

# Midterm Review Report

**FINAL**

22 April 2022

## Strengthening Marine Protected Areas in SE China to Conserve Globally Significant Coastal Biodiversity (China- Protected Areas System Reform – C-PAR 4)



UNDP Project ID#:	5379
GEF Project ID#:	9463
MTR time frame:	February to April 2022
Date of MTR Report:	22 April 2022
Country:	China
Region:	Asia-Pacific
GEF Operational Focal Area/Strategic Program:	Biodiversity
Executing Agency:	UNDP
Implementing Partner:	Government - National Forestry and Grassland Administration

### MTR team members:

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

### Acknowledgements

The evaluation team would like to acknowledge the support provided by the UNDP China Country Office, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration and the Project Management Office in assisting with the logistics of the mission and with our many requests during the evaluation. All participants were willing and keen to assist with the evaluation and we thank them all. We would particularly like to thank the bureaus and communities in the pilot areas for sharing their experiences with marine protected area planning and management and in striving for a balance between sustainable development and marine biodiversity conservation.

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

## Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations .....	v
1 Executive Summary .....	1
1.1 Project Description .....	1
1.2 Project Progress Summary .....	2
1.3 Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations .....	5
1.3.1 Strengths .....	5
1.3.2 Weaknesses and recommendations .....	6
2 Introduction .....	9
2.1 Purpose and Objectives of the Review .....	9
2.2 Scope and Methodology .....	9
2.3 Structure of the MTR Report .....	10
3 Project Description .....	11
3.1 Development Context .....	11
3.2 Problems that the Project Sought to Address .....	11
3.3 Project Description and Strategy .....	12
3.3.1 China's Protected Area System Reform (C-PAR) Program .....	12
3.3.2 C-PAR 4 project .....	13
3.3.3 Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) .....	13
3.4 Project Implementation Arrangements .....	14
3.5 Project Timing and Milestones .....	15
3.6 Main Stakeholders .....	15
4 Findings .....	19
4.1 Project Strategy .....	19
4.1.1 Project design .....	19
4.1.2 Results framework .....	20
4.2 Progress Towards Results .....	26
4.2.1 Progress towards outcomes analysis .....	26
4.2.2 Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective .....	36
4.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management .....	37
4.3.1 Social and environmental risk management .....	37
4.3.2 Management arrangements .....	38
4.3.3 Work planning .....	40
4.3.4 Finance and co-finance .....	41
4.3.5 Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems .....	44
4.3.6 Stakeholder engagement .....	45

4.3.7	Reporting.....	45
4.3.8	Communications .....	46
4.3.9	Gender mainstreaming .....	47
4.4	Sustainability .....	48
4.4.1	Financial risks to sustainability.....	48
4.4.2	Socio-economic risks to sustainability .....	49
4.4.3	Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability.....	49
4.4.4	Environmental risks to sustainability .....	50
4.5	Conclusions and Recommendations .....	51
4.5.1	Conclusions .....	51
4.5.1.1	Strengths .....	51
4.5.1.2	Weaknesses.....	51
4.5.2	Recommendations .....	52
	Annexes.....	55

- 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 4 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

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIP	Academy of Inventory and Planning
BTOR	Back-to-office reports
CBAP	Coastal Biodiversity Action Plan
CBP	Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships
CO	Country Office
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
CWD	Chinese white dolphin
EOP	End-of-project
ESA	Ecologically Sensitive Area
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
FSS	Financial Sustainability Scorecard
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HS	Highly Satisfactory
HU	Highly Unsatisfactory
IP	Implementing Partner
KAP	Knowledge Attitudes and Practices
KBA	Key biodiversity areas
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MARA	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs
MEE	Ministry of Ecology and Environment
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
ML	Moderately Likely
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MPA	Marine protected areas
MS	Moderately Satisfactory
MU	Moderately Unsatisfactory
NC	National consultant
NFGA	National Forestry and Grassland Administration
NIM	National implementation modality
NPD	National Project Director
PA	Protected area
PMO	Project Management Office
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PPR	Project Progress Report
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SAR	Self Assessment Report
SE	South-east
SES	Social and Environmental Standards
SESP	Social and Environmental Screening Procedure
SOA	State Oceanic Administration

# 1 Executive Summary

**Table 1:** Project Information Table

<b>Project Title</b>	Strengthening Marine Protected Areas in SE China to Conserve Globally Significant Coastal Biodiversity (China-Protected Areas System Reform – C-PAR 4)		
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	5379	PIF Approval Date:	25 Oct 2016
GEF Project ID (PMIS #):	9463	CEO Endorsement Date:	11 Oct 2018
ATLAS Business Unit, Award # Proj. ID:	00096238 00100216	Project Document (ProDoc) Signature Date (date project began):	3 Oct 2019
Country(ies):	China	Date project manager hired:	Dec 2019
Region:	Asia-Pacific	Inception Workshop date:	24 Dec 2019
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Midterm Review completion date:	8 Apr 2022
GEF Focal Area Strategic Objective:	BD-1	Planned closing date:	3 Oct 2024
Trust Fund [indicate GEF TF, LDCF, SCCF, NPIF]:	GEF TF	If revised, proposed op. closing date:	N/A
Executing Agency/ Implementing Partner:	Government - National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA)		
Other execution partners:			
<b>Project Financing</b>	<u>at CEO endorsement (US\$)</u>	<u>at Midterm Review (US\$)*</u>	
[1] GEF financing:	2,652,293.58	773,769	
[2] UNDP contribution:	150,000	75,000	
[3] Government:	22,212,852	11,791,672	
[4] Other partners:	-	-	
[5] Total co-financing [2 + 3+ 4]:	22,362,852	11,866,672	
PROJECT TOTAL COSTS [1 + 5]	25,015,145.58	12,640,441	

## 1.1 Project Description

This project aims 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. The project focuses on coastal ecosystems, using the Chinese white dolphin (CWD) as an indicator and flagship species to engage multiple stakeholders in novel ecosystem-based approaches. The target area for the project is three provinces in south-east China: Fujian, Guangdong and Guangxi.

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

The objective is to conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity in SE China through integrated seascape planning and threat management, MPA network expansion and strengthened MPA operations. The components are:

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.

As the only C-PAR child project focusing on coastal and marine ecosystems, this project offers particular opportunities for replication and learning both across the marine environment, linking marine and terrestrial approaches, and between MPAs and terrestrial PAs.

## 1.2 Project Progress Summary

The project is making good progress at midterm. The Implementing Partner (National Forestry and Grassland Authority) and Executing Agency (UNDP) are results focused and working proactively on significant reform to China's marine protected area (PA) system. This reform is a high political priority, therefore the project has high levels of political and government support. The PMO has been focused on building a large group of high-quality experts to deliver diverse outcomes and outputs. The project is assessed as on track to meet all end-of-project (EOP) targets, and progress towards the objective and all three outcomes is satisfactory. The project is making an effective contribution to China's MPA reform, expanding the MPA network in SE China and improving effectiveness of PA management. The project reported an expansion of the MPA network by 16,400 hectares and recorded substantial improvements in MPA management effectiveness and capacity. Importantly, the project is also building an MPA Network, three Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships and a GIS and website, which will make long-lasting improvements to the coordination and communication of key stakeholders in coastal and marine conservation and management.

Despite being assessed as on track to meet EOP targets, some aspects have progressed rather slowly and several midterm targets were not met. This project has been particularly affected by COVID-19 restrictions, with impacts on many aspects of the project's delivery. Some shortcomings in internal communication and coordination were also identified. The MTR team has identified some opportunities and recommendations to address these issues to improve the 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 (ESMF); this is summarised under Project Implementation & Adaptive Management in Table 2 below. This must now be a high priority for the project.

**Table 2:** MTR ratings and achievements table

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
<b>Project Strategy</b>	Not applicable	The project strategy was logical and well articulated, with outputs and activities clearly designed to address identified barriers. The project is effectively designed to use GEF funds to efficiently influence China's MPA reform. 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 and the results framework is well designed.
<b>Progress Towards Results</b>	Objective Achievement: <b>Satisfactory</b>	Good progress has been made towards the project objective, making valuable contributions to conserving globally significant coastal biodiversity in SE China through integrated seascape planning and threat management, MPA network expansion, and strengthened MPA operations. The three objective indicators are on track to meet EOP targets. Good progress has been made towards the target for the number of direct beneficiaries, including the participation of women (Indicator 1). The midterm target for MPA network expansion was met and it is likely that the EOP target will be met, although this is difficult to confidently predict (Indicator 2). Importantly, the population of CWD is considered stable and on track to meet the EOP target (Indicator 3).
	Outcome 1 Achievement: <b>Satisfactory</b>	The project has made fair progress towards Outcome 1. Although progress at midterm was slow, the CBPs will be established by EOP and will provide important new opportunities for stakeholder collaboration and communication (Indicator 4). Extensive work is underway on rules, regulations and management measures for MPAs/ESAs and mainstreaming in marine spatial planning (Indicator 5). Good work is being undertaken on innovative approaches to financial sustainability and resourcing for MPAs, including eco-compensation (Indicator 6).
	Outcome 2 Achievement: <b>Satisfactory</b>	The project has effectively increased the capacity of MPA agencies in pilot areas (Indicator 7) and the management effectiveness of target MPAs (Indicator 8) and is on track to meet EOP targets. The extent of community engagement in MPA conservation is on track for EOP targets, although a midterm sub-target was not met (Indicator 9). Although progress at midterm is mixed, the EOP targets for reduction in key threats to biodiversity in the pilot area are expected to be met (Indicator 10). And the baseline Knowledge Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey has been conducted, enabling the level of understanding of the value of MPAs among the public and decision-makers to be tracked (Indicator 11).



Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
	Outcome 3 Achievement:  <b>Satisfactory</b>	Satisfactory progress has been made against the two indicators for Outcome 3. Very good preparatory work has been undertaken for the establishment of an MPA Network, which is likely to have an important role beyond the GEF project (Indicator 12). And project results and lessons learned will soon be shared through a website that is being developed, although the midterm target of initial lessons learned being shared was not met (Indicator 13).
<b>Project Implementation &amp; Adaptive Management</b>	<b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>	Most aspects of project oversight and implementation have been good. The project has very high levels of government ownership and the IP is very proactive. Communication between UNDP, the PMO and NFGA has been strong and coordination of most project oversight and management activities has been efficient. The most significant shortcoming is in social and environmental risk management. The SESP that was undertaken identified this as a Moderate-risk project, and the ESMF required that a targeted assessment of potential economic displacement impacts at project pilot sites be undertaken, followed by the identification of management measures. These steps have not been undertaken, which impairs the project's safeguards risk identification and management. Moreover, the project document and ESMF stated that some outputs and activities should not commence until the targeted assessment and identification of measures is finalised, yet significant progress has been made on most project activities. This shortcoming must be addressed urgently. There were also some identified shortcomings in internal communication and coordination and in reporting against the results framework.
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Likely</b>	There is high political and government support for the results of this project to continue. Also, the IP (NFGA) is a proactive and responsible government agency and government financing is likely to continue to increase. The project is developing capacity and improving coordination between key stakeholders. It is important to consider how to ensure these valuable outputs continue and have the required institutional support and ownership. Also, there are risks to the continuation of involvement of communities in alternative livelihood activities and in other financing mechanisms. Finally, the risks from climate change and its impacts received limited attention in the project's design and implementation, and this should be reassessed.

## 1.3 Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

### 1.3.1 Strengths

#### **The project successfully worked through complex institutional reform challenges**

The NFGA became responsible for MPA management in China in 2018, after this project had been designed with the State Oceanic Administration (SOA) as implementing partner. Although there were delays in working through these reforms, NFGA embraced these new responsibilities and has become a proactive agency in marine environmental protection. The project has assisted NFGA to strengthen this new role.

#### **Efficiently integrating into national and provincial processes**

With NFGA as the IP, the project is in an excellent position to influence important national and provincial processes, especially PA reform, including the integration and optimisation of the MPA system. This means that the project is an efficient use of GEF resources to influence significant policy reform.

#### **Positive involvement of pilot MPAs**

The pilot MPAs that have been involved in this project have been very positive in their engagement with the project. This has been important for measures to increase capacity and management effectiveness, improve coordination and pilot activities with the community.

#### **Many knowledgeable experts guiding project and transferring knowledge**

The project has successfully built a high-quality team of many experts to provide strategic guidance and interpret policies (e.g. CTA, project experts/specialists). These experts are bringing technical rigour to the project's activities.

#### **The MPA Network, CBPs and GIS have high potential for long-term benefit**

The work that has been undertaken to prepare for the MPA Network is very detailed and of high quality. Planning for three Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships has also commenced, with extensive discussions with stakeholders. It is likely that these two approaches will combine to provide valuable mechanisms for communication, collaboration and learning that will continue beyond the life of the GEF project. Also, good progress under the GIS component, which includes both database establishment and a website for public knowledge dissemination, will provide key long-term services for NFGA and MNR.

### 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
<b>Category 1: Environmental and social risk management</b>  The SESP for this project found it to be a Moderate-risk project that triggered multiple SES standards. The targeted assessment and identification of management measures that were required to address these have not been undertaken, 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 targeted assessment and identification of management measures are undertaken urgently, and that all activities (including those completed, in progress and planned) are reviewed and required adjustments made. The MTR team is aware that there have also been similar shortcomings in implementation of the High-risk C-PAR child projects 1, 2 and 3; this project should be included in a programmatic-level review of these shortcomings to identify systemic issues, opportunities and lessons learned. Also, the SESP has not been updated since project development and is based on the earlier version of the UNDP SESP.		
1	<b>Undertake a targeted assessment and identification of management measures in accordance with the process outlined in the ESMF for the project</b>	PMO, NFGA, UNDP CO
2	<b>Review all project outputs and activities (including those completed, underway and future) as part of the targeted assessment and identification of management measures, 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</b>	PMO, NFGA, UNDP CO
3	<b>Participate in a programmatic review of the processes followed in environmental and social risk management in C-PAR projects 1, 2, 3 and 4 since CEO endorsement, including considering the requirements for this Moderate-risk project, to identify lessons learned and opportunities to improve safeguards outcomes in these projects and future projects (including identifying roles, responsibilities and resources required to oversee and implement the requirements)</b>	UNDP Regional Office including safeguards specialists, UNDP CO, PMO, NFGA, RTA
4	<b>Update the SESP for the project</b>	PMO, NFGA
<b>Category 2: Gender mainstreaming</b>  The project is meeting its gender participation targets; however, there is no clear focus on how actions would be implemented to optimise gender mainstreaming outcomes.		
5	<b>Drive a new focus on female participation and optimising gender mainstreaming outcomes, by 1. developing annual gender action plans in accordance with relevant activities under different components, 2. updating the gender action plan that was developed during project preparation (Annex G of the project document) after the SESP has been updated, and 3. reporting annually on progress against these action plans and the project's gender action plan</b>	PMO, NFGA, gender specialist, subcontractors

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility
<b>Category 3: Internal project communication and coordination</b>  The interaction between the different components and subcontractors in the project is sometimes weak, including in gender mainstreaming, CBPs, GIS and remote sensing, planning of training, and pilot MPAs. Consequently, subcontractors working on related issues were not always cognisant of each other's work.		
6	<b>Develop and implement an Internal Communication and Coordination Action Plan to enhance the efficiency of information exchange, prevent duplication or conflict in work undertaken, and optimise delivery of all project components; this plan should identify all internal stakeholders, analyse their role in the project, map the relationships between stakeholders and their roles, and identify communication solutions and methods</b>	PMO, subcontractors, pilots
<b>Category 4: Results framework</b>  Some changes to indicators are recommended to align the results framework with changing circumstances.		
7	<b>Set baselines for Indicators 10b (using 2021 data) and 10c (using 2020 data) as soon as possible</b>	PMO
8	<b>Use data from 2021 to set the baseline for Indicator 10b (illegal fishing), because the levels of enforcement activity were very low during 2020 due to COVID-19, and remove the midterm target for Indicator 10b</b>	PMO
9	<b>Remove Indicator 8a, because Sanniang Bay NNR has not been established and a baseline cannot now be set at this stage of the project</b>	PMO
<b>Category 5: COVID-19 epidemic</b>  The impacts of COVID-19 restrictions have been substantial for this project. Continuous adaptive management approaches have had some effectiveness at mitigating disruption to deliverables; however, restrictions are likely to continue for some time and it is recommended that the project systematically identifies solutions that are specific for different actions.		
10	<b>Develop a plan to address the impacts of COVID-19 that identifies potential solutions that are specific for different actions and that enhance project implementation; this should be integrated with the proposed Internal Communication and Coordination Action Plan</b>	PMO, subcontractors, pilots
<b>Category 6: Sustainability</b>  The project is well positioned for many results to continue beyond the GEF funding period, especially due to the increased government funding and the strong involvement of government partners. It is important that the project considers how to ensure that the valuable outputs from the project continue after the project and have the required institutional support and ownership. Also, there are uncertainties around the continuation of involvement of communities in alternative livelihood activities and in other financing mechanisms. A sustainability plan would enable the project to proactively plan for these matters.		
11	<b>Develop a sustainability plan to identify how the project's results can be continued beyond the GEF funding, including identifying institutional roles and</b>	PMO, NFGA, PSC, sub-contractors

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility
	<b>responsibilities for the continuing operation of key project deliverables after the GEF project</b>	
<b>Category 7: Climate change</b>  There is limited attention to climate change and its impacts in the project's design and implementation; it was assessed as Low risk in the SESP. This should be re-assessed as part of the recommended update of the SESP (Recommendation 4), including (but not limited to) consideration of possible impacts on CWD and its habitats (especially seagrass), and sea-level rise impacts on coastal habitats and human livelihoods. Project activities should then be reviewed. Also, the Coastal Biodiversity Action Plans (CBAPs) should all include climate change impacts and adaptation as core content.		
12	<b>Review key activities in the context of climate change after the project SESP has been updated, identify any changes or new opportunities, and present the findings to the PSC and RTA</b>	PMO, sub-contractors
13	<b>Ensure that the Coastal Biodiversity Action Plans (CBAPs) all include climate change impacts and adaptation as core content</b>	PMO, sub-contractors

## 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
- synthesize 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 February and March 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 2014* ('UNDP-GEF MTR Guidance' hereafter).<sup>1</sup>

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 provincial project sites, during a mission between 28 February and 9 March 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.
- Development of specific questions and areas for discussion to guide the semi-structured interviews; these are shown in Annex 4.

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/mid-term/Guidance\\_Midterm%20Review%20\\_EN\\_2014.pdf](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/mid-term/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20_EN_2014.pdf)

- 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:
  - progress towards the project's objective and three outcomes
  - project implementation and adaptive management
  - 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) and the Project Management Office (PMO) on 11 March 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

With 3 million km<sup>2</sup> of marine area and 6,500 islands under its jurisdiction, China hosts an exceptional marine biodiversity comprising about 20,300 recorded species, including 12,000 species of marine fauna, for which the South China Sea is particularly important. The rich coastal and marine resources support important industries such as fishing, maritime shipping, and oil and gas exploration, which together contribute over 10% of China's overall GDP and are growing rapidly. As a consequence, the maritime economy has developed rapidly, with high growth of coastal populations, intensified ocean development and land reclamation, and severe pollution. These represent extreme threats to the country's rich and diverse coastal ecosystems. Some coastal rural communities also remain highly dependent on direct access to coastal natural resources for subsistence and livelihoods.

Simultaneously, there has been rapid growth in the number and coverage of marine protected areas (MPAs) in China, protecting some important sites for coastal and marine biodiversity conservation. The project document for this project identified that many of these MPAs lack required management effectiveness and are in themselves insufficient to address the heavy development pressures on coastal ecosystems. Also, large areas with important biodiversity and ecological functions lie outside the MPA system and receive little attention for biodiversity conservation, management of the MPAs is fragmented between agencies and levels, there is poor coordination with uses in surrounding areas, and there is a lack of specific legislation. The project document therefore established novel ecosystem-based approaches to conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity, using the iconic and declining Chinese white dolphin (CWD) as an indicator and flagship to engage multiple stakeholders at the ecosystem scale.

This project aims 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. The project focuses on coastal ecosystems, using the Chinese white dolphin as an indicator and flagship species to engage multiple stakeholders in novel ecosystem-based approaches. The target area for the project is three provinces in south-east China: Fujian, Guangdong and Guangxi.

Since the launch of reform and opening-up in 1978, the economy in China's southeast coastal areas has developed rapidly with great population expansion and increasing human activities, which posed a serious impact on the ecological environment and biological diversity in coastal waters. The globally significant marine and coastal biodiversity along China's SE coast is being increasingly affected by high population growth, rapid coastal economic development and related demand for resources. Major direct and indirect threats include habitat loss and degradation from coastal development, mariculture, water pollution, over-fishing, fishing by-catch, marine debris and ghost nets, underwater noise pollution, marine traffic (including tourist boats for dolphin watching).

#### 3.2 Problems that the Project Sought to Address

The project document identified that, although the government has made significant efforts to address the conservation of coastal and marine biodiversity, these remain impeded by a number of significant barriers:

**Barrier 1: Inadequate MPAs and enabling framework for integrated coastal biodiversity conservation**

- Current network remains inadequate compared to international targets and the heavy development pressures
- Little systematic planning of MPAs at a national scale and no formal assessment of marine KBAs
- Recent analysis of conservation needs called for strengthening China's protected areas but did not address the large gaps for the marine environment



- Existing MPAs are fragmented and isolated in the wider seascapes, with no mechanisms to ensure ecological corridors between them
- There is a need for integrated marine spatial planning
- MPAs lagging behind terrestrial reserves in China's PA reform
- Existing laws and regulations are not clear enough for the management and enforcement bodies, and also do not provide enough coordination between administration, enforcement, personnel and finance
- Resources tend to be focused on national-level PAs
- The concept of ecological compensation for communities who are disadvantaged by environmental measures is not well advanced in coastal and marine ecosystems.

**Barrier 2: Lack of experience, capacity and participation to apply ecosystem-based approaches**

- Threats to coastal ecosystems persist despite the substantial baseline investment in MPAs
- There is a need to improve the management effectiveness of the MPAs and to mainstream them into the wider seascapes
- MPAs have key gaps in their staffing levels, and staff often lack the necessary capacity
- No targeted plans and inter-sectoral mechanisms to harness the efforts of multiple stakeholders to address threats
- Participatory approaches are needed to engage key stakeholder groups such as boat operators or local fishing communities for involvement in threat-reduction
- Public awareness of the value of MPAs and of the threats facing globally significant biodiversity needs to be greatly enhanced.

**Barrier 3: Inadequate coordination, knowledge management and information systems for effective threat management**

- Individual MPAs are highly fragmented geographically and institutionally
- Nearby MPAs are often under different management agencies at different levels (national, provincial, municipal, county) with different planning and reporting procedures and operational arrangements
- Little local coordination and no formal mechanism for communication or sharing of knowledge and information or best practices
- Different research teams study local CWD populations along the coast, using differing methodologies for research and monitoring
- The absence of key baseline information or a coordination mechanism for CWD is a bottleneck for CWD conservation; similar barriers exist for other biodiversity
- No comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system for assessing and reporting on threats in key habitats and no system for coordinated threat management and enforcement.

### 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 4 project to the C-PAR Program-level results is reproduced in Annex 9. The C-PAR 1 PMO 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 4 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 conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity in South-East (SE) China through integrated seascape planning and threat management, MPA network expansion and strengthened MPA operations’. The three outcomes are described below.

#### **Outcome 1: Expanded and strengthened MPA network with biodiversity mainstreamed into marine spatial planning.**

This will expand the area and improve the connectivity of MPAs protecting globally significant biodiversity, pilot innovative mechanisms to mainstream biodiversity conservation into marine spatial planning, and improve MPA regulations and financing. Outcome 1 has three outputs.

#### **Outcome 2: Improved management effectiveness of MPA/ESAs in the project pilot areas**

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. Outcome 2 has three outputs.

#### **Outcome 3: MPA network functioning for improved data and knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation**

This will establish a functioning MPA Network linking MPAs across SE China, including a GIS-based information platform for knowledge and information sharing, will enhance the coordination of research and monitoring for globally significant biodiversity, and will 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. 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 through more effective management of marine resources. At the local level, the project aims to build the resilience of local communities adjacent to MPAs by demonstrating participatory management approaches that contribute to more sustainable and diversified livelihoods. 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 design (PPG) and the results were summarised in the project document. Eight SES risks for this project were identified that ‘could have potential limited negative impacts in the absence of safeguards’ (paragraph 102, p. 49); six of these risks were rated as low and two as moderate. Therefore, the overall SESP risk categorisation for the project is Moderate. The moderate risks relate to potential access restrictions for fishermen/women due to the establishment of new MPAs and strengthened enforcement of regulations in existing MPAs, and

gender-based impacts. These risks trigger the UNDP SES Principle 1 on Human Rights, SES Principle 2 on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, and SES Standard 5 on Displacement and Resettlement.

An Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) was developed for this project during the project preparation phase; this ESMF also applies to C-PAR projects 1, 2 and 3 (all High risk). The project document stated that 'a targeted assessment of potential economic displacement impacts at project pilot sites will be completed, followed by the identification of required management measures that need to be integrated into project activities' and that this was likely to include 'the development and implementation of a stand-alone management plan (e.g. Livelihoods Action Plan), though the specific measures will be determined based on the findings of the targeted assessment'. The ESMF provides more detail on these requirements (see especially p. 15). The project document stated that specialist safeguards expertise would be engaged for this work and included provision for this in the budget; it was envisaged that this would be done during the inception phase.

Paragraph 104 (p. 50) of the project document stipulated that 'no project activities that could result in economic displacement will commence until the targeted assessment has been undertaken, and the management measures (e.g. Livelihood Action Plan) have been developed, approved and put in place'; note that the project document and ESMF did not indicate who the approver for these should be. Specific outputs and activities were listed that should not start until these conditions were met.<sup>2</sup>

On 1 January 2021, the updated UNDP Social and Environmental Standards and UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure became effective. It should be noted that this C-PAR 4 project must be delivered in accordance with the updated SES 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 National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA) 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 the Academy of Inventory and Planning (AIP) of the NFGA, located in Beijing. The PMO is led by the Project Manager and includes a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), a Project Assistant and an MPA Network Coordinator.

There are three Provincial Focal Points in each of the three target provinces (Guangxi, Guangdong and Fujian).

The activities of the project focus on three pilot areas:

- a) BQCW: Beihai-Qinzhou Coastal Waters (Guangxi)
- b) ZJCW: Zhuhai-Jiangmen Coastal Waters (Guangdong)
- c) XBCW: Xiamen Bay Coastal Waters (Fujian).

There are five Focal Points in these areas, located in Qinzhou, Beihai, Zhuhai, Jiangmen and Xiamen.

The National Project Director (NPD) is the Deputy Director of NFGA.

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) chaired by the NPD has been established and has met twice.

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

---

<sup>2</sup> Specific activities identified – Output 1.1: Activity 1.1.3 MPA expansion, 1.1.4 MPA upgrading, 1.1.5 ESA establishment; Output 2.1: Activity 2.1.9 MPA regulations; Output 2.3: Activity 2.3.2 voluntary compliance, Activity 2.3.5 compliance and enforcement.

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.

As part of the C-PAR Program, the project receives support from the C-PAR Program Alignment Officer, a position that is funded by the C-PAR 1 project budget, sits within the C-PAR 1 PMO and ensures harmonization of approaches and coherence in implementation processes across the overall C-PAR program.

### 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	11 October 2018
GEF Agency Approval (UNDP ProDoc signature, after Cabinet endorsement)	3 October 2019
Inception Workshop	24 December 2019
Project Manager hired	December 2019
Midterm Evaluation	22 April 2022
Terminal Evaluation due	3 July 2024

### 3.6 Main Stakeholders

The main stakeholders for the project are shown below (modified from Table 9 of the project document).

Stakeholder	Role in the project (at time of project document)
<b>National level</b>	
Ministry of Finance (MoF)	MoF is the GEF Operational Focal point of China responsible for coordinating the programming of GEF resources and overseeing the China GEF portfolio with the GEF Agencies. MoF will be the recipient of the GEF grant on behalf of the Chinese Government.
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA; Formerly Ministry of Agriculture)	MARA is the competent authority of CWD and CWD NRs in the pilot areas. Will be particularly involved in project components 1 and 3, i.e. expansion and establishment of MPA Network.
National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA; formerly State Forestry Administration)	Through its Natural Protected Area Department, NFGA is the national implementing partner for this project, responsible for all project components and providing a national project director and ensuring quality and timely results monitoring and reporting of the project. NFGA will coordinate those MPAs to join the MPA Network and any other MPAs that are transitioned under the ministry as part of the institutional reform underway.  The stakeholder engagement plan, particularly national agencies, will be revised during inception phase as the structure of new Ministries and allocation of functions becomes clearer.
Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)	This ministry was created at the end of the PPG phase. The ministry will be involved via NFGA and also SOA.

Stakeholder	Role in the project (at time of project document)
	Institutional reform is being finalised. The stakeholder engagement plan, particularly national agencies, will be revised during inception phase as the structure of new Ministries and allocation of functions becomes clearer.
Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE; formerly Ministry of Environmental Protection, MEP)	<p>This ministry was created at the end of the PPG phase. The FECO division of MEP is expected to remain in place, under the new MEE. MEP was the competent authority of Hepu Dugong NNR in the pilot area and some other MPAs in the project area. These functions could transition to NFGA/MNR.</p> <p>Institutional reform is being finalised. The stakeholder engagement plan, particularly national agencies, will be revised during inception phase as the structure of new Ministries and allocation of functions becomes clearer.</p>
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – China Country Office (CO)	UNDP is the GEF Agency for the project, and is therefore responsible for oversight and monitoring project implementation and ensuring adherence to UNDP and GEF policies and procedures.
<b>Provincial level</b>	
Fujian Provincial Department of Forestry	Fujian Provincial Department of Forestry is a key stakeholder of the project, and will coordinate and participate in the project, especially in Output 1.1, 1.2 and Component 3.
Guangdong Provincial Department of Forestry	Guangdong Provincial Department of Forestry is a key stakeholder of the project, and will coordinate and participate in the project, especially in Output 1.1, 1.2 and Component 3.
Department of Forestry of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region	Department of Forestry of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region is a key stakeholder of the project, and will coordinate and participate in the project, especially in Output 1.1, 1.2 and Component 3.
Third Institute of Oceanography, Ministry of Natural Resources (TIO, MNR)	TIO is a key provider of technical expertise on CWD conservation. The project will collaborate with TIO for species conservation work, and it will be a collaborator for the systematic biodiversity monitoring, evaluation and strengthening of Component 3.
<b>Pilot area level - enforcement agencies</b>	
Xiamen Municipal Natural Resources and Planning Bureau	Key stakeholder at local level and will play a leading role in many activities related to Xiamen Bay Pilot area, especially in output 1.2, 1.3 and 2.3.
Zhuhai Municipal Natural Resources Bureau	Key stakeholder at local level and will play a leading role in many activities related to Zhuhai-Jiangmen Pilot area, especially in output 1.2, 1.3 and 2.3.
Jiangmen Municipal Natural Resources Bureau / Ocean Bureau	Key stakeholder at local level and will play a leading role in many activities related to Zhuhai-Jiangmen Pilot area, especially in output 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 2.3.
Qinzhou Municipal Forestry Bureau	Key stakeholders at local level and will play a leading role in many activities related to Qinzhou-Beihai Pilot area, especially in output 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 2.3.

Stakeholder	Role in the project (at time of project document)
Aquatic and Husbandry Bureau of Qinzhou	Key stakeholder at local level and will play a leading role in many activities related to Qinzhou-Beihai Pilot area, especially in output 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 2.3.
Beihai Municipal Natural Resources Bureau / Forestry Bureau	Key stakeholder at local level and will play a leading role in many activities related to Qinzhou-Beihai Pilot area, especially in output 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 2.3.
<b>Pilot area level - target MPAs</b>	
Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR	Key target MPA in the Xiamen Bay pilot area. The project will collaborate with it for species conservation work and systematic biodiversity monitoring, especially for outputs in Components 2 and 3.
Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR	Key target MPA in the Zhuhai-Jiangmen pilot area, the project will collaborate with it for species conservation work and systematic biodiversity monitoring, especially for outputs in Components 2 and 3.
Jiangmen CWD PNR	Key target MPA in the Zhuhai-Jiangmen pilot area. The project will collaborate with it for species conservation work and systematic biodiversity monitoring, especially outputs in Components 2 and 3.
Hepu Dugong NNR	Key target MPA in the Qinzhou-Beihai pilot area. The project will collaborate with it for species conservation work and systematic biodiversity monitoring, especially outputs in Component 2 and 3.
Shankou Mangrove NNR	Key target MPA in the Qinzhou-Beihai pilot area. The project will collaborate with it for species conservation work and systematic biodiversity monitoring, especially outputs in Component 2 and 3.
<b>Pilot area level - local communities</b>	
Sanniang Bay village (Qinzhou)	Key beneficiary of the marine resources and biodiversity. Potential major role in local habitat conservation, controlling of poaching, and natural resource management. Critical participant for Output 2.2 and 2.3. The establishment of proposed Sanniang Bay MPA would restrict local traditional fishing activities, some livelihoods support needs to be provided.
Shanliao village (Beihai)	Key beneficiary of marine resources and biodiversity. It has a potentially major role in local habitat conservation, controlling of poaching, and natural resource management. Critical participant in output 2.2 and 2.3. Strengthening MPA management and law enforcement will restrict local traditional fishing activities, some livelihoods support needs to be provided.
Nanwan village (Jiangmen)	Key beneficiary of the marine resources and biodiversity. It has a potential role in local habitat conservation and natural resource management. Nanwan village will be involved in the output 2.2 and 2.3.
<b>Local and International NGOs</b>	
Local NGOs	Relevant local NGOs will be invited to participate in the project Technical Advisory Consortium and may be requested to support

Stakeholder	Role in the project (at time of project document)
	specific activities (e.g. on training, awareness raising etc) during the project implementation phase.
WWF-HK	WWF-HK can provide knowledge, experiences and lessons learned, as well as technical support to the project. WWF-HK is a potential partner for several components of the project, and has expressed a strong willingness to participate.
WWF-China	WWF-China can provide knowledge, experiences and lessons learned, as well as technical support to the project. WWF-China has expressed a strong willingness to participate in the project and has signed the letter for cooperation.
<b>Local academic institutions, media and others</b>	
Academic institutions	Relevant institutions will be invited to participate in the project Technical Advisory Consortium and may be requested to provide technical inputs on training, monitoring and evaluations during the project implementation phase.
CWD Conservation Union	Many of the members of CWD Conservation Union are CWD conservation and management departments, they also participate in the project, many activities need their coordination, organisation and implementation.
Local media	Key partners for the publicity and education about this Project through information dissemination and adding relevant programs and lessons.

## 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 a strong basis in China's national development and environmental agendas. As part of the C-PAR program group of projects, 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 as the only C-PAR child project that focuses on marine ecosystems and species and MPAs.

The project strategy provides an effective route towards the expected results, via a clear theory of change (Figure 2 on p. 21 of the project document).

The project document identifies the following four assumptions in the theory of change (Table 1 on p. 22 of the project document):

1. The national, provincial and municipal authorities are willing to expand the network of MPAs and prioritize the conservation of globally significant biodiversity, including through mainstreaming into marine spatial planning and allocating additional finances.
2. Increased capacity of MPA staff, together with greater participation of communities in MPA management will improve MPA management effectiveness and reduce locally specific threats to coastal biodiversity.
3. Networking, improved monitoring and evaluation, and sharing of knowledge institutionalized in the project and the proposed MPA Network will enhance capacity for sustainable ecosystem management and conservation of globally significant coastal biodiversity.
4. The expected outcomes within the pilot areas are sufficient to conserve their globally significant coastal biodiversity, and mechanisms are in place to up-scale the results throughout the project area.

Assumption 1 is sound, because the national commitment is strong and provincial and municipal commitment in China is built on that. Assumption 2 is sound, although it is important to note that capacity and participation are only part of the enabling environment required to achieve positive biodiversity outcomes. Assumption 3 is also sound. Assumption 4 is less sound, because the threats operating in the pilot are numerous and many are severe, and the project's interventions are limited in scope; up-scaling mechanisms are vital to deriving broad and sustainable outcomes for the globally significant biodiversity.

The project document also identified assumptions for each of the 13 indicators in the project results framework.



During project development, extensive consultation was undertaken with bureaus at the pilot areas to ensure that project outputs and activities were compatible with their priorities and legislative requirements.

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 political support in the Chinese Government, were considered central to the high likelihood of results being sustainable. As the MPA child project under the C-PAR Program, this project will be the coastal and marine catalyst for the rapidly advancing national agenda for protected areas, ensuring that the project’s achievements go beyond SE China, thereby increasing the scalability of its outcomes.

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 (and ESMF) provide 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, by involving national, provincial and local government agencies and local communities.

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

- A gender analysis and action plan were completed during the PPG phase (Annex G of the project document); this describes specific actions to mainstream gender into project implementation, including gender-disaggregated indicators and targets.
- A gender specialist was involved in this process and representatives of women were involved throughout.
- The key strategies to be followed include: a) Mobilize support from gender specialists; b) Designate gender focal points to be responsible for gender-related activities; c) Build capacity of the project management staff to promote gender equality; d) Ensure women’s genuine and equal representation (e.g. in task forces, committees, training, sustainable livelihoods etc., allocating women-targeted budgets if necessary to achieve this); e) Ensure women’s equal access to project information (e.g. by ensuring specific consultations with women’s groups).
- 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 harmonized 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 4) to the program-level results framework. The project benefits from the programmatic approach as monitoring and evaluation is closely coordinated through the C-PAR Program / C-PAR national project (C-PAR 1).

#### 4.1.2 Results framework

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

After the project commenced with a change of IP, some baselines and targets for Indicators 6, 7 and 8 were revised; these changes were approved by the PSC in the first PSC meeting and by the RTA. The changes are summarised as follows:

- Indicator 6b: baseline was recalculated to better reflect the intended use of the FSS.
- Indicator 7: baselines recalculated using the Capacity Development Scorecard; new EOP targets set according to criteria agreed between the expert and PMO; new midterm targets set as halfway to the EOP targets.
- Indicator 8: baselines recalculated using the METT; new EOP targets set as 70% for all target MPAs, which is an increase from the original targets of 67% for all target MPAs; new midterm targets set as halfway to the EOP targets.

This SMART analysis considers the new baselines and targets for these indicators rather than those from the project document.

To assist the PMO in following up on this MTR and in preparing for the remainder of the project and the terminal evaluation, 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. # direct project beneficiaries (disaggregated by gender). Total of: a) 50% of the population in target villages near project MPAs; b) People receiving targeted training (including MPA and MPA system staff).	a) 1500 people (50% female) benefiting directly from project b) 300 people have received targeted training (35% female)	a) 3,500 people benefiting directly from project (50% female) b) 750 people have received targeted training (C-PAR Program target for C-PAR4) (35% female)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. MPA network in SE China expanded by 40,000ha (including ESAs)	10,000 ha of new MPAs / ESAs gazetted	40,000 ha of new MPAs / ESAs gazetted	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Population size of Chinese white dolphin as indicator of globally significant biodiversity in the pilot areas  a) BQCW: Beihai-Qinzhou Coastal Waters  b) ZJCW: Zhuhai-Jiangmen Coastal Waters  c) XBCW = Xiamen Bay Coastal Waters	a) – c) No mid-term target	a) - c) Stable or improved from baseline	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Indicators 1, 2 and 3 meet all SMART criteria.

**Outcome 1**

Description of Indicator	Midterm target	End-of-project target level	SMART analysis				
			S	M	A	R	T
4. Established collaborative governance and planning mechanism for MPAs in the context of wider seascapes	3 inter-sectoral and where necessary transboundary Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships (CBPs) established and chaired by provincial MPA administrations, with at least annual meetings held (at least 30% of participants are female)	3 CBPs implementing CBAPs across pilot areas, with at least annual meetings held  Up-scaling mechanism agreed by NFGA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Extent of rules, regulations and management measures for MPAs/ESAs and mainstreaming in marine spatial planning.  a) New/improved provincial Rules, regulations and management measures eg for transboundary (provincial/municipal) design of MPAs  b) new/improved local rules, regulations and management measures for sustainable MPA management and eco-compensation	a) MPA legal and institutional task force operational  b) 1 new local rule, regulation, management measure	a) At least 2 improved/new provincial rules, regulations, management measures  b) At least 2 new local rules, regulations, management measures	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6. Financial sustainability and resourcing for MPAs: a) amount of financing from new eco-compensation mechanism (diverse sources including governmental, private sector etc); and b) improved financial sustainability as measured by the Financial Sustainability scorecard (FSS) - see Annex B)  FSS Components:  1. Legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks  2. Business planning and tools for cost- effective management  3. Tools for revenue generation	a) \$50,000 per year delivered for eco-compensation  b) Mid-way to target	a) \$200,000 per year delivered for eco-compensation  b) 30% increase in total FSS score	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

(average of the three pilot areas)							
------------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Indicators 4, 5 and 6 meet the SMART criteria. For Indicator 6, although it meets the SMART criteria, it is recommended that, to improve clarity, the EOP target be amended to include the exact target represented by the '30% increase' (see Annex 8 for specific recommendation). Note that a revised baseline for FSS was adopted and this analysis considers this new baseline.

## Outcome 2

Description of Indicator	Midterm target	End-of-project target level	SMART analysis				
			S	M	A	R	T
7. Capacity of MPA agencies in pilot areas, as measured by Capacity Development Scorecard	a) Beihai = 68% b) Qinzhou = 64% c) Zhuhai = 74% d) Jiangmen = 65% e) Xiamen = 77%	a) Beihai = 80% b) Qinzhou = 76% c) Zhuhai = 84% d) Jiangmen = 77% e) Xiamen = 89%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8. Management effectiveness of target MPAs of global significance, indicated by the percentage increase in the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores.	a) Proposed Sanniang Bay CWD NR = n/a b) Shankou Mangrove NNR = 63.34% c) Dugong NNR = 61.67% d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 66.67% e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 65.56% f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 68.89%	a) Proposed Sanniang Bay CWD NR = 70% b) Shankou Mangrove NNR = 70% c) Dugong NNR = 70% d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 70% e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 70% f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 70%	✓	✓	?	✓	✓
9. Extent of community engagement in MPA conservation:  a) # citizens (disaggregated by gender) participating in actions for MPAs (volunteer marine debris cleans, marine debris surveys, CWD sightings reports by smartphones), voluntary MPA rangers etc).  b) # eco-labelled tourism operations (boat operators, tour guides, restaurants, shell-fishers etc) - mainly Beihai-Qinzhou  c) # of people (gender disaggregated) benefiting	a) 2 citizen participatory action programmes (at least 250 participants, 50% women) b) Eco-label system established c) 10	a) 4 citizen participatory action programmes (1000 participants, 50% women) b) 10 businesses eco-labelled c) 30 (at least 50% women)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

from enhanced and more sustainable livelihoods as a result of project activities for MPAs							
10. Reduction in key threats to biodiversity in pilot areas:			?	?	?	✓	✓
a) # CWD and other cetaceans found dead with external injuries due to human activities	a) 5% reduction	a) 10% reduction					
b) # incidents of illegal fishing* in target MPAs	b) 5% reduction	b) 10% reduction					
c) Weight of debris/litter collected during volunteer beach cleans	c) 5% reduction	c) 10% reduction					
* measured separately for shell-fishing/mud digging in BQCW							
11. Level of understanding on value of MPAs among public and decision makers, as measured by KAP (Knowledge Attitudes and Practices) survey score.	No mid-term assessment	15% improvement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

For Indicator 8a, the project document was confident that Sanniang Bay CWD NNR would be established during the project, and set a METT target for the NNR authority that was not yet formed; given the uncertainties around PA establishment, this was not a realistic indicator and it is recommended that, because the NNR has not been established, Indicator 8a be removed (see Appendix 8). Note that revised baselines and targets for Indicators 7 and 8 were adopted and this analysis considers these.

For Indicator 10a, it is proving difficult to accurately determine the cause of death of CWDs, therefore this indicator is not specific, measurable or achievable. No change to 10a is recommended, because it is too late in the project to develop a new indicator and baseline. Indicators 10b and 10c meet the SMART criteria. However, the baselines for 10b and 10c have still not been set, despite suitable data for baselines having been collected; the MTR team understands that the delay in setting the baselines is due to a lack of confidence in which data sets to use. It is recommended that these baselines be set as soon as possible (Recommendations 7 and 8, and Appendix 8).

Indicators 7, 9 and 11 meet all SMART criteria.

### Outcome 3

Description of Indicator	Midterm target	End-of-project target level	SMART analysis				
			S	M	A	R	T
12. Operational MPA Network for SE China established for improved data collection, sharing of knowledge and information and best practices for	MPA Network formally established  5 members	10 members  Network operational and with dedicated resources for operation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Midterm Review Report 2021: China Protected Areas System Reform – C-PAR 4

integrated MPA seascape planning and threat management		Operationalised information and knowledge management and sharing system linking different MPAs  Working groups on: CWD, habitats and species monitoring					
13. Number of key project lessons and strategies for sustainable coastal management documented, disseminated and adopted at local, provincial and national levels	Initial project results and lessons learned shared through MPA Network website and media	All project results and lessons learned shared through MPA Network website and media (30% female participants); lessons learned presented to MPA administration and Municipal authorities for adoption in coastal zone planning processes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Indicators 12 and 13 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: 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**

**Progress towards Objective: SATISFACTORY**

<b>Indicator 1: # direct project beneficiaries (disaggregated by gender). Total of: a) 50% of the population in target villages near project MPAs; b) People receiving targeted training (including MPA and MPA system staff).</b>				
<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midterm target</b>	<b>End-of-project Target</b>	<b>Status at MTR</b>	<b>MTR Assessment</b>
a) and b) = 0	a) 1500 people (50% female) benefiting directly from project  b) 300 people have received targeted training (35% female)	a) 3,500 people benefiting directly from project (50% female)  b) 750 people have received training (C-PAR Program target for C-PAR4) (35% female)	a) 2,300 people benefiting directly from project (68% female)  b) 310 people have received training (C-PAR Program target for C-PAR4) (52% female)  (Source: Self Assessment Report)	<b>ON TARGET</b>

The midterm targets for the number of direct beneficiaries and the number of people receiving training have been exceeded and the project is on target to achieve the EOP total targets; this includes the target for the percentage of beneficiaries who are female. The beneficiaries include people who participated in beach cleaning campaigns, activities such as CWD Awareness Day and Ocean Day, training and publicity activities in local communities and schools (in conjunction with the demonstration MPAs and selected communities), and various community co-management activities in the three demonstration MPAs. Training was provided in a variety of areas, including beach cleaning and CWD monitoring for community members, and PA management, legislation, gender mainstreaming and project management for MPA authorities.

<b>Indicator 2:</b> MPA network in SE China expanded by 40,000ha (including ESAs)				
<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midterm target</b>	<b>End-of-project Target</b>	<b>Status at MTR</b>	<b>MTR Assessment</b>
0 ha (baseline year is 2016)	10,000 ha of new MPAs / ESAs gazetted	40,000 ha of new MPAs / ESAs gazetted	16,400.16 ha of new MPAs gazetted  (Source: Self Assessment Report)	<b>ON TARGET</b>

A total of 16,400.16 ha of new MPAs have been added in SE China, comprising 141.98 ha in Guangdong, 2,225.56 ha in Guangxi, and 14,032.62 ha in Fujian.

The midterm target has been achieved. It is difficult to predict the likelihood of the EOP target being achieved, because the MPA integration and optimisation planning is still underway, which includes draft national and provincial plans and data that are not currently available. In discussions during the mission, all relevant stakeholders were hopeful that the midterm target would be achieved, in accordance with the principles of the integration and optimisation process. For this reason, the MTR team has assessed the indicator as on target.

<b>Indicator 3:</b> Population size of Chinese white dolphin as indicator of globally significant biodiversity in the pilot areas				
a) BQCW: Beihai-Qinzhou Coastal Waters b) ZJCW: Zhuhai-Jiangmen Coastal Waters c) XBCW = Xiamen Bay Coastal Waters				
<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midterm target</b>	<b>End-of-project Target</b>	<b>Status at MTR</b>	<b>MTR Assessment</b>
a) BQCW: >=230 individuals b) ZJCW: close to 2000 individuals c) XBCW: 60-76 individuals	a) – c) No mid-term target	a) - c) Stable or improved from baseline	Stable  (Source: Self Assessment Report and discussions during mission)	<b>ON TARGET</b>

The Self Assessment Report provided the following approximate CWD numbers from 2019: 255 in Dugong NNR in the Beihai-Qinzhou Coastal Waters (Guangxi); more than 2000 in the Pearl River Estuary in the Zhuhai-Jiangmen Coastal Waters (Guangdong); and more than 80 in Xiamen Bay Coastal Waters (Fujian). There is no midterm target for this indicator, and it is considered on track for the EOP target.

The project is investing in developing standards and guidelines for CWD monitoring and is gathering data collected by different MPAs; it is not providing funding to the direct collection of monitoring data. The monitoring guidelines are well advanced and will be a valuable contribution to CWD conservation.



**Outcome 1: Expanded and strengthened MPA network with biodiversity mainstreamed into marine spatial planning**

**Progress towards Outcome 1: SATISFACTORY**

<b>Indicator 4:</b> Established collaborative governance and planning mechanism for MPAs in the context of wider seascapes				
<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midterm target</b>	<b>End-of-project Target</b>	<b>Status at MTR</b>	<b>MTR Assessment</b>
No framework exists for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation from MPAs into wider seascapes	3 inter-sectoral and where necessary transboundary Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships (CBPs) established and chaired by provincial MPA administrations, with at least annual meetings held (at least 30% of participants are female)	3 CBPs implementing CBAPs across pilot areas, with at least annual meetings held  Up-scaling mechanism agreed by NFGA	Development of the 3 CBPs is underway, with a sub-contractor engaged in each province to establish the groups; no meetings have yet been held  (Source: interviews)	<b>ON TARGET</b>

Work is underway to develop the CBPs in the three project provinces, through three subcontractors that were engaged in 2021. Communication with stakeholders has commenced, a shared agreement template has been developed, and the first meetings are expected to occur in April (Guangdong and Fujian) and June 2022 (Guangxi). Although the midterm target has not been met because the CBPs are not yet established, the indicator is on track for the EOP target. COVID-19 restrictions have contributed to the delay in progress.

In many stakeholder interviews, the CBPs were considered a useful approach to coordinating the numerous and diverse stakeholders involved in the management of MPAs, CWDs, and marine and coastal resources.

There were differences in the progress made by the three provinces on this work, with the least progress made in Guangxi (where limited progress has been made on obtaining stakeholder involvement and the Coastal Biodiversity Action Plan (CBAP) has not been started).

There has been communication between the CBP subcontractors, but this has been variable. For example, communication effectively led to an agreement template, yet there does not appear to be collaboration over development of the CBAPs (including their purpose and content). It is recommended that the PMO facilitates regular cooperation between the sub-contractors to maximise synergies and agree on shared approaches where appropriate.

The midterm target states that the CBPs will be 'chaired by provincial MPA administrations', but during meetings it was apparent that this was not being done for all CBPs. It is recommended that the PMO and sub-contractors collaborate to determine whether this approach is appropriate.

The EOP target includes 'Up-scaling mechanism agreed by NFGA'; the project should carefully consider how this will be reported against and achieved.

<b>Indicator 5:</b> Extent of rules, regulations and management measures for MPAs/ESAs and mainstreaming in marine spatial planning.  a) New/improved provincial Rules, regulations and management measures eg for transboundary (provincial/municipal) design of MPAs  b) new/improved local rules, regulations and management measures for sustainable MPA management and eco-compensation				
Baseline	Midterm target	End-of-project Target	Status at MTR	MTR Assessment
0	a) MPA legal and institutional task force operational  b) 1 new local rule, regulation, management measure	a) At least 2 improved/new provincial rules, regulations, management measures  b) At least 2 new local rules, regulations, management measures	a) MPA legal and institutional task force not operational; progress is reported on several provincial measures and processes:  Fujian: ‘Notice on Strengthening the Construction and Management of Nature Reserves’; ‘Notice on Further Strengthening the Comprehensive Management and disposal of Sea Debris/Garbage’.  Guangxi: ‘Measures for the Administration of Marine Ecological Compensation in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region’; ‘Notice on Reporting of Mangrove Destruction in Beihai City’; ‘Notice on Mangrove Patrolling & Inspecting in Beihai City’.  Guangdong: ‘Measures on Financial Penalties on Ecological Environment Damage In Guangdong Province’; Guangdong Marine Comprehensive Law Enforcement Corps, affiliated with Dept of Agriculture and Rural Areas.  b) Several local measures and processes progressed:  Fujian: ‘Measures for the Administration of the National Nature Reserve of The Rare Marine	<b>ON TARGET</b>

			<p>Species of Xiamen’ (developed through contract under the project).</p> <p>Guangdong: ‘Guangdong Jiangmen CWD PNR Management Measures (Deliberation Draft)’.</p> <p>(Source: Self Assessment Report and additional information provided during mission)</p>	
--	--	--	---	--

The project reports progress on many provincial and local rules, regulations and measures. Of these, the ‘Measures for the Administration of the National Nature Reserve of The Rare Marine Species of Xiamen’ are being developed through a contract under this project. The other rules and measures are being developed as part of provincial and local planning processes, some of which can be considered co-financing contributions under the project. The EOP target is expected to be achieved.

The midterm target was not met because the ‘MPA legal and institutional task force’ was not established. However, the project engaged a legal expert to provide detailed specific recommendations to NFGA on management and control measures in China’s MPAs, including legislation recommendations, and is consulting with relevant agencies and experts on the findings.

<p><b>Indicator 6:</b> Financial sustainability and resourcing for MPAs: a) amount of financing from new eco-compensation mechanism (diverse sources including governmental, private sector etc); and b) improved financial sustainability as measured by the Financial Sustainability scorecard (FSS) - see Annex B)</p> <p>FSS Components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks</li> <li>Business planning and tools for cost- effective management</li> <li>Tools for revenue generation</li> </ol> <p>(average of the three pilot areas)</p>				
Baseline	Midterm target	End-of-project Target	Status at MTR	MTR Assessment
<p>a) \$0 for eco-compensation</p> <p>b) FSS Comp. 1: (41) 43%</p> <p>FSS Comp. 2: (21) 36%</p> <p>FSS Comp. 3: (9) 13%</p> <p>Total (71) 32%</p> <p>* Average of the three pilot areas</p>	<p>a) \$50,000 per year delivered for eco-compensation</p> <p>b) Mid-way to target</p>	<p>a) \$200,000 per year delivered for eco-compensation</p> <p>b) 30% increase in total FSS score</p>	<p>a) Total funds of 9.2 million RMB (approx. 1.44 million USD) reported: 500,000 RMB for Sun Yat-sen University, one of project subcontractors, in Qi'ao Mangrove PNR in Zhuhai in 2022; 2 million RMB for Guangxi Dugong NNR, with the assistance of the project, for seagrass bed protection and restoration; 5 million RMB for Shankou</p>	<b>ON TARGET</b>

			Mangrove NNR from wetland subsidy funds for mangrove conservation; 1.7 million RMB for China National Nuclear Corporation to supported construction of a science hall at Shankou Mangrove NNR.  b) Increase of 9 from baseline (12.7% increase):  FSS Comp. 1: (48) 51%  FSS Comp. 2: (22) 37%  FSS Comp. 3: (10) 14%  Total (80) 36%  (Source: Self Assessment Report)	
--	--	--	---	--

The Self Assessment Report reported large sums of money delivered for eco-compensation under Indicator 6(a) and, on this basis, the midterm and EOP targets have been met. This includes a variety of funding sources, including government grants. It is recommended that the project clearly defines 'eco-compensation' to clarify the scope of reporting under this indicator, with careful consideration of the intent of the project as described in the project document, especially in paragraphs 69 to 71.

The project has engaged two ecological compensation experts to inform work on eco-compensation. The consultants are undertaking a review of marine eco-compensation financing and proposing an eco-compensation financing promotion plan for protecting the seagrass bed ecosystem in Hepu Dugong NNR, Guangxi (based on an analysis of the characteristics and status of seagrass bed ecosystems). The detailed review includes suggestions for marine eco-compensation financing and is a valuable output from this project. In addition, the project provides an important opportunity for 'real world' testing of eco-compensation theory in an MPA.

Under 6b, a substantial increase in FSS was recorded, with midterm total FSS increasing by 12.7% from the baseline; this is slightly below the midterm target (which is 'mid-way to the EOP target' of 30%).

## **Outcome 2: Improved management effectiveness of MPA/ESAs in the project pilot areas**

### **Progress towards Outcome 2: SATISFACTORY**

<b>Indicator 7: Capacity of MPA agencies in pilot areas, as measured by Capacity Development Scorecard</b>				
<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Midterm target</b>	<b>End-of-project Target</b>	<b>Status at MTR</b>	<b>MTR Assessment</b>
a) Beihai = 56%	a) Beihai = 68%	a) Beihai = 80%	a) Beihai 69%	<b>ON TARGET</b>
b) Qinzhou = 53%	b) Qinzhou = 64%	b) Qinzhou = 76%	b) Qinzhou 65%	
c) Zhuhai = 64%	c) Zhuhai = 74%	c) Zhuhai = 84%	c) Zhuhai 75%	

d) Jiangmen = 54%	d) Jiangmen = 65%	d) Jiangmen = 77%	d) Jiangmen = 67%	
e) Xiamen = 66%	e) Xiamen = 77%	e) Xiamen = 89%	e) Xiamen = 78%	
			(Source: Self Assessment Report)	

The project has successfully increased the institutional capacities for MPAs in the pilot areas and has met the revised midterm targets. Given the project's strong focus on capacity development, the MTR team considers that the EOP targets are likely to be met.

<b>Indicator 8:</b> Management effectiveness of target MPAs of global significance, indicated by the percentage increase in the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores.				
Baseline	Midterm target	End-of-project Target	Status at MTR	MTR Assessment
a) Proposed Sanniang Bay CWD NR = n/a	a) Proposed Sanniang Bay CWD NR = n/a	a) Proposed Sanniang Bay CWD NR = 70%	a) Proposed Sanniang Bay CWD NR = n/a	<b>ON TARGET</b>
b) Shankou Mangrove NNR = 56.67%	b) Shankou Mangrove NNR = 63.34%	b) Shankou Mangrove NNR = 70%	b) Shankou Mangrove NNR = 65.66%	
c) Dugong NNR = 53.33%	c) Dugong NNR = 61.67%	c) Dugong NNR = 70%	c) Dugong NNR = 62.63%	
d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 63.33%	d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 66.67%	d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 70%	d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 67.68%	
e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 61.11%	e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 65.56%	e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 70%	e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 66.67%	
f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 67.78%	f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 68.89%	f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 70%	f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 69.70%	
			(Source: Self Assessment Report)	

The project has successfully increased protected area management effectiveness, as indicated by METT scores, for the five existing MPAs, and the midterm targets have been met. As described in Section 4.1.2, Sanniang Bay CWD NR has not been established, therefore no measurements are possible and it is recommended that this sub-target is removed.

<b>Indicator 9:</b> Extent of community engagement in MPA conservation:				
a) # citizens (disaggregated by gender) participating in actions for MPAs (volunteer marine debris cleans, marine debris surveys, CWD sightings reports by smartphones), voluntary MPA rangers etc).  b) # eco-labelled tourism operations (boat operators, tour guides, restaurants, shell-fishers etc) - mainly Beihai-Qinzhou  c) # of people (gender disaggregated) benefiting from enhanced and more sustainable livelihoods as a result of project activities for MPAs				
Baseline	Midterm target	End-of-project Target	Status at MTR	MTR Assessment
a) 0 b) 0 c) 0	a) 2 citizen participatory action programmes (at least 250 participants, 50% women)  b) Eco-label system established  c) 10	a) 4 citizen participatory action programmes (1000 participants, 50% women)  b) 10 businesses eco-labelled  c) 30 (at least 50% women)	a) 212 volunteers (130 or 61.3% of whom were female) participated in beach cleaning activities.  b) Eco-label system established, based on the 'ocean friendly consumption' system developed in another project.  c) 415 families in Yong'an and Beijie villages in Shankou town, Guangxi, are benefiting from sustainable livelihoods by renting approx. 60 ha of culture ponds to Shankou Mangrove NNR for ecological restoration. Also, a project has identified marine stewardship and sustainable livelihood opportunities in pilot villages in Qinzhou-Beihai, Guangxi, and village action plans are being prepared.  (Source: Self Assessment Report, additional information provided during mission)	<b>ON TARGET</b>

For Indicator 9a, there was good participation in beach cleaning activities at several beaches, including training, collection of debris and garbage, and surveying the garbage by sorting into categories; this was then used as the basis of awareness raising around marine conservation issues. As these related activities were undertaken during the same beach visits, the MTR team considers them to be one 'citizen participatory action programme' (as per the wording of the target). Because reporting was not received on other participatory programmes and the number of participants is less than 250, the MTR team considers that the midterm target was not achieved. Other programmes are in development, including opportunities to record CWD sightings by smartphones and other volunteer activities, therefore the MTR team believes that the EOP target can be achieved.

Regarding Indicator 9b, the eco-label system has been established, so this midterm target was met. The responsible sub-contractor has extensive experience in related work and will be working on this component of the project until 2024, so good progress is expected and the indicator is on track.

<b>Indicator 10:</b> Reduction in key threats to biodiversity in pilot areas:				
a) # CWD and other cetaceans found dead with external injuries due to human activities b) # incidents of illegal fishing* in target MPAs c) Weight of debris/litter collected during volunteer beach cleans * measured separately for shell-fishing/mud digging in BQCW				
Baseline	Midterm target	End-of-project Target	Status at MTR	MTR Assessment
a) # of CWD and other cetaceans found dead with external injuries due to human activities  BQCW: 7 ZJCW: 12 XBCW: 3 (average 2012-16)	a) 5% reduction	a) 10% reduction	a) >5% reduction in 2020  BQCW: 4 ZJCW: 7 XBCW: 0	<b>ON TARGET</b>
b) # incidents of illegal fishing in target MPAs BQCW: X  ZJCW: X XBCW: X  Baseline to be completed in year 1	b) 5% reduction	b) 10% reduction	b) Baseline not yet set.  BQCW: 21* ZJCW: 0 XBCW: 0  * Shell-fishing:6 * Mud digging:15	
c) Weight of debris/litter collected during volunteer beach cleans  BQCW: X ZJCW: X XBCW: X  Baseline to be completed in year 1	c) 5% reduction	c) 10% reduction	c) Baseline not yet set. Proposed baseline (from 2020):  BQCW: 237.86 kg ZJCW: 203.02 kg XBCW: 154.53 kg  No summarised midterm data provided for (c) (although evidence of reduction in weight was viewed)  (Source: Self Assessment Report, discussions and reports provided during mission)	

For Indicator 10a, the number of dead CWD in 2020 had declined substantially from the baseline, therefore the midterm target was met. The PMO advises that it is difficult to accurately determine the cause of death for many CWD.

For Indicator 10b, a baseline has not yet been set, therefore progress cannot be reported. It is recommended that a baseline is established using the data on illegal fishing from 2021 (as explained under this indicator in Section 4.1.2).

The baseline has not yet been set for Indicator 10c. It is recommended that the baseline be set using the data from 2020. Also, although summarised 2021 data was not provided for Indicator 10c, the MTR team understands from discussions and a report received ('Organising Volunteers to Carry Out Beach Cleaning Activities' from June 2021) that there was a substantial decline in the weight of debris and litter collected and that this trend is likely to continue; therefore, although the midterm target has not been met because the baseline has not been set, the EOP target is expected to be met. It is important that clear summarised data in accordance with the results framework is provided at the terminal evaluation.

<b>Indicator 11:</b> Level of understanding on value of MPAs among public and decision makers, as measured by KAP (Knowledge Attitudes and Practices) survey score.				
Baseline	Midterm target	End-of-project Target	Status at MTR	MTR Assessment
a) BQCW: X b) ZJCW: X c) XBCW: X  Baseline to be completed in Year 1 (gender disaggregated)	No mid-term assessment	15% improvement	A baseline and midterm KAP survey have been completed.	<b>ON TARGET</b>

The baseline has not yet been set for this indicator; the baseline KAP survey has been completed, therefore this should now be used to set the baseline for the three pilot areas, to be approved by the PSC and RTA. There is no midterm target.

<b>Outcome 3: MPA network functioning for improved data and knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation</b>
<b>Progress towards Outcome 3: SATISFACTORY</b>

<b>Indicator 12:</b> Operational MPA Network for SE China established for improved data collection, sharing of knowledge and information and best practices for integrated MPA seascape planning and threat management				
Baseline	Midterm target	End-of-project Target	Status at MTR	MTR Assessment
Does not exist	MPA Network formally established  5 members	10 members  Network operational and with dedicated resources for operation	Extensive preparatory work has been completed for the establishment of the MPA Network, although it is not yet formally established. A	<b>ON TARGET</b>



		Operationalised information and knowledge management and sharing system linking different MPAs  Working groups on: CWD, habitats and species monitoring	detailed draft charter has been developed and institutional arrangements have been made. Launch of network expected mid-2022.  (Source: Interview and draft documents provided during mission)	
--	--	---	--	--

The preparatory work that has been undertaken for the MPA Network is very detailed and of high quality. It is partly based on lessons learned from similar projects in China. COVID-19 constraints are partly responsible for the network not yet being established, because the sub-contractor could not undertake face-to-face consultation to generate interest and energy among participants. Institutional arrangements have been agreed to (the PMO will fill the role of secretariat during the GEF project and AIP is likely to continue this function after the project), which means that there is a high likelihood that the network will continue after the GEF project ends.

Indicator 13: Number of key project lessons and strategies for sustainable coastal management documented, disseminated and adopted at local, provincial and national levels				
Baseline	Midterm target	End-of-project Target	Status at MTR	MTR Assessment
Baseline (2017): 0	Initial project results and lessons learned shared through MPA Network website and media	All project results and lessons learned shared through MPA Network website and media (30% female participants); lessons learned presented to MPA administration and Municipal authorities for adoption in coastal zone planning processes	Lessons learned have not yet been collected or shared because the MPA Network is not yet established. A project website is in development and due for launch mid-2022, which will provide the mechanism for sharing lessons and other information.  (Source: interviews)	ON TARGET

Because the MPA Network will be established and a website operational by mid-2022, the EOP target is expected to be met despite the midterm target not being met.

#### 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: Inadequate MPAs and enabling framework for integrated coastal biodiversity conservation

- There has been some progress through the integration and optimisation process towards improving the adequacy of the MPA network, improving systematic planning and addressing gaps, although the reforms are moving slowly
- This project is piloting a marine corridor in the Qinzhou-Beihai coastal waters
- There are improvements underway to marine spatial planning
- MPAs still lagging behind terrestrial areas, although improvements are underway

- Detailed investigation underway into laws and regulations and opportunities for improvement
- Detailed investigations into ecological compensation systems and opportunities are underway.

#### **Barrier 2: Lack of experience, capacity and participation to apply ecosystem-based approaches**

- Threats to coastal ecosystems persist
- Improvements have been made to management effectiveness and capacity for the pilot MPAs and agencies, although deficiencies remain elsewhere
- This project is working on mechanisms to harness the efforts of multiple stakeholders and develop participatory approaches to key stakeholder groups
- Public awareness of the value of MPAs and of the threats facing globally significant biodiversity still needs to be greatly enhanced.

#### **Barrier 3: Inadequate coordination, knowledge management and information systems for effective threat management**

- This project is piloting a marine corridor in the Qinzhou-Beihai coastal waters to address the geographic fragmentation of reserves
- Communication between agencies to address institutional fragmentation is improving
- Coordination and knowledge sharing mechanisms in development
- Standard CWD monitoring guidelines developed
- Collaboration between organisations involved in CWD conservation should improve
- Some monitoring and evaluation of threats in key habitats is occurring but not comprehensive.

### **4.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management**

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

This is rated as Moderately Satisfactory because, although most aspects of project oversight and implementation have been good, there are substantial shortcomings that require remedial action in the management of environmental and social risks, and in communications and reporting. The impacts of COVID-19 have been substantial for this project; although adaptive management approaches have had some effect at mitigating disruption to deliverables (especially in using online methods for training and stakeholder engagement), it is recommended that the project prepares a COVID-19 plan to systematically identify opportunities for improvement.

#### **4.3.1 Social and environmental risk management**

As described in Section 3.3.3, the project document and ESMF clearly spelled out the processes to be followed to manage the environmental and social risks for this Moderate-risk project. The key component of this was 'a targeted assessment of potential economic displacement impacts at project pilot sites ... followed by the identification of required management measures that need to be integrated into project activities'. The project document envisaged this targeted assessment and identification of management measures being finalised during the inception phase of the project and identified several outputs and activities that should not commence until they were completed.

At the time of the MTR, the targeted assessment had not been undertaken, which impairs the project's safeguards risk identification and management. From discussions during the MTR, it was evident that the targeted assessment (and identification of management measures) is not in the work program for the PMO or subcontractors.

Furthermore, progress has been reported against some of the project outputs and activities that were intended to not start until the targeted assessment was finalised (as described in Section 3.3.3); this is summarised in Table 5. As a consequence of the targeted assessment (and identification of management

measures) not being undertaken while these aspects of the project have proceeded, the project is not being delivered in accordance with the project document and ESMF.

**Table 5:** Activities that the project document stated should not start until the targeted assessment is undertaken and management measures developed, approved and in place, with indication of whether progress has been reported against each (yes/no); see summary of progress against outputs Annex 5

Output	Activity	Description from project document (paragraph 104)	Progress reported?
1.1	1.1.3	MPA expansion	Y
	1.1.4	MPA upgrading	N
	1.1.5	ESA establishment	N <sup>3</sup>
2.1	2.1.9	MPA regulations	Y
2.3	2.3.2	Voluntary compliance	Y
	2.3.5	Compliance and enforcement	Y

The safeguards requirements for this Moderate-risk project are substantially less than those for the High-risk C-PAR projects 1, 2 and 3.

#### 4.3.2 Management arrangements

##### GEF Partner Agency (UNDP)

UNDP has a strong focus on results. It is actively involved in responding to implementation 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, work plans and reporting) and also has a sound understanding of the strategic context for the project and makes important contributions to assist the project in maintaining its strategic direction.

As Partner Agency for the C-PAR 1 project, UNDP also plays an important role in providing oversight to the sharing of technical knowledge on the projects' implementation and on PA management and related matters.

Annual reporting in the 2021 PIR (the only PIR to be completed to date) has been candid and realistic, providing an overall rating of Moderately Satisfactory in recognition of the slow start and low spend in the first year. The requirement to conduct a targeted assessment to meet the requirements of the project document and ESMF was not mentioned in the PIR by the CO or RTA. The MTR team heard from the CO that this was because the global standard for managing Moderate-risk projects had not yet been made clear.

Most aspects of risk management have been undertaken adequately, with the exception of social and environmental risks (below). In the risk management section of the 2021 PIR, the RTA recommended that the SESP be updated because it was prepared using the earlier version of the UNDP SESP; however, this important recommendation has not been followed. Other identified risks in the PIR were the impacts of

<sup>3</sup> Note that ESAs are not being used in China, because Ecological Red Lining and the PA system are being used instead, hence there is no reporting against this activity.

COVID-19 and low delivery against the work plan; the project effectively responded to these risks and recommendations.

As described in Section 4.3.1, the targeted assessment and identification of management measures described in the project document and ESMF have not been undertaken. 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 (from ESMF p. 16):

- 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 for this Moderate-risk project. The targeted assessment is not included in work plans and is not mentioned in the 2021 PIR, suggesting that it has been omitted from project implementation in error. The C-PAR 1, 2, 3 and 4 projects are the first time that the China CO has been required to undertake such extensive planning for social and environmental risk management (although the other three are High risk and have more stringent requirements), which may partially explain the lack of awareness of this aspect of this project. 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 outcome.

It is clear that closer attention to SES risk management measures and more close collaboration with the PMO on these matters is required. The CO advised that, due to the lack of clarity on the standards required, it was difficult to oversee SES compliance for this Moderate-risk project and the High-risk projects. It is recommended (Recommendation 3) that a programmatic review be undertaken of the processes followed in environmental and social risk management in C-PAR projects 1, 2, 3 and 4 since CEO endorsement, including considering the requirements for this Moderate-risk project, to identify lessons learned and opportunities to improve safeguards outcomes in these projects and future projects. This should include assessing roles, responsibilities and resources required to oversee and implement the requirements, and should involve UNDP Regional Office including safeguards specialists.

There have been no project delays that will affect project duration. As discussed elsewhere, institutional reforms caused delays in the first year; however, they were worked through well and will not cause project delays. The impacts of COVID-19 have been substantial for this project; adaptive management approaches have had some effect at mitigating disruption to deliverables, although it is recommended that the project prepares a COVID-19 plan to systematically identify opportunities for improvement.

#### **Implementing Partner (NFGA)**

The NFGA has maintained a good focus on results and timeliness and the project is on track for all EOP targets.

The institutional reforms included NFGA assuming new responsibilities in the marine area and with MPAs. Although there were delays in working through these reforms, NFGA embraced these new responsibilities and has become a proactive agency in marine environmental protection. The project has assisted NFGA to strengthen this new role.

As a government agency, NFGA 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.

NFGA contributed to the 2021 PIR reporting and assessed the progress as Satisfactory, which differed from the more realistic assessment of Moderately Satisfactory by UNDP.

Government ownership of the project is excellent and the alignment with national environmental priorities is very high.

There were shortcomings in the management of environmental and social risks by NFGA. Although UNDP has responsibility for overall oversight of safeguards and compliance with the SES, as the IP NFGA also has various responsibilities under the ESMF, including (from ESMF p. 16):

- Ensure that the required assessment ... and assessment report and the ... required management plan(s) ... 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 NFGA oversight. The targeted assessment is not included in work plans and is not mentioned in the 2021 PIR, suggesting that it has been omitted from project implementation in error.

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

#### 4.3.3 Work planning

The project started on 3 October 2019 and the inception workshop was held on 24 December 2019. There were no significant start-up delays, although adapting to the institutional reforms caused some progress to be slow. The project was efficient in the first year at establishing the PMO and PSC, and in recruiting project staff and subcontractors.

Constraints due to the COVID-19 epidemic have had substantial impacts on deliverables and led to some delays and re-orientation of work-planning (e.g. training and capacity building, follow-up programs for engagement of young people, development of alternative livelihoods with villagers, and establishment of the CBPs and MPA Network). Continuous adaptive management approaches have had some effect at mitigating disruption to deliverables; however, restrictions are likely to continue for some time and it is recommended that the project develops a COVID-19 plan to systematically identify solutions that are specific for different actions (Recommendation 10). This COVID-19 plan should then be used to inform work planning for the remainder of the project.

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 project has made some changes to the results framework since inception to revise baselines and targets for some indicators, and the new results framework was used in the 2021 PIR. The relevant subcontractor prepared a short report to explain the basis and methodology for the baseline updates,

which was well justified; the methodology for setting the revised targets was less clear, however after discussions during the mission the MTR team feels that the new targets are appropriate. Some baselines have still not been set (see Section 4.1.2 for an explanation and Recommendations 7 and 8 and Appendix 8 for recommendations to address this).

#### 4.3.4 Finance and co-finance

The total committed budget in the project document was \$25,015,145.58, of which the GEF component was \$2,652,293.58 and co-financing contributions were \$22,362,852. 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	Total
Outcome 1	104,000	173,000	196,000	185,134	121,866	780,000
Outcome 2	153,000	249,000	253,000	244,000	149,000	1,048,000
Outcome 3	122,000	178,000	167,750	108,000	124,250	700,000
Project Management	26,000	20,700	24,700	24,200	28,694	124,294
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>405,000</b>	<b>620,700</b>	<b>641,450</b>	<b>561,334</b>	<b>423,810</b>	<b>2,652,294</b>

A spot check on programme disbursements relating to the project by the IP (NFGA) for the 12-month period ended December 2021 was commissioned by UNDP, and an audit was conducted in late 2021 for the year ended 31 December 2020. These are summarised in Section 4.3.5 'Project-level M&E systems'.

There were changes to funding allocations arising from budget revisions in 2020 and 2021, approved by both the IP and the EA. These changes were appropriate.

#### Expenditure

The annual expenditure is shown in Table 7. Actual expenditure was low in Year 1 (2020), as the project made a slow start due partly to the challenges of institutional reforms and the NFGA having new responsibilities; restrictions due to COVID-19 also contributed to the low spend. The project successfully brought spending in line with the annual budget in 2021. By 31 December 2021, \$773,769.39 had been expended, which is 29.2% of the total budget. This is a low delivery rate and particular effort will be required to improve expenditure to make up for the low spend in Year 1.

**Table 7:** Summary of project expenditure by year (US dollars) at 31 December 2021; source: PMO

Year	Budgeted expenditure	Actual expenditure	Actual as % of budgeted
2020	302,103	212,650.04	70.4
2021	527,409	561,119.35	106.4
TOTAL (2020 and 2021)	829,512	773,769.39	93.3
<b>TOTAL (Project)</b>	<b>2,652,293</b>	<b>773,769.39</b>	<b>29.2</b>

Table 8 shows the breakdown of expenditure by component against the project budget. Expenditure is progressing slowly for all components, especially Outcome 3 (20.2%) and Project Management (9.5%).

**Table 8:** Summary of project expenditure by component (US dollars) at 31 December 2021; source: PMO

Activity	Budgeted expenditure	Actual expenditure	%
Outcome 1	780,000	276,766.12	35.5
Outcome 2	1,048,000	352,555.48	33.6
Outcome 3	700,000	141,720.37	20.2
Project Mgt	124,294	11,862.26	9.5
Unrealised loss/gain	-	-9,234.84	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,652,294</b>	<b>773,769.39</b>	<b>29.2</b>

### Co-financing

Table 9 shows the actual co-financing received by the project from the co-financing parties. The total co-financing received is \$11,866,672, which is 53.1% of the total committed in the project document (\$22,362,852).

**Table 9: Project co-financing (USD) at 31 December 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
Local Government	Qinzhou Municipal Government, Guangxi	In-kind	271,072	150,991	55.7
		Grant	7,409,304	4,058,666	54.8
Local Government	Beihai Municipal Government, Guangxi	In-kind	225,893	128,185	56.7
		Grant	7,002,696	3,571,508	51.0
Local Government	Zhuhai Municipal Government, Jiangmen Municipal Government, Guangdong	In-kind	376,489	196,603	52.2
		Grant	4,367,273	2,258,572	51.7
Local Government	Xiamen Municipal Government, Fujian	In-kind	150,595	190,469	126.5
		Grant	2,409,530	1,236,678	51.3
GEF Partner Agency	UNDP	Grant	150,000	75,000	50.0
<b>Total</b>			<b>22,362,852</b>	<b>11,866,672</b>	<b>53.1</b>

All co-financers have contributed at least half of the amount confirmed at CEO endorsement; the Government of Xiamen has already exceeded its total commitment. The MTR team received descriptions of the activities and functions 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
Qinzhou Municipal Government, Guangxi	In-kind	Fishery resources enhancement and release project in 2020.
	Grant	Peacock Bay and Deer Earring River waters 'Blue Bay Remediation Initiative' project till the end of 2021.
Beihai Municipal Government, Guangxi	In-kind	Administration, management and operational security of Hepu Dugong NNR in 2019.  Construction of management and care housing for Shankou Mangrove NNR in 2021.
	Grant	Black-faced spoonbill, spoonbill sandpiper and other rare and key protected birds habitat modification and population monitoring project 2021.  Law enforcement and monitoring work 2020, 2021.  Guangxi Shankou Mangrove Reserve Mission and Education 2019-2021.  Central Forestry Reform and Development Fund Wetland Subsidy 2019, 2020.  Hepu Dugong NNR Chinese White Dolphin and other key protected species resource survey 2020, 2021.  Maintenance and reinforcement of sea animals temporary and medical pools in Hepu Dugong NNR Management Centre, 2021.  Hepu Dugong NNR Optimization and Integration Program Preparation, 2020-2022.  Operational work projects, administration and operation security and project staff funding in 2020.
Zhuhai Municipal Government, Jiangmen Municipal Government, Guangdong	In-kind	Vectorized map production and boundary survey of Pearl River Estuary NNR, Jiangmen PNR & Zhuhai Qi'ao - Dangan Island NR in 2019.
	Grant	MPA management for Pearl River and Jiangmen NRs and Construction of Chinese White Dolphin Rescue and Protection Base, infrastructure improvements and testing system upgrades for Jiangmen PNR in 2020.  Construction of a science popularization system for Pearl River Estuary NNR in 2021.
Xiamen Municipal Government, Fujian	In-kind	Communal expenses in 2020.
	Grant	Monitoring and surveillance system of Xiamen Nature Reserve and ecological enhancement of Mount Riding Horse in 2021.  Nature reserve construction and management in 2021.  Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR public funding in 2021
UNDP	Grant	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

Section VII ‘Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan’ in the project document establishes M&E and oversight responsibilities and activities and includes allowances for these in the M&E budget.

The project-level M&E plan includes mandatory GEF M&E activities. The total in the budget is \$198,230 plus \$44,000 of co-financing. The allocation for both the MTR and terminal evaluation is \$46,415, the allocation for the inception workshop is \$6,500, there is an allocation of \$22,500 for monitoring of indicators in the results framework, and \$15,000 is allocated to PSC meetings; there was no specific allocation for the completion of midterm and terminal tracking tools and scorecards (although external subcontractors were engaged to prepare these at midterm, which is good practice). The budget also includes various ‘non-core’ M&E activities that are important for the project, such as a gender action plan (\$6,700), lessons learned and knowledge generation (\$15,000), and monitoring of environmental and social risks and corresponding management plans as relevant (\$4,700). The M&E budget is 7.5% of the GEF grant (\$2,652,293.58), which is relatively high but comparable to that for the C-PAR child projects 2 (8.0%) and 3 (6.4%); given that it includes non-core components that are important for the project, the MTR team considers that the budget allocations are appropriate for the project’s context.

The monitoring tools provide the necessary information and are efficient and cost-effective.

The project has developed some inclusive, innovative and participatory monitoring, especially in developing CWD monitoring guidelines for use by professionals, which ensure consistency and rigour in data collection. Also, community members involved in beach cleans have received training in sorting and measuring garbage in different categories.

Follow-up actions and adaptive management in response to PIRs were limited. Some of the recommendations of the RTA from the 2021 PIR were implemented: there was some follow-up with regards to assessing the challenges from COVID-19 (although the MTR team is not aware of the recommended ‘contingency plan to stay on track to achieve the outcome and targets’ being developed) and improving financial delivery. However, RTA PIR recommendations to update the SESP and consult with the RTA regarding Indicator 13 were not followed up.

Development objectives are built into M&E systems, with gender-disaggregated data being kept of participation in project activities; this evidence was suitable for the MTR and should continue to be collected and provided for the terminal evaluation.

Prior to commencement of the project, 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 (AIP of NFGA). 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 (Annex I of the project document). This micro assessment was recently repeated (October 2021) to update the status of the IP. The overall risk rating was low because, as a legally registered public institution, the IP strictly follows internal control procedures and government policies; also, AIP receives close and regular supervision from NFGA, the National Audit Office and the Division of Financial Audit. One specific recommendation was also included, relating to improving insurance policies for fixed assets.

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 (NFGA) for the 12-month period ending 31 December 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, and no discrepancies in required procedures. No issues were identified for follow-up.

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 three back-to-office reports (BTORs) from site visits by UNDP personnel for various purposes, including attending the inception meeting and PSC meetings, visiting CWD and pilot sites, and attending public awareness activities. The BTORs included the purpose of the visit, the main issues raised, and follow-up or recommendations. Opportunities for site visits were limited due to COVID-19.

A Self Assessment Report (SAR) was prepared prior to the MTR commencing and was a key source of information for the MTR. The MTR team found some reporting in the SAR and the PIR against the results framework to be unclear; this is described in more detail in Section 4.3.7 'Reporting'.

#### 4.3.6 Stakeholder engagement

The project has developed and leveraged appropriate partnerships. In particular, the work towards establishing the CBPs and the MPA Network is establishing a framework in preparation for the next phase of establishing the partnerships. The model that has been used should ensure that these will be sustainable beyond the GEF project.

The project has strong support from local and national government stakeholders. They have active communication and positive involvement in the project. The MTR team heard during the mission that these stakeholders see the potential benefits from the GEF project, such as capacity building, technical capability, networks for sharing and learning, and improved communication and coordination between agencies. The agencies are directly involved in decision-making through membership of the PSC, which is providing effective direction for the project.

There has been some participation and public awareness. In particular, the beach cleans have involved substantial numbers of participants and has had associated awareness raising about marine conservation, and the music and art festival engaged many young people in marine biodiversity conservation. Unfortunately, planned follow-up programs for these have been postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions. Also, a public website is being developed, which will be used for awareness raising purposes, although this has not yet been launched.

There is some invested interest in the project's long-term success and sustainability. For example, there is interest in the pilot village in developing tourism opportunities associated with the nearby NR, especially in attracting more people who visit the NR to also visit the village to derive economic benefit. As part of this, the villagers hope that they will achieve better relationships with NR authorities and improved village facilities.

The project has closely followed the stakeholder management plan in subsection (iv) of Section IV ('Results and Partnerships') in the project document. As described in Section 4.3.8, there are shortcomings in engagement with some internal stakeholders, and Recommendation 6 provides a recommended approach to addressing these shortcomings by developing and implementing an Internal Communication and Coordination Action Plan to enhance the efficiency of information exchange, prevent duplication or conflict in work undertaken, and optimise delivery of all project components. Also, Recommendation 10 provides a suggested response to the challenges that COVID-19 constraints are causing, which should include evaluating stakeholder engagement approaches.

#### 4.3.7 Reporting

The format of project reporting has changed during implementation of the project. In 2020, the project undertook quarterly reporting for quarters 2, 3 and 4, with the quarter 4 report using a new template titled

Project Progress Report (PPR). After 2020, to ease the reporting burden, the project prepares half-yearly reports using this PPR template; the MTR team received a 6-month PPR for January–June 2021 (dated 22 July 2021), a 6-month PPR for July–December 2021 (dated 31 December 2021), and a 12-month PPR for January–December 2021 (dated 3 March 2022). The PPRs provide detailed reporting focused on the project's outputs under each component/outcome, risk management, monitoring and oversight activities, gender mainstreaming, partnerships, communication activities and media exposure. The following table summarises the reporting received by the MTR team.

Year	Quarterly reports (QPRs)	Project Progress Reports (PPR) – 3-monthly	Project Progress Reports (PPR) – 6-monthly	Project Progress Reports (PPR) – 12-monthly
2020	Yes (Q2, Q3)	Yes (Q4)	-	-
2021	-		Yes (2)	Yes

Annual PIRs are also prepared to meet GEF reporting requirements, covering each 12-month July–June period; one PIR has been prepared to date (in 2021).

There have been limited adaptive management responses and limited sharing of such changes with the PSC. Changes to baselines and targets for Indicators 6, 7 and 8 were made early in the project and endorsed by the PSC and RTA. Changes were also made to many activities due to COVID-19 restrictions, although these were not reported on in detail.

The response to the 2021 PIR was variable. Some recommendations were addressed (such as adaptive management responses to COVID-19 and improving financial delivery targets), while others were not (such as updating the SESP). There have been no poorly-performing PIRs to address.

A Self Assessment Report (SAR) was prepared prior to the MTR commencing and was a key source of information for the MTR. The MTR team found that some reporting in the SAR and the PIR against the results framework to be unclear; for example, for some indicators the appropriate summarised data were not provided and/or the date/year of data collection were not included, and for some indicators additional narratives were included which made it difficult to clearly identify and evaluate project achievements. It is recommended that, at the time of the terminal evaluation, concise reporting is prepared that clearly addresses the wording and/or numerical targets of each indicator and EOP target.

The PSC approved two-year work plans, although the PIR was not provided to the PSC. The MTR team understands that this was due to timing issues, with the PIR not being finalised in time for the PSC meetings. 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 141), the MTR team suggests that the PSC meetings are scheduled to enable the PIR to be considered by the PSC.

Lessons learned from the adaptive management process have not yet been documented, shared and internalised; Indicator 13 addresses lessons learned and shared, and work is underway towards meeting the EOP target for this indicator.

#### 4.3.8 Communications

WeChat (a social media and messaging application that is widely used in China) is the primary internal 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.

Internal communication is highly variable. For some aspects of the project, the communication and engagement of project parties is excellent (e.g. development of the CBPs and MPA Network). However, for other aspects of the project there appears to be limited structured communication and coordination, especially between different subcontractors. Consequently, subcontractors working on related issues were not always cognisant of each other's work. This can lead to risks such as duplicating or conflicting approaches, lack of knowledge sharing and learning, and missed opportunities for synergies and collaboration. It is recommended that an Internal Communication and Coordination Action Plan be developed and implemented to address these risks and optimise delivery of all project components (Recommendation 6); this plan should identify all internal stakeholders, analyse their role in the project, map the relationships between stakeholders and their roles, and identify communication solutions and methods.

Related to this, the MTR found variable levels of engagement in the project among internal stakeholders; for example, although the overall level of involvement of national and local agencies was very good, some participating agencies indicated that they did not have a good understanding of the project and their role. This shortcoming can also be addressed through the recommended Internal Communication and Coordination Action Plan.

Other than the coordination shortcomings described above, there are no key stakeholders left out of communications. Key agencies are involved in regular communication and local village communities and businesses are also engaged.

The extensive communication and planning underway for the CBPs and MPA Network, and the development of a public website (see next), are important investments in the sustainability of project results.

A website is in development for the project, which will be accessible to the public and used for sharing information on the project, CWD and other marine biodiversity conservation. External communication will be greatly improved when the knowledge-sharing component of the project is operational (Output 3.4 and Indicator 13), especially communication between people and organisations involved in MPA management, CWD and other species conservation, and marine protection and research. Also, as described in Section 4.3.6 'Stakeholder engagement', there has been some effective external communication through public awareness and participation in activities, including beach cleans, a music/art festival, engagement with schools, and targeted activities such as CWD Awareness Day and Ocean Day.

There are opportunities for expansion of educational or awareness aspects of the project. For example, the focus of much of the public awareness activities, such as the beach cleans, teaching materials for schools and work with villages, has been relatively narrow so far and could be upscaled to deliver broader results.

#### **4.3.9 Gender mainstreaming**

A gender analysis and action plan was developed during the PPG phase (Annex G of the project document) and reviewed by a national specialist at the commencement of the project (in response partly to the changed governmental responsibilities for the project); the project is implementing this updated gender action plan.

The national specialist provided training to relevant staff in identified areas relating to gender mainstreaming. The contract for the national specialist has ended.

A gender focal point has been appointed for the PMO and the PMO has responsibility for gender mainstreaming. No reporting is prepared on the project's gender mainstreaming activities.

The project has met its midterm targets for participation of women. However, there is no clear focus on how actions would be implemented for relevant activities to optimise gender mainstreaming outcomes. It is recommended (Recommendation 5) that an annual action plan be developed that assesses each project

output/activity and each training and development activity, including considering progress towards EOP targets, 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 that the project's gender action plan be reviewed again after the project SESP has been updated (see Recommendation 4). Finally, it is also recommended that regular reporting is undertaken in connection with the annual gender plans, to drive action and improve transparency.

#### 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, the NFGA is a proactive and responsible government agency and government financing has increased and is likely to continue to increase. The project is working effectively at supporting these government processes. The project is also investing in capacity development and in building improved coordination between key stakeholders. It is important that the project considers how to ensure that the valuable outputs from the project continue and have the required institutional support and ownership. Also, there are risks to the continuation of involvement of communities in alternative livelihood activities and in other financing mechanisms. The MTR team recommends that, to harness the potential and proactively plan for sustainability, a sustainability plan be developed for the project. Finally, the risks from climate change and its impacts receive limited attention in the project's design and implementation, and this should be reassessed.

##### 4.4.1 Financial risks to sustainability

Government financing has increased and is likely to continue to increase. Marine protection and MPAs are a political priority and a responsibility of the NFGA at the national level. The agency shows a strong commitment to progressing this, including enhancing protection and strengthening enforcement (e.g. against illegal fishing).

It is less clear how sustainable the other sources of financing will be. There is a risk that the alternative livelihoods approaches will not continue after GEF funding, especially if the improved facilities/capabilities and relationships with the PA authority cannot be achieved; the MTR team is limited in the extent to which it can assess this because no site visits were possible (due to COVID-19). It is also not clear how much active communication is occurring between villagers, authorities and subcontractors; this has also been compromised by COVID-19 restrictions. Also, communities in villages in coastal locations in the project area tend to have a better income from using natural resources than those in cropland areas; it is currently not clear how a balance will be found between sustainable livelihoods and environmental protection.

The recommended Internal Communication and Coordination Action Plan (Recommendation 6) should include stakeholders involved in the alternative livelihoods activities and should consider how to address the challenges from COVID-19.

The main opportunities for financial sustainability lie in the increased government funding. As described above, the opportunities from innovative sources currently appear limited.

The primary additional factor identified to create an enabling environment for continued financing is improved coordination between the many stakeholders. The CBPs and MPA Network that are being developed are likely to lead to better communication and dissemination of information, which should contribute to improving the enabling environment for improved financing.

The project has contributed to the establishment of financial and economic instruments and mechanisms through Output 1.3, particularly the eco-compensation mechanism, and Output 2.2, particularly the

alternative livelihoods leading to improved economic benefits while protecting biodiversity (although this has shortcomings and limitations as described previously).

#### 4.4.2 Socio-economic risks to sustainability

Political support for the project is strong at the national and local levels.

There is a social risk that the community will not continue with the alternative livelihoods after the GEF project.

The project is implementing activities that will enhance ownership for most stakeholders, particularly through the CBPs and MPA Network: these stakeholders see that the CBP and network provide potential benefits and are likely to meet their current demands. This enhanced ownership is considered likely to be sufficient for many project outcomes/activities to be sustained. To a lesser extent, the needs and priorities of local communities and villagers are being considered—such as knowledge and skills on coastal tourism—which should enhance the capacity of local people and consider proper alternative livelihood in the future.

Public awareness of the project and the associated issues remains low, although a public website will soon be operational. The project's awareness-raising activities were patchily distributed; for example, awareness raising was conducted as a key part of the beach cleans and a music/art festival was held in Guangdong province. Opportunities should be sought to up-scale awareness-raising activities (although opportunities for follow-up on some of these activities were compromised by COVID-19 restrictions).

The project is not yet documenting lessons learned on a regular basis, although satisfactory progress is being made on the relevant components of the project (Output 3.4 and Indicator 13). The work on the GIS platform has made good progress and will be important for this as it includes both a public website and a sharing platform for professionals. The CBPs and MPA Network will also be important contributors to knowledge sharing.

#### 4.4.3 Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability

Key components of the project are working on relevant legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes; therefore, the risk is low that these will jeopardise project benefits.

The project is also developing mechanisms for accountability, transparency and technical knowledge transfer, especially through the MPA Network, which has a detailed draft charter, governance structure and terms of reference developed.

The project has developed institutional capacity (as measured by increases in the CDS and METT) and is expected to meet the targets set in the project document; therefore, it is likely that the participating agencies will be self-sufficient after the project. The project is developing other important products and processes that will assist government agencies in their functions; it is important that the project considers how to ensure that these valuable outputs continue and have the required institutional support and ownership.

The project has not specifically identified champions, although key stakeholders are being identified and brought together through the CBPs and MPA Network.

Consensus from stakeholders on project activities after project closure date has not been achieved, although the PSC is an effective body with key agencies represented and the CBPs and MPA Network will provide a good environment for debate and discussion of priorities.

The project leadership does have the ability to respond to future institutional and governance changes; the NFGA responded rapidly to its new role as authority for marine protection and is proactive in responding to opportunities and challenges. The project is providing good support to NFGA in this. Also, the PSC provides effective project leadership and responsiveness.

Many project strategies can be mainstreamed into future planning (e.g. remote sensing of human activities, GIS, CWD monitoring using project-developed guidelines, rescue of CWD and other species, awareness-raising activities, and ongoing operation of the CBPs and MPA Network). It is not clear whether other project strategies will be mainstreamed into future planning (e.g. alternative livelihoods, innovative financing, reduction of locally specific threats).

#### 4.4.4 Environmental risks to sustainability

There is limited attention to climate change and its impacts in the project's design and implementation. In the SESP that was completed during the PPG phase (Annex E of the project document), SESP Risk 8 is 'Climate change impacts on coastal ecosystems in China, risking achievement of project targets/objective' and is rated as Low. The mitigation measures were: 'The project will build adaptation measures into relevant activities to address the long-term risk. In particular, climate change adaptation will be mainstreamed into all guidelines as well as the Coastal Biodiversity Action Plans that will be prepared and implemented for each pilot area.'

Despite these mitigation measures in the SESP and project document, the MTR team is not aware of climate change adaptation measures being built into relevant activities or into the CBAPs (which are at a very early stage of development). This may be partly because climate change adaptation in China is led by MEE, not NFGA.

The SESP should be updated (as recommended by the RTA in the 2021 PIR), which will include a re-assessment of climate change and its impacts as a risk. This should include (but not be limited to) consideration of possible impacts on CWD and its habitats (especially seagrass), and sea-level rise impacts on coastal habitats and human livelihoods. It is also recommended that, after completion of the SESP update, key activities are reviewed in the context of climate change and that each of the three CBAPs includes consideration of climate change impacts.

## 4.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

### 4.5.1 Conclusions

#### 4.5.1.1 Strengths

##### **The project successfully worked through complex institutional reform challenges**

The NFGA became responsible for MPA management in China in 2018, after this project had been designed with the State Oceanic Administration (SOA) as implementing partner. Although there were delays in working through these reforms, NFGA embraced these new responsibilities and has become a proactive agency in marine environmental protection. The project has assisted NFGA to strengthen this new role.

##### **Efficiently integrating into national and provincial processes**

With NFGA as the IP, the project is in an excellent position to influence important national and provincial processes, especially PA reform including the integration and optimisation of the MPA system. This means that the project is an efficient use of GEF resources to influence significant policy reform.

##### **Positive involvement of pilot MPAs**

The pilot MPAs that have been involved in this project have been very positive in their engagement with the project. This has been important for measures to increase capacity and management effectiveness, improving coordination, and piloting activities with the community.

##### **Many knowledgeable experts guiding project and transferring knowledge**

The project has successfully built a high-quality team of many experts to provide strategic guidance and interpret policies (e.g. CTA, project experts/specialists). These experts are bringing technical rigour to the project's activities.

##### **The MPA Network, CBPs and GIS have high potential for long-term benefit**

The work that has been undertaken to prepare for the MPA Network is very detailed and of high quality. Planning for three Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships has also commenced, with extensive discussions with stakeholders. It is likely that these two approaches will combine to provide valuable mechanisms for communication, collaboration and learning that will continue beyond the life of the GEF project. Also, good progress under the GIS component, which includes both database establishment and a website for public knowledge dissemination, will provide key long-term services for NFGA and MNR.

#### 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
<b>Category 1: Environmental and social risk management</b>  The SESP for this project found it to be a Moderate-risk project that triggered multiple SES standards. The targeted assessment and identification of management measures that were required to address these have not been undertaken, 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 targeted assessment and identification of management measures are undertaken urgently, and that all activities (including those completed, in progress and planned) are reviewed and required adjustments made. The MTR team is aware that there have also been similar shortcomings in implementation of the High-risk C-PAR child projects 1, 2 and 3; this project should be included in a programmatic-level review of these shortcomings to identify systemic issues, opportunities and lessons learned. Also, the SESP has not been updated since project development and is based on the earlier version of the UNDP SESP.		
1	<b>Undertake a targeted assessment and identification of management measures in accordance with the process outlined in the ESMF for the project</b>	PMO, NFGA, UNDP CO
2	<b>Review all project outputs and activities (including those completed, underway and future) as part of the targeted assessment and identification of management measures, 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</b>	PMO, NFGA, UNDP CO
3	<b>Participate in a programmatic review of the processes followed in environmental and social risk management in C-PAR projects 1, 2, 3 and 4 since CEO endorsement, including considering the requirements for this Moderate-risk project, to identify lessons learned and opportunities to improve safeguards outcomes in these projects and future projects (including identifying roles, responsibilities and resources required to oversee and implement the requirements)</b>	UNDP Regional Office including safeguards specialists, UNDP CO, PMO, NFGA, RTA
4	<b>Update the SESP for the project</b>	PMO, NFGA
<b>Category 2: Gender mainstreaming</b>  The project is meeting its gender participation targets; however, there is no clear focus on how actions would be implemented to optimise gender mainstreaming outcomes.		
5	<b>Drive a new focus on female participation and optimising gender mainstreaming outcomes, by 1. developing annual gender action plans in accordance with relevant activities under different components, 2. updating the gender action plan that was developed during project preparation (Annex G of the project document) after the SESP has been updated, and 3. reporting annually on progress against these action plans and the project's gender action plan</b>	PMO, NFGA, gender specialist, subcontractors

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility
<b>Category 3: Internal project communication and coordination</b>  The interactions between the different components and subcontractors in the project is sometimes weak, including gender mainstreaming, CBPs, GIS and remote sensing, planning of training, and pilot MPAs. Consequently, subcontractors working on related issues were not always cognisant of each other's work.		
6	<b>Develop and implement an Internal Communication and Coordination Action Plan to enhance the efficiency of information exchange, prevent duplication or conflict in work undertaken, and optimise delivery of all project components; this plan should identify all internal stakeholders, analyse their role in the project, map the relationships between stakeholders and their roles, and identify communication solutions and methods</b>	PMO, subcontractors, pilots
<b>Category 4: Results framework</b>  Some changes to indicators are recommended to align the results framework with changing circumstances.		
7	<b>Set baselines for Indicators 10b (using 2021 data) and 10c (using 2020 data) as soon as possible</b>	PMO
8	<b>Use data from 2021 to set the baseline for Indicator 10b (illegal fishing), because the levels of enforcement activity were very low during 2020 due to COVID-19, and remove the midterm target for Indicator 10b</b>	PMO
9	<b>Remove Indicator 8a, because Sanniang Bay NNR has not been established and a baseline cannot now be set at this stage of the project</b>	PMO
<b>Category 5: COVID-19 epidemic</b>  The impacts of COVID-19 restrictions have been substantial for this project; continuous adaptive management approaches have had some effectiveness at mitigating disruption to deliverables, however restrictions are likely to continue for some time and it is recommended that the project systematically identifies solutions that are specific for different actions.		
10	<b>Develop a plan to address the impacts of COVID-19 that identifies potential solutions that are specific for different actions and that enhance project implementation; this should be integrated with the proposed Internal Communication and Coordination Action Plan</b>	PMO, subcontractors, pilots
<b>Category 6: Sustainability</b>  The project is well positioned for many results to continue beyond the GEF funding period, especially due to the increased government funding and the strong involvement of government partners. It is important that the project considers how to ensure that the valuable outputs from the project continue after the project and have the required institutional support and ownership. Also, there are uncertainties around the continuation of involvement of communities in alternative livelihood activities and in other financing mechanisms. A sustainability plan would enable the project to proactively plan for these matters.		
11	<b>Develop a sustainability plan to identify how the project's results can be continued beyond the GEF funding, including identifying institutional roles and</b>	PMO, NFGA, PSC, sub-contractors

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility
	<b>responsibilities for the continuing operation of key project deliverables after the GEF project</b>	
<b>Category 7: Climate change</b>  There is limited attention to climate change and its impacts in the project's design and implementation; it was assessed as Low risk in the SESP. This should be re-assessed as part of the recommended update of the SESP (Recommendation 4), including (but not limited to) consideration of possible impacts on CWD and its habitats (especially seagrass), and sea-level rise impacts on coastal habitats and human livelihoods. Project activities should then be reviewed. Also, the Coastal Biodiversity Action Plans (CBAPs) should all include climate change impacts and adaptation as core content.		
12	<b>Review key activities in the context of climate change after the project SESP has been updated, identify any changes or new opportunities, and present the findings to the PSC and RTA</b>	PMO, sub-contractors
13	<b>Ensure that the Coastal Biodiversity Action Plans (CBAPs) all include climate change impacts and adaptation as core content.</b>	PMO, sub-contractors

## 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 4 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**

日期 DATE	时间 Time		内容 ACTIVITY	参加人 PARTICIPANTS
Day1 2022/2/28 Monday 星期一	AM	10:00-10:30	UNDP Briefing (Online) 联合国开发计划署会议（线上）	MTR consultants 评估专家 Dr. Ma Chaode 马超德博士 Assistant Resident Representative of UNDP 助理驻华代表
		10:30-11:30	Interview (Online) 线上访谈  DNPDP 项目国家副主任 PMO Director 项目管理办公室主任	MTR consultants 评估专家 Dr. Tang Xiaoping 唐小平副院长 DNPDP, Vice-President of AIP Prof. Yuanjun 袁军处长 PD, Division Chief of Wetland Resources Monitoring and Assessment GEF Project office)
	PM	14:30-15:30	Onsite Meeting or Interview DNPAM/NFGA 国家林草局自然保护地司领导会议或会谈 (地点: 和平里北街 24 号楼国家林草局规划院 201 会议室)	MTR consultants 评估专家, Mr. Yan Chenggao 严承高副司长 NPD 国家项目主任 Deputy Director-General of DNPAM/NFGA  Interpreter 翻译
Day2 2022/3/1 Tuesday 星期二	AM	9:00-11:00	Meeting (Online) 线上汇报会议  PMO Staff 项目管理办公室成员	MTR consultants 评估专家 Mrs. Sun Yulu 孙玉露 项目经理 Project Manager Ms. Wang Yibo 王一博 海洋保护地网络协调员 MPA Network Coordinator Mr. Rao Xinpeng 饶鑫鹏项目助理 Project Assistant
	PM	15:00-15:30	Interview (Online) 线上访谈:  Project Steering Committee (PSC) Member in Guangdong Province	陈庆辉 处长 Mr. Chen Qinghui Division of Guangdong Provincial Department of Forestry 唐松云 副处长

			项目指导委员会广东省成员	Mr. Tang Songyun Deputy Division of Guangdong Provincial Department of Forestry
		15:30-16:00	Interview (Online) 线上访谈:  PSC Member in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region 项目指导委员会广西壮族自治区成员	黄政康 副局长 Mr. Huang Zhengkang Deputy Director-General of Department of Forestry of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region 莫涛 处长 Mr. Mo Tao Division of Natural Protected Area Management and Wetland Management, Department of Forestry of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region
		16:00-16:30	Break between interviews 访谈间休息	
		16:30-17:00	Interview (Online) 线上访谈:  PSC Member in Fujian Province 项目指导委员会福建省成员	王宜美 副局长 Mr. Wang Yimei Deputy Director-General of Fujian Provincial Department of Forestry 张友坚 主任科员 Mr. Zhang Youjian Chief Staff Member of Fujian Provincial Department of Forestry
Day3 2022/3/2 Wednesday 星期三	AM	09:00-10:00	Subcontractor Interview (Online) 分包商线上访谈:  ‘Explore the establishment of marine-type national parks at Pearl River Estuary’ 《探索在珠江口试点建立海洋类型国家公园》	MTR consultants 评估专家 Mr. Chen Shang 陈尚 Mr. Li Wenbo 李文博 Representative of Qingdao Blue Smart Valley Marine Technology Development Centre 青岛蓝色智谷海洋科技发展中心代表 Interpreter 翻译
		10:00-10:15	Break between interviews 访谈间休息	

		10:15-11:15	Subcontractor Interview (Online) 分包商线上访谈: ‘Feasibility study on the construction of a marine category reserve in Sanniang Bay, Guangxi’ 《广西三娘湾海洋类保护地建设可行性分析调研》	MTR consultants 评估专家 Dr. Luo Yang 罗杨 Representative of Guangxi Lujin Ecological Technology Co. 广西绿金生态科技有限公司代表
		11:15-12:15	Subcontractor Interview (Online) 分包商线上访谈: : ‘Preparation of the programme for the construction of the Qinzhou-Beihai coastal waters ecological corridor’ 《编制钦州-北海沿海水域生态廊道建设方案》	MTR consultants 评估专家 Ms. Wang Shuangling 王双玲 Representative of Nanning Daji Ecological Technology Co. 南宁大戟生态科技有限责任公司代表 Interpreter 翻译
	PM	14:30-15:30	Subcontractor Interview (Online) 分包商线上访谈: ‘Establishing the Guangdong Coastal Biodiversity Partnership’ 《建立广东沿海生物多样性伙伴关系》	MTR consultants, subcontractor representatives MTR consultants 评估专家 Mr. Chen Zhu 陈竹 Secretary-General of Guangdong Ocean Association 广东海洋协会秘书长 Interpreter 翻译
		15:30-16:30	Subcontractor Interview (Online) 分包商线上访谈: ‘Establishing the Guangxi Coastal Biodiversity Partnership’ 《建立广西沿海生物多样性伙伴关系》	MTR consultants 评估专家 Mr. Chen Mo 陈默 Representative of Associate Research Fellow of Guangxi Academy of Science 广西科学院副研究 员 Interpreter 翻译
		16:30-16:40	Break between interviews 访谈间休息	
		16:40-17:40	Subcontractor Interview (Online) 分包商线上访谈: ‘Establishing the Fujian Coastal Biodiversity Partnership’	MTR consultants 评估专家 Prof. Chen Kelian 陈克亮 Third Institute of Oceanography, MNR 自然资源部第三海洋研究所高级工程师

			《建立福建沿海生物多样性伙伴关系》	Interpreter 翻译
Day4 2022/3/3 Thursday 星期四	AM	09:00-09:45	Short-term experts Interview (Online) 短期专家线上访谈:  MPA Legal Advice Expert 海洋保护地法律咨询专家	MTR consultants 评估专家 Prof. Mei Hong 梅宏 Associate professor, Law and Politics School of Ocean University of China 中国海洋大学法学院 教授
		09:45-10:45	Short-term experts Interview (Online) 短期专家线上访谈:  MPA Financing Expert 海洋保护地融资专家  MPA Eco-compensation Expert 海洋保护地生态补偿专家	MTR consultants 评估专家 Mr. Long Zouxia 龙邹霞 Senior Engineer, Third Institute of Oceanography, MNR 自然资源部第三海洋研究所高级工程师 Prof. Chen Kelian 陈克亮 Third Institute of Oceanography, MNR 自然资源部第三海洋研究所高级工程师
		10:45-11:30	Subcontractor Interview (Online) 分包商线上访谈:  'Preparation Management Measures for Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR' 编制《厦门珍稀海洋物种国家级自然保护区管理办法》	MTR consultants 评估专家 Mr. Wang Shenhong 王莘红 Ms. Ni Huiqing 倪卉青 Tenet & Partners 福建天衡联合律师事务所
	PM	14:30-15:00	MPA Interview (Online) 保护区线上访谈:  Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR 厦门珍稀海洋物种国家级保护区	蔡立波 主任 Director Cai Libo 刘伟 副主任 Deputy Director Li Wei
		15:00-15:30	MPA Interview (Online) 保护区线上访谈:	苏永新 局长 Director- General, Su Yongxin 陈希 高级工程师



			Guangdong Pearl River Estuary Chinese White Dolphin NNR 广东珠江口中华白海豚国家级自然保护区	Senior Engineer, Chen Xi 广东珠江口中华白海豚国家级自然保护区管理局 Guangdong Zhujiangkou Chinese White Dolphin National Nature Reserve Bureau
		15:30-16:00	MPA Interview (Online) 保护区访谈:  Jiangmen Chinese White Dolphin PNR 江门中华白海豚省级自然保护区	陆英发 主任 Director, Lu Yingfa 刘伟 高工 Senior Engineer, Liu Wei 冯抗抗 科员 Staff Member, Feng Kangkang 广东江门中华白海豚省级自然保护区管理处 Guangdong Jiangmen Chinese White Dolphin Provincial Nature Reserve Management Bureau
		16:00-16:15	Break between interviews 访谈间休息	
		16:15-16:45	MPA Interview (Online) 保护区线上访谈:  Guangxi Hepu Dugong NNR 广西合浦儒艮国家级自然保护区	张宏科 主任 Director, Zhang Hongke 吴礼广 Engineer, Wu Liguang 广西合浦儒艮国家级自然保护区管理中心 Guangxi Hepu Dugong National Nature Reserve Management Bureau
		16:45-17:15	MPA Interview (Online) 保护区线上访谈:  Guangxi Shankou Mangrove NNR 广西山口国家级红树林生态自然保护区	黄琦 工程师 苏炳欢 助理工程师 广西山口红树林生态国家级自然保护区管理中 心

Day5 2022/3/4 Friday 星期五	AM	09:00-09:45	Subcontractor (Online) Interview 分包商线上访谈:  ‘Capacity building plan, training materials and trail training’ 《编制海洋保护地能力建设计划和培训模块教材并开展验证培训》	MTR consultants 评估专家 Mr. Chen Mo 陈默 Representative of Associate Research Fellow of Guangxi Academy of Science 广西科学院副研究员
		09:45-10:15	Break between interviews 访谈间休息	
		10:15-10:45	Interview (Online) 线上访谈:  Project Chief Technical Advisor 项目首席技术顾问	MTR consultants 评估专家 Prof. Yu Xingguang 余兴光教授 CTA of C-PAR4 Interpreter 翻译
		10:45-11:30	Subcontractor Interview (Online) 分包商线上访谈:  ‘Online Learning Course Development for Marine Protected Areas’ 《海洋保护地在线学习课程开发》	MTR consultants 评估专家 Mr. Zhang Jiawei 张嘉伟 Division Director of National Academy of Forestry and Grassland Administration 国家林业和草原局管理干部学院处长
	PM	14:30-15:45	Subcontractor Interview (Online) 分包商线上访谈:  ‘Preparation of the Integrated Management Plan for the Hepu Dugong NNR and the Pearl River Estuary NNR’ 《合浦儒艮国家级及珠江口国家级保护区编制综合管理计划》	MTR consultants 评估专家 Ms. Zhang Zijie 张子婕 EJdrone Technology Co., Ltd 广西翼界科技有限公司
		15:45-16:30	Subcontractor Interview (Online) 分包商线上访谈:  ‘Development of primary and secondary schools nature education	MTR consultants 评估专家 Ms. Shi Ran 石然 Huaxia Xintian BJ Technology Co., LTD 华夏新天（北京）科技有限公司

			textbook for Guangxi Hepu Dugong NNR' 为广西合浦儒艮国家级保护区编制《中小学自然教育教材》	
		16:30-16:45	Break between interviews 访谈间休息	
		16:45-17:30	Short-term experts Interview (Online) 短期专家线上访谈:  ‘Manage Handbook for MPA staff of Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR’ 《厦门珍稀海洋物种国家级自然保护区管理者手册》	MTR consultants 评估专家 Mr. Chen Ganlin 陈甘霖 MSc Marine Biology, Third Institute of Oceanography, MNR 自然资源部第三海洋研究所海洋生物学硕士
2022/3/5-6 Weekend 周末	-			
Day6 2022/3/7 Monday 星期一	AM	9:00-10:20	Subcontractor Interview and results showcase (Online) 分包商线上访谈及成果展示:  ‘promoting the livelihood transformation and sustainable development of the community residents around the demonstration reserve (Zhuhai - Jiangmen)’ 《促进示范保护地周边社区居民生计转型与可持续发展（珠海-江门）》	MTR consultants 评估专家 Mrs. Li Meiyun 李美云副教授 Associate Professor, School of Business, Sun Yat-sen University 中山大学管理学院
		10:20-10:40	Break between interviews 访谈间休息	
		10:40-11:30	Subcontractor Interview (Online) 分包商线上访谈:  ‘To carry out community co management and alternative livelihood activities in Qinzhou- Beihai, and select sustainable products in selected pilot villages, and to pilot eco label	MTR consultants 评估专家 Ms. Dong Yifei 董亦非 Representative of Guangxi Biodiversity Research and Conservation Association 广西生物多样性研究和保护协会代表

			mechanism’ 《钦州-北海项目示范区开展社区共管与替代生计活动，并在 选定试点村选择可持续的产品，试点生态标签机制》	
	PM	14:30-15:30	Short-term experts Interview (Online) 短期专家线上访谈:  METT Expert 项目跟踪有效性专家	MTR consultants 评估专家 Dr. He Chao 贺超 Associate Professor, School of Economics & Management, Beijing Forestry University 北京林业大学经济管理学院
		15:30-16:00	Break between interviews 访谈间休息	
		16:00-17:00	Stakeholders interview (Online) 利益相关方线上访谈:  Villagers and businesses in the communities surrounding the MPA of the Qinzhou-Beihai 钦州-北海项目示范区周边社区村民、企业	MTR consultants 评估专家
Day7 2022/3/8 Tuesday 星期二	AM	09:00-10:20	Subcontractor and volunteer interviews (Online) 分包商及志愿者线上访谈:  ‘Activities of beach garbage and debris cleaning’ 《组织志愿者开展海滩清洁行动》	MTR consultants 评估专家 Dr. Yuan Jiangang 袁剑刚副教授 Associate Professor, School of Life Science, Sun Yat-sen University 中山大学生命科学学院
		10:20-10:50		
		10:50-11:30	Short-term experts Interview (Online) 短期专家线上访谈:  Gender mainstreaming expert 性别主流化专家	MTR consultants 评估专家 Dr. Zhang Xuemei 张雪梅 Associate Research Fellow of the College of Humanities and Development of Agricultural University of China 中国农业大学人文与发展学院副研究员

	PM	14:30-15:30	Subcontractor Interview (Online) 分包商线上访谈:  ‘Technical support for the preparation of the network of MPAs’ 《为筹建海洋保护地网络提供技术支持》	MTR consultants 评估专家 Ms. Liu Wei 刘玮 Associate Research Fellow of First Institute of Oceanography, MNR 自然资源部第一海洋研究所副研究员
		15:30-16:00	Equipment commissioning 设备调试	
		16:00-17:00	Subcontractor Interview and system demonstrations (Online) 分包商线上访谈和系统演示:  ‘Develop an operationalized GIS database management and sharing system linking different MPAs’ 《基于 GIS 的中国东南沿海海洋保护地网络知识和信息应用 平台》	MTR consultants 评估专家  Beijing Deepnature Technology Co.,Ltd 北京新智感科技有限公司
Day8 2022/3/9 Wednesday 星期三	AM	9:00-10:00	Subcontractor Interview (Online) 分包商线上访谈:  ‘Remote sensing monitoring of the impact of human activities on Marine protected areas in SE China’ 《中国东南沿海海洋保护地人类活动遥感监测》	MTR consultants 评估专家 Ms. Xu Yan 许艳 Representative of National Marine Data and Information Service (NMDIS) 国家海洋信息中心
		10:00-10:50	Subcontractor Interview (Online) 分包商线上访谈:  Preparation of ‘Technical Guidelines for Field Population Monitoring of Chinese White Dolphins’ and ‘Guidelines for the Rescue of Endangered Marine Species (Cetaceans and Turtles) along the Chinese Coast’ 编制《中华白海豚野外种群监测技术指南》与《中国沿海海 洋濒危物种（鲸豚类、海龟类）救护指南》	MTR consultants 评估专家 Ms. Zeng Qianhui 曾千惠 Assistant Research Fellow of Third Institute of Oceanography, MNR 自然资源部第三海洋研究所助理研究员

		10:50-11:10	Break	
		11:10-12:10	<p>Meeting (Online) 线上汇报会议</p> <p>PMO Staff 项目管理办公室成员</p>	<p>MTR consultants 评估专家 Mrs. Sun Yulu 孙玉露 项目经理 Project Manager</p> <p>Ms. Wang Yibo 王一博 海洋保护地网络协调员 MPA Network Coordinator</p> <p>Mr. Rao Xinpeng 饶鑫鹏项目助理 Project Assistant</p>
Day9 2022/3/10 Thursday 星期四				
Day10 2022/3/11 Friday 星期五	AM	10:30-12:00	<p>Debriefing (Online) 评估工作总结（线上）</p>	<p>MTR consultants 评估专家</p> <p>Dr. Ma Chaode 马超德博士 Assistant Resident Representative of UNDP 助理驻华代表</p> <p>Prof. Yuanjun 袁军处长 PD, Division Chief of Wetland Resources Monitoring and Assessment （GEF Project office ）</p> <p>Mrs. Sun Yulu 孙玉露 项目经理 Project Manager</p> <p>Ms. Wang Yibo 王一博 海洋保护地网络协调员 MPA Network Coordinator</p> <p>Mr. Rao Xinpeng 饶鑫鹏项目助理 Project Assistant</p>

**Annex 2: List of documents reviewed**

‘Chinese’ indicates that the document was available in Chinese only.

1. PIF
2. Project Document
3. UNDP Initiation Plan
4. Project Document
5. CEO Endorsement Request
6. UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure
7. Environmental and Social Management Framework
8. Micro Assessment Report for Academy of Inventory and Planning, National Forestry and Grassland Administration, Commissioned by United Nations Development Programme (18 October 2021)
9. Spot Check of National Forestry and Grassland Administration Commissioned by United Nations Development Programme (March 2021)
10. Audit Report of the Independent Auditors to ‘Strengthening Marine Protected Areas in SE China to Conserve Globally Significant Biodiversity’ – Implementing Partner: National Forestry and Grassland Administration (13 December 2021)
11. Finalised GEF focal area Tracking Tools at CEO endorsement and midterm, including METT and Financial Sustainability Scorecard
12. Completed Capacity Development Scorecards
13. Gender Action Plan (Annex G of Project Document)
14. Project Inception Report
15. 2021 PIR
16. Self Assessment Report for Midterm Review (February 2022)
17. Quarterly progress reports and project progress reports
18. Budget reporting
19. Approved budget revisions (2020 and 2021)
20. Co-financing reports
21. Three UNDP back-to-office reports
22. Work plans of the various implementation task teams
23. Minutes of the first and second PSC meetings (2020 and 2021)
24. Report of exploring the establishment of marine-type national parks at Pearl River Estuary (Chinese)
25. Report of feasibility study on the construction of a marine category reserve in Sanniang Bay, Guangxi (Chinese)
26. Report of technical support for the delimitation of ecological corridors in the coastal waters of Qin Zhou-Beihai (Chinese)
27. Report of establishing the Guangdong Coastal Biodiversity Partnership (Chinese)
28. Report of establishing the Guangxi Coastal Biodiversity Partnership (Chinese)
29. Report of establishing the Fujian Coastal Biodiversity Partnership (Chinese)
30. Report of study on Marine Protected Areas (Chinese)
31. Report of developing Financing Mechanism and Ecological Compensation for Marine Protected Areas and Carrying out in Guangxi (Chinese)
32. Report of supporting to the preparation of ‘Measures for the Administration of the National Nature Reserve of The Rare Marine Species of Xiamen’
33. Report of capacity building plan, training materials and trial training

34. Report of Online Learning Course Development for Marine Protected Areas (Chinese)
35. Report of preparation of the Integrated Management Plan for the Hepu Dugong NNR in Guangxi and the Pearl River Estuary NNR in Guangdong (Chinese)
36. Report of development of nature education textbook for Guangxi Hepu Dugong National Nature Reserve (Chinese)
37. Report of making a handbook for MPA staff of Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR (Chinese)
38. Report of promoting the livelihood transformation and sustainable development of the community residents around the demonstration reserve (Zhuhai-Jiangmen) (Chinese)
39. Report of carrying out community co management and alternative livelihood activities in Qinzhou- Beihai, selecting sustainable products in selected pilot villages, and piloting eco label mechanism (Chinese)
40. Report of organising activities to reduce marine threats in communities around Xiamen Bay (Chinese)
41. Report of promoting community participation in the protection of CWD in Zhuhai (Chinese)
42. Report of activities of beach garbage and debris cleaning
43. Report of technical support for the preparation of the network of MPAs (Chinese)
44. Report of developing an operationalized GIS database management and sharing system linking different MPAs (Chinese)
45. Report of remote sensing monitoring of the impact of human activities on Marine protected areas in SE China (Chinese)
46. Report of technical guidelines for ‘Field Population Monitoring of CWD’ and ‘Guidelines for the Rescue of Endangered Marine Species (Cetaceans and Turtles) along the Chinese Coast’ (Chinese)
47. Report of product project propaganda film and short videos for 5 demonstration MPAs (Chinese)



**Annex 3: MTR evaluation matrix**

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<b>Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?</b>			
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
<b>Progress Towards Results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?</b>			
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
<b>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?</b>			
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
<b>Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?</b>			
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 (SAR = Self Assessment Report)
1	Objective	Indicator 2	Have the new MPA areas been gazetted?	The target is for MPAs / ESAs to be gazetted
2	Objective	Indicator 2	Discuss the likelihood of EOP target being achieved	EOP target is 40,000 ha gazetted - it is difficult for us to assess how likely it is that this will be met
3	Objective	Indicator 2	Discuss the province plans and national plan	The SAR states that 'the plans of all provinces have been completed and submitted to NFGA for approval, and the data is not available for the time being. The national plan is expected to be approved 2022, and all policy updates can be further followed up on.'
4	Objective	Indicator 3	Data or reports for dolphin numbers at different locations?	The SAR refers to data and information from PAs and institutions
5	Outcome 1	Output 1.1	Can we see reports mentioned on p. 30 of SAR?	
6	Outcome 1	Indicator 4	Have the Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships been fully established? - have they met? - are they chaired by provincial MPA administrations?	This is the wording of the midterm target - the SAR states that the CBPs have been established 'through the way of subcontracts' and that the three contractors have 'communicated with potential partner participating organisations'
7	Outcome 1	Indicator 4	Discuss how the mechanism will be upscaled	EOP target includes 'Up-scaling mechanism agreed by NFGA'
8	Outcome 1	Indicator 5a	Is the MPA legal and institutional task force operational?	This is the wording of the midterm target in the results framework; the SAR refers to some pieces of work underway but does not mention the task force
9	Outcome 1	Indicator 5b	Discuss the various documents mentioned in SAR	
10	Outcome 1	Indicator 6a	Discuss the various projects and funding and which can be considered 'eco-compensation'	The SAR mentions several projects of different types - it is not clear whether they all are 'eco-compensation' as described in the project document
11	Outcome 1	Indicator 6b	Clarify why the baseline for Indicator 6a was updated	2021 PIR states that it was updated 'due to the government reshuffle'
12	Outcome 1	Indicator 6b	Confirm whether the EOP target is a 30% increase in the total score from the updated baseline	EOP target refers to 30% increase (increase of 30% from 71 = 92.3) - nearly achieved Midterm target is 'mid-way to target' (= 81.65)

Q	Objective / Outcome	Output / Indicator	Question / further information needed	Explanation (SAR = Self Assessment Report)
13	Outcome 2	Indicator 7	Clarify why the baselines, midterm and EOP targets for Indicator 7 were updated AND what was the methodology for setting the new targets	PIR and SAR contain different baselines, midterm and EOP targets from project document
14	Outcome 2	Indicator 8	Clarify why the baselines, midterm and EOP targets for Indicator 8 were updated AND what was the methodology for setting the new targets	PIR and SAR contain different baselines, midterm and EOP targets from project document
15	Outcome 2	Indicator 8	Discuss whether proposed Sanniang Bay CWD NR will be established AND adaptive management options	Indicator 8a is for METT for the proposed Sanniang Bay PA, but point (4) under 'Challenges and Recommendations' (p. 58) of the SAR discusses the possibility that this reserve may not be established during the project
16	Outcome 2	Indicator 9a	Discuss the number of participants in the first activity AND the % of women	SAR describes activities - clearer information on participation numbers are needed for reporting
17	Outcome 2	Indicator 9b	Has the eco-label system been established?	SAR refers to a subcontract being awarded - not clear whether the system is established yet
18	Outcome 2	Output 2.2	Discuss the community co-management and alternative livelihood activities in Qinzhou-Beihai and the pilot of eco-label mechanism	SAR refers to sub-contract with Guangxi Biodiversity Research and Conservation Association and states that work is 'going well'
19	Outcome 2	Indicator 10	Standard methodology / data or reports for threats?	Detailed information is provided in SAR
20	Outcome 2	Indicator 10	Discuss encountered problems with 10a and 10b and possible approaches to changing indicators	See point (6) under 'Challenges and Recommendations' section of SAR (p. 59)
21	Outcome 3	Indicator 12	Discuss progress with the MPA Network - Has it been 'formally established' (midterm target) - Is the approach proposed in the project document still suitable?	Point (2) on p. 37 of SAR states that network will be officially established 'this year' (2022)
22	Outcome 3	Indicator 12	Can we see the Constitution and the Working Mechanism for the Network?	Mentioned in SAR
23	Outcome 3	Indicator 12	Will all components of the EOP target be met?	EOP target: - 10 members - Network operational and with dedicated resources for operation - Operationalised information and knowledge management and sharing system linking different MPAs - Working groups on: CWD, habitats and species monitoring

Q	Objective / Outcome	Output / Indicator	Question / further information needed	Explanation (SAR = Self Assessment Report)
24	Outcome 3	Indicator 13	Have initial project results and lessons learned been shared?	Midterm target is 'Initial project results and lessons learned shared through MPA Network website and media'; the SAR reports on a GIS-based information sharing and knowledge management platform being under development, but does not talk about initial results / lessons being shared
25	Outcome 3	Indicator 13	Discuss how EOP target will be achieved	Will the subcontract described in the SAR deliver the different components of the EOP target? (See also RTA's Recommendation in 2021 PIR)
26	Outcome 3	Output 3.2?	Can we see the 'Knowledge Management, Results Sharing and Communications and Publicity Plan'	Mentioned under point (4) on p. 37 of SAR
27	Outcome 3		Discuss interaction with other CPAR projects and coordination / support from CPAR 1 - Does the CPAR program provide useful context for this marine PA project?	
28	Management arrangements		How has support from the UNDP CO been? Has oversight and support been timely and results-focused?	Focus on results? Adequacy of technical support? Responsive to implementation problems? Quality of risk management?
29	Management arrangements		- How has project management been? - has the IP been engaged and results-focused? - Effectiveness of PSC?	Focus on results? Adequacy of technical support? Responsive to implementation problems? Quality of risk management?
30	Management arrangements		Discuss challenges from institutional reforms - are there still coordination challenges? - Difficulties for IP to implement project's CWD activities when responsibility for PA management is with Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Areas?	See: - point (2) under 'Challenges and Recommendations' section of SAR (p58) - RTA comments under 'Challenges' in 2021 PIR - CO comments 2.2 in 2021 PIR
31	Sustainability		Discuss approach and challenges to maintaining project results after GEF funding	
32	Social and environmental risks		Discuss: - Status of 'targeted assessment of the project's potential economic displacement impacts and the identification of required management measures'? - Progress on outputs before targeted assessment finalised	Pro doc para 103 (p. 49): 'A targeted assessment of the project's potential economic displacement impacts and the identification of required management measures will take place during the project inception phase in accordance with the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) that this project falls under' Also pro doc para 104 (p. 50) lists several outputs and

Q	Objective / Outcome	Output / Indicator	Question / further information needed	Explanation (SAR = Self Assessment Report)
				activities that would not commence until the targeted assessment was finalised
33	Gender		Summarise and discuss gender mainstreaming plan and associated activities	Note point (5) on p. 37 of SAR states that 'Gender Analysis and Action Plan has been updated' to 'provide a direction to the project implementation team to ensure women and men involved in the C-PAR4 project equally participate in, contribute to and receive culturally equitable social and economic benefits'
34	COVID-19		Discuss: - Impacts on planned activities - Adaptive management response (e.g. online workshops) - Were some activities cancelled?	Note point (13) on p. 36 in SAR: contract with National Academy of Forestry and Grassland Administration in December 2021, including competency standards online for e-learning
35	GEF funding		Discuss: - The impact of GEF funding - Whether approaches to designing and planning the MPA system is helped by the GEF funding	
36	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?	
37	Finance		Discuss the budget for project manager position not being adequate	Point (5) of SAR under 'Challenges and Recommendations' (p. 58) explains budget in pro doc was in error

## 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 Assessment 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
<b>Outcome 1: Expanded and strengthened MPA network with biodiversity mainstreamed into marine spatial planning</b>	
1.1: MPA network in SE China expanded by 40,000 ha (including ESAs) and connectivity increased	<p>A sub-contract developed the report 'Analysis and Suggestions on Conservation Gaps of Marine Protected Areas in Guangdong Province'. The final report has been evaluated by the expert group and shared with the Guangdong Forestry Bureau as a decision-making reference for future work. Includes various findings and recommendations.</p> <p>Report in development 'Feasibility analysis and investigation of the construction of marine protection land in Sanniang Bay, Guangxi'.</p> <p>Report in development 'Technical support for the delimitation of ecological corridors in the coastal waters of Qin Zhou-Beihai'.</p> <p>The work on the integration and optimisation of natural protected areas is in progress. The areas and boundaries of many PAs may be adjusted, but the general principle is that the total protected area will not be reduced and the degree of protection will not be reduced. At present, the plans of all provinces have been completed and submitted to NFGA for approval, and the data is not available for the time being. The national plan is expected to be approved 2022, and all policy updates can be further followed up on.</p>
1.2: Coastal biodiversity conservation mainstreamed into marine spatial planning	Three contracts in place for establishment of CBPs in three provinces, and discussions commenced. Limited and variable progress on CBAPs as part of those contracts.
1.3: More effective legislation and financing for coastal biodiversity conservation	<p>Legislation and Enforcement Task Force not established; the project has instead engaged a specialist contractor and is working with agencies and other experts to consider how laws, regulations, management measures and enforcement can be made more effective.</p> <p>In accordance with the principle of 'one PA, one law', the project is providing technical support for the development of the 'Measures for the Administration of the NNR of The Rare Marine Species of Xiamen'.</p> <p>Legal expert engaged to support DNPAM in providing recommendations on specific control measures for MPAs.</p> <p>Two ecological compensation experts engaged to support the development of financing channels for the protected area, and the plan will trial in selected MPA in Guangxi.</p>
<b>Outcome 2: Improved management effectiveness of MPA/ESAs in the project pilot areas</b>	
2.1: Strengthened capacity and management effectiveness of MPAs in the pilot areas	<p>See reporting for Indicators 7 and 8.</p> <p>Various training materials prepared and delivered, including through a specific contract to develop web-based training. This has partly been an adaptive management response to the COVID-19 restrictions.</p> <p>Discussions have been held with major stakeholders in SE China not involved in the project, including Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge.</p> <p>Development of nature education textbook for Guangxi Hepu Dugong National Nature Reserve.</p> <p>Development of a draft handbook for MPA staff of Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR.</p>

Output	Progress as assessed by MTR team
2.2: Enhanced community-based conservation and livelihoods	<p>Subcontract entitled 'to carry out community co management and alternative livelihood activities in Qinzhou- Beihai, and select sustainable products in selected pilot villages, and to pilot eco label mechanism' underway, supporting communities in target villages to develop/diversify into sustainable livelihoods.</p> <p>Subcontract entitled 'promoting the livelihood transformation and sustainable development of the community residents around the demonstration reserve (Zhuhai-Jiangmen)' underway, supporting communities and students to be involved in marine conservation ranging from cleaning up beach litter to reducing the threats to marine organisms. Includes various community awareness events.</p>
2.3: Reduction of locally specific threats through participatory action and enforcement and improved awareness	<p>See reporting under Indicator 10.</p> <p>Designed and produced various publicity materials to promote public awareness through the demonstration PAs.</p>
<b>Outcome 3: MPA network functioning for improved data and knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation</b>	
3.1: A functioning MPA Network facilitating coordination between MPAs	See reporting under Indicator 12.
3.2: An operationalised data management and sharing system linking different MPAs	<p>See reporting under Indicator 13.</p> <p>Subcontract underway for development of GIS, including public website.</p>
3.3: Coordinated research, survey, monitoring and evaluation for CWD and other globally-significant biodiversity	Subcontract underway to develop guidelines for: 1. CWD monitoring and 2. rescue of living rare marine species.
3.4: M&E system developed and knowledge and lessons are shared with stakeholders	<p>See reporting in Sections 4.3.9 regarding gender mainstreaming.</p> <p>See also reporting under 4.3.3, 4.3.5 and 4.3.7 regarding work planning, M&amp;E and reporting.</p> <p>See reporting under Indicator 13 regarding knowledge sharing.</p> <p>The first phase of the CBD COP 15 was held in Kunming, Yunnan, in October 2021. Project staff participated in thematic forums and assisted the UNDP in organising thematic exchange activities on projects. During the event, used various methods (including posters, promotional pages, in-house meetings, videos) to promote the project and expand its impact.</p> <p>Various other promotional activities.</p>



**Annex 6: Progress towards results matrix**

Indicator	Baseline	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR - 2021 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
<b>Objective:</b> 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							
1. # direct project beneficiaries (disaggregated by gender). Total of: a) 50% of the population in target villages near project MPAs; b) People receiving targeted training (including MPA and MPA system staff)	a) and b) = 0	a) 1500 people (50% female) benefiting directly from project b) 300 people have received targeted training (35% female)	a) 3,500 people benefiting directly from project (50% female) b) 750 people have received training (C-PAR Program target for C-PAR4) (35% female)	In progress	<b>On target</b> a) 2,300 people benefiting directly from project (68% female) b) 310 people have received training (C-PAR Program target for C-PAR4) (52% female) (Source: Self Assessment Report) Midterm targets achieved.	<b>Satisfactory</b>	Good progress has been made towards the project objective, making valuable contributions to conserving globally significant coastal biodiversity in SE China through integrated seascape planning and threat management, MPA network expansion, and strengthened MPA operations. The three objective indicators are on track to meet EOP targets. Good progress has been made towards the target for the number of direct beneficiaries, including the participation of women (Indicator 1). The midterm target for MPA network expansion was met and it is likely that the EOP target will be met, although this is difficult to confidently predict (Indicator 2). Importantly, the population of CWD is considered stable and on track to meet the EOP target (Indicator 3).
2. : MPA network in SE China expanded by 40,000ha (including ESAs)	0 ha (baseline year is 2016)	10,000 ha of new MPAs / ESAs gazetted	40,000 ha of new MPAs / ESAs gazetted	In progress	<b>On target</b> 16,400.16 ha of new MPAs gazetted (Source: Self Assessment Report) Midterm target achieved.		
3. Population size of Chinese white dolphin as indicator of globally significant biodiversity in the pilot areas  a) BQCW: Beihai-Qinzhou Coastal Waters	a) BQCW: >=230 individuals b) ZJCW: close to 2000 individuals c) XBCW: 60-76 individuals	a) – c) No mid-term target	a) - c) Stable or improved from baseline	In progress	<b>On target</b> Stable. No midterm target.		

Indicator	Baseline	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR - 2021 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
b) ZJCW: Zhuhai-Jiangmen Coastal Waters c) XBCW = Xiamen Bay Coastal Waters							
<b>Outcome 1:</b> Expanded and strengthened MPA network with biodiversity mainstreamed into marine spatial planning							
4. Established collaborative governance and planning mechanism for MPAs in the context of wider seascapes	No framework exists for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation from MPAs into wider seascapes	3 inter-sectoral and where necessary transboundary Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships (CBPs) established and chaired by provincial MPA administrations, with at least annual meetings held (at least 30% of participants are female)	3 CBPs implementing CBAPs across pilot areas, with at least annual meetings held  Up-scaling mechanism agreed by NFGA	In progress	<b>On target</b>  Development of the 3 CBPs is underway, with a sub-contractor engaged in each province to establish the groups; no meetings have yet been held  (Source: interviews)  Midterm target not achieved but CBPs to be established in 2022.	<b>Satisfactory</b>	The project has made fair progress towards Outcome 1. Although progress at midterm was slow, the CBPs will be established by EOP and will provide important new opportunities for stakeholder collaboration and communication (Indicator 4). Extensive work is underway on rules, regulations and management measures for MPAs/ESAs and mainstreaming in marine spatial planning (Indicator 5). Good work is being undertaken on innovative approaches to financial sustainability and resourcing for MPAs, including eco-compensation (Indicator 6).
5. Extent of rules, regulations and management measures for MPAs/ESAs and mainstreaming in marine spatial planning.  a) New/improved provincial Rules, regulations and management measures eg for transboundary (provincial/municipal) design of MPAs	0	a) MPA legal and institutional task force operational  b) 1 new local rule, regulation, management measure	a) At least 2 improved/new provincial rules, regulations, management measures  b) At least 2 new local rules, regulations, management measures	In progress	<b>On target</b>  a) MPA legal and institutional task force not operational; progress is reported on several provincial measures and processes  b) Progress reported on several local measures and processes, including 'Measures for the Administration of the National Nature Reserve of The Rare Marine Species of Xiamen' developed through contract under the project		

Indicator	Baseline	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR - 2021 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
b) new/improved local rules, regulations and management measures for sustainable MPA management and eco-compensation					(Source: Self Assessment Report) a) Midterm target not achieved b) Midterm target achieved		
6. Financial sustainability and resourcing for MPAs: a) amount of financing from new eco-compensation mechanism (diverse sources including governmental, private sector etc); and b) improved financial sustainability as measured by the Financial Sustainability scorecard (FSS) - see Annex B)  FSS Components:  1. Legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks  2. Business planning and tools for cost-effective management  3. Tools for revenue generation	a) \$0 for eco-compensation b) FSS Comp. 1: (41) 43% FSS Comp. 2: (21) 36% FSS Comp. 3: (9) 13% Total (71) 32%  * Average of the three pilot areas	a) \$50,000 per year delivered for eco-compensation b) Mid-way to target	a) \$200,000 per year delivered for eco-compensation b) 30% increase in total FSS score	In progress	<b>On target</b>  a) Total funds of 9.2 million RMB (approx. 1.44 million USD) reported: 500,000 RMB for Sun Yat-sen University, one of project subcontractors, in Qi'ao Mangrove PNR in Zhuhai in 2022; 2 million RMB for Guangxi Dugong NNR, with the assistance of the project, for seagrass bed protection and restoration; 5 million RMB for Shankou Mangrove NNR from wetland subsidy funds for mangrove conservation; 1.7 million RMB for China National Nuclear Corporation to supported construction of a science hall at Shankou Mangrove NNR.  b) Increase of 9 from baseline (12.7% increase):  FSS Comp. 1: (48) 51%  FSS Comp. 2: (22) 37%  FSS Comp. 3: (10) 14%  Total (80) 36%  (Source: Self Assessment Report)		

Indicator	Baseline	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR - 2021 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
(average of the three pilot areas)					a) Midterm target achieved. b) Midterm target partially achieved		
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Improved management effectiveness of MPA/ESAs in the project pilot areas							
7. Capacity of MPA agencies in pilot areas, as measured by Capacity Development Scorecard	a) Beihai = 56% b) Qinzhou = 53% c) Zhuhai = 64% d) Jiangmen = 54% e) Xiamen = 66%	a) Beihai = 68% b) Qinzhou = 64% c) Zhuhai = 74% d) Jiangmen = 65% e) Xiamen = 77%	a) Beihai = 80% b) Qinzhou = 76% c) Zhuhai = 84% d) Jiangmen = 77% e) Xiamen = 89%	In progress	<b>On target</b>  a) Beihai 69% b) Qinzhou 65% c) Zhuhai 75% d) Jiangmen 67% e) Xiamen 78%  (Source: Self Assessment Report)  Midterm targets achieved.	<b>Satisfactory</b>	The project has effectively increased the capacity of MPA agencies in pilot areas (Indicator 7) and the management effectiveness of target MPAs (Indicator 8) and is on track to meet EOP targets. The extent of community engagement in MPA conservation is on track for EOP targets, although a midterm sub-target was not met (Indicator 9). Although progress at midterm is mixed, the EOP targets for reduction in key threats to biodiversity in the pilot area are expected to be met (Indicator 10). And the baseline Knowledge Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey has been conducted, enabling the level of understanding of the value of MPAs among the public and decision-makers to be tracked (Indicator 11).
8. Management effectiveness of target MPAs of global significance, indicated by the percentage increase in the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores	a) Proposed Sanniang Bay CWD NR = n/a b) Shankou Mangrove NNR = 56.67% c) Dugong NNR = 53.33% d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 63.33%	a) Proposed Sanniang Bay CWD NR = n/a b) Shankou Mangrove NNR = 63.34% c) Dugong NNR = 61.67%	a) Proposed Sanniang Bay CWD NR = 70% b) Shankou Mangrove NNR = 70% c) Dugong NNR = 70% d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 70%	In progress	<b>On target</b>  a) Proposed Sanniang Bay CWD NR = n/a b) Shankou Mangrove NNR = 65.66% c) Dugong NNR = 62.63%		

Indicator	Baseline	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR - 2021 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
	e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 61.11%  f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 67.78%	d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 66.67%  e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 65.56%  f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 68.89%	e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 70%  f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 70%		d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 67.68%  e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 66.67%  f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 69.70%  Midterm targets achieved for (b)-(f); no reporting possible against (a) - recommend removing from results framework.		
9. Extent of community engagement in MPA conservation:  a) # citizens (disaggregated by gender) participating in actions for MPAs (volunteer marine debris cleans, marine debris surveys, CWD sightings reports by smartphones), voluntary MPA rangers etc).  b) # eco-labelled tourism operations (boat operators, tour guides, restaurants, shell-fishers etc) - mainly Beihai-Qinzhou  c) # of people (gender disaggregated) benefiting from	a) 2 citizen participatory action programmes (at least 250 participants, 50% women)  b) Eco-label system established  c) 10	a) 2 citizen participatory action programmes (at least 250 participants, 50% women)  b) Eco-label system established  c) 10	a) 4 citizen participatory action programmes (1000 participants, 50% women)  b) 10 businesses eco-labelled  c) 30 (at least 50% women)	In progress	<b>On target</b>  a) 212 volunteers (130 or 61.3% of whom were female) participated in beach cleaning activities.  b) Eco-label system established, based on the 'ocean friendly consumption' system developed in another project.  c) 415 families in Yong'an and Beijie villages in Shankou town, Guangxi, are benefiting from sustainable livelihoods by renting approx. 60 ha of culture ponds to Shankou Mangrove NNR for ecological restoration. Also, a project has identified marine stewardship and sustainable livelihood opportunities in pilot villages in Qinzhou-Beihai, Guangxi, and village action plans are being prepared.		

Indicator	Baseline	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR - 2021 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
enhanced and more sustainable livelihoods as a result of project activities for MPAs					(Source: Self Assessment Report, additional information provided during mission)  a) Midterm target not achieved.  b) and c) Midterm targets achieved		
10. Reduction in key threats to biodiversity in pilot areas:  a) # CWD and other cetaceans found dead with external injuries due to human activities  b) # incidents of illegal fishing* in target MPAs  c) Weight of debris/litter collected during volunteer beach cleans  * measured separately for shell-fishing/mud digging in BQCW	a) # of CWD and other cetaceans found dead with external injuries due to human activities BQCW: 7 ZJCW: 12 XBCW: 3  b) # incidents of illegal fishing* in target MPAs BQCW: X ZJCW: X XBCW: X Baseline to be completed in year 1  c) Weight of debris/litter collected during volunteer beach cleans BQCW: X	a) 5% reduction          b) 5% reduction          c) 5% reduction	a) 10% reduction          b) 10% reduction          c) 10% reduction	In progress	<b>On target</b>  a) >5% reduction in 2020  BQCW: 4  ZJCW: 7  XBCW: 0     b) Baseline not yet set.  BQCW: 21*  ZJCW: 0  XBCW: 0  * Shell-fishing:6  * Mud digging:15  c) Baseline not yet set although data collected; proposed baseline (from 2020):  BQCW: 237.86 kg		

Indicator	Baseline	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR - 2021 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
	ZJCW: X XBCW: X Baseline to be completed in year 1				ZJCW: 203.02 kg XBCW: 154.53 kg  No summarised midterm data provided for (c) (although evidence of reduction in weight was viewed).  (Source: Self Assessment Report and information viewed during mission)  a) Midterm target achieved b) and c) Baselines not yet set so midterm targets not achieved		
11. Level of understanding on value of MPAs among public and decision makers, as measured by KAP (Knowledge Attitudes and Practices) survey score	a) BQCW: X b) ZJCW: X c) XBCW: X Baseline to be completed in Year 1 (gender disaggregated)	No mid-term assessment	15% improvement	In progress	<b>On target</b>  A baseline and midterm KAP survey have been completed.  (Source: KAP reports)  No midterm target.		

Indicator	Baseline	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR - 2021 (self-reported)	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
<b>Outcome 3:</b> MPA network functioning for improved data and knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation							
12. Operational MPA Network for SE China established for improved data collection, sharing of knowledge and information and best practices for integrated MPA seascape planning and threat management	Does not exist	MPA Network formally established  5 members	10 members  Network operational and with dedicated resources for operation  Operationalised information and knowledge management and sharing system linking different MPAs  Working groups on: CWD, habitats and species monitoring	In progress	<b>On target</b>  Extensive preparatory work has been completed for the establishment of the MPA Network, although it is not yet formally established. A detailed draft charter has been developed and institutional arrangements have been made. Launch of network expected mid-2022.  Midterm target not met.	<b>Satisfactory</b>	Satisfactory progress has been made against the two indicators for Outcome 3. Very good preparatory work has been undertaken for the establishment of an MPA Network, which is likely to have an important role beyond the GEF project (Indicator 12). And project results and lessons learned will soon be shared through a website that is being developed, although the midterm target of initial lessons learned being shared was not met (Indicator 13).
13 Number of key project lessons and strategies for sustainable coastal management documented, disseminated and adopted at local, provincial and national levels	Baseline (2017): 0	Initial project results and lessons learned shared through MPA Network website and media	All project results and lessons learned shared through MPA Network website and media (30% female participants); lessons learned presented to MPA administration and Municipal authorities for adoption in coastal zone planning processes	In progress	<b>On target</b>  Lessons learned have not yet been collected or shared because the MPA Network is not yet established. A project website is in development and due for launch mid-2022, which will provide the mechanism for sharing lessons and other information.  Midterm target not met.		



**Annex 7: Ratings scales**

<b>Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (one rating for each outcome and for the objective)</b>		
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.

<b>Ratings for Project Implementation &amp; Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)</b>		
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.

<b>Ratings for Sustainability: (one overall rating)</b>		
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
<b>Objective</b>		
1. # direct project beneficiaries (disaggregated by gender). Total of: a) 50% of the population in target villages near project MPAs; b) People receiving targeted training (including MPA and MPA system staff).	a) 3,500 people benefiting directly from project (50% female) b) 750 people have received training (C-PAR Program target for C-PAR4) (35% female)	No suggested changes
2. MPA network in SE China expanded by 40,000ha (including ESAs)	40,000 ha of new MPAs / ESAs gazetted	No suggested changes
3. Population size of Chinese white dolphin as indicator of globally significant biodiversity in the pilot areas  a) BQCW: Beihai-Qinzhou Coastal Waters  b) ZJCW: Zhuhai-Jiangmen Coastal Waters  c) XBCW = Xiamen Bay Coastal Waters	a) - c) Stable or improved from baseline	No suggested changes
<b>Outcome 1</b>		
4. Established collaborative governance and planning mechanism for MPAs in the context of wider seascapes	3 CBPs implementing CBAPs across pilot areas, with at least annual meetings held  Up-scaling mechanism agreed by NFGA	1. No suggested changes 2. Consider how the EOP target will be interpreted, measured and reported for the terminal evaluation, especially 'Up-scaling mechanism agreed by NFGA'
5. Extent of rules, regulations and management measures for MPAs/ESAs and mainstreaming in marine spatial planning.  a) New/improved provincial Rules, regulations and management measures eg for transboundary (provincial/municipal) design of MPAs  b) new/improved local rules, regulations and management measures for sustainable MPA management and eco-compensation	a) At least 2 improved/new provincial rules, regulations, management measures  b) At least 2 new local rules, regulations, management measures	1. No suggested changes 2. For terminal evaluation, report only on rules, regulations and measures that the project was involved in (including through co-financing) and make the involvement clear

Indicator	End-of-project target	Suggestions
<p>6. Financial sustainability and resourcing for MPAs: a) amount of financing from new eco-compensation mechanism (diverse sources including governmental, private sector etc); and b) improved financial sustainability as measured by the Financial Sustainability scorecard (FSS) - see Annex B)</p> <p>FSS Components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks</li> <li>2. Business planning and tools for cost- effective management</li> <li>3. Tools for revenue generation</li> </ol> <p>(average of the three pilot areas)</p>	<p>a) \$200,000 per year delivered for eco-compensation</p> <p>b) 30% increase in total FSS score</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clearly define 'eco-compensation' to clarify the scope of reporting under this indicator</li> <li>2. For clarity, suggest rewording EOP target (b) to a number instead of a % increase in total FSS score; the revised baseline total score is 71 and a 30% increase would be a target score of 92, so <u>recommend</u> changing EOP target (b) to 'Total FSS score 92 (a 30% increase)'</li> </ol>
<b>Outcome 2</b>		
7. Capacity of MPA agencies in pilot areas, as measured by Capacity Development Scorecard	<p>a) Beihai = 80%</p> <p>b) Qinzhou = 76%</p> <p>c) Zhuhai = 84%</p> <p>d) Jiangmen = 77%</p> <p>e) Xiamen = 89%</p>	No suggested changes
8. Management effectiveness of target MPAs of global significance, indicated by the percentage increase in the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores	<p>a) Proposed Sanniang Bay CWD NR = 70%</p> <p>b) Shankou Mangrove NNR = 70%</p> <p>c) Dugong NNR = 70%</p> <p>d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 70%</p> <p>e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 70%</p> <p>f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 70%</p>	1. <u>Recommend</u> removing Indicator 8a (Sanniang Bay CWD NNR) because the reserve has not been established and the authority has not been formed
<p>9. Extent of community engagement in MPA conservation:</p> <p>a) # citizens (disaggregated by gender) participating in actions for MPAs (volunteer marine debris cleans, marine debris surveys, CWD sightings reports by smartphones), voluntary MPA rangers etc).</p> <p>b) # eco-labelled tourism operations (boat operators, tour guides, restaurants, shell-fishers etc) - mainly Beihai-Qinzhou</p> <p>c) # of people (gender disaggregated) benefiting from enhanced and more sustainable livelihoods as a result of project activities for MPAs</p>	<p>a) 4 citizen participatory action programmes (1000 participants, 50% women)</p> <p>b) 10 businesses eco-labelled</p> <p>c) 30 (at least 50% women)</p>	No suggested changes

Indicator	End-of-project target	Suggestions
10. Reduction in key threats to biodiversity in pilot areas: a) # CWD and other cetaceans found dead with external injuries due to human activities b) # incidents of illegal fishing* in target MPAs c) Weight of debris/litter collected during volunteer beach cleans * measured separately for shell-fishing/mud digging in BQCW	a) 10% reduction b) 10% reduction c) 10% reduction	1. <u>Recommend</u> setting baseline for Indicator 10b, using data from 2021 (rather than 2020, when enforcement levels were very low due to COVID-19) 2. <u>Recommend</u> setting baseline for Indicator 10c, using data from 2020
11. Level of understanding on value of MPAs among public and decision makers, as measured by KAP (Knowledge Attitudes and Practices) survey score.	15% improvement	No suggested changes
<b>Outcome 3</b>		
12. Operational MPA Network for SE China established for improved data collection, sharing of knowledge and information and best practices for integrated MPA seascape planning and threat management	10 members  Network operational and with dedicated resources for operation  Operationalised information and knowledge management and sharing system linking different MPAs  Working groups on: CWD, habitats and species monitoring	No suggested changes
13. Number of key project lessons and strategies for sustainable coastal management documented, disseminated and adopted at local, provincial and national levels	All project results and lessons learned shared through MPA Network website and media (30% female participants); lessons learned presented to MPA administration and Municipal authorities for adoption in coastal zone planning processes	No suggested changes

**Annex 9: Contribution of the C-PAR 4 Project to the C-PAR Program-level results (source: project document Table 2)**

C-PAR Program Component	Program Outcomes	C-PAR Program Indicators	C-PAR 4 Project contributions to C-PAR Program-level results
<b>Objective: Transform China's national protected area system through systematic legal and institutional reform and innovation for conservation of globally significant biodiversity</b>			
<b>Component 1:</b> Improved legal and institutional framework at national and provincial level  <i>C-PAR4 Component 1: Strengthened MPA legal framework and mainstreaming and expansion of MPA network</i>  <i>C-PAR4 Outcome 1: Expanded and strengthened MPA network with biodiversity mainstreamed into marine spatial planning</i>	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	<b>Indicator 1:</b> <b>Extent to which legal, policy and institutional frameworks reflect current national policy for biodiversity conservation</b>	At least 2 improved/new provincial rules, regulations, management measures, and at least 2 new local rules, regulations, management measures (Indicator 5)
	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	<b>Indicator 2:</b> <b>Sustainability of PA financing</b> a) 30% increase in scores in the GEF-6 BD Financial Sustainability Scorecard b) 30% increase in cumulative annual national PA financing (direct), justified by economic valuations, narrowing the gap for basic PA management scenario c) C-PAR4: Establish ecological compensation mechanism	a) 30% increase in total FSS score  b) N/A  c) \$200,000 per year delivered for eco-compensation (Indicator 6)
	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	<b>Indicator 3:</b> <b>Improved PA governance</b> , as indicated by new or strengthened collaborative governance mechanisms	3 Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships implementing Coastal Biodiversity Action Plans across 3 pilot areas, with at least annual meetings held and up-scaling mechanism agreed by NFGA (Indicator 4)  Operational MPA Network for SE China established for improved data collection, sharing of knowledge and information and best practices for integrated MPA seascape planning and threat management (Indicator 12)
<b>Component 2:</b> 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	<b>Indicator 4:</b> <b>New areas of terrestrial and marine ecosystems in the national PA system</b> , indicated by coverage of ecologically sensitive areas (ESAs) and/or key biodiversity areas (KBAs) in protected area systems.	40,000ha of new MPAs / ESAs gazetted (Indicator 2)
	2.2 Threats to PAs reduced, indicated by increased ESAs and evidence of enforcement, integration of biodiversity concern in development and sector planning and operations, and increased	<b>Indicator 5:</b> <b>Subnational institutional capacities of for protected area planning and management</b> , as indicated by the UNDP	Capacity score raised by 23 – 39% in 5 coastal municipality MPA administrations (Indicator 7)

C-PAR Program Component	Program Outcomes	C-PAR Program Indicators	C-PAR 4 Project contributions to C-PAR Program-level results
<p><i>C-PAR4 Component 1: Strengthened MPA legal framework and mainstreaming and expansion of MPA network</i></p> <p><i>C-PAR4 Outcome 1: Expanded and strengthened MPA network with biodiversity mainstreamed into marine spatial planning</i></p>	capacity for community engagement	<p>Capacity Development Scorecard, tallied across the following five thematic areas:</p> <p><u>Area 1:</u> Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislations, strategies and programs</p> <p><u>Area 2:</u> Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programs</p> <p><u>Area 3:</u> Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders</p> <p><u>Area 4:</u> Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge</p> <p><u>Area 5:</u> Capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn</p>	
		<p><u>Indicator 6:</u></p> <p><b>Threats to globally significant biodiversity at project demonstration sites reduced.</b></p>	<p>10% reduction in:</p> <p>a. # of Chinese white dolphin and other cetaceans found dead with external injuries due to human misconducts</p> <p>b. # incidents of illegal fishing* in target MPAs</p> <p>c. Weight of debris/litter collected during volunteer beach cleans</p> <p>* measured separately for shell-fishing/mud digging in Beihai-Qinzhou coastal waters.</p> <p>(Indicator 10)</p>
<p><b>Component 3:</b></p> <p>Site level management and supervision standards raised for different PA types</p> <p><i>C-PAR4 Component 2: Demonstrations of improved MPA and ESA</i></p>	<p>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</p> <p>3.2 Stable or improved status of rare species population – e.g. snow leopard, Przewalski's gazelle, migratory birds</p>	<p><u>Indicator 7:</u></p> <p><b>Protected area management effectiveness</b>, as indicated by scores recorded in the GEF-6 version of the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT)</p> <p><u>Indicator 8:</u></p> <p><b>Estimated populations of threatened species</b>, as indicated by biodiversity assessments</p> <p><u>Indicator 9:</u></p> <p><b># direct project beneficiaries</b>,</p> <p>a. Communities within/around target sites.</p> <p>b. People receiving training.</p>	<p>METT score of at least 67% in 5 MPAs indicating “sound” management (Indicator 8)</p> <p>Population size of Chinese white dolphin stable or improved from baseline. (Indicator 3)</p> <p>a. 3,500 people benefiting directly from project (50% women)</p> <p>b. 750 people have received training (C-PAR Program target for C-PAR4) (35% women)</p>

C-PAR Program Component	Program Outcomes	C-PAR Program Indicators	C-PAR 4 Project contributions to C-PAR Program-level results
management effectiveness  C-PAR4 Outcome 2: Improved management effectiveness of MPAs/ESAs in the project pilot areas		Indicator 10: <b>Level of inclusiveness in management of the NP system, as indicated through:</b> a. Gender inclusion b. Ethnic minorities inclusion c. Community engagement d. Civil society participation	(Indicator 1)  50% women target for direct beneficiaries achieved, and 35% women target for training achieved (Indicator 1) 4 citizen participatory action programs (1000 participants, 50% women); 30 people (at least 50% women) benefiting from enhanced and more sustainable livelihoods as a result of project activities for MPAs (Indicator 9)
<b>Component 4:</b> Program Coordination, Knowledge Management, and M&E  C-PAR4 Component 3: Monitoring, evaluation and sharing of knowledge and information on coastal habitats and species  C-PAR4 Outcome 3: MPA network functioning for improved data and knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation	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: <b>Effectiveness of program coordination, as indicated by:</b> a. Program governance b. Program-level reporting	N/A
		Indicator 12: <b>Extent of knowledge management of C-PAR Program, as indicated through</b> a. Functional biodiversity knowledge platform b. Lessons learned distilled and disseminated c. Knowledge exchange through workshops, seminars, conferences	All project results and lessons learned shared through MPA Network website and media and presented to NFGA and Municipal authorities for adoption in coastal zone planning processes (Indicator 13)  Operational MPA Network for SE China established for improved data collection, sharing of information and best practices for integrated MPA seascape planning and threat management (Indicator 12)
		Indicator 13: <b>Level of understanding among decision makers and public on value of PA systems, based on results of knowledge, practices, and attitudes (KAP) survey</b>	15% improvement for 3 pilot areas (Indicator 11)
		Indicator 14: <b>Mandatory basic reporting standard for Chinese nature reserve system, as a necessary evaluation part of supervision</b>	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**

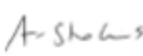
Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System:

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 <sup>2021</sup> (date)

Signature: Lin Shuo

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

# Midterm Review Terms of Reference

Standard Template 2: Formatted information to be entered in [UNDP Jobs website](#)<sup>4</sup>

## **BASIC CONTRACT INFORMATION**

**Location:** China

**Application Deadline:** Nov.29<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**Type of Contract:** Individual Contract

**Post Level:** one International Consultant, and one National Consultant

**Languages Required:** English

**Starting Date:** December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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

**Expected Duration of Assignment:** December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – April 30<sup>th</sup>, 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 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 8<sup>th</sup>, 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](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

<sup>4</sup> <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. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) was established in Oct. 2019 and the first PSC meeting was also held on Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>, 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](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. 24<sup>th</sup>, 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 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 to June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021, there have been 115,229 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 5,179 deaths, reported to WHO. As of June 8<sup>th</sup>, 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<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to Ministry of Ecology and Environment, Ministry of Finance, Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center, Sub-national Governments; executing agencies, senior officials and task team/ component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, local government and CSOs, etc. *Additionally, the national consultant is expected to conduct field missions to following project sites: Chengdu and Ya'an in Sichuan Province, and Xianju County in Zhejiang Province for CPAR 1. Beibai, Qinzhou in Guangxi Province, 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

<sup>5</sup> For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

<sup>6</sup> 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 <sup>7</sup>	Baseline Level <sup>8</sup>	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target <sup>9</sup>	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment <sup>10</sup>	Achievement Rating <sup>11</sup>	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.

<sup>7</sup> Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards

<sup>8</sup> Populate with data from the Project Document

<sup>9</sup> If available

<sup>10</sup> Colour code this column only

<sup>11</sup> 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

		<b>TOTAL</b>			
--	--	--------------	--	--	--

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

#### Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems

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

#### Stakeholder Engagement

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

#### Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

- Validate the risks identified in the project’s most current SESP, and those risks’ ratings; are any revisions needed?
- Summarize and assess the revisions made since CEO Endorsement/Approval (if any) to:
  - The project’s overall safeguards risk categorization.
  - The identified types of risks<sup>12</sup> (in the SESP).
  - The individual risk ratings (in the SESP).
- Describe and assess progress made in the implementation of the project’s social and environmental management measures as outlined in the SESP submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval (and prepared during implementation, if any), including any revisions to those measures. Such management measures might include Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) or other management plans, though can also include aspects of a project’s design; refer to Question 6 in the SESP template for a summary of the identified management measures.

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

<sup>12</sup> Risks are to be labeled with both the UNDP SES Principles and Standards, and the GEF’s “types of risks and potential impacts”: Climate Change and Disaster; Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups; Disability Inclusion; Adverse Gender-Related impact, including Gender-based Violence and Sexual Exploitation; Biodiversity Conservation and the Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources; Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement; Indigenous Peoples; Cultural Heritage; Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention; Labor and Working Conditions; Community Health, Safety and Security.

Reporting

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

Communications & Knowledge Management

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

**4. Sustainability**

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

Financial risks to sustainability:

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

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

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

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

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

Environmental risks to sustainability:

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

**Conclusions & Recommendations**

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

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

**Ratings**

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

**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 2<sup>nd</sup>, 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 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 for CPAR 1 and March 20<sup>th</sup> 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 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 for CPAR 1 and March 25<sup>th</sup> 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 **55 days** over a period of *4 months* starting on **December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021** and shall not exceed five months from when the consultant(s) are hired. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

- *December 10<sup>th</sup>*: Prep the MTR Team (handover of project documents)
- *December 15<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> 2021 (6 days<sup>13</sup>)*: Document review and preparing MTR Inception Reports (4 days for each project)
- *December 28<sup>th</sup> 2021-January 2<sup>nd</sup> 2022 (4 days)*: Finalization and Validation of MTR Inception Reports (CPAR1 & CPAR 4)
- *January 10<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> (5 days)*: Stakeholder meetings & interviews for CPAR 1
- *January 16<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup> (7 days)*: MTR mission: field visits in Sichuan and Zhejiang for CPAR 1
- *January 23<sup>th</sup> -February 10<sup>th</sup> (5 days<sup>14</sup>)*: Preparing draft report for CPAR 1
- *February 11<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> (5 days)*: Incorporating audit trail on draft report, preparation & issue of Management Response and finalization of MTR reports for CPAR 1
- *February 21<sup>th</sup> -25<sup>th</sup> (5 days)*: Stakeholder meetings & interviews for CPAR 4
- *February 27<sup>th</sup>-March 5<sup>th</sup> (7 days)*: MTR mission: field visits in Guangxi, Guangdong and Fujian Province for CPAR 4
- *March 6<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> (5 days)*: Preparing draft report for CPAR 4
- *March 11<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup>, 2022 (5 days)*: Incorporating audit trail on draft report, preparation & issue of Management Response and finalization of MTR reports for CPAR 4
- *March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022*: Expected date of full MTR completion

The date start of contract is **December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021**. There should be stand-alone MTR report for each of the 2 projects.

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

## I. Duty Station

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

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

Additionally, the national consultant is expected to conduct field missions to following project sites: *Chengdu and Ya'an in Sichuan Province*, and *Xianju County in Zhejiang Province* for CPAR 1. *Beihai, Qinzhou in Guangxi Province*, *Zhubai 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 must be successfully completed prior to commencement of travel; Herewith is the link to access this training: <https://training.dss.un.org/courses/login/index.php> . These training modules at this secure internet site is accessible to Consultants, which allows for registration with private email.

<sup>13</sup> The duration of document review has been lengthened considering it happens within the Christmas holiday.

<sup>14</sup> 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](#)<sup>15</sup> provided by UNDP;
- b) **CV and a Personal History Form** ([P11 form](#))<sup>16</sup>;
- 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 30<sup>th</sup>, 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](#)<sup>17</sup>
- [ToR ANNEX C: Midterm Review Evaluative Matrix Template](#)
- [ToR ANNEX D: UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Midterm Review Consultants](#)<sup>18</sup>
- [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 \(provided as a separate file\)](#)

<sup>15</sup>

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

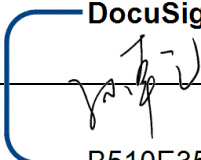
<sup>16</sup> [http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11\\_Personal\\_history\\_form.doc](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11_Personal_history_form.doc)

<sup>17</sup> The Report length should not exceed 40 pages in total (not including annexes).

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>



**Annex 12: Signed MTR final report clearance form****Commissioning Unit (M&E Focal Point)**Name: Sun Qian, M&E Officer

Signature:  **DocuSigned by:** 21-Apr-2022  
B510E356B66F44F...

**Commissioning Unit (Planet Pillar, UNDP CO)**Name: Ma Chaode, Assistant Resident Representative

Signature:  Date: 22 Apr. 2022

**Regional Technical Advisor (Nature, Climate and Energy)**Name: Bipin Pokharel

Signature:  **DocuSigned by:** 24 April 2022  
96CB6E05AF0B449...