Forestry University	Monitoring/Patrolling Specialist
Liu Wei	Northwest Institute of Plateau Biology, CAS	Baseline survey contractor/ Professor
Liang Weizhong	Guangyuan Forestry Bureau, Sichuan	Community cooperative development specialist/Senior Engineer
Zhang Genquan	Forestry Survey and Planning Institute, QFD	Chief engineer
Zhang Yanxiang	Qinghai Legislative Affairs Office	Deputy division chief
Wang Qiang	State Grid Qinghai Power Supply Branch	Senior Engineer
Zhang Li	Qinghai Nationality University	Professor
Qu Bo	Qinghai University	Professor
Qi Kexiao	Qinghai Transportation Department	Division Chief
Tian Junliang	Remote Information Monitoring Center of Qinghai Environment Protection Department	Director/ Senior Engineer
Tang Wenjia	Remote Information Monitoring Center of Qinghai Environment Protection Department	Senior Engineer
Ma Guizhen	Remote Information Monitoring Center of Qinghai Environment Protection Department	Engineer

Name	Organization	Position
Lu Ziyu	Remote Information Monitoring Center of Qinghai Environment Protection Department	Engineer
Li Shengzhi	Sichuan Academy of Social Science	Community Natural Resources Management Specialist
Yu Huiling	Future Generations (NGO)	NGO representative
Ma Haiyuan	Beijing Shanshui (NGO)	NGO representative
Li Xiaofan	Qinghai Agro-Forestry Institute	NGO representative
Zha Duo	Qinghai Sanjiangyuan Association	NGO representative
Mark Anstey	International Consultant	Mainstreaming Specialist
Greg Vaughan	International Consultant	Biodiversity Monitoring and Database Development Specialist
Graham Barry Jones	International Consultant	Training Program Development Specialist
Douglas Macmillan	International Consultant	PA Financing and Tourism Development Specialist
Dario Cesarini	International Consultant	Community Co-management Specialist
Yong Jiang	Animal and Husbandry Bureau, Qumalai County	Bureau Chief
Luosong Minzha	Animal and Husbandry Bureau, Qumalai County	Deputy Chief
Li Yongfu	Animal and Husbandry Bureau, Qumalai County	Staff
Ga La	Qumahe Protection Station, Qumalai County	Station Chief
Qingmei Cairen	Qumahe Protection Station, Qumalai County	Staff
Lan Zhoujia	Lhasa MCH Association	Community Participation Specialist
Ga Ma	Cuochi Village	Secretary of village party branch
Ge Jia	Cuochi Village	Herder/Group leader
Tu Sang	Cuochi Village	Deputy head of the village/ Group leader
Tu Ci	Cuochi Village	Herder
Cichengjia	Cuochi Village	Herder
A Ji	Cuochi Village	Herder
Suo Pu	Cuochi Village	Herder
A Tu	Cuochi Village	Herder
Nima Dongzhou	Cuochi Village	Herder/Group leader
Cairen Wenmao	Cuochi Village	Herder/Women director
Ge Ri	Cuochi Village	Herder
Qingmei Cairen	Cuochi Village	Herder
Dong Zhou	Cuochi Village	Herder
Dong La	Cuochi Village	Herder
Ang Cai	Cuochi Village	Herder
Jia ye	Cuochi Village	Herder
Nima Dongzhi	Cuochi Village	Herder
Ba Duo	Cuochi Village	Herder
Nima Jiangcai	Cuochi Village	Director of temple management committee
La Jia	Cuochi Village	Herder
Qiu Zhou	Cuochi Village	Herder
Er Jin	Cuochi Village	Herder
Jiangba Cicheng	Duoxiu Village	Secretary of village party branch
Gengque Duoding	Duoxiu Village	Village head
Jiang Zhou	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Suo Jia	Duoxiu Village	Herder

Name	Organization	Position
Suonan Qiupei	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Ding Ma	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Jiu Nai	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Jiang Xinqing	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Suo Nan	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Suo Jia	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Ba Luo	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Dai Ji	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Danzheng Cairen	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Daiqing Wenjia	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Jun Song	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Duo Jie	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Duo Jia	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Cai Song	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Jiangyong Duojie	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Ge Bei	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Tuding Zongzhou	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Ga Nan	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Ding Ma	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Gang Cai	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Yong Zang	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Nigula	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Caidan Duojie	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Xie Cuo	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Ba Dan	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Zhuomaji	Duoxiu Village	Herder
Gongque Zhaxi	Duoxiu Village	Herder

Annex 4: List of Documents Reviewed

Document	Language Chi/Eng
General	
Project Identification Form (PIF)	Eng
Co-Financing Letters	Chi
Project document, signed version	Eng
Project inception workshop report, 25 Feb 2013	Eng
Project Steering Committee Meeting Minutes,	Eng
Annual work plans for each year of implementation	Eng
Project Implementation Review (PIR) for 2013	Eng
Project Implementation Review (PIR) for 2014	Eng
Annual progress report (APR) for 2013	Eng
Annual progress report (APR) for 2014	Eng
Terms of reference for sub-contractors and consultancies	Eng
Financial expenditures broken down by outcome and ATLAS Code, for each year	Eng
Financial audits completed to date	Eng-Chi
Co-financing realized (amount, source, activity, date)	Eng
Maps showing locations of project sites	Chi
Press clippings and other evidence of media exposure	Chi-Eng
Tracking Tools	
GEF Biodiversity Tracking Tool, filled out at CEO Endorsement	Eng
GEF Biodiversity Tracking Tool, filled out at project midterm	Eng
Financial Sustainability Scorecard for Qinghai PA system, filled out at PPG phase	Eng
Financial Sustainability Scorecard for Qinghai PA system, filled out at midterm	Eng
METT for SNNR, filled out at PPG phase	Eng
METT for SNNR, filled out at midterm	Eng
METT for Mengda, filled out at PPG phase	Eng
METT for Mengda, filled out at midterm	Eng
METT for Qinghai Lake, filled out at PPG phase	Eng
METT for Qinghai Lake, filled out at midterm	Eng
METT for Golmud Poplar forest, filled out at PPG phase	Eng
METT for Golmud Poplar forest, filled out at midterm	Eng
Capacity Development Scorecard for the Qinghai PA System, filled out at PPG phase	Eng
Capacity Development Scorecard for the Qinghai PA System, filled out at midterm	Eng
Outcome 1: Mainstreaming PA management into provincial development and sector planning process	
Qinghai Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP)	Chi
The first draft of 'Environment Protection guideline of Road Construction'	Chi
The first draft of 'Management Regulation of Sand Extraction in Rivers'	Chi
The first draft of 'Environment Protection Regulation and Guidelines of Power Line Construction'	Chi
The first draft of 'Kekexili Nature Reserve Management Regulation'	Chi
The first draft of 'Qinghai PA Law Enforcement and Supervision Regulation'	Chi

Document	Language Chi/Eng
Outcome 2: Increasing PA management effectiveness through strengthened institutional and staff capacities	
The first draft of 'Qinghai Provincial Ecological Protection regulation for Sanjiangyuan Region'	Chi
Qinghai PAs Costing and investment Research Report	Eng
Qinghai Makehe Ecotourism Development Plan	Chi
Qinghai PA Institutional and Training Need Assessment Report	Eng
A research report of Climate Resilience and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy	Chi
The first draft of Qinghai Lake nature reserve management plan	Chi
The first draft of Mengda nature reserve management plan	Chi
The first draft of Datongbeichuan nature reserve management plan	Chi
The first draft of Kekexili nature reserve management plan	Chi
The second draft of Qaidam Haloxylon Forest nature reserve management plan	Chi
The second draft of Gulmod Populus Forest nature reserve management plan	Chi
The first draft of Makehe Block management plan of SNNR	Chi
The first draft of Suojia Block management plan of SNNR	Chi
The second draft of Qumahe Block management plan of SNNR	Chi
The biodiversity baseline survey reports of Suojia-Qumahe Block of SNNR	Chi
The biodiversity baseline survey reports of Makehe Block of SNNR	Chi
The biodiversity baseline survey reports of Zhalinghu-Elinghu Block of SNNR	Chi
Outcome 3: Demonstration of effective PA management through community involvement in the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve(SNNR)	
Signed respectively co-management agreements with 12 pilot villages	Chi
Community Assessment Reports and Co-management Plans of 12 pilot villages	Chi
The draft rule of village natural resources management of 12 pilot villages	Chi
The draft rule of village co-management fund management of 12 pilot villages	Chi
A draft version of 'community co-management operational Manual'	Chi
A draft version of 'community co-management monitoring and patrolling Manual'	Chi
Other:	
Global Environmental Facility, Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy and Strategic Programming for GEF-4	Eng
STAP Scientific and Technical screening of the Project Identification Form (PIF)	Eng
United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the People's Republic of China, 2011-2015	Eng

Annex 5: Summary of Field Visits

Visit to Cuo Chi Village

There is an office in the community center used for the project. Aerial photographs of the village are posted on the wall showing the boundary of the zoning area and some wildlife icons depicting frequency of sightings. There is also an organization chart posted on the wall showing the members and structure of the co-management coordination committee.

The village has been engaged in development support for a number of years, and it is a bit difficult to distinguish between the GEF project and the other activities, including the Public Service Position (PSP) programme. Each of the 4 pilot villages in this county participates in the PSP programme.

We discussed whether there have been any unintended consequences, and one issue is a perceived increase in attacks on livestock by wildlife, particularly by wolves, bears, and snow leopards. One of the herders interviewed indicated he lost 7-8 yak and 20-30 sheep last year. Another herder indicated that he witnessed last year an attack on one of his yaks by a snow leopard.

The collaborative management committee formed as part of the project. The committee has convened about 4 times per year. They keep records of each meeting.

Village leaders indicated that the zoning has been very helpful, and they intend to integrate these into the village regulations.

The committee representatives overwhelmingly indicated that they plan to continue to operate after project closure. And, they have a plan to register as a legal entity, i.e., community based organization.

Ecological migration has slowed in recent years. The government has not forced migration; it has been up to the families to decide.

There is a lot of infrastructure construction, and waste management is a particular concern of theirs.

The leader of the local monastery is involved as an advisor, and the community members have great respect for him. There are a total of three monasteries in the township.

Visit to Duo Xiu Village:

HH's: 320 distributed in 3 hamlets, total 1200 inhabitants. Average household income is 2,000 RNB.

They signed the co-management contract in 2013. All HH's participate in the co-management. The 25 members of the committee are elected, and will only drop out if they quit. 28 people participate in the PSP programme.

The co-management model was first developed in 2010 when the bureau had a contract arrangement. When the project started in 2013: (1) the village was provided with equipment, (2) allowances for the co-management committee, and (3) and provided funds to help in waste management.

Three activities and trainings: (1) patrolling, (2) monitoring, and (3) waste management. The village has a capacity gap with respect to scientific issues associated with monitoring.

They have identified a need to construct solar electrified bear fences. The project will finance 12 of these this year, in 2015. The village leaders indicated that approximately 50% of the households.

They have a wish to achieve legal status, community based organization (CBO), but the process is difficult for them.

They have 4 cooperatives in the village, and one received formal status/registration: they are all share-herding.

The project's gender strategy seems insufficient. Women are very active in the households, doing most of the animal husbandry chores and also the housework. Trainings should be more focused on gender needs, maybe separate trainings for women, delivered by women trainers.

Photograph Documentation:



12 Jun 2015. Herder interviews, Cuo Chi village.



13 Jun 2015. Village leader interview, Duo Xiu village.



12 Jun 2015. After group discussion, Cuo Chi village



13 Jun 2015. Group discussion, Duo Xiu village



12 Jun 2015. Village map, Cuo Chi village



12 Jun 2015. Co-management log books, Cuo Chi village



13 Jun 2015. Road construction inside SNNR



10 Jun 2015. Sand extraction inside SNNR



10 Jun 2015. Yak herd inside SNNR



12 Jun 2015. Bear fence (different project) at herder house, Cou Chi village



12 Jun 2015. Co-management coordination committee organizational chart, Cuo Chi village



13 Jun 2015. Village holy site, Duo Xiu village



11 Jun 2015. Tibetan ass, inside SNNR



12 June 2015. Tibetan antelope, near Qinghai-Tibet Railway

Annex 6: Survey Questionnaire and Findings

村名_____ 乡镇_____ 县_____ 访谈村干部姓名_____

Name of the village____ Township____ County____ Interviewed village carders_____

村庄问卷Village Questionnaire

题号 No.	问题 Questions	选项或单位 Choices/unit	答案 Answers
1.	村户数 No. of households	户 HH	
2.	村人口 No. of population	人 Person	
3.	村庄面积 Area of the village	平方公里 km ²	
4.	2014年户均收入 Average HH income of 2014	万元/年 10,000yuan/year	
5.	其中有多少户直接参与了本项目 How many HH directly participated in this project	户 HH	
6.	村庄哪年签的共管协议 When did this village sign the co-management agreement	年 Year	
7.	村庄共管协议的制定是否有牧户代表参加讨论 Did the formulation of the village co-management agreement involve the herders into the discussion	1=是, 2=否 1=Y, 2=N	
8.	村庄是否有公益岗 Whether this village has Public Service Position	1=是, 2=否 1=Y, 2=N	
9.	本项目为村庄提供了哪些支持 (多选) Project provided support for this village	1=培训, 2=垃圾清理设施, 3=巡护燃油补助, 4=办公设施, 5=防熊设施, 6=巡护设备, 7=牧民生计替代设备 (磨面机等), 8=宣传日历, 9=其他, 请说明 1=Training, 2=Waste management equipment, 3=Patrolling fuel subsidy, 4=Office facilities, 5=Bear fence, 6=Patrolling equipment, 7=Alternative livelihoods equipment, 8=Publicity calendar, 9=others	

10. 项目已经在本村提供了哪些方面的培训?

What kind of trainings already provided by this project?

11. 还希望项目提供哪些培训?

What else trainings are you expecting from this project?

12. 培训以外还希望项目提供哪些支持?

What else supports are you expecting from this project?

村庄名称_____访谈牧户姓名_____

Name of the village_____ Name of the interviewed herder_____

牧户问卷 Questionnaire for Herder

题号 No.	问题 Question	选项或单位 Choices/unit	答案 Answer
1.	访谈对象性别 Gender	1=男, 2=女 1=M, 2=F	
2.	你是否知道本项目 Do you know this project	1=知道, 2=不知道 1=Y, 2=N	
3.	你是否直接参加了本项目 Did you directly participate in this project	1=参加了, 2=没参加 1=Y, 2=N	
4.	你对本项目在本村的实施是否满意 Are you satisfied with the project implementation in this village	1=满意, 2=一般, 3=不满意 1=Y, 2=so so, 3=N	
5.	你是否了解村共管协议 Do you know the co-management agreement of this village	1=了解, 2=一般, 3=不了解 1=Y, 2=so so, 3=N	
6.	你是否赞成村共管协议 Do you agree with the co-management agreement of this village	1=赞成, 2=一般, 3=不赞成 1=Y, 2=so so, 3=N	
7.	你是否参与了村共管相关的活动 Did you participate in village co-management activities	1=是, 2=否 1=Y, 2=N	
8.	如果你看到有人不遵守共管协议你是否会向村里报告, whether you will take action	1=会, 2=不会 1=Y, 2=N	
9.	你是否愿意参加巡护 Are you willing to participate in the patrolling	1=愿意, 2=不愿意 1=Y, 2=N	
10.	你了解的情况, 现在村民是否有猎杀野生动物的情况 As you know, are there any villager kill wildlife currently	1=没有, 2=有 1=Y, 2=N	
11.	你认为本项目的活动是否利于改善村庄的生态环境 Whether this project activities will benefit the improvement of the village's ecological environment	1=是, 2=否 1=Y, 2=N	
12.	你认为本项目的活动是否有利于改善村民生产生活条件 Whether this project activities will benefit the improvement of the villager's production and life	1=是, 2=否 1=Y, 2=N	
13.	你认为本项目的活动是否有利于野生动物的保护 Whether this project activities will benefit the protection of the wildlife	1=是, 2=否 1=Y, 2=N	
14.	你是否获得公益岗位 Do you have the PSP (Public Service Position)	1=是, 2=否 1=Y, 2=N	

15. 最希望本项目提供的培训内容是?

Trainings you want the project provide?

16. 培训以外最希望本项目提供的支持是?

What other supports do you want the project provide?

17. Are you a member of a cooperative? If yes, which one?

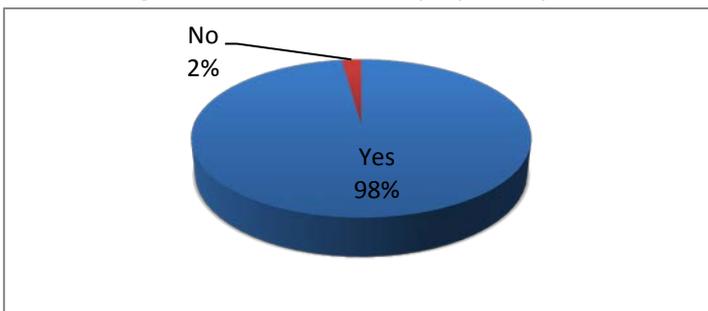
18. Have you experienced loss of livestock or other property due wildlife attack? If yes, please provide details.

19. Do you have access to a reliable water supply? If not, please explain.

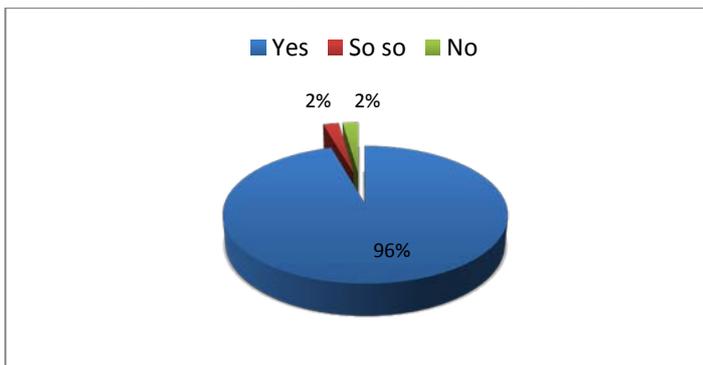
Questionnaire results

- ✓ Village interviewed: Cuochi village and Duoxiu village
- ✓ Questionnaire survey respondents: 46 herders (4female, 42male)
- ✓ 100% of the respondents know this project
- ✓ All respondents will take action, if he/she saw someone break the co-management agreement
- ✓ No villagers kill wildlife anymore
- ✓ All respondents think this project are in favor of wildlife protection and the village's ecological environment

Percentage of satisfied with the project implementation in this village



Percentage of knowing the co-management agreement of this village



Percentage of thinking this project activities will benefit the improvement of the villager's production and life

Training needs

Training needs	Eliminate illiteracy	Waste management	Environment protection	Monitoring and patrolling	Alternative livelihood	Disease control	Sustainable herding	Co-management related policy
Frequency	17	11	11	5	5	2	2	1
%	37.0	23.9	23.9	10.9	10.9	4.3	4.3	2.2

Other needs

Other Needs	Equipment for waste management	Bear fence	Certificate for patrolling	Road	Well	Increase the fuel compensation	Equipment for monitoring and patrolling	Public toilet	Propaganda board	Alternative livelihood support
Frequency	9	8	5	5	5	4	3	3	2	1
%	19.6	17.4	10.9	10.9	10.9	8.7	6.5	6.5	4.3	2.2

Community co-management stakeholder analysis

- ✓ Co-management committees established based on the institutionalized village organizations (village administration committee and village party branch committee), and also involve the herder representatives
- ✓ Make good use of the religion culture for the wildlife protection (holy mountain and holy lake regard as a kind of PA, and involve temple director into the co-management committee)
- ✓ Project strengthened the relationship between protection station and the villages
- ✓ Cooperative herding was a common arrangement among interviewed stakeholders.
- ✓ Some stakeholders had difficulty distinguishing co-management support among ongoing programs.
- ✓ Herder’s difficulties: livestock loss due to wildlife attack, literacy, drinking water, road etc.

Annex 7: Progress towards Results Matrix

Indicator Assessment Key:

Green: Achieved	Yellow: On target to be achieved	Red: Not on target to be achieved
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Indicator 指标	Baseline 基线	End of Project target 项目最终目标	Midterm Assessment	Midterm Rating and Justification
Objective: 目标: To catalyze management effectiveness of Qinghai's PA system to fulfil its purpose of conserving globally important biodiversity 促进青海保护区体系管理有效性, 实现其保护全球重要生物多样性的目的				
Financial sustainability score (%) for national systems of protected areas: 国家保护区体系融资可持续性得分 (百分比) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Component 1 – Legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks 组分1- 法律、法规以及机构框架 - Component 2 – Business planning and tools for cost-effective management 组分2- 商业计划和成本效益管理工具 - Component 3 – Tools for revenue generation 组分3- 创收工具 	15.4 % 11.5% 8.5%	30% 50% 40%	Midterm assessment results: Component 1: 50% Component 2: 20% Component 3: 25% There are discrepancies with respect to baseline figures; the ones indicated in the strategic results framework are different from those indicated as 2011 baseline.	There are a number of inconsistencies in the midterm scorecard assessment. PA management authorities continue to have limited discretion on allocation of funding and revenue, so it seems unlikely that the 40% end of project target for Component 3 will be achieved.
METT scores for different PAs: 各个保护区监测评估跟踪工具得分: : SNNR 三江源国家级自然保护区 Mengda 孟达 Kekexili 可可西里 Qinghai Lake 青海湖 Golmud Poplar forest 格尔木杨树林	33% 54% 50% 58% 22%	70% 65% 65% 75% 50%	Midterm assessment results: SNNR: 59% Mengda: 67% Kekexili: 60% Qinghai Lake: 75% Golmud Poplar F: 51%	There are a number of inconsistencies in the midterm METT assessments. The midterm METT assessment results indicate improvements from baseline figures ranging from 20% for the Mengda NR to 131% for the Golmud Poplar Forest NR. Even though some of the midterm scores seem over-rated, the project seems to be on track to achieve the targets.
Selected indicator species that are rare and threatened show stable or upward trends in numbers (including INTER ALIA wild yak, wild ass, Tibetan antelope, snow leopard, Pallas' cat, musk deer, white-lipped deer, black-necked crane, etc.) 选定的指示性物种, 包括在数量上趋于稳定或上升	Baseline survey of selected indicator species at outset of project, in three target units of the SNNR (Suojia-Qumahe, Zhaling-Elinghu, Makahe)	Key wildlife populations maintained or increasing; appropriate population structure 主要野生动物种群数量保持或增加; 适宜的种群结构	Unable to assess	Baseline surveys were done in 2014, so there is no information on population trends by midterm.

Indicator 指标	Baseline 基线	End of Project target 项目最终目标	Midterm Assessment	Midterm Rating and Justification
<p>的珍稀濒危物种（尤其是野牦牛、野驴、藏羚羊、雪豹、帕拉斯猫、林麝、白唇鹿、黑颈鹤等）</p>	<p>项目开始时在三江源国家级自然保护区三个目标单位（索加—曲麻河、扎陵湖—鄂陵湖、玛可河）选定的指示性物种基线调查</p>	<p>构</p>		
<p>Outcome 1 Mainstreaming PA management into provincial development and sector planning process 成果1: 将保护区管理纳入省级发展和部门规划过程中</p>				
<p>Outputs: 产出:</p> <p>1.1 Inter-sectoral coordination and planning mechanism established to integrate PA systems and objectives into development and sectoral planning process. 建立跨部门协调和规划机制，将保护区体系及其目标融入发展和部门规划过程中；</p> <p>1.2 Institutional capacities of the provincial government built for planning, monitoring and enforcement of biodiversity management to avoid/mitigate threats to PAs. 建立省政府生物多样性管理监测和执法机构能力，以避免/减弱对保护区体系的威胁；</p> <p>1.3 Knowledge management system established including climate change resilience monitoring component. 建立知识管理系统，包括气候变化适应力监测组分</p>				
<p>PA system and its management mainstreamed within the provincial sectoral and development planning framework at the provincial level: indicated by clear inclusion of due consideration and concrete measures for biodiversity conservation and PA development, as well as ear marked budget in the sectoral development plans at provincial levels and in the (national) 13th 5-year plan. 在省级层面将保护区体系及其管理纳入省级各部门和发展规划框架中：明确显示纳入了对生物多样性保护和保护区发展的适当考虑和具体措施，且在省级部门发展规划和（国家）13个5年规划中有专项预算。</p>	<p>No sectoral plans integrate PA objectives 没有在部门预算中整合保护区目标 Development plans include no vision and development plan for PAs and no link is made between the PAs and development, nor no concrete measure for biodiversity conservation 发展规划中没有包括保护区愿景和发展计划，且没有将保护区与发展相联系，也没有生物多样性保护的具体措施。</p>	<p>At least 3 sectoral plans integrate consideration of PAs and of biodiversity conservation measures 至少有3个部门的规划整合了对保护区的考虑和生物多样性保护的具体措施 13th 5 year-Plan recognises clear linkage between PAs and provincial development, and includes PA- and biodiversity-related targets and budgets 第13个5年计划认可了保护区和省级发展间的明确联系，并包含了与保护区和生物多样性相关的目标和预算。</p>	<p>The project is in fact working on 1+4, i.e., 5 in total; including the Provincial Development and Reform Commission, the Forestry Department, the Animal Husbandry Department, the Environmental Protection Department/Bureau, and the Hydrologic Water Management Department. Also, facilitating cross-sectoral support for mainstreaming biodiversity in the 13th 5-year plan. As an adaptive management measure, the project has also provided support to the Qinghai Environmental Monitoring Center in finalizing the Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (QBSAP)</p>	<p>The project has made good progress with respect to mainstreaming biodiversity conservation issues into provincial sector plans. During the second half of the project, focus should be on operationalizing specific activities in the 13th 5-year plan.</p>
<p>Threats to PAs from infrastructure placement (roads, dams) and other adverse forms of land use avoided, mitigated or offset, leading to more effective conservation in Qinghai's PA system covering</p>	<p>No procedure in place to deal with incompatible developments 没有到位的程序处理彼此</p>	<p>Official standards for infrastructure development and operation within the PAs are developed and</p>	<p>The project has already supported completion of the following ones: (1) road construction and operation, and (2) electricity transmission line</p>	<p>The project is on track to complete the earmarked regulations for infrastructure development. There has not been much progress in</p>

Indicator 指标	Baseline 基线	End of Project target 项目最终目标	Midterm Assessment	Midterm Rating and Justification
251,665km ² . 由于基础设施配置（道路，水坝）和其他土地利用负面影响使保护区面临的威胁得以避免、减轻或抵消，从而更有效地保护青海省保护区体系占地25.1665万平方公里的面积	相矛盾的开发活动	operationalised, with clear rehabilitation/offset mechanism. 在保护区范围内进行基础设施建设和经营的官方标准得以制定和运行，且具有明确的恢复/替代机制。	construction and operation. And, they are working on developing three other ones: (3) agriculture and animal husbandry infrastructure development, (4) agriculture and animal husbandry pest control, and (5) river sand extraction	terms of developing rehabilitation/offset mechanisms; it might be more practical to develop a separate guideline in this regard, rather than incorporating into the separate regulations.
Outcome 2: Increasing PA management effectiveness through strengthened institutional and staff capacities 成果2: 通过加强机构和人员能力建设，提高保护区管理有效性				
Outputs 产出: 2.1 Systemic capacity strengthened for effective PA system management. 加强有效保护区体系管理的系统能力； 2.2 Institutional strengthening plan adopted and operationalised. 机构加强计划被予以采纳并得到运行； 2.3 Budgeting procedures and resource allocation improved, directly addressing threats to PAs. 预算和资源分配直接推动了解决保护区威胁； 2.4 Business case made to show economic benefits from PA functions. 利用商业案例说明保护区功能带来的经济效益； 2.5 PA staff skills raised, with 200 PA staff and other participants receiving training to better meet occupational competence standards. 提高200名保护区工作人员技能，以满足职业能力标准； 2.6 PA system plan developed with climate change considerations. 制定顾及气候变化因素的保护区体系计划				
Capacity development scorecard (%) for the protected area system. 保护区体系能力发展计分卡（百分比）	35.5%	60%	Midterm assessment: 70%	Based upon the midterm assessment results, there has been a 100% improvement since 2011. While the MTR team thinks the midterm scoring is a bit over-rated, the project is on track to achieve this target.
Strategic plans prepared for PA institutions and procedures and investment, and PA staff numbers dramatically increased 起草保护区机构、规程及投资战略规划，保护区人员数量显著增加 - Permanent staff 正式职工 - Temporary staff 聘用人员	No strategic plans 没有战略规划 160 5	Strategic Plan developed and adopted 制定并通过了战略规划 360 150	Unable to assess Strategic plan has not yet been produced. Midterm results are inconsistent. Interview feedback: 231 permanent 273 temporary Based upon METT scorecards, there	Unclear baseline conditions, inconsistent results, and unclear target, e.g., PA system seems to be defined as 5 NR's (included in METT). But, midterm results indicated during MTR interviews include 106 forest police.

Indicator 指标	Baseline 基线	End of Project target 项目最终目标	Midterm Assessment	Midterm Rating and Justification
			has been 5.6% a decrease in staff members (permanent + temporary) compared to 2011.	
Province's system level PA financing increased to close the existing annual financing gap of US\$ 4.6 million for basic expenditure scenario (tracked with PA financial sustainability scorecard) 全省保护区系统融资增加至接近现有每年460万美元的基本支出资金缺口（通过跟踪保护区财务可持续性计分卡）	US\$ 2 million / year 200万美元/年	US\$ 6.6 million per year 每年660万美元	Unable to assess	There are a number of inconsistencies in the midterm financial sustainability scorecard assessment. But, there seems to be a reasonable likelihood that the target of reaching the basic level of PA financing will be achieved.
Ratio of total PA budget spent on field operations raised to narrow spending gap 整个保护区用于野外作业的总预算比例提高，缩小了支出差距	<10% of PA revenue spent on field operations 保护区收益中用于野外作业的资金不足10%。	>30% of PA revenue spent on field operations 保护区收益中用于野外作业的资金大于30%。	Unable to assess	The term "field operations" is not defined in the project document; thus, the indicated target is not particularly measurable. Also, PA revenue is generally not retained by the PA management authorities. There are a number of inconsistencies in the midterm financial scorecard assessment.
Reduction in illegal incident cases within the NRs – poaching, illegal harvesting, illegal-grazing, etc. 在自然保护区内违法案件减少 – 盗猎、非法采伐、非法放牧等	Currently no monitoring system in place. 当前没有到位的监测体系 Baseline for the number of illegal incidents will be estimated at onset of the project. 在项目伊始就要对违法案件数量基线进行预测。	Functioning policing records system with links to police/ court cases and an enhanced policing mandate of NR staff. 警务记录制度在与警察/法院案件处理和增强自然保护区工作人员治安职责的链接中发挥作用 Routine report forms designed for numerical analysis. 为数值分析设计了例行报告表。 Incidents reduced to 50% of the baseline level. 案件减少到基线水平的50%。	Unable to assess Baseline figures have not been established, as access to illegal incident records is restricted.	Access to information has been restricted. If this situation does not change, then the indicator should be reformulated. After first draft of MTR report, the PMO was able to obtain some figures from the QFD Forestry Police Bureau. Comparing 2011 to 2014, there was a 62% decrease in total incidents, but 65% increase in criminal incidents. No information regarding the other two sub-targets.

Indicator 指标	Baseline 基线	End of Project target 项目最终目标	Midterm Assessment	Midterm Rating and Justification
Annual income diverted to PA management from eco-compensation agreements (excluding funds arising from the Sanjiangyuan Ecological Construction Plan) 从生态补偿协议转移支付给保护区管理的年收入（不包括出自三江源生态建设规划的资金）	0	>US\$1.0m 100万美元以上	Unable to assess	Inconsistent figures included in midterm tracking tool. Also, the USD 1 million sum is likely not an appropriate target. Project progress reports refer to a report completed on Investing and Financing Analysis for the PA system. But, there is no evidence of a strategy for realizing this indicator.
More representative PA system approved with most of 'major vegetation types' represented (>5% coverage) in the NNR's 在国家级自然保护区内最能代表的“主要植被类型”（覆盖率大于5%）更具代表性的保护区体系而得到批准。	13 of 30 habitats 30个栖息地中的13个	22 of 30 habitats (addition of desert and Qilian montane habitats, with an overall increase of 18,000,000 ha in the provincial PA system) 30个栖息地中的22个（除了沙漠和祁连山山地栖息地，全省保护区体系整体增加2000平方公里的面积）	Updated vegetation maps have not yet been prepared. Considering expansions in the PA system, there is a reasonable likelihood that this target will be achieved by the end of the project.	Together with the Wildlife and Nature Reserve Management Bureau of the QFD, the project is supporting an update to the provincial PA Development Plan (2011-2020), with special consideration of potential climate change impacts, and vegetation studies will be completed to evaluate the current representation of vegetation types within the PA system
Outcome 3: Demonstration of Effective PA management through community involvement in the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve (SNNR) 成果3:在三江源国家级自然保护区通过社区参与示范有效的保护区管理				
Outputs 产出:				
3.1 PA management system in three management units covering 59,100 km ² in SNNR (Makehe, Suojia-Qumahe, Zhaling-Elinghu) improved through co-management 通过共同管理使覆盖面积为5.91万平方公里的3个管理分块中保护区管理体系得到加强（玛可河、索加-曲麻河、扎陵湖-鄂陵湖）。				
3.2 Monitoring and adaptive resource management systems in place. 监测和适应性资源管理体系到位				
3.3 Piloting of eco-compensation schemes in demonstration areas to reduce biodiversity threats. 在示范区开展生态补偿试点，减少对生物多样性的威胁				
Extent of area (ha) closed from domestic grazing 家畜禁牧区扩展面积（公顷）	1,000 km ² 1,000公里 ²	4,000 km ² 4,000公里 ²	Quantitative surveys have not yet been carried out.	The project is engaging 12 pilot villages, compared to 6 indicated in the project document. Achieving the domestic grazing closure and collaborative management targets are likely to be achieved.
Area of open corridors 廊道开通面积	0 km ² 0公里 ²	500 km ² 500公里 ²		
Area within the PA under community co-management 保护区内社区共管面积	2,440 km ² 2,440公里 ²	8,886 km ² (or more) 8,886公里 ² （或更多）		
Increase in the key species number and distributions in target co-management community sites (up to 12)	Baseline wildlife populations TBD	Key wildlife populations maintained or increasing in		

Indicator 指标	Baseline 基线	End of Project target 项目最终目标	Midterm Assessment	Midterm Rating and Justification
community field sites) 关键物种数量和目标共管社区网点分布增加（多达12个社区实地网点）	at onset of project 项目伊始野生动物数量基线数据待建 (Target species will be rare or endangered, to be agreed with SNNR and local communities) (目标物种稀有或濒临绝种, 且被三江源国家级自然保护区和当地社区认可)	co-management areas 在共管地区关键野生动物种群数量保持或增加。		population trends by midterm.
Management effectiveness increased in SNNR due to co-management arrangements using the METT tracking tool 由于使用管理有效性跟踪工具进行共管安排, 使三江源国家级自然保护区管理有效性提高。	33% Management unit baselines TBD at onset of project 项目伊始管理单位基线数据待建	70%	Midterm METT assessment: 59%	There has been an 80% increase in the SNNR METT score from 2011 to 2013-14.
Number of private-NR or of community co-management agreements: 私营保护区或社区共管协议数量: - Private enterprise management agreements 私营企业管理协议 - Informal, non-binding, agreements 非正式的、不具约束力的协议 - Formal, legally binding, agreements 正式的、具有法律效力的协议	0 6 0	At least 1 至少1个 >10 agreements 10个以上协议 >2 agreements 2个以上协议	There have been 12 collaborative management agreements signed with the pilot villages.	The collaborative management agreements signed by the 12 pilot villages are valid for the lifespan of the project. The second half of the project should focus on negotiating partnership agreements that will extend beyond project closure. There has not been progress with respect to the private sector, due to limited private sector actors in the demonstration communities.
Awareness surveys among communities show increased positive attitude towards PA conservation 社区民意调查显示对保护区保护活动提高了积极性.	Baseline awareness TBD by Knowledge Attitudes & Practice (KAP) survey at onset of project 项目伊始由知-信-行调查的理念基线数据待建	Baseline + 50% 基线数据+50% positive attitude 积极性	Unable to assess	Participatory rural appraisals were made in 2013-14. These appraisals included awareness surveys, but the term "positive attitude" is not represented in the surveys. The target for this indicator should be reformulated.

Annex 8: Cofinancing Table

Annex 8: Cofinancing Table							
Sources of Cofinancing	Name of Cofinancer	Description of Actual Co-Financing Contributed	Type of Cofinancing	Amount Confirmed at CEO Endorsement USD	Actual Amount Contributed at Stage of Midterm Review USD	Expected Amount by Project Closure USD	Actual % of Expected Amount USD
Government	Qinghai Dept of Finance		In-kind	14,602,900			
		Fund for Ecological Public Welfare Forest Protection for Sanjiangyuan	In-Kind		8,022,900	20,000,000	
		Wetland Conservation Project which includes wetland conservation and restoration and incentives ¹	In-Kind		12,822,581	12,822,581	
		Establishment of SNNR information system and capacity building ²	In-Kind		645,161	645,161	
		Other Projects	In-Kind			8,000,000	
Government In-Kind, Sub-Total				14,602,900	21,490,642	41,467,742	284%
Government	Qinghai Dept of Finance		Cash	3,897,100			
		Component-1 : eg. Workshop and logistic support for field visit	Cash		1,935	693,000	
		Component-2: mainly used in Ecotourism development and PA staff trainings	Cash		232,532	1,100,000	
		Component-3: compensations and small-scale infrastructure construction for 12 villages	Cash		133,896	1,032,000	
		8 PMO staff salary	cash		159,354	403,000	
		Office Facilities and equipment(including office and conference rooms, electricity, water and heating, vehicle maintenance and fuel)	cash		201,612	500,000	
Government Cash, Sub-Total				3,897,100	729,330	2,825,000	72%
Total				18,500,000	22,219,972	44,292,742	239%

Notes:

1. 6,000,000RMB was spent in 2013 and 73,500,000 was spent in 2014

2. 15,000,000RMB was for information system and 25,000,000RMB was for capacity building.

Source of information: PMO, June 2015

Annex 9: Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement Form

Evaluators:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and: respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/ or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultants: Prof. Li He, National Consultant; James Lenoci, International Consultant

We confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed in Beijing on 4 June 2015

Signatures:



Prof. Li He
National Consultant



James Lenoci
International Consultant / Team Leader

Annex 10: Summary of observations from Tracking Tool Review

Note: The observations itemized below are based upon evaluation of the midterm GEF Tracking Tool for Biodiversity Projects. The scope of the midterm review does not include a quality control review of the tracking tools, but rather includes an evaluation of the information presented. As there were a number of inconsistencies noticed during the evaluation, the observations are included here to help guide the project team moving forward. Again, this does not represent a complete quality control review; something the project team should do following the midterm review.

Objective 1. Section III (20150728)

- The sizes of the protected areas indicated in Section II do not match with the information in Section III:

From Section II		From Section III	
Terrestrial	Total Area, ha	Nature Reserve	Area, ha
Boreal forests/taiga (subarctic, humid)	1,224,000	Qinghai	4,952,000
Montane grasslands and shrublands (alpine or	22,492,000	Golmud	4,200
Sub-Total	23,716,000	Kekexili	4,500,000
Freshwater		Mengda	17,300
Large lakes	573,900	SNNR	15,230,000
Montane freshwaters	1,063,300	Total	24,703,500
Xeric freshwaters and endorheic basins	1,063,300		
Sub-Total	2,700,500		
Total, Terrestrial + Freshwater	26,416,500		

Section II (Qinghai Lake NNR - 20150728):

- The date of establishment is inconsistently reported: Year 1997 in 2011 (C19) and Year 1975 in 2015 (D19).
- The size of the PA is inconsistently recorded (C22 and D22).
- Significant reductions in staff: C23-C24 compared to D23-D24
- Operation budget (D25) indicated as USD 59; probably missing a few 0's.
- Supplementary budget (D26) indicated as USD 809; probably missing a few 0's.
- Aquaculture threat was 2 in 2011 but 0 in 2015 (C83, D83); seems questionable.
- Threat from energy generation was 2 in 2011 and 0 in 2015 (C88, D88); seems questionable.
- Tourism threat has reduced from 2 to 3 (C103, D103). I would expect tourism threats are increasing.
- Vandalism threats from visitors increased from 0 to 2 (C107, D107); inconsistent with reducing tourism threats.
- Threats from airborne pollutants have gone from 0 to 2 (C129, D129); seems questionable.
- Habitat shifting threat due to climate change is reduced from 3 to 1 (C139, D139); this is inconsistent with information provided by CAS experts during MTR mission.
- Temperature extreme threats due to climate change reduced from 2 to 1 (C141, D141); temperatures are expected to increase, according to CAS experts.
- Assessment of staff numbers is unchanged, although staff numbers reduced roughly in half (C180, D180). This is inconsistent.
- Land use planning of adjacent lands is assessed as fully taking into account the needs of the PA (C196, D196), compared to a minimum rating in 2011; this seems questionable, as land use planning stakeholders have not yet been engaged in project.
- Contact with neighboring users has gone from "no contact" to "regular contact" (C204, D204); seems questionable, significant change in short time.

Section II (Golmud poplar forest PNR- 20150728):

- The date of establishment of the PA is inconsistently recorded (C19, D19): 2003 or 2005?
- The size of the PA is inconsistently recorded (C22, D22).
- Annual supplementary budget in 2015 assessment indicated as USD 7.26; probably missing a few 0's.

20. Erosion-siltation threat reduced from 2 to 0 (C136, D136); what changes occurred in this time period to lead to such a significant reduction?
21. Threat of habitat alternation from climate change reduced from 3 to 1 (C139, D139); climate change impacts are considered to be on an increasing trajectory.
22. Threat from droughts due to climate change reduced from 3 to 1 (C140, D140); for semi-desert area, unclear why such a significant reduction.

Section II (Kekexili NNR - 20150728):

23. Date of establishment of PA inconsistently recorded (C19, D19)
24. Mining and quarrying threat reduced from 2 to 0 (C87, D87); this is a significant change in a short time.
25. Threats from earthquakes reduced from 2 to 0 (C134, D134): it would be useful to check the sources of these two very different assessments.
26. Threats from temperature extremes due to climate change reduced from 2 to 0 (C141, D141); information from CAS experts indicate increasing temperature trends.
27. Assessment of management objectives increased from 2 to 3 (C156, D156); does this mean that the management plan for this PA has been approved and is being implemented?
28. Assessment of protected area design increased from 2 to 3 (C158, D158); does this mean the size or design of the PA has changed since 2011?

Section II (Mengda NNR - 20150728):

29. Significant difference in the date of establishment: Year 2000 (C19) or Year 1984 (D19).
30. Threats from tourism decreased from 3 to 1 (C103, D103); have tourism numbers decreased in recent years?
31. Significant improvements recorded for Natural System Modification threats (C110-C115, D110-D115); what changes were made that resulted in such significant change in threat potential, in such a short time?
32. Erosion-siltation threat reduced from 2 to 0 (C136, D136); seems questionable.
33. Temperature extreme threats due to climate change reduced from 2 to 0 (C141, D141); temperatures are expected to increase, according to CAS experts.
34. Local communities have reduced input to PA management decisions (C208, D208); what was the reason for this?
35. Economic benefits to local communities are increasing (C216, D216); seems contradictory to the assessment of local communities input to management decisions.

Section II (SNNR – 20150728):

36. There is a large discrepancy with respect to the date of establishment of this NR: Year 1905 (C19) and Year 2003 (D19). Clearly, the year 1905 is incorrect.
37. Annual recurrent funds increased from USD 80,000 in 2011 to USD 1,000,000 in 2013-14 (C25, D25); this is a very significant increase in a short time span.
38. Threat from loss of traditional knowledge has increased from 1 to 2 (C144, D144); the project is working with local communities, promoting preservation of traditional knowledge/practices.
39. Assessment of protected area design increased from 2 to 3 (C158, D158); does this mean the size or design of the PA has changed since 2011.

Objective 1. Section III (20150728)

40. The indicated size of the PA system (21,747,360) for 11 NR's is smaller than the size indicated in Objective 1., Section I for the 5 NR's. This is inconsistent.
41. Government allocated financing for baseline year 2011 is extremely low: USD 460,300 (C33) for operations and Zero (C34) for infrastructure. These sums seem unreliable.

42. The source of the baseline infrastructure financing indicated, USD 1,793,500 (C74) is unclear. Government infrastructure financing was indicated as zero, and there was no non-governmental infrastructure financing indicated. Where did the figure in C74 come from?
43. According to the 2011 financial sustainability scorecard, the financing gap between available funding compared to estimated basic level funding is approximately USD 3.6 million (C72 deducted from C84). Later in the scorecard, the gap is indicated to be USD 3.1 million (C105). And, in the strategic results framework, indicator 2.3, the gap is indicated as USD 4.6 million. There are 3 different figures for basic level financing gap.
44. Should confirm that tourism fees collected in 2011 (C53) had to be turned over to provincial finance department, but in 2014, there was USD 501,600 (D523) retained. Did policy change in that time period?
45. The available finances to the PA system in the 20150728 assessment for operations and infrastructure (D73, D74) do not add up to the total indicated in D72. There is an 8% shortfall.
46. The estimation for PA site management operational cost (D86) for the Basic financing scenario is 17% of the total estimation (D84). This is inconsistent and contradictory with the objective outlined in the project document to close the gap between operation and infrastructure spending. In fact, the estimation for the Basic financing scenario is much lower than the baseline figures, in percentage terms. This is an important issue that should be resolved.
47. Suggestion: for presenting estimated PA financing needs (D84-88, and D90-96), it would be advisable to round up to the nearest USD 0.5 million. Indicating such precise figures is misleading; it appears that there is very little uncertainty in the estimates.
48. The estimation for PA financing needs for operations under the Optimal financing scenario is indicated as USD 19,699,000 (D94). This is nearly 7X greater than the estimated operation financing needs under the Basic financing scenario. This is a large difference between the two scenarios.
49. According to the 20150728 assessment, the amount of available financing in 2014 totaled USD 19,295,000 (D72), which is greater than the total estimation of PA financing needs for the Basic financing scenario (D78), which is USD 17,745,000. Does this mean that the Basic financing level has been reached in 2014?
50. The annual financing gap for the Basic financing scenario, compared to baseline available funds, is indicated at USD 2,923,000 (D105) in the 20150728 midterm assessment. But, I calculate the gap to be USD 14,547,000 (C72 deducted from D84). This is a very large difference that should be reconciled.
51. The annual financing gap for the Optimal financing scenario, compared to baseline available funds, is indicated at USD 18,245,000 (D109) in the 20150728 midterm assessment. But, I calculate the gap to be USD 34,560,200 (C72 deducted from D90). Again, this is a very large difference that should be reconciled.
52. In the Financial Scorecard, Part II, cell C152: "Laws or policies are in place for PA revenues to be retained at the PA site level" were indicated as "none" in 2011, but in 2014, the assessment was scored at 2 (Yes, but needs improvement). It would be advisable to indicate the % retained.

While completing the midterm tracking tool assessment, the PMO noted that many of the baseline figures in the financial scorecard were over-rated. This supports our recommendation to make a thorough review of the baseline figures. The indicators and targets included in the strategic results framework should then be re-considered.

Annex 11: Terms of Reference

UNDP-GEF Midterm Review

Terms of Reference

Standard Template 2: Formatted information to be entered in [UNDP Jobs website](#)¹

BASIC CONTRACT INFORMATION

Location: China
Application Deadline: Feb. 28, 2015
Category: Energy and Environment
Type of Contract: Individual Contract
Assignment Type: International Consultant and National Consultant
Languages Required: English for International, both English and Chinese for National
Starting Date: (date when the selected candidate is expected to start)
Duration of Initial Contract: 30 days
Expected Duration of Assignment: From April 15 to July 10.

BACKGROUND

A. Project Title

Strengthening the effectiveness of the protected area system in Qinghai Province, China to conserve globally important biodiversity

B. Project Description

This is the Terms of Reference for the UNDP-GEF Midterm Review (MTR) of the full -sized project titled Strengthening the effectiveness of the protected area system in Qinghai Province, China to conserve globally important biodiversity (PIMS 4179) implemented through the Department of Forestry, Qinghai Province Government, China, which is to be undertaken in 2015. The project started on the Sep. 14, 2012 and is in its third year of implementation. In line with the UNDP-GEF Guidance on MTRs, this MTR process was initiated before the submission of the second Project Implementation Report (PIR). The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* (see Annex).

¹ <https://jobs.undp.org/>

The project was designed to:

As the fourth largest province in China, with a total area of 720,000 km², Qinghai serves as a significant store of the national biodiversity, exhibits some unique high altitude grassland, mountain, wetland, desert and forest ecosystems, and serves as a significant controller of the Asian monsoon system that affects the climate of 3 billion people. The province includes the headwaters of three of Asia's major rivers – the Yellow, Yangtze and Mekong rivers.

Although Qinghai lists 11 nature reserves totaling an impressive 31% of the territory, the existing protected area (PA) system lacks adequate balance – it shows significant gaps in ecosystem coverage and contains extensive overlap with other interests such as road construction, water diversion plans and herder community tenure rights. It also includes areas exhibiting serious land degradation resulting from a combination *inter alia* of overgrazing, engineering damage and climate change. Other problems facing the PA system include illegal gold mining and poaching, livestock fences interrupting wildlife migratory pathways, and aggressive pest control programmes aimed at small burrowing mammals but that also harm many collateral species.

The project will directly target barriers through a series of steps that aim to enhance PA system effectiveness. The global and national biodiversity significance of Qinghai's PA system, its vital role as the catchment area for three major rivers, the nature and severity of on-going threats to the PA system and the persistence of important barriers limiting its effectiveness have led the Government to prioritise and present this project for GEF support.

The project **goal** is to strengthen the effectiveness of the PA system in Qinghai Province, China to conserve globally important biodiversity. The project **objective** is to *catalyse management effectiveness of Qinghai's PA system to fulfill its purpose of conserving globally important biodiversity*, by removing the barriers with three inter-related outcomes. The focus of the project is to strengthen the PA system in Qinghai to better protect a representative sample of its unique biodiversity and more effectively manage this PA network as a whole.

Outcome 1: Mainstreaming PA management objectives and needs into the provincial development and sector planning process

Outcome 2: Increasing PA management effectiveness through strengthened systemic, institutional and staff capacities

Outcome 3: Demonstration of effective PA management through local community involvement (co-management) in the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve (SNNR)

Note: Some of the project sites are based on the high altitude areas between 1000 to 4000 meters plateau, the consultants should be aware of this, the healthy condition must suitable for altitude above 4500m on anoxic high plateau, please fully consider healthy issues before apply for the posts.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

C. Scope of Work and Key Tasks

The MTR team will consist of two independent consultants that will conduct the MTR – one international consultant as the team leader and one national consultant as team expert.

The MTR team will first conduct a document review of project documents (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, Project Document, ESSP, Project Inception Report, PIRs, Finalized GEF focal area Tracking Tools, Project Appraisal Committee meeting minutes, Financial and Administration guidelines used by Project Team, project operational guidelines, manuals and systems, etc.) provided by the Project Team and Commissioning Unit. Then they will participate in a MTR inception workshop to clarify their understanding of the objectives and methods of the MTR, producing the MTR inception report thereafter. The MTR mission will then consist of interviews and site visits to Qinghai Province of China.

The MTR team will assess the following four categories of project progress and produce a draft and final MTR report. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* (<http://web.undp.org/gef/>) for requirements on ratings. No overall rating is required.

1. Project Strategy

Project Design:

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results.
- Review how the project addresses country priorities
- Review decision-making processes

Results Framework/Logframe:

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project's logframe indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.

2. Progress Towards Results

- Review the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets; populate the Progress Towards Results Matrix, as described in the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*; colour code progress in a "traffic light system" based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for the project objective and each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as "not on target to be achieved" (red).
- Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review.
- Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective.
- By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.

3. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Using the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*, assess the following categories of project progress:

- Management Arrangements
- Work Planning
- Finance and co-finance
- Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Reporting
- Communications

4. Sustainability

Assess overall risks to sustainability factors of the project in terms of the following four categories:

- Financial risks to sustainability
- Socio-economic risks to sustainability
- Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability
- Environmental risks to sustainability

The MTR consultant/team will include a section in the MTR report setting out the MTR's evidence-based **conclusions**, in light of the findings.

Additionally, the MTR consultant/team is expected to make **recommendations** to the Project Team. Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report's executive summary. The MTR consultant/team should make no more than 15 recommendations total.

D. Expected Outputs and Deliverables

The MTR consultant/team shall prepare and submit:

- MTR Inception Report: MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of the Midterm Review no later than **2 weeks** before the MTR mission.
- Presentation: Initial Findings presented to project management and the Commissioning Unit at the end of the MTR mission.
- Draft Final Report: Full report with annexes **within 3 weeks** of the MTR mission.
- Final Report*: Revised report with annexed audit trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report. To be sent to the Commissioning Unit **within 1 week** of receiving UNDP comments on draft.

*The final MTR report must be in English. If applicable, the Commissioning Unit may choose to arrange for a translation of the report into a language more widely shared by national stakeholders.

E. Institutional Arrangement

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project's MTR is UNDP China Office.

The Commissioning Unit will contract the consultants and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements **within the country** for the MTR team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the MTR team to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

F. Duration of the Work

30 days (estimated from early June 2015)

The total duration of the MTR will be approximately (4 of weeks) starting from Mid-April and shall not exceed five months from when the consultant(s) are hired. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

- (Feb. 28): Application closes
- (Mar. 31): Selection of MTR Team
- (April 15): Prep the MTR Team (handover of project documents)
- (April 30): 4 days: Document review and preparing MTR Inception Report
- (May 5): 2 days: Finalization and Validation of MTR Inception Report- latest start of MTR mission
- (June 1): 15 days: MTR mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits
- (June 16): Mission wrap-up meeting & presentation of initial findings- earliest end of MTR mission
- (June 1): 5 days: Preparing draft report
- (June 15): 1 days: Incorporating audit trail on draft report/Finalization of MTR report
- (June 30): Preparation & Issue of Management Response
- (July 5): (optional) Concluding Stakeholder Workshop (not mandatory for MTR team)
- (July 10): Expected date of full MTR completion

The date start of contract is (April 30).

G. Duty Station

Identify the consultant's duty station/location for the contract duration, mentioning ALL possible locations of field works/duty travel in pursuit of other relevant activities, specially where traveling to locations at security Phase I or above will be required.

Travel:

- International travel will be required to China during the MTR mission;
- The Basic Security in the Field II and Advanced Security in the Field courses must be successfully completed prior to commencement of travel;
- Individual Consultants are responsible for ensuring they have vaccinations/inoculations when travelling to certain countries, as designated by the UN Medical Director.
- Consultants are required to comply with the UN security directives set forth under <https://dss.un.org/dssweb/>
- All related travel expenses will be covered and will be reimbursed as per UNDP rules and regulations upon submission of an F-10 claim form and supporting documents.

REQUIRED SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

H. Qualifications of the Successful Applicants

The selection of consultants will be aimed at maximizing the overall “team” qualities in the following areas:

- Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience applying SMART targets and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to Biodiversity and ecosystem services management;
- Experience working with the GEF or GEF-evaluations;
- International consultant should have experience working in China or Asia, National consultant should be familiar with the ecological, social-economic conditions in Qinghai Plateau;
- Work experience in relevant technical areas for at least 10 years;
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and Biodiversity and ecosystem services management; experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis;
- Excellent communication skills;
- Demonstrable analytical skills;
- Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset;
- A Master’s degree in natural sciences, or other closely related field.

Consultant Independence:

The consultants cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with project’s related activities.

APPLICATION PROCESS

I. Scope of Price Proposal and Schedule of Payments

Financial Proposal:

- Financial proposals must be “all inclusive” and expressed in a lump-sum for the total duration of the contract. The term “all inclusive” implies all cost (professional fees, travel costs, living allowances etc.);
- For duty travels, the UN’s Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) rates are Xining and elsewhere of Qinghai Province of China, which should provide indication of the cost of living in a duty station/destination (*Note: Individuals on this contract are not UN staff and are therefore not entitled to DSAs. All living allowances required to perform the demands of the ToR must be incorporated in the financial proposal, whether the fees are expressed as daily fees or lump sum amount.*)
- The lump sum is fixed regardless of changes in the cost components.

Schedule of Payments:

10% of payment upon approval of the MTR Inception Report

30% upon submission of the draft MTR Report

60% upon finalization of the MTR Report

Or, as otherwise agreed between the Commissioning Unit and the MTR team.

J. Recommended Presentation of Offer

- a) Completed **Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability** using the [template](#) provided by UNDP;
- b) **Personal CV or a P11 Personal History form**, indicating all past experience from similar projects, as well as the contact details (email and telephone number) of the Candidate and at least three (3) professional references;
- c) **Brief description of approach to work/technical proposal** of why the individual considers him/herself as the most suitable for the assignment, and a proposed methodology on how they will approach and complete the assignment; (max 1 page)
- d) **Financial Proposal** that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price, supported by a breakdown of costs, as per template provided. If an applicant is employed by an organization/company/institution, and he/she expects his/her employer to charge a management fee in the process of releasing him/her to UNDP under Reimbursable Loan Agreement (RLA), the applicant must indicate at this point, and ensure that all such costs are duly incorporated in the financial proposal submitted to UNDP. See Letter of Confirmation of Interest template for financial proposal template.

Incomplete applications will be excluded from further consideration.

K. Criteria for Selection of the Best Offer

The award of the contract will be made to the Individual Consultant who has obtained the highest Combined Score and has accepted UNDP's General Terms and Conditions. Only those applications which are responsive and compliant will be evaluated. The offers will be evaluated using the "Combined Scoring method" where:

- a) The educational background and experience on similar assignments will be weighted a max. of 70%;
- b) The price proposal will weigh as 30% of the total scoring.

L. Annexes to the MTR ToR

- List of documents to be reviewed by the MTR Team
- Guidelines on Contents for the Midterm Review Report
- UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Midterm Review Consultants
- MTR Required Ratings Table and Ratings Scales
- MTR Report Clearance Form
- Sample MTR Evaluative Matrix
- Progress Towards Results Matrix and MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Tables (in Word)

ToR ANNEX A: List of Documents to be reviewed by the MTR Team

1. PIF
2. UNDP Initiation Plan
3. UNDP Project Document
4. UNDP Environmental and Social Screening results
5. Project Inception Report
6. All Project Implementation Reports (PIR's)
7. Quarterly progress reports and work plans of the various implementation task teams
8. Audit reports
9. Finalized GEF focal area Tracking Tools at CEO endorsement and midterm (BD-1, which need to be prepared before the MTR visit and verified during the mission.)
10. Oversight mission reports
11. All monitoring reports prepared by the project
12. Financial and Administration guidelines used by Project Team

The following documents will also be available:

13. Project operational guidelines, manuals and systems
14. UNDP country/countries programme document(s)
15. Minutes of the Project Board Meetings and other meetings (i.e. Project Appraisal Committee meetings)
16. Project site location maps

ToR ANNEX B: Guidelines on Contents for the Midterm Review Report²

- i. Basic Report Information (*for opening page or title page*)
 - Title of UNDP supported GEF financed project
 - UNDP PIMS# and GEF project ID#
 - MTR time frame and date of MTR report
 - Region and countries included in the project
 - GEF Operational Focal Area/Strategic Program
 - Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and other project partners
 - MTR team members
 - Acknowledgements
- ii. Table of Contents
- iii. Acronyms and Abbreviations
1. Executive Summary (*3-5 pages*)
 - Project Information Table
 - Project Description (brief)
 - Project Progress Summary (between 200-500 words)
 - MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table
 - Concise summary of conclusions
 - Recommendation Summary Table
2. Introduction (*2-3 pages*)
 - Purpose of the MTR and objectives
 - Scope & Methodology: principles of design and execution of the MTR, MTR approach and data collection methods, limitations to the MTR
 - Structure of the MTR report
3. Project Description and Background Context (*3-5 pages*)
 - Development context: environmental, socio-economic, institutional, and policy factors relevant to the project objective and scope
 - Problems that the project sought to address: threats and barriers targeted
 - Project Description and Strategy: objective, outcomes and expected results, description of field sites (if any)
 - Project Implementation Arrangements: short description of the Project Board, key implementing partner arrangements, etc.
 - Project timing and milestones
 - Main stakeholders: summary list
4. Findings (*12-14 pages*)
 - 4.1 Project Strategy
 - Project Design
 - Results Framework/Logframe
 - 4.2 Progress Towards Results
 - Progress towards outcomes analysis
 - Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective
 - 4.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management
 - Management Arrangements
 - Work planning
 - Finance and co-finance
 - Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems
 - Stakeholder engagement
 - Reporting
 - Communications

² The Report length should not exceed 40 pages in total (not including annexes).

- 4.4 Sustainability
 - Financial risks to sustainability
 - Socio-economic to sustainability
 - Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability
 - Environmental risks to sustainability
- 5. Conclusions and Recommendations (*4-6 pages*)
 - 5.1 Conclusions
 - Comprehensive and balanced statements (that are evidence-based and connected to the MTR's findings) which highlight the strengths, weaknesses and results of the project
 - Recommendations
 - 5.2
 - Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project
 - Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project
 - Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives
- 6. Annexes
 - MTR ToR (excluding ToR annexes)
 - MTR evaluative matrix (evaluation criteria with key questions, indicators, sources of data, and methodology)
 - Example Questionnaire or Interview Guide used for data collection
 - Ratings Scales
 - MTR mission itinerary
 - List of persons interviewed
 - List of documents reviewed
 - Co-financing table (if not previously included in the body of the report)
 - Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form
 - Signed MTR final report clearance form
 - *Annexed in a separate file:* Audit trail from received comments on draft MTR report
 - *Annexed in a separate file:* Relevant midterm tracking tools (*METT, FSC, Capacity scorecard, etc.*)

ToR ANNEX C: Midterm Review Evaluative Matrix Template

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
(include evaluative question(s))	(i.e. relationships established, level of coherence between project design and implementation approach, specific activities conducted, quality of risk mitigation strategies, etc.)	(i.e. project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission, etc.)	(i.e. document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc.)
Progress Towards Results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?			
Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project's implementation?			
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			

Evaluators/Consultants:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

MTR Consultant Agreement Form

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System:

Name of Consultant: _____

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): _____

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at _____ (Place) on _____
(Date)

Signature: _____

³ www.undp.org/uneqcodeofconduct

ToR ANNEX E: MTR Ratings

Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (one rating for each outcome and for the objective)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets, and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.

Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of most of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only few that are subject to remedial action.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.

Ratings for Sustainability: (one overall rating)		
4	Likely (L)	Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project’s closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future
3	Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review

2	Moderately Unlikely (MU)	Significant risk that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on
1	Unlikely (U)	Severe risks that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained

ToR ANNEX F: MTR Report Clearance Form

(to be completed by the Commissioning Unit and UNDP-GEF RTA and included in the final document)

Midterm Review Report Reviewed and Cleared By:

Commissioning Unit

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date:

UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date:
