Midterm Review Report

FINAL

11 March 2022

China's Protected Area Reform (C-PAR) for Conserving Globally Significant Biodiversity (China-Protected Areas System Reform – C-PAR 1)

MTR team members:

Dr Adrian Stokes, International Consultant
Dr Liu Shuo, National Consultant

Acknowledgements

Dr Adrian Stokes, International Consultant	Dr Liu Shuo, National Consultant

Contents

Annexed in a separate file: Audit trail from received comments on draft MTR report

Annexed in a separate file: Relevant midterm tracking tools

Acronyms and Abbreviations

CO	Country Office
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
CRAES	Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Sciences
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
EOP	End-of-project
ESA	Ecologically sensitive areas
ESIA	Environmental and Social Risk Assessment
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
FECO	Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center
FPIC	Free and Prior Informed Consent
FYP	Five Year Plan
GP	Giant Panda
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
HS	Highly Satisfactory
HU	Highly Unsatisfactory
HWC	Human Wildlife Conflict
IP	Implementing Partner
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice
KBA	Key Biodiversity Areas
MEE	Ministry of Ecology and Environment
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
ML	Moderately Likely
MS	Moderately Satisfactory
MU	Moderately Unsatisfactory
NC	National consultant
NFGA	National Forestry and Grassland Administration
NIM	National implementation modality
NP	National park
NPD	National Project Director
PA	Protected Areas
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PMO	Project Management Office
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PPR	Project Progress Report
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SES	Social and Environmental Standards
SESP	Social and Environmental Screening Procedure
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
TRS	Three River Source
XJ	Xianju

1   Executive Summary

Table 1: Project Information Table

Project Title	China's Protected Area Reform (C-PAR) for Conserving Globally Significant Biodiversity (China-Protected Areas System Reform – C-PAR 1)		
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	5688	PIF Approval Date:	25 Oct 2016
GEF Project ID (PMIS #):	9679	CEO Endorsement Date:	20 Nov 2018
ATLAS Business Unit, Award # Proj. ID:	00096225 00100200	Project Document (ProDoc) Signature Date (date project began):	8 Mar 2019
Country(ies):	China	Date project manager hired:	1 July 2019
Region:	Asia-Pacific	Inception Workshop date:	5 Nov 2019
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Midterm Review completion date:	11 Mar 2022
GEF Focal Area Strategic Objective:	BD-1	Planned closing date:	8 Mar 2025
Trust Fund [indicate GEF TF, LDCF, SCCF, NPIF]:	GEF TF	If revised, proposed op. closing date:	N/A
Executing Agency/ Implementing Partner:	Government - Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment		
Other execution partners:			
Project Financing	*at CEO endorsement (US$)*		*at Midterm Review (US$)**
[1] GEF financing:	6,222,018.35		2,000,064
[2] UNDP contribution:	100,000		50,000
[3] Government:	42,000,000		50,689,555
[4] Other partners:	1,000,000		1,199,341
[5] Total co-financing [2 + 3+ 4]:	43,100,000		51,938,896
PROJECT TOTAL COSTS [1 + 5]	49,322,018.35		53,938,960

1.1   Project Description

The project is intended to 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. The GEF funding for this project, the national level project among a total of six child projects under the C-PAR program, supports the Chinese authorities in ensuring that protection of globally significant biodiversity is expanded under the new NP system.

The project has one objective and three outcomes, each comprising several outputs.

The objective is to establish an effective national park system through protected area reform and institutional innovation, increasing coverage of protected areas and improving effectiveness of protected area management for conservation of globally significant biodiversity.

Outcome 1: National Park system established with effective legal, governance and institutional framework. Technical assistance through the GEF funding will feed into the protected area (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 utilisation of available funds, broadened participation through concession arrangements and value-based eco-compensation appropriations. Outcome 1 has four outputs.

Outcome 2: National Park system strengthened through pilot development. PA reforms will be demonstrated at three NP pilot sites, specifically the Three River Source (TRS) NP in Qinghai province, the Giant Panda (GP) NP traversing parts of Sichuan, Gansu, and Shaanxi provinces, and the Xianju (XJ) 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. Outcome 2 has three outputs.

Outcome 3: Improved data and knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation supports biodiversity conservation. Biodiversity knowledge management will be strengthened by more effectively communicating the values of the NP system. This will be facilitated through a 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. Outcome 3 has four outputs.

1.2   Project Progress Summary

This project is progressing very well at midterm. The Project Management Office (PMO) is implementing the project very efficiently, the Implementing Partner (Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center) and Executing Agency (UNDP) are both strongly results-focused and responsive to implementation challenges, and the level of political and government support for the project is particularly strong. Consequently, the project is on target to meet all 12 project indicators and progress towards the objective and all three outcomes is satisfactory. The project is making an effective contribution to China's PA reform and institutional innovation, and to increasing the coverage of PAs and improving effectiveness of PA management. As part of this, the project is making an important contribution to national deliberations around the legal framework and policies for national parks, by submitting policy recommendations to key government bureaus and/or through workshops to reach consensus among key stakeholders. The project reported an expansion of the PA network by 7.9404 million hectares, through the establishment in 2021 of the TRS and GP NPs, which is an impressive increase. Importantly, these two NPs are the first in China, and the project's outputs for these pilots make a significant contribution to providing a model for future NPs. The project has also recorded substantial improvements in PA management effectiveness and capacity and a highly significant increase in the available PA financing, and has made well-targeted interventions in national-level and local-level initiatives around tourism concessions, human-wildlife conflict and alternative livelihoods in PAs.

PA reform in China is complex and constantly evolving. This means that some of the content of the project document that received CEO endorsement in 2019 is less relevant to today's situation. The project is responding well to these challenges, using a flexible approach to continue to positively influence the reform processes and PA system improvements while remaining focused on the project's objective and outcomes. The MTR team has identified some opportunities to adjust the strategic results framework to better reflect the new realities and to improve delivery of the project's outcomes and indicators.

Remedial action is urgently needed to address shortcomings in the management of social and environmental risks, which has not been consistent with the project document or the project's

Environmental and Social Management Framework; this is summarised under Project Implementation & Adaptive Management in Table 2 below. This must now be the project's highest priority.

Table 2: MTR ratings and achievements table

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	Not applicable	The project strategy was logical and well articulated, with outputs and activities clearly designed to address identified barriers. The project is cleverly designed to ensure that the GEF funds have been used to work flexibly with existing processes to optimise PA reform outcomes in China. The project document is very thorough in the assessment of social and environmental risks and provides clear documentation of the steps required for mitigating and managing those risks. The design is also strong in consideration of gender issues.
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement: **Satisfactory**	Good progress has been made towards the project objective. The project has made real contributions to establishing an effective national park 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 two objective indicators are assessed as on target to meet EOP targets. Good progress has been made towards the Indicator 1 target for the total number of beneficiaries, although attention will be required to improve the participation of women. The EOP target for expansion of the PA system has already been achieved, through the establishment of TRS and GP NPs; XJ NP will not be established during the project. As the first NPs in China, TRS and GP NPs play a key role in China's PA reform as models for other future NPs.
	Outcome 1 Achievement: **Satisfactory**	The project has made very good progress towards Outcome 1. The work to inform development of the legal framework for China's NP system (Indicator 3) is progressing well and has been well received by stakeholders. Five draft policies and guidelines are under pilot operationalisation at the three NP pilot sites (Indicator 4); it is recommended that a policy and guideline for ecological-based planning, establishment and management of corridors be developed. Collaborative governance coordination mechanisms have been piloted in NP pilots and draft working rules have been established (Indicator 5). The total financing available for the national PA system has increased by 58%, which surpasses the EOP target for Indicator 6.

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
	Outcome 2 Achievement: **Satisfactory**	Good progress has been made towards the three indicators under Outcome 2. The project has contributed to the development of regulations for GP NP and XJ NP and reviewed and provided recommendations for existing regulations and other matters for TRS NP (Indicator 7). There were significant increases in institutional capacities for PA management (Indicator 8) and management effectiveness (as measured by the METT; Indicator 9) for the three NP pilots.
	Outcome 3 Achievement: **Satisfactory**	The project is making good progress towards Outcome 3, with some specific remedial actions recommended. The project is well managed and the C-PAR program is coordinated and reporting mechanisms are in place; care is needed that the program reporting meets the EOP target for Indicator 10b. The biodiversity knowledge platform is in tender stage and content is being discussed, five lessons learned are completed and will be uploaded, and a side event was held at CBD COP 15; midterm targets for Indicator 11 were therefore partially met and the indicator is on track for the EOP target. Generally good progress has been made towards the five target areas for level of inclusiveness in management of the NP system and Indicator 12 is on target; although attention will be required to improve the participation of women, an EOP target for the Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) surveys must be set, and the C-PAR Advisory Group is yet to be established with CSO representation.
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	**Satisfactory**	Most aspects of implementation and adaptive management are at a high level. The organisational structure is functioning well, the PMO and pilot PMOs are very effective, M&E and project reporting are being implemented well, stakeholder engagement and communications are good, and the IP and EA are both results-focused and proactive in addressing implementation challenges. The significant shortcoming is in social and environmental risk management: key risk planning and management documents have not been finalised, yet significant progress has been made on most project activities, which is not consistent with the project document or the project's Environmental and Social Management Framework. Despite this very significant shortcoming, a Satisfactory rating has been assigned in accordance with the rating scale for assessing Project Implementation and Adaptive Management (see Annex 7), because 'implementation of <u>most</u> of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for <u>only a few</u> that are subject to remedial action'.

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Sustainability	**Likely**	There is very high political and government support for the results of this project to continue. Associated with this, there has been a substantial increase in national financing available for PAs in China. The project's flexible approach is ensuring that it continues to contribute meaningfully to PA reform even as priorities and circumstances change. There are some risks to the continuation of involvement of NP communities in alternative livelihood, HWC and concessions activities.

1.3 Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

1.3.1 Strengths

Strong and effective PMO and pilot PMOs

The PMO is very effective and efficient, providing high-quality project management while also focusing on the project's strategic direction and facilitating good communication between major stakeholders. The pilot PMOs are also effective and efficient and the relationships between the PMO and pilot PMOs are strong, with regular communication ensuring that the project has a very cohesive delivery.

Very positive involvement of pilot NP agencies

The provincial and county PA management agencies associated with the pilot NPs are all enthusiastic about participation in the project and have a good understanding of the overall project and the potential benefits that the project can bring, including balancing development and alternative livelihoods with biodiversity conservation.

Many eminent experts guiding project and transferring knowledge

The project has successfully built a high-quality team of experts to provide strategic guidance and interpret policies (e.g. Chief Technical Advisor, project experts/specialists). These individuals have strong networks, therefore the project is well connected with the new field of NP planning and reform in China, which assists with ensuring that the work of the GEF project is targeted and remains relevant to changing realities.

Activities clearly contribute to the project's results framework

The project's activities are well planned and implemented and it is clear how most of these are contributing to the indicators and targets in the project's result framework. This is assisted by a clear and logical project design in the project document, which the PMO and IP are following closely.

Engaged and active Project Steering Committee

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) is constructive and effective, and PSC members interviewed were enthusiastic and knowledgeable; the PSC has met more than once per year, which means that there has been opportunity for strategic engagement and contribution to the project's direction. This is highly valuable in a project of such complexity and significance.

UNDP providing strong oversight and strategic support

UNDP is a constructive, results-focused Executing Agency in this project, proactively engaging with the IP, PMO and pilot PMOs to assist in responding to implementation challenges and to seek solutions.

1.3.2 Weaknesses and recommendations

Other conclusions and areas for improvement are presented in Table 3, with associated recommendations for the project to improve delivery and improve the likelihood of achieving sustainable results.

Table 3: Recommendations table

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility
	**Category 1: Environmental and social risk management** The SESP for this project found it to be a High-risk project that triggered multiple SES standards. The Environmental and Social Risk Assessment (ESIA), Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) and Grievance Redress Mechanism have been delayed and are not yet finalised, therefore the associated risk oversight and delivery of some outputs and activities did not follow the requirements set out in the signed project document or the ESMF for the four C-PAR projects. It is important that the ESIA and ESMP are finalised urgently, that all activities (including those completed, in progress and planned) are reviewed when the ESMP is finalised and required adjustments made, and that regional UNDP staff are involved in this. It was clear to the MTR team that the process was complex and difficult for the CO and the project, therefore opportunities should be sought to provide improved support and capacity building on safeguards implementation. Also, a review of the processes followed by the project since CEO endorsement, including the reasons for and implications of delays, would enable lessons to be learned, greater clarity to be established and improved safeguards outcomes being delivered in future projects. The MTR team is aware that there have also been delays in development of the required ESIAs and ESMPs for the C-PAR 2 and C-PAR 3 projects, so a programmatic-level review would maximise the identification of systemic issues, opportunities and lessons learned.	
1	**Finalise the Environmental and Social Risk Assessment (ESIA), Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) and Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) as a matter of urgency, while ensuring that SES requirements for disclosure are adhered to**	PMO, FECO, UNDP CO
2	**When the ESMP is finalised, review all project outputs and activities (including those completed, underway and future) against the ESMP to ensure risks are appropriately managed, make any necessary changes to the design of activities and identify any required remedial actions, and have the findings endorsed by the PSC and RTA**	PMO, FECO, UNDP CO, UNDP Regional Office incl. safeguards specialists
3	**Provide enhanced technical oversight and support, including targeted capacity building, to CO and other stakeholders for the complex processes involved in managing high-risk safeguards projects**	UNDP Regional Office including safeguards specialists
4	**Review the processes followed in environmental and social risk management in this project since CEO endorsement, identify lessons learned and opportunities to improve safeguards outcomes in future projects**	UNDP Regional Office including safeguards specialists, UNDP CO, FECO
5	**Coordinate implementation of the recommendations on environmental and social risk management at a C-PAR programmatic level to maximise identification of systemic issues, opportunities for improvement and lessons learned**	C-PAR 1 PMO, other C-PAR PMOs, UNDP CO

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility
Category 2: Project reporting and oversight		
The results framework has not been changed during the project. A baseline (for Indicator 1) was scheduled to be confirmed at project inception and an EOP target (for Indicator 12d) was scheduled to be set after the baseline KAP survey was conducted, but these have not occurred. It is recommended that a revised results framework be developed for adoption by the RTA and PSC. As part of this, the project should consider and document how all EOP targets will be measured and reported, and some changes to EOP targets should be considered. The MTR team has proposed some suggested amendments to the results framework (Annex 8).		
6	**Prepare a revised results framework for approval by the PSC and RTA with all baselines and targets reviewed and confirmed and with clarity around how each will be measured and reported; Annex 8 suggests some amendments to the results framework**	PMO, UNDP CO, PSC
7	**Establish end-of-project targets for the KAP survey under Indicator 12d and have these approved by the PSC and RTA**	PMO
8	**Revise the wording of the EOP target for Indicator 3 to be more specific and measurable and to be within the control of the project to achieve**	PMO, specialists
Category 3: Proposed Xianju NP pilot		
The proposed Xianju NP will not be established during the period of the project, which means that it will not contribute to achievement of the objective Indicator 2 (the expansion of China's terrestrial PA system). The total increase for this indicator has already been exceeded through the establishment of the TRS and GP NPs. XJ will not be established because it was determined to not be a priority pilot NP for China and was not included in the 14th FYP for Zhejiang Province. This outcome was largely beyond the control of the project, although the project has some influence over the areas that are protected for NPs. Therefore, it is recommended that the EOP target for this indicator be amended to shift the primary focus to the total area of expansion, without being specific about the contributions of the pilot NPs. It is important that the project still delivers comparable biodiversity conservation outcomes through this indicator, therefore it is recommended that an analysis be conducted of the biodiversity conservation benefits that have been delivered by the large areas of TRS and GP NPs. More detailed suggestions are in Appendix 8. Also, it is recommended that protection of XJ as a PA other than an NP be pursued.		
9	**Revise the EOP target for Indicator 2 to shift the primary focus to the total area of expansion, without being specific about the contributions of the pilot NPs, and support this proposed change with an analysis of the biodiversity conservation benefits (including KBA coverage) that have been delivered by the establishment of the large areas of TRS and GP NPs**	PMO, RTA
10	**Reorient the strategy for Xianju to pursue its declaration as a protected area in a category other than a NP, to achieve enhanced biodiversity protection and further contribute to PA system reforms**	Pilot PMO, PMO, UNDP CO, PSC, RTA

7

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility
Category 4: C-PAR program reporting		
Annual reporting on progress of the C-PAR program is undertaken as part of this project. This does not consistently report against the indicators in the C-PAR program results framework and, in its current form, may not meet the requirements of the EOP target to 'indicate clear progress towards outcomes and achievements <u>beyond individual child projects</u>'.		
11	**Prepare an end-of-project CPAR program report (at terminal evaluation) that assesses: 1. progress against program indicators and 2. progress towards outcomes and achievements beyond individual child projects**	PMO
Category 5: Internal communication and planning		
Interactions between the project's national-level experts and planning and the local-level outputs are sometimes limited (e.g. in the areas of gender mainstreaming, capacity development, concessions, and KBAs). Consequently, work at a national level was not always cognisant of that at local levels, and vice versa; this means that the project is not maximising the contributions by all specialists, that the local work is not always guided by the national directions, and that knowledge sharing is incomplete.		
The PSC is constructive and effective, and PSC members interviewed were enthusiastic and knowledgeable; the PSC has met more than once per year, which means that there has been opportunity for strategic engagement and contribution to the project's direction. This is highly valuable in a project of such complexity and significance.		
The project has not met its midterm targets for participation of women (Indicators 1 and 12a) and will require focused effort to meet the EOP targets. To assist with this, it is recommended that annual gender action plans are developed to maximise gender mainstreaming and the involvement of women and girls and that the project's overall gender action plan is updated after the completion of the ESIA.		
12	**Improve regular interaction between those involved in related project work at national and local levels to provide better strategic guidance, share knowledge and facilitate input to each other's work**	PMO, pilot PMOs
13	**Use the expertise and enthusiasm of the PSC by continuing to hold more than one PSC meeting per year and involving them in strategic discussions about the complex matters that the project is addressing**	PMO, PSC
14	**Drive a new focus on achieving targets for female participation and on optimising gender mainstreaming outcomes, by 1. developing annual gender action plans and 2. updating the gender action plan that was developed during project preparation (Annex I of the project document) after the completion of the ESIA, in line with the SESP risk mitigation measure described in the project document**	Gender specialist, gender focal points, PMO, pilot PMOs

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility
Category 6: Technical components		
The proposed work on corridor analysis and planning will be high-level national modelling that will not provide a practical policy or guideline for corridor establishment and management. Work towards a climate-responsive PA planning and monitoring guideline is being undertaken at a national level, but there is limited consideration of climate change and biodiversity as part of the NP pilots. In accordance with Activity 1.2.4 of the project document, guidance should also be provided at the PA level.		
15	**Develop a corridor policy and guideline that can be used by projects for ecological-based planning, establishment and management of corridors**	PMO, specialists
16	**Undertake trial implementation of the climate-responsive PA planning and monitoring guideline at the three NP pilots, to inform biodiversity management in the pilots and to validate and strengthen the national guideline and improve the quality of the scientific assessments**	PMO, specialists
Category 7: Sustainability		
The project is very well positioned for many results to continue beyond the GEF funding period, especially due to the strong involvement of government partners and the project's meaningful contribution to PA reform. It will be important to discuss with relevant government partners the long-term sustainability and, where possible, upscaling of pilots. There are also some risks to the continuation of involvement of NP communities in alternative livelihood, HWC and concessions activities. A sustainability plan would enable the project to proactively plan for these matters.		
17	**Develop a sustainability plan during the final year of the project to identify how the project's results can be continued beyond the GEF funding and upscaled where possible**	PMO, FECO

2   Introduction

2.1   Purpose and Objectives of the Review

In accordance with the ToR for this midterm review (MTR), the objective of the review is to assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the UNDP project document, and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made to set the project on track to achieve its intended results.

Further to this, the ToR states that the MTR will:

- review project activities and outputs and project governance and management to date
- synthesise lessons to help improve the project design and implementation of project activities
- assess results, effectiveness, processes and performance of partners to promote accountability for achievement of objectives
- promote learning and knowledge sharing to inform policies, strategies, programmes and projects
- provide recommendations to the project to improve its performance, sustainability, effectiveness and impact.

2.2   Scope and Methodology

The scope of the MTR was to review all relevant sources of evidence since project inception to collect evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.

The MTR was undertaken between December 2021 and February 2022. A two-person MTR team implemented the review, comprising an international consultant / team leader (IC) and a national consultant (NC).

The MTR followed the document *Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* ('UNDP-GEF MTR Guidance' hereafter).[1]

Multiple sources of data and information informed the review. A mixed methods approach was used, adopting a combination of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and instruments. These methodologies maximised the variety of information sources and enabled the triangulation of results to justify findings from more than one source and the development of recommendations for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable and relevant.

The following activities were included in the MTR:

- Discussions and interviews were held with project stakeholders from Beijing and from the three pilot sites, during a mission between 10 and 18 January 2022. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the IC could not visit China and the NC was unable to travel to the provinces; therefore, all mission interviews were undertaken virtually via video conferencing. This means that no visits to project sites were undertaken.
- The discussions were 'semi-structured interviews' in a conversational format. The itinerary and interviewees for the mission are provided in Annex 1.
- A desk review of all relevant documents covering project design, implementation progress, and monitoring and review; the list of documents and information is provided in Annex 2.
- Constructing an evaluation matrix that identifies the evaluation questions, the indicators used to consider the questions, the sources of information used and the assessment methodology for each; this is shown in Annex 3.

---

[1] http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/mid-term/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20_EN_2014.pdf

- Development of specific questions and areas for discussion to guide the semi-structured interviews; these are shown in Annex 4.
- Assessment of the extent to which gender considerations were mainstreamed into the project's design, monitoring, implementation and impact (more detail below).
- Consolidating information from various sources on progress against project outputs; this is summarised in Annex 5.
- Assessment of progress towards the midterm and end-of-project (EOP) targets.
- Assignment of ratings (as defined in Annex 7) for:
  o progress towards the project's objective and three outcomes
  o project implementation and adaptive management
  o the likelihood of continued benefits from the project after it ends (sustainability).
- Assessment of provided GEF Tracking Tools.
- Presentation of preliminary findings by the MTR team in an end-of-mission session with staff from UNDP Country Office (CO), the PMO and pilot PMOs on 21 January 2022.

To assess the extent to which gender considerations were mainstreamed by the project, the evaluation used the document and data review, stakeholder interviews and personal observations during the mission to analyse a range of matters, using Annex 9 of the UNDP-GEF MTR Guidance document (Checklist for Gender Sensitive Midterm Review Analysis). Questions considered included:

- Were relevant gender issues addressed in the project document?
- Was a gender analysis undertaken and were gender-specific activities, targets, monitoring and funding established?
- Were gender issues triggered during the environmental and social screening?
- Are sex-disaggregated data collected relating to project activities and outcomes?
- Is there an appropriate gender balance in participation in project activities and in project staff?
- How are women and girls benefiting from project activities?
- Were gender specialists involved throughout project design and implementation stages?

2.3 Structure of the MTR Report

This report structure follows the content guidelines provided on pp. 36–37 of the UNDP-GEF MTR Guidance document (Annex B of the MTR ToR Standard Template).

Background information is first provided on the MTR process (this chapter) and the project (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 then presents detailed findings in the areas of project strategy, progress towards results, project implementation and adaptive management, and sustainability. Finally, Chapter 5 provides specific conclusions and recommendations that provide corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Annexes provide additional information to supplement the contents of the main body of the report.

3 Project Description

3.1 Development Context

China is one of the most biodiverse temperate regions in the world, ranks globally as one of the richest countries in terms of overall plant diversity, and is recognised as one of the 17 megadiverse countries globally. Because of China's vast size, varying nature and complex geological history, a very wide range of habitat types and very large number of species are represented. Approximately 34,000 species of higher plants belonging to 353 families and 3,184 genera, of which 190 are endemic, occur in China. About 10% of all the planet's vertebrates occur here, including many rare and endemic forms.

Rapid economic growth of the country over the last decades has seen large-scale environmental degradation including biodiversity and ecosystem services loss. Biodiversity loss can lead to serious consequences, such as worsening health problems, higher food risks, increasing vulnerabilities and fewer development opportunities. Biodiversity conservation is therefore strategically important for China's long-term socio-economic development and wellbeing of present and future generations and is integral to the national vision of building an ecological civilization.

Biodiversity conservation has evolved through a progressive set of policies in China, but legal and institutional frameworks have not been able to keep up with the socioeconomic driving forces in the country. This has resulted in an extensive PA system comprised of numerous types of PAs, managed by different agencies and at different administrative levels, with inconsistent management approaches and strategic directions. In response to these shortcomings, the Chinese government initiated a pilot program in 2015 for establishing a national park (NP) system.

The project document for this project identifies that the long-term vision for conserving biodiversity in China is to: (i) reform and strengthen the entire PA system through improved and holistic system design, strengthening legislative and institutional frameworks, establishing secure funding and improving coordination and information sharing, awareness and capacity building; and (ii) mainstream biodiversity conservation and PAs into production sectors such as agriculture and water resource management, as well as in development and land land-use planning.

This project focuses on PA system reform. The new reformed PA system will have a strong legal basis, standardised categories, zoning and objectives, a robust system for supervision to ensure management effectiveness of individual PA sites, and sufficient and sustainable financing, with greater involvement of local communities, NGOs and the private sector.

3.2 Problems that the Project Sought to Address

The project document identified that, despite substantial achievements in biodiversity conservation and PA reform in recent years, progress towards the long-term vision is hampered by three barriers, as summarised below.

Barrier 1: Weakness of legal and institutional framework for coordinated PA system

- No comprehensive national law for the establishment and management of PAs
- Outdated regulation for establishment of nature reserves and no legal provisions for additional needed categories
- Current legislation too weak to protect sites from incompatible activities within or adjacent to PAs
- The wide-ranging PA reforms require a systematic approach
- Shortcomings with representativeness and connectivity of the developing PA system and with effectiveness of zoning
- Limited scientific basis to the PA classification system

- Inadequate institutional coordination compromises the adoption of a system-wide approach
- Most PAs have low financial security, zero or inadequate routine operational funds, and limitations in staff management standards and capacity.

Barrier 2: Insufficient provincial capacity and experiences in national park system strengthening

- Inadequate institutional capacity of most provincial departments
- Many PAs unable to fulfil their primary functions of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management
- Inconsistent regulatory standards across sub-national administrative levels
- An imbalance between protection and development and conflicts between PAs and communities
- Uncertainty on how the land use rights of local communities in PAs will be negotiated and over what timeframes, and insufficient capacities at the provincial level for developing and administering such reforms to land use practices.

Barrier 3: Insufficient knowledge sharing and coordination among individual projects and programs

- Lack of awareness at all levels of society about the importance of biodiversity in maintaining ecosystem services
- Poor access to up-to-date and accurate data on biodiversity and PAs
- Biodiversity knowledge managed separately across different ministries and departments – limited coordination
- The concept of the NP system must be effectively communicated to the public to address social concerns and to foster a general understanding of the values generated to society.

3.3 Project Description and Strategy

3.3.1 China's Protected Area System Reform (C-PAR) Program

The project is one of six child projects under the Government's GEF-6 China's Protected Area System Reform (C-PAR) Program, which aims to transform China's national protected area system through systematic legal and institutional reform and innovation for conservation of globally significant biodiversity. The C-PAR Program addresses several systematic barriers to effective PA management, including: a) weak framework for coordinated PA system; b) lack of systematic planning/mainstreaming; c) weak management capacity and inadequate resources; d) poor knowledge sharing and coordination.

There is a C-PAR programmatic results framework to which each C-PAR child project contributes; a table showing the contribution of the C-PAR 1 project to the C-PAR Program-level results is reproduced in Annex 9. The PMO for this project (C-PAR 1) also coordinates reporting on these program-level results. C-PAR projects also collaborate to support coordinated knowledge management and sharing of lessons learned, and to develop coordinated approaches to manage social risks and impacts associated with PA establishment and expansion, including knowledge and best practice transfer.

3.3.2 C-PAR 1 project

The project strategy is to address the three identified barriers through an integrated suite of activities grouped under three outcomes.

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 three outcomes are described below.

Outcome 1: National Park system established with effective legal, governance and institutional framework.

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 utilisation of available funds, broadened participation through concession arrangements and value-based eco-compensation appropriations. Outcome 1 has four outputs.

Outcome 2: National Park system strengthened through pilot development

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 proposed to be 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 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. Outcome 2 has three outputs.

Outcome 3: Improved data and knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation supports biodiversity conservation

Biodiversity knowledge management will be strengthened by more effectively communicating the values of the NP system. This will be facilitated through a 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. Outcome 3 has four outputs.

3.3.3   Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP)

Overall, the project is expected to result in major long-term positive impacts for biodiversity conservation and socio-economic benefits to China. As part of this, mechanisms have been established to manage social and environmental risks, in accordance with UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES).

The Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) was finalised during project preparation and the results were summarised in the project document. Eight risks for this project were identified that could have potential negative impacts in the absence of safeguards; two of these risks were rated as low, three moderate and three high. Therefore, the overall SESP risk categorisation for the project is High. The three risks with high rating relate to potential voluntary resettlement of local populations from NP pilot core zones, the potential economic displacement of local populations due to restricted/changed access to land and resources associated with PA expansion, and the potential that both risks could apply to ethnic minorities. Regarding the first of these risks, the SESP outlined that there could be potential voluntary resettlement of communities from the core zones of the GP NP and TRS NP as they are established by the government. Any resettlement would be voluntary in nature. Involuntary resettlement is not planned under the ongoing establishment of the NP system in China and would not be supported by this project.

In accordance with UNDP's SES, an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) was developed for this High-risk project during the project preparation phase; this ESMF also applies to C-PAR projects 2 and 3 (both also High risk) and 4 (Medium risk). This ESMF sets out the additional safeguards

measures that apply to the project during the inception phase, including but not limited to: (i) completion of an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) to further assess potential risks and impacts due to project activities, with an ESIA report; and (ii) the development of an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) including identified management measures as required based on the ESIA. Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) will be applied for all activities involving ethnic minorities, including but not limited to the implementation of the ESMF. A Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) would be developed as part of the ESMP.

Paragraph 186 (p. 66) of the project document stipulated that **'no project activities that could result in economic displacement, reduced access to land or resources, or that could provide livelihoods restoration support for resettled and/or economically displaced communities can commence until the ESIA and ESMP have been completed and approved and the identified management measures put in place**.' Specific outputs and activities were listed that should not start until these conditions were met.[2] The ESMP was scheduled to be completed in the first quarter of implementation and would inform the design and implementation of activities.

The updated UNDP SES became effective from 1 January 2021. It should be noted that this project must be delivered in accordance with these new standards and with the endorsed project document and ESMF.

3.4   Project Implementation Arrangements

The project is delivered following UNDP's national implementation modality (NIM), with the Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center (FECO) of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) as the Implementing Partner (IP). The IP is responsible and accountable for managing this project, including the monitoring and evaluation of project interventions, achieving project outcomes, and for the effective use of GEF resources.

The PMO sits within FECO in Beijing. The PMO is led by the Project Manager, and includes a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), an M&E / Safeguards Officer, a Project Assistant / Finance Officer, and a Program Alignment Officer (PAO); the latter role is primarily focused on C-PAR program-level issues and coordination and is funded by the C-PAR 1 project.[3]

There are three sub-level responsible parties, one for each of the three pilot NP sites: the Three River Source (TRS) NP Management Agency in Qinghai province, the Sichuan Administrative Bureau of Giant Panda NP (GP NP pilot) and the XJ NP Management Committee in Xianju county in Zhejiang province. Through contractual arrangements with FECO, these sub-level responsible parties are responsible for implementation of relevant project activities under Component 2.

The sub-level responsible parties have set up pilot PMOs, each with a Coordinator, located at the three pilot NP sites. There is a community mobilizer in each of the target villages in TRS and GP NPs.

The National Project Director (NPD) is the Deputy Director of FECO/MEE.

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) has been established and has meet three times. This has eight members and is co-chaired by the NPD and by the Deputy Director General of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA).

UNDP is the GEF Executing Agency. UNDP provides a three-tier supervision, oversight and quality assurance role involving UNDP staff in the China CO and at regional and headquarters levels. Project assurance is

---

[2] Specific activities identified – all or parts of: Output 1.1 - Activities 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.4; Output 1.2 - Activity 1.2.2; Output 2.1 - Activities 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.4; Output 2.3 - Activity 2.3.1, 2.3.2.

[3] The project document stated that the PAO would be funded from the individual budgets of C-PAR 1, 2, 3 and 4 projects; however, this proposed arrangement presented administrative difficulties, including transferring funds from the other projects to FECO. For this reason the PMO and FECO decided, in consultation with UNDP, to fund the PAO fully from the C-PAR 1 budget.

independent of the project management function. The quality assurance role supports the PSC and PMO by carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions. This role ensures appropriate project management milestones are managed and completed.

3.5   Project Timing and Milestones

A summary of the key project milestones and their dates is provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Project milestone dates

Milestone	Date
PIF Approval	25 October 2016
CEO Endorsement	20 November 2018
GEF Agency Approval (UNDP ProDoc signature, after Cabinet endorsement)	8 March 2019
Inception Workshop	5 November 2019
Project Manager hired	1 July 2019
Midterm Evaluation	8 March 2022
Terminal Evaluation due	8 December 2024

3.6   Main Stakeholders

The main stakeholders for the project are shown below (modified from Table 17 of the project document).

Stakeholders	Role in the project
National level	
Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE)	Implementing partner for the project; will designate officials to chair the project and program steering committees. MEE is also one of the co-financing partners on the project.
Ministry of Finance	A key member of the project and program steering committees.
Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center (FECO) of MEE	Responsible for day-to-day implementation of the project on behalf of MEE. The Deputy Director General of FECO will co-chair the PSC and be a member of the program steering committee.
Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)	Newly created ministry at the time of the project development, expected to be a key stakeholder during the project and program.
National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA)	A key stakeholder that includes a new Protected Area Management Department. The role of the NFGA (also known as the National Park Administration) includes uniting various PA-related actions and functions. The Deputy Director General of the NFGA will co-chair the project and program steering committees.
Legislative Affairs Office of the State Council	Will review and approve national level policies and/or regulations developed with technical assistance delivered by the project.
GEF Agency	
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	GEF Agency for the project and the C-PAR Program Coordination Agency. UNDP will be the Senior Supplier on the Project and Program Steering Committees; CO will provide administrative and strategic

Stakeholders	Role in the project
	guidance to the project, and support procurement processes; RTA will provide strategic technical assistance and project assurance. UNDP is also one of the co-financing partners on the project.
Sub-level Responsible Parties	
Three River Source National Park (TRS NP) Management Agency	Will be a member of the Project Steering Committee. Through a contractual arrangement with FECO, will be responsible for implementation of project activities under Component 2 designed for the TRS NP.
Sichuan Administrative Bureau of Giant Panda National Park	Will be a member of the Project Steering Committee. Through a contractual arrangement with FECO, will be responsible for implementation of project activities under Component 2 designed for the GP NP.
Xianju National Park Management Committee	Will be a member of the Project Steering Committee. Through a contractual arrangement with FECO, will be responsible for implementation of project activities under Component 2 designed for the XJ NP.
Local level	
Qinghai Provincial Department of Finance	A co-financing partner on the project with an oversight function for financial management and control of project funds dispersed for the TRS NP pilot.
Sichuan Provincial Department of Finance	A co-financing partner on the project with an oversight function for financial management and control of project funds dispersed for the GP NP pilot.
Xianju County Finance Bureau	A co-financing partner on the project with an oversight function for financial management and control of project funds dispersed for the XJ NP pilot.
Gansu Forestry and Grassland Bureau	Representatives will be members of the GP NP Pilot Advisory Group, and through coordination by the Sichuan Forestry Department, Gansu officials and staff will be invited to participate in collaborative PA training and governance activities.
Shaanxi Forestry and Grassland Bureau	Representatives will be members of the GP NP Pilot Advisory Group, and through coordination by the Sichuan Forestry Department, Shaanxi officials and staff will be invited to participate in collaborative PA training and governance activities.
Local governments of three provincial pilot demonstrations	Provincial, county, township and village government units will be key partners during project implementation. Representative subnational officials from the three NP pilots are proposed to be members of the project steering committee. Project activities will be closely coordinated with local government units, starting with the preparation of the environmental and social impact assessment and the associated consultations.
Local communities where project interventions are planned	
Local communities	Local communities will participate in collaborative PA management arrangements, receive specific training, be involved in sustainable

Stakeholders	Role in the project
	alternative demonstrations, and be encouraged to be actively involved in the NP.
Multilateral and bilateral technical and financial cooperation agencies	
Multilateral and bilateral technical and financial cooperation agencies	Other multilateral and bilateral technical and financial cooperation agencies will be advocated for membership of the C-PAR 1 Advisory Group.
Civil society organisations	
Three River Source Ecological Protection Foundation	One of the co-financing partners on the project; will cooperate on community engagement activities for the TRS NP pilot. Representatives will also be advocated for membership of the C-PAR 1 Advisory Group.
Conservation International (CI)	As the intended GEF agency for the C-PAR 5 project[4], was to be a member of the Program Steering Committee. For activities at the NP pilot sites, partnerships with CI supported initiatives will be developed where practicable.
Other international and domestic NGOs, including but not limited to WWF, IUCN, WCS, TNC, Friends of Nature, Shanshui Partnership, etc.	The project will develop partnerships with NGOs and community-based organisations for supporting the planned interventions. Representatives of NGOs will also be advocated for membership of the C-PAR 1 Advisory Group.
Scientific and research institutions	
Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Sciences (CRAES)	Will be involved with capacity development aspects of the project, including inviting to bid on delivery of trainings, development of PA competency standards, etc. As executing agency for the C-PAR 6 project, CRAES will be a member of the Program Steering Committee. CRAES officials will also be advocated for membership of the C-PAR 1 Advisory Group.
Other scientific and research institutes and universities, and the broader professional community	Scientific and research institutes, universities, and consultancies will be invited to bid on procurements under the project for technical assistance.
Private and business sector	
Enterprise sector	Partnerships with the enterprise sector will be developed, as part of the interventions aimed at diversifying PA financing, tourism partnerships and concessions, scaling up sustainable livelihood initiatives for local communities, etc.

---

[4] UNDP has recently replaced CI as the GEF Agency for the C-PAR 5 project.

4   Findings

4.1   Project Strategy

4.1.1   Project design

This section presents an analysis of the design of the project as outlined in the project document.

The project design was firmly based on baseline projects, including internal Chinese projects and projects supported by other funders/donors.

The project has very high relevance to national development and environmental agendas, and the recipient country commitment. The project document describes this clearly. The project strategy is rooted in the Chinese Government's mission to establish an 'ecological civilization', a key element to the process of modernising China through realising a harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. In 2016 an Overall Plan for the Reform of Ecological Civilization System was released, and in October 2017 the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China strengthened the idea of ecological civilization as being vital to sustain China's national development. With respect to biodiversity conservation, establishment of the NP system is the cornerstone of ongoing PA reform in China. The Integrated Plan for Establishing a National Park System in China in 2017 provides a vision for an NP system, including a National Park Law and a unified National PA Management Agency. This GEF project was developed to provide support to these reform processes.

The project strategy provides an effective route towards the expected results, via a clear theory of change (Figure 3 on p. 21 of the project document).

The project document identifies the following five key assumptions in the theory of change (Table 5 on p. 18 of the project document):

1.   Government vision to reform PA system is maintained

2.   Effective coordination with ongoing PA reform processes

3.   Sufficient buy-in from key stakeholders

4.   Ownership of knowledge platform, and access to public is ensured

5.   Inclusive participation by women and ethnic minorities.

The MTR team considers these assumptions to have been sound at the time of project preparation and that the project design was effective at addressing them. Importantly, the project document identifies that 'realisation of the project strategy depends upon strong country ownership and effective stakeholder engagement' (paragraph 48, p. 18), and country ownership and stakeholder engagement are strong. There is a risk that assumption 4 may not be valid at the end of the project: the project document also states that it 'will be imperative that there are clear ownership arrangements in place before project closure regarding the sustained operation and continued development'; the MTR team is not aware of such ownership arrangements being in place.

The project document also identified assumptions for each of the 12 indicators in the project results framework.

During project development, extensive consultation was undertaken with bureaus at the pilot NP sites to ensure that project outputs and activities were compatible with their priorities and legislative requirements and with local communities to carefully choose pilot villages for pilot interventions.

The project document includes a section 'Sustainability and Scaling Up', in which the sustainability and opportunities for upscaling project results are discussed. Importantly, the direct contribution of this project

(and the C-PAR family of projects) to the new national policy for the reform of the PA system, and the strong support political support in the Chinese Government, were considered central to the high likelihood of results being sustainable.

The project document is very thorough in the assessment of social and environmental risks through the UNDP SESP, which was finalised during project preparation as required by UNDP's SES. The project document provides clear documentation of the steps required for mitigating and managing those risks during implementation. This is described in Section 3.3.3.

The project design considered the perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions. Provincial and local government agencies were engaged and local communities were involved.

The project design was strong in consideration of gender issues. In summary:

- A gender analysis and action plan were completed during the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase (Annex I of the project document) and guide proactive women's empowerment efforts during implementation.
- A gender specialist was involved in this process and representatives of women were involved throughout.
- Gender issues were triggered during the UNDP SESP. Various mitigation measures were established, in particular the ESIA will also look at gender angles, including how gender intersects with the multiple risks in the SESP, and the gender mainstreaming plan will be updated as required after the completion of the ESIA. Gender mainstreaming actions will also be incorporated into the ESMP.
- The project includes some sex-disaggregated indicators in the results framework and has some gender-specific activities, and the gender action plan calls for 50% of project direct beneficiaries to be women.
- Gender training is to be provided to all members of the PMO, the Coordinators for the three pilot PMOs, the Community Mobilizers, and consultants and other service providers tasked with community related activities.
- The project was identified as GEN2 based on the relevant GEF and UNDP gender policies, which means the project has great potential to empower women and girls and to effectively promote gender equality.

Regarding the development of the C-PAR Program family of projects, a coordinated approach was taken during project preparation towards the development of individual child projects, which benefited the detailed design of this project. Coordination included two program-level coordination workshops, the deployment of a team of national specialists providing inputs across all UNDP projects under the coordination of lead national and international consultants, coordinated design of child project results frameworks based on the harmonised program-level results framework, and development of linkages between common activities and knowledge sharing opportunities. Annex 9 reproduces the table from the project showing the contribution of this project (C-PAR 1) to the program-level results framework.

4.1.2   Results framework

This section presents a critical analysis of the results framework in the project document, assessing whether the indicators and targets meet SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).

Annex 8 provides a list of suggestions regarding the results framework, including suggested changes to indicators and targets.

SMART analysis: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timebound.

✔ Meets criterion   ✚ Does not meet criterion   ❓ Some ambiguity or clarification needed

Objective

Description of Indicator	Midterm target		End-of-project target		SMART analysis				
					S	M	A	R	T
1. Number of direct project beneficiaries, measured based on: a. Cumulative total of the following: b. Number of people obtaining PA competency qualification and staff directly involved in the project c. Number of people living in the communities where project interventions are carried out.	a. Cumulative total:		a. Cumulative total:		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	3,800 (50% women)		10,376 (50% women)						
	b. Number of people obtaining PA competency qualification:		b. Number of people obtaining PA competency qualification:						
	Central:	175	Central:	372					
	TRS NP:	175	TRS NP:	471					
	GPA NP:	175	GPA NP:	471					
	XJU NP:	75	XJU NP:	186					
	Total: 600 (50% women)		Total: 1,500 (50% women)						
	c. Number of local beneficiaries:		c. Number of local beneficiaries:						
	TRS NP:	2,000	TRS NP:	5,771					
	GPA NP:	950	GPA NP:	2,405					
	XJU NP:	250	XJU NP:	700					
	Total: 3,200 (50% women)		Total: 8,876 (50% women)						
2. National terrestrial PA system expanded, with an emphasis on habitat connectivity and increasing coverage of KBAs among the three NP pilot sites of Three-River Source NP (TRS NP); Giant Panda NP (GP NP); and Xianju NP (XJ NP)	National terrestrial PA system expanded by 0.65 million ha		National terrestrial PA system expanded by 1.2838 million ha, broken down as follows: TRS NP: 0.6561 million ha GP NP: 0.6134 million ha XJ NP: 0.0143 million ha		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

Indicators 1 and 2 meet all SMART criteria. As described under Indicator 2 in Section 4.2.1, the final contribution of different pilot NPs to the total EOP target is largely beyond the control of the project and an amendment is recommended to emphasise that the total expansion is the primary focus and to remove XJ as a contributor to the total (see also Annex 8).

Outcome 1

Description of Indicator	Midterm target	End-of-project target level	SMART analysis				
			S	M	A	R	T
3. Extent to which legal, policy and institutional frameworks reflect PA reform priorities	Draft national PA system guideline, based upon a national PA gap analysis and comparative analyses of domestic and international best practices, presented to the NP Leading Group. The PA system plan includes a roadmap outlining concrete steps for PA reform, with increased protection of globally significant biodiversity and provisions for genuine participation by local communities, including ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups, promoting sustainable access and public benefit and minimising economic displacement and resettlement.	NP legal framework in place and mainstreamed into the 14th 5-year plan and key land use planning processes, including ecological red-lining	？	？	？	✓	✓
4. Extent to which policies, guidelines and regulations are in place for effectively governing, planning, managing and monitoring the NP system, including but not limited to ecological corridors establishment and management; competency standards for PA managers and staff; tourism partnerships and concessions	Draft policies and guidelines under pilot operationalisation at 3 NP pilot sites, including draft ecological corridor policy and guidelines, draft competency-based standards for PA professional development, and draft tourism partnerships and concessions policy document.	Ecological corridor policy document used to inform design of the expansions of the three NP pilots under Component 2, improving ecological connectivity. Ecological corridor policy, competency-based standards for PA professional development and tourism partnerships and concession policy adopted and being institutionalised across NP pilots and the national PA system through the State Administration of National Parks.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

5. Established framework for collaborative NP governance	Draft working rules on collaborative NP governance under piloting at NP pilot sites in Component 2, with establishment of collaborative governance coordination mechanisms.	Working rules on collaborative NP governance adopted in the NP regulatory frameworks of the three demonstration NP pilot sites and collaborative governance mechanisms fully operational. Working rules promoted for operationalisation across the national PA system through the State Administration of National Parks.	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
6. PA financing available nationally, narrowing the gap for basic PA management scenario	PA financing available: 10% increase from baseline USD 5,000 million	PA financing available: 30% increase from baseline USD 5,886 million	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

The wording of Indicator 3 is ambiguous and does not fully meet the specific, measurable and achievable criteria. In particular, it is not clear what is meant by 'NP legal framework in place': this could be interpreted as meaning that national legislation has been developed and fully adopted, which is a complex and highly uncertain process over which the project has limited control. It is recommended that the EOP target for Indicator 3 be revised to be more specific and measurable and to be within the control of the project to achieve (Recommendation 8, see also Annex 8). Setting this target should involve discussions with the project's legal specialists to identify a suitable stage of the legislation framework development process that it is realistic for the project to influence and achieve.

Indicators 4, 5 and 6 meet the SMART criteria.

Outcome 2

Description of Indicator	Midterm target		End-of-project target level		SMART analysis				
					S	M	A	R	T
7. Number of new or revised pilot NP policies and regulations	General and specific legislation for pilot NPs drafted and under review by competent authorities		Five general or specific legislations of NP pilot sites enacted and adopted more broadly through replication across NP pilots		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
8. Institutional capacities for protected area management at NP pilot sites, as indicated in scores of the UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard for the following areas: Area 1: Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislations, strategies and programs	a. Three-River Source NP:		a. Three-River Source NP:		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	Area 1:	For midterm, target set only for total score	Area 1:	100%					
	Area 2:		Area 2:	73%					
	Area 3:		Area 3:	73%					
	Area 4:		Area 4:	89%					
	Area 5:		Area 5:	73%					
	Total Score:	**62%**	**Total Score:**	**77%**					
	b. Giant Panda NP:		b. Giant Panda NP:						

Area 2: Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programs Area 3: Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders Area 4: Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge Area 5: Capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn, For the following NP pilot sites: a. Three-River Source NP b. Giant Panda NP c. Xianju NP	Area 1:		Area 1:	78%					
	Area 2:		Area 2:	88%					
	Area 3:		Area 3:	93%					
	Area 4:		Area 4:	89%					
	Area 5:		Area 5:	73%					
	Total Score:	**65%**	**Total Score:**	**85%**					
	c. Xianju NP:								
	Area 1:	For midterm, target set only for total score	Area 1:	89%					
	Area 2:		Area 2:	71%					
	Area 3:		Area 3:	67%					
	Area 4:		Area 4:	78%					
	Area 5:		Area 5:	73%					
	Total Score:	**57%**	**Total Score:**	**73%**					
9. Protected area management effectiveness, as indicated by METT scores, for the following sites: a. Three-River Source NP b. Giant Panda NP c. Xianju NP	a. Three-River Source NP: 55% b. Giant Panda NP: 50% c. Xianju NP: 50%		Achievement of sound management with score >67%: a. Three-River Source NP: 67% 40% increase from baseline: b. Giant Panda NP: 63% c. Xianju NP: 56%		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

Note: For midterm, target set only for total score (applies to Area 2–5 block with Total Score 65%/85%).

Indicators 7, 8 and 9 meet all SMART criteria.

Outcome 3

Description of Indicator	Midterm target	End-of-project target level	SMART analysis				
			S	M	A	R	T
10. Effectiveness of program coordination, as indicated by: a. Project/program management team and governance b. Program level reporting	a. PMO fully staffed; project and program level steering committees providing timely guidance b. Aggregated reporting mechanism implemented, and results across the program are tracked and reported through knowledge platform	a. Program effectively coordinated through efficient program steering function b. Annual program reports indicate clear progress towards outcomes and achievements beyond individual child projects	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

11. Extent of knowledge management of C-PAR program, as indicated through a. Functional biodiversity knowledge platform b. Lessons learned distilled and disseminated c. Knowledge exchange through workshops, seminars, conferences	a. Biodiversity knowledge platform designed and under testing phase and operation, including post-project maintenance approved b. 5 lessons learned completed and uploaded onto knowledge sharing platform c. One side event at CBD COP 15 highlights NP system in China	a. Functional biodiversity knowledge platform, accessible for public participation, and financial support for ongoing maintenance and institutionalisation approved b. 10 lessons learned completed and uploaded onto biodiversity knowledge platform, and usage statistics indicate increasing reach of C-PAR program lessons learned across national PA system. c. At least 5 national workshops convened	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
12. Level of inclusiveness in management of the NP system, as indicated through: a. Gender inclusion b. Ethnic minorities inclusion c. Community engagement d. Communication e. Civil society participation	a. Gender inclusion: • Gender mainstreaming plan under implementation, and 50% of direct beneficiaries by midterm are woman. b. Ethnic minorities: • Free, prior and informed (FPIC) consultations successfully completed at the target Tibetan villages, and project interventions initiated. • Human-wildlife policy and guideline developed, and pilot implementation plan developed. c. Community engagement • Collaborative community management agreements signed with at least one village in or near the three NP pilots, and project interventions initiated. • Guidelines for tourism partnerships and concessions developed, and pilot implementation plan completed. d. Communication: • Project interventions in target communities address knowledge, practices and	a. Gender inclusion: • 50% women target for direct beneficiaries achieved. b. Ethnic minorities: • 5,771 Tibetan ethnic minorities among the direct beneficiaries. • Human-wildlife conflict management policy and guideline approved, and implementation initiated in at least one Tibetan village. c. Community engagement • Collaborative community PA management demonstrated in villages situated within and near 3 national parks. • Guidelines for tourism partnerships and concessions approved and implementation initiated in at least one national park pilot. d. Communication: • Improvement in knowledge, practices and attitudes (target to be set	✔	✔	?	✔	✔

	attitudes assessed as part of the baseline KAP survey.	after baseline KAP survey).					
	e. Civil society:	e. Civil society:					
	• CSO representatives actively involved on the C-PAR Advisory Group.	• Three partnerships with CSOs strengthened or established.					
	• Project interventions being implemented in partnership with at least one CSO.						

The achievability of the EOP target for Indicator 12d could not be fully assessed because it had not yet been set, although the general aim for 'improvement' is achievable. Otherwise, the different components of Indicators 10, 11 and 12 meet the SMART criteria.

4.2   Progress Towards Results

4.2.1   Progress towards outcomes analysis

This section presents an analysis of the project's progress against the midterm and EOP targets for each indicator. An 'Achievement Rating' is assigned for the objective and each outcome.

Annex 6 provides the Progress Towards Results Matrix, which documents the findings for progress towards the objective and outcome-level results, provides a justification for each of these ratings, and summarises the analysis of progress against each indicator and target.

Project Objective: Establish an effective National Park 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
Progress towards Objective: SATISFACTORY

Indicator 1: Number of direct project beneficiaries, measured based on: a. Cumulative total of the following: b. Number of people obtaining PA competency qualification and staff directly involved in the project c. Number of people living in the communities where project interventions are carried out.

Baseline	Midterm target		End-of-project Target		Status at MTR		MTR Assessment
Estimates of direct beneficiaries based on a capacity building needs assessment and stakeholder consultations during the PPG phase. These estimates will be verified at project inception through development of the capacity development plan for the C-PAR program and confirmation consultations with villages where project interventions are planned.	a. Cumulative total:		a. Cumulative total:		a. Cumulative total:		**ON TARGET**
	3,800 (50% women)		10,376 (50% women)		4,518 (42% women)		
	b. Number of people obtaining PA competency qualification:		b. Number of people obtaining PA competency qualification:		b. Number of people obtaining PA competency qualification:		
	Central:	175	Central:	372	Central:	72	
	TRS NP:	175	TRS NP:	471	TRS NP:	685	
	GPA NP:	175	GPA NP:	471	GPA NP:	187	
	XJU NP:	75	XJU NP:	186	XJU NP:	46	
	Total: 600 (50% women)		Total: 1,500 (50% women)		Total: 990 (31% women)		
	c. Number of local beneficiaries:		c. Number of local beneficiaries:		c. Number of local beneficiaries:		
	TRS NP:	2,000	TRS NP:	5,771	TRS NP:	1,926	
	GPA NP:	950	GPA NP:	2,405	GPA NP:	1,558	
	XJU NP:	250	XJU NP:	700	XJU NP:	44	
	Total: 3,200 (50% women)		Total: 8,876 (50% women)		Total: 3,528 (42% women) (Source: Self Evaluation Report)		

The midterm total targets for the number of direct beneficiaries have been exceeded and the project is on target to achieve the EOP total targets. Some specific targets for individual pilots were not met, especially for XJ; this is largely because of difficulties delivering training and capacity development due to COVID-19 constraints and because of the XJ community specialist not being in place until late 2021.

The midterm targets for the participation of women were not met. During discussions it was apparent that there was no specific obstacle to including more women in interventions, therefore the MTR team considers the indicator to be on target. Nevertheless, deliberate focus will be required on increasing the participation of women. The MTR team recommends that the project's gender action plan is revised after the ESIA is completed (in accordance with the project document) and that an annual gender mainstreaming action plan is developed for each pilot, which identifies how the participation of women and girls in project activities will be increased and how the female participation targets in this indicator will be met (Recommendation 14; see also Section 4.3.9).

Indicator 2: National terrestrial PA system expanded, with an emphasis on habitat connectivity and increasing coverage of KBAs among the three NP pilot sites of Three-River Source NP (TRS NP); Giant Panda NP (GP NP); and Xianju NP (XJ NP)

Baseline	Midterm target	End-of-project Target	Status at MTR	MTR Assessment
Estimates of direct beneficiaries based on a capacity building needs assessment and stakeholder consultations during the PPG phase. These estimates will be verified at project inception through development of the capacity development plan for the C-PAR program and confirmation consultations with villages where project interventions are planned.	National terrestrial PA system expanded by 0.65 million ha	National terrestrial PA system expanded by 1.2838 million ha, broken down as follows: TRS NP: 0.6561 million ha GP NP: 0.6134 million ha XJ NP: 0.0143 million ha	National terrestrial PA system expanded by 7.9404 million ha, broken down as follows: TRS NP: 7.412 million ha GP NP: 0.5284 million ha XJ NP: 0 (Source: Self Evaluation Report)	**ACHIEVED**

The TRS and GP NPs were officially established on 12 October 2021 and the total increases exceeded the total midterm and EOP targets for expansion of the PA system, therefore the total EOP target has been achieved. This is largely due to the very large increase from the TRS NP; the GP NP also made a significant contribution. The XJ NP will not be established during the project, therefore will not contribute to this target; XJ will not be established because it was determined to not be a priority pilot NP and was not included in the 14th FYP for Zhejiang Province. Such decisions in China regarding which sites are confirmed to be pilot NPs are largely beyond the control of the project, although the project can have some influence over the areas that are protected for the pilot NPs. Therefore, the MTR team recommends that the EOP target for this indicator be amended to shift the primary focus to the total area of expansion, without being specific about the contributions of the pilot NPs (see Recommendation 9 and Annex 8).

It is important that the project still delivers comparable biodiversity conservation outcomes through this indicator, therefore it is also recommended that the proposal to change the EOP target is supported by an

analysis of the biodiversity conservation benefits (including KBA coverage) that have been delivered by the establishment of the large areas of TRS and GP NPs (see Annex 8).

Outcome 1: National Park system established with effective legal, governance and institutional framework
Progress towards Outcome 1: SATISFACTORY

Indicator 3: Extent to which legal, policy and institutional frameworks reflect PA reform priorities

Baseline	Midterm target	End-of-project Target	Status at MTR	MTR Assessment
The Integrated Plan for Establishing a National Park System in China, issued by the Office of the State Council on 26 September 2017 provides a vision for a National Park System, including a National Park Law and a unified National PA Management Agency	Draft national PA system guideline, based upon a national PA gap analysis and comparative analyses of domestic and international best practices, presented to the NP Leading Group. The PA system plan includes a roadmap outlining concrete steps for PA reform, with increased protection of globally significant biodiversity and provisions for genuine participation by local communities, including ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups, promoting sustainable access and public benefit and minimising economic displacement and resettlement.	NP legal framework in place and mainstreamed into the 14th 5-year plan and key land use planning processes, including ecological red-lining	Two studies conducted to strengthen the legal and governance framework for the NP system. 1. 'Study on Roadmap and Framework of National Park Law of China': proposed solutions to the NFGA regarding Protected Area Law and NP Law; a high-level workshop was convened on 20 June 2021 in association with this. 2. 'Environmental Analysis and Countermeasure Study on Hydroelectric and Mining Projects in Protected Areas' (2020): proposed an Environmental Impact Assessment Index System and mechanisms to supervise hydroelectric and mining projects in national PAs; supports work of MEE and NFGA. (Source: 2021 PIR and Self Evaluation Report)	**ON TARGET**

The project has undertaken extensive work on options and recommendations for developing the national legal framework for NPs. Experts with very good reputations have been involved and the MTR team heard from many interviewees that the project has made a valuable contribution to the national deliberations regarding NP legislation and that this contribution will continue. The MTR team has viewed the two reports mentioned in the reporting and considers that the midterm target has been met.

The MTR team also heard many times that development of NP legislation is a complex process. In particular, the relationship with, and respective timing of, NP law and PA law is a matter that has still not been

resolved. Consequently, progress is slow and it is possible that the NP legislation will not be established by the end of the project.

Furthermore, as discussed in Section 4.1.2, the wording of the EOP target 'NP legal framework in place' is ambiguous, because it is unclear what is meant by the 'NP legal framework in place'. Given that much of the process of developing and adopting legislation is highly uncertain and beyond the control of the project, it is recommended that the EOP target be amended to something that is more specific, more measurable and more achievable for the project (see Recommendation 8 and Annex 8 for more detail).

The project should also consider how the EOP target will be reported against for the NP legal framework to be 'mainstreamed into the 14th 5-year plan and key land use planning processes, including ecological red-lining'.

Indicator 4: Extent to which policies, guidelines and regulations are in place for effectively governing, planning, managing and monitoring the NP system, including but not limited to ecological corridors establishment and management; competency standards for PA managers and staff; tourism partnerships and concessions				
Baseline	**Midterm target**	**End-of-project Target**	**Status at MTR**	**MTR Assessment**
The Integrated Plan for Establishing a National Park System in China, issued by the Office of the State Council on 26 September 2017 provides a vision for a National Park System, including a National Park Law and updated regulatory framework. No policies exist for contemporary PA management issues such as ecological corridors and management of tourism concessions, and a competency-based approach is not taken for PA staff development.	Draft policies and guidelines under pilot operationalisation at 3 NP pilot sites, including draft ecological corridor policy and guidelines, draft competency-based standards for PA professional development, and draft tourism partnerships and concessions policy document.	Ecological corridor policy document used to inform design of the expansions of the three NP pilots under Component 2, improving ecological connectivity. Ecological corridor policy, competency-based standards for PA professional development and tourism partnerships and concession policy adopted and being institutionalised across NP pilots and the national PA system through the State Administration of National Parks.	Five relevant documents have been developed: 1. HWC management policy and guidelines submitted to MEE and NFGA; piloted in TRS NP. 2. 'Study on PA Network Layout and Ecological Corridors under Climate Change' commenced. 3. 'Guidelines and A Case Study on KBAs' identification in China' provided various findings and recommendations; specific KBA study being delivered for Xianju. 4. 'Study on Competency-based Standards for PA Professional Development' commenced. 5. 'Guidelines for the Concession of National Parks' drafted and will be adopted as standards by NFGA; specific concessions pilot also being delivered in TRS. (Source: 2021 PIR and Self Evaluation Report)	**ON TARGET**

The project is developing several draft policies, guidelines and other documents, three of which are under pilot operationalisation at NP pilot sites, and the midterm target has been met.

The MTR team found that, for some areas, there was limited interaction between the experts undertaking national-level work and experts and practitioners at the local level; this was especially noted for the work on KBAs and concessions. It is recommended that regular interaction is improved between those involved in similar project work at national and local levels to provide better strategic guidance, share knowledge and facilitate input to each other's work (Recommendation 12).

The work on corridors is primarily high-level network modelling to be developed by the national consultants who are implementing detailed modelling of biodiversity, climate change and adaptation responses including PA expansion. This will not develop practical policy and guidelines on establishment and management of corridors. The MTR team has observed in this project, and in the MTRs of C-PAR 2 and 3, that there is a lack of an ecological basis to corridor planning and management; to improve the quality of planning in these and other projects, it is recommended that this project develops a simple policy and guideline for how to plan, establish and manage a corridor to achieve ecological outcomes (Recommendation 15 and Annex 8).

The project should also consider how carefully how it will measure and report against the EOP target, especially 'Ecological corridor policy document used to inform design of the expansions of the three NP pilots under Component 2, improving ecological connectivity', given that the expansions have already occurred.

Indicator 5: Established framework for collaborative NP governance				
Baseline	**Midterm target**	**End-of-project Target**	**Status at MTR**	**MTR Assessment**
NP pilots established across provincial and administrative boundaries. The Integrated Plan for Establishing a National Park System in China provides vision for a unified National PA Management Agency, established as the State Administration of National Parks on 17 March 2018.

No adopted framework exists for collaborative NP governance across provincial/administrative boundaries. | Draft working rules on collaborative NP governance under piloting at NP pilot sites in Component 2, with establishment of collaborative governance coordination mechanisms. | Working rules on collaborative NP governance adopted in the NP regulatory frameworks of the three demonstration NP pilot sites and collaborative governance mechanisms fully operational.

Working rules promoted for operationalisation across the national PA system through the State Administration of National Parks. | Collaborative governance coordination mechanisms have been piloted in NP pilots; draft working rules have been established.

Joint actions of cross-regional patrol and biodiversity monitoring carried out in GP NP, including signing the agreement on joint defence and protection of Minshan area of GP NP.

(Source: 2021 PIR and Self Evaluation Report) | **ON TARGET** |

The project has made good progress towards this indicator; the MTR team viewed the relevant documentation and confirmed that draft working rules have been developed for piloting.

Indicator 6: PA financing available nationally, narrowing the gap for basic PA management scenario

Baseline	Midterm target	End-of-project Target	Status at MTR	MTR Assessment
Total annual PA finances available: USD 4,528 million (based on 2016 CNY figures converted to USD) Est. annual PA financing needs, basic: USD 6,782 million (based on 2016 CNY figures converted to USD) Annual PA financing gap, basic: USD 2,254 million	PA financing available: 10% increase from baseline USD 5,000 million	PA financing available: 30% increase from baseline USD 5,886 million	PA financing available: 58% increase from baseline USD 7,158 million (Source: Financial Sustainability Scorecard from METT, using 2020 national budget report of Ministry of Finance)	**ON TARGET**

There has been a very large increase (58%) in PA financing available, with both the midterm and EOP targets achieved according to 2020 finance data from the Ministry of Finance. It is likely that this increase will be confirmed when the Financial Sustainability Scorecard is completed again for the terminal evaluation.

Outcome 2: National Park system strengthened through pilot development
Progress towards Outcome 2: SATISFACTORY

Indicator 7: Number of new or revised pilot NP policies and regulations

Baseline	Midterm target	End-of-project Target	Status at MTR	MTR Assessment
NP system currently under establishment	General and specific legislation for pilot NPs drafted and under review by competent authorities	Five general or specific legislations of NP pilot sites enacted and adopted more broadly through replication across NP pilots	TRS NP: One regulation (trial) and 13 NP management measures had already been issued for TRS in 2018; the project prepared a report that collected and assessed these, identified barriers, and provided recommendations for their revision and for other relevant matters. GP NP: The Regulation of Sichuan Province on the Administration of GP NP was listed in the legislative plan of Sichuan Provincial Government from 2019-2021 and project had input to this.	**ON TARGET**

			XJ: Draft Regulation of the Xianju NP was prepared; not listed in the 14th FYP in Zhejiang Province. (Source: 2021 PIR, Self Evaluation Report and other information provided during MTR)	

Draft regulations have been developed for the three pilots, so the midterm target has been met; for TRS NP, these already existed and the project commissioned a detailed review of these. The project should carefully consider the wording of the EOP target and how this will be reported against and achieved, especially the target for five 'general or specific legislations' to be enacted and for these to be 'adopted more broadly through replication across NP pilots'; consider rewording the EOP target to something that better matches the current needs regarding the pilots (see Annex 8).

Indicator 8: Institutional capacities for protected area management at NP pilot sites, as indicated in scores of the UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard for the following areas:

Area 1: Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislations, strategies and programs

Area 2: Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programs

Area 3: Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders

Area 4: Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge

Area 5: Capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn,

For the following NP pilot sites: a. Three-River Source NP b. Giant Panda NP c. Xianju NP

Baseline		Midterm target		End-of-project Target		Status at MTR		MTR Assessment
a. Three-River Source NP:		a. Three-River Source NP:		a. Three-River Source NP:		a. Three-River Source NP:		**ON TARGET**
Area 1:	44%	Area 1:	For midterm, target set only for total score	Area 1:	100%	Area 1:	Only total score reported	
Area 2:	46%	Area 2:		Area 2:	73%	Area 2:		
Area 3:	60%	Area 3:		Area 3:	73%	Area 3:		
Area 4:	33%	Area 4:		Area 4:	89%	Area 4:		
Area 5:	47%	Area 5:		Area 5:	73%	Area 5:		
Total Score:	**47%**	**Total Score:**	**62%**	**Total Score:**	**77%**	**Total Score:**	**66%**	
b. Giant Panda NP:		b. Giant Panda NP:		b. Giant Panda NP:		b. Giant Panda NP:		
Area 1:	22%	Area 1:	For midterm, target set only for total score	Area 1:	78%	Area 1:	Only total score reported	
Area 2:	48%	Area 2:		Area 2:	88%	Area 2:		
Area 3:	60%	Area 3:		Area 3:	93%	Area 3:		
Area 4:	33%	Area 4:		Area 4:	89%	Area 4:		
Area 5:	40%	Area 5:		Area 5:	73%	Area 5:		

Total Score: 45%	Total Score: 65%	Total Score: 85%	Total Score: 68%	
c. Xianju NP:	c. Xianju NP:	c. Xianju NP:	c. Xianju NP:	
Area 1: 56%	Area 1: For midterm, target set only for total score	Area 1: 89%	Area 1: Only total score reported	
Area 2: 38%	Area 2:	Area 2: 71%	Area 2:	
Area 3: 47%	Area 3:	Area 3: 67%	Area 3:	
Area 4: 33%	Area 4:	Area 4: 78%	Area 4:	
Area 5: 47%	Area 5:	Area 5: 73%	Area 5:	
Total Score: 42%	Total Score: 57%	Total Score: 73%	Total Score: 57%	
			(Source: Midterm PA Administration Capacity Development Scorecards)	

The project has successfully increased the institutional capacities for protected area management at the NP pilot sites and has meet the midterm total score targets. Given the project's strong focus on capacity development, the MTR team considers that the EOP targets are likely to be met.

The project's investment in institutional capacity development for the Xianju pilot continues to be beneficial despite the XJ NP not being established during the project, because it delivers valuable improvements to globally significant biodiversity protection and management and it means that the institutional capacity will be high if the provincial agency is successful in establishing Xianju as a NP in the future. There would also be benefits in reorienting the project's strategy for Xianju to pursue listing through a PA category other than an NP; this would achieve enhanced biodiversity protection, further contribute to PA system reforms and maintain the motivation and enthusiasm of those involved in promoting XJ as a PA (see Recommendation 10).

Indicator 9: Protected area management effectiveness, as indicated by METT scores, for the following sites: a. Three-River Source NP b. Giant Panda NP c. Xianju NP

Baseline	Midterm target	End-of-project Target	Status at MTR	MTR Assessment
a. Three-River Source NP: 50% (Jan 2018) b. Giant Panda NP: 45% (Jan 2018) c. Xianju NP: 40% (Jan 2018)	a. Three-River Source NP: 55% b. Giant Panda NP: 50% c. Xianju NP: 50%	Achievement of sound management with score >67%: a. Three-River Source NP: 67% 40% increase from baseline: b. Giant Panda NP: 63% c. Xianju NP: 56%	a. Three-River Source NP: 64% b. Giant Panda NP: 55% c. Xianju NP: 55% (Source: METT provided January 2022)	**ON TARGET**

The project has successfully increased protected area management effectiveness, as indicated by METT scores, for the three pilot sites, and the midterm targets have been met.

Outcome 3: Sustainability of project and program results enhanced through effective project management, program coordination, monitoring & evaluation, knowledge management and social inclusion
Progress towards Outcome 3: SATISFACTORY

Indicator 10: Sustainability of project and program results enhanced through effective project management, program coordination, monitoring & evaluation, knowledge management and social inclusion				
Baseline	Midterm target	End-of-project Target	Status at MTR	MTR Assessment
a. Terms of reference for PMO positions and PSC developed with clearly identified program-level responsibilities b. Budget allocated for Program Alignment Officer to oversee program level coordination	a. PMO fully staffed; project and program level steering committees providing timely guidance b. Aggregated reporting mechanism implemented, and results across the program are tracked and reported through knowledge platform	a. Program effectively coordinated through efficient program steering function b. Annual program reports indicate clear progress towards outcomes and achievements beyond individual child projects	a. PMO fully staffed and running very well; project-level steering committee (PSC) has met 3 times and program-level steering committee has met twice – both are providing timely and strategic guidance. b. Program level reporting is in place and two annual reports prepared on progress of the C-PAR program (2019 and 2020). (Source: 2021 PIR and Self Evaluation Report)	ON TARGET

The PMO is fully staffed and is very efficient and effective, as described elsewhere. The project-level and program-level steering committees are also established and meeting regularly.

Program-level reporting is in place, which collates progress across this and the other C-PAR child projects. The format of this changed from 2019 and 2020: most significantly, the 2019 report assessed progress against the program indicators (in the Program Results Framework in Annex R of the project document) whereas the 2020 report did not. The MTR team notes that there is no other mechanism for reporting against the indicators in this Program Results Framework, therefore it is recommended that the program annual reports report against these indicators.

It is also important to carefully consider the wording of the EOP target (b): the reports should 'indicate clear progress towards outcomes and achievements beyond individual child projects' – that is, reporting should provide more than a collation or summary of the collective results of the child projects. It is recommended that the C-PAR 1 project prepares an end-of-project CPAR program report (at terminal evaluation) that assesses: 1. progress against program indicators and 2. progress towards outcomes and achievements beyond individual child projects (Recommendation 11 and Annex 8)

Indicator 11: Extent of knowledge management of C-PAR program, as indicated through

a. Functional biodiversity knowledge platform

b. Lessons learned distilled and disseminated

c. Knowledge exchange through workshops, seminars, conferences

Baseline	Midterm target	End-of-project Target	Status at MTR	MTR Assessment
a. Recommended framework for a biodiversity knowledge platform outlined (Annex P to the project document) b. Project documents for child projects contain targets for developing lessons learned case studies c. CBD COP 15 scheduled in China in 2020	a. Biodiversity knowledge platform designed and under testing phase and operation, including post-project maintenance approved b. 5 lessons learned completed and uploaded onto knowledge sharing platform c. One side event at CBD COP 15 highlights NP system in China	a. Functional biodiversity knowledge platform, accessible for public participation, and financial support for ongoing maintenance and institutionalisation approved b. 10 lessons learned completed and uploaded onto biodiversity knowledge platform, and usage statistics indicate increasing reach of C-PAR program lessons learned across national PA system. c. At least 5 national workshops convened	a. Biodiversity knowledge platform is in the tender stage; it will include a program platform, online training resources, case studies etc. b. 5 lessons learned and completed: HWC; concessions in the TRS NP system pilot; inter-provincial collaborative NP governance in GP NP; nature education; and sustainable livelihoods in GP NP system pilot. Not yet loaded onto knowledge platform because platform not operational. c. Outcomes of the C-PAR child projects were shared globally at a high-level eco-civilization forum at CBD COP 15 on 14 October 2021. (Source: 2021 PIR, Self Evaluation Report and additional information during mission)	**ON TARGET**

The project has made good progress towards this indicator. The MTR team was advised during the mission that the tender process is underway, that content for the platform is being negotiated with relevant government departments, and that relevant lessons learned and achievements will be uploaded after the platform is completed. Therefore, although the midterm target for the platform to be 'designed and under testing phase and operation' was not met, the project is on track to meet the EOP targets.

Careful consideration should be given to the wording of the EOP targets and how they will be achieved, measured and reported against, especially: (a) the biodiversity knowledge platform should have 'financial support for ongoing maintenance and institutionalisation approved'; and (b) 'usage statistics indicate increasing reach of C-PAR program lessons learned across national PA system'.

Indicator 12: Level of inclusiveness in management of the NP system, as indicated through:

a. Gender inclusion
b. Ethnic minorities inclusion
c. Community engagement
d. Communication
e. Civil society participation

Baseline	Midterm target	End-of-project Target	Status at MTR	MTR Assessment
The Integrated Plan for Establishing a National Park System in China, issued by the Office of the State Council on 26 September 2017, outlines a system in which government units, enterprises, social organizations and the public participate in the protection and management of national parks. KAP framework outlined in Annex P to the project document and includes target stakeholder groups and objectives of survey(s). The baseline KAP survey will be made during project inception phase	a. Gender inclusion: • Gender mainstreaming plan under implementation, and 50% of direct beneficiaries by midterm are woman. b. Ethnic minorities: • Free, prior and informed (FPIC) consultations successfully completed at the target Tibetan villages, and project interventions initiated. • Human-wildlife policy and guideline developed, and pilot implementation plan developed. c. Community engagement • Collaborative community management agreements signed with at least one village in or near the three NP pilots, and project interventions initiated. • Guidelines for tourism partnerships and concessions developed, and pilot implementation plan completed. d. Communication: • Project interventions in target communities address knowledge, practices and attitudes assessed as part of the baseline KAP survey.	a. Gender inclusion: • 50% women target for direct beneficiaries achieved. b. Ethnic minorities: • 5,771 Tibetan ethnic minorities among the direct beneficiaries. • Human-wildlife conflict management policy and guideline approved, and implementation initiated in at least one Tibetan village. c. Community engagement • Collaborative community PA management demonstrated in villages situated within and near 3 national parks. • Guidelines for tourism partnerships and concessions approved and implementation initiated in at least one national park pilot. d. Communication: • Improvement in knowledge, practices and attitudes (target to be set after baseline KAP survey).	a. Gender inclusion: • Gender mainstreaming plan is under implementation; 42% of direct beneficiaries are women. b. Ethnic minorities: • FPIC has been obtained from 105 households of Tibetan ethnic minorities and interventions have been initiated. • HWC policy and guideline developed, and pilot implementation plan in place in TRS NP. c. Community engagement • Community co-management mechanism established to enhance PA management and improve local livelihoods; agreements signed in TRS and GP NP pilots. • Guidelines for tourism partnerships and concessions developed and pilot underway in TRS NP. d. Communication: • KAP survey completed and data used to inform strategy for awareness raising; midterm KAP survey completed and recorded improvements; EOP target not set.	**ON TARGET**

| | e. Civil society:

• CSO representatives actively involved on the C-PAR Advisory Group.

• Project interventions being implemented in partnership with at least one CSO. | e. Civil society:

• Three partnerships with CSOs strengthened or established. | e. Civil society:

• C-PAR Advisory Group not yet officially established (expected in 2022); CSO representatives will be involved.

• Interventions are being implemented in partnership with three CSOs: South-North Institute for Sustainable Development; Academy of Beijing Fuqun Environment; Shan Shui Conservation Center.

(Source: 2021 PIR, Self Evaluation Report, and other information provided during MTR) | |

Generally good progress has been made with the components of this indicator and overall the MTR team considers that the indicator is on target. Specific observations and suggestions are provided below.

Under 12a, the low participation rate of women is discussed under Indicator 1 and recommendations are provided.

The MTR team viewed evidence of the FPIC reported under 12b and the community co-management mechanism and concession / tourism guidelines described under 12c.

Under 12d, the baseline KAP survey was completed in December 2020 and interventions are being informed by the results. A midterm KAP was survey was completed in February 2022 and this survey recorded increases in knowledge, awareness and support for biodiversity conservation and NP development; therefore, the MTR team expects the general EOP target for 'improvement in knowledge, practices and attitudes' to be achieved. However, the specific EOP targets have not been set: it is important that EOP targets are developed for approval by the PSC and RTA and included in the revised results framework (Recommendation 7 and Annex 8).

Under 12e, the CPAR Advisory Group is expected to be established in 2022, therefore the midterm target was only partially achieved. The MTR team was advised by the PMO that CSOs have been involved in various activities, including guiding the project's design, research, training, and review.

4.2.2   Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective

The three barriers identified in the project document remain. The MTR team provides the following observations on progress towards addressing these barriers.

Barrier 1: Weakness of legal and institutional framework for coordinated PA system

- There is still no comprehensive national law for the establishment and management of PAs, although important background investigations have been undertaken towards this

- The weaknesses remain for establishment of nature reserves, lack of legal provisions for additional needed categories, and protection of sites from incompatible activities
- A systematic approach is now being brought to the wide-ranging PA reforms and the first pilot NPs have been established
- Shortcomings with representativeness and connectivity of the developing PA system are being addressed
- Institutional coordination has improved
- PA financing availability has increased and staff management standards and capacity have been improved, although there are still limitations for most PAs in China
- Limited change to the scientific basis to the PA classification system (noting that this project does not include activities to directly address this).

Barrier 2: Insufficient provincial capacity and experiences in national park system strengthening

- Institutional capacity in the participating provincial departments has increased
- The capacity of the target PAs to fulfil their primary functions of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management has improved, although there are still widespread limitations
- Work is underway to address the inconsistent regulatory standards across sub-national administrative levels
- Work is underway to address the imbalance between protection and development and conflicts between PAs and communities
- Work is underway to address the uncertainty on how the land use rights of local communities in PAs will be negotiated and over what timeframes, and the insufficient capacities at the provincial level for developing and administering such reforms to land use practices.

Barrier 3: Insufficient knowledge sharing and coordination among individual projects and programs

- There is still a lack of awareness at all levels of society about the importance of biodiversity in maintaining ecosystem services
- Work is underway to improve access to up-to-date and accurate data on biodiversity and PAs
- Coordination of biodiversity knowledge management across ministries and departments has improved
- There has been limited communication to the public of the concept of the NP system and the values generated to society.

4.3   Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Project Implementation and Adaptive Management is rated as **Satisfactory.**

Most aspects of implementation and adaptive management are at a very high level. The organisational structure is functioning well, the PMO and pilot PMOs are very effective, M&E is being implemented well, and the IP and EA are both results-focused and proactive in addressing implementation challenges. There is one component that requires significant remedial action: the management of social and environmental risks (described in the following sections).

This is a very significant shortcoming; however, in accordance with the rating scale for assessing Project Implementation and Adaptive Management (see Annex 7), a Satisfactory rating has been assigned because 'implementation of <u>most</u> of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for <u>only a few</u> that are subject to remedial action'.

4.3.1   Social and environmental risk management

As described in Section 3.3.3, the project document clearly spelled out the processes to be followed to manage the environmental and social risks for this High-risk project. The early development of an ESIA, ESMP and GRM was a critical part of these processes. The project document envisaged the ESMP being finalised in the first quarter of the project and identified several outputs and activities that should not commence until the ESMP and GRM were completed.

At the time of the MTR, the ESIA, ESMP and GRM have not yet been finalised, which impairs the project's safeguards risk identification and management. From discussions with the PMO, UNDP CO and other stakeholders, and from the review of project reporting, it is apparent that this has been in active development for an extended period: the 2020 Project Progress Report (for the period 1 January to 31 December 2020) shows that work towards the ESIA and ESMP commenced in 2020 (after recruitment of safeguards specialists). The MTR team was advised that the documents are nearing completion and expected to be finalised in early 2022.

Furthermore, progress has been made against several of the project outputs and activities that were intended to not start until the ESMP was finalised (as described in Section 3.3.3); this is summarised in Table 5. As a consequence of the ESIA, ESMP and GRM not being in place while these aspects of the project have proceeded, the project is not being delivered in accordance with the project document and ESMF. Importantly, however, FPIC from affected communities has been obtained and documented. In addition, the MTR team was advised that the ESIA/ESMP recently recommended that this project (and the other High-risk child projects C-PAR 2 and 3) prepare an Indigenous People's Plan (IPP) to help manage risks in the project.

Table 5: Activities that the project document stated should not start until the ESIA and ESMP were completed and approved and the identified management measures put in place, with indication of whether progress has been reported against each (yes/no); a summary of reporting against outputs is in Annex 5

Output	Activity	Description from project document (paragraph 186)	Progress reported? (yes/no)
1.1	1.1.2	Development of NP system guideline	Y
	1.1.3	Drafting NP legislation	y
	1.1.4		y
1.2	1.2.2	Guidelines for ecological corridor establishment	y
2.1	2.1.1	Technical assistance for conservation planning and management planning for NP pilot sites which could include expansion into areas currently not under protection	Y
	2.1.2		y
	2.1.4		y
		Drafting NP regulations	
2.3	2.3.1	Strengthening community collaborative PA management arrangements, sustainable livelihoods support, that could include residents who have been economically displaced and/or voluntarily resettled	Y
	2.3.2		Y

There are several reasons why the required documents have not been finalised. The MTR team understands that the processes for developing the ESIA, ESMP and GRM are complex and time-consuming.

There has been input from many people into the draft documents (including an international safeguards specialist, national consultant and local specialists), which is positive and reflects the project document's proposed approach. However, frequent document reviews and recommendations, and follow-up consultations with stakeholders, mean that the process is taking a very long time. Further to this, the quality of early draft documents did not adhere to required international standards. These factors have been compounded by delays in meetings and consultations due to COVID-19.

The final significant factor in the delays is that these C-PAR projects are the first time that the China CO has been required to undertake such extensive planning for social and environmental risk management and implemented GEF projects with a High safeguards risk rating. It is also the first time that the IP (FECO) has undertaken such planning. From extensive discussions with these parties and with the PMO and contractors, it is evident that the process and agency safeguards requirements were found to be complex and difficult to understand and that it was difficult to explain them to project staff and agency staff.

This combination of factors resulted in shortcomings in execution of the social and environmental risk management. In addition, there were shortcomings in oversight and these are discussed in Section 4.3.2 'Management arrangements'.

Given these complexities and delays, the MTR team considers it unrealistic for the ESMP to have been finalised in the first quarter of the approach as proposed in the project document.

4.3.2   Management arrangements

GEF Partner Agency (UNDP)

UNDP has a strong focus on results. It is actively involved in responding to challenges and collaborating to seek solutions.

Support from UNDP to the IP and PMO has been strong. The UNDP CO holds scheduled bimonthly meetings with the PMO and engages proactively in other meetings and discussions as required. The CO is in regular contact with the PMO to provide timely support on routine project matters (such as finance, workplans and reporting). The UNDP CO also provides support to regional pilot PMOs in addressing technical implementation challenges.

Generally, annual reporting in the PIRs has been candid and reported realistically on progress and challenges; the main exception is the reporting of environmental and social risks, as described below. In addition, the 2021 PIR contains limited analysis of the challenges and risks faced by the project due to XJ NP not being established during the project. The MTR team is aware that extensive constructive discussions were held regarding this matter; however, the PIR process was not used to document these issues or to direct adaptive management responses.

The quality of risk management has generally been satisfactory, with the exception of environmental and social risks (below) and the shortcoming described above in using the PIR process to document and address risks to the project due to XJ NP not being established.

The C-PAR 1 project is responsible for coordination among all 6 C-PAR child projects. Therefore, as Partner Agency for the C-PAR 1 project, UNDP also plays an important role in providing oversight to the sharing of technical knowledge among C-PAR child projects on the projects' implementation and on PA management and related matters. Execution of the C-PAR 5 project was recently transferred from Conservation International to the UNDP and is expected to start in 2022. Given that this project has not yet started despite CEO endorsement in 2019, extra attention will be required from the C-PAR 1 PMO and UNDP CO when it commences.

UNDP was responsive to implementation problems, with CO staff engaging proactively with PMO, the IP and pilot PMOs to address challenges. The MTR team heard positive feedback from several interviewees regarding the responsiveness of UNDP to solving implementation problems.

As described in Section 4.3.1, the ESIA, ESMP and GRM have not been finalised. Despite this, significant progress has been made on several outputs and activities that were identified in the project document as to not start until the ESMP was finalised (see Table 5). Under the ESMF (which is shared across C-PAR projects 1, 2, 3 and 4), UNDP has various responsibilities, including:

- Provide oversight on all matters related to safeguards
- Ensure adherence to the SES for project activities … and undertake appropriate measures to address any shortcomings
- Verify and document that all UNDP SES requirements have been addressed
- Provide technical guidance on implementation of the ESMF.

Given these responsibilities, and the ongoing delivery of project activities without the targeted risk management agreed to in the project document and ESMF, the MTR team considers there to have been shortcomings in UNDP oversight and that enhanced oversight is warranted for such a High-risk project. The urgency to complete the ESIA and ESMP was clearly expressed by the RTAs in both the 2020 and 2021 PIRs. However, the reasons for the urgency were not made so clear – the fact that, in the absence of the ESIA/ESMP, key aspects of project delivery were not aligned to the project document or ESMF, which sets out the project's safeguards requirements in accordance with the SES for a High-risk project.

The ESIA/ESMP delay was discussed in the Risk Management section of the 2021 PIR. The risk rating for this was not increased, although it was reported that the PMO issued, at the RTA's request, a letter to UNDP to provide assurances of SES compliance; this is described further in Section 4.3.5 'Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems'. It should be noted that this provides limited additional assurance, because the IP already has this obligation as a signatory to the project document; nevertheless, it was useful as a measure to ensure that social and environmental risk management remained in focus while the ESIA and ESMP are finalised.

As described in Section 4.3.1, there are several reasons for the delays with the ESIA, ESMP and GRM. This includes the fact that these C-PAR projects are the first time that the China CO has been required to undertake such extensive planning for social and environmental risk management, and the fact that the process was found to be complex, difficult to understand and difficult to explain to project staff and agency staff. Although relevant training and capacity building was provided to the CO, IP and PMO, it is likely that a higher level of technical support and enhanced oversight from the Regional Office (including safeguards specialists) would have facilitated a better and timelier outcome.

There have been no project delays that will affect project duration. As discussed elsewhere, the impacts of COVID-19 have been substantial for this project, however adaptive management approaches have been effective at minimising disruption to deliverables.

Implementing Partner (FECO)

The Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center (FECO) has maintained an excellent focus on results and timeliness. The project has been highly efficient at delivering outputs and is on target for all indicators.

As a government agency, FECO has well-established management, finance and procurement practices in place that have been well suited to the project's delivery. Formal procurement processes are in place, including open bidding processes. The PMO and other structures were established efficiently early in the project.

Risk management has generally been satisfactory, with the exception of the shortcomings described below with safeguards management; also, as with UNDP, better use could have been made of the PIR process for documenting and managing risks to the project, such as the challenges with the proposed XJ NP.

FECO were proactive in identifying and responding to project challenges and risks. For example, the MTR team heard during the mission that FECO anticipated risks to the project due to the complexities of the legal components and proactively communicated with relevant parts of NFGA and MEE to provide suggestions and recommendations. This was well received by the agencies. FECO was also proactive in engaging a specialist to try to find constructive solutions to the challenges with XJ NP not being established; however, it is difficult to substantially influence such decisions regarding national NP pilots.

FECO contributed briefly to the two PIRs and reported realistically that the project was 'being implemented as expected'.

Government ownership of the project is excellent. The alignment with national environmental priorities was high at the time of project development and has become even higher during implementation.

There were shortcomings in the management of environmental and social risks by FECO. Although UNDP has responsibility for overall oversight of safeguards and adherence to the SES, as the IP FECO also has various responsibilities under the ESMF, including:

- Ensure that the … ESIA … and assessment report and the … ESMP … are developed, disclosed for public consultation and approved, and management measures are adopted and integrated during project implementation
- Ensure all requirements of UNDP's SES and national regulatory/policy frameworks and relevant international standards have been addressed
- Hold responsibility and accountability to UNDP for overall management of the project, including compliance with UNDP SES.

Given these responsibilities, the MTR team considers there to have been shortcomings in FECO oversight. Issues around the complexity and long duration of the development of the ESIA, ESMP and GRM are described in Section 4.3.1. However, the delays were not mentioned in the IP section of the 2020 or 2021 PIRs (the 2021 PIR noted that 'The SES safeguards are in compliance with UNDP SES policy'), nor was there mention of the need to complete this planning so that the project was being implemented in accordance with the project document and ESMF.

Because these C-PAR projects are the first time that such extensive assessments and management plans for social and environmental risks have been required for GEF projects in China, the MTR team considers it likely that FECO had limited awareness of the importance of this work. Furthermore, the UNDP CO explained that the process was difficult to communicate to project staff and FECO staff. As with the UNDP CO, it is likely that enhanced technical support from the Regional Office (including safeguards specialists) would have facilitated a better and timelier outcome.

4.3.3   Work planning

The project started on 8 March 2019 and the inception workshop was held on 5 November 2019. There were no start-up delays. The project was efficient in the first year at establishing the PMO, pilot PMOs and PSC, and in recruiting project staff, consultants and subcontractors.

Work-planning processes are results-based. The project develops detailed quarterly work plans and two-year work plans, based on the long-term work plan in the project document. These work plans clearly align the work undertaken and the expenditure to the outcomes, outputs and activities in the project document, providing a high level of transparency to work planning and budgeting.

The results framework has not been changed during the project and is not used as a management tool. A baseline (for Indicator 1) was scheduled to be confirmed at project inception and an EOP target (for Indicator 12d) was scheduled to be set after the baseline KAP survey was conducted, but these have not occurred. It is recommended that a revised results framework be developed for adoption by the RTA and PSC (see Recommendation 6).

4.3.4   Finance and co-finance

The total committed budget in the project document was $49,322,018.35, of which the GEF component was $6,222,018.35 and co-financing contributions were $43,100,000.00. The planned allocation of the GEF funds during the project is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of budgeted GEF funds (USD); source: project document

Funding source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
Outcome 1	208,771	605,901	472,436	274,434	158,458	-	1,720,000
Outcome 2	250,827	594,340	851,708	722,154	530,971	-	2,950,000
Outcome 3	221,895	196,949	323,708	206,049	296,364	15,035	1,260,000
Project Management	43,143	56,353	58,669	61,102	59,857	12,894.35	292,018
TOTAL	**724,636**	**1,453,543**	**1,706,521**	**1,263,739**	**1,045,650**	**27,929.35**	**6,222,018.35**

A spot check on programme disbursements relating to the project by the IP (FECO) was commissioned by UNDP in 2020; this is summarised in Section 4.3.5 'Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems'. An audit was conducted in late 2021 for the year ended 31 December 2020; this is also summarised in Section 4.3.5.

There were changes to fund allocations arising from budget revisions in 2019, 2020 and 2021, approved by both the IP (NPD, FECO) and the EA (UNDP Deputy Resident Representative). These changes were appropriate and were accompanied by budgeted work plans to justify the changes.

Expenditure

The annual expenditure is shown in Table 7. Actual expenditure closely matched planned expenditure in Year 1 (2019), was only 68.5% of expenditure in Year 2 (2020), and 72.2% in the first 11 months of 2021. The low spend in 2020 and 2021 is partly due to the need to adopt adaptive measures and postpone some activities due to COVID-19 constraints. The MTR team also understands that most scheduled 2021 activities had been implemented and that many payments were pending. By 30 November 2021, $2,000,064 had been expended, which is 32.1% of the total budget. This is a low delivery rate and particular effort will be required to improve expenditure.

Table 7: Summary of project expenditure by year (US dollars) at 30 November 2021; source: PMO

Year	Budgeted expenditure	Actual expenditure	Actual as % of budgeted
2019	86,321	85,188	98.7
2020	1,227,382	840,554	68.5
2021 (to 30 November)	1,488,368	1,074,323	72.2
TOTAL (2019–2021)	2,802,071	2,000,064	71.4
TOTAL (Project)	**6,222,018**	2,000,064	32.1

Table 8 shows the breakdown of expenditure by component against the project budget. Expenditure is progressing slowly for all components, especially Outcomes 1 and 3 (26.8 and 18.7% respectively).

Table 8: Summary of project expenditure by component (US dollars) as of 31 December 2021; source: PMO and CO

Activity	Project Budget	Total	%
Outcome 1	1,720,000	460,366	26.8
Outcome 2	2,950,000	1,194,269	40.5
Outcome 3	1,260,000	235,774	18.7
Project Mgt	292,018.35	109,655	37.6
Total	6,222,018.35	2,000,064	32.1

Co-financing

Table 9 shows the actual co-financing received from co-financing parties. The total co-financing received is $51,938,896, which already exceeds the total committed in the project document ($43,100,000).

Table 9: Project co-financing (USD) at 30 November 2021; source: PMO

Sources of co-funding	Name of co-financer	Type of co-financing	Amount confirmed at CEO endorsement (USD)	Actual amount contributed at stage of midterm review (USD)	Actual % of expected amount
GEF Implementing Partner – National Government	Ministry of Ecology and Environment; former Ministry of Environmental Protection	Grant	14,370,000	5,430,000	37.8
		In-kind	2,000,000	172,300	8.6
Local Government	Qinghai Provincial Department of Finance	Grant	11,820,000	8,870,446	75.0
		In-kind	1,000,000	18,077	1.8
Local Government	Sichuan Provincial Department of Finance	Grant	8,500,000	31,869,137.50	374.9
		In-kind	500,000	404,088.30	80.8
Local Government	Zhejiang Province, Xianju County Finance Bureau	Grant	3,610,000	3,845,506	106.5
		In-kind	200,000	80,000	40.0
Civil Society Organisation	Sanjiangyuan Ecological Protection Foundation	Grant	840,000	1,098,054	130.7
		In-kind	160,000	101,287	63.3
GEF Partner Agency	UNDP	In-kind	100,000	50,000	50.0
Total			**43,100,000**	**51,938,896**	**120.5**

The largest co-financing contribution is from the Sichuan Provincial Department of Finance, which has contributed 374.9% of the amount committed in the project document. The MTR team received an itemised outline of the activities/outputs that these co-financing allocations contributed to; this is summarised in Table 10. These represent real and substantial contributions to the project's achievements.

Table 10: Activities/outputs supported by co-financing parties; source: PMO

Name of co-financer	Type of co-financing	Supported activities/outputs
Ministry of Ecology and Environment	Grant	Output 1.1: strengthened legal and governance frameworks; Output 1.2: advanced PA policies and guidelines; Output 1.3: institutional enabling environment strengthened; Output 1.4: sustainable PA financing; Output 2.1: conservation planning (particularly for Xianju NP); Output 3.2: improved understanding among decision makers; Output 3.3: improved knowledge management
	In-kind	Output 3.1: project and program coordination; Output 3.3: improved knowledge management
Qinghai Provincial Department of Finance	Grant	Environmental education training; construction of furniture for ecological experience; big data technology; procurement of work clothes for rangers; advertisement products; develop books for ecological conservation

Name of co-financer	Type of co-financing	Supported activities/outputs
	In-kind	Daily running costs
Sichuan Provincial Department of Finance	Grant	Giant Panda National Park System Pilot Project, including the construction of the science popularisation and education center in Ya'an; construction of conservation and management houses; logo signs; ecological monitoring facilities; ecological restoration; sewage treatment systems and emergency rescue facilities in Baoxing, Wenchuan, Beichuan, Shifang, Jiuzhaigou, Qingchuan, etc.; and restoration of ecological corridor of giant panda
	In-kind	Boundary Pillar planting in Anzhou and Hongya of Giant Panda National Park; training course in 2020 for capacity building for staff of the management organisations at all levels of the Giant Panda National Park in Sichuan Province
Zhejiang Province, Xianju County Finance Bureau	Grant	In accordance with national and provincial regulations and policies concerning the construction of nature reserves, conducted comprehensive scientific investigations on Xianjukuo Cangshan Provincial Nature Reserve, and completed scientific research report, overall planning and preparation of declaration forms to promote the promotion of national nature reserves be prepared Optimised and integrated all the nature reserves in Xianju County; capacity building and technical assistance
	In-kind	Daily running expenses
Sanjiangyuan Ecological Protection Foundation	Grant	Ecological restoration in TRS in 2020–21; garbage sorting project in Zhaja village, Qumalai in 2020; sustainable livelihoods projects to alleviate poverty in TRS in 2020
	In-kind	Capacity building in ecological conservation in 2020–21
UNDP	In-kind	Important quality assurance role, supporting the PSC and PMO by carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions

4.3.5   Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems

The Section 7 'Monitoring and Evaluation Plan' in the project document establishes M&E and oversight responsibilities and activities at both a project level (C-PAR 1) and program level (C-PAR program) and includes allowances for these in the M&E budget.

The project-level M&E plan includes including standard project M&E activities. The project-level sub-total in the budget is $263,000, plus $170,000 of co-financing. Allocations for the MTR and terminal evaluation are $30,000 and $40,000 respectively, the allocation for the inception workshop is $8,000, there is an allocation of $20,000 for monitoring of indicators in the results framework, $25,000 is allocated to annual PSC meetings, and $20,000 is allocated to the completion of midterm and terminal tracking tools and scorecards. The budget also includes various 'non-core' M&E activities that are important for the project, such as a gender action plan ($10,000), lessons learned and knowledge generation ($25,000), and monitoring of environmental and social risks as part of the ESIA and ESMP ($55,000).

The project-level M&E budget is 4.2% of the GEF grant ($6,222,018.35), which is relatively low; however, the MTR team considers that the M&E plan is well suited to the project's context, given its primary focus on legal and institutional reform and capacity development, and that the budget allocations are appropriate. These resources are being allocated effectively.

The program-level M&E budget is $61,000, plus $40,000 of co-financing. This includes provisions for a program inception workshop, program steering committee meetings, a separate midterm review, a separate terminal evaluation, and a final report. This represents 1.0% of the GEF grant. Given that program coordination is a core role of the C-PAR 1 project, the MTR team considers that the allocation is appropriate.

The total M&E budget (both project-level and program-level M&E) is $324,000, 5.2% of the GEF grant.

There was some adaptive management in response to PIRs. Most of the recommendations of the RTA from the 2020 PIR were implemented (especially proactively planning for COVID-19 challenges). However, despite a detailed RTA recommendation in the 2020 PIR to prioritise finalising the ESIA, ESMP and GRM, these had not been completed by the time of the 2021 PIR; these are nearing completion at the time of the MTR (early 2022). In an adaptive management measure, the IP issued a letter to the UNDP Resident Representative in 2021 to assure that the project will remain in compliance with UNDP's SES. However, delivery of project outputs and activities continued without being informed by an ESMP and without a GRM in place.

Some participatory monitoring is being used in the project, including:

- In GP NP, the pilot PMO procured infrared cameras to enable field monitoring of giant pandas by the frontline NP management agency and local communities, who will share lessons learned and improve the monitoring.

- In the three NP pilots, the social and environmental safeguards specialists interviewed local communities to develop social and environmental management plans, and will use participatory interviews to monitor the implementation status of the plans.

Development objectives are built into M&E systems. In addition to gender-disaggregated data being kept of participation in project activities, an annual report is prepared on gender mainstreaming and progress in implementing the gender mainstreaming plan from the project document. Data is also collected and reported on participation of ethnic minorities in the project.

Prior to commencement of the project (October 2016), UNDP commissioned a micro assessment from an independent company to assess the financial and operations management policies, procedures, systems and internal controls of the IP (FECO). This was undertaken as part of the requirements of the UN's Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) Framework, which is aimed at providing an overall assessment of the IP's capacity and internal control. The micro assessment concluded that the overall risk rating for the IP was low. This micro assessment was recently repeated (September 2021) to update the status of the IP. The overall rating was again low because, as a public institution, the IP strictly follows internal control procedures and government policies; two specific recommendations were also included, relating to improving insurance coverage for fixed assets and establishing a tracking mechanism for tracking past performance of suppliers.

In accordance with the M&E plan, an independent auditing company was engaged to complete a spot check on programme disbursements relating to the project by the IP (FECO) as at 30 September 2020; this spot check was viewed by the MTR team. The spot check found no changes or inconsistencies for the IP's financial management and management internal controls. The spot check found one discrepancy in which an invoice for contractual services was not attached to the relevant voucher number; the spot check authors recommended that the person in charge should make sure that relevant support, such as invoice,

contract and other supporting documentation, are properly attached to vouchers. No other issues were identified.

Also in accordance with the M&E plan, an audit was conducted in late 2021 for the year ended 31 December 2020. The report found that the statement of expenses presents fairly the incurred expenses and is: (i) in conformity with approved project budgets; (ii) for the approved purposes of the projects; (iii) in compliance with the relevant UNDP regulations and rules, policies and procedures; and (iv) supported by properly approved vouchers and other supporting documents. The audit did not highlight any issues for consideration during the remaining implementation.

The MTR team viewed two back-to-office reports from site visits for project implementation, monitoring and assurance activities. One of these related to the challenges associated with the XJ NP not being established and involved various parties including UNDP, the CTA and local government staff; the other related to the ESIA process for TRS NP. Opportunities for site visits were limited due to COVID-19.

A Self Evaluation Report was prepared at the time of the MTR; this report was comprehensive and of high quality and greatly assisted the MTR team.

4.3.6   Stakeholder engagement

The project has developed and leveraged appropriate partnerships with stakeholders. All relevant agencies are aware of and involved in the project.

Local and national government stakeholders strongly support the project because it is making targeted and valued contributions to a high priority reform area that is very complex. Local and national government stakeholders are actively involved in decision-making and strategic discussions at national and local levels, which is ensuring that the project remains focused on assisting with PA reform according to current priorities.

Public awareness makes a limited contribution to the progress towards most of the project's results, because much of the project is focused on legislative reform, PA system improvements, and capacity building. Nevertheless, the project is undertaking some public awareness activities, including posters and a video, the knowledge platform (which is intended to have public access), the WeChat public account, and a presence at the CBD COP 15 in Kunming. The MTR team considers stakeholder awareness to be appropriate for the project's activities.

4.3.7   Reporting

The format of project reporting has changed during implementation of the project. For the first year in 2019, one report was prepared; this was titled the Annual Progress Report (APR) and covered the period March–December 2019 (dated 22 January 2020). In 2020, the project undertook quarterly reporting (QPRs) for quarters 1, 2 and 3 and prepared an annual report using a new template titled Project Progress Report (PPR). After 2020, to ease the reporting burden, the project prepares half-year reports using this PPR template; this includes a PPR in each June for the preceding January–June (6-month) period and a PPR in each December for the preceding January–December (12-month) period. The MTR team received two 12-month PPRs, for the periods January–December 2020 (dated 31 December 2020) and January–November 2021 (dated 30 November 2021), and a 6-month PPR for the period January–June 2021 (dated 30 June 2021). These reports provide detailed reporting focused on the project's outputs under each component/outcome, risk management, monitoring and oversight activities, gender mainstreaming, partnerships, and communication activities and media exposure. The following table summarises the reporting to date.

Year	Quarterly reports (QPRs)	Annual Progress Report (APR)	Project Progress Reports (PPR) – 6-monthly	Project Progress Reports (PPR) – 12-monthly
2019	-	Yes	-	-
2020	Yes (3)	-	-	Yes
2021	-	-	Yes (1)	Yes

Annual PIRs are also prepared to meet GEF reporting requirements, covering each 12-month July–June period.

There has been limited adaptive management formally documented during the project's implementation, therefore no formal reporting to the PSC on adaptive management. Nevertheless, the PSC is actively engaged in discussions around the project's strategic direction and has a good awareness of challenges and changes. A flexible approach to implementation has been used to ensure that the project responds to current realities rather than being locked into approaches that were established during the project development phase; this is essential in areas such as PA and legislative reform that change very rapidly in China.

Most recommendations from PIRs have been followed through, although completion of recommendations relating to social and environmental risk planning was a shortcoming, as described elsewhere (Sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.5). There have been no poorly-performing PIRs to address.

Two-year work plans have been shared at PSC meetings, although PIRs are not included in the minutes of the three PSC meetings. The MTR team understands that this was due to timing issues, with the PIRs not being finalised in time for the PSC meetings, but that most PSC members were consulted during PIR preparation. Because the PIR is the key project reporting and oversight mechanism and the project document states that 'the PIR … will be shared with the PSC' (paragraph 227), the MTR team suggests that the PSC meetings are scheduled to enable the PIR to be considered by the PSC.

Documenting and sharing lessons learned is a key aspect of this project and the C-PAR program, although no lessons learned from adaptive management have been documented, as formal adaptive management has been limited.

4.3.8   Communications

Most internal project communication is regular and effective. WeChat (a social media and messaging application that is widely used in China) is the primary communication tool. WeChat groups are used for different project specialist areas and pilots, and WeChat is also used for communication between C-PAR projects. As described in Section 4.3.2, communication between UNDP CO and the PMO is regular and effective and the CO is responsive in providing support and oversight activities.

There are some shortcomings in communication between experts/specialists involved in components of the project. The MTR team found that interactions between the project's national-level experts and planning and the local-level outputs are sometimes limited (e.g. in the areas of gender mainstreaming, capacity development, concessions, and KBAs). Consequently, work at a national level was not always cognisant of that at local levels, and vice versa. This is partly due to COVID-19 restricting the level of interaction. The result is that the project is not maximising the contributions by all specialists, that the local work is not always guided by the national directions, and that knowledge sharing is incomplete. See Recommendation 12 for the recommended approach to addressing this shortcoming.

WeChat is also the primary means of external communication, especially via a shared C-PAR 'public account', which provides a comparable service to a website and reaches a very large audience in China.

Each C-PAR project shares information and updates on this public account, providing good outreach and public awareness campaigns. Individuals involved in the project have strong networks (e.g. CTA, project experts/specialists), therefore there is also extensive informal external communication.

Communication between the C-PAR program projects also occurs via WeChat and via regular media such as email and telephone. In addition, when the biodiversity knowledge platform is completed (see Indicator 11a under Section 4.2.1), this will improve knowledge sharing. Joint workshops, seminars and training are also held regularly involving the C-PAR child projects, with subjects including ESIA and ESMP development, HWC, and carbon neutrality; these have been mostly online. Some other activities have been postponed due to COVID-19, such as the second National Park Forum and the Qinghai Tibet Plateau biodiversity seminar.

4.3.9   Gender mainstreaming

The project is implementing the gender action plan that was developed during the PPG phase (Annex I of the project document). A national specialist has been engaged and a gender focal point has been appointed for each of the PMO and the three pilot PMOs.

The national specialist has provided training to many in accordance with needs identified by the PMO and pilots, and prepares annual reports on the project's gender mainstreaming activities.

The project has not met its midterm targets for participation of women (Indicators 1 and 12a) and will require focused effort to meet the EOP targets. It is recommended (Recommendation 14) that an annual action plan be developed that assesses each project output/activity and each training and development activity and identifies opportunities to maximise gender mainstreaming and the involvement of women and girls. Such annual gender plans are developed in the C-PAR 2 and 3 projects and are effective at proactively enhancing gender mainstreaming outcomes and female participation.

It is also recommended (Recommendation 14) that the gender action plan (Annex I of the project document) be updated after the completion of the ESIA, in line with the risk mitigation measure described in the project document (Table 16, SESP Risk 6 in the project document).

4.4   Sustainability

Rating: Overall sustainability of the project is rated as **Likely.**

There is very high political and government support for the results of this project to continue. Associated with this, there has been a substantial increase in national financing available for PAs in China. The project's flexible approach is ensuring that it continues to contribute meaningfully to PA reform even as priorities and circumstances change. It will be important to discuss with relevant government partners the long-term sustainability and, where possible, upscaling of pilots. There are also some risks to the continuation of involvement of NP communities in alternative livelihood, HWC and concessions activities. The MTR team recommends that, to harness the potential and proactively plan for sustainability, a sustainability plan be developed for the project.

4.4.1   Financial risks to sustainability

Financing available for PA management in China has increased substantially from the project's baseline data, collected in 2016. This is very likely to continue beyond the project and will ensure that PA reform and PA system improvement will continue.

The clever design and implementation of the project mean that the GEF funds have been used to work with existing processes to optimise PA reform outcomes. At approximately 0.1% of the 2016 baseline PA financing available nationally ($4,528 million), the GEF funding ($6,222,018) is a very well-targeted

contribution to PA reform in China and the results from that investment are highly likely to continue beyond the project.

It is not clear whether funding and support will continue for the work with communities on alternative livelihoods and HWC.

4.4.2   Socio-economic risks to sustainability

Political risks are very low, because the project is a high-priority project and PA reform is supported at the highest political levels in China.

In the pilot sites there is some social risk that the good relationships with villagers may not continue after the project, and therefore that the improved balance between development and conservation may not be as strong. This is especially so given that the pilots of human-wildlife conflict, alternative livelihoods and concessions have not yet been used to formulate effective pathways to strengthen the balance between development and conservation.

Lessons learned are being documented by the project, as reported under Indicator 11. The six projects under the C-PAR family interact and share knowledge on relevant matters (protected area reform, ecological connectivity, alternative livelihoods, etc). The C-PAR projects should consider opportunities for knowledge sharing to continue after completion of the project.

Successful aspects of the project are being transferred to different parties, using the methods described in Section 4.3.8 'Communications'.

Stakeholder awareness is generally high, due to the communication methods described. Public awareness makes a limited contribution to the progress towards most of the project's results (see also 4.3.6 'Stakeholder engagement').

4.4.3   Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability

Legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes do not pose significant risks that may jeopardise project benefits: the project is working to strengthen these as a fundamental part of PA reform.

The project is putting in place frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes that will continue beyond the project. Knowledge transfer to the regions is important for mainstreaming findings and approaches and for ensuring results will continue. For example, the TRS NP has responded positively to the HWC and concessions work and would like to make it work locally.

The project is also managing institutional framework and governance risks by responding flexibly to changing priorities and circumstances to ensure that the project continues to be relevant in the new realities.

Development of institutional and individual capacity has been a strength of this project, as indicated by the results from Indicators 1, 8 and 9.

The project has developed champions through the recruitment of high-quality project staff and specialists, an engaged PSC, and extensive constructive engagement of stakeholders from government, NGOs/CSOs, companies and local communities.

4.4.4   Environmental risks to sustainability

No additional environmental risks were identified.

4.5   Conclusions and Recommendations

4.5.1   Conclusions

4.5.1.1   Strengths

Strong and effective PMO and pilot PMOs

The PMO is very effective and efficient, providing high-quality project management while also focusing on the project's strategic direction and facilitating good communication between major stakeholders. The pilot PMOs are also effective and efficient and the relationships between the PMO and pilot PMOs are strong, with regular communication ensuring that the project has a very cohesive delivery.

Very positive involvement of pilot NP agencies

The provincial and county PA management agencies associated with the pilot NPs are all enthusiastic about participation in the project and have a good understanding of the overall project and the potential benefits that the project can bring, including balancing development and alternative livelihoods with biodiversity conservation.

Many eminent experts guiding project and transferring knowledge

The project has successfully built a high-quality team of experts to provide strategic guidance and interpreting policies (e.g. CTA, project experts/specialists). These individuals have strong networks, therefore the project is well connected with the new field of NP planning and reform in China, which assists with ensuring that the work of the GEF project is targeted and remains relevant to changing realities.

Activities clearly contribute to the project's results framework

The project's activities are well planned and implemented and it is clear how most of these are contributing to the indicators and targets in the project's result framework. This is assisted by a clear and logical project design in the project document, which the PMO and IP are following closely.

Engaged and active Project Steering Committee

The PSC is constructive and effective, and PSC members interviewed were enthusiastic and knowledgeable; the PSC has met more than once per year, which means that there has been opportunity for strategic engagement and contribution to the project's direction. This is highly valuable in a project of such complexity and significance.

UNDP providing strong oversight and strategic support

UNDP is a constructive, results-focused Partner Agency in this project, proactively engaging with the IP, PMO and pilot PMOs to assist in responding to implementation challenges and to seek solutions.

4.5.1.2   Weaknesses

Other conclusions and areas for improvement are presented in the following section, with associated recommendations for the project to improve delivery and improve the likelihood of achieving sustainable results.

4.5.2   Recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility
(Category 1)	**Category 1: Environmental and social risk management** The SESP for this project found it to be a High-risk project that triggered multiple SES standards. The ESIA, ESMP and Grievance Redress Mechanism have been delayed and are not yet finalised, therefore the associated risk oversight and delivery of some outputs and activities did not follow the requirements set out in the signed project document or the ESMF for the four C-PAR projects. It is important that the ESIA and ESMP are finalised urgently, that all activities (including those completed, in progress and planned) are reviewed when the ESMP is finalised and required adjustments made, and that regional UNDP staff are involved in this. It was clear to the MTR team that the process was complex and difficult for the CO and the project, therefore opportunities should be sought to provide improved support and capacity building on safeguards implementation. Also, a review of the processes followed by the project since CEO endorsement, including the reasons for and implications of delays, would enable lessons to be learned, greater clarity to be established and improved safeguards outcomes being delivered in future projects. The MTR team is aware that there have also been delays in development of the required ESIAs and ESMPs for the C-PAR 2 and C-PAR 3 projects, so a programmatic-level review would maximise the identification of systemic issues, opportunities and lessons learned.	
1	**Finalise the Environmental and Social Risk Assessment (ESIA), Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) and Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) as a matter of urgency, while ensuring that SES requirements for disclosure are adhered to**	PMO, FECO, UNDP CO
2	**When the ESMP is finalised, review all project outputs and activities (including those completed, underway and future) against the ESMP to ensure risks are appropriately managed, make any necessary changes to the design of activities and identify any required remedial actions, and have the findings endorsed by the PSC and RTA**	PMO, FECO, UNDP CO, UNDP Regional Office including safeguards specialists
3	**Provide enhanced technical oversight and support, including targeted capacity building, to CO and other stakeholders for the complex processes involved in managing high-risk safeguards projects**	UNDP Regional Office including safeguards specialists
4	**Review the processes followed in environmental and social risk management in this project since CEO endorsement, identify lessons learned and opportunities to improve safeguards outcomes in future projects**	UNDP Regional Office including safeguards specialists, UNDP CO, FECO
5	**Coordinate implementation of the recommendations on environmental and social risk management at a C-PAR programmatic level to maximise identification of systemic issues, opportunities for improvement and lessons learned**	C-PAR 1 PMO, other C-PAR PMOs, UNDP CO

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility
\multicolumn{3}{l}{**Category 2: Project reporting and oversight**}		
\multicolumn{3}{l}{The results framework has not been changed during the project. A baseline (for Indicator 1) was scheduled to be confirmed at project inception and an EOP target (for Indicator 12d) was scheduled to be set after the baseline KAP survey was conducted, but these have not occurred. It is recommended that a revised results framework be developed for adoption by the RTA and PSC. As part of this, the project should consider and document how all EOP targets will be measured and reported, and some changes to EOP targets should be considered. The MTR team has proposed some suggested amendments to the results framework (Annex 8).}		
6	Prepare a revised results framework for approval by the PSC and RTA with all baselines and targets reviewed and confirmed and with clarity around how each will be measured and reported; Annex 8 suggests some amendments to the results framework	PMO, UNDP CO, PSC
7	Establish end-of-project targets for the KAP survey under Indicator 12d and have these approved by the PSC and RTA	PMO
8	Revise the wording of the EOP target for Indicator 3 to be more specific and measurable and to be within the control of the project to achieve	PMO, specialists
\multicolumn{3}{l}{**Category 3: Proposed Xianju NP pilot**}		
\multicolumn{3}{l}{The proposed Xianju NP will not be established during the period of the project, which means that it will not contribute to achievement of the objective Indicator 2 (the expansion of China's terrestrial PA system). The total increase for this indicator has already been exceeded through the establishment of the TRS and GP NPs. Xianju will not be established because it was determined to not be a priority pilot NP for China and was not included in the 14th FYP for Zhejiang Province. This outcome was largely beyond the control of the project, although the project has some influence over the areas that are protected for NPs. Therefore, it is recommended that the EOP target for this indicator be amended to shift the primary focus to the total area of expansion, without being specific about the contributions of the pilot NPs. It is important that the project still delivers comparable biodiversity conservation outcomes through this indicator, therefore it is recommended that an analysis be conducted of the biodiversity conservation benefits that have been delivered by the large areas of TRS and GP NPs. More detailed suggestions are in Appendix 8. Also, it is recommended that protection of Xianju as a PA other than an NP be pursued.}		
9	Revise the EOP target for Indicator 2 to shift the primary focus to the total area of expansion, without being specific about the contributions of the pilot NPs, and support this proposed change with an analysis of the biodiversity conservation benefits (including KBA coverage) that have been delivered by the establishment of the large areas of TRS and GP NPs	PMO, RTA
10	Reorient the strategy for Xianju to pursue its declaration as a protected area in a category other than a NP, to achieve enhanced biodiversity protection and further contribute to PA system reforms	Pilot PMO, PMO, UNDP CO, PSC, RTA

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility
Category 4: C-PAR program reporting		
Annual reporting on progress of the C-PAR program is undertaken as part of this project. This does not consistently report against the indicators in the C-PAR program results framework and, in its current form, may not meet the requirements of the EOP target to 'indicate clear progress towards outcomes and achievements <u>beyond individual child projects</u>'.		
11	**Prepare an end-of-project CPAR program report (at terminal evaluation) that assesses: 1. progress against program indicators and 2. progress towards outcomes and achievements beyond individual child projects**	PMO
Category 5: Internal communication and planning		
Interactions between the project's national-level experts and planning and the local-level outputs are sometimes limited (e.g. in the areas of gender mainstreaming, capacity development, concessions, and KBAs). Consequently, work at a national level was not always cognisant of that at local levels, and vice versa; this means that the project is not maximising the contributions by all specialists, that the local work is not always guided by the national directions, and that knowledge sharing is incomplete.		
The PSC is constructive and effective, and PSC members interviewed were enthusiastic and knowledgeable; the PSC has met more than once per year, which means that there has been opportunity for strategic engagement and contribution to the project's direction. This is highly valuable in a project of such complexity and significance.		
The project has not met its midterm targets for participation of women (Indicators 1 and 12a) and will require focused effort to meet the EOP targets. To assist with this, it is recommended that annual gender action plans are developed to maximise gender mainstreaming and the involvement of women and girls and that the project's gender action plan is updated after the completion of the ESIA.		
12	**Improve regular interaction between those involved in related project work at national and local levels to provide better strategic guidance, share knowledge and facilitate input to each other's work**	PMO, pilot PMOs
13	**Use the expertise and enthusiasm of the PSC by continuing to hold more than one PSC meeting per year and involving them in strategic discussions about the complex matters that the project is addressing**	PMO, PSC
14	**Drive a new focus on achieving targets for female participation and on optimising gender mainstreaming outcomes, by 1. developing annual gender action plans and 2. updating the gender action plan that was developed during project preparation (Annex I of the project document) after the completion of the ESIA, in line with the SESP risk mitigation measure described in the project document**	Gender specialist, gender focal points, PMO, pilot PMOs

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility
Category 6: Technical components		
The proposed work on corridor analysis and planning will be high-level national modelling that will not provide a practical policy or guideline for corridor establishment and management.		
Work towards a climate-responsive PA planning and monitoring guideline is being undertaken at a national level, but there is limited consideration of climate change and biodiversity as part of the NP pilots. In accordance with Activity 1.2.4 of the project document, guidance should also be provided at the PA level.		
15	**Develop a corridor policy and guideline that can be used by projects for ecological-based planning, establishment and management of corridors**	PMO, specialists
16	**Undertake trial implementation of the climate-responsive PA planning and monitoring guideline at the three NP pilots, to inform biodiversity management in the pilots and to validate and strengthen the national guideline and improve the quality of the scientific assessments**	PMO, specialists
Category 7: Sustainability		
The project is very well positioned for many results to continue beyond the GEF funding period, especially due to the strong involvement of government partners and the project's meaningful contribution to PA reform. It will be important to discuss with relevant government partners the long-term sustainability and, where possible, upscaling of pilots. There are also some risks to the continuation of involvement of NP communities in alternative livelihood, HWC and concessions activities. A sustainability plan would enable the project to proactively plan for these matters.		
17	**Develop a sustainability plan during the final year of the project to identify how the project's results can be continued beyond the GEF funding and upscaled where possible**	PMO, FECO

Annexes

Annex 1.   MTR mission itinerary and people interviewed

Annex 2.   List of documents reviewed

Annex 3.   MTR evaluation matrix

Annex 4.   Interview guide used for data collection

Annex 5.   Progress against outputs

Annex 6.   Progress towards results matrix

Annex 7.   Ratings scales

Annex 8.   Suggested amendments to results framework

Annex 9.   Contribution of the C-PAR 1 Project to the C-PAR Program-level results

Annex 10.   Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form

Annex 11.   MTR Terms of Reference (excluding ToR annexes)

Annex 12.   Signed MTR final report clearance form

Annexed in a separate file: Audit trail from received comments on draft MTR report

Annexed in a separate file: Relevant midterm tracking tools

Annex 1: MTR mission itinerary and people interviewed

Schedule for the Middle-Term Review of
UNDP-GEF China's Protected Area Reform for Conserving Globally Significant Biodiversity
UNDP-GEF 中国国家公园体制机制创新项目中期评估日程

DATE		Time	ACTIVITY	PARTICIPANTS	VENUE	LOGISTICS
Day1 10 Jan. Monday	AM	09:00-12:00	No arrangement		Beijing 北京	Online 线上访谈
	PM	14:00-15:00	Meeting with UNDP 访谈联合国开发计划署	Mr. Ma Chaode, Assistant Resident Representative of UNDP 马超德, 助理驻华代表		
		15:00-15:20	No arrangement			
		15:20-17:20	No arrangement			
DAY2 11 Jan. Tuesday	AM	09:00-12:00	No arrangement			
	PM	13:00-14:30	Meeting with PMO within FECO and three pilot implementing offices 访谈国家项目办和三个试点办 Voov Meeting ID: 661-962-829	Ms. Wang Aihua, Ms. Zhang Juan, Ms. Yu Yanbo, Mr. Xu Ji from FECO and three PIOs FECO 项目办人员王爱华、张娟、俞妍博、徐吉以及**三个试点办人员**		
		15:00-16:00	Meeting with National Park Law Specialist 访谈国家公园立法项目专家 Voov Meeting ID: 738-464-438	Madam Lyu Zhongmei, Member of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC, Vice president of China Law Society and President of the Environmental and Resources Law of China Law Society, Mr. Liu Jiaqi (Madam Lyu's assistant), Associate Professor of Liaoning University, Interpreter 吕忠梅主任，全国政协常委会委员、中国法学会副会长、中国法学会环境资源法学研究会会长 刘佳奇副教授，辽宁大学法学院副教授，翻译		
DAY2		16:00-17:00	Meeting with Representative of National Forestry	Madam Sun Hongyan, Deputy Director General of		

11 Jan. Tuesday			Grassland Administration 访谈国家林业和草原局代表，项目指导委员会副主任单位 Voov Meeting ID: 206-776-707	National Park (Natural Protected Area) Development Center, National Forestry Grassland Administration, Interpreter 国家林草局国家公园（自然保护地）发展中心孙鸿雁副主任，翻译		
DAY3 12 Jan. Wednesday	AM	09:00-10:00	Meeting with PSC member from MEE 访谈项目指导委员会成员生态环境部 Voov Meeting ID: 527-664-638	Ms. Zhang Ye, Deputy Director from MEE, interpreter 生态环境部自然生态保护司张晔副处长，翻译	Beijing 北京	Online 线上访谈
		10:00-10:20	Interview Break 访谈休息			
		10:20-11:20	Meeting with Concession of National Parks Study Partners 访谈国家公园特许经营研究合作伙伴 Voov Meeting ID: 974-975-335	Mr. Wan Xusheng from Tianheng NGO, Ms. Zhang Haixia from Zhejiang Gongshang University, interpreter 天恒可持续研究所万旭升老师，浙江工商大学张海霞教授，翻译		
	PM	14:00-15:00	Meeting with Gender mainstreaming specialist 访谈项目性别主流化专家 Voov Meeting ID: 385-106-375	Ms. Zhang Xuemei from China Agricultural University, interpreter 中国农业大学张雪梅，翻译		
		15:00-15:15	Interview Break			
		15:15-16:15	Meeting with National PA gap, connectivity analysis and ecological corridor Study Partner 访谈网络空间格局和廊道设计研究合作伙伴 Voov Meeting ID: 883-301-063	Mr. Xu Ming and Mr. Li Renqiang from IGSNRR, interpreter 中科院地理所徐明研究员、李仁强副研究员，翻译		
		16:15-16:30	Interview Break			
		16:30-17:30	Meeting with Capacity Development Specialist 访谈项目能力发展专家 Voov Meeting ID: 283-718-032	Mr. Yu Xiubo from IGSNRR, interpreter 中科院地理所于秀波研究员，翻译		
DAY4 13 Jan. Thursday	AM	09:00-10:00	Meeting with National Project Director 访谈国家项目主任 Voov Meeting ID: 585-789-740	Mr. Li Yonghong, Deputy Director General of FECO, interpreter 李永红副主任、翻译		
		10:00-10:20	Interview Break 访谈休息			
		10:20-11:20	Meeting with Human-wildlife Conflict Study Partner 访谈项目人兽冲突研究合作伙伴 Voov Meeting ID: 879-194-367	Mr. Wenyali, Ms. Hou Yilei from Beijing Forestry University, interpreter 北京林业大学温亚利教授和侯一蕾博士，翻译		
	PM	13:30-14:30	Meeting with national/local SES specialist 访谈项目社会环境和保障专家 Voov Meeting ID: 473-611-226	Ms. Wu Jian from Renmin University of China, Mr. Exiang, interpreter 中国人民大学吴健教授，俄项，翻译	Beijing 北京	
		14:30-15:00	Interview Break 访谈休息			

	15:00-16:00	Meeting with CTA 访谈项目首席技术顾问 Voov Meeting ID: 946-370-088	Mr. Wang Yi from CASISD, interpreter 中科院科技战略咨询研究员王毅副院长，翻译		
	16:00-16:30	Interview Break 访谈休息			
	16:30-17:30	Meeting with Biodiversity Specialist 访谈项目生物多样性专家 Voov Meeting ID: 400-723-432	Mr. Li Xinhai from IOZ, Chinese Academy of Science 中科院动物所李欣海研究员		
	Meeting with project specialists and partners from three pilots under Outcome 2 (Provincial level NP system strengthening) 与产出 2 下(地方层面国家公园建设)三个试点的项目专家和合作伙伴会谈				

DAY5 14 Jan. Friday	AM	**09:00-9:30** Meeting with TRS NP PSC representative, Vice Director, Mr Sun Lijun 访谈三江源国家公园试点项目指导委员会代表孙立军副局长 **9:30-10:10** Meeting with TRS NP Administration Representatives 访谈三江源国家公园管理局代表 -- --Mr Zhang Dehai, General Engineer and Mr Zhai Jinquan, Division Chief -- --张德海总工程师和翟进全处长 （With presence of pilot office coordinator, Mr Li Dongliang for supporting） **10:10-10:30** Interview Break 访谈休息 **10:30-11:00** Meeting with Yellow River Source financial officer of TRS Pilot Project, Mr Wang Quanbin 访谈试点项目黄河源园区规划部部长，王权宾 **11:00-11:30** Meeting with TRS Pilot Project Law consultant, Ms Zhangli 访谈试点项目法律法规专家，张立老师 Voov Meeting ID: 718-622-696 This meeting covers time from 9:00-11:30 AM, the interviewees will enter the meeting room based on the time slots distributed in turn. **14:30-15:00** Meeting with TRS Pilot Project community consultant, Ms. Yu Xianrong 访谈试点项目社区发展专家，于现荣老师 **15:00-15:30** Meeting with TRS Pilot Project contractor of Yellow River Concession activity, Ms. Wang Lei 访谈试点项目黄河源园区特许经营承包商，王蕾女士 **15:30-15:50** Interview Break 访谈休息 **15:50-16:20** Meeting with TRS Pilot Project community mobilizer 访谈社区动员者 -- --Mr. Dongcai in Zaduo in Mekong Source District -- --澜沧江园区杂多社区动员者东才先生 **16:20-17:00** Meeting with TRS Pilot Project community representatives	The leaders in TRS NP management agency, the related leaders in 3 River Districts, the contracted specialists, local mobilizers and villager representatives 三江源国家公园主管领导、各园区相关领导，局相关科室、合作专家、社区动员者及村民代表	Beijing 北京	Online 线上访谈

		访谈试点项目社区代表 -- --Mr. Naobu Cairang from Hongqi Community in Yangzi River Source -- --Ms Qiuzhong Bamao from Niandu community in Mekong River source -- --长江源区红旗村社区代表闹布才仁先生 -- --澜沧江源区年都村社区代表求忠巴毛女士 Voov Meeting ID: 860-680-862 This meeting covers time from 14:30-17:00 PM, the interviewees will enter the meeting room based on the time slots distributed in turn.			
15-16 Jan Weekend		No arrangement			

| DAY6
17 Jan
Monday | AM | **9: 00-9:30**
Meeting with PSC member, Mr. Gu Xiaodong, Director of habitat division of Sichuan National Giant Panda Administration of Giant Panda National Park
访谈项目指导委员会成员、大熊猫国家公园四川试点项目、大熊猫国家公园四川省管理局栖息地处处长，古晓东先生
9: 30-10:00
Meeting with Policy/Legal Specialist of GP pilot: Mr. Yang Biao Deputy Secretary General of Beijing Entrepreneur Environmental Protection Foundation / Associate Professor of West China Normal University
访谈四川试点政策/法律专家：北京市企业家环保基金会副秘书长/西华师范大学副教授杨彪先生

10:00-10:20 Interview Break 访谈休息

10:20-10:50
Meeting with cooperation partner of Sustainable Alternative Livelihood of GP pilot, Ms. Zhong Jincen, General Manager of Chengdu Tianfu New Area Aisiyi Ecological Protection Center, partner of sustainable alternative livelihood demonstration site in Sichuan pilot demonstration area of Giant Panda National Park.
访谈大熊猫国家公园四川省试点示范区可持续替代生计示范点建设项目合作机构：成都天府新区爱思益生态保护中心总经理，钟金岑女士

（Chaired by Zheng Weichao, Liaison Officer / Senior Engineer of GP IPO）
会议由四川项目办联络员/高级工程师郑维超主持
Voov Meeting ID: 942-826-974
This meeting covers time from 9:00-10:50 AM, the interviewees will enter the meeting room based on the time slots distributed in turn. | --Mr. Gu Xiaodong, Director of habitat division of Sichuan National Giant Panda Administration of Giant Panda National Park
--Mr. Yang Biao, Policy/Legal Specialist of GP pilot
--Ms. Zhong Jincen, cooperation partner of Sustainable Alternative Livelihood
大熊猫国家公园四川省管理局栖息地处处长古晓东，试点政策/法律专家杨彪、可持续替代生计钟金岑女士 | Sichuan Administration of Giant Panda National Park
大熊猫国家公园四川省管理局 | Online
线上访谈 |

| DAY6
17 Jan
Monday | PM | **14:00-14:30**
Meeting with representative of community mobilizer, Mr. Cheng Yong of Heping Village, Yingjing County of GP pilot, staff of Yingjing management and Protection Station of giant panda National Park
访谈四川试点村社区动员者代表：荥经县和平村社区动员者、大熊猫国家公园荥经管护总站工作人员，程勇先生

14:30-15:00
Meeting with representatives of three pilot village of GP pilot, namely Heping Village, Caojia village and Jiguanshan village of Giant Panda National Park.
访谈大熊猫国家公园四川省试点示范区中的 3 个试点村(和平村、曹家村和鸡冠山村)村民代表

（Chaired by Zheng Weichao, Liaison Officer / Senior Engineer of GP IPO）
会议由四川项目办联络员/高级工程师郑维超主持

Voov Meeting ID: 135-485-309
This meeting covers time from 14:00-15:00PM, the interviewees will enter the meeting room based on the time slots distributed in turn.

15:00-
No arrangement | -- Community mobilizer of Heping Village, Mr. Cheng Yong
--Representatives of Heping Village (2 persons), Caojia Village (3 persons) and Jiguanshan Village (2 persons).
--和平村社区动员者程勇
--三个试点村村民代表：和平村（2人）、曹家村（3人）、鸡冠山村（2人） | Sichuan Administration of Giant Panda National Park.
大熊猫国家公园四川省管理局 | Online
线上访谈 |

DAY7 18 Jan Tuesday	AM	**9:00-9:30** Meeting with PSC member，Mr. Zhou Huizhong, member of the PSC (Deputy Head of Xianju County People's Government of Zhejiang Province), 访谈项目指导委员会代表周慧忠先生（浙江省仙居县人民政府副县长） **9:30-10:00** Meeting with KBA specialist of Xianju Pilot, Mr. Wu Jianyong, Senior Researcher, Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences, Ministry of Ecology and Environment. 访谈仙居试点 KBAs 分包合同负责人武建勇研究员（生态与环境部南京环境科学研究所） **10:00-10:20** Interview Break 访谈休息 **10:20-10:50** Meeting with capacity development specialist of Xianju pilot，Mr. Ouyang Feng, Independent Consultant. 访谈仙居试点项目能力建设发展专家欧阳峰先生（独立专家） **10:50-11:20** Meeting with community development specialist, Ms. Hu Difei, Director of Marketing and Communications & Assistant Principal, RDFZ King's College School Hangzhou, and Representatives of Two pilot villages (Danzhu Village and Xiaye Village) 访谈仙居试点社区发展专家胡涤菲（中国人民大学附属中学杭州学校战略营销与传播总监及副校长）以及两个试点村（淡竹村、下叶村）代表 Voov Meeting ID: 274-109-438, this meeting covers time from 9:00-11:20 AM, the interviewees will enter the meeting room based on the time slots distributed in turn.	PSC member, Xianju pilot project office, Xiaye village committee personnel, Danzhu village committee personnel, home stay representatives, Danzhu villagers' representatives PSC 指导委员会成员周慧忠（仙居县人民政府副县长）、仙居试点项目办、下叶村两委人员、淡竹村两委人员、民宿主代表、淡竹村村民代表	Xianju 仙居	Online 线上访谈
DAY8-9 19-20 Jan	**No arrangement**				
Day10 21 Jan Friday	AM	9:00-11:30 Meeting with PMO, three pilot offices and UNDP for conclusion 访谈总结会	PMO, three pilots, UNDP, interpreter	Beijing 北京	Online 线上访谈

Annex 2: List of documents reviewed

'Chinese' indicates that the document was available in Chinese only.

1.   PIF
2.   UNDP Initiation Plan
3.   Project Document
4.   CEO Endorsement Request
5.   UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure
6.   Environmental and Social Management Framework
7.   Draft Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
8.   Draft Environmental and Social Management Plan
9.   Gender Action Plan (Annex I of Project Document)
10. Project Inception Report
11. 2020 and 2021 PIRs
12. Self-Evaluation Report for Midterm Review (December 2021)
13. Quarterly progress reports, project progress reports, and annual project reports
14. Budget reporting
15. Co-financing reports
16. Work plans of the various implementation task teams
17. Micro Assessment Report of Foreign Economic Cooperation Office, Ministry of Environmental Protection ("FECO") Commissioned by UNDP (4 October 2016)
18. Micro Assessment Report of Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center, Ministry of Ecology and Environment (FECO) Commissioned by United Nations Development Programme (18 September 2021)
19. Spot Check Report of Foreign Economic Cooperation Office (December 2020)
20. Audit Report of the Independent Auditors to 'Chinese National Park System Innovation Project Assisted by UNP' – Implementing Partner: Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center (December 2021)
21. Finalised GEF focal area Tracking Tools at CEO endorsement and midterm, including METT and Financial Sustainability Scorecard
22. Completed Capacity Development Scorecards
23. Back to office reports by UNDP and other partners
24. Minutes of the Project Steering Committee meetings
25. Reports prepared by project consultants (Chinese)
26. Relevant national strategic and legal documents
27. Training workshops and disseminated booklets (Chinese)
28. Monitoring reports including CDR, PPR, QPR, QWP and Bi-monthly meetings
29. Project site location maps
30. Research on National Park legislation roadmap and framework (Chinese)
31. Report: Environmental Impact Analysis and Countermeasures of Hydropower and Mining Projects in National Nature Reserves (Chinese)
32. Current situation and analysis report on human and animal conflict in protected areas at home and abroad (Chinese)
33. Typical cases of human and animal conflicts in protected areas at home and abroad (Chinese)
34. Investigation and analysis report on human and animal conflict in protected areas (Chinese)
35. Pilot scheme for human animal conflict in Three River Sources National Park (Chinese)

36. Human animal conflict management policy and guidelines (Chinese)

37. Cases of human animal conflict (Chinese)

38. Implementation Plan of China's Protected Area Network Spatial Pattern Optimization and National Ecological Corridor Planning and Design Project (Chinese)

39. Analysis report on protection gaps of protected areas in China (Chinese)

40. Feasibility report on establishing national KBA Coordination Group (Chinese)

41. Analysis on the protection gaps of key biodiversity areas (KBAs) in China and research suggestions on integrating KBAs into protection planning strategy (Chinese)

42. Implementation plan of pilot application for KBAs (Chinese)

43. KBAs document for pilot application (Chinese)

44. Preparation status and research analysis report of protected area capacity and performance standard manual (Chinese)

45. Current situation and analysis report of concession of protected areas at home and abroad (Chinese)

46. National Park concession guide (Chinese)

47. Evaluation report on concession pilot of Three River Sources National Park (Chinese)

48. Summary report on the implementation experience of concession in Three River Sources National Park (Chinese)

49. Analysis report on capital investment for biodiversity conservation in China

50. China's post-2020 biodiversity conservation fund demand outlook report

51. Work plan of National Park Green Fund (Chinese)

52. Implementation plan for network spatial pattern optimization and ecological corridor planning and design project of Three River Sources Park pilot reserve (Chinese)

53. Investigation report on the implementation of laws and regulations in the pilot project of Three River Sources National Park (Chinese)

54. Evaluation report on management measures for concession of operating projects in Three River Sources National Park (Trial) (Chinese)

55. Research Report on the management of pilot nature reserves in Three River Sources National Park (Chinese)

56. Implementation plan for concession project of Three River Sources National Park and Huanghuayuan Park (Chinese)

57. Investigation report on biodiversity of pilot nature reserve in Three River Sources National Park (Chinese)

58. Research Report on social inclusion / environmental education / gender of Three River Sources National Park pilot project (Chinese)

59. Research Report on reading books of natural environment education in Three River Sources National Park (Chinese)

60. Regulations of Sichuan Province on the administration of Giant Panda National Parks (first draft) (Chinese)

61. Comprehensive conservation plan of giant panda National Park (Sichuan) (Chinese)

62. Framework for inter provincial cooperative operation of Giant Panda National Park (Chinese)

63. Environmental project assessment report of Giant Panda National Park (Chinese)

64. Environmental education report of Giant Panda National Park (Chinese)

65. Research Report on livelihood project of Giant Panda National Park (Chinese)

66. Proposal for on-site intervention in social inclusion, gender and environmental education in Sichuan Province of Giant Panda National Park (Chinese)

67. On site intervention plan for biodiversity and community collaborative management in Sichuan Province of Giant Panda National Park (Chinese)

68. Technical scheme for KBAs identification and connectivity research in Xianju National Park (Chinese)

69. Technical report on KBAs identification and connectivity research in Xianju National Park (Chinese)

70. 2020 and 2021 annual reports on gender mainstreaming of GEF National Park Project (Chinese)

71. Follow up evaluation form for sustainability of pilot protected area management of GEF National Park project in the medium term (Chinese)

72. Knowledge-Attitude-Practice (KAP) Survey Research Reports – Baseline (December 2020) and Midterm (February 2022)

Annex 3: MTR evaluation matrix

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
Project Design	Project design effective at achieving desired results	Project document, PIF, CEO endorsement request, PIR, GEF strategies, Chinese national strategies and plans	Desk review, interviews
Results Framework	Indicators and targets meet SMART criteria	Project document, amended results framework, PIR, tracking tools	Desk review, interviews
Progress Towards Results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?			
Progress Towards Outcomes	Indicators in results framework	PIR, quarterly reports, results framework, project document, stakeholder interviews, midterm tracking tools	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Remaining Barriers to Achieving Project Objective	Status of barriers at midterm	PIR, quarterly reports, project document, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project's implementation?			
Management Arrangements	Quality of support to and execution of the project	PIR, quarterly reports, PB minutes, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, interviews
Work planning	Work planning is results-based and project uses results framework as a management tool	PIR, quarterly reports, annual and multi-year work plans, PB minutes, results framework, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, interviews
Finance and co-finance	Effectiveness of financial management and level of co-financing relative to that originally committed	Budget and expenditure reports, audit reports, quarterly reports, PB minutes, co-financing reports, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, interviews
Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems	Quality and implementation of M&E plan	PIR, quarterly reports, project document, results framework, Tracking Tools, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, interviews
Stakeholder engagement	Adequacy of stakeholder engagement throughout project cycle	Project document, PIR, quarterly reports, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Reporting	Reporting meets requirements and is used effectively to communicate and share within project	PIR, quarterly reports, back to office reports, PB minutes, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, interviews

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Communications	Internal and external communication is regular, effective and appropriate	PIR, quarterly reports, back to office reports, PB minutes, social media posts, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
Financial risks to sustainability	Likelihood and opportunities for financial sustainability beyond project	Quarterly reports, PIR, PB minutes, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Socio-economic risks to sustainability	Level of stakeholder ownership of project and level of knowledge transfer	PIR, quarterly reports, back to office reports, PB minutes, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability	Risks identified and mitigation measures in place	PIR, quarterly reports, back to office reports, PB minutes, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Environmental risks to sustainability	Risks identified and mitigation measures in place	PIR, quarterly reports, back to office reports, PB minutes, project document, stakeholder interviews	Desk review, interviews, field visits

Annex 4: Interview guide used for data collection

The MTR team used the following questions to guide the semi-structured interviews with stakeholders. Questionnaires were not used.

Q	Objective / Outcome	Output / Indicator	Question / further information needed	Explanation (SER = Self Evaluation Report)
1	Objective	Indicator 1	Discuss % women participation	% women participation in SER is below targets
2	Objective	Indicator 2	Clarify how the expansions are reported	SER reports numbers that are lower than the total areas of TRS and GP NPs
3	Objective	Indicator 2	Discuss Xianju NP - will it be established during project?	SER says it will not be established
4	Outcome 1	Indicator 3	Discuss the two studies mentioned, including: - do they cover 'increased protection of globally significant biodiversity and provisions for genuine participation by local communities, including ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups, promoting sustainable access and public benefit and minimising economic displacement and resettlement'? - will the NP legal framework be mainstreamed into the 14th FYP?	This is the wording of the midterm and EOP targets in the results framework
5	Outcome 1	Indicator 3	Discuss the differences and relationship between 'PA law' and 'NP law'	
6	Outcome 1	Indicator 4	Corridors - is an 'ecological corridor policy and guidelines' being developed that can be use by other projects/programmes (e.g. other CPAR projects)	This is the wording in the results framework
7	Outcome 1	Indicator 5	Discuss the 'Collaborative governance coordination mechanisms were piloted in NP pilots'. What was the role of the GEF project?	Reported in PIR and SER
8	Outcome 1	Indicator 6	Discuss results of the PA financing, including: - is the data consistent with the baseline?	There is a very large increase
9	Outcome 2	Indicator 7	What are the 'one regulation and 13 NP measures' for TRS NP?	Mentioned in 2021 PIR and SER
10	Outcome 2	Indicator 7	How will the project meet the EOP target of 'Five general or specific legislations of NP pilot sites enacted and adopted more broadly through replication across NP pilots'?	
13	Outcome 3	Indicator 10a	Can we see ToR, meeting minutes etc as evidence?	

Q	Objective / Outcome	Output / Indicator	Question / further information needed	Explanation (SER = Self Evaluation Report)
	Outcome 3	Indicator 10a	Are the 2019 and 2020 Annual Reports the same as the CPAR 1 or are there separate CPAR programmatic annual reports?	Mentioned in the SER
	Outcome 3	Indicator 11a	Can we see the knowledge management platform?	
	Outcome 3	Indicator 11b	Have the five lessons learned been 'uploaded onto knowledge sharing platform'	SER mentions 5 lessons learned but does not say whether uploaded
	Outcome 3	Indicator 12a	Discuss implementation of gender mainstreaming plan - is an annual plan developed?	CPAR 2 and 3 prepared annual action plans
	Outcome 3	Indicator 12b	Discuss ESIA and ESMP (see also under 'Social and environmental risks' below)	
	Outcome 3	Indicator 12b	Can we see the HWC materials mentioned?	'policy and guideline' and 'pilot scheme' mentioned in PIR and SER
	Outcome 3	Indicator 12c	Discuss the community engagement work. Can we see the work mentioned?	PIR and SER mention: - Community co-management mechanism established in NP pilots to enhance PA management and improve local livelihoods. - Agreement signed on community co-management in TRS and GP NP system pilots. - Guidelines for tourism partnerships and concessions developed in TRS NP system pilots and the effect was assessed.
	Outcome 3	Indicator 12d	Are project interventions in target communities being informed by the baseline KAP survey?	SER says KAP survey completed but not clear how it is being used
	Outcome 3	Indicator 12d	Will an EOP KAP target be set?	EOP target in results framework: 'Improvement in knowledge, practices and attitudes (target to be set after baseline KAP survey)'
	Outcome 3	Indicator 12e	Discuss involvement of CSOs, including the intent of Indicator 12e and how the EOP target will be met	EOP target in results framework: 'Three partnerships with CSOs strengthened or established'
15	Management arrangements		How has support from the UNDP been?	Focus on results? Adequacy of technical support? Responsive to implementation problems? Quality of risk management?
16	Sustainability		Discuss approach and challenges to maintaining project results after GEF funding	

Q	Objective / Outcome	Output / Indicator	Question / further information needed	Explanation (SER = Self Evaluation Report)
17	Social and environmental risks		Discuss: - Status of ESIA/ESMP - adopted or in development? - Reasons for delays with ESIA and ESMP - Is a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) included? - Discuss progress on outputs before ESMP finalised	Note that the project document listed several outputs and activities that would not commence until the ESMP was finalised
18	Gender		Summarise and discuss gender mainstreaming plan and associated activities	
19	COVID-19		Discuss: - Impacts on planned activities - Adaptive management response (e.g. online workshops) - Were some activities cancelled?	
20	GEF funding		Discuss: - The impact of GEF funding - Whether approaches to reforming, legislating, designing and planning the protected area system is helped by the GEF funding	
21	Stakeholder engagement		Discuss involvement of local and other stakeholders and their interest in and ownership of the project's aims and priorities. Do local stakeholders support the project and have an active role in decision-making?	

Annex 5: Progress against outputs

The following brief assessment of progress against project outputs (and associated activities) has been prepared by the MTR team, using a variety of information sources, particularly the Self Evaluation Report, quarterly reports, project progress reports and interviews. It is not intended as a comprehensive progress report or critical assessment of progress.

Output	Progress as assessed by MTR team
Outcome 1: National Park system established with effective legal, governance and institutional framework	
1.1: Strengthened legal and governance framework for the national park system, with NP system guideline and regulations, mainstreamed into land-use planning and ecological redlining	Two studies conducted and reports prepared, as reported under Indicator 3. 'Study on Roadmap and Framework of National Park Law of China': Recommendations provided to NFGA and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). High-level seminar on 20 June 2021 with 30 specialists from 15 organisations to discuss how to push NP legislation. 'Study on Hydroelectric and Mining Projects in the Protected Areas (PA)': provided MEE with governance countermeasure on hydroelectric and mining projects in national PAs by putting forward a quantitate Environmental Impact Assessment Index System.
1.2: National gap and connectivity analysis and advanced policies and guidelines developed for effective expansion and management of the NP system	National-level HWC management policy, guidelines and recommendations submitted to MEE and NFGA; being piloted in TRS NP (see Indicator 4). Report 'Study on PA Network Layout and Ecological Corridors under the Climate Change' conducted analysis of species and ecosystem gaps in PA network, calculated the PA network contribution to the carbon sink, and analysed impact on PA planning and land use policy in China. National analysis of the role of KBAs in conserving globally significant biodiversity in the PA system; pilot study in proposed Xianju NP.
1.3: Institutional enabling environment strengthened through introduction of PA competency-based standards and delivery of training to key central level change agents	Two capacity development plans to strengthen the institutional enabling environment were developed after detailed investigations. International training plan also developed, with the aim to enhance PA institutional capacity to ensure effective PA system management and fulfil PAs' primary functions of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management. 'Competency-based Standards for PA Professional Development' are in development. The study 'Knowledge Transfer and Online Training' is underway. Some capacity development training delivered.
1.4: Sustainability of PA financing strengthened through policy and demonstrations of diversification of funding sources, improved efficiency in access and utilisation of available funds, broadened participation through concession arrangements and value-based eco-compensation appropriations	Draft National Park Concession Guidelines drafted after extensive investigations and submitted to NFGA and well received; piloted in TRS NP. 'Recommended measures for implementing the Concessions system of National Parks to guard against overuse of protected nature areas" developed by PM and experts and adopted by the Office of the Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission of China in November 2021. NP Green Fund and Social Donation System Study underway. Study to commence in 2022: Strengthening eco-compensation schemes associated with establishment of the NP system and improving the efficiency of utilisation of funds for PA management by consolidating NP financing information into a systematic annual report.
Outcome 2: National Park system strengthened through pilot development	
2.1: Dynamic conservation planning, NP regulations, and collaborative governance arrangements for NP system pilot implementation	See reporting under Indicators 5 and 7.

Output	Progress as assessed by MTR team
2.2: Institutional capacities of NP pilot management agencies enhanced through implementation of PA competency standards, introduction of international best practices, implementation of technical guidelines and strengthened partnerships	Institutional capacities and management effectiveness of the three pilot NP management agencies were enhanced and midterm targets were met (see Indicators 8 and 9). Capacity development plan developed for each pilot and training delivered on project management and technical matters.
2.3: Community benefits strengthened through demonstration of collaborative management arrangements, including implementation of human-wildlife conflict management plans, tourism partnerships and concessions, and environmental education programs	Collaborative community co-management arrangements and income improvement: TRS: training in nature education, craft and 'ecological experience' as a concession (a form of ecotourism); the experiences with the concession were shared with other NP pilots. GP NP: training in nature education and sustainable livelihoods, including microfinance funds, technical guidance over planting, and market support to help villagers sell more local products. XJ NP: training in nature education, gender mainstreaming and environmental safeguards.
Outcome 3: Sustainability of project and program results enhanced through effective project management, program coordination, monitoring & evaluation, knowledge management and social inclusion	
3.1: Effective project management and program coordination supported through proactive steering committee functions, an aggregated reporting mechanism and inclusive monitoring & evaluation	See reporting under Indicator 10. Three PSC meetings and two C-PAR Program SC meetings held. Some resources shared between C-PAR projects for efficiency and consistency, including joint recruitment of international specialists. Aggregated C-PAR program reporting in place with two annual reports prepared.
3.2: C-PAR knowledge management strategy developed and implemented, supporting raised awareness of decision makers and the public on the values of the national park system	See reporting under Indicator 11 and 12. C-PAR knowledge management strategy developed and implemented, KAP survey undertaken.
3.3: Dynamic biodiversity knowledge platform operationalised, providing a unified system for knowledge sharing, uptake of best practices and broader participation	See reporting under Indicator 11. Tender process for knowledge platform underway after extensive coordination and negotiation with key stakeholders, including MEE, NFGA, FECO and Chinese Academy of Science. Communication products and processes include: logo for the program designed and used widely; WeChat public account for the C-PAR Program running well with 45,594 reading and published 544 notices about procurement and implementation; posters; and videos. Outcomes of the C-PAR child projects were shared globally at a high-level eco-civilization forum at CBD COP 15.
3.4: Environmental and social management plan and gender mainstreaming plan implemented with inclusive participation of local communities, including women and ethnic minorities	See Sections 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.5, 4.3.7, 4.3.9 and associated Recommendations for reporting and findings on activities under Output 3.4. The ESIA and ESMP have not been finalised for the project but are nearing completion.

Annex 6: Progress towards results matrix

Indicator	Baseline	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Level in 1st PIR - 2020 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
Objective: Establish an effective National Park 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							
1. Number of direct project beneficiaries, measured based on: a. Cumulative total of the following: b. Number of people obtaining PA competency qualification and staff directly involved in the project c. Number of people living in the communities where project interventions are carried out	Estimates of direct beneficiaries based on a capacity building needs assessment and stakeholder consultations during the PPG phase. These estimates will be verified at project inception through development of the capacity development plan for the C-PAR program and confirmation consultations with villages where project interventions are planned	a. Cumulative total: 3,800 (50% women) b. Number of people obtaining PA competency qualification: Central: 175 / TRS NP: 175 / GPA NP: 175 / XJU NP: 75 / Total: 600 (50% women) c. Number of local beneficiaries: TRS NP: 2,000 / GPA NP: 950 / XJU NP: 250 / Total: 3,200 (50% women)	a. Cumulative total: 10,376 (50% women) b. Number of people obtaining PA competency qualification: Central: 372 / TRS NP: 471 / GPA NP: 471 / XJU NP: 186 / Total: 1,500 (50% women) c. Number of local beneficiaries: TRS NP: 5,771 / GPA NP: 2,405 / XJU NP: 700 / Total: 8,876 (50% women)	In progress	**On target** a. Cumulative total: 4,518 (42% women) b. Number of people obtaining PA competency qualification: Central: 72 / TRS NP: 685 / GPA NP: 187 / XJU NP: 46 / Total: 990 (31% women) c. Number of local beneficiaries: TRS NP: 1,926 / GPA NP: 1,558 / XJU NP: 44 / Total: 3,528 (42% women) (Source: Self Evaluation Report)	Satisfactory	Good progress has been made towards the project objective. The project has made real contributions to establishing an effective national park 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 two objective indicators are assessed as on target to meet EOP targets. Good progress has been made towards the Indicator 1 target for the total number of beneficiaries, although attention will be required to improve the participation of women. The EOP target for expansion of the PA system has already been achieved, through the establishment of TRS and GP NPs; Xianju NP will not be established during the project.

Indicator	Baseline	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Level in 1st PIR - 2020 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
					Midterm total targets achieved; focus needed to achieve women's participation targets.		
2. National terrestrial PA system expanded, with an emphasis on habitat connectivity and increasing coverage of KBAs among the three NP pilot sites of Three-River Source NP (TRS NP); Giant Panda NP (GP NP); and Xianju NP (XJ NP)	Estimates of direct beneficiaries based on a capacity building needs assessment and stakeholder consultations during the PPG phase. These estimates will be verified at project inception through development of the capacity development plan for the C-PAR program and confirmation consultations with villages where project interventions are planned.	National terrestrial PA system expanded by 0.65 million ha	National terrestrial PA system expanded by 1.2838 million ha, broken down as follows: TRS NP: 0.6561 million ha GP NP: 0.6134 million ha XJ NP: 0.0143 million ha	In progress	**Achieved** National terrestrial PA system expanded by 7.9404 million ha, broken down as follows: TRS NP: 7.412 million ha GP NP: 0.5284 million ha XJ NP: 0 (Source: Self Evaluation Report) TRS and GP NPs officially established and total increases exceeded the total midterm and EOP targets for expansion of the PA system; XJ NP not established so did not contribute to total.		
Outcome 1: National Park system established with effective legal, governance and institutional framework							
3. Extent to which legal, policy and institutional frameworks reflect PA reform priorities	The Integrated Plan for Establishing a National Park System in China, issued by the Office of the State Council on 26 September 2017 provides a vision for a National Park System, including a National Park Law and a unified National PA Management Agency	Draft national PA system guideline, based upon a national PA gap analysis and comparative analyses of domestic and international best practices, presented to the NP Leading Group. The PA system plan includes	NP legal framework in place and mainstreamed into the 14th 5-year plan and key land use planning processes, including ecological red-lining	In progress	**On target** Two studies conducted to strengthen the legal and governance framework for the NP system. 1. "Study on Roadmap and Framework of National Park Law of China": proposed solutions to the NFGA regarding Protected Area Law and NP Law; a high-level	Satisfactory	The project has made very good progress towards Outcome 1. The work to inform development of the legal framework for China's NP system (Indicator 3) is progressing well and has been well received by stakeholders. Five draft policies and guidelines are under pilot operationalisation at the three NP pilot sites (Indicator 4); it is recommended that a policy and guideline for ecological-based planning, establishment and management of

Indicator	Baseline	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Level in 1st PIR - 2020 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
		a roadmap outlining concrete steps for PA reform, with increased protection of globally significant biodiversity and provisions for genuine participation by local communities, including ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups, promoting sustainable access and public benefit and minimising economic displacement and resettlement.			workshop was convened on 20 June 2021 in association with this. 2. "Environmental Analysis and Countermeasure Study on Hydroelectric and Mining Projects in Protected Areas" (2020): proposed an Environmental Impact Assessment Index System and mechanisms to supervise hydroelectric and mining projects in national PAs; supports work of MEE and NFGA. (Source: 2021 PIR and Self Evaluation Report) Midterm target achieved.		corridors be developed. Collaborative governance coordination mechanisms have been piloted in NP pilots and draft working rules have been established (Indicator 5). The total financing available for the national PA system has increased by 58%, which surpasses the EOP target for Indicator 6.
4. Extent to which policies, guidelines and regulations are in place for effectively governing, planning, managing and monitoring the NP system, including but not limited to ecological corridors establishment and management; competency standards for PA managers and staff; tourism partnerships and concessions	The Integrated Plan for Establishing a National Park System in China, issued by the Office of the State Council on 26 September 2017 provides a vision for a National Park System, including a National Park Law and updated regulatory framework. No policies exist for contemporary PA management issues such as ecological corridors and management of tourism concessions,	Draft policies and guidelines under pilot operationalisation at 3 NP pilot sites, including draft ecological corridor policy and guidelines, draft competency-based standards for PA professional development, and draft tourism partnerships and concessions policy document.	Ecological corridor policy document used to inform design of the expansions of the three NP pilots under Component 2, improving ecological connectivity. Ecological corridor policy, competency-based standards for PA professional development and tourism partnerships and concession policy adopted and being institutionalised across	In progress	**On target** Five relevant documents have been developed: 1. HWC management policy and guidelines submitted to MEE and NFGA; being piloted in TRS NP. 2. "Study on PA Network Layout and Ecological Corridors under Climate Change" commenced. 3. "Guidelines and A Case Study on KBAs' identification in China" provided various findings and recommendations; specific KBA study being delivered for Xianju.		

Indicator	Baseline	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Level in 1st PIR - 2020 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
	and a competency-based approach is not taken for PA staff development.		NP pilots and the national PA system through the State Administration of National Parks.		4. "Study on Competency-based Standards for PA Professional Development" commenced. 5. "Guidelines for the Concession of National Parks" drafted and will be adopted as standards by NFGA; specific concessions pilot also being delivered in TRS. (Source: 2021 PIR and Self Evaluation Report) Midterm target achieved.		
5. Established framework for collaborative NP governance	NP pilots established across provincial and administrative boundaries. The Integrated Plan for Establishing a National Park System in China provides vision for a unified National PA Management Agency, established as the State Administration of National Parks on 17 March 2018. No adopted framework exists for collaborative NP governance across provincial/administrative boundaries.	Draft working rules on collaborative NP governance under piloting at NP pilot sites in Component 2, with establishment of collaborative governance coordination mechanisms.	Working rules on collaborative NP governance adopted in the NP regulatory frameworks of the three demonstration NP pilot sites and collaborative governance mechanisms fully operational. Working rules promoted for operationalisation across the national PA system through the State Administration of National Parks.	In progress	**On target** Collaborative governance coordination mechanisms have been piloted in NP pilots; draft working rules have been established. Joint actions of cross-regional patrol and biodiversity monitoring carried out in GP NP, including signing the agreement on joint defence and protection of Minshan area of GP NP. (Source: 2021 PIR and Self Evaluation Report) Midterm target achieved.		
6. PA financing available nationally, narrowing the gap for	Total annual PA finances available: USD 4,528 million (based on 2016	PA financing available:	PA financing available:	Same as baseline data	**On target**		

Indicator	Baseline	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Level in 1st PIR - 2020 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
basic PA management scenario	CNY figures converted to USD) Est. annual PA financing needs, basic: USD 6,782 million (based on 2016 CNY figures converted to USD) Annual PA financing gap, basic: USD 2,254 million	10% increase from baseline USD 5,000 million	30% increase from baseline USD 5,886 million		PA financing available: 58% increase from baseline USD 7,158 million (Source: Financial Sustainability Scorecard from METT, using 2020 national budget report of Ministry of Finance) Midterm target achieved.		
Outcome 2: National Park system strengthened through pilot development							
7. Number of new or revised pilot NP policies and regulations	NP system currently under establishment	General and specific legislation for pilot NPs drafted and under review by competent authorities	Five general or specific legislations of NP pilot sites enacted and adopted more broadly through replication across NP pilots	Same as baseline data	**On target** TRS NP: One regulation (trial) and 13 NP management measures had already been issued for TRS in 2018; the project prepared a report that collected and assessed these, identified barriers, and provided recommendations for their revision and for other relevant matters. GP NP: The Regulation of Sichuan Province on the Administration of GP NP was listed in the legislative plan of Sichuan Provincial Government from 2019-2021 and project had input to this. Xianju: Draft Regulation of the Xianju NP was prepared; not listed in the 14th FYP in Zhejiang Province.	**Satisfactory**	Good progress has been made towards the three indicators under Outcome 2. The project has contributed to the development of regulations for GP NP and Xianju NP and reviewed and provided recommendations for existing regulations and other matters for TRS NP (Indicator 7). There were significant increases in institutional capacities for PA management (Indicator 8) and management effectiveness (as measured by the METT; Indicator 9) for the three NP pilots.

Indicator	Baseline		Midterm Target		End-of-project Target		Level in 1st PIR - 2020 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
								(Source: 2021 PIR, Self Evaluation Report and other information provided during MTR) Midterm target achieved.		
8. Institutional capacities for protected area management at NP pilot sites, as indicated in scores of the UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard for the following areas: Area 1: Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislations, strategies and programs Area 2: Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programs Area 3: Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders Area 4: Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge Area 5: Capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn,	a. Three-River Source NP:		a. Three-River Source NP:		a. Three-River Source NP:		Same as baseline data	**On target** a. Three-River Source NP:		
	Area 1:	44%	Area 1:	For midterm, target set only for total score	Area 1:	100%		Area 1: | Only total score reported		
	Area 2:	46%	Area 2:		Area 2:	73%		Area 2:		
	Area 3:	60%	Area 3:		Area 3:	73%		Area 3:		
	Area 4:	33%	Area 4:		Area 4:	89%		Area 4:		
	Area 5:	47%	Area 5:		Area 5:	73%		Area 5:		
	Total Score:	47%	**Total Score:**	62%	**Total Score:**	77%		**Total Score:** | 66%		
	b. Giant Panda NP:		b. Giant Panda NP:		b. Giant Panda NP:			b. Giant Panda NP:		
	Area 1:	22%	Area 1:	For midterm, target set only for total score	Area 1:	78%		Area 1: | Only total score reported		
	Area 2:	48%	Area 2:		Area 2:	88%		Area 2:		
	Area 3:	60%	Area 3:		Area 3:	93%		Area 3:		
	Area 4:	33%	Area 4:		Area 4:	89%		Area 4:		
	Area 5:	40%	Area 5:		Area 5:	73%		Area 5:		
	Total Score:	45%	**Total Score:**	65%	**Total Score:**	85%		**Total Score:** | 68%		
								c. Xianju NP:		

Indicator	Baseline		Midterm Target		End-of-project Target		Level in 1st PIR - 2020 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
For the following NP pilot sites: a. Three-River Source NP b. Giant Panda NP c. Xianju NP	c. Xianju NP:		c. Xianju NP:		c. Xianju NP:			Area 1: Only total score reported		
	Area 1:	56%	Area 1:	For midterm, target set only for total score	Area 1:	89%		Area 2:		
	Area 2:	38%	Area 2:		Area 2:	71%		Area 3:		
	Area 3:	47%	Area 3:		Area 3:	67%		Area 4:		
	Area 4:	33%	Area 4:		Area 4:	78%		Area 5:		
	Area 5:	47%	Area 5:		Area 5:	73%		**Total Score:** **57%**		
	Total Score:	**42%**	**Total Score:**	**57%**	**Total Score:**	**73%**		(Source: Midterm PA Administration Capacity Development Scorecards) Midterm targets achieved.		
9. Protected area management effectiveness, as indicated by METT scores, for the following sites: a. Three-River Source NP b. Giant Panda NP c. Xianju NP	a. Three-River Source NP: 50% (Jan 2018) b. Giant Panda NP: 45% (Jan 2018) c. Xianju NP: 40% (Jan 2018)		a. Three-River Source NP: 55% b. Giant Panda NP: 50% c. Xianju NP: 50%		Achievement of sound management with score >67%: a. Three-River Source NP: 67% 40% increase from baseline: b. Giant Panda NP: 63% c. Xianju NP: 56%		Same as baseline data	**On target** a. Three-River Source NP: 64% b. Giant Panda NP: 55% c. Xianju NP: 55% (Source: METT provided January 2022) Midterm targets achieved.		

Indicator	Baseline	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Level in 1st PIR - 2020 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
Outcome 3: Sustainability of project and program results enhanced through effective project management, program coordination, monitoring & evaluation, knowledge management and social inclusion							
10. Sustainability of project and program results enhanced through effective project management, program coordination, monitoring & evaluation, knowledge management and social inclusion	a. Terms of reference for PMO positions and PSC developed with clearly identified program-level responsibilities b. Budget allocated for Program Alignment Officer to oversee program level coordination	a. PMO fully staffed; project and program level steering committees providing timely guidance b. Aggregated reporting mechanism implemented, and results across the program are tracked and reported through knowledge platform	a. Program effectively coordinated through efficient program steering function b. Annual program reports indicate clear progress towards outcomes and achievements beyond individual child projects	In progress	**On target** a. PMO fully staffed and running very well; project-level steering committee (PSC) has met 3 times and program-level steering committee has met twice – both are providing timely and strategic guidance. b. Program level reporting is in place and two annual reports prepared on progress of the C-PAR program (2019 and 2020). (Source: 2021 PIR and Self Evaluation Report) Midterm targets achieved.	Satisfactory	The project is making good progress towards Outcome 3, with some specific remedial actions recommended. The project is well managed and the C-PAR program is coordinated and reporting mechanisms are in place; care is needed that the program reporting meets the EOP target for Indicator 10b. The biodiversity knowledge platform is in tender stage and content is being discussed, five lessons learned are completed and will be uploaded, and a side event was held at CBD COP 15; midterm targets for Indicator 11 were therefore partially met and the indicator is on track for the EOP target. Generally good progress has been made towards the five target areas for level of inclusiveness in management of the NP system and Indicator 12 is on target; although attention will be required to improve the participation of women, an EOP target for the Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) surveys must be set, and the CPAR Advisory Group is yet to be established with CSO representation.

Indicator	Baseline	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Level in 1st PIR - 2020 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
11. Extent of knowledge management of C-PAR program, as indicated through a. Functional biodiversity knowledge platform b. Lessons learned distilled and disseminated c. Knowledge exchange through workshops, seminars, conferences	a. Recommended framework for a biodiversity knowledge platform outlined (Annex P to the project document) b. Project documents for child projects contain targets for developing lessons learned case studies c. CBD COP 15 scheduled in China in 2020	a. Biodiversity knowledge platform designed and under testing phase and operation, including post-project maintenance approved b. 5 lessons learned completed and uploaded onto knowledge sharing platform c. One side event at CBD COP 15 highlights NP system in China	a. Functional biodiversity knowledge platform, accessible for public participation, and financial support for ongoing maintenance and institutionalisation approved b. 10 lessons learned completed and uploaded onto biodiversity knowledge platform, and usage statistics indicate increasing reach of C-PAR program lessons learned across national PA system. c. At least 5 national workshops convened	In progress	**On target** a. Biodiversity knowledge platform is in the tender stage; it will include a program platform, online training resources, case studies etc. b. 5 lessons learned and completed: HWC; concessions in the TRS NP system pilot; inter-provincial collaborative NP governance in GP NP; nature education; and sustainable livelihoods in GP NP system pilot. Not yet loaded onto knowledge platform because platform not operational. c. Outcomes of the C-PAR child projects were shared globally at a high-level eco-civilization forum at CBD COP 15 on 14 October 2021. (Source: 2021 PIR, Self Evaluation Report and additional information during mission) Midterm targets partially achieved.		
12 Level of inclusiveness in management of the NP system, as indicated through: a. Gender inclusion	The Integrated Plan for Establishing a National Park System in China, issued by the Office of the State Council on 26 September 2017, outlines a system in which government units,	a. Gender inclusion: • Gender mainstreaming plan under implementation, and 50% of direct	a. Gender inclusion: • 50% women target for direct beneficiaries achieved.	In progress	**On target** a. Gender inclusion: • Gender mainstreaming plan is under implementation; 42% of direct beneficiaries are women.		

Indicator	Baseline	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Level in 1st PIR - 2020 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
b. Ethnic minorities inclusion c. Community engagement d. Communication e. Civil society participation	enterprises, social organizations and the public participate in the protection and management of national parks. KAP framework outlined in Annex P to the project document and includes target stakeholder groups and objectives of survey(s). The baseline KAP survey will be made during project inception phase	beneficiaries by midterm are woman. b. Ethnic minorities: • Free, prior and informed (FPIC) consultations successfully completed at the target Tibetan villages, and project interventions initiated. • Human-wildlife policy and guideline developed, and pilot implementation plan developed. c. Community engagement • Collaborative community management agreements signed with at least one village in or near the three NP pilots, and project interventions initiated. • Guidelines for tourism partnerships and concessions developed, and pilot	b. Ethnic minorities: • 5,771 Tibetan ethnic minorities among the direct beneficiaries. • Human-wildlife conflict management policy and guideline approved, and implementation initiated in at least one Tibetan village. c. Community engagement • Collaborative community PA management demonstrated in villages situated within and near 3 national parks. • Guidelines for tourism partnerships and concessions approved and implementation		b. Ethnic minorities: • FPIC has been obtained from 105 households of Tibetan ethnic minorities and interventions have been initiated. • HWC policy and guideline developed, and pilot implementation plan in place in TRS NP. c. Community engagement • Community co-management mechanism established to enhance PA management and improve local livelihoods; agreements signed in TRS and GP NP pilots. • Guidelines for tourism partnerships and concessions developed and pilot underway in TRS NP.		

Indicator	Baseline	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Level in 1st PIR - 2020 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
		implementation plan completed. d. Communication: • Project interventions in target communities address knowledge, practices and attitudes assessed as part of the baseline KAP survey e. Civil society: • CSO representatives actively involved on the C-PAR Advisory Group. • Project interventions being implemented in partnership with at least one CSO.	initiated in at least one national park pilot. d. Communication: • Improvement in knowledge, practices and attitudes (target to be set after baseline KAP survey). e. Civil society: • Three partnerships with CSOs strengthened or established.		d. Communication: • KAP survey completed and data used to inform strategy for awareness raising; midterm KAP completed and recorded increases in knowledge, awareness and support for biodiversity conservation and NP development; EOP target not set. e. Civil society: • C-PAR Advisory Group not yet officially established (expected in 2022); CSO representatives will be involved. • Interventions are being implemented in partnership with three CSOs: South-North Institute for Sustainable Development; Academy of Beijing Fuqun Environment; Shan Shui Conservation Center. (Source: 2021 PIR, Self Evaluation Report, and other information provided during MTR) Most midterm targets achieved; low female participation in 12a requires attention; EOP target for KAP survey in 12d needs to be set; CPAR Advisory Group in 12e not		

Indicator	Baseline	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Level in 1st PIR - 2020 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
					yet established. Considered on target with simple remedial action.		

Annex 7: Ratings scales

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

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

	Ratings for Sustainability: (one overall rating)	
4	Likely (L)	Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project's closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future
3	Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review
2	Moderately Unlikely (MU)	Significant risk that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on
1	Unlikely (U)	Severe risks that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained.

Annex 8: Suggested amendments to results framework

Indicator	End-of-project target	Suggestions
Objective		
1. Number of direct project beneficiaries, measured based on: a. Cumulative total of the following: b. Number of people obtaining PA competency qualification and staff directly involved in the project c. Number of people living in the communities where project interventions are carried out.	a. Cumulative total: 10,376 (50% women) b. Number of people obtaining PA competency qualification: Central: 372 TRS NP: 471 GPA NP: 471 XJU NP: 186 Total: 1,500 (50% women) c. Number of local beneficiaries: TRS NP: 5,771 GPA NP: 2,405 XJU NP: 700 Total: 8,876 (50% women)	1. No suggested changes 2. The baseline estimates for this indicator (developed during project preparation phase) were to be verified at project inception through the capacity development plan, but this did not occur; as part of revised results framework (see Recommendation 6), verify the baseline estimates and document this
2. National terrestrial PA system expanded, with an emphasis on habitat connectivity and increasing coverage of KBAs among the three NP pilot sites of Three-River Source NP (TRS NP); Giant Panda NP (GP NP); and Xianju NP (XJ NP)	National terrestrial PA system expanded by 1.2838 million ha, broken down as follows: TRS NP: 0.6561 million ha GP NP: 0.6134 million ha XJ NP: 0.0143 million ha	1. Decisions in China regarding which sites are confirmed to be pilot NPs are largely beyond the control of the project, although the project can have some influence over the areas that are protected for NPs; therefore recommend changing the wording of the EOP target to shift the primary focus to the total area of expansion, without being specific about the contributions of the pilot NPs. Suggest rewording EOP target to the following or similar: 'National terrestrial PA system expanded by 1.2838 million ha due to contributions from some or all of TRS NP, GP NP and XJ NP' 2. To support the proposed EOP target change, undertake an analysis of the biodiversity conservation benefits (including KBA coverage) that have been delivered by the establishment of the large areas of TRS and GP NPs

Indicator	End-of-project target	Suggestions
Outcome 1		
3. Extent to which legal, policy and institutional frameworks reflect PA reform priorities	NP legal framework in place and mainstreamed into the 14th 5-year plan and key land use planning processes, including ecological red-lining	1. The wording of the EOP target is ambiguous and, depending on its interpretation, partly out of the project's control, so <u>recommend</u> changing the EOP target to be more specific and measurable and to be within the control of the project to achieve; the proposed new target should be developed through discussions with project's legal specialists to identify a suitable stage of the legislation framework development process that it is realistic for the project to influence and achieve (Recommendation 8) 2. Consider how the EOP target for the NP legal framework to be 'mainstreamed into the 14th 5-year plan and key land use planning processes, including ecological red-lining' will be interpreted, measured and reported for the terminal evaluation
4. Extent to which policies, guidelines and regulations are in place for effectively governing, planning, managing and monitoring the NP system, including but not limited to ecological corridors establishment and management; competency standards for PA managers and staff; tourism partnerships and concessions	Ecological corridor policy document used to inform design of the expansions of the three NP pilots under Component 2, improving ecological connectivity. Ecological corridor policy, competency-based standards for PA professional development and tourism partnerships and concession policy adopted and being institutionalised across NP pilots and the national PA system through the State Administration of National Parks.	1. No suggested changes 2. Consider how the EOP target will be interpreted, measured and reported for the terminal evaluation, especially 'Ecological corridor policy document used to inform design of the expansions of the three NP pilots under Component 2, improving ecological connectivity', given that the expansions have already occurred
5. Established framework for collaborative NP governance	Working rules on collaborative NP governance adopted in the NP regulatory frameworks of the three demonstration NP pilot sites and collaborative governance mechanisms fully operational. Working rules promoted for operationalisation across the national PA system through the State Administration of National Parks.	No suggested changes
6. PA financing available nationally, narrowing the gap for basic PA management scenario	PA financing available: 30% increase from baseline USD 5,886 million	No suggested changes

Indicator	End-of-project target	Suggestions
Outcome 2		
7. Number of new or revised pilot NP policies and regulations	Five general or specific legislations of NP pilot sites enacted and adopted more broadly through replication across NP pilots	1. Carefully consider the wording of the EOP target and how this will be reported against and achieved; consider rewording the EOP target to something that better matches the current needs regarding the pilots
8. Institutional capacities for protected area management at NP pilot sites, as indicated in scores of the UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard for the following areas: Area 1: Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislations, strategies and programs Area 2: Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programs Area 3: Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders Area 4: Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge Area 5: Capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn, For the following NP pilot sites: a. Three-River Source NP b. Giant Panda NP c. Xianju NP	a. Three-River Source NP: <table><tr><td>Area 1:</td><td>100%</td></tr><tr><td>Area 2:</td><td>73%</td></tr><tr><td>Area 3:</td><td>73%</td></tr><tr><td>Area 4:</td><td>89%</td></tr><tr><td>Area 5:</td><td>73%</td></tr><tr><td>**Total Score:**</td><td>**77%**</td></tr></table> b. Giant Panda NP: <table><tr><td>Area 1:</td><td>78%</td></tr><tr><td>Area 2:</td><td>88%</td></tr><tr><td>Area 3:</td><td>93%</td></tr><tr><td>Area 4:</td><td>89%</td></tr><tr><td>Area 5:</td><td>73%</td></tr><tr><td>**Total Score:**</td><td>**85%**</td></tr></table> c. Xianju NP: <table><tr><td>Area 1:</td><td>89%</td></tr><tr><td>Area 2:</td><td>71%</td></tr><tr><td>Area 3:</td><td>67%</td></tr><tr><td>Area 4:</td><td>78%</td></tr><tr><td>Area 5:</td><td>73%</td></tr><tr><td>**Total Score:**</td><td>**73%**</td></tr></table>	No suggested changes
9. Protected area management effectiveness, as indicated by METT scores, for the following sites: a. Three-River Source NP b. Giant Panda NP c. Xianju NP	Achievement of sound management with score >67%: a. Three-River Source NP: 67% 40% increase from baseline: b. Giant Panda NP: 63% c. Xianju NP: 56%	No suggested changes

Indicator	End-of-project target	Suggestions
Outcome 3		
10. Sustainability of project and program results enhanced through effective project management, program coordination, monitoring & evaluation, knowledge management and social inclusion	a. Program effectively coordinated through efficient program steering function b. Annual program reports indicate clear progress towards outcomes and achievements beyond individual child projects	1. No suggested changes 2. Carefully consider how the EOP target for 10b will be interpreted, measured and reported for the terminal evaluation; see also Recommendation 10
11. Extent of knowledge management of C-PAR program, as indicated through a. Functional biodiversity knowledge platform b. Lessons learned distilled and disseminated c. Knowledge exchange through workshops, seminars, conferences	a. Functional biodiversity knowledge platform, accessible for public participation, and financial support for ongoing maintenance and institutionalisation approved b. 10 lessons learned completed and uploaded onto biodiversity knowledge platform, and usage statistics indicate increasing reach of C-PAR program lessons learned across national PA system. c. At least 5 national workshops convened	1. No suggested changes 2. Carefully consider how the EOP targets will be interpreted, measured and reported for the terminal evaluation
12. Level of inclusiveness in management of the NP system, as indicated through: a. Gender inclusion b. Ethnic minorities inclusion c. Community engagement d. Communication e. Civil society participation	a. Gender inclusion: • 50% women target for direct beneficiaries achieved. b. Ethnic minorities: • 5,771 Tibetan ethnic minorities among the direct beneficiaries. • Human-wildlife conflict management policy and guideline approved, and implementation initiated in at least one Tibetan village. c. Community engagement • Collaborative community PA management demonstrated in villages situated within and near 3 national parks. • Guidelines for tourism partnerships and concessions approved and implementation initiated in at least one national park pilot. d. Communication: • Improvement in knowledge, practices and attitudes (target to be set after baseline KAP survey). e. Civil society: • Three partnerships with CSOs strengthened or established.	An EOP target was to be 'set after baseline KAP survey'; recommend agreeing on achievable targets for increased KAP scores and replacing the text in the results framework with these target scores

Annex 9: Contribution of the C-PAR 1 Project to the C-PAR Program-level results (source: project document Table 6)

C-PAR Program Component	Program Outcomes	C-PAR Program Indicators	C-PAR 1 Project contributions to C-PAR Program-level results
Objective: Transform China's national protected area system through systematic legal and institutional reform and innovation for conservation of globally significant biodiversity			
Component 1: Improved legal and institutional framework at national and provincial level	1.1 Effective governance and legal framework for the national protected area system – indicated by approved national systems plan and technical regulations allowing for establishment of new PA categories suited for biodiversity protection	Indicator 1: **Extent to which legal, policy and institutional frameworks reflect current national policy for biodiversity conservation**	NP legal framework in place and mainstreamed into the 14th 5-year plan and key land use planning processes, including ecological red-lining (Indicator 3) Ecological corridor policy, competency-based standards for PA professional development and tourism partnerships and concession policy adopted and being institutionalised across NP pilots and the national PA system through the State Administration of National Parks (Indicator 4)
	1.2 Harmonized and effective national system for selecting, designing, managing and monitoring various types of protected areas – indicated by transparent selection, planning and monitoring procedures	Indicator 2: **Sustainability of PA financing** a) 30% increase in cumulative annual national PA financing (direct), justified by economic valuations, narrowing the gap for basic PA management scenario b) C-PAR4: Establish ecological compensation mechanism	a) 30% increase in cumulative annual PA financing (direct), from USD 4,528 million baseline to USD 5,886 million by end of project (Indicator 6) b) Not applicable
	1.3 Increased government financing for PA management – indicated by an increase of annual investment in PA system operation by >30% over baseline amount to be established during the PPG	Indicator 3: **Improved PA governance**, as indicated by new or strengthened collaborative governance mechanisms	Working rules on collaborative NP governance operationalised in the NP regulatory frameworks of the three NP pilot sites and promoted across the national PA system through the State Administration of National Parks (Indicator 5)
Component 2: Systematic PA planning and mainstreaming at national, provincial, county spatial planning and sectors	2.1 National protected area system expanded by 2.483 million ha 2.2 Threats to PAs reduced, indicated by increased ESAs and evidence of enforcement, integration of biodiversity	Indicator 4: **New areas of terrestrial and marine ecosystems in the national PA system**, indicated by coverage of ecologically sensitive areas (ESAs) and/or key biodiversity areas (KBAs) in protected area systems.	National terrestrial PA system expanded by 1.2838 million ha, with an emphasis on habitat connectivity and increasing coverage of KBAs (Indicator 2) Note: this is the project contribution to the overall program target

C-PAR Program Component	Program Outcomes	C-PAR Program Indicators	C-PAR 1 Project contributions to C-PAR Program-level results
	concern in development and sector planning and operations, and increased capacity for community engagement	Indicator 5: **Subnational institutional capacities of for protected area planning and management**, as indicated by the UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard, tallied across the following five thematic areas: Area 1: Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislations, strategies and programs Area 2: Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programs Area 3: Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders Area 4: Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge Area 5: Capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn	Capacity scores raised for three NP management agencies: Three-River Source NP Management Agency (47%-77%), Sichuan Forestry Department (45%-85%), and Xianju NP Management Committee (42%-73%) (Indicator 8)
		Indicator 6: **Threats to globally significant biodiversity at project demonstration sites reduced**.	N/A – activities at the three NP pilots are focused on capacity building and demonstration of policy reforms. There are no targets specifically addressing threat reduction.
Component 3: Site level management and supervision standards raised for different PA types	3.1 Increased management effectiveness of demonstration PAs with globally significant biodiversity and ecosystems - 30% increase indicated by METT plus 20% improvement of EHI over baselines 3.2 Stable or improved status of rare species population – e.g. snow leopard, Przewalski's gazelle, migratory birds	Indicator 7: **Protected area management effectiveness**, as indicated by scores recorded in the GEF-6 version of the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT)	40% increase or achievement of sound management with score of at least 67%: Three Rivers Source NP: 67% Giant Panda NP: 63% Xianju Provincial Park: 56% (Indicator 9)
		Indicator 8: **Estimated populations of threatened species,** as indicated by biodiversity assessments	N/A – Activities at the three NP pilots are focused on capacity building and demonstration of policy reforms. There are no species-specific targets.
		Indicator 9: **# direct project beneficiaries**, a. Communities within/around target sites. b. People receiving training.	a. 8,876 1,500 Total: 10,376 (Indicator 1)

C-PAR Program Component	Program Outcomes	C-PAR Program Indicators	C-PAR 1 Project contributions to C-PAR Program-level results
		Indicator 10: **Level of inclusiveness in management of the NP system, as indicated through:** a. Gender inclusion b. Ethnic minorities inclusion c. Community engagement d. Civil society participation	a. 5,188 direct beneficiaries are women. b. 5,771 Tibetan ethnic minorities among the direct beneficiaries. Human-wildlife conflict management policy and guideline approved, and implementation initiated in at least one Tibetan village. c. Collaborative community PA management demonstrated in villages situated within and near 3 NPs. Guidelines for tourism partnerships and concessions approved and implementation initiated in at least one NP pilot. d. Three partnerships with CSOs strengthened or established. (Indicator 12)
Component 4: Program Coordination, Knowledge Management, and M&E	4.1 Improved knowledge sharing between PAs and uptake of best practices 4.2 Improved understanding among decision makers and the public on value of PA system, indicated by Knowledge, Attitude and Practices surveys to be conducted at start and end of projects	Indicator 11: **Effectiveness of program coordination, as indicated by:** a. Program governance b. Program-level reporting	a. Program effectively coordinated through efficient program steering function b. Annual program reports indicate clear progress towards outcomes and achievements beyond individual child projects. (Indicator 10)
		Indicator 12: **Extent of knowledge management of C-PAR Program, as indicated through** a. Functional biodiversity knowledge platform b. Lessons learned distilled and disseminated c. Knowledge exchange through workshops, seminars, conferences	a. Functional biodiversity knowledge platform, accessible for public participation, and financial support for maintenance post-project approved. b. 10 lessons learned completed and uploaded onto biodiversity knowledge platform, and usage statistics indicate increasing reach of C-PAR program lessons learned across national PA system. c. At least 5 national workshops convened. (Indicator 11)
		Indicator 13: **Level of understanding among decision makers and public on value of PA systems**, based on results of knowledge, practices, and attitudes (KAP) survey	Improvement in knowledge, practices and attitudes (target to be set after baseline KAP survey) (Indicator 12)

C-PAR Program Component	Program Outcomes	C-PAR Program Indicators	C-PAR 1 Project contributions to C-PAR Program-level results
		Indicator 14: **Mandatory basic reporting standard for Chinese nature reserve system**, as a necessary evaluation part of supervision	N/A

Annex 10: Signed UNEG Code of Conduct forms

Evaluators/Consultants:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.

2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.

3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.

4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.

5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.

6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.

7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

8. Must ensure that independence of judgement is maintained, and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.

9. Must confirm that they have not been involved in designing, executing or advising on the project being evaluated and did not carry out the project's Mid-Term Review.

TE Consultant Agreement Form

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

Name of Evaluator: Adrian Stokes

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant):

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

Signed at: Adelaide, Australia *(place)* on: 8 September 2021 *(date)*

Signature:

Evaluators/Consultants:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.

2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.

3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.

4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.

5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.

6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.

7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

8. Must ensure that independence of judgement is maintained, and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.

9. Must confirm that they have not been involved in designing, executing or advising on the project being evaluated and did not carry out the project's Mid-Term Review.

TE Consultant Agreement Form

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

Name of Evaluator:

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant):

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

Signed at ...*Beijing, China* (place) on ....*8, September* 2021 (date)

Signature: 刘硕 *Lin Shuo*

Annex 11: MTR Terms of Reference (excluding ToR annexes)

Midterm Review Terms of Reference

BASIC CONTRACT INFORMATION

Location: China
Application Deadline: Nov.29th, 2021
Type of Contract: Individual Contract
Post Level: one International Consultant, and one National Consultant
Languages Required: English
Starting Date: December 10th, 2021
Duration of Initial Contract: 55 working days
Expected Duration of Assignment: December 10th, 2021 – April 30th, 2022

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)

1.1.1.1.1 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 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

---

[5] https://jobs.undp.org/

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 **Error! Reference source not found.**:

 ➢ 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

1.1.1.1.2   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[6] 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.[7] 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. *Beihai, Qinzhou in Guangxi Province, Zhuhai 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

---

[6] For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results, 05 Nov 2013.
[7] 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.

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.

1.1.1.1.3 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[8]	Baseline Level[9]	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target[10]	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment[11]	Achievement Rating[12]	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.

---

[8] Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards
[9] Populate with data from the Project Document
[10] If available
[11] Colour code this column only
[12] Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

- 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

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:
  o The project's overall safeguards risk categorization.
  o The identified types of risks[13] (in the SESP).
  o 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.

---

[13] 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.

<u>Reporting</u>
- 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.

<u>Communications & Knowledge Management</u>
- 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:

<u>Financial risks to sustainability:</u>
- 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)?

<u>Socio-economic risks to sustainability:</u>
- 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?

<u>Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:</u>
- 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.

1.1.1.1.4 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
-

*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 <mark>55 days</mark> over a period of *4 months* starting *on* <mark>December 10th, 2021</mark> 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 days[14]):* 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 days[15]):* 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 <mark>December 10th, 2021</mark>. 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;
- The BSAFE training course <u>must</u> be successfully completed <u>prior</u> 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.

---

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

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

- 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 [template](#)[16] provided by UNDP;

b) **CV** and a **Personal History Form** ([P11 form](#)[17]);

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

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[18]
- ToR ANNEX C: Midterm Review Evaluative Matrix Template
- ToR ANNEX D: UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Midterm Review Consultants[19]
- 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)

---

[16] https://intranet.undp.org/unit/bom/pso/Support%20documents%20on%20IC%20Guidelines/Template%20for%20Confirmation%20of%20Interest%20and%20Submission%20of%20Financial%20Proposal.docx

[17] http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11_Personal_history_form.doc

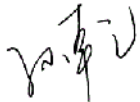[18] The Report length should not exceed *40* pages in total (not including annexes).

[19] http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100

Annex 12: Signed MTR final report clearance form

Mid-term Review Report Reviewed and Cleared By:

Commissioning Unit (M&E Focal Point)

Name: Sun Qian, M&E Officer

Signature: Date: 12-Mar-2022

Commissioning Unit (Planet Pillar, UNDP CO)

Name: Ma Chaode, Assistant Resident Representative

Signature: Date: 11 Mar. 2022

Regional Technical Advisor (Nature, Climate and Energy)

Name: Bipin Pokharel

Signature: Date: 29 March 2022