



UNDP China

**Demonstration Project of Resilience Community
Construction and Sustainable Development in
Zhouqu County, Gansu Province**

Final Evaluation Report

July 2023

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PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Information		
Project	Demonstration Project of Resilience Community Construction and Sustainable Development in Zhouqu County, Gansu Province	
Atlas number	121313 (Award) / 117090 (Output)	
Overall outcomes and outputs	CPD (2021-2025) Outcome 1: Relative poverty and multidimensional poverty are reduced. More coordinated development leads to reduced urban-rural and regional disparities. More Chinese people including those left behind can benefit from sustainable, innovation-driven, and shared high-quality economic development. More people gain economic opportunities through innovation, entrepreneurship, and rural revitalization, enjoy decent jobs, sustainable livelihoods, and equal rights to development for men and women.	
Nation	China	
Area	Asia-Pacific	
Date of project document signing	August 1, 2019	
Project cycle	Start date	End date
	August 1, 2019	December 31, 2022
Project budget	\$ 3,000,000	
Total project expenditures as of the time of evaluation	\$882,529.23	
Source of funding	United Nations Development Programme, Gannan Prefecture Government and Zhouqu County Government in Gansu Province	
Implementing partners	China International Center for Economic and Technological Exchanges (CICETE)	

Assessment Information		
Type of evaluation (project/outcome/ad hoc report/national program, etc.)	Project	
Final/midterm evaluation/other	Final evaluation	
Evaluation cycle	Start date	End date

	October 9, 2022	March 20, 2023
Evaluator	Yang Bao	
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Evaluator

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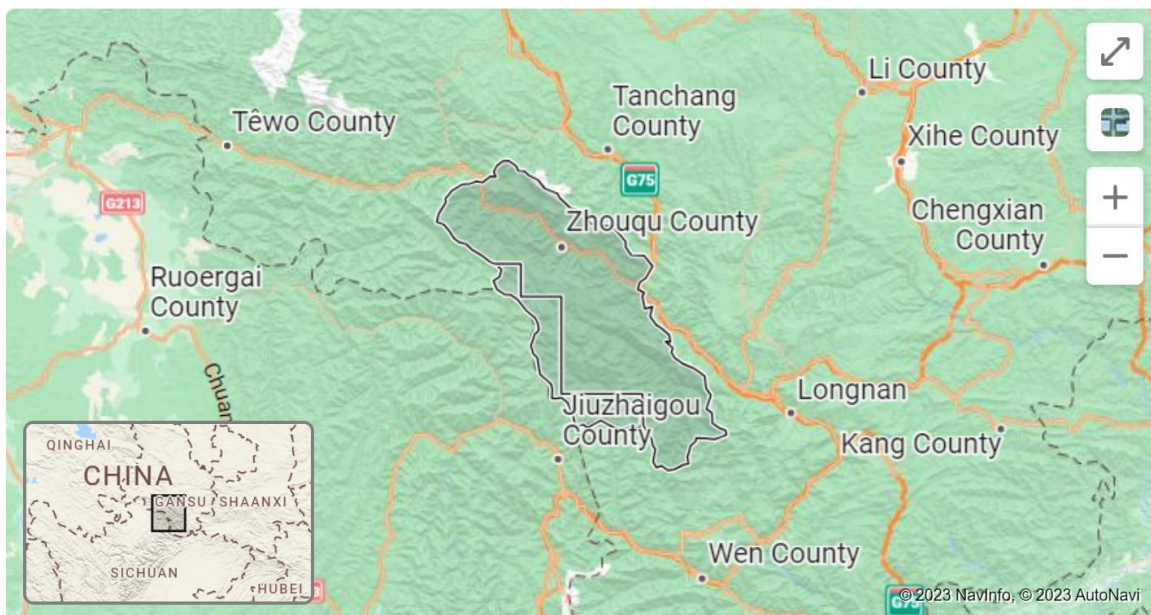
LIST OF ACRONYMS

- **UNDP** United Nations Development Program
- **CICETE** China International Center for Economic and Technological Exchanges
- **TOR** Terms of Reference
- **M&E** Monitoring and Evaluation
- **PPM** Project and Program Management
- **CPD** Country Program Document
- **SDGs** Sustainable Development Goals
- **UNDAF** United Nations Development Assistance Framework
- **UNDAP** United Nations Development Assistance Partnership
- **UNSDCF** United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Zhouqu County in Gansu Province is located in the "three areas and three prefectures"¹ in China, and it is a deeply impoverished county receiving targeted support from the Chinese government. Natural disasters occur frequently in Zhouqu County, such as the "Aug 8" catastrophic mudslide in 2010, which has attracted widespread international attention. The harsh natural environment and weak industrial foundation have seriously hindered the sustainable development of Zhouqu County.

Deploying a poverty reduction project in Zhouqu County is in line with the requirements of the UN Sustainable Development Goal Framework and will also help China in achieving its national priority, namely, to promote the effective connection between poverty alleviation and rural revitalization. In July 2019, UNDP, CICETE and the People's Government Zhouqu County, the People's Government of Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture jointly signed Demonstration Project of Resilience Community Construction and Sustainable Development in Zhouqu County, Gansu Province, aiming to carry out localized and innovative demonstration work featuring organic integration of poverty reduction and resilience building under the framework of sustainable development. The project implementation cycle is three years (2019 - 2022), and now it has entered the final evaluation phase.



The project evaluation was conducted by professor Yang Bao from the School of Public Administration of Chongqing University. Professor Yang Bao has long been committed to the research of regional sustainable development and collaborative governance. He has participated in the evaluations of relevant UNDP projects for many years and his work has been well received, such as Socioeconomic Impact Assessment of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Poverty Areas in China in 2020, and the Final Evaluation for UNDP Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development

¹ Three areas and three prefectures: a political geography term of the China in 2018, refers to the deep poverty areas at the national level of the China and the key areas to solve the poverty alleviation.

Project in 2021. He has rich experience in evaluating similar projects and can ensure the quality standard of project evaluation results.

Guided by the UNDP evaluation guidelines, project evaluation focuses on the five criteria: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and gender equality and cross-cutting issues**, and evaluate four aspects of objectives and content:

- Project **design** evaluation focuses on whether a project targets local needs, whether the designed activities effectively solve local problems, and whether the local conditions are in place for implementing project activities;
- Project **implementation** evaluation focuses on the efficiency of resource utilization and stakeholder participation;
- Project **result** evaluation focuses on the direct outcomes, what local sustainable development issues have been addressed by the project, and the lasting influence of the project in local area;
- The overall project evaluation focuses on the local experiences explored during the project implementation process, the cooperation mechanism established and the implications for UNDP in planning and managing similar projects.

The evaluation results will provide references and research materials for the direct beneficiaries of poverty reduction and resilience building in Zhouqu County and other relevant parties interested in “resilience building and industrial poverty reduction”.

This evaluation follows the principles outlined in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, using the triangulation principle to validate the results. The evaluation team adopts positivist methodology and obtains data and information through project document review, interviews with key informants, group discussions and relevant secondary literature collection. Analysis revealed that the project planned a framework of sustainable development goals for Zhouqu County in five areas including resilience building, industrial poverty reduction, environmental governance, renewable energy and folk culture, with 5 major goals and 13 specific sub-goals. However, due to the sudden outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 and changes in Zhouqu County government’s priorities, including the mudslide disaster that occurred on August 17, 2020, the project was suspended from August 2020 to 2021 March. Then the project was halted again due to repeated epidemic prevention and control restrictions in Gansu province. At the same time, some changes were made to the project as approved by the Steering Committee. In the end, not all of the five major objectives set by the project were achieved, and the project implementation team mainly focused on two key issues: resilience building and industrial poverty reduction.

The actual cost of the project is \$882,529.23 The project mainly accomplished two expected objectives in resilience building and industrial poverty reduction, which include 12 activities. The project on forming and promoting Zhouqu resilient community demonstration model completed the international research on learning agricultural science and technology and learning experience and knowledge on disaster early warning; also completed preparations for the International Conference on Resilient City Construction in Zhouqu County. The project on poverty reduction and capacity enhancement of characteristic industry completed the development of morel mushrooms planting industry and a large-scale greenhouse construction.

Although not all the set goals have been achieved, with the joint efforts of the project team, the project has achieved outstanding outcomes:

- 1) In terms of resilience building, the project has expanded the scope of knowledge and vision of Zhouqu County government leaders by organizing study trips to the Netherlands and Switzerland, contributing to the disaster prevention and mitigation capability in Zhouqu County.
- 2) In terms of industrial poverty reduction, the scale of morel mushroom planting has expanded and the industrial chain has become more complete; farmers' income has been effectively improved; the National Morel Mushroom Conference was successfully held to expand the influence of morel mushroom industry in Zhouqu County; the "small but beautiful" concept applied in industrial poverty reduction was incorporated into the "14th Five-Year Plan" for Revitalizing the Specialty Agricultural Industry in Zhouqu County.
- 3) In terms of women's rights and interests, the project has promoted women's participation in the project implementation process, and enabled women to acquire new skills and capabilities through vocational training and women's employment, so as to improve their economic income and family status.

At the same time, the project has also explored experiences that are transferrable:

- 1) Creating a collaboration model of "platform resources + local funds", which can effectively leverage the enthusiasm of local government and promote the piloting of global experience in China;
- 2) Building a "four-in-one" industrial cooperation network composed of government, enterprises, cooperatives and farmers, which unites forces to promote industrial poverty reduction;
- 3) Implementing five measures including providing policy subsidies, implementing the "Three Changes" reform, carrying out participatory learning on planting techniques, promoting technical touring mechanism and the unified purchase and sales of agricultural products, in order to reduce the risk of farmers participating in poverty reduction industry and stimulate their enthusiasm;
- 4) Focusing on resilience building and poverty reduction industry cultivation, local sustainable development capacity has been enhanced by renewing the vision of local government leaders, formulating industrial development plans, strengthening the administrative functions of agricultural technology promotion stations, and accelerating the improvement of industrial chains;
- 5) Promoting women's autonomy through the development of labor-intensive industries, the creation of a large number of short-term jobs, the promotion of learning planting techniques, and launching publicity activities to encourage women's participation in industrial poverty reduction, realize "participatory empowerment" and promote women's rights and interests.

In general, the project has the advantages of respecting local facts in planning and design, focusing on diversified participation in the implementation process, reflecting sustainable development in project outcomes, and producing typical experiences in a general sense, but the project also reveals three problems:

- 1) During the project design and implementation stage, although the impact of leadership transition in local government on project implementation was taken into account, such as increased communication cost and rising hurdles in the approval process, and some measures were taken, the overall project progress was still affected to a certain extent;
- 2) The project implementation process did not fully stimulate the endogenous motivation of farmers to participate in industrial poverty reduction;
- 3) After the project was launched, it fails to foster and form industrial clusters resulting in limited benefits on poverty reduction.

The final evaluation provides an opportunity for reflection and continuous improvement even though this project is soon to be closed. The recommendations highlight areas for enhancement in strategy, planning, implementation, and project management. These insights can inform the planning processes for future projects in tangible ways, leading to measurable improvements in project delivery and efficiency over time. In this regard, the evaluator recommends:

- 1) To address the change of local leaders, the following two measures could be taken: a. Establishing varied forms of communications such as thematic salons, field trips and joint meetings to promote consensus on the project; b. Forming a dynamic project adjustment mechanism combining regular and irregular adjustments in response to new expectations of the project landing place.
- 2) In view of the problem that the project did not fully stimulate the endogenous motivation of farmers, the following two measures are suggested to reduce farmers' risk in project participation: a. Vigorously develop rural cooperatives and enhance risk resilience; b. Improve the mechanism of technical touring to provide multi-level technical support.
- 3) In view of the fact that no industrial cluster has been formed in Zhouqu County, the following three measures are suggested: a. Improve the external cooperation network and promote the integrated development of "production, processing and marketing"; b. Vigorously develop e-commerce in rural areas and broaden the sales channels of agricultural products; c. Increase policy advocacy and introduce policies to optimize the business environment.

Throughout the project implementation process, the project has the following lessons for the UNDP's deployment of resilience building and poverty reduction projects:

- 1) Innovate the strategy for activities in China and encourage a new collaboration model of "platform resources + local funds";
- 2) Focus on the organic integration of global experience and local knowledge to enhance the effectiveness of project implementation;
- 3) Establish a communication, coordination and dynamic adjustment mechanism covering the whole process to facilitate the smooth implementation of the project; (4) Guide enterprises and local people to establish industrial partnerships, make full use of the mobilization capacity of cooperatives, stimulate the initiative of local people to participate in poverty reduction initiative, and put an end to the chaotic phenomenon of "nanny-style" poverty alleviation.

I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Since the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 adopted the outcome document Transforming Our World – The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations has vigorously promoted the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals Framework. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), as a key agency of the UN, explores sustainable development experience around the world, making full use of its global network and development experience to provide countries with knowledge, experience and resources to assist them in enhancing their environmental resilience, with a particular focus on helping developing countries in the third world to find solutions for sustainable development.

China is actively exploring the answers to sustainable development. In September 2016, China released China's National Plan on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the UN Headquarter, while its domestic practice is to promote the effective linkage between poverty eradication and rural revitalization. Zhouqu County in Gansu Province is a deeply impoverished county belongs to the “three areas and three prefectures” in China and the “two prefectures and one county” in Gansu Province, thus has received substantial support from the Chinese government. Moreover, natural disasters occur frequently in Zhouqu County, such as the catastrophic mudslide on August 8, 2010 which caused huge losses in human lives and property. The harsh natural environment and weak industrial base pose serious challenges to the sustainable development of Zhouqu County.

Against this background, in July 2019, UNDP, CICETE and the People's Government of Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, the People's Government of Zhouqu County jointly signed the Demonstration Project of Resilience Community Construction and Sustainable Development in Zhouqu County, Gansu Province. The project aims to establish a comprehensive and systematic perspective to integrate China's national strategy and the UN Sustainable Development Goal Framework, combining the systematic practice of constructing a national ecological security barrier in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River in Zhouqu, to integrate poverty reduction and resilience building and form a localized and innovative demonstration project under the sustainable development framework; and to refine and develop a Chinese model of localizing SDGs for other developing countries' reference around the world. The project has been implemented for three years and has now entered the final evaluation stage.

1.1 Necessities and benefits of evaluation

The project evaluation reached conclusions on the basis of summarizing and analyzing the project design, implementation process and practical experiences, which is of great significance to implementing UN SDG framework, China's comprehensive promotion of rural revitalization, and strengthening resilience building in Zhouqu County, Gansu Province.

Particularly the expected benefits of this evaluation include the following:



1.1.1 Conducive to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goal Framework

Based on the project evaluation results, stakeholders such as UNDP, CICETE, and Zhouqu County government can fully understand the process of localizing the UN’s 2030 SDG framework and its practices and experiences.

The project was designed to integrate the seven goals of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely:

- Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere;
- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
- Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all;
- Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;
- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Zhouqu County in Gansu Province belongs to the “Tibetan region in four provinces” in the “three areas and three prefectures” and is one of the deeply impoverished counties that receives key support from the Chinese government. The localization experiences of promoting sustainable development gained through exploring the above goals during the project implementation process are typical. This evaluation summarizes the local experience in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in China and contributes ideas to global sustainable development.

1.1.2 Conducive to the Chinese government's comprehensive promotion of rural revitalization

At present, China is actively promoting the modernization of agriculture and rural areas, and rural revitalization has become an important national strategy. The project evaluation will provide reference and suggestion for implementing this strategy at local level.

In February 2020, Zhouqu County, Gansu Province was removed from the list of impoverished counties and entered the stage of promoting an effective linkage between poverty alleviation and rural revitalization in accordance with the strategic plan outlined by the Chinese government. The project was implemented at this critical stage. Industrial revitalization is the top priority of rural revitalization. Therefore, this project prioritizes industrial poverty reduction as a key task, aiming to promote the ongoing improvement of Zhouqu County's agricultural industry chain and the continuous increase of farmers' income. This evaluation will summarize the experience of industrial poverty reduction developed throughout the project implementation process, including the construction of cooperation networks and the cultivation of industrial chains, to provide reference for the Chinese government in making decisions on the overall promotion of rural revitalization.

1.1.3 Conducive to the sustainable development of Zhouqu County, Gansu Province

The project focuses on poverty reduction and resilience building in Zhouqu County. The evaluation will provide thorough assessment for sustainable development in Zhouqu County by reviewing the whole process of project implementation and summarizing experiences.

As one of the “three areas and three prefectures”, Zhouqu County's sustainable development is constrained by natural environment and human resources. First, the natural ecological environment is very fragile. Zhouqu County is a region with many mountains and ravines, frequent natural disasters such as collapses, landslides and mudslides. It is an earthquake - prone and relatively active area with a seismic intensity of 7 degrees. The frequent occurrence of large-scale mudslides in Zhouqu is related to several major earthquakes in history. Nine earthquakes that caused house collapses, landslides and mudslides that affected the county have been documented in written records. Among them, the catastrophic mudslide disaster on August 8, 2010 killed 1,557 people. Following this incident, the Chinese government declared August 15 a National Day of Mourning. Second, the overall education level of local labor force is low. In Zhouqu County, there are 8,500 people with a high school education or above, accounting for 12.84% of the work force and 17,000 people with a junior high school education, accounting for 25.6% of the work force. There are more than 32,000 people with primary school education, accounting for 48.9% of the workforce, 8,400 illiterate and semi-literate people, accounting for 12.64% of the workforce, and less than 3% of its rural labor force systematically received agricultural vocational training.

The vulnerability of its natural environment and human resources has led to frequent natural disasters and hindered industrial development in Zhouqu County. The local government attempted to relocate the population, but they could not leave their homeland, and few people responded to the relocation policy. In this regard, Zhouqu County urgently needs to strengthen resilience to provide safety and security, and to promote local economic development through fostering characteristic industries to improve the living standards of local people. The project evaluation serves this purpose by summarizing project implementation experiences.

1.2 Evaluation Scope

According to project document, the evaluation will systematically evaluate the project in four aspects and stages: project design, project implementation, project results and overall evaluation. Meanwhile, the evaluation also addresses how the project sought to mainstream gender, considered disability issues, and applied the rights-based approach.

1.2.1 Evaluation for project design

- Evaluate whether the project has targeted the needs of Zhouqu County, and whether a detailed and accurate demand survey has been completed;
- Evaluate whether the project can effectively solve the problems faced by Zhouqu County in areas such as resilience building and industrial poverty reduction;
- Evaluate whether local conditions are suitable for implementing all project activities, including natural resources, transportation, market structure and the capacity of executive personnel.

1.2.2 Evaluation for project implementation

- Item-by-item assessment of the completion status of project objectives;
- Evaluate resource utilization efficiency during project implementation;
- Evaluate the participation of stakeholders during project implementation including Zhouqu County government, project office, project business partners, local people, and summarize how the project objectives are accomplished.

1.2.3 Evaluation for project results

- Summarize the project's direct outcomes in terms of resilience building and poverty reduction;
- Analyze what sustainable development problems in Zhouqu County have been solved;
- Evaluate the far-reaching influence of these outcomes on sustainable development in Zhouqu County.

1.2.4 Overall evaluation of the project

- Summarize the local experience explored by the project in terms of regional sustainable development;
- Analyze the project's contribution in improving governance capacity, which includes institutional building, governance network and other elements in Zhouqu County;
- Summarize lessons learned for leading similar projects by UNDP.

1.3 The Use of Evaluation

There are mainly two types of targeted beneficiaries of this project evaluation:

1.3.1 Stakeholders for poverty reduction and resilience building project in Zhouqu County

This type of beneficiary includes Zhouqu County government, Zhouqu Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and other local agencies. They can use this evaluation report as past experiences to continuously carry out socioeconomic projects in Zhouqu County and effectively promote local sustainable development. In addition, UNDP can measure the direction of resilient community construction projects based on the evaluation results, apply implementation experiences gained in Zhouqu project for future projects, and summarize the demonstration model of resilient community construction to improve the implementation standard and efficiency of similar UNDP projects.

1.3.2 Relevant parties concerned with resilience building and industrial poverty alleviation

The project evaluation strives to systematically present the project process, and present issues related to poverty reduction and resilience building to the interested parties in this field around the world for in-depth research or as a reference to implement similar sustainable development projects.

1.4 Evaluation Report Structure

The project evaluation report mainly includes the following seven sections.

- Introduction and overview: explain the significance of evaluation, evaluation content and application of evaluation results.
- Project description: explain project objectives, design basis, key assumptions, stakeholders, resources required and challenges faced for the implementation of Zhouqu project.
- Scope and objectives: explain the evaluation scope, evaluation objectives and evaluation criteria for the Zhouqu project.
- Methodologies and process: explain the evaluation method and its usage for the Zhouqu project.
- Results and findings: summarize the design background of Zhouqu project, project implementation, outcomes achieved, lessons learned and challenges that emerged during the implementation process.
- Evaluation conclusion: summarize the evaluation work and evaluation results for the Zhouqu project.
- Optimization recommendations: the expert group raised targeted suggestions focusing on the weaknesses exposed in the Zhouqu project in terms of design, implementation and outcomes.
- Lessons learned: based on the implementation of Zhouqu project, the expert group made holistic recommendations for UNDP's global deployment of projects in areas of resilience building and poverty reduction.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Results Framework

Based on the SDG framework proposed by the United Nations and China's national development strategy, combined with building a national ecological security barrier in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River in Zhouqu, the project initially focuses on 5 major goals including: resilience building, industrial poverty reduction, environmental governance, renewable energy and folk culture as the sustainable development framework for Zhouqu County.

Outcome	Output
<p>Goal 1: The overall capacity to cope with climate change and disaster risk management has been improved, and the international demonstration model of Zhouqu resilient community/city has been formed and promoted.</p>	<p>Sub-goal 1: Compile Zhouqu County Resilient Community/Urban Strategic Planning and Action Plan Zhouqu County is facing enormous challenges brought by climate change, frequent natural disasters and rapid urban economic development. Through formulating the Resilient Community/City Strategic Planning and Action Plan, the focus was on how to strengthen resilience construction in Zhouqu County, enhance urban risk management capacity and build a firm “safety line”, so as to improve the disaster prevention, mitigation and response capabilities of Zhouqu County.</p>
	<p>Sub-goal 2: Explore community-based smart resilience solutions for county-level emergency management, and systematically improve comprehensive disaster prevention and response capabilities County level is the most important public service level in China. The core of building a comprehensive and resilient city lies in how to vitalize the whole process of systematic prevention, first response, emergency command, and comprehensive recovery, of which community is the most basic unit. The risks associated with disasters are highly uncertain and unexpected. To this end, it is necessary to improve governance capabilities such as real-time tracking, response and disposal. It is crucial to establish a dynamic, interactive, and precise emergency management mindset and corresponding technology platform. Based on the risk characteristics of Zhouqu County, combined with the relevant requirements of China's national demonstration districts and counties in comprehensive disaster reduction, as well as the piloting experience of UNDP at home and abroad, the project takes into account the varied needs and vulnerabilities of different geographic, age and gender groups to explore the establishment of a community-based smart resilience that is institutionable for emergency management at county-level to improve comprehensive disaster prevention and response capabilities.</p>
	<p>Sub-goal 3: Gender-specific disaster prevention and mitigation, climate change capacity building, and community/city resilience enhancement</p>

	<p>Through carrying out a series of activities and learning from the advanced experiences at home and abroad, improve disaster risk management capacity at all levels in Zhouqu County. Specifically, the project intends to combine the successful experience of UNDP and China’s risk governance innovation project to promote disaster risk mitigation and prevention and climate change capacity building through the following ways: ① commemorative days such as “Aug 8” and “Jul 10”, “May 12” (the national disaster prevention and reduction day), “Oct 13” (international disaster reduction day), can be used for innovative and in-depth advocacy and educational activities on disaster prevention and reduction. Other activities can also be arranged under the theme of “reducing community disaster risks and enhance disaster mitigation capacity at the grassroot level”; ② Promote capacity building on community disaster risk management, carry out special trainings and activities such as community first responders, community risk maps, and family disaster plans; ③ Conduct regional training and demonstration of safe school development based on the International Comprehensive Safe School Framework (CSS); ④In the process of carrying out relevant activities, focus on cultivating leaders (or supporting them in employment) from easily marginalized groups such as women.</p> <p>Sub-goal 4: Compile the “Green Paper on Resilience and Sustainable Development in Zhouqu County”</p> <p>Through the compilation of “Green Paper on Resilience and Sustainable Development in Zhouqu County”, collate a number of ecological engineering projects in Zhouqu County over the years from the implementation of ecological protection, geological disaster management, to water and soil conservation, returning farmland to forests, energy conservation and emission reduction so as to summarize the experience of systematically promoting resilience building and sustainable development in the course of poverty reduction, and to provide reference for similar regions to carry out resilience building program and help them better benefit local residents.</p> <p>Sub-goal 5: Build a county-level collaboration network for resilient city construction and an institutionalized exchange platform at home and abroad</p> <p>Combining the implementation experience of UNDP and China's risk governance innovation project, the project will work with typical counties and cities in some of China’s high-risk areas to jointly build a collaborative network for the construction of county-level resilient cities in China. In addition, the project will organize international organizations and experts at home and abroad to summarize mature international experience and consider the differences in the needs and vulnerabilities of people of different genders, ages, ethnicities, and regions in terms of resilience building</p>
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	<p>by building domestic and foreign exchange platforms, explore inclusive localization implementation solutions, and share “Zhouqu Experience” on the platforms.</p>
<p>Goal 2: Enhance the production capacity of local high-quality characteristic agricultural products and relevant sales and logistics system; improve the industrial poverty reduction capability</p>	<p>Sub-goal 6: Cultivate the entrepreneurial and poverty reduction capability of left-behind groups, and improve the yield of high-quality agricultural products and the efficiency of land utilization through the development of three-dimensional planting, breeding research and demonstration based on greenhouse facilities, which serves as the new momentum for the poverty reduction goal of Zhouqu County</p> <p>Through research and demonstration, we will further improve and optimize the quality and output of premium agricultural products in Zhouqu County, enhance their competitiveness in the market so as to reduce poverty. Guide new business entities to carry out quality certification of pollution-free agricultural products, green food, and organic agricultural products, gradually forming regional branding advantages.</p>
	<p>Sub-goal 7: Build a cold chain logistics system, connect with the “E-commerce Demonstration County Project”, introduce leading e-commerce companies, support left-behind groups to engage in e-commerce entrepreneurship, and enhance the competitiveness of local high-quality products, thereby promoting the poverty reduction process in Zhouqu County</p> <p>Combined with the “2018 Comprehensive Demonstration Project Implementation Plan for E-Commerce Entering into Rural Areas in Zhouqu County”, we will focus on the construction activities related to cold chain logistics, create new momentum for industrial poverty reduction, tap the poverty reduction potential of Zhouqu County, drive local economic growth through developing industrial clusters, so as to increase the income of farmers.</p>
<p>Goal 3: The environment is effectively managed, and efforts are made to enter the track of high-quality development</p>	<p>Sub-goal 8: According to the requirements of local policies and regulations, prove the current upgrading methods of existing local waste disposal facilities in a scientific manner, construct and implement demonstration projects</p> <p>Scientifically plan and implement demonstration projects for upgrading existing waste disposal facilities in Zhouqu County, promoting the construction of “ecologically civilized well-off villages” and “environmental revolution”, and resolve potential dangers such as leakage affecting groundwater.</p>
	<p>Sub-goal 9: Conduct scientific treatment of sewage, build and implement demonstration projects</p> <p>The sludge disposal technology of the sewage treatment plant in the old urban area in Zhouqu County is seriously obsolete, and the pollution parameters after treatment are about 20% lower than the national standard. Therefore, this project studies how to align the sewage treatment in the old district with relevant national standards,</p>

	<p>and reduce the impact of unsuitable sewage treatment system on the health, economic activities, and lives of local people.</p>
<p>Goal 4: Develop and utilize renewable energy and practice green development</p>	<p>Sub-goal 10: Ensure safe drinking water for communities and students</p> <p>As a major livelihood project, the safety of drinking water is most directly related to the vital interests of local male and female students, and is also the most concerned issue of parents and family members. Therefore, the project focuses on and addresses drinking water safety in Zhouqu communities and schools, ensuring safe drinking water for the community and students through the protection of centralized water sources, the construction of drinking water safety demonstration sites, and the implementation of drinking water safety publicity campaigns.</p> <p>Sub-goal 11: Carry out feasibility studies and research on the utilization of renewable energy such as micro-hydropower, biogas and micro-wind power</p> <p>Through tapping the potential of renewable energy and conducting relevant research, we will explore an energy regeneration model suitable for the green development of Zhouqu County, provide sufficient source of energy for promoting green and low-carbon development, protect the ecological environment, and embark on the road of sustainable economic and social development.</p>
<p>Goal 5: Innovate and develop characteristic tourism combining folk culture and ecological environment</p>	<p>Sub-goal 12: According to the characteristics of local folk culture and ecological environment, formulate a characteristic tourism development plan combining folk culture and ecological environment in Zhouqu County, and carry out related capacity building to reduce poverty and increase people’s income through characteristic tourism</p> <p>Promote the harmonious co-development of cultural and ecological protection and tourism development, protect Zhouqu’s folk cultural activities with strong local features such as “Dongshan Zhuandeng” and historical relics such as Qin tombs, Han tombs, Tang tombs and Ming tombs, and promote the development of tertiary industry in Zhouqu, so as to boost regional economy and increase employment opportunities.</p> <p>Sub-goal 13: Organize folk culture and eco-tourism innovations to promote local poverty reduction and economic development in conjunction with domestic and international collaboration network on resilience building</p> <p>Through domestic and international collaboration network on resilience building, plan and implement new paths of folk culture and eco-tourism for poverty reduction, encourage people of different genders from different regions and at all ages to participate in the process, organize and launch an innovation platform for folk culture and eco-tourism, and focus on launching tourism products that combine unique folk culture and ecological characteristics of Zhouqu County.</p>

2.2 Stakeholders

The project involves close cooperation with multiple stakeholders, which can be divided into three categories according to their different roles in the project implementation process: core management structure, main advocacy platform, and key implementation partners.

2.2.1 Core management structure

In order to ensure project compliance and effective management, the project has established a management, supervision and coordination organizational structure, including the Project Steering Committee, UNDP, CICETE, the People's Government of Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, the People's Government of Zhouqu County, Project Management Office, the responsibilities of each party are as follows:

Parties	Responsibilities
Project Steering Committee (PSC)	<p>The Project Steering Committee is responsible for the strategic decision-making of the project and provides policy and strategic guidance on the project implementation, with representatives from UNDP, CICETE, the People's Government of Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and the People's Government of Zhouqu County. During the project implementation process, the steering committee meets at least once a year. UNDP and CICETE attend the annual meetings to review project progress, approve annual project work plans and budgets, discuss and resolve major issues. The duties of Project Steering Committee include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve annual work plan; • Review and approve project annual work report; • Provide industry-specific technical input and suggestions for the project; • Ensure policy compliance, human resources and financial support for project implementation; • Coordinate different opinions within the project to ensure collaboration amongst member units; • Conduct comprehensive evaluation and quality control of project's results.
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	<p>UNDP is primarily responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in project design and the preparation of project documents; • Monitoring and evaluating project progress in conjunction with CICETE to ensure expected results; • Providing international experience and technology and promote project results.

<p>China International Center for Economic and Technological Exchange (CICETE)</p>	<p>CICETE is mainly responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in project design and preparation of project documents; • Project coordination and management; • Sign project documents on behalf of the Chinese government, and jointly oversee the project with UNDP to ensure the overall project quality; • Provide other necessary support for the project.
<p>People's Government of Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture</p>	<p>The main responsibilities of the People's Government of Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advisory support on local policies and planning etc.; • Provide guidance and support to Zhouqu County government in coordinating with the departments under direct management of prefecture; • Secure funding for the project at the beginning of each year after the Project Steering Committee approves annual work plan.
<p>People's Government of Zhouqu County</p>	<p>Zhouqu County government is responsible for providing support in terms of policy, organizational coordination, funds and physical facilities for project implementation. The specific responsibilities are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-department and cross-industry coordination during project implementation; • Designate Zhouqu County Development and Reform Bureau as the supporting unit for the Project Management Office, and provide office space, staff and necessary office equipment.
<p>Project Management Office (PMO)</p>	<p>The Project Management Office is located in the Development and Reform Bureau in Zhouqu County. The local government assigned national project director and the director of the Project Management Office. The office staffing includes project manager, project assistant, information officer, project accountant and cashier. Under the guidance and supervision of the Project Steering Committee, the Project Management Office is responsible for the implementation management and financial accounting of the project. Specific responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall coordination of project implementation, including formulation of work plans, technical guidance on the implementation of project outcomes, preparation of procurement plans, drafting monitoring reports, regular coordination of project results, maintaining

	<p>communication with stakeholders etc., and providing secretariat support to the Project Steering Committee;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for the implementation of projects related to policy, mechanism and program, promoting knowledge management and results sharing, and facilitating the dissemination and application of project results at the policy level; • Project implementation management, including coordinating project participating units to compile and summarize work plans and budgets, daily management of project implementation, monitoring project implementation and funding progress, executing project procurement plans, signing service contracts with technical service providers and consultants, regularly coordinating project outcomes, promoting experience exchange and preparing regular project reports.
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2.2.3 Beneficiaries

The project focused on resilience building, industrial poverty reduction, environmental governance, renewable energy, and folk culture as the sustainable development framework for Zhouqu County has several beneficiaries.

Firstly, the local community of Zhouqu County will benefit from the project as it aims to alleviate poverty, improve environmental conditions, and promote sustainable development. The project will provide employment opportunities through the development of renewable energy and industries, leading to economic growth and poverty reduction. Additionally, the project's emphasis on environmental governance will help preserve the natural resources of the area, benefiting not only the local community but also the wider region. Finally, the promotion of folk culture as a part of the sustainable development framework will help preserve and celebrate the unique cultural heritage of Zhouqu County.

2.2.4 Other key partners

Throughout the project life, the following departments or groups will support and participate in the project implementation as the main partners of project implementation:

- Zhouqu County Development and Reform Bureau,
- Zhouqu County Finance Bureau,
- Zhouqu County Emergency Management Bureau,
- Zhouqu County Housing and Construction Bureau,
- Zhouqu County Poverty Alleviation Office,
- Zhouqu County Ecological and Environmental Protection Bureau,
- Zhouqu County Electric Power Bureau,
- Zhouqu County Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Bureau (Agricultural Bureau),
- Zhouqu County Commerce Bureau, Zhouqu County Culture Bureau,

- Zhouqu County Education Bureau,
- Zhouqu Sub-branch of the People's Bank of China,
- Zhouqu County Tourism Bureau,

Besides, partners in project implementation also include: communities and indigenous people, relevant academic and scientific institution partners, and relevant media.

2.3 Resources

The resources required for project implementation can be divided into three categories: funding, manpower and public platforms. Unlike traditional projects that are contracted and funded by UNDP, the funding of this project mainly come from the People's Government of Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and the People's Government of Zhouqu County. The purpose of cooperation with UNDP is to introduce an international knowledge exchange platform, in order to promote mutual learning and exchange of experience on resilience building and poverty reduction.

2.3.1 Source of funding

The project has been supported by the People's Government of Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and the People's Government of Zhouqu County for a period of three years (August 2019 -July 2022) with a total amount of US \$ 2,990,000. UNDP provides US \$ 10, 000 in financial support for a total of US \$ 3, 000, 000

2.3.2 Human resources

Manpower is mainly needed in three areas of the project: project management, project implementation and project technical support.

- In terms of project management, all project partners need to appoint staff to participate in project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and financial management. The policy-making, planning and relevant departments of the Zhouqu County government are required to assign people to participate in the work of the Project Steering Committee, including attending regular meetings, consultation meetings and technical seminars at least once a year, and provide policy guidance and technical input.
- The Project Management Office, located in Zhouqu County Development and Reform Bureau, is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day implementation and regular reporting of the project. The Project Management Office works under the leadership of Project Director, who is a county leader appointed by People's Government of Zhouqu County.
- In order to ensure the technical guidance and direction of the project during its implementation, the project will hire a chief technical consultant. Technical support activities will be carried out by procuring services and hiring independent experts.

2.3.3 Platform support

The project draws on the international platform provided by UNDP to achieve the following goals:

- Expand the international vision of Zhouqu County government leaders on sustainable development;
- Introduce the advanced development experience at home and abroad through this platform;
- Liaise with experts in industrial development through UNDP, and work with them to rationally plan and implement resilience building projects in Zhouqu based on local realities.

2.6 Gender and cross-cutting issues

Regarding the issue that gender differences restrict poverty reduction and human development, the project is closely linked to the UN sustainable development Goal 5 “Gender Equality” and China's Country Program Document (UNDP CPD) to promote gender equality, empower women, and improve the quality of life for vulnerable groups (e.g. children), with a focus on equal opportunities and participation of men and women. It encourages the participation of different gender groups, and seeks to strengthen the empowerment of women left behind and other marginalized groups.

In the project design, the differences in the needs and vulnerabilities of different gender groups in terms of resilience building were taken into full consideration, and an inclusive and localized implementation plan for resilience building was explored, focusing on marginalized groups in terms of poverty reduction capability enhancement, vocational skills training and equal employment opportunities for women left behind.

III. EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Evaluation Scope

The evaluation scope of this final project evaluation encompasses all aspects of the project from initiation to completion. It examines the project planning process, including the setting of goals, objectives, timelines, budgets, and resource allocation. Through the quality criteria including: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Gender and cross-cutting issues, the project is evaluated by looking at how well the project executed relative to the plan, including analysis of variances, challenges faced, and corrective actions taken. Project outputs and deliverables are assessed in terms of quality, timeliness, and alignment with objectives.

Particularly, the evaluation is based on the project document and evaluates the completed project activities. The data shows that the contract budget of Zhouqu project is 3,000,000 US dollars, the actual project cost (including various management fees) is 882,529.23 US dollars, with a 47.50 % budget implementation rate. The details are as follows:

At the beginning of the project, two types of activities -resilience building and industrial poverty reduction- were smoothly underway. However, due to the impact of COVID-19 and the mudslide disaster occurred on August 17, 2020 in Wenxian County, Gansu Province, the Zhouqu County government’s priorities changed significantly, which also affected project implementation. In November 2020, the Project Management Office applied to the Project Steering Committee to suspend the project and the proposal was approved. In March 2021, the project resumed its implementation, but due to the focus on pandemic prevention and control, Zhouqu County was unable to invest sufficient manpower and material resources in environmental governance, renewable energy, folk culture and other project activities. Under this circumstance, the Project Management Office made changes to the project activities after communicating with the Project Steering Committee, Zhouqu County government and other stakeholders. for example, the “Jiangding Cliff Base Construction Project” that was supposed to be implemented in 2021, was adjusted to “Zhouqu County Greenhouse Construction Project for the Optimization and Technology Demonstration of Agricultural Products”. the International Conference on Resilient City Construction in Zhouqu was also suspended.

In summary, the scope of this project evaluation covers the project activities that have been implemented from 2019 to 2022, mainly focusing on sharing demonstration models for building resilient communities and the improvement of industrial poverty reduction capabilities in Zhouqu County, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Project Evaluation Scope: Activities to be covered

Year of Implementation	Serial Number	Project Activity	Activity Expenses (RMB)
2019-2020	1	Domestic and international research on the experience of building resilient city	104, 400
	2	Preliminary preparations for the International Conference on Resilient City Construction in	54, 144

		Zhouqu (executive draft, meeting approval, meeting arrangement and publicity plan)	
	3	Compilation of <i>Zhouqu County Morel Mushroom Optimization and Demonstration Plan</i>	42, 000
	4	Domestic research on optimal planting technology of agricultural products	42, 000
	5	Compilation of <i>Zhouqu Agricultural Products Optimization and Demonstration Plan</i>	126, 000
	6	Compilation of <i>Preliminary Design of Zhouqu Agricultural Product Optimization and Demonstration Project</i>	154, 000
	7	According to the <i>Zhouqu Morel Mushroom Optimization and Demonstration Plan</i> , purchase morel mushroom strains for demonstration purpose	182,000
	8	Purchase auxiliary materials for planting morel mushrooms	70, 000
	9	Guidance and technical support for the demonstration planting of morel mushrooms	140, 000
2021-2022	10	Construction of venlo greenhouses for planting	1, 701, 505
	11	Build greenhouse according to the <i>Preliminary Design of Zhouqu Agricultural Product Optimization and Demonstration Project</i>	1,931,930
	12	Domestic three-dimensional planting, agricultural science and technology study tour	104, 540
Total Expenses			4, 652, 519 (RMB)

3.2 Evaluation Objectives

By examining the project activities listed above, the project evaluation objectives are mainly distributed across the following 3 stages of the project life.

- **Project design.** Focusing on the targeting and feasibility of the project, we evaluate whether the project has grasped the key issues faced by Zhouqu County in resilience building and poverty reduction, whether the project activities designed are the correct solutions, and whether there are conditions and foundation for project implementation in the area.
- **Project implementation.** Focusing on the efficiency, relevance and effectiveness of the project, we evaluate whether the project results and outcomes are completed in accordance with the planning framework, how the two types of project activities -- the demonstration of resilient community construction and industrial poverty reduction are implemented, and what tangible results have been achieved.
- **Project results.** Focusing on the project sustainability, we evaluate what kind of sustainable development mechanism the project has brought to Zhouqu County based on

the project's actual results, what long-lasting benefits have been created during the implementation process, and what risks exist that endanger sustainable development.

The evaluation will also focus on the demonstration effect of the project, we comprehensively evaluate the transferrable and scalable experience related to the implementation of UN SDGs and China's national priorities with a systemic view from project design to project completion

The benefits of examining project implementation around the above four evaluation objectives are twofold: first, it can sort out the project implementation process for stakeholders, summarize the actual project outcomes on Zhouqu's sustainable development, to facilitate an overall review of the whole project. Second, summarize local sustainable development experience will not only contribute to Zhouqu's continued development, but also provide a reference for the cooperation between UNDP and Chinese municipal/county governments.

3.3 Evaluation Criteria

There are five project evaluation criteria namely: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and gender and cross-cutting issues. The content of each evaluation standard is elucidated as follows. Please refer to the Annex 2 for the Evaluation criteria and questions matrix.

3.3.1 Relevance

- The extent to which the project conforms to the UN SDG framework, the UNDP strategic plan and China's national development priorities etc.;
- The relevance between the overall project design and the actual needs of Zhouqu County;
- The extent to which the project design process considers the perspectives of people and organizations that may influence project outcomes and provide information or other resources to achieve the set targets.

3.3.2 Effectiveness

- The extent to which the project objectives and outcomes are clear, realistic and feasible within its framework;
- The extent to which the project contributes to the implementation of the UN SDG framework, the outcomes and results of the Sustainable Development Country Program etc.;
- The extent to which project objectives are effectively achieved, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and the factors contributing to achieving the expected outcomes and results;
- The extent to which stakeholders are involved in project implementation;
- The extent to which the project promotes gender equality, women's empowerment and the realization of human rights;
- How much the project has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to address it.

3.3.3 Efficiency

- Efficiency in the use of project finance, human and other resources;
- Rational allocation of project resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.);
- The extent to which project funds and activities are delivered in a timely manner.

3.3.4 Sustainability

- The likelihood that project outcomes will be sustained after project completion;
- The likelihood of financial risks jeopardizing the sustainability of project outcomes;
- The possibility of obtaining financial and social resources to sustain the project outcomes;
- The possibility for social or political risks that jeopardize the sustainability of project outcomes;
- The potential for Zhouqu County government to develop a plan to sustain the project outcomes;
- Existing institutions, policies and collaborative mechanisms allow key stakeholders to advance the possibility of achieving results in gender equality, women's empowerment, human rights and human development.

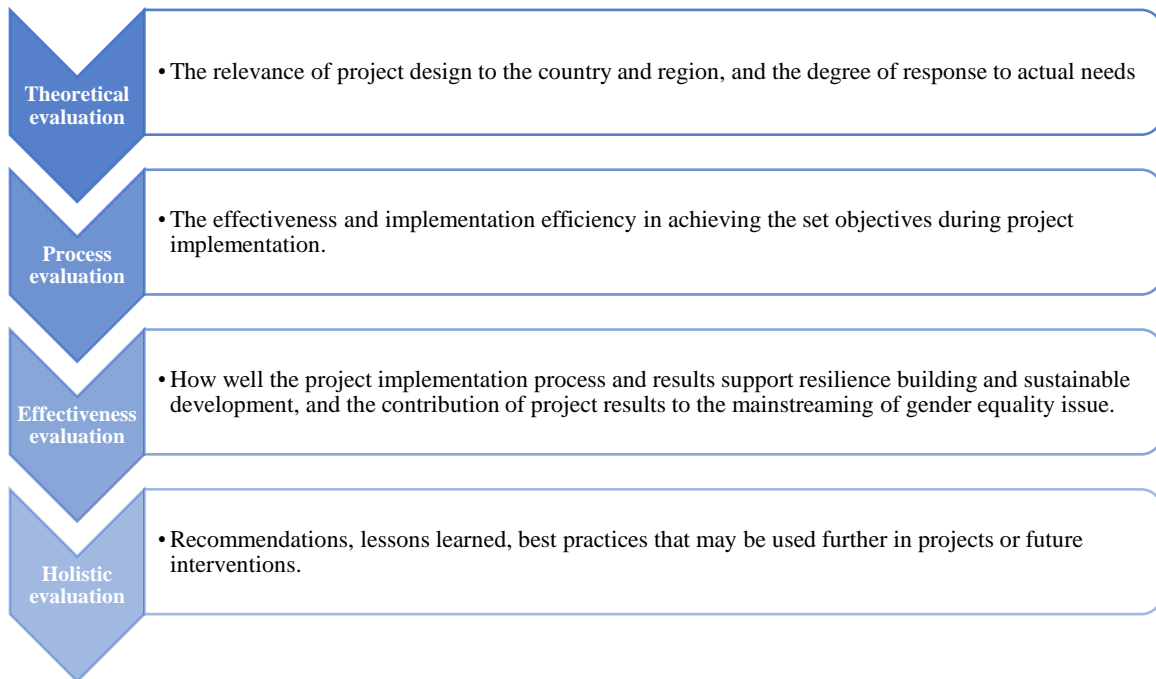
3.3.5 Gender and cross-cutting issues

- The extent to which gender equality and women's empowerment are realized in the design, implementation and evaluation of the project;
- The extent to which the project has contributed to positive changes such as gender equality and women's empowerment.

IV. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

4.1 Methodology

This evaluation was designed using the core content of the OECD/DAC Development Aid Evaluation Standards and following the evaluation criteria and key guiding questions in TOR document. The evaluation team specifies the evaluation objectives in four areas--- theory, process, effectiveness and holistics to the following key questions:



The evaluation team formulated evaluation methods around these questions, strictly abided by the principles outlined in the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines and the UNEG Ethics Guidelines for Evaluation, was mindful of the reliability and quality of data, used the triangulation principle when conducting interviews and collecting data, and paid attention to data impartiality and independence. The final evaluation was conducted through project document reviews, interviews with key informants, group discussions and collection of relevant secondary literature to obtain data and information.

The evaluation process followed three main phases of the TOR: first, the preparatory phase (initial document review and preparation of the initial report, including the interview programme); second, the evaluation phase (data collection, analysis, and integration); third, the final evaluation phase (drafting report and final report, incorporating stakeholder comments and producing final evaluation report).

4.2 Document Review

Evaluator conducted a comprehensive document review and analysis of relevant documents collected during the evaluation phase, including project design texts, annual work plans, all annual

progress reports, all audit reports, meeting minutes, strategic national development documents, government documents and additional material useful for the evidence-based evaluation. The key documents reviewed are as follows:

- Project planning and summary documents: UNDP-Zhouqu project documents, 2019-2020 annual work plans, 2019-2020 annual project progress reports etc.
- Project process documents: Zhouqu Modern Agriculture Research Report, Summary of Study Trip to the Netherlands and Switzerland, Zhouqu Agricultural Product Optimization and Demonstration Plan, Summary of Morel Mushroom Strains Procurement, Summary of the Artificial Planting of Morel Mushrooms, Anti-pandemic Donation Agreement, etc.
- Project adjustment documents: Meeting Minutes on the Follow-up Activity Arrangement during the Pandemic Period, Meeting Minutes on Project Suspension and Follow-up Arrangement, Meeting Minutes on Project Changes, Letter of Personnel Change for the Director of Project Office, etc.
- Relevant government documents: Opinions on Consolidating and Expanding the Achievements of Poverty Alleviation and Rural Revitalization, “14th Five-Year Plan” for Revitalizing the Specialty Agricultural Industry in Zhouqu County, Zhouqu County Morel Mushroom Industry Revitalization Plan, etc.

4.3 Online Interview

This evaluation mainly collects project-related materials through in-depth interviews, formulating an interview outline based on the preliminary understanding of project implementation, and conducts interviews with major stakeholders based on the interview outline.

The evaluation team organized several online symposiums at different levels from October to December 2022, including seminars and one-on-one interviews attended by the evaluation team and project stakeholders. A total of four symposiums in the second type were organized:

- October 19, 2022, individual interviews with CICETE officials to receive an overview of the project;
- October 31, 2022, a symposium with officials from CICETE and the Project Management Office to exchange information on project design and implementation;
- On November 24, 2022, a symposium with officials from the Project Management Office and the person in charge of Tianhe Mushroom Industry Co., Ltd. to exchange information on project implementation in terms of industrial poverty reduction;
- December 1, 2022, a symposium with government leaders of Zhouqu County government and senior staff from the Project Management Office to share information on the overall project design, implementation status, experience gained, challenges faced and suggestions for optimization.
- October – December 2022 – Ongoing interview with communities and beneficiaries

The interview framework is divided into two parts: overall evaluation and sub-item evaluation. Among them, the sub-item evaluation is divided into two categories based on the completion of project activities: the formation and promotion of Zhouqu resilient community demonstration model, poverty reduction and capacity enhancement of characteristic industries.

4.3.1 Overall project evaluation questions

The overall evaluation focuses on the design background of the entire project, the stakeholders, the implementation of the five major objectives, the benefits generated by the project, the cooperation mechanism and other experiences developed during the project implementation, and the overall evaluation opinions of stakeholders such as the Zhouqu County government and the Project Management Office. Relevant information was collected mainly through the first three symposiums and the interview outline is as follows:

- Please tell us about the background, original intention and core purpose of Zhouqu's resilience building and sustainable development project. Why were there five major areas in the project plan? Please provide details on the process of formulating the project plan, such as participants, formulation process, and the breakdown of objectives.
- Please introduce the organizational structure, job responsibilities, operating mechanism, supervision system and other relevant information established during the project implementation process, and what were the experiences and challenges in the implementation process?
- Please describe each of the five major aspects of the project implementation process, focusing on: how to leverage and stimulate the participation of functional departments and collaboration partners; the experiences and challenges summarized from project implementation process; what remarkable results have been achieved, the main reasons why some of the goals or plans were difficult to achieve, what alternative strategies have been adopted?
- Please tell us what contribution the project has made to the sustainable development of the region? What exit mechanism has been designed to continuously consolidate current development gains?
- Please tell us what development opportunities the project has brought to the relatively vulnerable groups such as left-behind women, the elderly, and children? What are the main mechanisms through which they share the fruits of development?
- Please focus on sharing the following stories: What has been the project's impact on local government's governance capacity? How does the project promote the cooperation network between local government and other parties? What changes has the project brought about for organizations or individuals? Other far-reaching implications of the project.
- Please provide suggestions on the following questions: If there is a second phase of the project, what projects does Zhouqu hope to carry out in depth and why? If there was further cooperation, what suggestions would you like to make to other partners?
- Please comment on the overall outcomes of the project, such as achievements and weaknesses that impress you.
- If convenient, please provide a chronological record of events during the implementation process of the project.

4.3.2 Sub-item evaluation questions: Formation and replication of Zhouqu resilient community model

This part of the evaluation focuses on the activities completed by the project in terms of resilience building, with information mainly collected through the second and third symposiums. The interview outline is as follows:

- Please introduce the process of formulating the Plan, such as the key information about unit delegation, participating departments, focal issues and consensus reached. How did the process of preparing the plan on resilient community building differ from the way the 14th Five-Year Plan was prepared?
- Please introduce the implementation status of the pilot work on building resilient communities, such as key information about organizational safeguard, specific practices, typical models and public participation.
- Please introduce the outcomes of study trips overseas and the changes and actions they have promoted.
- What do you think are the good practices in Zhouqu that has earned it the UNDP Resilient City certification? What resilient community building experiences are worth of replication?
- How did the Jiangding Cliff Tree Planting Project work? Please introduce its main parties, division of responsibilities, achievements and follow-up management etc.
- Some projects were not completed on schedule, please briefly explain the reasons and alternatives.
- What experience has your department or individuals gained since the implementation of the project? Please provide policy recommendations for continued improvement of the project.

4.3.3 Sub-item evaluation questions: Poverty reduction and capacity enhancement in characteristic industries

This part evaluates the project implementation on industrial poverty reduction, with information mainly collected through the third and fourth interviews. The interview outline is as follows:

- Please briefly introduce the development status of Zhouqu industries, especially the development status of agricultural brands.
- How to select specific industries for poverty reduction projects? For example, parties involved, negotiation method, factors to be considered, and the key points to be weighed.
- Regarding the poverty reduction industry in Zhouqu, please provide detailed information on the development process, main outcomes, practices and challenges of each poverty reduction project. In particular, what are the prospects for the sustainability of poverty reduction projects? What factors have affected the sustainability of poverty reduction projects?
- How does the project office leverage the active participation of enterprises and farmers during the implementation of poverty reduction projects? What kind of cooperation network has been formed by various parties? What are the regular activities and liaison mechanism during the operation of cooperative network?
- In what way have the poverty reduction projects increase farmers' income? Please estimate the income status and sustainable income expectations for participating households. What kind of supportive constructions has the poverty reduction project brought to villages or local areas? What impact does it have on regional sustainable development?

- What are the benefits of poverty reduction projects for local women, children, and the elderly left behind? How does the poverty reduction project affect their social status? How can their disadvantages be improved in a sustained manner?
- What social organizations have been formed during the implementation of the poverty reduction project? For example, cooperatives, how do these organizations perform in terms of governance, social security functions etc.?
- What are the typical experiences of Zhouqu poverty reduction project? What are the key areas that require further enhancements? What suggestions do you have for UNDP and the project office?

4.4 Evaluation criteria and questions matrix

The evaluation matrix provides a structured framework to assess the various aspects of the project. It is developed based on key criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. Additionally, gender and cross-cutting issues are incorporated to apply a gender lens throughout the evaluation.

A novel approach taken in this evaluation is to organize the evaluation questions by relevant segments: (a) overall project management, (b) Formation and replication of Zhouqu resilient community model, and (c) Poverty reduction and capacity enhancement in characteristic industries. Through combined lenses of evaluation criteria and project components, the evaluation aims to analyze and evaluate the different facets of the project in a comprehensive and systematic way. This mixed methods approach will help gain nuanced insights into accomplishments as well as areas needing improvement across the critical dimensions of the project.

For details of the evaluation matrix, see Annex 2.

V. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Relevance

Finding 1. The project objectives and strategies are highly relevant to the country and Zhouqu, appropriately addressing national and regional priorities and needs.

Analysis of the project data and details solicited from interviews reveal that the project was born out of the desire for international cooperation of the interim county leader who went to Zhouqu County as part of the “East-West Poverty Alleviation Collaboration” strategy implemented by the Chinese government. The said leader hoped to introduce UNDP’s technical support and experience model for local resilience building and poverty reduction. In the project design phase following a mutual agreement for cooperation, the project not only integrated the UN SDG framework, but also fully considered China's development priorities and the actual needs of Zhouqu County. During this process, project stakeholders such as Zhouqu County Development and Reform Bureau and Finance Bureau were deeply involved in the project design process, ensuring that the interests of all parties were realized and balanced to a great extent.

The finding is made based on the following observations.

5.1.1 East-west collaboration in poverty alleviation drives talent transfer and provides opportunities for the project

Facing the problem of unbalanced development between the eastern and the western regions, the Chinese government has implemented the strategy of “East-West Collaboration in Poverty Alleviation”. Based on the resource endowment and industrial base of the poor regions in the west, the strategy introduces talents, funds, and management resources from the east to the west to help achieve poverty alleviation. It is a major strategy for the coordinated, synergistic and common development for all regions. Under this policy, Tianjin Heping District implemented a group-style precise assistance and targeted support to Zhouqu County, sending cadres and talents to Zhouqu. For this reason, one of the cadres went to Zhouqu County became the initiator of this project.

The interim county leader 's personal pursuit of seeking changes for Zhouqu and his experience of international education led to his desire to work with UNDP on projects. During his on-the-job training, he learned that the catastrophic mudslide happened on August 8th, 2010 caused great damages to the economic and social development of Zhouqu County, he wanted to enhance the local disaster prevention and mitigation capacity but was short of solutions. In 2012, he participated in a state-sponsored training at the Newcastle University in the UK. During this time, he learned that UNDP has gained extensive experience and achieved considerable results in community resilience building and renewable energy development, so he had the idea of applying for a UNDP project. After he sent the proposal email, UNDP quickly responded to him, and worked with CICETE introducing the concepts related to resilience building, and the two sides reached preliminary opinions on project collaboration.

In 2019, on the basis of in-depth exchanges and repeated negotiations, UNDP, CICETE signed a meeting minutes with the People's Government of Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture on collaborating on poverty reduction and resilience building, also signed an agreement with the

People's Government of Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and the People's Government of Zhouqu County on the Demonstration Project of Resilience Community Construction and Sustainable Development in Zhouqu County, Gansu Province.

5.1.2 Launch an innovative collaboration model featuring platform support and local capital investment

After reaching a consensus on working with UNDP, the Zhouqu County government was eager to bring in global experience and advanced technology on resilience building and poverty reduction, and also to take the opportunity to share China's poverty alleviation experience with the rest of the world. Therefore, the whole county was mobilized to apply for financial support to its superior Gannan Prefecture government. As a result, the project established a different collaboration model from traditional projects, namely the Gannan Prefecture government provided 2.99 million in US dollars as project funds; UNDP, CICETE and the People's Government of Zhouqu County worked together on project design, utilizing the technical and network advantages of UNDP during project implementation to ensure the project is scientific, feasible and effective.

UNDP and CICETE provided Zhouqu County with tremendous support in project launching: first, UNDP integrated expert resources and special technologies for Zhouqu, and sent 6 batches of 33 experts to Zhouqu for field research and provided research support in demonstration and feasibility for project design. Second, UNDP provided a platform for Zhouqu to learn from global experiences. For example, inviting Zhouqu County representatives to attend international summit: "China-Africa Cooperation Forum - Poverty Reduction and Development, The Belt and Road and China-Africa Poverty Reduction Cooperation" to learn from the advanced poverty alleviation experience of China and Africa to better plan the direction of the project in Zhouqu County.

5.1.3 Focus on local sustainable development and effective implementation of the UN 2030 agenda

The project incorporates the following 7 sustainable development goals set out by the United Nations in Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

- Through the expected result No. 2 to enhance the industry's ability to reduce poverty and the expected result No. 5 to innovate and develop characteristic tourism to directly contribute to sustainable development Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; and Goal 5: Achieve gender equality.
- Through the expected result No.1 to enhance capacity in addressing climate change and disaster risks and building a resilient community which fully aligned with sustainable development Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- Through the expected result No. 3: effective governance of the environment and the expected result No. 4: the development of renewable energy link to the sustainable development Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all; Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

At the same time, the project is fully aligned with the four outcomes of the 2016-2020 and 2021-2025 China Country Program Document (UNDP CPD), which are:

- 2016-2020 UNDP CPD Outcome 1: An increasing number of people, especially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, will enjoy better living conditions and greater opportunities for economic, social and cultural development. Outcome 2: As a result of environmental protection and sustainable green growth, more people can enjoy a cleaner and healthier environment.
- 2021-2025 UNDP CPD Outcome 1: High-quality and people-centered development. Outcome 2: A healthier and more resilient ecosystem.

The design of the project focuses on climate resilience enhancement and poverty reducing interventions that clearly contribute to these CPD outputs.

5.1.4 Focus on promoting industrial poverty reduction, and promote the effective connection between poverty alleviation and rural revitalization

“Poverty Alleviation” is a major national development strategy proposed by the Chinese government since 2012. It is committed to eliminating absolute poverty in an all-round way by 2020. The next stage of the national strategy is “Rural Revitalization”. The project application was filed in 2019, which was at the most critical time for the task of poverty eradication. As a national poverty-stricken county, the key task of Zhouqu County government is to promote the effective connection between poverty alleviation and rural revitalization, and the key means is to develop rural industries. The section on “Industrial Poverty Reduction” in Demonstration Project of Resilience Community Construction and Sustainable Development in Zhouqu County, Gansu Province was designed exactly for this purpose.

5.1.5 Fully consider the local conditions and actual needs of Zhouqu to secure the successful outcomes of project

During the project design process, Zhouqu County and UNDP conducted 6 rounds of opinion exchanges. Firstly, participants fully communicated on UNDP 's own resources and platform advantages, as well as the basic conditions such as the geological environment, socio-economic conditions and industrial resources in Zhouqu. Second, the county government officials put forward the needs of Zhouqu County, and both sides jointly determined five major project objectives, namely the formation and promotion of an international demonstration model for Zhouqu resilient community/city, improved ability in industrial poverty reduction, effective environmental management, the R&D demonstration for utilizing renewable energy, innovative development of characteristic tourism combining folk culture and ecological environment. Among them, based on the needs of rural revitalization work in Zhouqu County, the project mainly focuses on the design and implementation of poverty reduction.

5.1.6 Coordinate stakeholder participation in project development to promote a balance of interests for all parties

The needs of stakeholders were fully understood and coordination work was carried out during the design phase. First, a comprehensive and in-depth discussion and analysis on stakeholders and their relationship with the project, multiple meetings were held for them to conduct extensive consultation. Second, project seminars were held with major stakeholders being invited to

participate in the preparation and implementation of project documents, including Zhouqu County Development and Reform Bureau, Finance Bureau, Emergency Management Bureau.

5.2 Effectiveness

Findings 2. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent reprioritization efforts by Zhouqu had a profound impact on the progress of the project. Nonetheless, the project exhibited adaptability and remained steadfast in its commitment to achieving the most critical priorities and deliverables by making timely adjustments to the workplan through intensive consultations.

The following is an effectiveness evaluation of the project, focusing on measuring how well the project has achieved its planned objectives and how many outcomes have been produced. The evaluation provided in this section is structured according to the actual process and final results of the project. After sorting out the overall completion status, the two main outputs of this project are analyzed in details: the formation and promotion of resilient community model in Zhouqu and the project on poverty reduction and capacity enhancement in characteristic industries, to evaluate their implementation process and results.

This section provides analysis through a review of project documents and records and interviews with project staff and stakeholders. In terms of the overall degree of completion, 3 out of the 50 Level 3 expected outputs have been completed, with a completion rate of 6 %, primarily due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and shifted priorities in Zhouqu (implementation hindrances are discussed in 5.4). In terms of specific output, both main projects have been effectively implemented and produced positive results (see the analysis below for more details).

5.2.1 Overall completion status

The project implementation process was severely impacted by the outbreak of COVID-19. Preventing and containing the epidemic became an urgent task, bringing great pressure to the local government. At the same time, relevant restrictions made various offline activities impossible, affecting the project's implementation progress. In the end, the project completed 12 activities on the objectives of resilience building and industrial poverty reduction. Specific completion status is shown in the Table 2 below.

Table 2 Completion of project objectives

Expected Major Goal	Expected Sub-goal	Overall Completion	Actual Implementation	Actual Expenditure	Notes
<p>Goal 1: The overall capacity to cope with climate change and disaster risk management has been improved, and the international model of resilient community /city in Zhouqu is formed and promoted</p>	<p>Sub-goal 1: Compile the <i>Zhouqu County Resilient Community/City Strategic Planning and Action Plan.</i></p>	<p>1.1 Conduct in-depth research in Zhouqu based on the content of domestic and foreign framework on resilience building, including but not limited to the four types of indicator system: health and well-being (people), economy and society (organization), urban system and its services (local), leadership and strategy (knowledge).</p>	<p>Incomplete</p>		
		<p>1.2 Research at home and abroad to learn from the international experience in building resilient cities.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>Trips have been completed to the Netherlands and Switzerland to study and learn the experience and knowledge of international agricultural technology and disaster early warning system with study reports completed.</p>	<p>104,400</p>
		<p>1.3 Hold symposium to explore the scientificity, feasibility and action plan of resilience building in Zhouqu.</p>	<p>Incomplete</p>		
		<p>1.4 Compile the <i>Zhouqu County Resilient Community/City Strategic Planning and Action Plan.</i></p>	<p>Incomplete</p>		
	<p>Sub-goal 2: Explore community-based smart</p>	<p>2.1 Hold a symposium on the theme of resilient cities</p>	<p>Incomplete</p>		
	<p>2.2 Establish a sound working mechanism, coordination mechanism and safeguard</p>	<p>Incomplete</p>			

	solutions for county-level resilience building and emergency management, and systematically improve comprehensive disaster prevention and response capabilities.	mechanism, collect relevant data, and establish a smart resilience baseline					
		2.3 Develop community-based smart solutions for county-level emergency management and resilience building	Incomplete				
		2.4 Carry out relevant pilot work, improve the multi-stakeholder participation mechanism, and improve the monitoring and early warning, research and evaluation, emergency decision-making, emergency command and other comprehensive response capabilities to natural disasters	Incomplete				
	Sub-goal 3: Gender-specific disaster prevention and mitigation, climate change capacity building, and enhance community/city resilience	3.1 Make use of major commemorative dates such as “Aug 8” and “Jul 10”, “May 12” (National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Day) and “October 13” (International Disaster Mitigation Day) for advocacy, carry out innovative and in-depth education activities on disaster prevention and mitigation knowledge. At the same time, we also carry out activities on reducing community disaster risks and improving grassroots disaster mitigation capabilities	Adjustment plan				Based on the change from ‘Jiangding Cliff’ governance plan to venlo planting greenhouse for three-dimensional agricultural planting or mushroom cultivation.
		3.2 Promote themed publicity for community disaster risk management capacity building	Incomplete				
		3.3 Based on the International Comprehensive Safe Schools Framework (CSS), carry out regional safety school	Incomplete				

		development capacity training and demonstration				
		3.4 In the process of carrying out relevant activities, women should be involved as much as possible, and attention should be paid to cultivating leaders from easily marginalized groups such as women (or supporting them to participate in employment)	Incomplete			
	Sub-goal 4: Compile the “Green Paper on Resilience Building and Sustainable Development in Zhouqu County”.	4.1 Research and seminars to sort out the development history of Zhouqu	Incomplete			
		4.2 Compilation of “Green Paper on Resilience Building and Sustainable Development in Zhouqu County”	Incomplete			
	Sub-goal 5: Build a county-level collaboration network for resilient city construction, and domestic and international exchange platforms.	5.1 Organize a seminar on the collaborative network for building county-level resilient cities	Incomplete			
		5.2 Compile a plan for building resilient cities in counties that is socially and gender inclusive, establish a sound working mechanism, coordination mechanism and safeguard mechanism; carry out relevant collaborative pilot projects that are both socially and gender inclusive and sum up relevant experiences.	Incomplete			
		5.3 Plan and build domestic and international exchange platform for building resilient community/city in conjunction with the international network of UNDP.	Incomplete			

		5.4 Take advantage of the high position and network of the said platforms, invite domestic and foreign experts and officials to convene regular international conferences (encourage women to actively participate) to carry out policy exchanges, share experiences, lessons and relevant cases.	Partially completed	Completed an overview of the current progress of international resilient city construction and an overview of the policy promotion and construction development in domestic comprehensive disaster reduction demonstration districts and counties. Completed the preliminary preparations for the International Conference on Resilient City Construction in Zhouqu (including draft plan, meeting approval, meeting arrangement and publicity plan).	54, 144	Due to the pandemic, the International Conference on Resilient City Construction was cancelled.
Goal 2: Enhance the production capacity of local high-quality characteristic agricultural products and the relevant sales and	Sub-goal 6: Foster entrepreneurship and poverty reduction ability amongst the left-behind groups. Provide new momentum for the poverty reduction	6.1 Conduct technical seminars to further improve and optimize the quality of high-quality agricultural products in Zhouqu County, and increase the yield of high-quality agricultural products, including but not limited to Morel mushrooms, Congling Tibetan chicken, Chinese bees, native pigs, walnuts, peppers, black fungus, potatoes, corns and Chinese herbal medicines.	Completed	Completed the compilation of <i>Zhouqu County Morel Mushroom Optimization and Demonstration Program</i> .	42, 000	
				Completed domestic research on optimal planting techniques for agricultural products.	42, 000	

logistics systems, so as improve the ability in industrial poverty reduction.	objectives in Zhouqu County by conducting research and demonstration of three-dimensional planting and cultivation based on greenhouse facilities, to improve the yield of high-quality agricultural products and the efficiency of land unit utilization.			Completed the compilation of <i>Zhouqu Agricultural Products Optimization and Demonstration Program</i> .	126,000	
				Completed the preparation of the <i>Preliminary Design of Zhouqu Agricultural Product Optimization and Demonstration Project</i> based on the optimization scheme.	154,000	
		6.2 Conduct industrial poverty reduction (including three-dimensional planting , etc.) research and demonstration	Partially completed	A total of 3,700 square meters of greenhouses has been built.	3,633,435	The original greenhouse construction area is 2,200 square meters, and the greenhouse construction area changed from the “Jiangding Cliff” project is 1,500 square meters, thus a total of 3,700 square meters.
	Completed the procurement of morel mushroom strains for demonstration project.			182,000		
	Completed the procurement of other auxiliary materials for the demonstration planting of morel mushrooms.			70,000		
	Completed the artificial and technical guidance for planting morel mushrooms.			140,000		

				Completed the research and study of three-dimensional planting and agricultural technology in Yangling Demonstration Zone, Shaanxi.	104, 540	Affected by the pandemic, the time of the three-dimensional planting and agricultural science and technology study tour to Tianjin is to be determined.
		6.3 Apply for the “Certification of Origin” or “Green Product” for high-quality agricultural products, and contribute to poverty reduction by enhancing products’ market competitiveness. Guide new business entities to apply for certifications of pollution-free agricultural products, green food, and organic agricultural products, so as to gradually form regional brand advantages	Incomplete			
	Sub-goal 7: Build a cold chain logistics system, connect with the “E-commerce Demonstration County Project”, introduce leading e-commerce companies, support left-behind groups to	7.1 Prepare the <i>Cold Chain Logistics System Construction Plan</i> according to the local e-commerce poverty reduction policy and planning	Incomplete			
		7.2 Provide local leading cold chain logistics enterprises and distributors with supply channel matching and management ability training and other capacity building in order to contribute to poverty reduction.	Incomplete			
		7.3 Carry out pilot demonstration for e-commerce supply chain to contribute to poverty reduction	Incomplete			

	engage in e-commerce entrepreneurship, and enhance the competitiveness of local high-quality products, thereby promoting the poverty reduction progress in Zhouqu County.					
Goal 3: The environment is effectively managed, and efforts are made to enter a high-quality development track.	Sub-goal 8: According to the requirements of local policies and regulations, scientifically expound the upgrading and renovation methods of existing local waste disposal facilities, and implement the demonstration project.	8.1 Organizing relevant departments to carry out research and study on domestic and foreign waste disposal technologies, and formulate the upgrade and renovation plan for existing waste disposal facilities in Zhouqu County	Incomplete			
		8.2 Compile the <i>Feasibility Study Report on the Upgrading and Renovation of Existing Garbage Disposal Facilities</i>	Incomplete			
		8.3 Prepare an environmental impact assessment report for the upgrade and renovation plan of existing waste disposal facilities	Incomplete			
		8.4 Prepare other necessary technical documents, such as: energy saving analysis and other technical documents	Incomplete			
		8.5 The feasibility study report and the environmental impact assessment report have been approved by relevant local government departments	Incomplete			

		8. 6 Provide technical support for the implementation of corresponding demonstration projects in Zhouqu County (prepare bidding notices or provide revision suggestions, participate in bidding evaluation, testing evaluation and acceptance check etc.)	Incomplete			
	Sub-goal 9: Scientific treatment of sewage, and implement demonstration project	9.1 Organize relevant departments to carry out investigation and research on sewage treatment technology at home and abroad, and prepare a feasibility study report on upgrading existing sewage treatment facilities	Incomplete			
		9. 2 Prepare an environmental impact assessment report for the upgrade and renovation plan of existing sewage treatment facilities	Incomplete			
		9.3 Prepare other necessary technical documents, such as: energy saving analysis and other technical documents	Incomplete			
		9.4 The feasibility study report and the environmental impact assessment report have been approved by relevant local government departments	Incomplete			
		9.5 Provide technical support for the implementation of corresponding demonstrations in Zhouqu County (prepare bidding notices or provide revision suggestions, participate in bidding evaluation, testing evaluation and acceptance check etc.)	Incomplete			
	Sub-goal 10: Safe drinking water for the	10.1 Investigate the safety of drinking water in Zhouqu County and determine the drinking water safety demonstration sites	Incomplete			

	community and students is ensured.	10.2 Carry out drinking water safety publicity campaign, including but not limited to school campaigns (knowledge competitions on protecting water pools and rural drinking water sanitation or joint knowledge competitions with other UNDP safe drinking water projects)	Incomplete			
		10.3 Construction of drinking water safety demonstration projects	Incomplete			
Goal 4: Carry out research and demonstration on the development and utilization of renewable energy, and practice green development.	Sub-goal 11: Expound the feasibility of using renewable energy such as micro-hydropower, biogas, and micro-wind power, and carry out demonstration project in the cold chain logistics system.	11.1 Study local meteorological data, water resource data, wind resource data etc., to select and carry out economically feasible renewable energy demonstration project activities	Incomplete			
		11.2 Compile the feasibility study report on demonstration activities of micro-hydropower, biogas, micro-wind power and other demonstration of renewable energy utilization activities	Incomplete			
		11.3 Prepare the EIA report based on the feasibility study report	Incomplete			
		11.4 Prepare other necessary technical documents, such as: energy saving analysis and other technical documents	Incomplete			
		11.5 After the feasibility study report, environmental impact assessment report and other required technical reports have been approved by the relevant departments of local government, launch implementation according to the approved items and conduct relevant skills training	Incomplete			
Goal 5: Innovatively	Sub-goal 12: Based on the	12.1 Hold a research seminar on tourism development in Zhouqu	Incomplete			

develop characteristic tourism combining folk culture and ecological environment.	characteristics of local folk culture and ecological environment, formulate a characteristic tourism development plan combining folk culture and ecological environment in Zhouqu County, and carry out related capacity building.	12.2 Compile a characteristic tourism development plan combining folk culture and ecological environment	Incomplete			
		12.3 Design tourism demonstration products	Incomplete			
		12.4 Training and promotion activities for ecotourism development in Zhouqu	Incomplete			
		12.5 Feasibility study for “Dongshan Zhuandeng” applying for intangible cultural heritage	Incomplete			
	Sub-goal 13: Combine domestic and international collaboration network mechanisms on resilience building, organize folk culture and eco-tourism innovations, and promote local poverty reduction and economic development.	13.1 Compile an innovation work plan on folk culture and eco-tourism	Incomplete			
		13.2 Organize and implement folk culture and eco-tourism innovation	Incomplete			

- The “formation and promotion of Zhouqu Resilient Community Demonstration Model” segment completed two activities: learning international experience of building resilient cities and preparing for the International Conference on Resilient City Construction in Zhouqu.
- The “characteristic industry poverty reduction and capacity enhancement” segment completed the construction of greenhouses, the three-dimensional planting study tour to Shaanxi demonstration area, Zhouqu agricultural products optimization and demonstration project, and morel mushroom industrial poverty reduction activities. Among them, Zhouqu agricultural product optimization and demonstration project feature domestic research on agricultural product optimization planting technology, the compilation of Zhouqu Agricultural Product Optimization and Demonstration Plan, Preliminary Design of Zhouqu Agricultural Product Optimization and Demonstration Project. The morel mushroom industry project includes the compilation of Zhouqu County Morel Mushroom Optimization and Demonstration Program, strain procurement and production, auxiliary material procurement and preparation, planting demonstration and technical support.

Due to the impact of COVID-19 and changes in the priorities of Zhouqu County government during the project implementation process, there were delays, cancellations and changes to the project as specified below:

- The Zhouqu County government prioritized industrial poverty reduction, while reducing the importance of Jiangding Cliff governance project, the Project Management Office made dynamic adjustments to the project and applied for cancelling the planning and design of the Jiangding Cliff Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Fruit Tree Base project that previously approved by the Zhouqu government, and at the same time applying for expanding the implementation scale of the agricultural product optimization and greenhouse technology demonstration construction project in Zhouqu County, which were both approved.
- Due to various negative factors such as poor communication between stakeholders and difficulty in holding offline activities due to COVID-19, the approved International Conference on Resilient City Construction in Zhouqu could not be held as scheduled. At the tripartite video conference held on July 23, 2021, the international conference was approved to be postponed until the pandemic situation improves. The conference was still on hold at the time of final evaluation.
- Due to the restrictions on cross-province travel as a result of COVID-19, the domestic three-dimensional planting and agricultural science and technology study tour completed the part in Yangling Demonstration Zone in Shaanxi, and the planned study tour to Tianjin was still on hold at the time of final evaluation.

5.2.2 Formation of Zhouqu resilient community demonstration model and implementation of promotional segment

In the formation and promotion of Zhouqu Resilient Community Demonstration Model, the project also focuses on the “input” and “output” of resilience building experience. The project not only organized trips to the Netherlands and Switzerland to study advanced practices, launching feasibility study of replicating international resilience building experience in Zhouqu; it also tried

to build an international exchange platform for sharing the experience in resilience community building.

Goal: Conducting international research	
Planning and design	<p>Mudslides are frequent and severe in Zhouqu County every year, such as the flash flood and mudslide in August 2020 affected more than 60,000 people in 176 villages. However, the local disaster prevention and mitigation capability is weak, and the existing early warning system, a disaster risk prevention and control center funded by the Ministry of Land and Resources after the “Aug 8” mudslide, is unable to meet the requirements for timely and effective early warning, both in terms of software and hardware. Therefore, the Zhouqu County government was eager to gain support from UNDP to expand the learning channels of resilience building experience and find a breakthrough for resilience building in Zhouqu County.</p> <p>In this regard, the Project Management Office learned about resilience building through international research. There were two main considerations when selecting research cases: First, the research site and Zhouqu should both suffer from frequent natural disasters but with a better coping experience; Second, the research site has established cooperation with UNDP to ensure the feasibility of research.</p> <p>In the end, the project selected Switzerland and the Netherlands, which have similar structure and disaster experience as Zhouqu, but are equipped with better risk resistance experience. Switzerland has a high incidence of disasters such as avalanches and earthquakes. It has a world-class team of engineering and geology experts, advanced geological disaster assessment and early warning practices and technologies. The country is particularly good at responding to geological disasters, and Swiss people have a strong awareness of disaster prevention and mitigation as well as self-protection. In addition, the Netherlands is a country with a long history in the greenhouse industry with profound experiences, thus also listed as a research object for project design. As for feasibility, the UNDP secretariat is located in Switzerland with established contact and cooperation with the Dutch Earthquake Administration and the Forestry Bureau, so the secretariat can organize the Zhouqu resilience building team to conduct research there.</p>
Implementation	<p>December 8th to 15th, 2019, the key leaders of the Zhouqu County government and the representative of UNDP in China went together to Switzerland and the Netherlands to complete international research on resilience building experience. The actual cost of this activity is 104,400 yuan, which conforms to the relevant regulations of UNDP/CICETE. The research process is specified as follows:</p> <p>Visited Dutch DALSEM company, the Cooper Greenhouse Project etc., exchanged opinions on the design, construction, management, training and other issues around greenhouse project;</p> <p>Visited the United Nations Headquarter in Geneva, Switzerland, and communicated with Humanitarian Affairs Office officials;</p>

	<p>Visited the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Swiss Institute for Forest and Snow Landscape, and the Swiss National Seismological Office to learn about the experience of emergency early warning, disaster prevention and mitigation.</p> <p>In addition, UNDP also awarded Zhouqu County the title of “Demonstration Area for Resilience Building and Sustainable Development Cooperation Project”, which enables Zhouqu County to further rely on and tap the rich knowledge of UNDP in resilience building and sustainable development, international networks and expert resources to continuously promote resilience building in Zhouqu County.</p>
Results	<p>After conducting international research and learning from resilience building experiences, the following results have been achieved to facilitate the implementation of resilience building project in Zhouqu:</p> <p>Learned modern agricultural greenhouse technology and formed replicable experience. In order to promote the development of agricultural modernization in Zhouqu County and drive the development of Zhouqu agriculture towards the direction of intelligence and high-end development, the Project Management Office summarized and refined the experience of the Netherlands in modern greenhouse construction, which was incorporated into the modern agricultural demonstration activities and implemented as part of the Demonstration Project of Resilience Community Construction and Sustainable Development in Zhouqu County, Gansu Province.</p> <p>It has expanded the knowledge horizon of government cadres in Zhouqu County and laid a solid foundation for project implementation. By leading local cadres on overseas study tours to learn excellent disaster prevention demonstrations, natural disaster monitoring and early warning, research and evaluation, emergency decision-making and emergency command, they have broadened the horizons and clearly perceived that the key to mitigating geological disasters lies in prevention, thus increasing their support for project implementation.</p>

Goal: Hold the International Conference on Resilient City Construction in Zhouqu	
Planning and design	<p>In order to build a collaboration network and an established exchange platform at home and abroad for relevant parties to interact and communicate, and to explore a localized innovative demonstration path for the organic integration of poverty reduction and resilience building under the framework of sustainable development goals, the project intends to hold the International Conference on Resilient City Construction in Zhouqu. The conference intends to invite domestic experts to systematically summarize Zhouqu County’s experience in post-disaster reconstruction, comprehensive disaster mitigation, poverty alleviation and rural revitalization since the occurrence of catastrophic torrent and mudslide disaster in 2010, and compile an overview of policy promotion and development status of demonstration districts and counties for</p>

	comprehensive disaster reduction in China, as a basis for international exchanges.
Implementation	The preliminary preparations for the International Conference on Resilient City Construction in Zhouqu began in December 2019 and ended in August 2020. It was led by Professor Zhang Qiang from the Institute of Disaster Reduction and Emergency Management of Beijing Normal University. The total cost of this event is 54,144 yuan, which was used reasonably in line with relevant UNDP/CICETE regulations. By the end of 2019, the report has been largely compiled and the review on the current progress of international resilient city construction and the policy development of domestic comprehensive disaster reduction demonstration districts and counties has been basically completed.
Results	The conference has completed preliminary preparations, worked out the meeting theme, participants and other matters, formed the overall meeting framework. However, due to the unexpected rebound of COVID-19 epidemic, offline activities were hindered. After being discussed by the Steering Committee, it was decided to postpone the conference. At present, the conference is still on hold, so the original goal of using the conference as an exchange platform to share experiences on resilience building has not been achieved.

5.2.3 The implementation of poverty reduction and capacity enhancement projects in characteristic industries segment

The characteristic industry poverty reduction and capacity enhancement segment aims to promote the development of agricultural industry in Zhouqu County and enhance the industry's ability to reduce poverty. Focusing on the goal of poverty reduction, the project selected the morel mushroom industry as the leading specialty industry; at the same time, due to the lack of cultivated land in Zhouqu County limits the scale of morel mushroom industry, the project built large-scale greenhouses to develop industries such as mushrooms and fungus planting that do not require the use of cultivated land.

Goal: Develop morel mushroom planting as a specialty industry	
Planning and design	<p>There are five reasons why the project chose morel mushroom as the leading characteristic industry for development:</p> <p>Before the launch of the project, Zhouqu County already had a basis for trial planting of morel mushrooms and the government maintained close cooperation with relevant enterprises and scientific research institutes. In 2013, the government of Zhouqu County discovered the industrial prospects of morel mushrooms so they went outside the county to purchase mushroom strains, and completed a small-scale trial cultivation in the county. In 2015, Tianhe Mushroom Industry Co., Ltd. achieved remarkable practical results in the trial planting of morel mushrooms, and the company has been conducting research in cooperation with university experts resulting in quite mature planting techniques. As a result, the Zhouqu County government proposed to collaborate with Tianhe Mushroom Industry Company in 2016. During that</p>

	<p>period, Zhouqu County government also reached scientific research cooperation initiative with Sichuan Academy of Agricultural Sciences and Gansu Academy of Agricultural Sciences.</p> <p>The government of Zhouqu County expects to cultivate morel mushrooms as a new industry. Zhouqu County once cultivated large red peppers and black fungus as specialty industries, forming a certain industrial foundation. However, the local economic benefits brought by such local industries alone are relatively ineffective, so there was an urgent need to cultivate new industries. Morel mushrooms attracted the government's attention at the time thus fostered as an emerging industry.</p> <p>The market demand for morel mushrooms is gradually rising. With the development of technology, morel mushroom varieties tend to diversify and can meet more market demand. Meanwhile, people gain more awareness on health. The profitability of morel mushrooms has risen from the fourteenth to the fourth, and the demand for morel mushrooms in the market has increased significantly.</p> <p>The growth cycle of morel mushrooms is staggered from that of common crops. Traditional crops such as vegetables and wheat need to be planted every summer. In winter, when the land becomes idle, morel mushroom as a low-temperature and low-humidity crop, just make up the planting gap. To a certain extent, the idle land in Zhouqu County can be used, and growing morel mushrooms is very profitable.</p> <p>The natural environment in Zhouqu County is suitable for growing morel mushrooms. Before the industry was formed, there were many wild morel mushrooms in the fields of Zhouqu County. Clearly, the natural environment here in Zhouqu is suitable for the growth of morel mushrooms, and high profits can be obtained through artificial planting.</p>
Implementation	<p>In order to attract local farmers to participate and ensure their benefits, the project adopted the following four measures: planting demonstration, policy support, technology promotion and industrial chain cultivation:</p> <p>First, stimulate the enthusiasm of local farmers to participate in planting demonstrations. Preliminary research found that local farmers in Zhouqu County did not know much about the cultivation and profitability of morel mushrooms, and they were unwilling to grown morel mushrooms because they were worried about the potential risks. In this regard, the project invited a team of experts to visit local morel mushroom enterprises, and wrote the Zhouqu County Morel Mushroom Optimization and Demonstration Program. The program initially landed in Fengdie Town, Zhouqu County, and demonstrated the planting of Liumei Morchella and Tileng Morchella for 15 Mu each. The results were remarkable, which greatly increased the enthusiasm of local farmers to participate in the cultivation of morel mushroom.</p>

Second, the Zhouqu County government encourages farmers to participate through supporting policies such as subsidies and the “Three Changes” reform to ensure their basic income. This includes the following two aspects:

- Two types of subsidies were provided for farmers to participate in morel mushroom cultivation. First is the subsidy for production facilities. Zhouqu County government reimbursed 50% - 80% of the construction expenditure for farmers to build simple morel mushroom greenhouse, namely a subsidy of 5,000-8,000 yuan for a construction costing 10,000 yuan. Second is mushroom strain subsidy. The government subsidized the procurement of mushroom strains according to the standard of 5,000 yuan/mu. The strains were purchased by enterprises and distributed to farmers.
- The “Three Changes” reform secured farmers’ benefits in project participation. First, the financial funds invested by various departments at all levels for rural development and production are not directly distributed in the form of subsidies, but are quantified as shares held by farmers, which are seen as targeted investment towards the growth of Zhouqu enterprises. Enterprises give 8 % of their income (about 580,000) to farmers as dividends. The second is to formulate a land transfer capital with a standard of 2,000 yuan/mu to stimulate rural land transfer. The third is to encourage enterprises to recruit farmers for production positions through which farmers can earn wages.

Third, build an integrated “Industry-Study-Research” cooperation network for technology promotion, and promote farmers to “learn by doing, do by learning”. In particular:

- The government of Zhouqu County established a partnership between local enterprises and Sichuan Academy of Agricultural Sciences in terms of planting technology and strain selection, and obtained the morel mushroom varieties Liumei and Tileng that are suitable for commercial promotion.
- Through a series of training activities during the introduction and demonstration process and the recruitment of local people as short-term laborers, companies enabled local people to practice and learn planting techniques in real scenarios. In addition, companies have also promoted the skills of building simple greenhouses introduced from Sichuan and Chongqing regions to farmers, so as to reduce the initial planting costs and risks.
- Cooperatives took advantage of its close relationship with farmers, liaised between enterprises and farmers, called on farmers to participate in morel mushroom cultivation and technical training, and assisted enterprises in passing on the techniques in morel mushroom planting, field management, pest control, harvesting and other areas. At the same time, it undertook the task of simple greenhouse management.
- The Agricultural and Rural Bureau coordinated the agricultural technology promotion station to assist enterprises in carrying out

	<p>technical training and promotion, and conducted special lectures and demonstrations in two training activities in Chengguan Town and Qugaona Town in Zhouqu County.</p> <p>Fourth, cultivate the morel mushroom industry chain and effectively increase farmers' income. This measure was implemented through market forces, in which businesses played a key role. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprises controlled the quality of land. For the planting plots reported by the farmers, companies would conduct field visits to determine if the land is suitable for planting morel mushrooms and reported to the government to prevent farmers from planting blindly. • Unified provision of strains by enterprises. Companies obtained high-quality strains through cooperation with Sichuan and Gansu Academy of Agricultural Sciences every year, and distributed them to farmers who have signed up to plant morel mushrooms, so as to ensure the stability of strain source in Zhouqu County, diminished the possibility of a disturbed market and uneven product quality. • Enterprises provided regular and occasional jobs for local people. At the same time, different job positions were available based on varied education levels, for example assigning workers with higher level of education to technical positions such as inoculation and making fungus packs, and those with lower level of education were assigned to positions such as providing auxiliary materials, purchasing, and garbage cleaning. • Unified recycling of primary products by enterprises. In mid- April every year, companies would purchase fresh morel mushrooms from local farmers then sell them, so as to solve the problem that local farmers cannot find sales channels and have difficulty in marketing, resulting in unmarketable products. The purchase price of fresh morel mushrooms is 40-50 yuan/Jin, and the average yield per mu in Zhouqu County is 300 Jin. The maximum revenue for one mu of land can reach 15,000 yuan, excluding miscellaneous expenses such as strains and facilities, farmers can earn 8,000-10,000 yuan.
Results	<p>The project not only promoted the development of morel mushroom industry in Zhouqu County, increased the income of local farmers, but also formed a unique poverty reduction experience. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scale of morel mushroom industry was expanded. In 2017, the planting area of morel mushrooms in Zhouqu County was 500 mu. By the year of 2022, the planting area of morel mushrooms has reached 2001.6 mu, accounting for about 1.33 % of the national total. There are 530 planting households, with an average household size of 3.78 mu, distributed in 76 villages in 15 towns. • The morel mushroom industry chain is more complete. Before the project was launched, the morel mushroom industry in Zhouqu County was limited to individual cultivation or picking wild morel mushrooms for sale. Through the development and implementation of Zhouqu County Morel Mushroom Optimization and Demonstration

	<p>Program, the expansion of morel mushroom enterprises, the addition of fresh morel mushroom acquisition, drying, packaging, processing and unified purchase and marketing, a prototype of morel mushroom industry chain has emerged in Zhouqu County.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers' income has been substantially improved. The project mainly contributes to farmers' income through four aspects: first, companies distribute guaranteed income at the rate of 8% as dividends to farmers (about 580,000 yuan) per year; second, farmers can earn 2,000 yuan/mu of land rent through land transfer; third, farmers can earn wages once being employed in morel mushroom enterprises. At present, the personal wages paid by enterprise have exceeded 800,000 yuan a year; fourth, farmers who grow morel mushrooms can get 8,000-10,000 yuan/mu when selling them to enterprises. • The National Morel Mushroom Conference. On April 1, 2021, the 6th National Morel Mushroom Conference was held in Zhouqu County on the theme of “promoting exchanges, researching trends, stabilizing development, and creating new chapters”, which effectively expanded the development of morel mushrooms in Zhouqu County, helping Zhouqu morel mushroom to “go global”. • The project’s industrial poverty reduction experience has been incorporated into the local “14th Five-Year Plan” industrial revitalization plan. Since farm lands are scattered in mountains, it is difficult to achieve agricultural intensification. Therefore, the project has created a “small but refined” concept, which was absorbed into the “14th Five-Year Plan” for Revitalizing the Specialty Agricultural Industry in Zhouqu County.
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Goal: Develop morel mushroom planting as a specialty industry	
Planning and design	<p>The morel mushroom industry can indeed bring a lot of economic benefits to Zhouqu County, but there are also limitations in its promotion: First, the arable land in Zhouqu County is small in size and fragmented, limiting mushroom production output; second, morel mushroom cultivation requires strong technical support, and it is difficult for some farmers to learn the trade.</p> <p>In order to expand the participation of local farmers and further increase their income, the project first built large-scale greenhouses in Zhouqu County to simulate an excellent planting environment, and then created another planting area to carry out three-dimensional planting. Second, the greenhouses were also used to promote the cultivation of fungus, shiitake mushrooms and other material plants. The planting techniques of these crops are simple and easy to learn, and the products are not time-sensitive, can be sold at any time after drying, which is less risky than morel mushrooms.</p>
Implementation	<p>M-shaped laminated greenhouses and venlo-style multi-span intelligent greenhouses were designed and developed, which were respectively handed over to Boming Zhongli Agricultural Science and Technology Co., Ltd. and Hebei Zhenghang Construction Engineering Co., Ltd. Both contracts were signed in November 2021 and delivered in December 2022.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boning Zhongli Agricultural Technology Co., Ltd. formulated the Zhouqu Science and Technology Greenhouse Design Plan as a guide, produced a drawing of M-shaped greenhouse, with matching operation design and explanation, then completed the construction of a 2,200 square meter M-shaped laminated greenhouse in Bazang Town, Zhouqu County. • Hebei Zhenghang Construction Engineering Co., Ltd. completed the construction of a 1,500 square meter venlo-style multi-span intelligent greenhouse according to the construction drawings of intelligent greenhouse. <p>Greenhouses were used free of charge by townships. Townships coordinated the use of greenhouses in two ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leased to enterprises for crop production activities, and the rent was given to farmers as dividends. • Used by local farmers free of charge for three years, and farmers were supported to grow their own crops such as fungus and shiitake mushrooms.
Results	<p>Due to the negative impact of COVID-19 in Gansu Province, Zhouqu County has been in a state of blockade since the greenhouse construction started, resulting in some building materials not being transported to Zhouqu in a timely manner, delaying the project progress. The greenhouse construction was finally completed in December 2022.</p> <p>A total of 3,700 square meters of greenhouses have been built for the project. Among them, the 2,200 square meter of M-shaped laminated greenhouse is the original plan of the project, and the 1,500 square meter of multi-span intelligent greenhouse is an additional project which was approved by the Steering Committee in July 2021, replacing the Jiangding Cliff governance project to the greenhouse construction project for the optimization and demonstration of agricultural products in Zhouqu County.</p>

5.3 Efficiency

5.3.1 Financial Resources Management:

Finding 3. The project is designed on the basis of integrating global experience and local conditions in Zhouqu County, with 5 general objectives and 13 sub-objectives, and a total budget of US\$ 3 million. However, due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and the adjusted development strategy of local government, the Project Management Office made significant adjustments after thorough communication with and approval by key stakeholders including the Project Steering Committee and Zhouqu County government. The project’s actual budget for 2019-2022 totals \$1,858,167.92, and the actual implementation cost totals \$882,529.23.

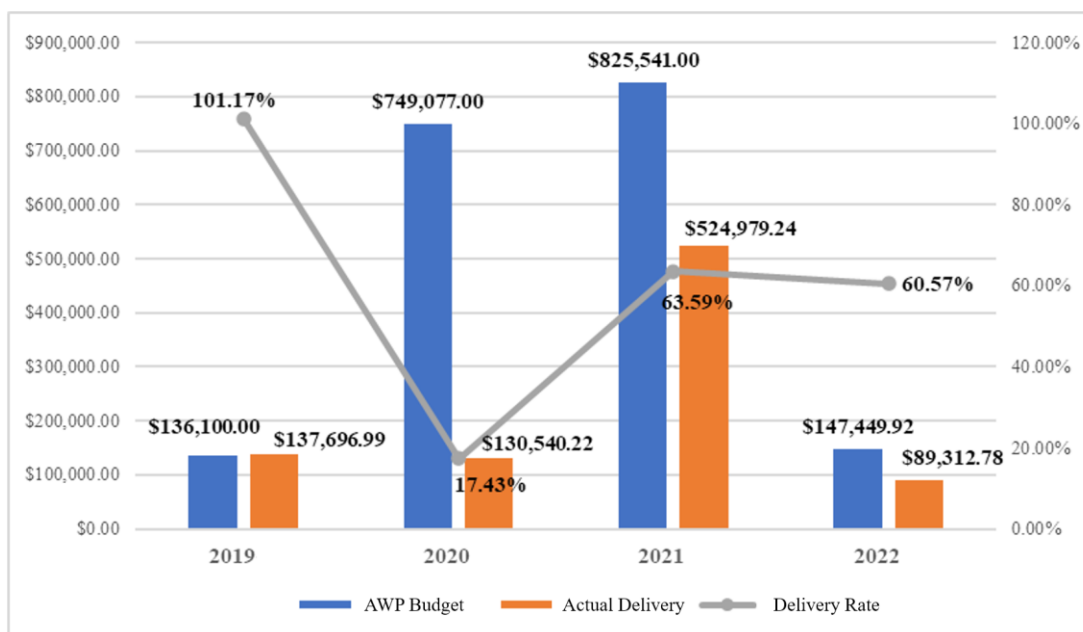


Figure 1 Project annual plan budget and actual expenditure

As shown in the analysis in Figure 1, the Zhouqu project plans to invest most of the funds towards project implementation in 2020 and 2021. 2019 had the lowest annual budget compared with other years in the entire implementation period, but the project delivery rate is the highest, reaching 101.17%. 2020 was strongly hit by the pandemic, resulting in a project delivery rate of only 17.43%. In 2021 and 2022, the project delivery rate recovered to a certain level. Due to some project delays and changes, the delivery rates are 63.59% and 60.57% respectively. Overall, the project's budget delivery rate fluctuates greatly, which is a combined result of project implementation delays and project changes.

5.3.2 Human resources

Finding 4. In general, the project has utilized the human resources efficiently to transfer the technical knowledge and improve competencies of different participants in the areas of strategic planning, policy development and partnership buildups.

Project management did not report any major problem in the recruitment of staff. All project partners appointed staff participated in the project implementation, M&E, and financial management. With regular meetings, consultation meetings and technical seminars attended by the representative of relevant departments of Zhouqu County government, most human resources of the project team are greatly utilized.

Under the leadership of the county leader appointed by the People's Government of Zhouqu County, the project PMO, located in the Zhouqu County Development and Reform Bureau, oversaw the day-to-day implementation and regular reporting of the project. Technical guidance and other needed support are provided by procuring services and hiring independent experts. The evaluation team found that project staff performed their duties conscientiously and delicately. Project management displayed UNDP standards, procedures and transparency in the recruitment of staff, relevant trainings, and operational procedures. Evaluation found that there was a strong culture of

participation within the project and display of transparency by the management in its operational procedures.

5.3.3 Monitoring and Evaluation:

Finding 5. The project carried out the M&E according to UNDP's standard procedures of monitoring, assessment and evaluation, which all based on the expected results listed in the project results framework, the output indicators and the multi-year workplan. Overall, the project M&E mechanism for monitoring of project activities is proved to be efficient and effective.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are key factors in helping improve performance and achieve results. The project developed and adopted detailed M&E Framework include project implementation process, risk, project quality, baseline assessment, project progress report, review and field trips, which are reviewed quarterly, health-yearly and annual according to the project document. The Project Manager (PM) maintained the responsibility for the day-to-day monitoring of implementation progress based on the results framework indicators and project's Annual Work Plan. The CO alongside project IP (CICETE) undertook periodic monitoring of implementation progress through monthly meeting to further strengthen the M&E.

5.4 Gender and cross-cutting issues

Finding 6. Drawing on the rationale of the China Country Program Document (UNDP CPD), this project places great emphasis on systematically obstacles posed by gender differences. There remains potential for improvement concerning the incorporation of cross-cutting issues such as LNOB in the project's implementation.

Zhouqu County is a predominantly Tibetan area where the local folk culture has a significant influence on the lifestyle and economic activities of the community. A significant number of young and middle-aged men migrate to cities in search of employment opportunities, leaving behind a predominantly female rural population. The women left behind are burdened with the responsibility of supporting their families and elderly relatives, which often results in their exclusion from the workforce and a weakened economic status. This situation, in turn, hinders the improvement of women's rights and interests, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and exclusion.

To address this issue, the project mapped out the unique needs and priorities of women, particularly those who are poor and disadvantaged. The project planning emphasized the implementation of activities should be favorable to women, with a focus on developing female leaders from easily marginalized groups. The implementation strategy combines mainstream measures that ensure women and men have equal opportunities to express their opinions and participate in project activities.

The project's approach recognized that gender equality is essential for sustainable development and seeks to empower women in Zhouqu County to fully participate in the economic, social, and political spheres of their community. By promoting the leadership and participation of women, the project created a more inclusive and equitable society, where all members can enjoy the benefits of sustainable development. The project tried to address the root causes of gender inequality in

Zhouqu County, leading to lasting change and a more prosperous future for all members of the community.

Undoubtedly, there remains potential for improvement concerning the promotion of women's empowerment and the incorporation of cross-cutting issues such as LNOB in the project's implementation. Nevertheless, this project has taken the initial step towards progress by increasing awareness, facilitating women's leadership, and advocating for equal development. The noteworthy outcomes and breakthroughs achieved thus far are certain to generate far-reaching benefits for this region. Furthermore, these achievements will serve as a foundation for future projects in these regions, providing valuable insights into best practices and effective strategies for addressing gender inequality and promoting sustainable development.

5.4.1 Project design: integrate gender equality goals

The project was designed with full consideration of the Sustainable Development Goal framework highlighted by the United Nations in Transforming Our World – The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, one of which is gender equality, which aims to encourage women to participate in social development.

Prior to project implementation, the Project Management Office also briefed or trained all project personnel responsible for different project stages (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) on gender topics.

5.4.2 Project implementation: support women 's full participation

Women have fully participated in the project implementation process, which is mainly reflected in:

- When selecting a professional team, the project contracted three consultants, two of whom are women experts in the field of agricultural product optimization.
- Recommend women entrepreneurs to participate in UNDP SMEs Digital Capacity Training and documented industry perspectives from men and women in the business sector.
- Companies involved in projects related to industrial poverty reduction have provided technical training for women and recruited a large number of female employees. Among them, the project implemented by Tianhe Mushroom was selected as a case for RBAP Gender Equality Newsletter.

5.4.3 Project outcome: promote women's rights and interests

The project has effectively improved women's rights and interests in the process of promoting industrial poverty reduction as specified below:

- Provided local women with the opportunity of “employment at the doorstep”, making it easier for women to participate in economic activities.
- Vocational skill trainings enabled women to learn new techniques and abilities, including morel mushroom strain production, mushroom maintenance, harvesting and processing; planting, harvesting and processing of Chinese herbal medicines. For example, 732 women participated in the training of planting Chinese herbal medicines in forest. The number of

women participants has exceeded 50% of all the trained, improving the herbal medicine cultivation skills of women in Baleng Township, Zhouqu County.

- Women's employment has improved their income and family status. For example, Tianhe Mushroom Company provided job opportunities for 15 housewives and provided seasonal work to about 120 women. Before joining Tianhe as a full-time employee, women earned about 1,000 yuan per month. After becoming full-time employees, their monthly income nearly tripled to 3,600 yuan, that is 1,500 yuan more than the per capita wage income in Zhouqu County in 2020. Even seasonal short-term workers could earn 2,800 yuan a month. Increased income improves the quality of life for women and their families.
- On the basis of Zhouqu project, relevant UNDP resources was fully mobilized, such as coordinating with China Children's Charity Aid Foundation to invest special fund for impoverished children in 5 schools in Zhouqu County, providing 180,000yuan scholarship for 150 impoverished children (1,200 yuan per person), which alleviated the pressure of women in family education.

5.5 Sustainability

Finding 7. The project has established a sound foundation for sustaining and scaling impacts. It has successfully broadened officials' perspectives for long-term, sustainable industrial planning. It has also strengthened agricultural stations' capabilities for continued farming support. Additionally, by facilitating sustainable industry value chains and empowering women's participation, the project has enabled systemic changes and conditions to sustain outcomes and scale solutions to new regions.

The evaluation follows the definition of sustainability in the Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for Development Outcomes, measuring the extent to which the benefits of initiatives can sustain after the external development assistance ends. The evaluation team evaluates the following two parameters: the achievement of sustainability in the project itself and the replicability of project results, and the collaboration network formed during the implementation process continue to exist.

5.5.1 Create a cooperation model of “platform resources + local funds” to promote the pilot of global experience

Unlike traditional UNDP projects that provide funds, resources and technical support to projects, the vast majority of this project's funding (\$ 2.99 million) comes from the Gannan Prefecture Government (the higher-level government of Zhouqu County), and UNDP only supported a small amount of funds (US\$ 10,000) that were mainly used in utilizing platform resources to provide technical support, established experiences and cooperation network for the project.

The new cooperation model has two advantages:

- It is helpful to leverage the enthusiasm of local governments to implement projects, enhance their participation in project coordination, supervision and other areas, which in turn promotes smooth project implementation.
- It is conducive to UNDP to better leverage its strengths of integrating platform resources, providing technical capabilities and promoting the replication and innovation of global experience in China at county-level.

5.5.2 Build a “four-in-one” industrial cooperation network composed of government, enterprises, cooperatives and farmers

In the process of promoting industrial poverty reduction, the project has built a cooperation network involving the government, enterprises, cooperatives, and farmers. The roles and functions of all parties are as follows:

- Local government coordinated online actions and provided farmers with basic revenues. First, local government encouraged enterprises to carry out demonstration planting and independent planting by farmers through supportive policies. It also coordinated with the Agricultural and Rural Bureau and its agricultural technology promotion stations and cooperatives for activities such as technology promotion and planting training that support industrial development. Second, local government formulated policies such as financial subsidies and minimum dividends and provided step-by-step subsidies to enterprises and farmers based on planting area, which reduced the risks of industrial development to a certain extent and enhanced the enthusiasm of farmers.
- As the main body of industrial development, enterprises revitalized the morel mushroom industry chain, they provided morel mushroom strains in Zhouqu County in a centralized manner, carried out technical training, distributed production materials, recycled primary products, completed intensive processing, and shared industry benefits, forming a “six unifications” safeguard mechanism for developing the industrial chain. At the same time, they also provided varied job opportunities for local people.
- Cooperatives worked as an effective bridge between enterprises and farmers. Farmers are the initial production end of morel mushrooms, and enterprises are the final sales end. A well-run industry needs to establish an effective communication mechanism between the two. However, as businessmen and outsiders, facing the complex relationship network in Zhouqu County, enterprises have no way to start, and it is difficult to establish close contact with farmers to achieve effective communication. Cooperatives as social organizations are closer to local farmers, thus can promote cooperation between enterprises and local farmers.
- Farmers, as the target group of industrial poverty reduction, participated in industrial development in two ways. One is to be employed by relevant enterprises for jobs in mushroom strain inoculation, production of fungus packs, distribution etc.; other farmers planted morel mushrooms independently after receiving training on planting techniques, and the finished products were uniformly purchased by the enterprises.

5.5.3 Adopt multiple measures to reduce farmers’ risks in their involvement in poverty reduction industry and stimulate their enthusiasm

In order to reduce the risk of participation for farmers and ensure their benefits, the project has adopted five measures:

- Provide policy subsidies. There are two types of subsidies: the first is subsidy for morel mushroom strains at 5,000 yuan/mu. Generally speaking, the cost of strains accounts for 30% of the total revenue of morel mushrooms per mu of land, which reduced the risk of farmers planting morel mushrooms. Second, the subsidy covers 50% -80% of the

construction cost of simple greenhouses, also reduced the cost of farmers growing morel mushrooms.

- Implement the “Three Changes” reform. In accordance with the principles of the “Three Changes” reform, i.e., resources become equity, capitals become stock, and farmers become shareholders, the government turns the subsidies that should have been given to farmers into shares in the enterprises, so that farmers can enjoy 8% of the company's minimum dividends every year. In addition, when farmers transfer their land to enterprises, they can also get 2,000 yuan/mu of land transfer fees.
- Carry out participatory learning of planting techniques. Enterprises conducted demonstration planting, attracted farmers to participate as workers, so that they could ‘learn by doing, do by learning’ to master planting skills. Farmers who are capable of independent planting can obtain sustained revenue. By participating in demonstration planting, farmers also received 2,400-3,000 yuan in salary income.
- Promoted technique sharing tours. Agricultural technology promotion stations, cooperatives and enterprises have gathered together to form a technical support system for regular trainings in the production process of morel mushrooms, regularly observed the growth of morel mushrooms, and provided guidance on core cultivation techniques.
- Implemented the unified purchase and sales of morel mushrooms. The fresh morel mushrooms grown by farmers were purchased and sold by companies in a unified manner to ensure that the morel mushrooms produced by the farmers were not stagnant goods.

5.5.4 Focus on building resilience and cultivating poverty reduction industries to enhance local sustainable development capabilities

With the platform resources of UNDP, the project has introduced global experience and advanced technologies in resilience building and poverty reduction to Zhouqu County, and promoted the growth of Zhouqu County's sustainable development capacity. It is mainly reflected in the following four aspects:

- Broadened the visions of key local government officials. With the support of the project, the key leaders of Zhouqu County government went to the Netherlands and Switzerland to study their experience in disaster prevention and poverty reduction, and their international perspective was greatly expanded as a result.
- Formulated industrial development plans. On the basis of developing morel mushroom industry, the project promoted the formulation of industrial planning with products of regional characteristics and development potentials such as Chinese and Tibetan herbs, jungle Tibetan chicken, Chinese bees, black native pigs, peppers and other specialty products.
- Strengthened the administrative functions of agricultural technology promotion stations. By participating in technical promotion activities of morel mushroom industry, the role of agricultural technology promotion stations in promoting agricultural techniques has been emphasized and utilized with strengthened administrative functions.
- Accelerated the improvement of industrial chain. The project focused on supporting enterprises to integrate the industrial chain of production, processing and sales for morel mushroom industry. Although the current production volume and sales channels of morel

mushrooms in Zhouqu County are not enough to form a complete industrial chain, the prototype of a complete industrial chain has emerged.

5.5.5 Encourage women's participation in industrial poverty reduction to realize "participatory empowerment"

The project has achieved "participatory empowerment" by expanding women's participation in industrial poverty reduction through the main methods below:

- Developed labor-intensive industries. The morel mushroom industry is a labor-intensive industry that needs to employ a large amount of labor and is less dependent on technology and equipment, which provides ample employment opportunities for local left-behind women.
- Created a large number of short-term labor positions. Due to the family responsibility of supporting the elderly, the time for left-behind women in Zhouqu County to participate in external work is relatively scarce. In this regard, enterprises in Zhouqu County mostly hired employees as short-term workers with three months/one quarter employment period to meet the needs of local women for flexible employment.
- Promoted the learning of planting techniques. Enterprises provided technical learning opportunities for local left-behind women through technical training and participatory learning, so that they can master new skills.
- Conducted advocacy campaigns to motivate women's participation. The government of Zhouqu County issued a notice to various communities, requiring them to carry out advocacy activities to encourage women's employment and participation in technical training, creating a strong atmosphere that supported women's participation.

5.6 Impact and challenges encountered

Finding 8. Multiple challenges particularly the COVID-19 have led to delays and affected the delivery of some activities and overall targets. Nevertheless, the project has made progress in building resilience, cultivating poverty reduction industries, and empowering women, and it has the potential to continue making positive impacts in the community with appropriate support and collaboration.

The project was faced with a challenging external environment and has experienced multiple delays in the implementation of project activities, affecting activity timeliness. The reasons include both external and internal factors as specified below:

5.6.1 The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic limited activities

Most of the offline activities of this project require frequent exchanges and field research by various parties. Affected by the outbreak of COVID-19, all project activities must comply with national and local epidemic prevention and control regulations. As a result, some of the planned activities were not carried out as scheduled, and about 90% of the activities were affected, including resilience building in Zhouqu County, domestic three-dimensional planting and agricultural technology research, agricultural product optimization and demonstration programs. Specifically, the International Conference on Resilient City Construction in Zhouqu has been postponed and

remains in a state of temporary cancellation; materials for greenhouse construction could not be transported to the construction site; research on domestic three-dimensional planting was postponed; the bidding process of agricultural product optimization and demonstration project could not be completed.

5.6.2 Lack of international cooperation experience in Zhouqu County

Zhouqu County has never collaborated with an international organization before, so it was short of experience in managing international collaboration projects. As one of China's top ten extremely poor counties, Zhouqu County has received key attention and strong support from the Chinese government in poverty alleviation, but has never had an international project in Zhouqu. This reality poses two challenges for project implementation:

- The main leaders of the Zhouqu County government have a narrow international vision, and have less knowledge about international collaboration projects, which increased the communication cost during project implementation.
- The international collaboration project management system in Zhouqu County was immature, with an ineffective process for budget (final) accounting management, activity approval and reporting, which increased the management cost of project implementation.

5.6.3 Shifted priorities of Zhouqu County government

During the implementation process, the priorities of Zhouqu County government were changed, resulting in a lower rank of priority for this project, affected 50% of the planned activities and 50% of the overall delivery target. There are two main reasons:

- The sudden outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic forced the Zhouqu County government to devote a lot of energy to epidemic prevention and control, reducing its attention to the project.
- After the change of leadership positions in local government, the new leaders did not know enough about the project background and content, and were more cautious about international cooperation projects such as with UNDP, which weakened the support for project implementation and increased the project's communication cost.

5.6.4 Insufficient support for industrial chain development

The development of morel mushroom industry in Zhouqu County lacks of matched support in terms of production and sales:

- In the production process, morel mushroom planting accessories could not be purchased in Gansu Province, but only from outside the province. Due to the natural climate and geographical factors, rice husk crops such as riced are hard to grow in Gansu, while rice husks happen to be the planting auxiliary materials for morel mushroom. For example, rice husks account for 20% to 40% in the formula of nutrition bags.
- In terms of sales, morel mushroom sales are limited by two aspects: one is the inconvenient traffic conditions. Most village roads in Zhouqu County do not meet the requirements for agricultural machinery transportation. It takes two hours to drive to the nearest airport and

three hours to the nearest railway station. As a result, businesses have to increase their budget in transportation in order to sell morel mushrooms. Second is the single sales channel. The ability of enterprises to learn and use internet technologies such as e-commerce sales and online promotion is weak, failing to enjoy the benefits of digital economy.

5.6.5 Demanding conditions for cultivating morel mushrooms

Morel mushrooms has not been fully domesticated yet, and there are still two hurdles in planting conditions:

- Morel mushrooms can only be cultivated in soil with poor stability and higher requirements for land quality compared with other crops cultivated with materials. In addition, bacteria in the soil and air can cause damages to morel mushrooms, resulting in reduced or no production of morel mushrooms.
- Morel mushroom strains are a low-temperature type of bacteria, and soil temperature is suitable for the growth of mycelium at 10-20 degrees. However, Zhouqu County belongs to the plateau area with cold air often passing by, the phenomenon of “cold spring” may appear (after the average temperature exceeds 10°C, the temperature drops rapidly due to frequent occurrence of strong cold air), and the temperature drops quickly causing morel mushrooms to be damaged by freezing. The uncertainties in climate changes also have a great impact on the yield and quality of morel mushrooms.

5.6.6 Weak foundation for the development of cultural tourism industry

The basic conditions for developing cultural tourism industry in Zhouqu County are relatively poor, mainly reflected in:

- Zhouqu County is prone to mudslides and a large amount of money needs to be invested in disaster prevention and mitigation, so as to safeguard the development of cultural tourism. Even so, the number of tourists in Zhouqu County is scarce due to concerns about potential safety hazards.
- Developing cultural and tourism industry requires a range of supporting facilities such as transportation, accommodation and catering, as well as a “soft environment” for high-quality tourism services, so as to enhance the overall tourism experience and attract a large number of tourists to support the development of cultural and tourism industry, but Zhouqu County does not yet meet such conditions.

5.6.7 Inadequate conditions for developing renewable energy

There are certain difficulties in developing renewable energy in Zhouqu County, taking solar energy as an example:

- The geographic composition in Zhouqu can be summarized as “eight mountains, one water and one field”, that is, you can see the mountains when you go outside, and mountains are steep with more than 45 degrees in slope, which is not conducive to collecting solar energy.
- Shorter hours of sunshine lead to shorter time for solar power generation capacity.

VI. EVALUATION CONCLUSION

6.1 Overall observations and conclusions

Overall, the project is an effective attempt to implement the UN 2030 SDG framework, and it also integrates China's national priorities, namely promoting the effective linkage between poverty alleviation and rural revitalization, as well as capturing the key regional development issues of Zhouqu County with a focus on “prescribing the right medicine” in terms of resilience building and industrial poverty reduction.

The project has formulated five goals including resilience building, industrial poverty reduction, environmental governance, renewable energy and folk culture, as well as 13 detailed sub-goals. However, shortly after signing the project, the sudden outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 greatly hindered the project implementation. In addition, the harsh natural environment and inconvenient traffic conditions in Zhouqu County led to slow progress of the project. Upon the application of Zhouqu County government, the Steering Committee discussed and decided to suspend the project implementation in November 2020. The project resumed in March 2021, but the above-mentioned implementation challenges remained.

The evaluation found that the initial five goals of the project were not fully realized, and the project implementation team mainly accomplished the expected goals of resilience building and industrial poverty reduction with 12 activities completed. Among them, the formation and promotion of Zhouqu resilient community demonstration model completed the international research on learning agricultural technology and disaster early warning experience and knowledge, and the preparations for the International Conference on Resilient City Construction in Zhouqu; the characteristic industrial poverty reduction and capacity enhancement project completed the development of morel mushroom specialty industry and large-scale construction of greenhouse.

Nevertheless, the project has achieved considerable results in resilience building, industrial poverty reduction and women's empowerment.

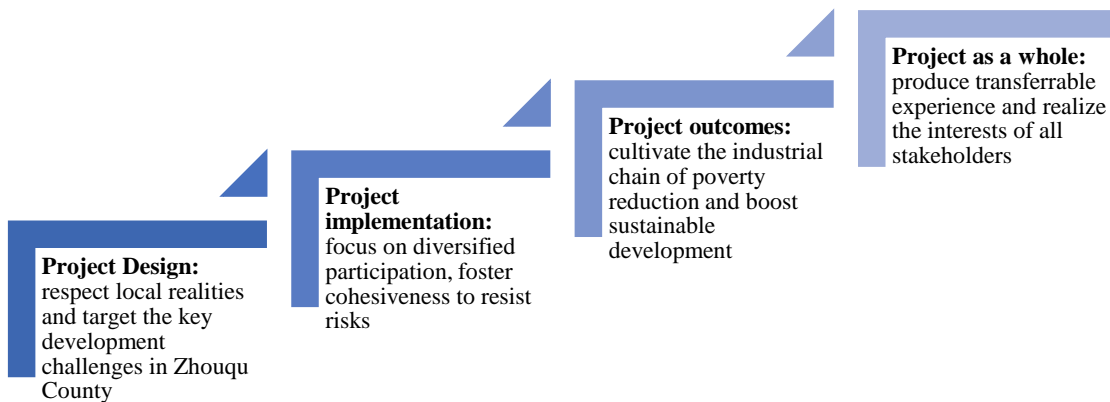
- In terms of resilience building, learning resilience building experience through international research has broadened the horizon of Zhouqu County government leaders and improved the disaster prevention and mitigation capacity of Zhouqu County to a certain extent.
- In terms of industrial poverty reduction, the scale of local morel mushroom industry has expanded with a better industrial chain; farmers' income has been effectively increased; the National Conference on Morel Mushrooms was successfully held to expand Zhouqu's influence in morel mushroom industry; the concept of combatting poverty through “small but refined” project was incorporated into the “14th Five-Year Plan” for Revitalizing the Specialty Agricultural Industry in Zhouqu County.
- In terms of women's rights and interests, women were encouraged to participate in the project implementation process, and through vocational skills training and employment, women have acquired new techniques and skills, thus improved their income and family status.

What's more gratifying is that the project has also explored some experiences that can be used for reference globally:

- Through the collaboration model of “platform resources + local funds”, the project effectively leveraged the enthusiasm of local government, and promoted the piloting of global experience in China;
- Supported the building of a “four-in-one” industrial cooperation network comprised of local government, enterprises, cooperatives and farmers, to gather strength in promoting industrial poverty reduction;
- Five measures including providing policy subsidies, implementing “Three Changes” reform, carrying out participatory learning of planting technology, promoting technology sharing tours, and implementing unified purchase and marketing of agricultural products were taken, to reduce the risk of farmers participating in poverty reduction initiative and stimulate their enthusiasm;
- It focused on resilience building and poverty reduction industry cultivation, improved local sustainable development capabilities by broadening the vision of local government key officials, formulating industrial development plans, strengthening the administrative functions of agricultural technology promotion stations, and accelerating the improvement of industrial chains;
- Through the development of labor-intensive industries, the establishment of a large number of short-term labor positions, the promotion of learning cultivation techniques, and the implementation of publicity activities to encourage women’s participation in industrial poverty reduction, realized “participatory empowerment” and enhanced women's rights and interests.

6.2 Advantages of the Project

During the entire project life, the project implementation team focused on local development needs, actively communicated with relevant partners with special attentions paid on maintaining close contact and cooperation with local government, and tried its best to promote project implementation, so that the local government and the public could truly enjoy the project benefits. For example, improved capacity in local disaster mitigation and the increase in resident income. These results are inseparable from the following advantages of the project:



6.2.1 Project design: respect local realities and target the key development challenges in Zhouqu County

Based on the relatively solid local research in the early stage, the project designed objectives and content on the basis of grasping the local basic conditions and actual needs. The activities are interlinked to ensure the targeting, effectiveness and feasibility of the project.

- The project aims at the key problems facing the development of Zhouqu County, namely frequent natural disasters and weak industrial development foundation. First of all, Zhouqu County is an area with frequent and strong earthquakes and frequent mudslides. The disastrous mudslide on August 8, 2010 is a typical natural disaster event, which is the primary obstacle to local development in Zhouqu County. Secondly, Zhouqu County's own conditions such as less arable land and inconvenient transportation make it difficult to develop agricultural industry. At the same time, the market competition amongst neighboring counties is fierce, the stability of internal industrial chain is poor, which restricts the county's economic growth.
- For the above key issues, the project was designed in a targeted manner, especially emphasizing on the project objectives of resilience building and industrial poverty reduction.
- The project design was based on Zhouqu County's own conditions and industrial foundation ensuring the project's feasibility. For example, morel mushrooms were selected as a characteristic industry to support because Zhouqu County has experience in morel mushroom cultivation with an existing industrial chain cooperation network and suitable natural conditions.

6. 2. 2 Project implementation: focus on diversified participation, foster cohesiveness to resist risks

During the project implementation, the project implementation team actively built links to set up a multi-party cooperation network to reduce the risk of industrial development. Taking industrial poverty reduction as an example,

- The project implementation team made agreement with the government in developing the specialty industry of morel mushrooms, then led by the government and supported by the Project Management Office to build a “four-in-one” industrial cooperation network composed of government, enterprises, cooperatives and farmers.
- This set of cooperation network effectively reduced the risk of farmers' participation in industrial development and enhanced their enthusiasm. In particular, the government reduced the cost of farmers to cultivate morel mushrooms by providing financial subsidies and implementing the “Three Changes” reform to ensure their basic revenue; enterprises, cooperatives and agricultural technology promotion stations carried out technique sharing tours to improve farmers' planting skills and ensured the quality of morel mushroom products; enterprises improved planting efficiency by integrating the morel mushroom industry chain, such as unified procurement of mushroom strains and auxiliary materials, unified purchase of fresh morel mushrooms. The job opportunities provided by companies have also generated considerable income for farmers.

6. 2. 3 **Project results:** cultivate the industrial chain of poverty reduction and boost sustainable development

Through the practice of poverty reduction through fostering characteristic industry, this project has cultivated the prototype of morel industry chain for Zhouqu County, which will benefit the local area in the long run.

- The characteristic industry of morel mushrooms has initially formed an integrated industrial chain of production, processing and sales. The cooperation mechanisms such as capital dividends, technology promotion, and diversified participation established during the development process can continue to drive farmers' income growth and local economic development after the project ends.
- The industrial cooperation network features technology promotion and skill training established by enterprises, cooperatives and agricultural technology promotion stations has stimulated the initiative and enthusiasm of local farmers to participate in economic and social activities to a certain extent, which can still help farmers continuedly to gain planting skills and sustained benefits after the project ends.

6.2.4 **Project long-term impact:** produce transferrable experience and realize the interests of all stakeholders

The long-term impact and lessons learned from this project are beneficial to UNDP, China's national priorities and the sustainable development of Zhouqu County. In particular:

- The cooperation model of “platform resources + local funds” brings new idea for UNDP to deploy collaborative projects in China, and also contributes Chinese wisdom to the implementation of UN 2030 SDG framework.
- Industrial prosperity is the foundation of rural revitalization. Therefore, the industrial poverty reduction experience explored by the project in building cooperation network and ensuring farmers' benefits will help China realize its national priority in comprehensive promotion of rural revitalization.
- The diversified and multi-level cooperation network built by the project not only expanded the access to resources and technologies for Zhouqu County, but also enhanced local governance capacity, which will continue to serve the sustainable economic and social development goals of Zhouqu County.

6.3 Weakness of the Project

Objectively speaking, the project is not perfect with some disadvantages, which are mainly reflected in three aspects: project design, project implementation and project results.

6.3.1 **Project design:** the impact of the transition of officials of local government was not fully considered

The change of key officials in local government increased the communication cost during project implementation. Although this was considered in early stage and during implementation, the

transition of government officials still had a great impact on the project progress during implementation:

- In July 2021, the National Project Director was unable to continue to perform duties due to job transfer, resulting in important decisions about the project not being finalized, affecting 80% of the planned activities and 80% of the overall delivery target . In October 2021, a new government leader filled the vacancy of National Project Director, moved the project forward in an effort to minimize impact.
- In January 2022, the director of Project Management Office was unable to continue to perform duties due to job transfer. In June 2022, the position was assumed by a new government leader.

Since the new government leader did not have a comprehensive understanding of the project when they took office, and was cautious about large-scale international projects, the project implementation team needed to spend a lot of time and energy explaining the project to them, which increased project communication cost and led to slow project implementation. After in-depth communication, the new leadership team increased support to the project, and the speed of project implementation increased.

6.3.2 Project implementation: the local farmers and communities were not effectively motivated.

Endogenous motivation is an indispensable and important factor for poor people to get rid of poverty. Rural households are not only the target of poverty alleviation, but also the main actors of poverty alleviation. The change of state from poverty to non-poverty must depend on the motivation of the impoverished, which is the farmers themselves. Only when farmers themselves take the initiative and work hard can the limited and precious poverty alleviation funds and projects be able to make a difference.

Due to long-term poverty, local farmers in Zhouqu County are more risk-averse and less motivated to venture in a new industry. Moreover, the limitations of morel mushroom industry further expanded their risk aversion: first, the morel mushroom industry has suffered losses, and 1/3 of the farmers have experienced losses; second, morel mushroom planting requires a certain level of planting techniques, and the overall education level of local farmers is relatively low, making it difficult to master complex planting techniques.

Although various measures were taken during the project implementation to reduce the risks of planting morel mushrooms, the enthusiasm of farmers participating in industrial poverty reduction is still low. Therefore, the cooperation mechanism to reduce the risk of farmers' participation and ensure their income needs to be further improved.

6.3.3 Project results: industrial clusters for poverty reduction have not been cultivated

Unimpeded industrial chains and the formation of industrial clusters can expand industrial economic benefits and inject strong impetus into local development. However, after the project is implemented, no poverty reduction industrial clusters have been formed, which has limited the industrial development of Zhouqu County, mainly due to the following two reasons:

Harsh natural environment and less effective arable land resulting in higher cost for the industry to scale up;

Zhouqu County does not have supporting facilities for the development of morel mushroom industry. For example, the lack of producers for morel mushroom strains and auxiliary materials makes them only purchasable from outside the county; fine processing technique for morel mushrooms is frail, only rough processing is viable; products are mainly sold through traditional offline channels, the development of e-commerce sales lags behind.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the project has been closed, this final evaluation provides an opportunity for reflection and continuous improvement. The below recommendations highlight areas for enhancement in strategy, planning, implementation, and project management. These insights can inform the planning processes for future projects in tangible ways for *future* new projects to be incubated, leading to measurable improvements in project delivery and efficiency over time.

In view of the weaknesses manifested in the Zhouqu project in terms of design, implementation, and outcomes, the evaluator put forward the following suggestions for further improvement.

7.1 Establish a multi-party communication and coordination mechanism to dynamically monitor and adjust the project plan for future projects in cooperation with local government with a similar theme.

In response to the problems such as the decrease in project priority and the increase in communication cost brought by the changes in key local government officials, a multi-party communication and coordination mechanism can be established to keep abreast of the needs of project landing place and make dynamic adjustment to the project service plan, which include:

(1) Establish a multi-party communication and coordination mechanism to dynamically adjust the project plan

Establish a communication and coordination mechanism among stakeholders, i.e. UNDP, CICETE and local government leaders, carrying out activities of field visits, symposiums, work meetings etc. Due to the lack of project-related knowledge, new government leaders did not understand the project design, its objectives and service content. To this end, the comprehensive communication platform can impart relevant knowledge to these key decision makers, ensure their understanding of and attention to the project, and finally reach a consensus.

More importantly, frequent and diversified communication enables key government leaders to discover the potential resources owned by UNDP and CICETE, so that they can take the initiative to raise new demands and cooperation proposals, which can effectively solve local problems and achieve better results.

(2) Dynamically adjust the project plan to respond to new local project expectations

This project demonstrates that the expectations for projects are not set in stone at the project site. In particular, projects with longer implementation cycles face greater uncertainty. Therefore, in addition to establishing a multi-party communication and coordination mechanism, it is also necessary to dynamically adjust the program, which can be achieved through a combination of regular and irregular adjustments, in order to meet the new needs raised by project landing place.

7.2 Foster the development of rural cooperatives and improve the technical touring mechanism for future project with a theme of rural revitalization, etc.

In order to further reduce the risk of farmers participating in poverty reduction industry, two approaches can be taken:

(1) Vigorously develop rural cooperatives to enhance risk resistance

“Individual” farmers are weak in resisting external risks, and the development of rural cooperatives can transform the main body of risk resistance into a “group collective” weakening the impact of external risks. First, cooperatives have the characteristics of “developing as a group”. Cooperatives established by scattered and small farmer households have a high degree of organization and an integrated organizational structure, which can resist the risk of morel mushroom cultivation. Second, cooperatives have enhanced their bargaining power through centralized procurement of mushroom strains, which can reduce the cost of raw materials. Third, cooperatives are widely trusted by farmers and can act as a bridge for the cooperation between enterprises and farmers, promoting technology promotion and expanding industrial scale.

(2) Improve the technical touring mechanism and provide multi-level technical support

The technical promotion of this project was mainly achieved through skill training, but limited to simple cultivation techniques, and key technologies with high technical content cannot be instilled in farmers through training. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation among enterprises, cooperatives, and agricultural technology promotion stations, and send professional technicians to diagnose the situation of farmers growing morel mushrooms and provide technical support. This move can also strengthen the existing technical promotion function of agricultural technology promotion stations, which can benefit the local area in the long run.

7.3 Promote the improvement of the industrial chain for agricultural products and accelerate the cultivation of industrial clusters for future new project with similar theme in Zhouqu-like rural areas.

Zhouqu County has formed a prototype of morel mushroom industry chain and it is necessary to further integrate the production, processing and marketing segments to form a sound industrial cluster. Cultivating industrial clusters is also a response to the phenomenon of people in Zhouqu County are hard to leave their homeland. Through the development of industries, the local economy and people’s lives can be improved.

(1) Improve the external cooperation network and promote the integrated development of “production, processing and marketing”

Limited by local natural environment and traffic conditions, it is difficult for Zhouqu County to provide matching support for production, processing and marketing required for industrial chain development. Therefore, we can use the resources network of UNDP and CICETE to locate external partners, such as stable and high-quality strain providers, enterprises with deep processing capabilities of morel mushrooms, and enterprises with diversified sales channels, with which to form a mutually beneficial cooperation, complement each other's advantages, to create an industrial chain integrating the production, processing and marketing of morel mushrooms.

(2) Vigorously develop e-commerce in rural areas and expand sales channels of agricultural products

China's rural e-commerce has developed rapidly in recent years, with more and more rural areas riding the “internet e-commerce express”, such as joining rural Taobao, cloud farms, social Tao platforms. As an important carrier for targeted poverty alleviation, it has expanded the online sales of existing rural industries and promoted industrial transformation and upgrading, injecting new momentum into the important deployment of rural revitalization.

However, Zhouqu County has not yet enjoyed the digital dividend brought by the development of internet. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop rural e-commerce, sell agricultural products through e-commerce in a unified manner, break the decentralized management pattern, broaden sales channels, and increase total sales and overall revenue.

(3) Intensify policy advocacy and introduce business environment optimization policies

The government of Zhouqu County can continue to increase support for poverty reduction industries on the basis of existing policies, optimize business environment, stimulate industrial vitality, and promote the development of sustainable industrial clusters in Zhouqu County. First, government should support the innovation of market entities such as enterprises through direct financial subsidies, loan subsidies, guarantee support, government procurement, and government funds. Second, government should formulate and implement tax incentives to support enterprises in R&D and innovation, so as to optimize the business environment of Zhouqu County, stimulate the industrial vitality and promote the development of sustainable industrial clusters.

VIII. LESSONS LEARNED

By reviewing the implementation process of the Zhouqu project, the evaluator summarized the following experience and lessons for UNDP to promote “resilience building” and “poverty reduction” projects in China and around the world:

8.1 Actively implement the cooperation model of “platform resources + local funds”.

The Zhouqu project adopted the cooperation model of “Platform Resources + Local Funds”. As a project support platform, UNDP provided resources and global experiences, and local government or its superior government invested project funds. It is recommended that UNDP promote this model on a larger scale for the following reasons: During the past decade, new historical changes have taken place in various undertakings in China, and has made new historical achievements in reform and opening up and Chinese-style modernization. China's economic strength has leapt to a new level. In 2012, China 's economic aggregate accounted for only 11.3 % of the world's total. By 2022, this number will exceed 18%. China’s local governments have also become more financially robust, with a diminishing reliance on foreign funding.

In this context, the applicability of traditional cooperation model mainly based on financial support has been reduced in China. UNDP needs to reflect and adjust its strategy in China, especially to promote the transformation of project cooperation model. The project landed in Zhouqu County provides a new model of cooperation featuring “platform resources + local funds”.

UNDP can continue to encourage the new cooperation model of “platform resources + local funds” in its subsequent collaborative projects in China, and promote the integration of global governance experience with China's governance practices. The new cooperation model is funded by the Chinese government, but it has completed the pilot project in resilience building and poverty reduction with experiences learned from developed countries in Europe and the United States. The resulting experiences can be further extended to other developing countries.

8.2 Focus on the organic integration of global experiences and local knowledge to enhance project effectiveness.

“Respecting local reality and aiming at real needs” is a major advantage of the project. The key strength of the Zhouqu project in terms of poverty reduction and sustainable development is that it was designed to integrate UN and national priorities, and to take into account the views of local experts in Zhouqu, thus making the project more relevant. This has inspired the project to be implemented on the basis of an organic integration of global advanced experience and local knowledge, thereby enhancing the responsiveness of project objectives and service content to local problems, enhancing project effectiveness. The typical experience derived from this project can also be more easily replicated and radiated to other regions. The specific approaches are:

- Create an exchange venue for global experience and local knowledge. First, salons and consultation meetings can be organized for international experts and local experts to promote communication between the two sides. International experts introduce the development concepts and models of developed countries, while local experts report local issues, such as the most urgent local needs and existing advantages to international experts.

Second, local experts can be invited to participate in international conferences to expand their knowledge and vision, learn from global experience, and promote their understanding of the project.

- Comprehensively summarize local knowledge. UNDP excels in advocating global experience. In order to better integrate global experience with local knowledge, it is necessary to conduct solid research on local needs to understand the key challenges that local residents face in terms of resilience building and poverty reduction, as well as existing conditions and foundations. We need to focus on both the problems and solutions, and then design projects based on local conditions. For example, mudslides occur frequently in Zhouqu County, so the improvement of disaster prevention and mitigation capacity should be a key component of the project.

8.3 Establish a communication and coordination mechanism enabling dynamic adjustments throughout the process to promote the smooth implementation of the project.

Based on the Zhouqu project, most of the projects carried out by UNDP have an average span for three years, which also increases the uncertainties and risks faced by project implementation. The Zhouqu County project faced the sudden outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and the changes in key local government officials which impacted the project implementation such as lower priority, increased communication cost and prolonged approval processes, hindering project implementation and even halted at one time. In this regard, it is necessary to establish a communication, coordination mechanism to enable dynamic adjustments covering the whole project process to facilitate the project's smooth implementation. It includes the following two aspects:

- Promote multi-party communication and enhance project recognition by the main leaders of local government. UNDP can establish a communication and coordination mechanism with CICETE and key leaders of local government when the project is in its infancy, and regularly organize activities such as salons, joint meetings, and field visits to allow key government officials gain more understanding and recognition of the project. At the same time, keep abreast of the emerging needs of the project sites and collect relevant information for reference when the project requires adjustments.
- Grasp the changes in local demand for projects and dynamically adjust the project plan. With the rapid development of China's economy and the rapid changes in social structure, the existing project plan is likely to become inappropriate, thus the project plan needs to be adjusted. In this regard, UNDP can establish a dynamic adjustment mechanism that combines regular and irregular project programs.

8.4 Stimulate the initiative of local people to participate in the poverty reduction industry and stop the “nanny-style poverty alleviation” chaos.

Cooperation projects with external entities, especially poverty reduction and regional development projects, tend to cause local people's dependence on external resources, weaken their enthusiasm for active participation in poverty reduction industries and regional development, forming a chaotic situation similar to “nanny-style poverty alleviation”. For example, local farmers in Zhouqu have been in poverty for a long time and are averse to risks, so they are not very active in participating in new poverty reduction industries such as growing morel mushrooms, and are still highly dependent on Zhouqu government, which is not conducive to the high-quality development of

poverty reduction industries. In response to this phenomenon, the mobilization ability of the existing organizational system can be used to guide local people to join in the industrial poverty reduction cooperation network, and fully stimulate their endogenous motivation to participate in poverty reduction industry. Specific approaches include:

- Guide enterprises and local people to establish industrial cooperative relations, which means enterprises provide production materials and technical support, and local people complete production.
- Make full use of the characteristics of cooperatives being close to the farmers, and leverage them to mobilize local people to participate in poverty reduction industries, expand the industry scale and enhance economic benefits.

8.5 Establish a learning and exchange platform for party and government leaders of the project area, and strengthen the proliferation of project experience.

UNDP has carried out many projects in China, involving various fields and regions, and has accumulated a large amount of knowledge, experiences and models. It is imperative to disseminate such experiences and influence in a wider range, so as to bridge regional gaps and promote mutual learning on development models amongst regions. We propose to invite key government leaders of the project site to share implementation experience, regional development models and so on, in the form of annual forums, themed salons and field visits, so as to enhance local party and government leaders' understanding about UNDP concepts, methods and projects, strengthening exchanges and learning among regions and reinforcing the role of UNDP as a hub driving global development.

Annex I. Evaluation TOR

As separately attached and uploaded in ERC.

Annex II. Evaluation criteria and questions matrix

The evaluation matrix provides a structured framework to assess the various aspects of the project. It is developed based on key criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. Additionally, gender and cross-cutting issues are incorporated to apply a gender lens throughout the evaluation.

A novel approach taken is to organize and tailor the evaluation questions by 3 relevant segments: (a) overall project management, (b) Formation and replication of Zhouqu resilient community model segment, and (c) Poverty reduction and capacity enhancement in characteristic industries segment. Through combined lenses of evaluation criteria and project components, the evaluation aims to analyze and evaluate the different facets of the project in a comprehensive and systematic way. This mixed methods approach will help gain nuanced insights into accomplishments as well as areas needing improvement across the critical dimensions of the project.

Evaluation criteria	Key questions for Overall project evaluation questions	Key questions for “Formation and replication of Zhouqu resilient community model” segment	Key questions for “Poverty reduction and capacity enhancement in characteristic industries” segment	Data source and collection methods
Relevance	<p>Please tell us about the background, original intention and core purpose of Zhouqu’s resilience building and sustainable development project. Why were there five major areas in the project plan? Please provide details on the process of formulating the project plan, such as participants, formulation process, and the breakdown of objectives.</p> <p>Please tell us what contribution the project has made to the sustainable development of the region? What exit mechanism has been designed to continuously consolidate current development gains?</p>	<p>Please introduce the process of formulating the Plan, such as the key information about unit delegation, participating departments, focal issues and consensus reached. How did the process of preparing the plan on resilient community building differ from the way the 14th Five-Year Plan was prepared?</p>	<p>How to select specific industries for poverty reduction projects? For example, parties involved, negotiation method, factors to be considered, and the key points to be weighed.</p>	<p>Documents review (project document, progress report, monitoring and oversight report, PSC meeting minutes, annual workplan, etc.)</p> <p>Interviews with beneficiaries, key stakeholders, and project management team (KII and FGD)</p>
Effectiveness	<p>Please describe each of the five major aspects of the project implementation process, focusing</p>	<p>Please introduce the implementation status of the pilot work on building resilient communities, such as key</p>	<p>Please briefly introduce the development status of Zhouqu industries, especially the</p>	<p>Documents review (project document, progress report,</p>

	<p>on: how to leverage and stimulate the participation of functional departments and collaboration partners; the experiences and challenges summarized from project implementation process; what remarkable results have been achieved, the main reasons why some of the goals or plans were difficult to achieve, what alternative strategies have been adopted?</p> <p>Please comment on the overall outcomes of the project, such as achievements and weaknesses that impress you.</p> <p>If convenient, please provide a chronological record of events during the implementation process of the project.</p>	<p>information about organizational safeguard, specific practices, typical models and public participation.</p> <p>Please introduce the outcomes of study trips overseas and the changes and actions they have promoted.</p> <p>How did the Jiangding Cliff Tree Planting Project work? Please introduce its main parties, division of responsibilities, achievements and follow-up management etc</p>	<p>development status of agricultural brands.</p> <p>In what way have the poverty reduction projects increase farmers' income? Please estimate the income status and sustainable income expectations for participating households. What kind of supportive constructions has the poverty reduction project brought to villages or local areas? What impact does it have on regional sustainable development?</p>	<p>monitoring and oversight report, PSC meeting minutes, annual workplan, etc.)</p> <p>Interviews with beneficiaries, key stakeholders, and project management team (KII and FGD)</p>
<p>Efficiency</p>	<p>Please introduce the organizational structure, job responsibilities, operating mechanism, supervision system and other relevant information established during the project implementation process, and what were the experiences and challenges in the implementation process?</p>	<p>Some projects were not completed on schedule, please briefly explain the reasons and alternatives.</p>	<p>How does the project office leverage the active participation of enterprises and farmers during the implementation of poverty reduction projects? What kind of cooperation network has been formed by various parties? What are the regular activities and liaison mechanism during the operation of cooperative network?</p> <p>What are the typical experiences of Zhouqu poverty reduction project? What are the key areas that require further enhancements? What</p>	<p>Documents review (project document, progress report, monitoring and oversight report, PSC meeting minutes, annual workplan, etc.)</p> <p>Interviews with beneficiaries, key stakeholders, and project management team (KII and FGD)</p>

			suggestions do you have for UNDP and the project office?	
Gender and cross-cutting issues	Please tell us what development opportunities the project has brought to the relatively vulnerable groups such as left-behind women, the elderly, and children? What are the main mechanisms through which they share the fruits of development?		What are the benefits of poverty reduction projects for local women, children, and the elderly left behind? How does the poverty reduction project affect their social status? How can their disadvantages be improved in a sustained manner?	Documents review (project document, progress report, monitoring and oversight report, PSC meeting minutes, annual workplan, etc.) Interviews with beneficiaries, key stakeholders, and project management team (KII and FGD)
Sustainability	Please provide suggestions on the following questions: If there is a second phase of the project, what projects does Zhouqu hope to carry out in depth and why? If there was further cooperation, what suggestions would you like to make to other partners?	What experience has your department or individuals gained since the implementation of the project? Please provide policy recommendations for continued improvement of the project.	Regarding the poverty reduction industry in Zhouqu, please provide detailed information on the development process, main outcomes, practices and challenges of each poverty reduction project. In particular, what are the prospects for the sustainability of poverty reduction projects? What factors have affected the sustainability of poverty reduction projects?	Documents review (project document, progress report, monitoring and oversight report, PSC meeting minutes, annual workplan, etc.) Interviews with beneficiaries, key stakeholders, and project management team (KII and FGD)
Impact	Please focus on sharing the following stories: What has been the project's impact on local government's governance capacity? How does the project promote the cooperation network between local government and other parties? What	What do you think are the good practices in Zhouqu that has earned it the UNDP Resilient City certification? What resilient community building experiences are worth of replication?	What social organizations have been formed during the implementation of the poverty reduction project? For example, cooperatives, how do these organizations perform in terms of governance, social security functions etc.?	Documents review (project document, progress report, monitoring and oversight report, PSC meeting

	changes has the project brought about for organizations or individuals? Other far-reaching implications of the project.			minutes, annual workplan, etc.) Interviews with beneficiaries, key stakeholders, and project management team (KII and FGD)
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Annex III. Document Review Checklist

The key documents reviewed during the final evaluation process of the Zhouqu project are as follows:

- **Official domestic policies and local regulations and notices**
 - Opinions on Consolidating and Expanding the Achievements of Poverty Alleviation and Rural Revitalization;
 - 14th Five-Year Plan” for Revitalizing the Specialty Agricultural Industry in Zhouqu County;
 - Notice on the change of office director for Zhouqu Project Management Office
- **Programme documents**
 - UNSDCF 2021-2025
 - UNSDCF 2016-2020
 - UNDP CPD 2021-2025
 - UNDP CPD 2016-2020
 - ICPE China report 2019
- **Project documents**
 - Project document
 - Project revision document
 - Annual workplans
 - Project annual reports
 - Project oversight and monitoring reports
 - Annual PSC meeting minutes (including meeting minutes on the research follow-up activities arrangement, meeting minutes on project suspension and follow-up arrangements, meeting minutes on project adjustments, etc.)
- **Other reports, research products, etc. developed by/during the project**
 - Zhouqu Modern Agriculture Research Report
 - Summary of Study Tour to the Netherlands and Switzerland
 - Zhouqu Agricultural Product Optimization and Demonstration Plan
 - Summary of the Procurement of Morel Mushroom Strains
 - Summary of the Artificial Planting of Morel Mushrooms
 - Anti-pandemic Donation Agreement

Annex IV. List of Individuals or Groups Interviewed or Consulted:

The key stakeholders or groups that interviewed during the final evaluation process of Zhouqu project are as follows:

- Project management colleagues
 - UNDP Programme Officers
 - IP counterpart (CICETE officials)
 - Colleagues working in the project management office (PMO) in Zhouqu
- Beneficiaries and local stakeholders
 - Tianhe Mushroom Industry Co., Ltd
 - Local communities
- Donor and government
 - Officials from Zhouqu government

Annex V. Project Result Framework

Outcome	Output
<p>Goal 1: The overall capacity to cope with climate change and disaster risk management has been improved, and the international demonstration model of Zhouqu resilient community/city has been formed and promoted.</p>	<p>Sub-goal 1: Compile Zhouqu County Resilient Community/Urban Strategic Planning and Action Plan</p> <p>Zhouqu County is facing enormous challenges brought by climate change, frequent natural disasters and rapid urban economic development. Through formulating the Resilient Community/City Strategic Planning and Action Plan, the focus was on how to strengthen resilience construction in Zhouqu County, enhance urban risk management capacity and build a firm “safety line”, so as to improve the disaster prevention, mitigation and response capabilities of Zhouqu County.</p>
	<p>Sub-goal 2: Explore community-based smart resilience solutions for county-level emergency management, and systematically improve comprehensive disaster prevention and response capabilities</p> <p>County level is the most important public service level in China. The core of building a comprehensive and resilient city lies in how to vitalize the whole process of systematic prevention, first response, emergency command, and comprehensive recovery, of which community is the most basic unit. The risks associated with disasters are highly uncertain and unexpected. To this end, it is necessary to improve governance capabilities such as real-time tracking, response and disposal. It is crucial to establish a dynamic, interactive, and precise emergency management mindset and corresponding technology platform. Based on the risk characteristics of Zhouqu County, combined with the relevant requirements of China's national demonstration districts and counties in comprehensive disaster reduction, as well as the piloting experience of UNDP at home and abroad, the project takes into account the varied needs and vulnerabilities of different geographic, age and gender groups to explore the establishment of a community-based smart resilience that is institutionable for emergency management at county-level to improve comprehensive disaster prevention and response capabilities.</p>
	<p>Sub-goal 3: Gender-specific disaster prevention and mitigation, climate change capacity building, and community/city resilience enhancement</p> <p>Through carrying out a series of activities and learning from the advanced experiences at home and abroad, improve disaster risk management capacity at all levels in Zhouqu County. Specifically, the project intends to combine the successful experience of UNDP and China’s risk governance innovation project to promote disaster risk mitigation and prevention and climate change capacity building through</p>

	<p>the following ways: ① commemorative days such as “Aug 8” and “Jul 10”, “May 12” (the national disaster prevention and reduction day), “Oct 13” (international disaster reduction day), can be used for innovative and in-depth advocacy and educational activities on disaster prevention and reduction. Other activities can also be arranged under the theme of “reducing community disaster risks and enhance disaster mitigation capacity at the grassroots level”; ②Promote capacity building on community disaster risk management, carry out special trainings and activities such as community first responders, community risk maps, and family disaster plans; ③ Conduct regional training and demonstration of safe school development based on the International Comprehensive Safe School Framework (CSS); ④In the process of carrying out relevant activities, focus on cultivating leaders (or supporting them in employment) from easily marginalized groups such as women.</p>
	<p>Sub-goal 4: Compile the “Green Paper on Resilience and Sustainable Development in Zhouqu County” Through the compilation of “Green Paper on Resilience and Sustainable Development in Zhouqu County”, collate a number of ecological engineering projects in Zhouqu County over the years from the implementation of ecological protection, geological disaster management, to water and soil conservation, returning farmland to forests, energy conservation and emission reduction so as to summarize the experience of systematically promoting resilience building and sustainable development in the course of poverty reduction, and to provide reference for similar regions to carry out resilience building program and help them better benefit local residents.</p>
	<p>Sub-goal 5: Build a county-level collaboration network for resilient city construction and an institutionalized exchange platform at home and abroad Combining the implementation experience of UNDP and China's risk governance innovation project, the project will work with typical counties and cities in some of China’s high-risk areas to jointly build a collaborative network for the construction of county-level resilient cities in China. In addition, the project will organize international organizations and experts at home and abroad to summarize mature international experience and consider the differences in the needs and vulnerabilities of people of different genders, ages, ethnicities and regions in terms of resilience building by building domestic and foreign exchange platforms, explore inclusive localization implementation solutions, and share “Zhouqu Experience” on the platforms.</p>

<p>Goal 2: Enhance the production capacity of local high-quality characteristic agricultural products and relevant sales and logistics system; improve the industrial poverty reduction capability</p>	<p>Sub-goal 6: Cultivate the entrepreneurial and poverty reduction capability of left-behind groups, and improve the yield of high-quality agricultural products and the efficiency of land utilization through the development of three-dimensional planting, breeding research and demonstration based on greenhouse facilities, which serves as the new momentum for the poverty reduction goal of Zhouqu County</p> <p>Through research and demonstration, we will further improve and optimize the quality and output of premium agricultural products in Zhouqu County, enhance their competitiveness in the market so as to reduce poverty. Guide new business entities to carry out quality certification of pollution-free agricultural products, green food, and organic agricultural products, gradually forming regional branding advantages.</p>
	<p>Sub-goal 7: Build a cold chain logistics system, connect with the “E-commerce Demonstration County Project”, introduce leading e-commerce companies, support left-behind groups to engage in e-commerce entrepreneurship, and enhance the competitiveness of local high-quality products, thereby promoting the poverty reduction process in Zhouqu County</p> <p>Combined with the “2018 Comprehensive Demonstration Project Implementation Plan for E-Commerce Entering into Rural Areas in Zhouqu County”, we will focus on the construction activities related to cold chain logistics, create new momentum for industrial poverty reduction, tap the poverty reduction potential of Zhouqu County, drive local economic growth through developing industrial clusters, so as to increase the income of farmers.</p>
<p>Goal 3: The environment is effectively managed, and efforts are made to enter the track of high-quality development</p>	<p>Sub-goal 8: According to the requirements of local policies and regulations, prove the current upgrading methods of existing local waste disposal facilities in a scientific manner, construct and implement demonstration projects</p> <p>Scientifically plan and implement demonstration projects for upgrading existing waste disposal facilities in Zhouqu County, promoting the construction of “ecologically civilized well-off villages” and “environmental revolution”, and resolve potential dangers such as leakage affecting groundwater.</p>
	<p>Sub-goal 9: Scientific treatment of sewage, build and implement demonstration projects</p> <p>The sludge disposal technology of the sewage treatment plant in the old urban area in Zhouqu County is seriously obsolete, and the pollution parameters after treatment are about 20% lower than the national standard. Therefore, this project studies how to align the sewage treatment in the old district with relevant national standards, and reduce the impact of unsuitable sewage treatment system on the health, economic activities, and lives of local people.</p>

	<p>Sub-goal 10: Safe drinking water for communities and students is ensured</p> <p>As a major livelihood project, the safety of drinking water is most directly related to the vital interests of local male and female students, and is also the most concerned issue of parents and family members. Therefore, the project focuses on and addresses drinking water safety in Zhouqu communities and schools, ensuring safe drinking water for the community and students through the protection of centralized water sources, the construction of drinking water safety demonstration sites, and the implementation of drinking water safety publicity campaigns.</p>
<p>Goal 4: Develop and utilize renewable energy and practice green development</p>	<p>Sub-goal 11: Carry out feasibility studies and research on the utilization of renewable energy such as micro-hydropower, biogas and micro-wind power</p> <p>Through tapping the potential of renewable energy and conducting relevant research, we will explore an energy regeneration model suitable for the green development of Zhouqu County, provide sufficient source of energy for promoting green and low-carbon development, protect the ecological environment, and embark on the road of sustainable economic and social development.</p>
<p>Goal 5: Innovate and develop characteristic tourism combining folk culture and ecological environment</p>	<p>Sub-goal 12: According to the characteristics of local folk culture and ecological environment, formulate a characteristic tourism development plan combining folk culture and ecological environment in Zhouqu County, and carry out related capacity building to reduce poverty and increase people’s income through characteristic tourism</p> <p>Promote the harmonious co-development of cultural and ecological protection and tourism development, protect Zhouqu’s folk cultural activities with strong local features such as “Dongshan Zhuandeng” and historical relics such as Qin tombs, Han tombs, Tang tombs and Ming tombs, and promote the development of tertiary industry in Zhouqu, so as to boost regional economy and increase employment opportunities.</p> <p>Sub-goal 13: Organize folk culture and eco-tourism innovations to promote local poverty reduction and economic development in conjunction with domestic and international collaboration network on resilience building</p> <p>Through domestic and international collaboration network on resilience building, plan and implement new paths of folk culture and eco-tourism for poverty reduction, encourage people of different genders from different regions and at all ages to participate in the process, organize and launch an innovation platform for folk culture and eco-tourism, and focus on launching tourism products that combine unique folk culture and ecological characteristics of Zhouqu County.</p>