## Midterm Review Terms of Reference

**Standard Template 2: Formatted information to be entered in** [**UNDP Jobs website**[[1]](#footnote-1)](https://jobs.undp.org/)

**BASIC CONTRACT INFORMATION**

**Location: China**

**Application Deadline:** July 16th, 2021

**Type of Contract:** Individual Contract

**Post Level:** International Consultant

**Languages Required:** English

**Starting Date:** August 18th, 2021

**Duration of Initial Contract:** 55 working days

**Expected Duration of Assignment:** August 18th, 2021 – November 15th, 2021

**BACKGROUND**

**A. Project Titles**

* Enhancing conservation of globally significant biodiversity through protected area system strengthening in Gansu (China-Protected Areas System Reform (C-PAR) Program Child Project #2)
* Strengthening the Protected Area System in the Qilian Mountains-Qinghai Lake Landscape Project (China-Protected Areas System Reform (C-PAR) Program Child Project #3)

##### **B. Project Description**

This is the Terms of Reference for the UNDP-GEF Midterm Review (MTR) of the two full-sized projects:

**Project 1:** Enhancing conservation of globally significant biodiversity through protected area system strengthening in Gansu (China-Protected Areas System Reform (C-PAR) Program Child Project #2) (PIMS #5689) implemented through the Forestry and Grassland Bureau of Gansu Province, which is to be undertaken in 2019-2024. The project started on the January 31st, 2019 and is in its third year of implementation. This ToR sets out the expectations for these MTRs. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* (*http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/mid-term/Guidance\_Midterm%20Review%20\_EN\_2014.pdf*).

Gansu Province is notable for its topographical, climatic and biological diversity, including the West Qinling - Minshan Mountains landscape which features large tracts of forest that are critical watersheds and part of the south-central China ‘biodiversity hotspot’. Gansu Province has more than 60 nature reserves (NRs) that are important for endemic and globally threatened species such as giant panda, golden snub-nosed monkey, etc. However, the connectivity of forested landscapes and viability of key species populations are threatened by infrastructure development and unsustainable land management, exacerbated by climate change. The project is designed to remove the barriers for the long-term solution to strengthen the conservation of endemic and globally threatened species in Gansu Province through reducing threats and strengthening and mainstreaming the protected area (PA) system into government and sectoral planning through three components: 1) Improved legal and institutional framework for protected areas, Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and globally threatened species, and mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation in provincial planning; 2) Strengthened West Qinling Mountains-Minshan Mountains PA network and reduction of threats; and 3) Knowledge Management, Monitoring and Evaluation and Gender Mainstreaming.

The project objective is to strengthen the conservation of globally significant biodiversity in Gansu Province through improving the legal and institutional framework, reforming and mainstreaming the protected area system, enhancing habitat connectivity and reducing key threats. The project comprises of three components:

* Outcome 1: Improved legal and institutional framework for Protected Areas (PAs), Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and globally threatened species, and mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation in provincial planning
* Outcome 2: Strengthened West Qinling Mountains-Minshan Mountains PA network and reduction of threats
* Outcome 3: Improved data and knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation supports biodiversity conservation

Activities under component 1 has been focused on provincial level to update related legislation and the biodiversity conservation strategy and action plan, develop the PA and ecological corridor network plan, improve the institutional capacity for PA system and species conservation, and strengthen financial sustainability of the PA system. Activities under component 2 has been focused on the West Qinling - Minshan Mountains landscape with four target NRs (A’xia, Duo’er, Chagangliang and Yuhe), two Ecological Corridors in Liangdang and Hezheng County, and Endanger Animal Protection Center (EAPC) in Wuwei City. Results of the second component include a strengthened PA and ecological corridor network in the West Qinling-Minshan Mountains landscape expanded by more than 25,000 ha; improved management effectiveness and reduced threats at four target NRs covering c.355,530 ha, with strengthened engagement of communities and support for livelihoods. Under the third component, the project has been sharing knowledge with stakeholders and other projects through the C-PAR Program, and awareness of biodiversity conservation raised among key stakeholders.

Implemented by the Provincial Forestry and Grassland Bureau of Gansu (GFGB), Gansu Provincial Forest Fire Warning and Monitoring Information Center (Gansu Provincial Foreign-Funded Forestry Project Management Office) of GFGB has hosted the project management office (PMO). The Project Coordination Office is established in the Provincial Department of Finance. The project duration is 5 years, from January 31st, 2019 to January 31st, 2024. The total budget is $20,697,293.58, including $2,652,293.58 of GEF contribution and $18,045,000 co-financing jointly provided by the provincial government of Gansu and UNDP.

The project launched on May 13th, 2019. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) was established on April 23rd, 2019and the first PSC meeting was also held on May 13th, 2019. Representatives from GFGB, UNDP and 11 provincial departments attended the meeting.

**Project 2:** Strengthening the PA system in the Qilian Mountains-Qinghai Lake landscape (China-Protected Areas System Reform (C-PAR) Program Child Project #3) (PIMS #5690) implemented through the Qinghai Forestry and Grassland Bureau, which is to be undertaken in 2019-2024. The project officially signed on the January 31st, 2019 is in its third year of implementation. This ToR sets out the expectations for this MTR. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* (*http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/mid-term/Guidance\_Midterm%20Review%20\_EN\_2014.pdf*).

Consolidation of the protected area system in the Qilian Mountains-Qinghai Lake landscape to conserve globally significant biodiversity and development of landscape level management will promote resilience and a functional natural environment across these critical ecosystems. The project aims to strengthen the enabling conditions both at the institutional and site level, to enhance the participation of local communities in natural resource management towards achieving mutually beneficial conservation and socioeconomic outcomes. Although the current protected areas in the Qilian Mountains-Qinghai Lake landscape, namely the Qinghai Lake national nature reserve (NNR) and the Qilian Mountains nature reserve (NR), are managed under sustainable use arrangements, e.g., access for local Tibetan herders to grassland ecosystems, there remain threats to globally significant biodiversity that are not being effectively managed. The project is designed to increase participation through collaborative management and innovative conservation financing arrangements, including but not limited to: (1) expansion of the PA system and management under collaborative community arrangements; (2) community and/or herder group agreements to remove or adjust fencing to reduce threats to Przewalski’s gazelle and increase habitat connectivity; (3) development of community jobs in support of PA management; (4) support for sustainable alternative livelihoods linked to conservation incentives, e.g., biodiversity friendly eco-tourism; (5) collaborative implementation of grassland restoration, utilizing local herders to patrol and manage the process; (6) collaborative livestock management in high mountain grasslands, reducing seasonal fragmentation of habitat for key species, including the snow leopard; and (7) pilot implementation of innovative conservation financing, e.g., through conservation easement arrangements, including transfer of tenure and/or land use rights, to support restoration and improve habitat management.

The Project Objective is “to strengthen the effectiveness of the protected area system in the Qilian Mountains-Qinghai Lake landscape to conserve globally significant biodiversity, including snow leopard and Przewalski’s gazelle”. The project strategy, as the GEF project alternative aimed at removing the barriers outlined above, is broken down into the following three components:

Component 1: Protected Area System Consolidation and Institutional Strengthening

Component 2: Emplacement of Effective PA Management and Incentivising Participatory Conservation

Component 3: Knowledge Management, Monitoring & Evaluation, and Gender and Social Inclusion.

Implementing Partner is the Qinghai Forestry and Grassland Bureau (QFGB), the Project Management Office (PMO) is established under the Qinghai Forestry and Grassland Project Service Center (QFGPSC) of QFGB;. The Project Coordination Office is in the Qinghai Department of Finance. The project duration is 5 years, from January 31st, 2019 to January 31st, 2024. The total budget is $20,697,293.58, including $2,652,293.58 of GEF grant and $18,045,000 co-financing jointly provided by the provincial government of Qinghai and UNDP.

The project officially launched on June 19th, 2019. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) was established on April 1st, 2019 and the first PSC meeting was also held on June 19th, 2019. Representatives from QFGB, UNDP and nine provincial PSC member departments attended the meeting.

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has escalated into a global humanitarian and socio-economic crisis since 2020. As of June 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic as the new coronavirus rapidly spread to all regions of the world. In China, from January 3rd, 2020 to June 10th, 2021, there have been 115,229 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 5,179 deaths, reported to WHO. As of June 8th, 2021, a total of 808,962,000 vaccine doses have been administered. China responded to the outbreak by implemented a series of strict restrictions to minimize contracting or spreading the virus. In the first and second quarters of 2020, there was a lockdown period. This had a negative impact on the project, resulting in delays to implementation for at least 2 months but with the lifting of restrictions implementation gradually picked up since June. To date, international travel is still limited. Entry restrictions vary depending on departure location. All travelers are strongly advised to check with a local Chinese embassy or consulate to confirm all testing and document verification requirements. All persons (including Chinese nationals) traveling from abroad must have proof of dual negative results for COVID-19 using both a nucleic acid test and a serological test for IgM antibodies. All persons (including Chinese nationals) must undergo a 14-day quarantine at a designated location upon arrival in Mainland China plus a 7-14 days quarantine at home or in the community.

**C. MTR Purpose**

The overall objective of MTR is to assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Documents titled Enhancing conservation of globally significant biodiversity through protected area system strengthening in Gansu (China-Protected Areas System Reform (C-PAR) Program Child Project #2) (PIMS #5689) and Strengthening the PA system in the Qilian Mountains-Qinghai Lake landscape (China-Protected Areas System Reform (C-PAR) Program Child Project #3) (PIMS #5690), which are scheduled to end in January 2024, to confirm whether/not the project is on track, especially with respect to project design, timeframe, budget and sustainability and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will review project activities, output and project governance and management to date and will synthesize lessons to help improve the project design and implementation of project activities. Results, effectiveness, processes, and performance of partners will also be assessed to promote accountability for achievement of objectives. The MTR will promote learning and knowledge sharing to inform policies, strategies, programmes and projects, and recommendations will be provided to the project to improve its performance, sustainability, effectiveness, and impact.

To achieve the objectives of MTR described above, the MTR consultants will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Environmental & Social Safeguard Policy, the Project Document, project reports including Annual Project Review/PIRs, project budget revisions, lesson learned reports, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the consultant considers useful for this evidence-based review), and summarize assessment methodologies, results, and recommendations in a report. The MTR report should promote accountability and transparency and assess the extent of project accomplishments.

**DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

##### **D. MTR Approach & Methodology**

The MTR reports must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.

The MTR team will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP)), the Project Document, project reports including Annual Project Review/PIRs, project budget revisions, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based review. The MTR team will review the baseline GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools submitted to the GEF at CEO endorsement, and the midterm GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools that must be completed before the MTR field mission begins.

The MTR team is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach[[2]](#footnote-2) ensuring close engagement with the Project Teams, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), the Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR.[[3]](#footnote-3) Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to Ministry of Ecology and Environment, Ministry of Finance, Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center, Sub-national Governments; executing agencies, senior officials and task team/ component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, local government and CSOs, etc. Additionally, the national consultant is expected to conduct field missions to *Beijing, Gansu and Qinghai,* including the following project sites *in cities of Lanzhou, Longnan, Wuwei, Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture* for Gansu Project. Xining City, Haibei Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture including Menyuan County, Gangcha County and Haiyan County for Qinghai Project*.*

The specific design and methodology for the MTR should emerge from consultations between the MTR team and the above-mentioned parties regarding what is appropriate and feasible for meeting the MTR purpose and objectives and answering the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data. The MTR team must, however, use gender-responsive methodologies and tools and ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment, as well as other cross-cutting issues and SDGs are incorporated into the MTR report.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the MTR should be clearly outlined in the Inception Report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, stakeholders and the MTR team.

The final MTR reports must describe the full MTR approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review.

Considering the travel limitation, the MTR team should develop a methodology that takes this into account the conduct of the MTRs virtually and remotely, including the use of remote interview methods and extended desk reviews, data analysis, surveys and review questionnaires. This should be detailed in the MTR Inception Reports and agreed with the Commissioning Unit. The international consultant will be home-based and provide guidance to the National Consultant, who will do the field visit to the sites (if the travel is permitted). Since part of the MTR is to be carried out virtually then consideration should be taken for stakeholder availability, ability or willingness to be interviewed remotely. These limitations must be reflected in the final MTR reports.

If a data collection/field mission is not possible then remote interviews may be undertaken through telephone or online (skype, zoom etc.). International consultant can work remotely with national consultant support in the field if it is safe for them to operate and travel. No stakeholders, consultants or UNDP staff should be put in harm’s way and safety is the key priority.

A short validation mission may be considered if it is confirmed to be safe for staffs, consultants, stakeholders and if such a mission is possible within the MTR schedule.

##### **E. Detailed Scope of the MTR**

The MTR team will assess the following four categories of project progress. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for extended descriptions.

Considering the MTR team will conduct evaluation for 2 child projects under one programme, despite shared overall programmatic level background, stand-alone report and relevant documents are required for each one of the project.

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. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
* Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?
* Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
* Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.
  + Were relevant gender issues (e.g. the impact of the project on gender equality in the programme country, involvement of women’s groups, engaging women in project activities) raised in the Project Document?
* If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for

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.
* Are the project’s objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
* 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.
* Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART ‘development’ indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.

1. **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).
* Table. Progress Towards Results Matrix (Achievement of outcomes against End-of-project Targets)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Strategy** | **Indicator[[4]](#footnote-4)** | **Baseline Level[[5]](#footnote-5)** | **Level in 1st PIR (self- reported)** | **Midterm Target[[6]](#footnote-6)** | **End-of-project Target** | **Midterm Level & Assessment[[7]](#footnote-7)** | **Achievement Rating[[8]](#footnote-8)** | **Justification for Rating** |
| **Objective:** | Indicator (if applicable): |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Outcome 1:** | Indicator 1: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Indicator 2: |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Outcome 2:** | Indicator 3: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Indicator 4: |  |  |  |  |  |
| Etc. |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Etc.** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

* **Indicator Assessment Key**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Green= Achieved | Yellow= On target to be achieved | Red= Not on target to be achieved |

In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

* Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool/Core Indicators at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review.
* Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project.
* By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.

1. **Project Implementation and Adaptive Management**

Management Arrangements

* Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
* Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.
* Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.
* Do the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and/or UNDP and other partners have the capacity to deliver benefits to or involve women? If yes, how?
* What is the gender balance of project staff? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in project staff?
* What is the gender balance of the Project Board? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in the Project Board?

Work Planning

* Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.
* Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?
* Examine the use of the project’s results framework/ logframe as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.

Finance and co-finance

* Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
* Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.
* Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?
* Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out by the Commissioning Unit and project team, provide commentary on co-financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sources of Co-financing** | **Name of Co-financer** | **Type of Co-financing** | **Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement (US$)** | **Actual Amount Contributed at stage of Midterm Review (US$)** | **Actual % of Expected Amount** |
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|  |  | **TOTAL** |  |  |  |

* Include the separate GEF Co-Financing template (filled out by the Commissioning Unit and project team) which categorizes co-financing amounts by source as ‘investment mobilized’ or ‘recurrent expenditures’. (This template will be annexed as a separate file.

Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems

* Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
* Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?
* Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were incorporated in monitoring systems. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.

Stakeholder Engagement

* Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
* Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
* Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?
* How does the project engage women and girls? Is the project likely to have the same positive and/or negative effects on women and men, girls and boys? Identify, if possible, legal, cultural, or religious constraints on women’s participation in the project. What can the project do to enhance its gender benefits?

Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

* Validate the risks identified in the project’s most current SESP, and those risks’ ratings; are any revisions needed?
* Summarize and assess the revisions made since CEO Endorsement/Approval (if any) to:
  + The project’s overall safeguards risk categorization.
  + The identified types of risks[[9]](#footnote-9) (in the SESP).
  + The individual risk ratings (in the SESP).
* Describe and assess progress made in the implementation of the project’s social and environmental management measures as outlined in the SESP submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval (and prepared during implementation, if any), including any revisions to those measures. Such management measures might include Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) or other management plans, though can also include aspects of a project’s design; refer to Question 6 in the SESP template for a summary of the identified management measures.

A given project should be assessed against the version of UNDP’s safeguards policy that was in effect at the time of the project’s approval.

Reporting

* Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board.
* Assess how well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfil GEF reporting requirements (i.e. how have they addressed poorly-rated PIRs, if applicable?)
* Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

Communications & Knowledge Management

* Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?
* Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)
* For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project’s progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.
* List knowledge activities/products developed (based on knowledge management approach approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval).

1. **Sustainability**

* Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the ATLAS Risk Register are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why.
* In addition, assess the following risks to sustainability:

Financial risks to sustainability:

* What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project’s outcomes)?

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

* Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project? Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

* Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.

Environmental risks to sustainability:

* Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?

**Conclusions & Recommendations**

The MTR consultant/team will include a section in the MTR report for 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.

**Ratings**

The MTR team will include its ratings of the project’s results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements in a *MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table* in the Executive Summary of the MTR report. See the TOR Annexes for the Rating Table and ratings scales.

##### **F. Expected Outputs and Deliverables**

The MTR team shall prepare and submit:

* MTR Inception Reports: MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of the Midterm Review no later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission. To be sent to the Commissioning Unit and project management. Completion date: **August 26th, 2021**
* Presentation: MTR team presents initial findings to project management and the Commissioning Unit at the end of the MTR missions. Completion date: **September 30th, 2021**
* Draft MTR Reports: MTR team submits the draft full reports with annexes within 3 weeks of the MTR missions. Completion date: **October 20th, 2021**
* Final Reports\*: MTR team submits the revised report with annexed and completed Audit Trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR reports. To be sent to the Commissioning Unit within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft. Completion date: **November 15th, 2021**

\*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.

**G. Institutional Arrangements**

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

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. The Commissioning Unit and Project Team will facilitate and provide all the support that is required to implement remote/ virtual MTR in the event of travel restriction to the country.

**H. Duration of the Work**

The total duration of the MTR will be approximately *55 days* over a period of *3 months* starting *on* August 18th, 2021 and shall not exceed five months from when the consultant(s) are hired. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

* *August 18th, 2021:* Prep the MTR Team (handover of project documents)
* *August 26th, 2021 (6 days):* Document review and preparing MTR Inception Reports (3 days for each project)
* *September 6th, 2021 (8 days):* Finalization andValidation of MTR Inception Reports
* *September 15th, 2021(8days):* MTR mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits in Gansu
* *September 22nd, 2021:* Mission wrap-up meeting & presentation of initial findings for Gansu
* *September 23rd, 2021(8days):* MTR mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits in Qinghai
* *September 30th, 2021:* Mission wrap-up meeting & presentation of initial findings for Qinghai
* *October 1th - October 20th,2021(20 days):* Preparing draft report
* *November 1st, 2021 (5 days):* Incorporating audit trail on draft report/Finalization of MTR reports (note: accommodate time delay in dates for circulation and review of the draft report)
* *November 8th, 2021:* Preparation & Issue of Management Response
* *November 15th-30th*, 2021: Expected date of full MTR completion

The date start of contract is August 18th, 2021. There should be stand-alone MTR report for each of the 2 projects.

Options for site visits should be provided in the MTR Inception Report.

**I. Duty Station**

Considering the travel limitation, the MTR team should develop a methodology that takes this into account the conduct of the MTR virtually and remotely, including the use of remote interview methods and extended desk reviews, data analysis, surveys and review questionnaires. This should be detailed in the MTR Inception Report and agreed with the Commissioning Unit. The international consultant will be home-based and provide guidance to the National Consultant, who will do the field visit to the sites (if the travel is permitted).

If a data collection/field mission is not possible then remote interviews may be undertaken through telephone or online (skype, zoom etc.). International consultant can work remotely with national consultant support in the field if it is safe for them to operate and travel. No stakeholders, consultants or UNDP staff should be put in harm’s way and safety is the key priority.

Additionally, the national consultant is expected to conduct field missions to Beijing, Gansu Province and Qinghai Province, including the following project sites in cities of Lanzhou, Longnan , Wuwei, Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture for Gansu Project; Xining City, Haibei Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture including Menyuan County, Gangcha County and Haiyan County for Qinghai Project.

**Travel:**

* Due to the travel limitation, international travel will not be required during the MTR mission;
* The BSAFE training course must be successfully completed prior to commencement of travel; Herewith is the link to access this training: [https://training.dss.un.org/courses/login/index.php](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftraining.dss.un.org%2Fcourses%2Flogin%2Findex.php&data=02%7C01%7Cmargarita.arguelles%40undp.org%7Cf844bcc8bed44b9d964e08d81439040f%7Cb3e5db5e2944483799f57488ace54319%7C0%7C0%7C637281583941862242&sdata=rxpJarejT1BkWC%2FDUq2F4MmAZf43mbRMl5fFqWWBTyY%3D&reserved=0) . These training modules at this secure internet site is accessible to Consultants, which allows for registration with private email.
* 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**

**J. Qualifications of the Successful Applicants**

A team of 2 independent consultants will conduct the MTR - one team leader (with experience and exposure to projects and evaluations in other regions globally), one team expert, usually from the country of the project. The team leader will join online for interviews (where internet connection allows). 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.

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

1. Qualifications for the Team Leader

Education

* A Master’s degree in Biodiversity/Environmental Science/Environmental or other closely related field; (20%)

Experience

* Work experience in biodiversity related management for at least 10 years; (20%)
* Minimum 8 years of experience in conducting evaluation of development projects supported by UNDP/UN agencies, GEF or any donors (15%)
* Experience in evaluating/reviewing projects, experiences in evaluating/reviewing GEF-funded project will be an asset; (5%)
* Experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies and applying SMART targets and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios; (10%)
* Competence in adaptive management, as applied to CBD; (5%)
* Experience working in China; (5%)
* Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and biodiversity; experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis; (5%)
* Excellent communication skills; (5%)
* Demonstrable analytical skills; (5%)
* Experience with implementing evaluations remotely will be considered an asset. (5%)

Language

* Fluency in written and spoken English.

2. Qualifications for the National Consultant

Education

* A Master’s degree in Biodiversity/Environmental Science/Environmental or other closely related field; (20%)

Experience

* Work experience in biodiversity related management for at least 8 years; (20%)
* Minimum 5 years of experience in conducting evaluation of development projects supported by UNDP/UN agencies, GEF or any donors (15%)
* Experience in evaluating/reviewing projects, experiences in evaluating/reviewing GEF-funded project will be an asset; (5%)
* R
* Experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies and applying SMART targets and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios; (10%)
* Competence in adaptive management, as applied to CBD; (5%)
* Experience working in China; (5%)
* Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and biodiversity; experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis; (5%)
* Excellent communication skills; (5%)
* Demonstrable analytical skills; (5%)
* Experience with implementing evaluations remotely will be considered an asset. (5%)

Language

* Fluency in written and spoken English and Chinese.

**K. Ethics**

The MTR team will be held to the highest ethical standards and is required to sign a code of conduct upon acceptance of the assignment. This MTR will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’. The MTR team must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The MTR team must also ensure security of collected information before and after the MTR and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information, knowledge and data gathered in the MTR process must also be solely used for the MTR and not for other uses without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

**L. Schedule of Payments**

For Team Leader and National Consultant:

* 20% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final MTR Inception Reports and approval by the Commissioning Unit
* 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the draft MTR reports to the Commissioning Unit
* 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final MTR reports and approval by the Commissioning Unit and RTA (via signatures on the MTR Report Clearance Form) and delivery of completed MTR Audit Trail

Criteria for issuing the final payment of 40%

* The final MTR reports includes all requirements outlined in the MTR TOR and is in accordance with the MTR guidance.
* The final MTR reports are clearly written, logically organized, and is specific for this project (i.e. text has not been cut & pasted from other MTR reports).
* The Audit Trail includes responses to and justification for each comment listed.

In line with the UNDP’s financial regulations, when determined by the Commissioning Unit and/or the consultant that a deliverable or service cannot be satisfactorily completed due to the impact of COVID-19 and limitations to the MTR, that deliverable or service will not be paid.

Due to the current COVID-19 situation and its implications, a partial payment may be considered if the consultant invested time towards the deliverable but was unable to complete to circumstances beyond his/her control.

**APPLICATION PROCESS**

*(Adjust this section if a vetted roster will be used)*

**M. Recommended Presentation of Offer**

Recommended Presentation of Proposal:

1. **Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability** using the [template](https://intranet.undp.org/unit/bom/pso/Support%20documents%20on%20IC%20Guidelines/Template%20for%20Confirmation%20of%20Interest%20and%20Submission%20of%20Financial%20Proposal.docx)[[10]](#footnote-10) provided by UNDP;
2. **CV** and a **Personal History Form** ([P11 form](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11_Personal_history_form.doc)[[11]](#footnote-11));
3. **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)
4. **Financial Proposal** that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price and all other travel related costs (such as flight ticket, per diem, etc), supported by a breakdown of costs, as per template attached to the [Letter of Confirmation of Interest template](https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PSU_%20Individual%20Contract_Offerors%20Letter%20to%20UNDP%20Confirming%20Interest%20and%20Availability.docx&action=default). 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.

Applicants are requested to apply online (http://jobs.undp.org, etc.) by (June 30th, 2021). Incomplete applications will be excluded from further consideration.

**N. Criteria for Selection of the Best Offer**

Only those applications which are responsive and compliant will be evaluated. Offers will be evaluated according to the Combined Scoring method – where the educational background and experience on similar assignments will be weighted at 70%and the price proposal will weigh as 30% of the total scoring. The applicant receiving the Highest Combined Score that has also accepted UNDP’s General Terms and Conditions will be awarded the contract.

**O. Annexes to the MTR ToR**

List of documents to be reviewed by the MTR Team

* ToR ANNEX A: List of Documents to be reviewed by the MTR Team
* ToR ANNEX B: Guidelines on Contents for the Midterm Review Report[[12]](#footnote-12)
* ToR ANNEX C: Midterm Review Evaluative Matrix Template
* ToR ANNEX D: UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Midterm Review Consultants[[13]](#footnote-13)
* ToR ANNEX E: MTR Ratings Table and Ratings Scales
* ToR ANNEX F: MTR Report Clearance Form
* ToR ANNEX G: Audit Trail Template
* ToR ANNEX H: Progress Towards Results Matrix
* ToR ANNEX I: GEF Co-Financing Template (provided as a separate file)

1. https://jobs.undp.org/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/capacity-building/discussion-paper--innovations-in-monitoring---evaluating-results/), 05 Nov 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For more stakeholder engagement in the M&E process, see the [UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](http://www.undg.org/docs/11653/UNDP-PME-Handbook-(2009).pdf), Chapter 3, pg. 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Populate with data from the Project Document [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. If available [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Colour code this column only [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Risks are to be labeled with both the UNDP SES Principles and Standards, and the GEF’s “types of risks and potential impacts”: Climate Change and Disaster; Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups; Disability Inclusion; Adverse Gender-Related impact, including Gender-based Violence and Sexual Exploitation; Biodiversity Conservation and the Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources; Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement; Indigenous Peoples; Cultural Heritage; Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention; Labor and Working Conditions; Community Health, Safety and Security. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <https://intranet.undp.org/unit/bom/pso/Support%20documents%20on%20IC%20Guidelines/Template%20for%20Confirmation%20of%20Interest%20and%20Submission%20of%20Financial%20Proposal.docx> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11_Personal_history_form.doc> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The Report length should not exceed *40* pages in total (not including annexes). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)