

Midterm Review Terms of Reference

BACKGROUND

A. Project Titles

- China's Protected Area Reform (C-PAR) for Conserving Globally Significant Biodiversity (China-Protected Areas System Reform (C-PAR) Program Child Project #1)
- Strengthening Marine Protected Areas in SE China to conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity (China-Protected Areas System Reform (C-PAR) Program Child Project #4)

B. Project Description

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

Project 1: China's Protected Area Reform (C-PAR) for Conserving Globally Significant Biodiversity (China-Protected Areas System Reform (C-PAR) Program Child Project #1) (PIMS #5688) implemented through the Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center (FECO) of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE), which is to be undertaken in 2019-2025. The project started on the March 8th, 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).

The project will deliver global environmental benefits through establishing a national park (NP) system in China, as part of the comprehensive protected area reform processes underway in the country. Over the past two decades China has undergone unprecedented economic growth, conservation increasingly recognized and integrated into development strategies and plans. The enabling environment for biodiversity conservation has evolved through a progressive set of policies and regulations, but legal and institutional frameworks have not been able to keep up with rapid socioeconomic transformations, resulting in a protected area (PA) system comprised of numerous types of PAs, managed by different agencies and at different administrative levels, with inconsistent management approaches and strategic direction.

The GEF funding for this project, the national level project among a total of six child projects under the C-PAR program, is timely, providing an opportunity to support the Chinese authorities in ensuring protection of globally significant biodiversity is expanded under the new NP system. Establishment of the NP system is the cornerstone of the major PA reform in China, including development of a National Park Law that would consolidate, and essentially supersede, the current fragmented set of laws and regulations associated with protected areas, and establishing a new PA management agency, integrating the relevant management functions of protected areas so that a unified management responsibility can be exercised on NP system.

Technical assistance through the GEF funding will feed into the PA reform processes, integrating international best practice into legislative and institutional frameworks, introduction of advanced policies and guidelines for increasing the representativeness of the NP system and enhancing management effectiveness, building institutional capacities, and improving financial sustainability, with an increase of at least 30% in available PA finances through diversification of funding sources, improved efficiency in access and utilization of available funds, broadened participation through concession arrangements and value-based eco-compensation appropriations.

At the site level, PA reforms will be demonstrated at three NP pilot sites, specifically the Three-River Source NP in Qinghai province, the Giant Panda NP traversing parts of Sichuan, Gansu, and Shaanxi provinces, and the Xianju NP, a national park established at the provincial level in Zhejiang province. The current national PA system is slated to expand by 1.2838 million hectares, increasing coverage of globally significant biodiversity as represented by Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs). The envisaged expansion will require close cooperation with local governments and communities, with respect to issues associated with land rights, resettlement, livelihoods and traditional ways of life. Many of the communities located within and near the proposed NP sites are predominantly made up of ethnic minorities.

Under the third component of the project, biodiversity knowledge management will be strengthened by more effectively communicating the values of the NP system. This will be facilitated through biodiversity knowledge platform, consolidating information among conservation agencies, with access to the public, rendering more participatory stewardship of the NP system. Coordination of the C-PAR program is also covered in the third component of the project, with the national project having the role of overseeing the progress on the other child projects, ensuring that program outcomes are achieved and disseminating information regarding PA reforms realised at the central level.

The Project Objective is “to establish an effective National Park (NP) System through protected area reform and institutional innovation, increasing coverage of protected areas and improving effectiveness of PA management for conservation of globally significant biodiversity”. The strategy in achieving this objective is broken down into the following three components described in the theory of change diagram in Figure 3:

- Component 1: National Park System Establishment
- Component 2: Provincial level National Park System Strengthening
- Component 3: Program Coordination and Knowledge Management.

The project launched on Nov. 5th, 2019. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) was established in Oct. 2019 and the first PSC meeting was also held on Nov. 5th, 2019. Representatives from Ministry of Finance (MOF), MEE, NFGA, UNDP and provincial departments and PMOs of child projects attended the meeting.

Project 2: Strengthening Marine Protected Areas in SE China to conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity (China-Protected Areas System Reform (C-PAR) Program Child Project #4) implemented through the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA), which is to be undertaken in 2019-2024. The project officially signed on the October 3, 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).

The project Objective is to conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity in South-East (SE) China through integrated seascape planning and threat management, MPA network expansion and strengthened MPA operations. Coastal ecosystems and their biodiversity in SE China are under extreme pressure from dense human populations, intensive natural resource exploitation and disturbance, conversion of natural habitats and pollution.

The project focuses on coastal ecosystems, using the iconic Chinese white dolphin (CWD) as an indicator and flagship species to engage multiple stakeholders in novel ecosystem-based approaches to achieve the Objective through three strategies or project components as follows: Component 1: Strengthened MPA legal framework and mainstreaming and expansion of MPA network. This will expand the area and improve the connectivity of MPAs protecting globally significant biodiversity, as well as piloting innovative mechanisms to mainstream biodiversity conservation into marine spatial planning, and improving MPA regulations and financing. Component 2: Demonstrations of improved MPA

and ESA (Ecologically Sensitive Area) management. This will strengthen the management effectiveness of MPAs in the project's three pilot areas, build the capacity of MPA staff, enhance the participation of communities, and reduce locally specific threats in MPAs and across wider seascapes through participatory action and enforcement and improved awareness. Component 3: Monitoring, evaluation and sharing of knowledge and information on coastal habitats and species. This will establish a functioning MPA Network linking MPAs across SE China including a GIS-based information platform for knowledge and information sharing, enhance the coordination of research and monitoring for globally significant biodiversity, and ensure that the project is implemented effectively and knowledge and lessons learned are widely shared with project stakeholders, including the wider public in coastal SE China and nationally through the GEF-financed, C-PAR Program, of which this project is a part.

The project officially launched on Dec. 24, 2019. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) was established on Dec. 13, 2019 and the first PSC meeting was also held on Dec. 24th, 2019. Representatives from NFGA, UNDP and provincial PSC member departments attended the meeting.

This project is one of six child projects under the GEF-financed C-PAR Program. This programmatic approach will support coordinated knowledge management and cross-fertilisation between individual child projects, coordinated by the national child project and the national C-PAR Program Steering Committee. The project components will contribute towards the C-PAR programmatic outcomes. As the only child project focusing on coastal and marine ecosystems, this child project offers particular opportunities for replication and learning both across the marine environment, linking marine and terrestrial approaches, and between MPAs and terrestrial PAs.

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 China's Protected Area Reform (C-PAR) for Conserving Globally Significant Biodiversity (China-Protected Areas System Reform (C-PAR) Program Child Project #1) (PIMS #5688) and Strengthening Marine Protected Areas in SE China to conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity (China-Protected Areas System Reform (C-PAR) Program Child Project #4) (PIMS #5379), 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 approach² 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 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 following project sites: *Chengdu and Ya'an in Sichuan Province*, and *Xianju County in Zhejiang Province* for CPAR 1. *Beibai, Qinzhou in Guangxi Province*, *Zhubai in Guangdong Province*, and *Xiamen in Fujian Province* for CPAR 4.

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.

² For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

³ For more stakeholder engagement in the M&E process, see the [UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 3, pg. 93.

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.

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).

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

Project Strategy	Indicator ⁴	Baseline Level ⁵	Level in 1 st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target ⁶	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment ⁷	Achievement Rating 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
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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.

3. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

⁴ Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards

⁵ Populate with data from the Project Document

⁶ If available

⁷ Colour code this column only

⁸ Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

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
		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 risks⁹ (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.

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.

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).

4. 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: January 2nd, 2022
- Presentation: MTR team presents initial findings to project management and the Commissioning Unit at the end of the MTR missions. Completion date: to be discussed between MTR team and PMO and UNDP CO
- Draft MTR Reports: MTR team submits the draft full reports with annexes **within 3 weeks** of the MTR missions. Completion date: February 20th, 2020 for CPAR 1 and March 20th for CPAR 4
- 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: February 25th, 2020 for CPAR 1 and March 25th for CPAR 4
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*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 *4 months* starting *on* December 10th, 2021 and shall not exceed five months from when the consultant(s) are hired. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

- *December 10th*: Prep the MTR Team (handover of project documents)
- *December 15th-27th 2021 (6 days¹⁰)*: Document review and preparing MTR Inception Reports (4 days for each project)
- *December 28th 2021-January 2nd 2022 (4 days)*: Finalization and Validation of MTR Inception Reports (CPAR1 & CPAR 4)
- *January 10th -14th (5 days)*: Stakeholder meetings & interviews for CPAR 1
- *January 16th -22nd (7 days)*: MTR mission: field visits in Sichuan and Zhejiang for CPAR 1
- *January 23th -February 10th (5 days¹¹)*: Preparing draft report for CPAR 1
- *February 11th -20th (5 days)*: Incorporating audit trail on draft report, preparation & issue of Management Response and finalization of MTR reports for CPAR 1
- *February 21th -25th (5 days)*: Stakeholder meetings & interviews for CPAR 4
- *February 27th-March 5th (7 days)*: MTR mission: field visits in Guangxi, Guangdong and Fujian Province for CPAR 4
- *March 6th - 10th (5 days)* : Preparing draft report for CPAR 4
- *March 11th -20th, 2022 (5 days)*: Incorporating audit trail on draft report, preparation & issue of Management Response and finalization of MTR reports for CPAR 4
- *March 30th, 2022*: Expected date of full MTR completion

The date start of contract is December 10th, 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 following project sites: *Chengdu and Ya'an in Sichuan Province*, and *Xianju County in Zhejiang Province* for CPAR 1. *Beihai, Qinzhou in Guangxi Province*, *Zhuhai in Guangdong Province*, and *Xiamen in Fujian Province* for CPAR 4.

Travel:

- Due to the travel limitation, international travel will not be required during the MTR mission;

¹⁰ The duration of document review has been lengthened considering it happens within the Christmas holiday.

¹¹ The duration of report draft for CPAR 1 has been lengthened considering it happens within the Chinese New Year holiday.

- 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> . 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:

- a) **Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability** using the template¹² provided by UNDP;
- b) **CV** and a **Personal History Form (P11 form)**¹³;
- 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 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. 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

¹²

<https://intranet.undp.org/unit/bom/psa/Support%20documents%20on%20IC%20Guidelines/Template%20for%20Confirmation%20of%20Interest%20and%20Submission%20of%20Financial%20Proposal.docx>

¹³ http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11_Personal_history_form.doc

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 Report¹⁴
- ToR ANNEX C: Midterm Review Evaluative Matrix Template
- ToR ANNEX D: UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Midterm Review Consultants¹⁵
- 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)

¹⁴ The Report length should not exceed 40 pages in total (not including annexes).

¹⁵ <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>