



## **Mid-Term Evaluation of the UNDP-GEF Project:**

***“Enabling China to Prepare Its Fourth National Communication, and Biennial Update Reports on Climate Change” (4NC Project)***

## **Final Report**

**Global Environment Facility (GEF)  
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)  
Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE)**

**GEF Project ID: 10707**

**UNDP Project ID: PIMS 6399**

**GEF Focal Area: Climate Change**

**MTR Timeframe: May-July 2024**

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**July 2024**

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## List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

AWP	Annual Work Plan
BRH	Bangkok Regional Hub
BUR	Biennial Update Report
CA	Contribution Analysis
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CCM	Climate Change Mitigation
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CERDoc	CEO Endorsement Request Document
CSO	Civil Social Organization
CMA	China Meteorological Administration
CO	Country Office
DCC	Department of Climate Change
DOA	Delegation of Authority
EA	Enabling Activity
FECO	Foreign Environmental Cooperation Office
FYP	Five-Year-Plan
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GOC	Government of China
IP	Implementing Partner
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LPAC	Local Project Appraisal Committee
MARA	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs
MEE	Ministry of Ecology and Environment
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOST	Ministry of Science and Technology
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting & Verification
MTR	Mid-Term Review
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NC	National Communication
NDC	National Determined Contribution
NDRC	National Development and Reform Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIM	National Implementation Modality
OFP	Operational Focal Point
PB	Project Board
PE	Participatory Evaluation
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PM	Project Manager
PMO	Project Management Office
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PPR	Project Progress Report

ProDoc	Project Document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RTA	Regional Technical Adviser
SAR	Special Administrative Region
SEP	Stakeholders Engagement Plan
SESP	Social and Environmental Screening Procedure
SOE	State Owned Enterprises
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound
TOC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TT	Tracking Tool
TYWP	Two-Year Work Plan
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USD	United States Dollar

## 1. Executive Summary

### 1.1 Project Information Table

**Table 1.1 Project Information Table**

Project Details		Project Milestones	
Project Title:	Enabling China to Prepare Its Fourth National Communication, and Biennial Update Reports on Climate Change	PIF Approval Date:	November 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2020
GEF Agency Project ID:	PIMS 6399	CEO Endorsement Date:	April 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2022
GEF Project ID:	10707	ProDoc Signature Date:	July 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2022
UNDP Atlas Business Unit:	Award ID: 00111998 Project ID: 00110698	Inception Workshop Date:	November 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2022
Country:	People’s Republic of China	Mid-Term Review Completion Date:	July 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2024
Region:	Asia-Pacific	Planned Closing Date:	July 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2026
GEF Focal Area:	Climate Change		
Trust Fund:	GEF Trust Fund (GEFTF)		
GEF Agency:	UNDP		
Implementing Partner (GEF Executing Entity):	Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE)		
Project Financing	@ CEO Endorsement (USD)	@ Mid-Term Review (USD)	
[1] GEF Financing:	<b>4,566,210</b>		
[2] UNDP Contribution:	100,000		
[3] Government:	1,366,000		
[4] Total Co-Financing [2+3]:	<b>1,466,000</b>		
<b>Total Project Cost [1+4]:</b>	<b>6,032,210</b>		

### 1.2 Project Description

This reviewed “Enabling China to Prepare Its Fourth National Communication, and Biennial Update Reports on Climate Change” Project (4NC Project – PIMS 6399) has a main objective “To enable China to prepare its fourth National Communication (4NC) and the third Biennial Update Report (BUR3) and the fourth Biennial Update Report (BUR4), in order to fulfill the obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change”.

The strategy adopted for the project design is barrier removal, and the identified barriers are:

1. Policy & Regulatory Barriers: Lack of regular information collection mechanism and institutional framework

2. **Capacity Barriers:** Obstacles of gathering activity data and emission factors that are fit to the new guidelines, such as data missing for new categories, data inconsistency among different agencies, parameter missing for higher tier methods, as well as investigation insufficient under current system.
3. **Technical Barriers:** Data for checking China's progress in addressing climate change is lagged behind; The transparency of the information reported in previous reports should be further enhanced

For the removal of these barriers the project has been organized in six Components, producing the following Outcomes:

1. **Component 1:** National greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory.
  - **Outcome 1.1:** Clearer understanding of the magnitude, trend and causes of the GHG emissions and removals from the different sectors, facilitated through an improved capacity to prepare time-series consistent inventories applying 2006 IPCC guidelines, and an improved national system for GHG inventory preparation.
2. **Component 2:** Impact of vulnerability and adaptation to climate change.
  - **Outcome 2.1:** Better understanding of China's vulnerability to the threats of climate change and improved accuracy of prediction of impacts in the vulnerable sectors of the country.
3. **Component 3:** Policies and actions for climate change mitigation.
  - **Outcome 3.1:** Enhanced understanding of the appropriate policies to enable the proper planning and implementation of prioritized applicable and feasible climate change mitigation (CCM) actions for China.
  - **Outcome 3.2:** Improved accounting of the results and impacts of implemented CCM actions through an improved national Monitoring, Reporting & Verification (MRV) system.
4. **Component 4:** National circumstances, related financial, technical, and capacity needs, and other relevant information.
  - **Outcome 4.1:** Enhanced capacity to determine, analyze, refer to, and articulate key national circumstances information in the national communication (NC) reports and biennial update reports (BUR).
  - **Outcome 4.2:** Enhanced understanding and capacity to determine applicable, feasible and cost-effective CCM and climate change adaptation (CCA) technologies, techniques and measures, and the most suitable financial resources and financing options that can be applied to implement action that address CCM and CCA issues.
  - **Outcome 4.3:** Further enhanced public awareness of climate change issues.
5. **Component 5:** Communication of the GHG inventories, NCs and BURs of Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions (SARs).
  - **Outcome 5.1:** Better understanding of GHG emissions and sinks in the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions (SARs), and improved capacities for NC, and BUR.
6. **Component 6:** China's compliance to the reporting obligations to the UNFCCC.
  - **Outcome 6.1:** China's compliance to the reporting obligations to the UNFCCC.

The 4NC Project received a grant from the GEF Trust Fund for USD 4,566,210 and committed to mobilize USD 1,466,000 of in-kind co-financing resources (USD 1,366,000 from the Ministry of Ecology and Environment and USD 100,000 from UNDP), for a total of USD 6,032,210.

The Main stakeholders for the 4NC Project include:

- **Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE):** Implementing Partner
- **Department of Climate Change (DCC):** under MEE, responsible for NCs and BURs preparation
- **Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center (FECO):** under MEE, responsible for project execution
- **Ministry of Finance (MOF)**
- **Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST)**
- **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA)**
- **China Meteorological Administration (CMA)**
- **National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)**
- **Environmental Protection Department of Hong Kong SAR**
- **Macao Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau**

A complete list of stakeholders and their role in the project is provided in Section 3.6.

The Project Document (ProDoc) was signed on July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022 and the planned closing date for the implementation of the 4 NC project is July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

### 1.3 Project Progress Summary

The 4NC Project was initially scheduled to break ground in mid-2022; however, due to the resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic the ProDoc approval and signing process was postponed, which in turn also delayed the grant execution agreement between MOF and MEE. Therefore, the kick-off meeting was deferred and consequently the initiation of project implementation and PMO's bidding processes only commenced in Spring 2023, about nine months later than originally scheduled and, perhaps more significantly, with only nine months left before the hard deadline for submitting the 4NC and the BUR3 reports to the UNFCCC Secretariat.

Despite this slow start, as evidenced by the submitted reports to UNFCCC on December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and further supported by the results reported in the 2023 project progress report (PPR), the PMO, under the guidance of the PSC, the support of the UNDP CO in Beijing, and in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders and contracted partners, has been able to meet most of the Indicators' Mid-Term targets well ahead of the mid-2024 deadline<sup>1</sup>. Only Indicators 1 and 9 have been measured in June 2024, therefore not reported in the 2023 PPR, but they still met the Mid-Term deadline.

In order to cope with this delayed start of activities, the PMO has successfully applied adaptive management by redirecting all resources towards the completion of the 4NC and BUR3 reports, including human resources, which inevitably caused a slowdown in the implementation of other activities, including

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<sup>1</sup> Indicators 5 and 11 only have End-of-Project targets, while the Mid-Term targets are the same as the Baseline Level; therefore they have not been assessed.

capacity building programs. Many capacity building activities have been postponed to the second half of 4NC Project implementation, and currently the following training programs are ongoing: i) “Improving provincial-level climate change adaptation capabilities”; and ii) “Improving climate-resilient urban capabilities”.

Similarly, the preparation of some reports has been deferred; however, most scheduled reports have been either finalized or completed in a draft form (refer to Annex 13), although translations in English is not available yet, which is one of the recommendations provided by the MTR Team.

Lastly, as mentioned above, the adopted project strategy is barrier removal, and an assessment of the degree of barriers removal as consequence of the implemented activities concluded that the rate of removal is pretty high. Ranging from 70% for the Capacity Barrier and the Policy & Regulatory Barrier, up to 80% for the Technical Barrier (refer to section 4.2.2 for a detailed analysis). It is opinion of the MTR Team that complete barriers removal is very likely to occur by the end of project implementation.

#### 1.4 MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table

Table 1.2 summarizes the ratings of the project’s results assigned by the MTR Team and the descriptions of the associated achievements. A complete discussion of the ratings is provided in Section 4.

**Table 1.2. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for the “Enabling China to Prepare Its Fourth National Communication, and Biennial Update Reports on Climate Change” Project.**

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
<b>Project Strategy</b>	<b><u>N/A</u></b>	The adopted project strategy is barrier removal, which is well explained and with clearly defined Outcomes, Outputs and Activities. The only issue noticed is an imbalance in the redistribution of budget among the six Components, with 75.6% allocated for Component 1 to finance a mere 13.3% of project activities.  Indicators are deemed SMART and their targets reasonable, with only some minor issues detected, except Indicator 10 for which a rephrasing has been recommended.
<b>Progress Towards Results<sup>2</sup></b>	Objective Achievement Rating: <b><u>S</u></b>	Indicators at the Objective level include Core Indicator 11 (number of beneficiaries disaggregated by gender) and the percentage of completion of the main reports: 4NC, BUR3 and BUR4. All Mid-Term targets have been met and surpassed.
	Outcome 1.1 Achievement Rating: <b><u>HS</u></b>	The 2017 and 2018 GHG inventories and GHG emissions datasets for the preparation of the 4NC and BUR3 reports have been completed following 1996 IPCC guidelines, despite the very tight deadline, a highly satisfactory result.  Furthermore, governmental agencies have been capacitated to collect, update, analyze and report data for the preparation of GHG inventories.

<sup>2</sup> The 6 Ratings are: 1) Highly Satisfactory (HS); 2) Satisfactory (S); 3) Moderately Satisfactory (MS); 4) Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); 5) Unsatisfactory (U); and 6) Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). For a description of the ratings refer to Table A-4.1 in Annex 4.

		The training of governmental entities for the preparation of GHG emissions inventories and datasets following IPCC 2006 guidelines is scheduled for the second half of project implementation.
	Outcome 2.1 Achievement Rating: <u>S</u>	The target for the only indicator of Outcome 2.1 has been achieved. Most expected output reports have been completed either in a finalized form or in a draft form, although only available in Chinese; however considering the delay due to the resurgence of COVID-19, the rating assigned is satisfactory.
	Outcome 3.1 Achievement Rating: <u>S</u>	The policies formulated under this Outcome, which allowed the achievement of the Mid-Term target, are: 1. "Compilation of a Review of National CCM Policies and Measures". 2. "Optimization of China's MRV System".
	Outcome 3.2 Achievement Rating: <u>S</u>	The target for the only indicator of Outcome 3.2 has been achieved. The expected output reports have been completed either in a finalized form or in a draft form, although only available in Chinese.
	Outcome 4.1 Achievement Rating: <u>MS</u>	Although the Mid-Term target for the only indicator (Indicator 10) has been achieved, as explained in Section 4.1.2, this indicator statement fails to explain how the implementation of the project activities triggered the involvement of government entities in the project; therefore the rating assigned to Outcome 4.1 can only be moderately satisfactory.
	Outcome 4.2 Achievement Rating: <u>N/A</u>	The indicator for this Outcome only has a target for the End-of-Project, while other outputs are due during the second half of this project implementation, therefore a rating cannot be assigned.
	Outcome 4.3 Achievement Rating: <u>S</u>	The target for the only indicator of Outcome 2.1 has been achieved. Results meet expectations; however, awareness raising is an ongoing effort and it is advisable to broaden the audience of future awareness raising initiatives.
	Outcome 5.1 Achievement Rating: <u>MS</u>	The target for this Outcome has been successfully achieved; however multiple stakeholders have indicated in their questionnaire's responses that although all reports from the SARs' have been submitted in a timely manner, the capacity of the SARs' agencies on following compliance rules and preparing the reports following IPCC guidance still needs to be strengthened. Additional workshops and capacity building initiatives are scheduled for the second half of the 4NC Project implementation.
	Outcome 6.1 Achievement Rating: <u>HS</u>	Timely submission of quality reports to the UNFCCC Secretariat is a critical achievement for this 4NC Project, and this target was achieved at the end of 2023 despite starting the implementation of the project activities over half a year later than initially scheduled. Hence, the achievements of this Outcome are considered highly satisfactory.
<b>Project Implementation &amp; Adaptive Management<sup>3</sup></b>	Rating: <u>S</u>	Adaptive management has been a substantial strength for the PSC, PMO, UNDP and project partners. The delayed start due to the resurgence of COVID-19 has been managed adequately by redirecting all resources towards the submission of the 4NC and BUR3 reports to UNFCCC by the end of 2023.  Adaptive management has been successfully applied also for handling initial hiccups in communication and coordination mechanisms among

<sup>3</sup> The 6 Ratings are: 1) Highly Satisfactory (HS); 2) Satisfactory (S); 3) Moderately Satisfactory (MS); 4) Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); 5) Unsatisfactory (U); and 6) Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). For a description of the ratings refer to Table A-4.2 in Annex 4.

		<p>stakeholders, which have later been considered by multiple surveyed stakeholders as key for successfully achieving all Indicators Mid-Term targets on time.</p> <p>The only shortcoming, which is however deemed not critical by the MTR Team, is that redirecting all resources on completing 4NC and BUR3 has caused delays in some reports drafting and capacity building. However, considering that this is an enabling activity project, capacity building is crucial and successful implementation is expected for the second half of project implementation.</p> <p>Overall Project Implementation &amp; Adaptive Management is considered satisfactory.</p>
<b>Sustainability<sup>4</sup></b>	Rating: <b>L</b>	<p>Sustainability has been assessed based on the four GEF categories of sustainability: i) financial; ii) socio-economic; iii) institutional framework and governance; and iv) environmental.</p> <p>The commitment of the GOC towards CCM and CCA and the significant body of work produced, the sense of ownership of all key stakeholders towards the project and its outcomes, the effective institutional framework and governance mechanisms established, and the well managed environmental risks, all lead to conclude that the sustainability of the project benefits and outcomes is well supported and the overall rating assigned by the MTR Team is Likely (L).</p>

### 1.5 Summary of Conclusions

The project design adopts a barrier removal strategy, which is quite common for UNDP-supported, GEF-funded project. The strategy is clearly displayed and uses a four-prong approach. Lessons learned drawn from previous in-country experiences preparing NCs and BURs have been properly leveraged, while consultation of international experiences is not sufficiently referenced. The project design is well aligned with national as well as SARs’ priorities, and it adequately takes into consideration cross-cutting issues like gender equality and women empowerment. According to the UNDP Gender Results Effectiveness Scale<sup>5</sup> this project is “*Gender Responsive*”, where needs of women are addressed and there is an equitable distribution of benefits, although root causes of inequalities were not specifically addressed. Social and environmental impacts of the 4NC Project, another important cross-cutting issue, has also been adequately addressed; in fact, a suitable Social and Environmental Screening Procedure has been carried out and a risk log prepared, which are regularly monitored. Barriers removal has been assessed to range from 70% for the Capacity Barrier and the Policy & Regulatory Barrier, up to 80% for the Technical Barrier (see Section 4.2.2). The only issue detected for project design concerns budget allocation for the six Components, with 75.6% of the budget assigned for the implementation of the activities designed under Component 1, which only represents 13.3% of total activities, and 17.5% for the other five Components (6.9% of the budget is used for the M&E plan and for project management).

<sup>4</sup> The 4 Ratings are: 1) Likely (L); 2) Moderately Likely (ML); 3) Moderately Unlikely; and 4) Unlikely (U). For a description of the ratings refer to Table A-4.3 in Annex 4

<sup>5</sup> <https://erc.undp.org/methods-center/methods/assessing-crossing-cutting-themes/accessing-gender-equality>

The project LogFrame is clearly outlined, and Indicators are largely deemed SMART with reasonable targets. The only noteworthy issue refers to the way Indicator 10 has been stated, which is not considered “Specific” for measuring the achievement of Outcome 4.1.

The resurgence of COVID-19 led to a nine-month delay in starting project activities; however, applying excellent adaptive management skills, the PSC, PMO and UNDP have been able to meet all indicators Mid-Term targets on time by redirecting all resources towards the completion of the 4NC and BUR3 reports. However, redirecting all resources on completing the 4NC and BUR3 caused some other activities, including capacity building, to be deferred. Considering that 4NC Project is an EA project, completing all capacity building programs on time and with excellent results is of utmost importance, therefore becoming a high priority for the second half of project implementation.

Excellent adaptive management has been showcased also when initial hiccups in stakeholders’ coordination and communication mechanisms have affected project implementation. The problem has been solved by PMO and UNDP by organizing multi-stakeholders coordination meetings and by putting in place effective communication and feedback mechanisms, as highlighted by many surveyed stakeholders in their questionnaire’s responses, who suggested to extending these efforts also to the second half of project implementation.

Stakeholders have been effectively involved in both project design and implementation; however, there is no evidence of involvement of civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which can be modified for the implementation of the remaining activities. Similarly, the successful awareness raising initiatives can be further expanded by reaching out to a broader audience.

Reporting can be improved by including more information to better explain what changes have been made and why, as it has been the case for the work plans, which were not sufficiently detailed. Furthermore all reports prepared are not promptly translated in English which affects their impact and usefulness. While internal communication is considered sufficient, external communication is quite scattered and disorganized, leaving it up to the single agencies to use their existing communication channels (i.e., press releases, social media and websites) to disseminate news and results, and as a matter of fact calling for a dedicate website for the 4NC Project.

Lastly, assessment of the four GEF’s categories of sustainability has demonstrated commitment of the GOC towards CCM and CCA and the significant body of work produced, the sense of ownership of all key stakeholders towards the project and its outcomes, the effective institutional framework and governance mechanisms established, and the well managed environmental risks, all leading to consider likely the sustainability of the project benefits and outcomes.

## 1.6 Recommendations Summary Table

Based on the findings of the MTR, this evaluation has the following recommendations

**Table 1.3. Summary of Recommendations and Responsible Parties**

No.	Recommendations	Responsible Parties
	<b>Outcome 1.1:</b> Clearer understanding of the magnitude, trend and causes of the GHG emissions and removals from the different sectors, facilitated through an	

	improved capacity to prepare time-series consistent inventories applying 2006 IPCC guidelines, and an improved national system for GHG inventory preparation.	
1	It is recommended to break down the Activities under Component 1 in simpler sub-Activities and, at least for Component 1, to detail the Gantt chart in Annex 3 of the ProDoc per sub-Activity and not per Output.	PMO, PSC, and UNDP
2	It would be advisable to reassess the budget for all remaining activities to make sure that activities under Component 1 are not over-budgeted and that activities under the other five Components are not under-budgeted.	PMO, PSC, and UNDP
	<b>Project Strategy (Results Framework/LogFrame)</b>	
3	It is recommended to rephrase Indicator 10 in order to specifically describe a condition attained through the implementation of the activities and that therefore measures the achievement of Outcome 4.1.	PMO, PSC, and UNDP
	<b>Project Implementation &amp; Adaptive Management (Work Planning)</b>	
4	It is recommended to draft a detailed schedule and prioritize the design, development and administration of all postponed and pending training activities.	PMO
	<b>Project Implementation &amp; Adaptive Management (Project Level M&amp;E Systems)</b>	
5	It is recommended to increase the M&E plan budget by approximately USD 20,000-30,000 by revising the project budget.	PMO, PSC, and UNDP
	<b>Project Implementation &amp; Adaptive Management (Stakeholders Engagement)</b>	
6	The MTR Team recommends to drawing lessons from the experience acquired in improving communication and cooperation among stakeholders, to formalizing mechanisms and protocols and adopting them for the remaining activities of the 4NC Project.	PMO, and UNDP
7	The MTR Team recommends involving more stakeholders, including CSOs and NGOs, in the remaining project activities. In addition, it is recommended to expand the awareness raising initiatives to women groups, youth organizations and marginalized and indigenous people.	PMO
	<b>Project Implementation &amp; Adaptive Management (Reporting)</b>	
8	It is recommended to promptly translate in English the existing reports as well as those that will be prepared during the second half of project implementation.	PMO, and UNDP
	<b>Project Implementation &amp; Adaptive Management (Communication)</b>	
9	The MTR Team recommends to communicating externally all news and results as a single voice, creating a project webpage and a recognizable logo.	PMO

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Purpose of the MTR and Objectives

This Mid-Term Review (MTR) has been prepared for the “Enabling China to Prepare Its Fourth National Communication, and Biennial Update Reports on Climate Change” Project (4NC Project – PIMS 6399). In accordance with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, a Mid-Term Review is a mandatory requirement for all United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported and GEF-financed full-sized projects.

The purpose of this MTR is the assessment of the progress made by the 4NC Project towards meeting its objectives as specified in the Project Document (ProDoc). The 4NC Project aims at enhancing China’s capability to prepare and deliver time-series consistent national greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories every two years, applying 2006 IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) guidelines with: a) higher transparency; b) increased completeness and accuracy; and c) stronger comparability.

The MTR assessed the project progress following the four categories as requested in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the MTR Team, and prescribed in the *“Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects”*, namely: i) Project Strategy, which includes Project Design; ii) Progress Towards Results; iii) Project Implementation and Adaptive Management; and iv) Sustainability. The MTR identified signs of success and failure of project implementation, providing conclusions and recommendations to facilitate the achievement of the intended 4NC Project results.

### 2.2 Scope & Methodology of the MTR

The scope of this MTR is to assess the progress made during the first two years of project implementation weighted against the Mid-Term targets as set in the 4NC Project LogFrame (Logical Framework). The approach followed by the MTR Team to undertake this assignment, including data collection, is made of the following steps: i) desk review; ii) interviews with the Commissioning Unit (the UNDP Country Office in Beijing) and the Project Management Office (PMO); iii) preparation and administration of a questionnaire to survey all relevant stakeholders; and iv) follow up questions and consultations, as needed, for surveyed stakeholders. The MTR approach followed, both the methodology applied as well as the data collection tools and the analysis of the results, is gender responsive and also takes into account other cross-cutting issues, such as social and environmental impacts, and broad societal participation, particularly in awareness raising initiatives.

The methodology applied by the MTR Team for this evaluation is a combination of participatory evaluation (PE) and contribution analysis (CA). The PE approach assures the involvement and consultation of all relevant stakeholders throughout the entire MTR process; while the CA relies on examining the Theory of Change (TOC) and testing it against the data collected and results observed. In fact, the two main assessment tools that have allowed both quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the results are: i) the MTR Evaluative Matrix (Annex 2), which has been prepared by the MTR Team and has served as basis for the interviews and the questionnaire to survey all relevant stakeholders; and ii) the TOC (Figure 3.1), which

was prepared during the PPG stage and has allowed to assess the project logic and how the identified barriers have been converted into project objectives.

The stakeholders consulted, besides the Implementing Partner (IP) and the UNDP Country Office (CO) in Beijing, include government officials and subcontractors, as well as subcontractors from the private sector and academic institutions; a complete list is attached here within as Annex 6.

The project documents received from the Commissioning Unit and consulted during the desk review include: 1) the Project Identification Form (PIF); 2) the Project Document (ProDoc) and the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP); 3) the CEO Endorsement Request Document (CERDoc); 4) the Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings minutes; 5) the Inception Report; 6) the Two-Year Work Plans (TYWPs); 7) Project Progress Report (PPR); 8) Quality Assurance Reports (both Design & Appraisal Stage and Implementation Stage); 9) the GEF Tracking Tool; and other reports. In addition, the MTR Team has consulted the first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) submitted and its update, as well as the Biennial Update Reports (BURs) and the National Communication (including BUR3 and 4NC, which are outputs of this 4NC Project and are already available on the UNFCCC website). A complete list of the documents reviewed is attached here within as Annex 7.

The second step of this process has been a telecon involving the MTR Team, the UNDP CO in Beijing and the PMO. The purpose of this introductory consultation was, besides better familiarize the MTR Team with the project, also to acquire additional information that would integrate the information obtained from the reviewed documents in order to prepare a more detailed and focused questionnaire.

The main tool for data collection adopted has been an all-encompassing questionnaire made up of over 100 questions and here included as Annex 3. The questionnaire has been formulated in a gender-responsive way to ensure that gender equality and women empowerment have been taken into account during project design as well as during this project implementation stage. Despite the large number of questions asked and the relatively short time allotted for data collection the rate of response has been approximately of 90%.

Since the 4NC Project is an Enabling Activity (EA) project, it doesn't have any downstream demonstration activities, and therefore site visits have not been deemed necessary by the Commissioning Unit who has not requested any field mission for this assignment.

The adopted methodology followed by the MTR Team for this evaluation and data collection has shown several strengths and some limitations, which are here summarized.

Strengths: i) utilizing a combination of PE and CA methodologies, the assessment could make the most of stakeholders participation, knowledge and involvement, in addition to the use of the TOC that summarizes all the findings from the problem analysis and the objective analysis undertaken during the PPG phase; ii) analyzing the questionnaires filled out by the surveyed stakeholders the MTR Team has also been able to appreciate the thoughtfulness of the responses given, since the stakeholders have had the time to read and respond to each question at their leisure, a result that was expected and desired by the MTR Team; iii) administering a questionnaire also allowed to optimize time, since this step could be carried out with all stakeholders simultaneously, hence avoiding complex virtual meeting arrangements and conflicting schedules, especially considering the high responsibility roles held by the interviewed stakeholders.

Limitations: i) except for the introductory telecon with the PMO and the Commissioning Unit, all other stakeholders received practically the same questionnaire, with very limited personalization of questions asked; this led to a large number of questions in order to cover all important topics, which might have caused some stakeholders to be more succinct in their reply to some questions; and ii) by not conducting “live” consultations, the MTR Team waived the opportunity to react to stimulating answers by immediately asking follow up questions to better investigate the topic.

The measure implemented by the MTR Team to mitigate the potential impact of these limitations was the request for follow up questions and targeted consultations, particularly with the Commissioning Unit and the PMO, to clarify any pending issue. However, it is noteworthy that the analysis of the questionnaires evidenced a satisfying mix of consistency and variety of answers among stakeholders as well as adequate in-depth elaboration provided for all crucial issues.

### **2.3 Structure of the MTR Report**

The structure of this MTR report is very standard and it follows the exact table of content as detailed in the ToR (which is attached here as Annex 1), which is the same recommended in the GEF’s *“Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects”*. Next is a list of the main sections:

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction
3. Project Description and Background Context
4. Findings
5. Conclusions & Recommendations
6. Annexes

The final MTR report has been cleared by the UNDP Country Office and the UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Adviser (RTA) for China (currently based in NY UNDP offices), and has been approved by the PSC.

### **3. Project Description and Background Context**

#### **3.1 Development Context**

Global warming has caused many adverse effects on the environment of human life, production and social activities. Global warming aggravates grassland soil erosion and desertification, and causes ocean thermal expansion and glacier melting, resulting in sea level rise. China's coastal provinces risk losing their territory, and their people may become homeless and displaced. Global warming affects agriculture, one of the pillar industries for the low-income population of China, by increasing the instability of agricultural production that may threaten their financial security. Some crop yields will be reduced, causing larger application of chemical fertilizers and pesticide that may increase the potential of both economic cost and hazardous chemical pollution. Global warming may bring frequent climate disasters, such as excessive rainfall, extensive drought and persistent high temperature. Indigenous people who are extremely dependent on local natural climate may be unable to adapt to abrupt climate change or be directly hit by severe meteorological disasters and suffer serious losses of the basic needs, like homes and food. Global warming also has adverse effects on human health. Frequent heat waves may cause mortality and certain diseases, especially the incidence rate of heart and respiratory diseases. The range of sensitive infectious diseases such as malaria and dengue fever may increase. Extreme weather events, such as drought, flood and storm, increase mortality, disability and infectious disease, and increase social psychological pressure. The least developed provinces and regions in China are often the most affected by climate change. In these areas both government and people need to increase their capacities to cope with potential climate disasters. It is reasonably foreseeable to improve the ability of local people to adaptation, so to minimize adverse effects of climate change.

To achieve the objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and fulfill the obligation of the Parties, China needs to collect and report reliable, transparent and comprehensive information on greenhouse gas emissions, climate actions and support. According to the requirements of Articles 4.1 and 12 of the UNFCCC and Decisions 17/CP.8, 1/CP.16 and 2/CP.17, China followed the relevant reporting guidelines and IPCC guidelines to compile national GHG inventories to fulfill transparency-related obligations.

In order to prepare the 4NC report, BUR3, and BUR4 in higher quality, China needed to address stricter reporting requirements towards developing countries, fill the gaps in management capacity and inter-ministerial collaborations and deal with technical obstacles for transitioning to 2006 IPCC Guidelines.

China is faced with great barriers in the transparency of GHG data and information reporting. Compared with transparency requirements under the UNFCCC, reporting obligations under the Paris Agreement have been strengthened for China, with comprehensiveness, completeness, and accuracy of reporting largely improved. Ministerial capacities to deal with climate change issues are still lagged behind, especially as compared to the strong ambitions of the central government of China. In the first half of 2018, the functions related to combating climate change have been transferred from the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) to the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) in China's governmental institutional reform. The Government of China (GOC) should make the most of the expertise that MEE gained from its long-standing pollutant control experience.

China's comprehensive and complicated reporting system urgently needs to build capacity at central government level, as well as at provincial level and for supporting agencies. This will allow to strengthen its institutional and technical capacities of reporting at the national level.

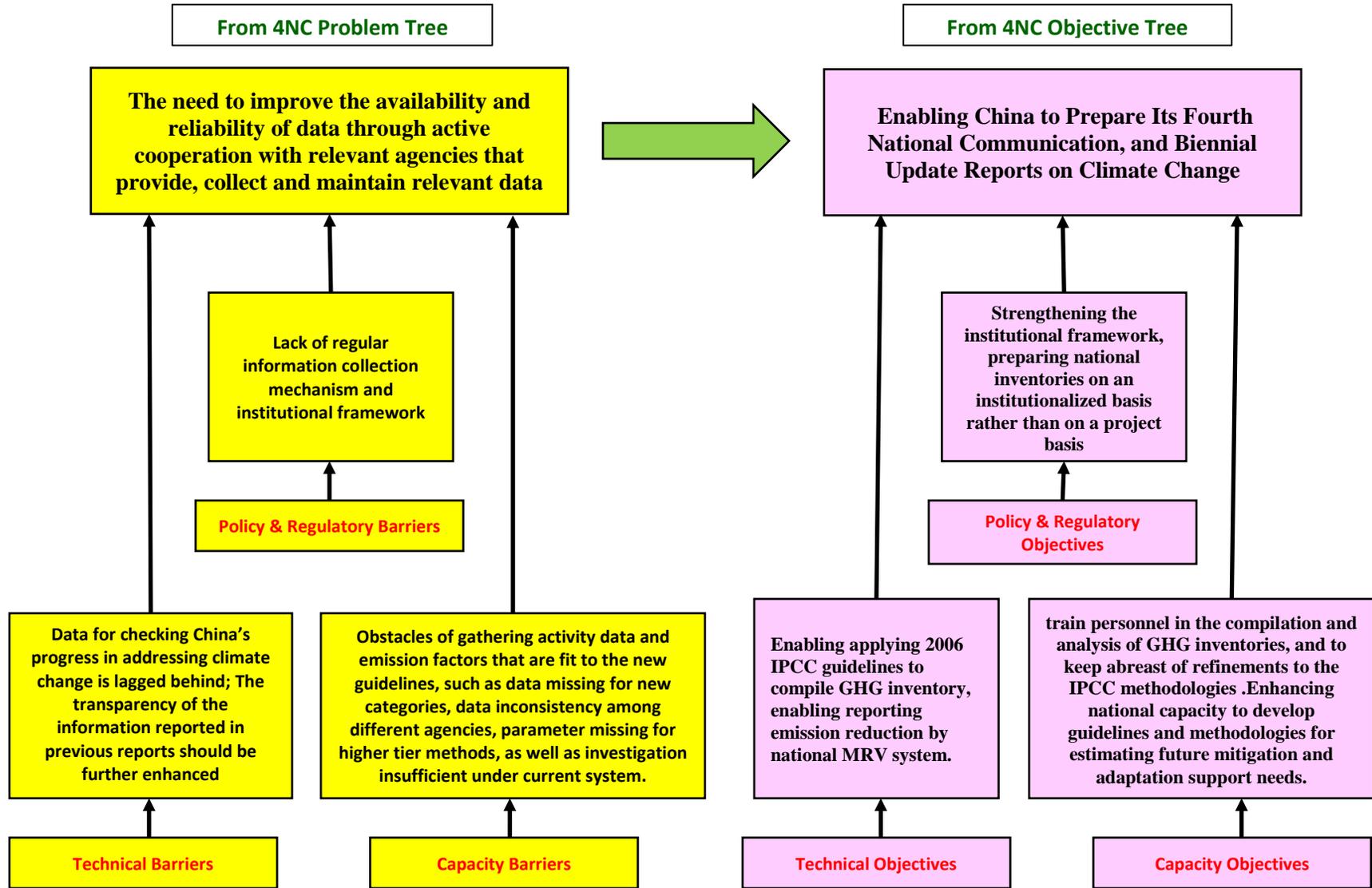
### **3.2 Problems that the Project Sought to Address**

As actions to combat climate change continue to deepen, policy makers need more comprehensive and exhaustive information on climate change. In order to prepare the Fourth National Communication (4NC) report, as well as the Third and Fourth Biennial Update Reports (BUR3 and BUR4) in higher quality, China needs to address stricter reporting requirements to the developing countries, fill the gaps in the management capacity and inter-ministerial collaborations and deal with the technical obstacles for transitioning to the 2006 Guidelines provided by IPCC. In order to achieve this result, the project development team, during the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) stage, has identified the main barriers hindering the achievement of the stated objective, which are:

4. Policy & Regulatory Barriers: Lack of regular information collection mechanism and institutional framework
5. Capacity Barriers: Obstacles of gathering activity data and emission factors that are fit to the new guidelines, such as data missing for new categories, data inconsistency among different agencies, parameter missing for higher tier methods, as well as investigation insufficient under current system.
6. Technical Barriers: Data for checking China's progress in addressing climate change is lagged behind; The transparency of the information reported in previous reports should be further enhanced

A representation of the Theory of Change (TOC) describing the conversion of the barriers into objectives is provided in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Theory of Change



### 3.3 Project Description and Strategy

The objective of this 4NC Project is *“To enable China to prepare its fourth National Communication (4NC) and the third Biennial Update Report (BUR3) and the fourth Biennial Update Report (BUR4), in order to fulfill the obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change”*.

The strategy adopted for this project is barrier removal. The three main barriers identified in the TOC will be converted into as many objectives by relying on the following four prong approach:

1. Place more attention on the quality of activity data. In the development of GHG inventories, efforts must be made to verify the activity data of CO<sub>2</sub>, the key emission source, and the data on coal consumption in particular.
2. Compared to previous GHG inventories, the inventory to be prepared for the 4NC report, and BUR3 and BUR4 must be more comprehensive.
3. The GHG inventories prepared under this 4NC Project have to reflect to a largest extent the latest information about China’s GHG emissions.
4. The methodology employed for inventory preparation must be improved. In this regard, the GHG inventories submitted starting in 2024 must make use of the IPCC 2006 guidelines.

The barrier removal approach is a preferred strategy for GEF because it does not just circumvent the obstacles hindering the achievement of the main project Objective but it completely removes them, providing therefore a long lasting and sustainable solution.

The project design is organized in six Components, producing the following Outcomes:

1. **Outcome 1.1:** Clearer understanding of the magnitude, trend and causes of the GHG emissions and removals from the different sectors, facilitated through an improved capacity to prepare time-series consistent inventories applying 2006 IPCC guidelines, and an improved national system for GHG inventory preparation.
2. **Outcome 2.1:** Better understanding of China’s vulnerability to the threats of climate change and improved accuracy of prediction of impacts in the vulnerable sectors of the country.
3. **Outcome 3.1:** Enhanced understanding of the appropriate policies to enable the proper planning and implementation of prioritized applicable and feasible climate change mitigation (CCM) actions for China.
4. **Outcome 3.2:** Improved accounting of the results and impacts of implemented CCM actions through an improved national Monitoring, Reporting & Verification (MRV) system.
5. **Outcome 4.1:** Enhanced capacity to determine, analyze, refer to, and articulate key national circumstances information in the national communication (NC) reports and biennial update reports (BUR).
6. **Outcome 4.2:** Enhanced understanding and capacity to determine applicable, feasible and cost-effective CCM and climate change adaptation (CCA) technologies, techniques and measures, and the most suitable financial resources and financing options that can be applied to implement action that address CCM and CCA issues.

7. **Outcome 4.3**: Further enhanced public awareness of climate change issues.
8. **Outcome 5.1**: Better understanding of GHG emissions and sinks in the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions (SARs), and improved capacities for NC, and BUR.
9. **Outcome 6.1**: China's compliance to the reporting obligations to the UNFCCC.

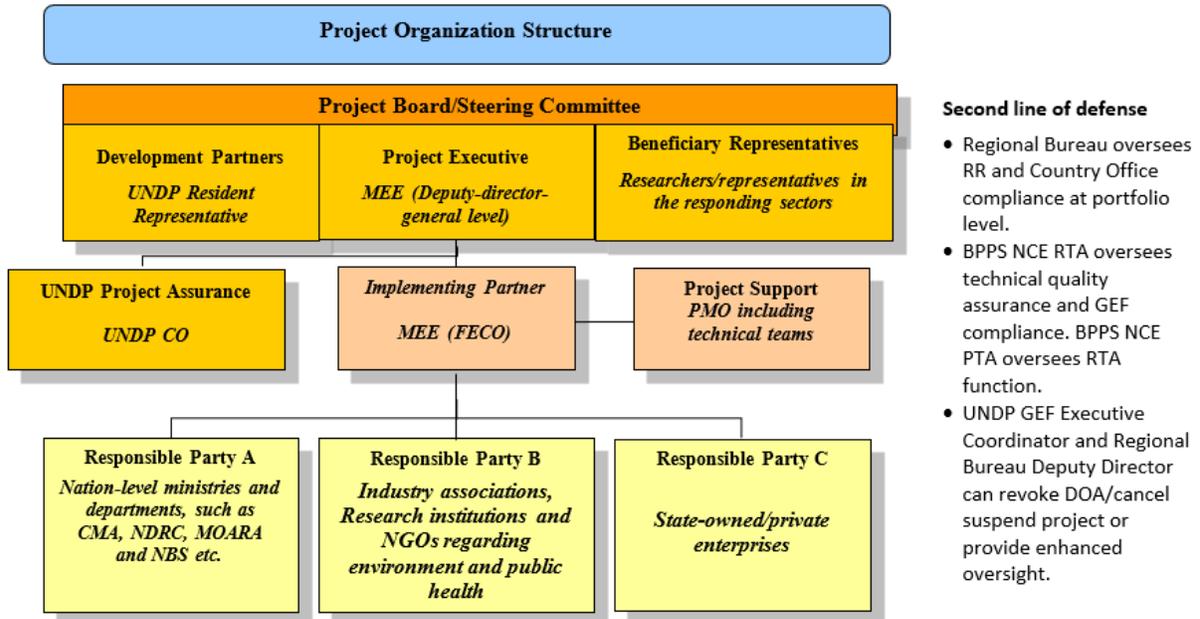
The combined effect of realizing these outcomes is to obtain the project expected results, which are: i) enhancing China's capability to prepare and deliver time-series consistent national GHG inventories every two years, applying 2006 IPCC guidelines with higher transparency, increased completeness and accuracy and stronger comparability; ii) establishing a normalization mechanism for GHG inventories and reporting; iii) enabling China to strengthen and update the impacts and vulnerability assessments of climate change and combine with emissions scenario analysis of policies and actions for climate change mitigation; iv) enabling China to have a reliable Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) and NDCs tracking systems to fulfill the obligations of NCs and BURs; and v) enhancing the stakeholders' understanding of the appropriate policies to enable the proper planning and implementation of prioritized applicable and feasible climate change mitigation actions for China low GHG development.

### **3.4 Project Implementation Arrangements**

The execution modality for this 4NC Project is National Implementation Modality (NIM), which follows the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement stipulated between UNDP and the Government of China (GOC). Under this implementation modality, the project is implemented by the GOC. The Implementing Partner (or GEF Executing Entity) identified for this project is the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE). For the day-to-day management of the project activities, a full-time Project Management Office (PMO) has been established in the Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center (FECO), a national public institution operating directly under the MEE. The PMO is headed by a Project Manager (PM) who covers administrative, technical, management and coordination roles in collaboration with other project partners, such as provincial officers, provincial government institutions, and UNDP. Among other duties, the PMO also supports and facilitate the interventions to enhance gender equality and women empowerment.

The 4NC Project is supported by a Project Steering Committee (PSC), or Project Board, which is responsible for taking corrective action as needed to ensure the project achieves the desired results. In order to ensure UNDP's ultimate accountability, Project Board decisions are made in accordance with standards that shall ensure management for development results, best value for money, fairness, integrity, transparency and effective international competition. The Project Governance Structure is described in the ProDoc and a graphic representation of the parties involved and their roles in the project is drawn in Figure 3.2 below.

**Figure 3.2 Project Governance Structure**



**3.5 Project Timing and Milestones**

The project has a planned duration of four years (48 months), and the planned closing date is July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Table 3.1, below, lists the main project milestones.

**Table 3.1 Project Milestones**

Milestone	Date
PIF Approval	November 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2020
CEO Endorsement	April 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2022
LPAC Meeting	May 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2022
ProDoc Signature	July 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2022
Inception Workshop	November 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2022
PSC Meetings	November 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2022 March 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2024
Mid-Term Review Completion	July 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2024
Terminal Evaluation (Planned)	April 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2026
Closing Date (Planned)	July 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2026

x

### 3.6 Main Stakeholders

A list of the main project stakeholders, their mandate and relevance for the 4NC project, and finally their role in the 4NC Project implementation has been taken from Annex 7: Stakeholder Engagement Plan of the ProDoc and reproduced here as Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2 Project Information Table**

Key Stakeholders	Mandate Relevant to the Project	Roles in the Project
<b>National level administrative authorities</b>		
<b>Ministry of Finance (MOF)</b>	MOF manages loans (grants) from multi- and bi-lateral development organizations and foreign governments.	GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP). Coordination and implementation of GEF projects in China. The MOF was briefed on project development and will endorse the final Project Document.
<b>National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC)</b>	NDRC is responsible for promotion of the strategy of sustainable development through its lead role in the five-year planning process. NDRC makes proposal on strategy, plan, and relevant policies on using foreign funds.	NDRC will be a key partner in project mainstreaming efforts related to its lead role in the adjustment of industrial structure
<b>Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE), and its internal Department of Climate Change (DCC)</b>	Supervise and administer to ensure the attainment of national emission reduction targets; Preparation of 4NC RCCEA; conduct and coordination of consultation meetings and workshops; data gathering work Guide and coordinate educational campaigns over ecological environmental protection; Formulate and implement educational campaign outlines for ecological environmental protection; Promote societal and public participation in environmental protection efforts;	Overall responsibility for 4NC, BUR3, BUR4 development, compilation, and reporting  Ensure that China’s 4NC, BUR3, BUR4 conform to UN international standards and requirements  Administer functions of Single National Entity to UNFCCC  DCC is the leading decision-making department inside MEE in the climate agenda and will provide necessary guidance to the project implementation.
<b>Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center, Ministry of Ecology and Environment (FECO/MEE)</b>	FECO carries out multilateral and bilateral international cooperation and exchange on environment under the Ministry of Ecology and Environment. FECO supports for Implementation of International Environmental Conventions and build a long-term mechanism, participate in global environmental	FECO/MEE will execute the project on behalf of MEE and under the technical guidance of the Department of Climate Change of MEE.

Key Stakeholders	Mandate Relevant to the Project	Roles in the Project
	governance, join in the formulation of international environmental governance rules, and promote the improvement of global environmental governance system.	
<b>Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST)</b>	<p>MOST formulates and facilitates the implementation of strategies and policies for innovation-driven development for carbon neutrality and plans and policies for S&amp;T development.</p> <p>MOST takes the lead in formulating plans for carbon neutrality, policies and measures for the R&amp;D and industrial application of the outcomes of the project.</p>	Discussions on the work mechanism for GHG inventory and NC/BUR reporting inputs
<b>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA)</b>	MARA leads in preparing and implementing strategies, mid- and long-term plans and major policies related to agriculture, rural areas and farmers: draft laws and regulations on agricultural and rural affairs, formulate related norms and rules, and direct related law enforcement; and participate in formulating policies on finance and taxation, pricing, purchase and storage, financial insurance, and import and export	<p>Provide basic data and information in agriculture</p> <p>Agriculture Inventory compilation and development</p>
<b>China Meteorological Administration (CMA)</b>	CMA formulating policies, legal and regulatory frameworks, development strategies and long-term plans governing meteorological services; formulating and issuing rules and regulations, technical standards and practices governing meteorological services, and supervising their execution; undertaking relevant administrative reviews.	Assess vulnerability of climate change
<b>National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)</b>	<p>NBS is in charge of statistics and economic accounting in China.</p> <p>NBS sets up and improve the national economic accounting system and statistical country; to work out national statistical standards; to review and approve statistical standards by other government departments; to organize the administration of national statistical survey projects, to examine, approve and manage plans and schemes for statistical surveys by other departments;</p>	Provide energy balance and statistical data
<b>National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation, Ministry of Ecology and</b>	Organize and carry out research on climate change policies, regulations, strategies, planning, etc.; undertake technical support work in domestic compliance, statistical accounting and assessment, carbon emission trading management, international	Feed international emissions inventory expectations back to the GHG inventory team to ensure China complies and

Key Stakeholders	Mandate Relevant to the Project	Roles in the Project
<b>Environment, P. R. China</b>	negotiations, foreign cooperation and exchanges, etc.; develop climate change think tanks Dialogue, publicity, capacity building and consulting services; undertaking clean development mechanism project management	develops the inventory accordingly  Provide information on future international developments and changes to expectations
<b>Environmental Protection Department of Hong Kong SAR</b>	Formulate policies and plans on environmental protection, energy, nature conservation and the promotion of sustainable development.  raise community awareness of and promote public support for issues related to environmental protection, energy, nature conservation and sustainable development.  Promote collaborative efforts through regional and international co-operation.	Coordination with the MEE Team on the design of the Hong Kong SAR NC and BUR preparations.
<b>Macao Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau</b>	Weather monitoring, analysis and forecast, SMG also issues different kinds of meteorological warnings. In addition. Responsible for the activities relating to aviation meteorology, climate as well as the activities against the climate change.	Coordination with the MEE Team on the design of the Macao SAR NC and BUR preparations.
<b>United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)</b>	UNDP works in about 170 countries and territories, helping to achieve the eradication of poverty, and the reduction of inequalities and exclusion. UNDP helps countries to develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities and build resilience in order to sustain development results.	UNDP is GEF Implementing Agency for the project and is therefore responsible for oversight and monitoring project implementation and ensuring adherence to UNDP and GEF policies and procedures.
<b>Other Stakeholders</b>		
<b>Academic institutes, colleges, universities, and/or relevant individuals</b>	Universities and research organizations focus on teaching, research and conservation knowledge development and policy recommendations	Provided technical expertise on data/analysis quality of the outcomes
<b>Industrial associations related to data reporting in sectors</b>	Within their own areas:  Coordinate and support compliance actions within the sector; Facilitate information exchanges among members; Facilitate formulation of sector development strategies; Industrial strategy development of 4NC.	Coordinate and support compliance reporting within the sector;  Facilitate information exchanges among members;  Help establish technical specifications for GHG data monitoring at the enterprise level

Key Stakeholders	Mandate Relevant to the Project	Roles in the Project
<b>State-owned/private enterprises (SOE)</b>	Major emitter of the industrial GHG emissions	Participate in project activities and report the GHG emissions; Cooperate with the surveys and other activities on the governmental level
<b>CSOs</b>	Have their focuses and special interests on climate change and 4NC, BUR3, BUR4.	Potential to provide technical expertise and bring in international experience, networking and platform for communication. Possible co-implementers for some activities such as training, communication and public awareness under projects.

## 4. Findings

*MTR Team findings are shown in Italic.*

### 4.1 Project Strategy

#### 4.1.1 Project Design

The main challenges faced in this 4NC Project for the achievement of its main Objective (please refer to Section 3.3) are: i) the enhancement of transparency of the reporting; ii) the improvement of completeness and accuracy of the information reported; and iii) a stronger comparability with the reporting from other countries. In order to address these challenges and successfully realize the project objective, the methodology followed for the project design is barrier removal. Although an explicit barrier analysis is not included in the ProDoc, the TOC obtained from the Problem Tree clearly shows that hindering barriers have been identified and a path to turn barriers into objectives by implementing a barrier removal strategy, which is based on a four-prong approach, has been devised (this barrier removal strategy is discussed in Section 3.3).

*The MTR Team considers the project to have a valid project strategy clearly explained and that can be implemented in a relatively easy way. The clarity and straightforwardness of implementation has also been confirmed by all surveyed stakeholders, although the clarity of the strategy outlined could have benefitted of a more detailed TOC (see Figure 3.1 in Section 3.2), which is quite simple in its visual representation and it fails to represent how barriers are removed and turned into objectives. Lastly, the project is organized in six Components, a more direct connection between the three barriers and the six Components designed to remove them would have simplified the understanding of the logic of the project design.*

*The MTR Team also noticed an imbalance in the redistribution of budget and activities among the various Components. Specifically, USD 3,450,000 has been allocated as Component 1 budget, or 75.6% of the total USD 4,566,210 GEF grant; a combined 17.5% has been allocated for the other five Components, and the remaining 6.9% is used for the Monitoring & Evaluation Plan and Project Management. Despite that, Component 1 only has a total of eight (8) activities compared with the combined 52 activities for the other five Components. While there are no restrictions on the number of activities and their allocated budget, considering that 4NC is a purely technical assistance project that doesn't require the purchase of expensive equipment, this redistribution of budget and number of activities leads to concluding that the activities under Component 1 are significantly more complex, which makes them longer lasting, more complicated to monitor and therefore more prone to incur into issues with the risk that these are not promptly detected. On the other hand, the activities from the other 5 components seem to be overly granular and at risk of being under-budgeted, in fact USD 300,000 has already been reallocated from Component 1 to Components 2 and 4 (see Section 4.3.3).*

Prior to this project, the GOC had already submitted three national communications and two biennial update reports, and the experience obtained during the preparation of those reports has been used for the design of this 4NC Project. Surveyed stakeholders also indicated the consultation of documents prepared for similar project in other countries.

*While the experience acquired from previous NCs and BURs preparation has been clearly leveraged and utilized for the design and development of this project, it is opinion of the MTR Team that lessons learned from similar efforts undertaken abroad and included in the project design should have been clearly stated and referenced in the ProDoc, as the incorporation of these lessons is not intuitive and are not easily identifiable.*

Reduction of energy consumption has been a GOC priority since its 11<sup>th</sup> Five-Year-Plan (FYP). In September 2020, President Xi Jinping proposed the goal of achieving carbon emission peak by 2030 and becoming carbon neutral by 2060. In the current 14<sup>th</sup> FYP, the GOC has combined advancing ecological civilization with a focus on reducing carbon emissions and promoted it to one of the most crucial issues in the next 5 years, and over the same period China will also improve its measuring and monitoring of carbon sinks. Following central government's work towards carbon neutrality, Hong Kong SAR and Macao SAR governments also set to capitalize on the trend to enhance the environmental protection and green technology industry with the innovative ability of people and the research edge of its universities and supporting policies from the government. China's comprehensive and complicated reporting system urgently needs a capacity building project to strengthen its institutional and technical capacities of preparing GHG inventories and reporting to the UNFCCC at the national level.

*The MTR Team has ascertained that all these national priorities have been well embedded in the project design, which will contribute to their achievement.*

*Sustainability of the project is clearly taken into consideration and well supported by all the capacity building activities that have been designed in the ProDoc and that will enable all key stakeholders not only to prepare the required 4NC, BUR3, BUR4 and GHG inventories according to the new IPCC guidance, but also to continue these efforts well past the 4NC Project implementation period.*

*All relevant stakeholders have been consulted with for the design of the ProDoc, including government ministries and departments<sup>6</sup>, Special Administrative Regions (SARs) of Macao and Hong Kong, academic institutions, universities and colleges, business associations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and private sector enterprises.*

The project has been developed in a gender inclusive manner and women empowerment has been taken into consideration for the design of the project activities, particularly those involving stakeholders for capacity development, for which women participation has been prioritized. This is also evidenced by Core Indicator 11 Mid-Term and End-of-Project targets, which are disaggregated by gender and show more ambitious results for the involvement of women compared to men. A Gender analysis and a Gender Action Plan (GAP) have also been prepared and annexed to the ProDoc as Annex 8.

*The MTR Team has accumulated substantial experience regarding UNDP-developed, GEF-funded projects in China, and it is aware that gender issues are not particularly severe in China and that gender equality*

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<sup>6</sup> In the first half of 2018, the functions related to combating climate change have been transferred from the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) to the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) in China's governmental institutional reform. These allowed to leverage the expertise that MEE gained from long-standing pollutant control in order to establish technical specifications for GHG data monitoring at the enterprise level, and to better support the formulation of GHG inventories and emission control action plans

*and women empowerment are always taken in high consideration, both during project design as well as its implementation. However, it is the MTR Team’s opinion that the project would have benefitted from a more detailed gender analysis and GAP with more statistics concerning not only women employment, but also determine the percentages of senior positions, as well as positions of responsibility and decision making that are actually occupied by women, and how these percentages changed over time.*

A Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) to identify potential risks and recommend mitigation measures has been conducted during the project design stage and it is attached to the ProDoc as Annex 11. The SESP only includes six risks and all of them are rated low, with the consequence that the overall risk rating is also low.

*Considering that this is an Enabling Activity (EA) project, the MTR Team finds the SESP adequate, particularly because social groups and environmental resources that might be affected by the project activities are extremely circumscribed. In addition, the lack of on-site demonstrations further reduces the possibility of these risks’ occurrence and impact.*

**4.1.2 Results Framework/LogFrame**

The Project Results Framework, or Project LogFrame, includes indicators at the objective levels, as well as for each of the six project components.

The MTR Team has completed an assessment of the degree to which these indicators meet the definition of SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, **T**ime-bound) indicators.

According to the “Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects”, the definitions of a SMART indicator are:

**Specific:** Indicators must use clear language, describing a specific future condition.

**Measurable:** Indicators must have measurable aspects making it possible to assess whether they were achieved or not.

**Achievable:** Indicators must be within the capacity of the partners to achieve.

**Relevant:** Indicators must make a contribution to selected priorities of the national development framework

**Time-bound:** Indicators are never open-ended; there should be an expected date of accomplishment.

The results from this assessment are shown in Table 4.1.

**Green** means the indicator has the corresponding characteristic, **Yellow** indicates partial compliance, and **Red** denotes that the indicator does not meet the property assessed.

**Table 4.1 SMART Analysis of Project Results Framework**

Indicator	Baseline	Mid-Term target	End-of-Project Target	Smart Analysis				
				S	M	A	R	T
Project Objective								

<p><b>Mandatory Indicator 1:</b> No. of new additional individuals that directly benefited from the implementation of the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Male: 0 50 100</li> <li>• Female: 0 60 120</li> </ul>								
<p><b>Comments:</b> The Gender Analysis (Annex 8 of the ProDoc) shows how, according to the Chinese State Statistics Bureau, in 2010 women accounted for 38.0% of all trained employees in jobs related to climate change, percentage that increased to 42.6% in 2014. The 4NC Project aims at benefitting 54.5% of women, a percentage that indicates a clear direction towards closing the existing gap between men and women.</p>								
<p><b>Indicator 2:</b> Progress towards completion, government-approval, and submission of reports to the UNFCCC, % completion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4NC: 0 100% 100%</li> <li>• BUR3: 0 100% 100%</li> <li>• BUR4: 0 0 100%</li> </ul>								
<p><b>Comments:</b> Although this indicator measures the completion of the main products of the project, these results are reports, and therefore in case any of these reports would not be fully completed by the expected deadline it would be impossible to establish the percentage of achievement applying <i>objective</i> criteria, but the assessment would depend on the <i>subjective</i> estimation of the evaluator.</p>								
<p><b>Project Component 1 – Outcome 1.1</b></p>								
<p><b>Indicator 3:</b> No. of completed GHG inventories that are used in the preparation of the NC and BURs.</p>	5	7	8					
<p><b>Comments:</b> No comments</p>								
<p><b>Indicator 4:</b> No. of updated yearly data sets uploaded to the National GHG Emissions Database and used in the preparation of the NC and BURs.</p>	5	7	8					
<p><b>Comments:</b> A clearer description of the indicator would have helped the reader to better understand if and why both Indicators 3 and 4 are needed to be tracked. Also, since the project also calls for a recalculation of past GHG inventories and an upgrade of GHG Emissions Datasets, perhaps Indicators 3 and 4 could have been diversified to track the completion of new GHG inventories and datasets as well as the recalculation and upgrade of existing ones.</p>								
<p><b>Indicator 5:</b> No. of governmental entities that are capable of producing acceptable and useful time series of sectoral GHG emissions applying 2006 IPCC guidelines.</p>	0	0	5					
<p><b>Comments:</b> No comments</p>								
<p><b>Indicator 6:</b> No. of trained GOC agencies that regularly collect, update, analyze and report required data and analytical information used for conducting and preparing GHG inventories.</p>	12	14	14					
<p><b>Comments:</b> It is unclear which Outputs/Activities under Component 1 contribute to the achievement of the targets of this indicator. It would appear that the Output contributing to achieve this indicator would be Output 1.1.5: “Completed capacity building of relevant government departments in collecting required data and information for conducting and preparing GHG inventories”, but this output is only slated to be completed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of Year</p>								

4 (refer to Annex 3: Multi Year Work Plan of the ProDoc), which would conflict with the fact that the final target for this Indicator is achieved at Mid-Term and it doesn't change until End-of-Project.						
<b>Project Component 2 – Outcome 2.1</b>						
<b>Indicator 7:</b> No. of governmental entities that are capable of producing improved climate change vulnerability and adaptation assessments and improved formulations of climate change adaptation measures and plans.	1	2	4			
<b>Comments:</b> Looking again at the Multi Year Work Plan in the ProDoc (Annex 3), it is clear that Component 2 will be completely delivered by the end of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter of Year 2 of implementation, it is therefore unclear why this indicator is specific for Component 2 and why the End-of-Project target is twice as large as the Mid-Term target.						
<b>Project Component 3 – Outcome 3.1</b>						
<b>Indicator 8:</b> No. of formulated and recommended new or improved national CCM policies and feasible CCM actions plans.	0	2	3			
<b>Comments:</b> No comments						
<b>Project Component 3 – Outcome 3.2</b>						
<b>Indicator 9:</b> No. of governmental entities that can capably report evidence-based GHG emission reduction data using the country's official MRV system.	7	34	65			
<b>Comments:</b> Based on the description of the project activities in Section IV of the ProDoc (more specifically the Expected Results sub-section), there is only one capacity building activity, which does not specifically train on reporting evidence-based GHG emission reduction data using an improved national MRV system. The training program is completed by the end of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of Year 2 of implementation, while the improved MRV system is completed by the end of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of Year 4; it is therefore uncertain how the End-of-Project target can be nearly twice as high as the Mid-Term target. In conclusion, it is unclear how this indicator and its targets capture the achievement of Outcome 3.2.						
<b>Project Component 4 – Outcome 4.1</b>						
<b>Indicator 10:</b> No. of governmental entities that are substantially involved and/or contributing to the performance of analyses of the various in-country factors that affects and impacts on the climate and climate change situation in the country as articulated in the NC Reports and BURs.	2	30	30			
<b>Comments:</b> The way this Indicator has been formulated it simply counts the number of governmental entities involved in analyzing the factors impacting on climate change in China and articulated in the NC and BUR reports; however this involvement is not a measure of the progress of the activities that will collectively deliver Outcome 4.1. In fact, the indicator does not include or specify any requirement deriving from, or enabled by, the implementation of any activity that would qualify governmental entities as contributing to the achievement of the targets. It is also important to notice that while the Outcome statement refers to enhanced capacity, no activity under this Outcome is devoted to capacity building. Perhaps, a simpler, but more pertinent indicator statement might be referring to the sole Output under Outcome 4.1, which is consistent with the designed activities: "No. of completed sets of vetted data/information on each pertinent indicator". The Targets should also be changed accordingly, and the PMO who is aware of the number of datasets required by Mid-Term as well as by End-of-Project						

<p>can easily amend these. Alternatively, the Activities under Outcome 4.1 could be redesigned in order to include capacity building, which however would require restating the indicators, but in this case, it can be simply mentioned that the indicator measures the “No. of governmental entities whose capacity has been enhanced and that are substantially involved...”. Because of the unclear specificity of this indicator, it is also unclear its relevance for the realization of the Outcome.</p>							
<p><b>Project Component 4 – Outcome 4.2</b></p>							
<p><b>Indicator 11:</b> No. of governmental government entities that are capable of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Identifying, assessing, planning, designing, implementing:</li> <li>•Identifying and sourcing financing for the implementation of:</li> <li>•Gathering, processing, storing, managing:</li> </ul> <p>Feasible and applicable CCM &amp; CCA technologies, techniques, and measures.</p>	3	3	10				
<p><b>Comments:</b> All the activities under this Outcome focus on assessing the capacity building needs of government entities in various aspects of identification, feasibility and financing option for CCM &amp; CCA technologies, techniques and measures. However, no training is subsequently specified for capacitating these assessed government entities. It is therefore unclear if the indicator just counts the number of already capacitated government entities or if it counts the number of government entities capacitated through the project activities and training programs. If the former, it would be questionable also the relevance of such indicator as a measure of the progress of the implementation of the activities under this outcome.</p>							
<p><b>Project Component 4 – Outcome 4.3</b></p>							
<p><b>Indicator 12:</b> No. of people that have improved understanding of the climate change issues of the country climate and weather forecasts for China.</p>	0	500	1,000				
<p><b>Comments:</b> No comments</p>							
<p><b>Project Component 5 – Outcome 5.1</b></p>							
<p><b>Indicator 13:</b> No. of SAR agencies that are capable of producing improved GHG inventories, vulnerability and adaptation assessments and improved formulations of CCM and CCA measures and plans.</p>	0	2	3				
<p><b>Comments:</b> No comments</p>							
<p><b>Indicator 14:</b> Progress towards completion, SAR government-approval, and submission of reports to P.R. China, % completion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4NC</li> <li>• BUR3</li> <li>• BUR4</li> </ul>	0	100%	100%				
	0	100%	100%				
	0	0	100%				
<p><b>Comments:</b> Although this indicator measures the completion of the main products of the project, these results are reports for the two SARs, and therefore in case any of these reports would not be fully completed by the expected</p>							

deadline it would be impossible to establish the percentage of achievement applying <i>objective</i> criteria, but the assessment would depend on the <i>subjective</i> estimation of the evaluator.						
<b>Project Component 6 – Outcome 6.1</b>						
<b>Indicator 15:</b> No. required reports prepared, translated and submitted to UNFCCC.	5	7	8			
<b>Comments:</b> The relevance of this indicator is not clear since it seems that it could be inferred from the achievement of other projects indicators (i.e., Indicators 2 and 14)						

## 4.2 Progress Towards Results

### 4.2.1 Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis

The assessment of the project’s progress towards results is provided in Table 4.2 and compared to the mid-term targets provided in the project LogFrame. The main results and progress, and the justification for the ratings are described in the following paragraphs. Table 4.2 uses a color-code to indicate targets that have been (i) achieved (**Green**), (ii) on target to be achieved (**Yellow**), and (iii) not on target to be achieved (**Red**).

The results achieved by each indicator have been presented by the PMO in the 2023 Project Progress Report (PPR). The 2023 Project Implementation Report (PIR), which was initially scheduled to be completed by mid-2023, was not prepared because the national government signed the implementation agreement at the end of 2022 and consequentially project implementation only began after the first budget disbursement in April 2023. The 2024 PIR, which will be the first completed, is currently under preparation and will be completed by mid-2024 and not yet available at the time of this MTR.

A GEF Tracking Tool (TT) was not prepared during the PPG stage, since GEF TTs are not mandatory for EA projects under GEF-6 and subsequent rounds of funding, as explained in the GEF guidance for MTR. However, a GEF TT at Mid-Term stage has been recently completed by the PMO and shared with the MTR Team. The TT tracks the only Core Indicator for the 4NC Project, which is Core Indicator 11: **Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment**. The tracking tools reports that the Mid-Term targets for both women and men has been largely achieved and surpassed, as shown in Table 4.2 and Annex 12.

In addition, a list of outputs and reports that have been already submitted, in a final or a draft form, is attached to this review as Annex 13.

**Table 4.2 Progress Towards Results Matrix**

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline Level	Mid-Term Target	End-of-Project Target	Mid-Term Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification
<b>Project Objective:</b> <b>To enable China to prepare its fourth National Communication (4NC) and the third Biennial Update Report (BUR3) and the fourth Biennial Update Report (BUR4), in order to fulfill the obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.</b>	<b>Mandatory Indicator 1:</b> No. of new additional individuals that are directly benefited from the implementation of the project. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Male:</li> <li>• Female:</li> </ul>	0	50	100	94	S	Results for the first two indicators were not initially reported in the 2023 PPR because the PMO only reported on the completion status of indicators directly related to specific project outcomes. However, since the completion of the 2023 PPR these two Indicators have been reported and they have both met and even surpassed the Mid-Term targets. However, it is to be noted that although it has surpassed the Mid-Term target and its value is slightly larger than men, the proportion of women is below the percentage targeted for the indicator.
	<b>Indicator 2:</b> Progress towards completion, government-approval, and submission of reports to the UNFCCC, % completion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4NC:</li> <li>• BUR3:</li> <li>• BUR4:</li> </ul>	0	100%	100%	100%		
<b>Component 1: National Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory</b>							
<b>Outcome 1.1:</b> Clearer understanding of the magnitude and sources of the GHG emissions and removals from the different sectors.	<b>Indicator 3:</b> No. of completed GHG inventories that are used in the preparation of the NC and BURs.	5	7	8	7	HS	Despite the project starting late, not only these two critical indicators' Mid-Term targets have been achieved, but the GHG inventories and GHG Emissions Databases were completed about half a
	<b>Indicator 4:</b> No. of updated yearly data sets uploaded to the National GHG Emissions	5	7	8	7	HS	

	Database and used in the preparation of the NC and BURs.						year before the expected deadline
	<b>Indicator 5:</b> No. of governmental entities that are capable of producing acceptable and useful time series of sectoral GHG emissions applying 2006 IPCC guidelines.	0	0	5	0	N/A	The Mid-Term target for this indicator is 0; therefore no evaluation can be made.
	<b>Indicator 6:</b> No. of trained GOC agencies that regularly collect, update, analyze and report required data and analytical information used for conducting and preparing GHG inventories.	12	14	14	14	S	The target has been successfully achieved ahead of the Mid-Term deadline
<b>Component 2: Impacts of vulnerability and adaptation to climate change</b>							
<b>Outcome 2.1:</b> Better understanding of China's vulnerability to the threats of climate change and improved accuracy of prediction of impacts in the vulnerable sectors of the country.	<b>Indicator 7:</b> No. of governmental entities that are capable of producing improved climate change vulnerability and adaptation assessments and improved formulations of climate change adaptation measures and plans.	1	2	4	2	S	The target has been successfully achieved ahead of the Mid-Term deadline
<b>Component 3: Mitigation policies and actions for climate change</b>							
<b>Outcome 3.1:</b> Enhanced understanding of the appropriate policies to enable the proper planning and implementation of prioritized applicable and feasible climate change mitigation (CCM) actions for China.	<b>Indicator 8:</b> No. of formulated and recommended new or improved national CCM policies and feasible CCM actions plans.	0	2	3	2	S	The policies formulated for the achievement of this Mid-Term target are: 3. "Compilation of a Review of National Climate Change Mitigation Policies and Measures" 4. "Optimization of China's Monitoring, Reporting,

							and Verification (MRV) System”
<p><b>Outcome 3.2:</b> Improved accounting of the results and impacts of implemented CCM actions through an improved national MRV system.</p>	<p><b>Indicator 9:</b> No. of governmental entities that can capably report evidence-based GHG emission reduction data using the country’s official MRV system.</p>	7	34	65	34	S	<p>When the 2023 PPR was prepared, this indicator’s Mid-Term target was not achieved yet; however, since the preparation of the 2023 PPR also the target for indicator 9 has been achieved, as reported by the PMO, and ahead of the June 2024 deadline, and its achievement will be regularly included in the upcoming 2024 PIR. The capacitated governmental entities include 33 member units of the BUR4 compliance report preparation working group plus the Tsinghua University</p>
<p><b>Component 4: National circumstances, related financial, technical, and capacity needs, and other relevant information</b></p>							
<p><b>Outcome 4.1:</b> Enhanced capacity to determine, analyze, refer to, and articulate key national circumstances information in the national communication (NC) reports and biennial update reports (BUR).</p>	<p><b>Indicator 10:</b> No. of governmental entities that are substantially involved and/or contributing to the performance of analyses of the various in-country factors that affects and impacts on the climate and climate change situation in the country as articulated in the NC Reports and BURs.</p>	2	30	30	30	MS	<p>Although the Mid-Term target has been achieved, as explained in Section 4.1.2, this indicator statement fails to explain how the implementation of the project activities triggered the involvement of these government entities.</p>

<p><b>Outcome 4.2:</b> Enhanced understanding and capacity to determine applicable, feasible and cost-effective CCM and climate change adaptation (CCA) technologies, techniques and measures, and the most suitable financial resources and financing options that can be applied to implement action that address CCM and CCA issues.</p>	<p><b>Indicator 11:</b> No. of governmental government entities that are capable of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Identifying, assessing, planning, designing, implementing:</li> <li>•Identifying and sourcing financing for the implementation of:</li> <li>•Gathering, processing, storing, managing:</li> </ul> <p>Feasible and applicable CCM &amp; CCA technologies, techniques, and measures.</p>	3	3	10	3	N/A	The Mid-Term target for this indicator is 3, which is the same as the Baseline level; therefore, no evaluation can be made.
<p><b>Outcome 4.3:</b> Further enhanced public awareness of climate change issues.</p>	<p><b>Indicator 12:</b> No. of people that have improved understanding of the climate change issues of the country climate and weather forecasts for China.</p>	0	500	1,000	500	S	The target has been successfully achieved ahead of the Mid-Term deadline
<p><b>Component 5: Communication of the GHG inventories, NCs, and BURs of the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions (SARs)</b></p>							
<p><b>Outcome 5.1:</b> Better understanding of GHG emissions and sinks in the Hong Kong and Macao SARs, and improved capacities for NC, and BUR.</p>	<p><b>Indicator 13:</b> No. of SAR agencies that are capable of producing improved GHG inventories, vulnerability and adaptation assessments and improved formulations of CCM and CCA measures and plans.</p>	0	2	3	2	MS	The target has been successfully achieved ahead of the Mid-Term deadline; however multiple stakeholders have indicated in their questionnaire’s responses that although all reports from the SARs’ have been submitted in a timely manner, the capacity of the SARs’ agencies on following compliance rules and
<p><b>Indicator 14:</b> Progress towards completion, SAR government-approval, and submission of reports to P.R. China, % completion.</p>	0	100%	100%	100%	MS		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4NC</li> <li>• BUR3</li> <li>• BUR4</li> </ul>	0	100%	100%	100%		preparing the reports following IPCC guidance still needs to be strengthened and additional workshops and capacity building initiatives are scheduled for the second half of the 4NC Project implementation.
<b>Component 6: UNFCCC reporting obligations, e.g., NC, BUR</b>							
<b>Outcome 6.1:</b> China's compliance to the reporting obligations to the UNFCCC.	<b>Indicator 15:</b> No. required reports prepared, translated and submitted to UNFCCC.	5	7	8	7	HS	Timely submission of quality reports to the UNFCCC is a critical achievement for the 4NC Project, and this target was achieved at the end of 2023 despite starting the implementation of the project activities over half a year later than initially scheduled.

#### 4.2.2 Remaining Barriers to Achieving the Project Objective

The project development team during the PPG stage has identified three barriers hindering the achievement of the objectives of this 4NC Project. As discussed in Section 4.1.1, the strategy adopted for project implementation is barrier removal, and in this section the MTR Team will assess the degree of barrier removal that the project has achieved to date. The barriers are represented graphically in the TOC in Figure 3.1.

**Technical Barrier: *“Data for checking China’s progress in addressing climate change is lagged behind; The transparency of the information reported in previous reports should be further enhanced”.***

At the end of 2023, the GOC has submitted to the UNFCCC Secretariat both the 4NC and BUR3. This implies that all GHG inventories as well as GHG emissions datasets necessary to prepare such reports have been prepared.

The submitted 4NC and BUR3 reports will have to undergo through a technical review from international experts, but the fact that over a relatively short period of time the GOC has been able to comply with new and more stringent requirements is an indication that project implementation is significantly removing the technical barrier. Furthermore, BUR4 and relative GHG inventories and emissions datasets will be prepared in the second half of this project implementation, which will further remove this technical barrier.

*For this reason, the MTR Team assigns a qualitative rating of technical barrier removal of 80%, with excellent chances to reach 100% by end of project.*

**Policy & Regulatory Barrier: *“Lack of regular information collection mechanism and institutional framework”.***

When asked to indicate the most important strength appreciated during project implementation, most surveyed key stakeholders have responded the excellent communication and cooperation established among all relevant partners. This extremely efficient and well-coordinated framework has also been the reason for meeting the mid-term targets of all indicators, and most of them had been achieved already by the end of 2023, instead of mid-2024, which is the end of Year 2 of implementation. Information collection has also been strengthened, although further improvements are expected to be made through the training programs that will be implemented in the second half of the 4NC Project implementation, particularly in the SARs.

*Therefore, the MTR Team appreciates at 70% the rate of achievement of this barrier removal, well positioned to be completely removed over the next two years of project implementation.*

**Capacity Barrier: *“Obstacles of gathering activity data and emission factors that are fit to the new guidelines, such as data missing for new categories, data inconsistency among different agencies, parameter missing for higher tier methods, as well as investigation insufficient under current system”.***

For the 2017 and 2018 inventories, new categories added include: nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) emissions from the production process of caprolactam; carbon dioxide emissions from the production process of titanium dioxide (TiO<sub>2</sub>), methanol and ethylene; indirect emissions of N<sub>2</sub>O from animal manure management and grazing animals; and non-carbon dioxide emissions caused by fires in forestry and grassland.

For the 2020 GHG inventory, there will be additional categories, including: methane emissions from post-surface mining activities; direct and indirect emissions of N<sub>2</sub>O caused by farmland soil mineralization and abiotic nitrogen fixation; and nitrogen volatilization and re-deposition from animal excreta.

Questionnaire responses however evidenced how some key stakeholders would prefer to acquire additional knowledge and further improve their confidence in the use of the national Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system. Stakeholders' capacity will continue to be strengthened during the remaining two years of project implementation.

*The results achieved to date led the MTR Team to attribute a rate of capacity barrier removal of 70%, and similarly to the previous two barriers, there are extremely high probabilities that the project will achieve 100% barrier removal by the end of the implementation period.*

### 4.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

#### 4.3.1 Management Arrangements

A Management Arrangements section is included as Chapter VII of the ProDoc, and summarized in Section 3.4 of this MTR report, describing the governance structure (please refer to Figure 3.2) and the roles and responsibilities of each responsible partner.

The 4NC Project is implemented following UNDP's National Implementation Modality (NIM). Under this implementation modality, the project is implemented by the government, and for this project the national entity designated as Implementing Partner is the Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center (FECO) under the Ministry of Ecology and Environment.

**Project Steering Committee (PSC) or Project Board (PB):** The PSC is responsible for taking corrective actions as needed to ensure the project achieves the desired results. The two main roles of the PSC are: i) high-level oversight of the execution of the project by the Implementing Partner, including assessments of any major risks to the project, and decisions on any management actions to address them effectively; and ii) approval of strategic project execution decisions of the Implementing Partner.

The PSC has to meet at least once annually, and on as needed basis. During the first two years of 4NC Project implementation the board has met twice:

1. 2023 Meeting, held on November 18, 2022. The meeting was well participated and no changes were made to the ProDoc and to the Risk Log. The PSC provided recommendations for the implementation of the project activities, such as: i) strengthening the coordination mechanism among stakeholders; ii) use existing work on GHG emissions; iii) assure that national priorities are aligned with UNFCCC and IPCC guidance and expectations; iv) operationalize the outcomes produced in a timely manner; and v) raise awareness of the general public. The delay in initiating the project implementation and the strict deadline to submit the 4NC and BUR3 called for a revision of the 2023-2024 Work Plan.
2. 2024 Meeting, held on March 1, 2024. The meeting was again well participated and after approving the minutes from the previous meeting and discussed the project progress, the PSC provided recommendations for the continuation of the project implementation: i) leveraging best practices and lessons learned to maximize the impact of the project; ii) facilitate the completion of this MTR; and iii) approve the 2024-2025 Two Year Work Plan focusing on further strengthening

capacity and awareness. All previously identified risks were confirmed and no significant issue was reported during implementation.

**Implementing Partner (IP):** FECO is responsible for the execution of the project on behalf of MEE, under the technical guidance of the Department of Climate Change of MEE. The IP directly assumes the responsibility for the delivery of the project outputs and carries out all activities towards the achievement of these outputs, including: i) project planning, coordination, management and MRV activities; ii) risk management; iii) procurement of goods and services; iv) financial management, including overseeing financial expenditures; and v) approving and signing the delivery report and the financial report at the end of the year.

The **Project Management Office (PMO)** has been established under FECO. The PMO is responsible for the day-to-day management of project activities; it is headed by a Project Manager (PM), includes a Project Assistant and a Project Finance Assistant, and this staff has been trained by UNDP on UNDP procedures and policies.

*During project implementation the PMO has demonstrated a high level of proficiency and efficiency in carrying out the project activities, and effectively planning and coordinating project implementation. The percentage of women engaged by the PMO as sub-contractors has been 53.4%, providing a high-quality performance. The ability to cope with demanding expectations and strict deadlines has been highlighted and praised by most surveyed participants.*

UNDP: as GEF Agency, UNDP has no role in the execution of the project activities. Its role is limited to overseeing the project implementation on behalf of the GEF to ensure that the project is being carried out in accordance with UNDP and GEF policies and procedures and the standards and provisions outlined in the Delegation of Authority (DOA) letter for this project. It also ensures compliance providing specific instructions that must be followed by the IP and other designated responsible parties regarding the financial management requirements. UNDP is responsible for Project Assurance in the project governance structure, and attends Project Board meetings as a non-voting member.

*Over this first half of 4NC Project implementation, UNDP has proactively managed the project reminding stakeholders of important milestones, providing support for a clear understanding of requirements to meet and procedure to follow. UNDP has monitored the implementation of the project participating to decision-making processes. UNDP has been praised by most surveyed stakeholders for establishing effective communication channels and for responding promptly to any request for support from stakeholders.*

As discussed in the UNDP Risk Register (Annex 5 of the ProDoc), there are 12 risks that can potentially hinder the achievement of the project objectives. Nine of these risks are rated Low, while three risks rated Medium are: a) Inadequate and possibly constrained coordination during the implementation of the project; b) Difficult to submit the reports in a timely manner; and c) Failure to promote the project affected by COVID-19.

*During the two PSC meetings the risk log has been reviewed and no new risks have been identified. In this first half of project implementation the resurgence of COVID-19 has led to a delay to the project start. However, the PMO and all partners have been able to cope with this difficulty and still achieve all Indicators' Mid-Term targets, most of them ahead of the deadline, which leads the MTR Team to conclude*

*that good risk management procedures are in place and there is confidence that the PMO and UNDP CO would be able to manage the occurrence of any presently foreseeable risk.*

#### **4.3.2 Work Planning**

The 4NC Project was initially scheduled to break ground in mid-2022; however, due to the resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic the ProDoc approval and signing process was postponed, which in turn also delayed the grant execution agreement between the Ministry of Finance (MOF) and MEE. Therefore, the kick-off meeting was deferred and consequently the initiation of project implementation and PMO's bidding processes only commenced in Spring 2023.

These delays called for changes in the work plans. The first change occurred in 2023 and it led to the revised 2023-2024 Two Year Work Plan (TYWP) where the budget for 2022 was zeroed and in 2023 was shifted towards the back half of the year. The 2024 budget was amended again the following year to align expenditures with activities implementation.

These processes followed this procedure: the PMO started the process by changing the work plans and adjusting the budgets, afterwards the requests were made to the PSC who reviewed and approved them before submitting them to the CCD for final review and signing.

*These changes in work plans and budgets have been dictated by the need to expediting project implementation and meeting the deadline for 4NC and BUR3 submission, as well as the next deadline for BUR4. In order to cope with these delays the PMO had to operate under a very tight deadline, and it has successfully applied adaptive management, proactively pursuing stakeholders' participation, mobilizing additional resources, and ensuring timely execution and delivery of results in a transparent and reliable manner.*

*On the other hand, redirecting all resources towards the completion of the 4NC and BUR3 reports, including human resources, caused the PMO to inevitably slow down the implementation of other activities, including capacity building programs. To date there are no completed capacity building programs, while currently there are ongoing training initiatives, such as: i) "Improving provincial-level climate change adaptation capabilities"; and ii) "Improving climate-resilient urban capabilities". Considering that 4NC Project is an EA project, completing all capacity building programs on time and with excellent results is of utmost importance.*

#### **4.3.3 Finance and Co-Finance**

The 4NC Project received a grant from GEF for USD 4,566,210 and committed to mobilize USD 1,466,000 in co-financing resources (USD 100,000 from UNDP), for a total of USD 6,032,210.

As of June 30th, 2024 the disbursed GEF funds are USD 1,416,020 against an allocated budget in the amended work plan of USD 1,537,539, translating in a rate of GEF grant disbursement of 92.1%, which is considered satisfactory. Furthermore, over the period March-April 2024, a financial audit has been conducted for year 2023 and there have been no major issues reported.

The co-financing for this EA project is only 32.1% of the GEF fund (or 24.3% of the total budget) and it is all in-kind, and it is used to provide project management, technical support, office space, capacity building and training programs. The co-financing is measured as a pro-rated disbursement proportional to the implemented activities and the GEF grant associated with them, and to date the majority of the co-financing has already been successfully disbursed (see Table 4.3). Considering that the co-financing only

comes from the Implementing Partner (MEE) and the Commissioning Unit (UNDP) meeting with between the PMO and the co-financiers are regularly held.

**Table 4.3 Co-Financing Table**

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement / Approval	Investment mobilized	Materialized co-financing as of Jun 30, 2024
Recipient Government	Ministry of Ecology and Environment	In Kind	1,366,000	Recurrent expenditures	1,012,000
GEF Agency	UNDP	In Kind	100,000	Recurrent expenditures	20,000

As mentioned in Section 4.3.2, the change of work plans was accompanied also by budget revisions as compared to the ProDoc.

The first budget amendment in 2023 led to the following quarterly distribution of budget for 2023: Q1 = USD 0; Q2 = USD 145,152; **Q3 = USD 1,231,000**; and Q4 = USD 38,000; for a total of USD 1,414,152; while for 2024 it was: Q1 = USD 86,813; **Q2 = USD 578,513**; Q3 = USD 53,013; and Q4 = USD 68,013; for a total of USD 786,352.

The budget was revised again in 2024 and led to the current quarterly budget for 2024: Q1 = USD 12,000; Q2 = USD 111,387; **Q3 = USD 1,275,946**; and Q4 = USD 37,000; for a total of USD 1,436,333; while for 2025 it was: USD 183,429; Q2 = USD 108,967; Q3 = USD 135,000; and Q4 = USD 160,500; for a total of USD 587,896.

Lastly, a budget reallocation of USD 300,000 has been made from Component 1 by shifting USD 150,000 to Component 2 for the "Assessment of Climate Change Impacts, Vulnerability, and Adaptation", and another USD 150,000 to Component 4 for the "National Context, Financial, Technical, and Capacity Needs, and Other Relevant Information". These reallocations were intended to strengthen corresponding capacity building activities.

#### **4.3.4 Project-Level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems**

A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan is included in Section VI of the 4NC Project ProDoc, and the Project-Level Monitoring & Evaluation is carried out in compliance with UNDP requirements as outlined in the [UNDP POPP](#) and [UNDP Evaluation Policy](#).

A M&E Plan Budget has been prepared already at Project Information Form (PIF) stage, it totaled USD 107,000 and included also a USD 12,000 budget for the preparation of annual Project Implementation Reviews. This M&E Plan Budget was changed during the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) stage and the figures were changed. While the changes made during PPG stage compared to PIF stage have been documented and explained in Annex A of the CEO Endorsement Request Document (CERDoc), the M&E Plan Budget in ProDoc and in the CERDoc are different from one another, USD 100,000 in the ProDoc and USD 90,000 in the CERDoc.

*The total cost for the M&E plan is only 2.2% of the total GEF grant. Assuming that the PIRs can be always prepared by the UNDP CO and PMO at no charge, the plan still does not include any budget for the*

*monitoring of the risk log, the SESP, the stakeholder engagement plan (SEP) and the GAP. Although many surveyed stakeholders consider the allocated budget for the M&E Plan sufficient, it is opinion of this MTR Team that more funds should be allocated for the monitoring activities taking them from the various project components. Finally some additional budget might also need to be allocated for the GEF Tracking Tool, which was not initially budgeted.*

#### **4.3.5 Stakeholders Engagement**

The ProDoc includes as Annex 7 a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) detailing the stakeholders involved and their role in the project. In terms of categories, the stakeholders engaged are: i) national and local government officials; ii) research and academic institutions; iii) business associations; iv) enterprises (including state-owned); v) civil society organizations (CSOs); and vi) non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The full and dedicated engagement of relevant stakeholders throughout the entire process of project design as well as implementation of all the activities is crucial not only for the success of the project itself, but also for the sustainability of the results achieved. For this 4NC Project the involvement of stakeholders in the management of the project (with the establishment of the PSC), implementation of the activities, and as recipients of capacity building and awareness raising activities has been fulfilled satisfactorily; however, many capacity building programs and awareness raising initiatives are scheduled for the second half of project implementation.

*Communication and cooperation among different stakeholders has been successful, considering the timely submission of the 4NC and BUR3 reports to the UNFCCC Secretariat despite the very tight deadline. However, as highlighted by multiple stakeholders in their responses to the MTR questionnaire, there have been some hiccups. These minor issues were due to different administrative systems among departments, lack of data consistency across different stakeholders, and somewhat improvable coordination mechanisms. While these issues have been overcome under the guidance of the PMO and UNDP, it would be advisable to use this experience as lesson learned to implement adaptive management and improve stakeholders' cooperation for the remainder of project implementation.*

*Furthermore, besides representatives from the government and from research and academic institutions, members of business associations and managers of enterprises have also contributed to the compilation of GHG inventories and GHG emissions datasets. What the reports prepared and the stakeholders surveyed have failed to clearly demonstrate has been any significant involvement of CSOs and NGOs in project implementation. The MTR Team recommends to enhance and clearly point out their participation for the second half of project implementation when many training and awareness raising initiatives have been scheduled. To this end, it would be recommendable to include in outreach activities also women groups, youth organizations and marginalized and indigenous people.*

#### **4.3.6 Reporting**

There have been relatively few reports prepared under the 4NC Project to date. Two Annual Work Plans (AWPs), the 2023-2024 and the 2024-2025. The reports revised the 2-year budgets as a result of delay in commencing the project activities.

*Although the reports were needed and good adaptive management was applied, the information reported in the AWP was not very detailed and required further investigation from the MTR Team to understand*

*the reasons that led to those revisions and the process followed to make and approve the changes. The procedure followed for revising the budget was simple, accurate and effective, and it can be illustrated as follows: the PMO made changes to the work plan and to the quarterly budget for the next two-year period and presented the changes to the PSC. Afterwards, the PSC reviewed and approved the changes and then passed the amended documents on to the Department of Climate Change of MEE for final review and signing.*

As explained in section 4.2.1 of this report, because of the belated project implementation start, the 2023 PIR was not prepared and the first PIR for 2024 is currently being finalized. It was however prepared the 2023 Project Progress Report (PPR), which reported the progress made by the project towards achieving the indicators' Mid-Term targets.

*The PPR is well organized and the information provided is clear and well documented, providing a highly satisfactory product.*

*A last comment from the MTR Team concerns the preparation of the reports prepared during implementation of project activities. Besides the 4NC and the BUR3 that have been submitted to the UNFCCC Secretariat, all other reports drafted (please refer to Annex 13 of this MTR report) are currently only available in Chinese and the plan is to translate them in English only at the end of the project implementation period. It is opinion of the MTR Team that the reports drafted should be made available in English as they are completed, in this way not only they become an additional source of information for revision and for international partners, but it is also possible to determine their quality when there is still time to refine and improve them. Furthermore, these reports are required as supporting evidence of the achievement of the indicators for the preparation of the PIRS. It is therefore recommended to proceed with a timely translation for the reports already prepared, ahead of the next 2025 PIR preparation, and those that will be prepared in the second half of this project implementation.*

#### **4.3.7 Communication**

Internal communication, as it appeared clear from the responses of most of the stakeholders surveyed by the MTR Team, has been pivotal for successfully completing the 4NC and BUR3 report on time despite the slow start of project activities. While initially communication was deemed scattered and insufficient, many stakeholders pointed out how PMO and UNDP straightened things out by increasing the frequency of communication, organizing regular multi-stakeholders coordination meetings, and establishing a feedback mechanism. The feedback mechanism enables stakeholders to provide feedback, ask questions, or raise concerns regarding project implementation. The PMO assigns a high priority to promptly responding to feedback, ensuring that stakeholders' inquiries or suggestions are acknowledged and addressed in a timely manner.

*The MTR Team considers perfectly adequate the current internal communication protocols.*

External communication channels are primarily used to disclose significant news about the project and to announce important results obtained and milestones achieved. The means used are limited to existing channels of the various stakeholders, such as press releases, and department/organization websites and social media.

*It is opinion of the MTR Team that given the considerable socio-economic and environmental importance of the 4NC Project, all external communications should be made as one voice. It is recommended to create a project logo and website and disseminate all news and communications through this dedicated channel. The existing means of communication of the various partners can still be used as additional media, but the project logo should always be clearly visible.*

The overall rating for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management is **Satisfactory**. Adaptive management has been a substantial strength for the PSC, PMO, UNDP and project partners. The delayed start due to the resurgence of COVID-19 has been managed adequately by redirecting all resources towards the submission of the 4NC and BUR3 reports to UNFCCC by the end of 2023.

Adaptive management has been successfully applied also for handling initial hiccups in communication and coordination mechanisms among stakeholders, which have later been considered by multiple surveyed stakeholders as key for successfully achieving all Indicators Mid-Term targets on time.

The only shortcoming, which is however deemed not critical by the MTR Team, is that redirecting all resources on completing 4NC and BUR3 has caused delays in some reports drafting and capacity building. However, considering that this is an enabling activity project, capacity building is crucial and successful implementation is expected for the second half of project implementation.

#### **4.4 Sustainability**

Sustainability is generally considered to be the likelihood of continued benefits after the project ends. Consequently the assessment of sustainability at the midterm considers the risks that are likely to affect the continuation of project outcomes. Sustainability will be rated by each of the four GEF categories of sustainability: i) financial; ii) socio-economic; iii) institutional framework and governance; and iv) environmental.

##### **4.4.1 Financial Risks to Sustainability**

The 4NC Project is an enabling activity project, focusing on compiling new GHG inventories and GHG emissions datasets, as well as upgrading existing ones, complying with the new guidelines from the IPCC in order to prepare national communications and biennial update reports. As such, the required financial resources to continue the efforts set forth in the project are not excessive, a much different consideration would be done if one had to assess the financial resources that are needed to actually achieve the established climate change mitigation and adaptation targets, which are extremely large. What is most important to avert any risks to financial sustainability is to continue to have full support from the government.

*Considering the pledges made by the GOC to mitigate and adapt to climate change and the significant body of work carried out to prepare climate change policies and promoting renewable energy, energy efficiency and climate resilience, the MTR Team would rate very low the chance of occurrence and the significance of any financial risks affecting sustainability.*

##### **4.4.2 Socio-Economic Risks to Sustainability**

The results achieved during the first half of the 4NC Project implementation, corroborated by the majority of the MTR questionnaire's responses on this topic, unequivocally show a sense of ownership of all key

stakeholders towards the project and a full commitment to continue to produce results also past the completion of the project implementation period. To trigger this behavior has contributed the ability of the PMO and all partners to produce the expected results even in face of difficulties, such as the tight deadline, which reinforced their sense of accomplishment. Equally important, have been the capacity built and awareness raised (although the majority of the initiatives to these ends will be undertaken during the second half of project implementation) about the importance of producing reliable, transparent and trustworthy GHG emissions inventories and datasets that will further enable China to adequately fight climate change and prevent socio-economic shocks to the country.

*Perhaps, the only aspects that could be improved are a wider dissemination of results and a broader involvement of social groups and organizations (i.e., women, youth and indigenous people). Therefore, also the chance that this risk dimension will negatively impact sustainability is deemed quite low by the MTR Team.*

#### **4.4.3 Institutional Framework and Governance Risks to Sustainability**

An inadequate institutional framework and insufficient governance structure have been identified during the project design stage as part of the Policy & Regulatory Barriers hindering the achievement of the 4NC Project objective and results. Initial struggles of stakeholders from different sectors to properly communicate and collaborate together have been highlighted in many MTR questionnaire's responses as the cause of initial challenges. However, the same surveyed stakeholders have pointed out how the leadership demonstrated by the Implementing Agency, supported by the PSC, PMO and UNDP, in strengthening cooperation, establishing effective reporting mechanisms, and building capacity has allowed to significantly removing this barrier, although more work is left to be accomplished until the end of the project implementation period.

*It is the opinion of the MTR Team that current leadership will have full capacity and sufficient instruments to continue to sustainably produce quality results and outputs, capacity and instruments that can be further enhanced by successfully implementing the remaining project activities.*

#### **4.4.4 Environmental Risks to Sustainability**

An assessment of the climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation policies has been undertaken to highlight any potential environmental risk to sustainability and it identified the following risks: i) insufficient consistency of policy framework; ii) inadequate capacity of key stakeholders; iii) insufficient public awareness; and iv) lacking of climate resilience. The project design is intended to directly mitigate the first three risks, while the fourth is addressed indirectly through policy and regulatory reforms.

*As mentioned earlier, environmental risks would jeopardize the achievement of mitigation and adaptation targets pledged by the government rather than severely affect this 4NC Project; however, the occurrence of environmental risks could impact the morale of the project implementers. It is recommended to draw lessons from past experiences both nationally and abroad to manage this risk, which is deemed to be unlikely to occur and not particularly severe.*

*The overall likelihood of sustainability is ranked on a four-point scale: i) Likely (L); ii) Moderately Likely (ML); iii) Moderately Unlikely (MU); and iv) Unlikely (U). Based on the assessment of individual areas, the rating to sustainability assigned by the MTR Team is Likely (L). An explanation of the ratings scale is provided in Table A-4.3 in Annex 4.*

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusions

The main objective of this 4NC Project is *“To enable China to prepare its fourth National Communication (4NC) and the third Biennial Update Report (BUR3) and the fourth Biennial Update Report (BUR4), in order to fulfill the obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change”*. The project design aims at achieving this result through the implementation of a four-prong barrier removal strategy, which is deemed adequate and it is discussed in Section 3.3 of this MTR report and visually represented in Figure 3.1. Furthermore, compared to previous submissions of national communications and biennial update reports, the project design had to guarantee the preparation of these compliances with higher standards in terms of: i) transparency of the reporting; ii) completeness and accuracy of the information reported; and iii) comparability with the reporting from other countries.

Lessons learned have been adequately leveraged, particularly the knowledge acquired from the preparation of previous NCs and BURs, while there is no clear evidence that lessons learned from other countries have been examined and integrated in the design. The design is well aligned with priorities at the national level as well as for the SARs. A proper SESP has been carried out during the PPG stage and satisfactory mitigation measures have been put in place; in addition, since 4NC is an enabling activity (EA) project, occurrence and severity of social and environmental risks, which are regularly monitored, are not expected to be a major concern. Lastly, gender equality and women empowerment are well embedded in the project design, although the gender analysis and the GAP annexed to the ProDoc could have been more detailed.

In terms of project design the only issue detected by the MTR Team, and discussed in Section 4.1.1 of this report, concerns the budget allocation among the six designed Components and the excessive granularity of details for the activities designed under Components 2-through-6. A larger number of simpler (sub-)activities with a shorter duration limited to Component 1 would allow for easier implementation and monitoring, with the possibility of immediately detecting early signs of challenges; on the other end the very large number of activities under Components 2-6 weighted against a very limited budget allocation raises concerns of under-budgeted activities, with some budget reallocation from Component 1 towards Components 2 and 4 already materialized.

The Project LogFrame is clearly outlined, and Indicators are largely deemed SMART by the MTR Team while the surveyed stakeholders have specified that they are easy to follow. The MTR Team assessment of the indicators concerning the degree to which they meet the definition of SMART has only found minor discrepancies, which have been however highlighted in the report (please refer to Section 4.1.2). The only noteworthy issue refers to the way Indicator 10 has been stated, which is not considered “Specific” for measuring the achievement of Outcome 4.1.

The resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a series of delays that caused the project to practically only start the implementation of its activities in Spring 2023, about nine months later than originally scheduled and, perhaps more significantly, with only nine months left before the hard deadline for submitting the 4NC and the BUR3 reports to the UNFCCC Secretariat. Despite this slow start, as evidenced

by the submitted reports to UNFCCC on December 29th, 2023, and further supported by the results reported in the 2023 project progress report (PPR), the PMO, under the guidance of the PSC, the support of the UNDP CO in Beijing, and in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders and contracted partners has been able to meet most of the Indicators' Mid-Term targets well ahead of the mid-2024 deadline. Only Indicators 1 and 9 have been achieved in June 2024, therefore not reported in the 2023 PPR, but still ahead of the Mid-Term deadline.

As to Indicator 1: *"No. of new additional individuals that are directly benefited from the implementation of the project. Disaggregated by gender."* this is the only Core Indicator for this EA project. Following GEF guidelines, this 4NC EA Project prepared, submitted and reported on Core Indicators, but did not prepare a GEF Tracking Tool (TT), which was not required; however, a GEF TT at Mid-Term stage has been recently prepared and it shows that the gender disaggregated targets have been both met and surpassed.

As mentioned above, the adopted project strategy is barrier removal, and an assessment of the degree of barriers removal as consequence of the implemented activities concluded that the rate of removal is pretty high. Ranging from 70% for the Capacity Barrier and the Policy & Regulatory Barrier, up to 80% for the Technical Barrier (please refer to section 4.2.2 for a detailed analysis). It is opinion of the MTR Team that complete barriers removal is very likely to occur by the end of project implementation.

The implementation of the 4NC Project has experienced a pretty rocky start, primarily due to the delayed start of the activities. However, the management structure that has been put in place has demonstrated to be perfectly capable of implementing the project activities even in the face of challenges and issues. All roles are clearly stated, with the implementing partner (MEE) heading the Project Steering Committee responsible for achieving the desired results, the PMO managing the day-to-day activities, and the UNDP overseeing project implementation.

The entire management team (i.e., IP, PSC, PMO and UNDP) has demonstrated highly satisfactory adaptive management skills when coping with initial issues of insufficient communication and coordination, exacerbated by stringent deadlines. As highlighted by the majority of surveyed stakeholders in their questionnaire's responses about this topic, management has quickly transformed a weakness into a strength establishing good communication and feedback mechanisms, fruitful cooperation among stakeholders, and amending work plans and budgets to cope with the challenges faced. This ability to apply adaptive management is also evidenced by the results obtained to date and all indicators' targets met. However, an increase in the budget allocated for the M&E plan is warranted and considered necessary for the continuation of project implementation.

Stakeholders' engagement during both project design as well as implementation has been sought after and successful. The mix of experience and expertise contributed by the stakeholders has allowed to prepare new GHG inventories and datasets according to the latest IPCC guidance and to upgrade the existing ones, which have been used for the 4NC and BUR3 compliances and will be also used for the upcoming BUR4 submission. However, for some stakeholder categories, which were mentioned in the ProDoc, there is no clear evidence in the reports and other documents produced that they have been sufficiently involved in project implementation (i.e., CSOs and NGOs). Furthermore, in order to gain support, it would be advisable to involve in the awareness raising activities the largest possible audience.

Reporting can be strengthened in a few aspects. For example, the annual work plans were not very detailed and lacked explanation on the reasons that led to their amendment, although the need to amend them is unquestionable. Also, many reports produced are left in Chinese and will only be translated at the end of the project, which limit their usefulness during project implementation, including this MTR, and doesn't allow to check their quality and content.

Internal communication, as mentioned earlier, started with some minor hiccups, but it was promptly transformed into strength by the PMO and UNDP. On the other hand, external communication is limited to existing channels of the various stakeholders, such as press releases, websites and social media. In order to improve the dissemination of the 4NC project results it would be advisable to create a dedicated website that does not replace, but it augments the existing channels.

Sustainability of project outcomes has been assessed by the MTR Team according to GEF's four categories of sustainability: i) financial; ii) socio-economic; iii) institutional framework and governance; and iv) environmental. The commitment of the GOC towards CCM and CCA and the significant body of work produced, the sense of ownership of all key stakeholders towards the project and its outcomes, the effective institutional framework and governance mechanisms established, and the well managed environmental risks, all lead to conclude that the sustainability of the project benefits and outcomes is well supported. Sustainability is further strengthened by the various capacity building activities and awareness raising initiatives that have been designed and are either currently ongoing or scheduled to be administered during the second half of project implementation. In conclusion sustainability of project outcomes has been deemed likely to occur by the MTR Team.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions from this MTR, the following recommendations are put forward to the PSC, PMO, and UNDP:

**Recommendations 1 and 2:** As discussed in Section 4.1.1, the budget allocated for Component 1 is USD 3,450,000, or 75.6% of the total GEF grant, which is to be weighed against the fact that the number of activities designed under Component 1 is only eight, or 13.3% of the total activities. Components 2 through 6 are allocated a combined 17.5% of the GEF grant (the remaining 6.9% is used for M&E plan and for project management) and have a total of 52 activities<sup>7</sup>. While this does not infringe any rule, it is a clear indication that activities under Component 1 are significantly more complex than all other Components.

Annex 3 of the ProDoc, the Multi Year Work Plan, shows the Gantt chart for project implementation, and it is broken down by Outputs and not by Activities, as it is usually the case for UNDP-developed, GEF-funded projects. This Gantt chart shows for Component 1 that except Output 1.1.1, which lasts 2 years, the other four Outputs have durations of at least three years. Having such long and significantly budgeted

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<sup>7</sup> This means that on average each activity under Component 1 uses 5.7% of the GEF grant vs an average of 0.2% of the GEF grant used for each activity under Components 2 through 6.

Outputs/Activities poses a risk of complexity in implementation and monitoring and therefore in case of any issue happening this might be not promptly detected.

It is therefore recommended to break down the Activities under Component 1 in simpler sub-Activities and, at least for Component 1, to detail the Gantt chart in Annex 3 of the ProDoc per sub-Activity and not per Output. This will simplify both implementation and monitoring of Component 1.

Furthermore, as second recommendation, it would be advisable to reassess the budget for all remaining activities to make sure that Activities under Component 1 are not over-budgeted while activities under the other five Components are not under-budgeted. To corroborate this need, it should be noticed that USD 300,000 has been already reallocated from Component 1 to Components 2 and 4, USD 150,000 each (see Section 4.3.3).

*Responsible Parties: PMO, PSC, and UNDP*

**Recommendation 3:** The statement of **Outcome 4.1** is: ***Enhanced capacity to determine, analyze, refer to, and articulate key national circumstances information in the national communication (NC) reports and biennial update reports (BUR).***

The designated indicator to measure the achievement of Outcome 4.1 is **Indicator 10:** *No. of governmental entities that are substantially involved and/or contributing to the performance of analyses of the various in-country factors that affects and impacts on the climate and climate change situation in the country as articulated in the NC Reports and BURs.*

While Outcome 4.1 aims at enhancing the capacity of stakeholders contributing to the NC and BURs, the way Indicator 10 is stated it only counts the number of people involved in analyses of factors impacting on climate change. Therefore Indicator 10 does not meet the “Specific” criterion for SMART indicators according to GEF definition<sup>8</sup>. Furthermore, **“Enhanced capacity”** in Outcome 4.1 statement would imply that some sort of training activities are carried out; however, the only two activities designed under Outcome 4.1 refer to a literature review and stakeholder consultations.

It is recommended to rephrase Indicator 10 in order to specifically describe a condition attained through the implementation of the activities and that concomitantly measures the achievement of Outcome 4.1. The MTR Team suggests a simpler, but perhaps more pertinent indicator statement referring to the sole Output under Outcome 4.1, which is consistent with the designed activities: “No. of completed sets of vetted data/information on each pertinent indicator”. If this statement is accepted, the Targets should also be changed accordingly, and can be provided the PMO who is aware of the number of datasets required by Mid-Term as well as by End-of-Project.

Alternatively, the description(s) of Activities 4.1.1.1 and/or 4.1.1.2 could be amended and improved to better suit Outcome 4.1, including some specific capacity building initiatives. In this case the rephrasing of Indicator 10 would be simpler and it could be *“No. of governmental entities whose capacity has been enhanced and that are substantially involved and/or contributing to the performance of analyses of the various in-country factors that affects and impacts on the climate and climate change situation in the country as articulated in the NC Reports and BURs”*.

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<sup>8</sup> The “S” stands for: **Specific:** Indicators must use clear language, describing a specific future condition.

*Responsible Parties: PMO, PSC, and UNDP*

**Recommendation 4:** Because of the delay in the start of the activities and the consequent tight deadline to submit the 4NC and BUR3 reports to the UNFCCC Secretariat, the PMO had to redirect most resources for the completion of these efforts. The consequence of correctly applying this adaptive management action has been the postponement of all the capacity building initiatives, with currently only the first two programs ongoing, which are: i) *“Improving provincial-level climate change adaptation capabilities”*; and ii) *“Improving climate-resilient urban capabilities”*.

Considering that 4NC is an EA project, completing all the designed capacity building on time and with high rate of success is critical for the project itself as well as for the sustainability of its Outcomes. It is therefore recommended to draft a detailed schedule and prioritize the design, development and administration of all postponed and pending training activities. Ideally all training initiatives should be completed at least 2 quarters before the end of the project, which is scheduled for mid-2026, to have sufficient time for the evaluation of the capacity building programs. To this end, it is recommended to prepare questionnaires on the content of each capacity building program and survey the participants 3-6 months after the end of the training activities to assess their enhanced capacity.

*Responsible Parties: PMO*

**Recommendation 5:** The budget for the M&E plan has been reduced compared to the PIF stage (initially it was USD 107,000); however, the M&E budgets in the ProDoc and in the CERDoc are different<sup>9</sup> and this discrepancy should be corrected. The total budget allocated is USD 100,000, which represents only 2.2% of the GEF grant. The MTR Team has prior experience of UNDP-developed, GEF-funded projects in China, and the team is well aware of the capacity of the UNDP CO to prepare the PIRs internally, with support from the PMO. However, the current M&E plan has no budget for the monitoring of the risk log, the SESP, the stakeholder engagement plan (SEP) and the GAP, plus the newly added GEF TT, and the allocated budget for other activities in the plan is quite tight.

It is recommended to increase the M&E plan budget by approximately USD 20,000-30,000 by revising the project budget.

*Responsible Parties: PMO, PSC, and UNDP*

**Recommendation 6:** Communication and cooperation among stakeholders from different ministries, departments and sectors have faced a few hiccups at the beginning of project implementation. The PMO and UNDP by organizing multi-stakeholders coordination meetings and by putting in place effective communication and feedback mechanisms have been able to turn the table around and make coordination and cooperation one of the project’s strengths as evidenced by the timely submission of the 4NC and BUR3 reports to the UNFCCC Secretariat. However, as highlighted by multiple stakeholders in

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<sup>9</sup> USD 100,000 in the ProDoc and USD 90,000 in the CERDoc.

their questionnaire's responses concerning this topic, the solutions applied should be systematically adopted for the second half of project implementation.

The MTR Team agrees with these stakeholders and recommends to draw lessons from this experience in improving communication and cooperation, to formalize mechanisms and protocols and adopting them for the remaining activities of the 4NC Project.

*Responsible Parties: PMO, and UNDP*

**Recommendation 7:** A stakeholder engagement plan is annexed to the ProDoc, and additional stakeholders that have been involved in project design are also mentioned in the same proposal. However, for some of these stakeholders, namely CSOs and NGOs, there is no clear mention or reference in any report of which activity implementation they have participated to and in what role; furthermore, no questionnaire has been compiled for this MTR by any representative of either category.

The MTR Team recommends involving more stakeholders, including CSOs and NGOs, in the remaining project activities, and better reporting on their contributions to the project. In addition, given the importance of creating support for advancing CCM and CCA actions, it is recommended to expand the awareness raising initiatives to a broader audience, including women groups, youth organizations and marginalized and indigenous people.

*Responsible Parties: PMO*

**Recommendation 8:** Besides the 4NC and BUR3 reports that have been submitted to the UNFCC Secretariat in English, several other reports have been drafted to date in Chinese (see Annex 13). However, the PMO has indicated that these reports will only be translated in English at the end of the project implementation period.

It is recommended to promptly translate the existing reports as well as those that will be prepared during the second half of project implementation. Having the reports readily available in English serves a threefold purpose: i) provides an additional source of information accessible to everybody; ii) allows during reviews, like this MTR, to assess the quality of the reports and, if needed, recommend areas of improvements; and, perhaps most importantly, iii) are required as supporting evidence for indicators achievement during PIRs preparation. The MTR Team strongly recommends completing this translation before the next 2025 PIR preparation; this, of course, in addition to preparing all new reports in English as well.

*Responsible Parties: PMO, and UNDP*

**Recommendation 9:** The project has not developed and put in place a proper external communication plan. When there is news related to the project or an outcome that needs to be disseminated, every stakeholder uses its own communication channels, such as press releases, social media and webpages. A fragmented communication does not allow the project to achieve full potential in terms of dissemination and creating support for such a critical project both from socio-economic as well as environmental standpoints.

The MTR Team recommends to communicate externally all news and achievements as a single voice, creating a project webpage and a recognizable logo. Of course, existing channels of communication of the various partners can still be used as additional media, but the project logo should always be clearly visible.

*Responsible Parties: PMO*

## Annexes

### Annex 1. MTR ToR

# Mid-Term Review Terms of Reference

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This is the Terms of Reference (ToR) for -the Midterm Review (MTR) of the full-sized UNDP-supported GEF-financed project titled **Enabling China to Prepare Its Fourth National Communication, and Biennial Update Reports on Climate Change (PIMS6399)** implemented through the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE), which is to be undertaken in 2024. The project started on the 29/7/2022 and is in its *second* year of implementation. This ToR sets out the expectations for this MTR. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* ([https://erc.undp.org/pdf/Guidance\\_Midterm%20Review%20 EN\\_2014.pdf](https://erc.undp.org/pdf/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20 EN_2014.pdf)).

## 2. PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The objective of this project is to enable China to fulfill its commitments under the UNFCCC to prepare its fourth National Communication (4NC) Report, third Biennial Update Report (BUR3), and fourth Biennial Update Report (BUR4).

Based on the experience and lessons learned from the previous NCs and BURs, the project will broaden and consolidate the network of stakeholders, including those in the government, research and education institutions, associations, social groups, enterprises, individuals, enhance technical capacity of national experts, and strengthen the institutional frameworks.

Furthermore, the project will place greater emphasis on relevant policies on mitigation of and adaptation to climate change and the results of their implementation, promote the establishment and improvement of the domestic systems for measurement, report and verification, so as to enable China to effectively address climate change in the process of pursuing national sustainable development.

The outcomes of the project are as follows:

- **Outcome 1** Clearer understanding of the magnitude and sources of the GHG emissions and removals from the different sectors.
- **Outcome 2** Better understanding of China's vulnerability to the threats of climate change and improved accuracy of prediction of impacts in the vulnerable sectors of the country.
- **Outcome 3:** 3.1) Enhanced understanding of the appropriate policies to enable the proper planning and implementation of prioritized applicable and feasible climate change mitigation (CCM) actions for China. 3.2) Improved accounting of the results and impacts of implemented CCM actions through an improved national MRV system.
- **Outcome 4:** 4.1) Enhanced capacity to determine, analyze, refer to, and articulate key national circumstances information in the national communication (NC) reports and biennial update reports (BUR); 4.2) Enhanced understanding and capacity to determine applicable, feasible and

cost-effective CCM and climate change adaptation (CCA) technologies, techniques and measures, and the most suitable financial resources and financing options that can be applied to implement action that address CCM and CCA issues; 4.3) Further enhanced public awareness of climate change issues.

- **Outcome 5** Better understanding of GHG emissions and sinks in the Hong Kong and Macao SARs, and improved capacities for NC, and BUR.
- **Outcome 6** China's compliance to the reporting obligations to the UNFCCC.

The total project budget is USD 6,032,210, of which from GEF Trust Fund is USD 4,566,210. Its Co-financing is USD 1,466,000, including funds from UNDP and central government. Project started in July 2022 and was scheduled to end in July 2026.

### 3. MTR PURPOSE

The MTR of this Project is scheduled to be in 2024. The MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document, and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability.

The stakeholders will be involved and consulted during the MTR process. The final MTR report will be cleared by the UNDP Country Office and the UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Adviser, and will be approved by the PSC.

### 4. MTR APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

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

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

The MTR team is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach<sup>10</sup> ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), the Nature, Climate and Energy (NCE) Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to Project Management Office, the Implementing Partner, UNDP China; executing agencies, senior officials and task team/ component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, local government and CSOs, etc. Additionally, field mission might be expected once the implementing partner confirm the process.

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<sup>10</sup> For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

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

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

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

## 5. DETAILED SCOPE OF THE MTR

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

### i. Project Strategy

#### Project design:

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
- Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?
- Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.
  - Were relevant gender issues (e.g. the impact of the project on gender equality in the programme country, involvement of women's groups, engaging women in project activities) raised in the Project Document?
- If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

#### Results Framework/Logframe:

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project's logframe indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.

- Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART ‘development’ indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.

**ii. Progress Towards Results**

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:

- Review the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix and following the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*; colour code progress in a “traffic light system” based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as “Not on target to be achieved” (red).

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

Project Strategy	Indicator <sup>11</sup>	Baseline Level <sup>12</sup>	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target <sup>13</sup>	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment <sup>14</sup>	Achievement Rating <sup>15</sup>	Justification for Rating
<b>Objective:</b>	Indicator (if applicable):							
<b>Outcome 1:</b>	Indicator 1:							
	Indicator 2:							
<b>Outcome 2:</b>	Indicator 3:							
	Indicator 4:							
	Etc.							
<b>Etc.</b>								

**Indicator Assessment Key**

Green= Achieved	Yellow= On target to be achieved	Red= Not on target to be achieved
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In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

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

**iii. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management**

Management Arrangements:

- Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.

<sup>11</sup> Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards

<sup>12</sup> Populate with data from the Project Document

<sup>13</sup> If available

<sup>14</sup> Colour code this column only

<sup>15</sup> Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

- Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Do the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and/or UNDP and other partners have the capacity to deliver benefits to or involve women? If yes, how?
- What is the gender balance of project staff? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in project staff?
- What is the gender balance of the Project Board? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in the Project Board?

Work Planning:

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

Finance and co-finance:

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

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement (US\$)	Actual Amount Contributed at stage of Midterm Review (US\$)	Actual % of Expected Amount
<b>TOTAL</b>					

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

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

- Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they

use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?

- Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were incorporated in monitoring systems. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.

#### Stakeholder Engagement:

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

#### Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

- Validate the risks identified in the project’s most current SESP, and those risks’ ratings; are any revisions needed?
- Summarize and assess the revisions made since CEO Endorsement/Approval (if any) to:
  - The project’s overall safeguards risk categorization.
  - The identified types of risks<sup>16</sup> (in the SESP).
  - The individual risk ratings (in the SESP).
- Describe and assess progress made in the implementation of the project’s social and environmental management measures as outlined in the SESP submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval (and prepared during implementation, if any), including any revisions to those measures. Such management measures might include Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) or other management plans, though can also include aspects of a project’s design; refer to Question 6 in the SESP template for a summary of the identified management measures.

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

#### Reporting:

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

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<sup>16</sup> Risks are to be labeled with both the UNDP SES Principles and Standards, and the GEF’s “types of risks and potential impacts”: Climate Change and Disaster; Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups; Disability Inclusion; Adverse Gender-Related impact, including Gender-based Violence and Sexual Exploitation; Biodiversity Conservation and the Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources; Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement; Indigenous Peoples; Cultural Heritage; Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention; Labor and Working Conditions; Community Health, Safety and Security.

- Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

#### Communications & Knowledge Management:

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

#### **iv. Sustainability**

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

##### Financial risks to sustainability:

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

##### Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

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

##### Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

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

##### Environmental risks to sustainability:

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

#### **Conclusions & Recommendations**

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

Additionally, the MTR consultant/team is expected to make recommendations to the Project Team. Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report’s executive summary. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for guidance on a recommendation table.

The MTR team should make no more than 15 recommendations total.

## Ratings

The MTR team will include its ratings of the project’s results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements in a *MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table* in the Executive Summary of the MTR report. See Annex E for ratings scales. No rating on Project Strategy and no overall project rating is required.

**Table. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for Enabling China to Prepare Its Fourth National Communication, and Biennial Update Reports on Climate Change**

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
<b>Project Strategy</b>	N/A	
<b>Progress Towards Results</b>	Objective Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Etc.	
<b>Project Implementation &amp; Adaptive Management</b>	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
<b>Sustainability</b>	(rate 4 pt. scale)	

## 6. TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the MTR will be approximately 25 working days over a time period of 12 of weeks, and shall not exceed five months from when the consultant(s) are hired. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF WORKING DAYS	COMPLETION DATE
Application Deadline		10 April, 2024
Selection of MTR Team		30 April, 2024
Preparation of the MTR Team (Documents Handover)		3 May, 2024

Document review and preparing MTR Inception Report (MTR Inception Report due no later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission)	<i>3 days</i>	<i>10 May, 2024</i>
MTR mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits	<i>11 days</i>	<i>15 June, 2024</i>
Presentation of initial findings- last day of the MTR mission	<i>1 day</i>	<i>20 June, 2024</i>
Preparing draft report (due within 3 weeks of the MTR mission)	<i>7 days</i>	<i>10 July, 2024</i>
Circulation of draft MTR report for comments		<i>15 July, 2024</i>
Finalization of MTR report/ Incorporating audit trail from feedback on draft report (due within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on the draft)	<i>3 days</i>	<i>22 July, 2024</i>
Preparation & Issue of Management Response (by the Commissioning Unit)		<i>25 July, 2024</i>
Expected date of full MTR completion		<i>29 July, 2024</i>

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

## 7. MIDTERM REVIEW DELIVERABLES

#	Deliverable	Description	Timing	Responsibilities
1	<b>MTR Inception Report</b>	MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of Midterm Review	10 May, 2024	MTR team submits to the Commissioning Unit and project management
2	<b>Presentation</b>	Initial Findings	20 June, 2024	MTR Team presents to project management and the Commissioning Unit
3	<b>Draft MTR Report</b>	Full draft report (using guidelines on content outlined in Annex B) with annexes	10 July, 2024	Sent to the Commissioning Unit, reviewed by RTA, Project Coordinating Unit, GEF OFP
4	<b>Final Report*</b>	Revised report with audit trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report	29 July, 2024	Sent to the Commissioning Unit

\*The final MTR report must be in English. If applicable, the Commissioning Unit may choose to arrange for a translation of the report into a language more widely shared by national stakeholders.

## 8. MTR ARRANGEMENTS

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

The Commissioning Unit will contract the consultants and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the MTR team and will provide an updated stakeholder list with contact

details (phone and email). The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the MTR team to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

## 9. TEAM COMPOSITION

A team of independent consultants will conduct the MTR - *one team leader (with experience and exposure to projects and evaluations in other regions globally) and national consultants, usually from the country of the project.* The team leader will be responsible for the overall design of the MTR process, assessment of the project results, leading the MTR team, supervising the national consultants, and writing the MTR report etc. The national consultants will support and report to the Team Leader, assess emerging trends with respect to regulatory frameworks, budget allocation, capacity buildings, and work with the Project Team in formulating MTR report.

The consultants cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with project's related activities.

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

### Team Leader (one person)

#### Education

- A Master's degree in social science, or other closely related field

#### Experience

- Experience in relevant technical areas for at least 8 years;
- Relevant experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to Climate Change;
- Experience in evaluating projects with Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and Climate Change; experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis.
- Excellent communication skills, Demonstrable analytical skills, and Experience working in China;

#### Language

- Fluency in written and spoken English.

### National Consultants

#### Education

- A Bachelor's degree in social science, or other closely related field

#### Experience

- Experience in relevant technical areas for at least 5 years;
- A minimum of five years of project management experience in related climate change projects;
- Climate change project evaluation experience;
- Multilateral and bilateral funded project development and implementation;
- Familiarity with national development policies, programs and projects related to Climate Change.

- English proficiency is required.

## 10. ETHICS

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

## 11. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the Deliverable 1, final MTR Inception Report and approval by the Commissioning Unit
- 60% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the Deliverable 2, 3, 4, including Initial Findings, MTR draft report, and the final MTR report, and approval by the Commissioning Unit and RTA (via signatures on the MTR Report Clearance Form) and delivery of completed MTR Audit Trail

Criteria for issuing the final payment of 60%<sup>17</sup>:

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

## 12. APPLICATION PROCESS<sup>18</sup>

Please submit your offer and the below documents directly in the UNDP supplier system:

- a) **CV and a Personal History Form** ([P11 form](#)<sup>19</sup>);
- b) **Brief description of approach to work/technical proposal** of why the individual considers him/herself as the most suitable for the assignment, and a proposed methodology on how they will approach and complete the assignment; (max 1 page)

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<sup>17</sup> The Commissioning Unit is obligated to issue payments to the MTR team as soon as the terms under the ToR are fulfilled. If there is an ongoing discussion regarding the quality and completeness of the final deliverables that cannot be resolved between the Commissioning Unit and the MTR team, the Regional M&E Advisor and Vertical Fund Directorate will be consulted. If needed, the Commissioning Unit's senior management, Procurement Services Unit and Legal Support Office will be notified as well so that a decision can be made about whether or not to withhold payment of any amounts that may be due to the evaluator(s), suspend or terminate the contract and/or remove the individual contractor from any applicable rosters. See the UNDP Individual Contract Policy for further details:

[https://popp.undp.org/\\_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP\\_POPP\\_DOCUMENT\\_LIBRARY/Public/PSU\\_Individual%20Contract\\_Individual%20Contract%20Policy.docx&action=default](https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PSU_Individual%20Contract_Individual%20Contract%20Policy.docx&action=default)

<sup>18</sup> Engagement of the consultants should be done in line with guidelines for hiring consultants in the POPP: <https://popp.undp.org/SitePages/POPPRoot.aspx>

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11\\_Personal\\_history\\_form.doc](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11_Personal_history_form.doc)

- c) **Financial Proposal** that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price and all other travel related costs (such as flight ticket, per diem, etc), supported by a breakdown of costs, as per template. If an applicant is employed by an organization/company/institution, and he/she expects his/her employer to charge a management fee in the process of releasing him/her to UNDP under Reimbursable Loan Agreement (RLA), the applicant must indicate at this point, and ensure that all such costs are duly incorporated in the financial proposal submitted to UNDP.

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

## Annex 2. MTR Evaluative Matrix

Below there are the criteria developed and followed by the MTR Team for the preparation of the questions to be asked in the stakeholders’ questionnaire and interviews.

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<b>Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?</b>			
<b>Project Design</b>			
Is the project strategy effective for reaching the desired results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistency between project objective, project rationale and project strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Information Form (PIF)</li> <li>Project Document (ProDoc)</li> <li>CEO Endorsement Request Document (CERDoc)</li> <li>Stakeholders views</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of documents and data received.</li> <li>Preliminary interviews with PMO and UNDP.</li> <li>Survey of relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> <li>Follow up questions and interviews, on an as-needed basis, with relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> </ul>
How well were the country priorities addressed in the project design?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alignment of national policies/strategies with objectives/outcomes within the project timeframe.</li> </ul>		
Were lessons learned from similar projects, in China and abroad, incorporated in the project design?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of lessons learned from other projects, in China and abroad, in the project design.</li> </ul>		
Was the perspective of all relevant stakeholders taken into account during project design?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence that point of views of stakeholders contributed to the project design.</li> <li>Stakeholders consulted during project design and engagement plan.</li> </ul>		
Were relevant gender considerations included in the project design?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of gender disaggregated indicators.</li> <li>Gender analysis and gender action plan.</li> </ul>		
<b>Results Framework/LogFrame</b>			
Were all project objectives, outcomes and outputs logical and clearly defined?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coherence and consistency among project outcomes/outputs/activities and achievement of project objectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Information Form (PIF)</li> <li>Project Document (ProDoc)</li> <li>CEO Endorsement Request Document (CERDoc)</li> <li>Stakeholders views</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of documents and data received.</li> <li>Preliminary interviews with PMO and UNDP.</li> <li>Survey of relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> <li>Follow up questions and interviews, on an as-needed basis, with relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> </ul>
Are all project indicators “SMART” (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suitability of indicators, reliability of baseline, and adequacy of targets’ ambition.</li> </ul>		

<b>Progress Towards Results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?</b>			
<b>Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis</b>			
What progress has been made towards achieving indicators' mid-term targets, and producing mid-term outputs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project results framework indicators.</li> <li>• Indicators in GEF tracking tool at mid-term review stage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Reports (AWPs; PPR).</li> <li>• Quality Assurance Reports.</li> <li>• Combined Delivery Reports.</li> <li>• Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures.</li> <li>• PSC Meetings Minutes.</li> <li>• GEF Tracking Tool.</li> <li>• Government and UNFCCC press releases and websites.</li> <li>• Questionnaire and interviews with stakeholders.</li> <li>• Mid-Term Outputs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of documents and data received.</li> <li>• Preliminary interviews with PMO and UNDP.</li> <li>• Survey of relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> <li>• Follow up questions and interviews, on an as-needed basis, with relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> </ul>
What NCs, BURs, GHG inventories and GHG emissions datasets have been drafted or updated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submission of NCs and BURs to GEF Secretariat.</li> <li>• Completion of new or updated GHG inventories and GHG emissions datasets.</li> </ul>		
What CCM and CCA policies have been drafted, updated or implemented?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of new or updated CCM and CCA policies.</li> <li>• Monitoring of implemented CCM and CCA policies.</li> </ul>		
What have been the main achievements and strengths valued during project implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results above targets.</li> <li>• Unexpected results or benefits.</li> </ul>		
What have been the main difficulties and shortcomings encountered during project implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results below targets.</li> <li>• Activities behind schedule.</li> <li>• Budget execution rate below initial estimates.</li> </ul>		
<b>Remaining Barriers to Achieving the Project Objective</b>			
To what extent the identified barriers have been removed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of compliance report for UNFCCC Secretariat.</li> <li>• Establishment of communication and institutional frameworks.</li> <li>• Adherence to IPCC guidance of new and updated data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Theory of Change.</li> <li>• Project Progress Report (PPR).</li> <li>• Annual Work Plans (AWPs).</li> <li>• Questionnaire and interviews with stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of documents and data received.</li> <li>• Preliminary interviews with PMO and UNDP.</li> <li>• Survey of relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> <li>• Follow up questions and interviews, on an as-needed basis, with relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project's implementation?</b>			
<b>Management Arrangements/Work Planning</b>			

Have the IP and PMO effectively focused on project results, timeliness and risk management?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of issues being detected, analyzed and solved.</li> <li>• Evidence that risk log and SESP were periodically reviewed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project documents and annual reports (AWPs; PPR).</li> <li>• Questionnaire and interviews with stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of documents and data received.</li> <li>• Preliminary interviews with PMO and UNDP.</li> <li>• Survey of relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> <li>• Follow up questions and interviews, on an as-needed basis, with relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> </ul>
To what extent UNDP (GEF Agency) responsiveness to project implementation problems was timely and effective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of quality of support by the GEF Agency.</li> <li>• Assessment of level of responsiveness of the GEF Agency to changing project needs.</li> </ul>		
Have changes to project activities and implementation timeline been adequately documented and approved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence that changes to activities, timeline and budget have been documented and approved.</li> <li>• Evidence that relevant stakeholders and project partners were aware of significant project changes.</li> </ul>		
<b>Finance and Co-Finance</b>			
To what extent has the project delivery rate (budget disbursed as a percentage of estimated budget) been achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of discrepancy between planned and executed budget (quarterly and annually).</li> <li>• Evidence of funding amounts and disbursement dates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Delivery Reports.</li> <li>• Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures.</li> <li>• Co-financing tables.</li> <li>• Questionnaire and interviews with stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of documents and data received.</li> <li>• Preliminary interviews with PMO and UNDP.</li> <li>• Survey of relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> <li>• Follow up questions and interviews, on an as-needed basis, with relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> </ul>
How much co-financing has materialized and how timely?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of Co-Financing reported and discrepancy with planned co-financing.</li> </ul>		
<b>Project-Level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems</b>			
To what extent has the M&E plan been effectively operational and sufficiently funded during project implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of funding disbursement for the M&amp;E activities.</li> <li>• Relevance and quality of the project progress reporting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PIF, ProDoc, CERDoc, and PPR.</li> <li>• Questionnaire and interviews with stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of documents and data received.</li> <li>• Preliminary interviews with PMO and UNDP.</li> <li>• Survey of relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> <li>• Follow up questions and interviews, on an as-needed basis, with relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholders Engagement</b>			

<p>Have recommendations and priorities of key stakeholders been taken into consideration?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roles and responsibilities of all project partners.</li> <li>• Evidence of contribution of stakeholders to projects Outcomes and Outputs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholders Engagement Plan.</li> <li>• Gender analysis and Gender Action Plan</li> <li>• PPR and Mid-Term Outputs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of documents and data received.</li> <li>• Preliminary interviews with PMO and UNDP.</li> <li>• Survey of relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> </ul>
<p>To what extent have relevant stakeholders been engaged during project implementation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of stakeholders participation to project activities, including capacity building programs and awareness raising initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSC meetings minutes.</li> <li>• Questionnaire and interviews with stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up questions and interviews, on an as-needed basis, with relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> </ul>
<p>To what extent did the project contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of participation of women in project implementation, including capacity building programs and awareness raising initiatives.</li> <li>• Evidence of engagement of women contractors, particularly in senior roles.</li> </ul>		
<p>Have local governments and SARs supported the achievement of the objectives on the project?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of local authorities contributions to project Outcomes and Outputs.</li> <li>• Evidence of submission of SARs’ contributions to 4NC and BUR3.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Reporting/Communication</b></p>			
<p>To what extent has the quality of reporting fulfilled UNFCCC/IPCC high standard requirements?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of compliances submitted to the UNFCCC Secretariat aligned with latest IPCC guidelines.</li> <li>• Results of training programs to enable stakeholders to prepare NCs and BURs compliant to UNFCCC and IPCC standards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All project documents produced (4NC, BUR3, new and updated GHG inventories and emissions datasets, project output reports, AWP; PPR, quality assurance reports, etc.).</li> <li>• Press releases.</li> <li>• Questionnaire and interviews with stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of documents and data received.</li> <li>• Preliminary interviews with PMO and UNDP.</li> <li>• Survey of relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> <li>• Follow up questions and interviews, on an as-needed basis, with relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> </ul>
<p>How effective and regular are communication and feedback mechanisms in ensuring stakeholder knowledge of the project?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of stakeholders coordination meetings.</li> <li>• Level of stakeholder awareness of project results and activities.</li> </ul>		
<p>Are there effective external communication mechanisms?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of project and project results visibility.</li> <li>• Number and type of external communication channels.</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders' perception of usefulness of the communication channels.</li> </ul>		
<b>Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?</b>			
<p>What is the likelihood that financial resources will not be available after GEF support ends?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existence of sources of funding for these activities.</li> <li>Type and cost of activities that would require continued financial support after the end of the project in order to sustain results.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ProDoc, SESP and risk log.</li> <li>PSC meetings minutes.</li> <li>Project Progress Report.</li> <li>Questionnaire and interviews with stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of documents and data received.</li> <li>Preliminary interviews with PMO and UNDP.</li> <li>Survey of relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> <li>Follow up questions and interviews, on an as-needed basis, with relevant stakeholders and project staff.</li> </ul>
<p>Do institutional framework and governance structure pose risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project benefits?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existence and type of institutional frameworks and governance structures that might affect project benefits?</li> </ul>		
<p>Are there socio-economic risks that could jeopardize the sustainability of project results?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existence and type of socio-economic conditions that may affect the sustainability of the direct results.</li> <li>Evidence of ownership by stakeholders of the project's results.</li> </ul>		
<p>Are there environmental risks that could jeopardize the sustainability of project results?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existence and intensity of environmental conditions affecting the sustainability of the project results</li> </ul>		

## Annex 3. Questionnaire Used for Data Collection

### Mid-Term Review Questionnaire

**This survey is administered assuring the strictest level of confidentiality of the persons interviewed. Nobody, besides the Mid-Term Review Team, will ever be aware of the source of any input or feedback.**

**Please specify if you have been engaged during the:**

- A. Project design phase.
- B. Project implementation phase.
- C. Both phases.

**Please respond to as many questions as possible to the best and fullest of your knowledge.**

#### Project Strategy

1. How clearly was the Project Strategy outlined in the ProDoc?
2. Has the Project Strategy proven to be effective in reaching the desired results?
3. Could you describe the Project Strategy in one sentence?

#### Project Design

4. To what extent were lessons learned from other similar projects, both in China and abroad, taken into consideration in the project design?
5. How well were the country priorities addressed in the project design (i.e., achieve carbon neutrality by 2060, strengthen institutional and technical capacity on preparing GHG inventories and reporting to the UNFCCC, enhance domestic transparency, improve measuring and monitoring systems, etc.)? Would have you recommended any additional activity? If yes, please describe as many as you deem necessary.
6. Was the project designed in a relatively thorough and easy to implement way? Were all project objectives, outcomes and outputs clearly defined?
7. Do you think the project design is technically and financially viable and guarantees sustainability of the results achieved? If not, what would have you done differently?
8. Were all risks thoroughly identified? Were the risk mitigation and management measures outlined in the ProDoc adequate?
9. Were all relevant/key stakeholders sufficiently involved during project design phase? If not, which stakeholders were left out or not sufficiently involved?
10. Were relevant gender issues raised during the project design phase?

11. What was the percentage of women involved in the project design? What proportion of engaged women were at senior level?
12. Were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?

### **Results Framework/LogFrame**

13. How clear was the project LogFrame? Did you find all Indicators to be “SMART” (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound)? If not, which Indicator you didn’t find SMART and why?
14. Has the project LogFrame been relevant across the project implementation, so far? If no, why not?
15. If you had the opportunity, would have you added, removed or changed any of the proposed Indicators? If yes, please provide your insights.
16. Were all Mid-Term Targets and End-Of-Project sensible? Was any target either overly ambitious or not ambitious enough? If yes, which ones and how would have you changed them?
17. According to the 2023 Project Progress Report, most Mid-Term Targets were achieved already in December 2023, 6 months before the deadline, what led to such early achievement of the project results? (e.g. unambitious project design, unexpected synergies among stakeholders, etc.) Please elaborate.
18. Why was the Mid-Term Target for Indicator 9 not achieved? (Indicator 9: No. of governmental entities that can capably report evidence-based GHG emission reduction data using the country’s official MRV system)
19. Why Indicators 1 & 2 were not reported in the 2023 Project Progress Reports? (Indicator 1: No. of new additional individuals that are directly benefited from the implementation of the project. Indicator 2: Progress towards completion, government-approval, and submission of reports to the UNFCCC, % completion.) With Indicator 2 clearly being achieved.
20. Did the Project Progress Report provide evidence of any challenge that occurred during project implementation? If yes, please provide examples.

## **Progress Towards Results**

### **GEF Tracking Tool**

N/A

### **Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis**

21. Have you encountered any unexpected difficulties during project implementation, so far? If yes, what have you done to overcome them and what would have you done differently to prevent them?
22. What are the strengths that you have appreciated during project implementation, so far?
23. Has any new policy of CCM and/or CCA been drafted, or existing ones updated, as a result of this project enabling activities? If yes, which ones?

24. Have the implementation of existing CCM and CCA policies been monitored as a result of this project enabling activities? If yes, what are the main results measured?
25. Has the domestic MRV system been improved/established? If yes, has the corresponding training program been completed? Have you already used this new MRV system? Is it easy to use and results are more accurate and reliable than before? Please elaborate.
26. The Gantt chart in the ProDoc detailing the project work plan/timeline is provided by Output. Considering that each Output is made of multiple Activities, how well was possible to track Activities completion towards Outcomes? Any plan to break the Gantt chart down to the Activity level?
27. Have the extended GHG inventories for 2017 and 2018 using the 1996 IPCC Guidelines been completed? For each completed GHG inventory, which GHG gases have been covered? Which new category, if any, has been added?
28. Have the extended GHG inventory for 2020 using the 2006 IPCC Guidelines been successfully completed? Which GHG gases have been covered? Which new category, if any, has been added?
29. Why was the 2023 Project Implementation Review (PIR) not completed?
30. Is the information coming from Hong Kong and Macao adequate and timely? Have any relevant issues or strengths been detected in the SARs (Special administrative Regions)? Please elaborate.

## **Project Implementation & Adaptive Management**

### **Management Arrangements**

#### **Questions on UNDP**

31. On a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest grade, how would you rate the quality and timeliness of UNDP support to the project (i.e., to the Implementing Partner and/or to the Project Management Office)? Please in few words justify your rating.
32. Is there an appropriate focus from UNDP on achieving project results and timeliness?
33. Has the reporting of results and information been always transparent and realistic? If not, please give examples of when it was not.
34. How effective and timely has been the responsiveness of the managing partners to significant implementation problems, including risk management? Could you give examples of a problem and how it was managed and solved?

#### **Questions on MEE (Implementing Partner – IP) and PMO (Project Management Office)**

35. On a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest grade, how would you rate the execution capacity of the project activities of the IP and PMO? Please in few words justify your rating.
36. Is there an appropriate focus from IP and PMO on achieving project results and timeliness?
37. Has the reporting of results and information been always transparent and realistic? If not, please give examples of when it was not.
38. How effective and timely has been the responsiveness of the managing partners to significant implementation problems, including risk management? Could you give examples of a problem and how it was managed and solved?

### **General Management Arrangements Questions**

39. Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent, effective and undertaken in a timely manner?
40. Were the PSC meetings productive, well organized and fully participated? Would you recommend any change for the second half of project implementation?
41. What were the major challenges faced during the course of the implementation? Please provide examples and how they have been overcome.
42. What was the general process of selecting the sub-contractors and consultants?
43. Have you experienced any problem in engaging contractors (e.g. limited capacity, delayed delivery by contractor, etc.)? If yes, how were these mitigated?
44. What proportion of engaged sub-contractors and consultants were women? How well did they perform on average?
45. Was any gender issue detected during project implementation? If yes, how it has been mitigated?

### **Work Planning**

46. The project was slated to break ground on July 1, 2022; however, it only started early 2023. What was the reason for that delay (i.e., Covid-19 resurgence, difficulties at kick-off stage, stakeholders' coordination issues, etc.)? Please elaborate.
47. Do you expect similar delays to occur again? What has the management team done to prevent this issue to recur?
48. As evidenced in the Inception report, the first-year and 2-year budgets have been changed, could you explain what was the reason for that request? What was the decision approval process?
49. Do you expect further changes in the budget for the remaining project implementation period? Please elaborate.
50. Given that this is an enabling/capacity building project, how well does it facilitate, or impede, the implementation of the project activities the fact that capacity building programs on data collection for GHG inventories preparation (Output 1.5) as well as on assessing technologies and source of financing for such technologies (Output 4.6) will only be completed during the last year of project implementation? Was this discussed, are there plans to change the timeline of these Outputs?

### **Finance and Co-Finance**

51. How much GEF funds have been disbursed to date compared to the original budget? Are there any variances between planned and actual expenditures?
52. How much co-financing has been disbursed to date compared to the original budget? Was it always timely?
53. How was the project co-financing data tracked? What were the challenges in tracking co-financing?
54. Have strong financial controls been established that allow the project management to make informed decisions regarding the budget at any time, and allow for the timely flow of funds and the payment of satisfactory project deliverables?

55. Were all activities implemented so far well budgeted? If not, how was the issue solved? Please provide examples.
56. Has an annual financial audit ever been conducted? If yes, what were the main results? If not, why not and have you scheduled any audits?
57. Are there any changes made to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions? If yes, how would you rate appropriateness and relevance of such revisions? Please elaborate.

### **Project-Level Monitoring & Evaluation Systems**

58. Was the M&E plan sufficiently budgeted and funded during project preparation and implementation thus far? Are sufficient resources being allocated to M&E? Are these resources being allocated effectively?
59. Are the M&E systems appropriate for this project specific context?
60. Do the monitoring tools provide the necessary information? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required?
61. What kind of follow-up actions and/or adaptive management have been taken in response to challenges documented in the Project Progress Report?

### **Stakeholders Engagement**

62. Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders? Are roles and responsibilities clearly defined? If not, please provide example of what could be improved.
63. What key challenges have been faced by the key stakeholders in collaborating with each other? Were all stakeholders collaborative as expected? How were some of these challenges mitigated?
64. Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
65. How has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives? Are there any limitations to stakeholder participation in project activities? Is there invested interest of stakeholders in the project's long-term success and sustainability?
66. Based on the stakeholder engagement plan provided as Annex 7 of the ProDoc, are there any stakeholders that have not been adequately engaged yet in project implementation? If yes, which stakeholders and why?
67. Considering the one of the project's objectives is to broaden and consolidate the network of stakeholders, how have the private sector (i.e., enterprises, business associations and financial institutions), CSOs, NGOs, and individuals (including national experts and consulting firms) been engaged in the project?
68. Could you provide example of Activities implementation that involved the private sector (i.e., enterprises, business associations and financial institutions), CSOs, NGOs, and individuals (including national experts and consulting firms)? In which way were these stakeholders involved?
69. Which stakeholders, and from what sectors, participated to the capacity building programs? How were these participants selected? Please elaborate.

70. Where the capacity building programs well participated? What was the average numbers of trainees? What was the percentage of women trained?
71. How was the success of these capacity building programs evaluated, which methods have been applied?
72. How were women engaged in project implementation? What percentage of stakeholders are women? What proportion in senior positions? Please give examples.

### **Reporting**

73. Are the deliverables prepared of good quality and do they fulfil GEF reporting requirements? If yes, what evidence would support that?
74. What was done differently compared to the first 3 NCs and the first 2 BURs, to improve the reliability, transparency, accuracy, comparability and comprehensiveness of the information on GHG emissions and climate actions?
75. After submitting its BUR3 and NC4, has China undergone any Technical Analysis/Technical Review, yet? If yes, what are the results from the experts? If not, when are these reviews scheduled for?
76. How has any undertaken adaptive management process been documented, shared with key partners and incorporated into project implementation? Please provide examples.

### **Communications**

77. Is communication regular and effective?
78. Are there key stakeholders left out of communication?
79. Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Are these feedbacks timely?
80. Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness concerning project outcomes and activities?
81. Are proper means/channels/protocols of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (i.e., a web presence, or a public awareness campaigns?)
82. Could communications be improved? If yes, how?
83. Among the project stakeholders, who do you personally communicate with the most?

### **Sustainability**

84. The project Theory of Change has identified three barriers (Policy & Regulatory Barrier: lack of regular information collection mechanism; Technical Barrier: transparency of information reported should be enhanced; and Capacity Barrier: data are missing for new categories and data is inconsistent among different agencies). To what degree has each of the three barriers been removed to date? Please express your rating in percentage terms, where 100% means that the barrier has been completely removed.
85. Will the project be able to completely remove each of the three barriers by the end of project implementation? If not, which barrier(s) you deem most persistent and what would you recommend to do differently in order to completely remove such barrier(s)?

86. What have been the key measures of sustainability/replicability embedded in the project design and delivery?
87. Which elements/results of the project are particularly sustainable? Why?
88. Which elements/results of the project are least sustainable? Why?
89. Has any new risks been identified during project implementation so far, or has any existing risk required a change in its ratings? If yes, which new risks were identified or which existing risk has been re-rated?

### **Financial Risks to Sustainability**

90. Will the government continue to support CCM and CCA actions and their reporting to fulfill its pledge to reduce GHG emissions? What evidence would support your response?
91. What additional factors are needed to create an enabling environment for continued financing?
92. Has there been the establishment of financial and economic instruments and mechanisms to ensure the ongoing flow of benefits once the GEF assistance ends (i.e. from the public and private sectors, or market transformations to promote the project's objectives)?

### **Socio-Economic Risks to Sustainability**

93. What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow?
94. Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the objectives of the project?
95. Are the project's successful aspects being transferred to appropriate parties, potential future beneficiaries, and others who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or replicate it in the future?
96. Has the project faced any challenges, e.g. non-availability of in country technical expertise and knowhow? If yes, will the capacity building programs fill these gaps? What additional actions do you deem necessary to strengthen local technical expertise?
97. Are there any planned actions to mitigate the potential socio-economic impact of externalities like COVID-19?

### **Institutional Framework and Governance Risks to Sustainability**

98. Has the project put in place frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes that will create mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer after the project's closure? If yes, please provide examples.
99. How has the project developed appropriate institutional capacity (systems, structures, expertise, etc.) that will be self-sufficient after the project closure date?
100. Are the progress made through capacity building satisfactory? Will the GOC be able to continue to produce high quality NCs BURs and GHG Inventories also past the project implementation period? What evidence would support your response?
101. How has the project identified and involved individuals in both public and private sectors who can promote sustainability of project outcomes?

102. Has the project achieved stakeholders' (including government stakeholders') consensus regarding courses of action on project activities after the project's closure date? If yes, please provide examples.
103. Does the project leadership have the ability to respond to future institutional and governance changes? Can the project strategies effectively be incorporated/mainstreamed into future planning?

**Environmental Risks to Sustainability**

104. Has the assessment of CCA and CCM policies impact highlighted any potential environmental risks to sustainability? If yes, what measures have been recommended to mitigate these impacts?

## Annex 4. Rating Scale

**Table A-4.1 Progress Towards Results Rating Scale**

Rating	Description
<b>Highly Satisfactory (HS)</b>	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as “good practice”.
<b>Satisfactory (S)</b>	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
<b>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</b>	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
<b>Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)</b>	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
<b>Unsatisfactory (U)</b>	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
<b>Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)</b>	The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets, and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.

**Table A-4.2 Project Implementation & Adaptive Management Rating Scale**

Rating	Description
<b>Highly Satisfactory (HS)</b>	Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
<b>Satisfactory (S)</b>	Implementation of most of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only few that are subject to remedial action.
<b>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</b>	Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.
<b>Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)</b>	Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.
<b>Unsatisfactory (U)</b>	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
<b>Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)</b>	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.

**Table A-4.3 Sustainability Rating Scale**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Likely (L)</b>	Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project’s closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future.
<b>Moderately Likely (ML)</b>	Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review.
<b>Moderately Unlikely (MU)</b>	Significant risk that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on.
<b>Unlikely (U)</b>	Severe risks that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained.

## **Annex 5. MTR Mission Itinerary**

The Mid-Term Review has been conducted home based, therefore no field mission has been organized and undertaken. All relevant stakeholders have been reached out via email or, if follow up clarifications were required, via telecon.

**Annex 6. List of Persons Surveyed**

No	Stakeholders	Contact Person	Notes	Sub-contracts/or Roles in the Project
1	Department of Climate Change of Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) (MEEDCC)	ZHANG BEIYANG	Executing Agency / PSC	Overall responsibility for 4NC, BUR3, BUR4 development, compilation, and reporting
2	Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center, Ministry of Ecology and Environment (FECO/MEE)	MO FEIFEI	PMO	FECO/MEE will execute the project on behalf of MEE and under the technical guidance of the Department of Climate Change of MEE.
3	National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, P. R. China	XU DANHUI	Subcontractor - Government Stakeholder	Improvement of the working mechanism for greenhouse gas inventory preparation
				Preparation of National Greenhouse Gas Inventory for Energy Activities (Consortium with Energy Research Institute of NDRC )
4	National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, P. R. China	WANG XIAOYANG	Subcontractor - Government Stakeholder	Improving and updating the national greenhouse gas inventory database (consortium with Jiangsu Qingtian Industrial Internet Co., Ltd)
5	National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, P. R. China	ZHANG XI	Subcontractor - Government Stakeholder	Compile a summary of national climate change mitigation policies and measures

				Prepare a report on the optimization of China's monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) system
6	National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, P. R. China	ZHOU YUAN	Subcontractor - Government Stakeholder	Collect and compile information on China's climate change related national conditions
7	National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, P. R. China	SHOU HUANTAO	Subcontractor - Government Stakeholder	Prepare the third biennial update report, the fourth biennial update report, and the fourth national information communication
8	National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, P. R. China	CAO YING	Subcontractor - Government Stakeholder	Analysis and research on the effectiveness of climate change adaptation policies implemented
				Climate Change Vulnerability, Impact, and Adaptation Capacity Building - Project to Enhance Provincial Adaptation to Climate Change
9	National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, P. R. China	LEI JIEQIONG	Subcontractor - Government Stakeholder	Prepare a report to raise public awareness of climate change
10	National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, P. R. China	QIN YUANYUAN	Subcontractor - Government Stakeholder	Assessment of Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Capacity Building Needs and Funding Needs
11	Tsinghua University	TONG QING	Subcontractor-Academic Institutes and Private Sector	Preparation of National Greenhouse Gas Inventory for Industrial Production Processes (Non Fluorine) (Consortium with Suzhou Xin Tan Feng He Technology Ltd. Co.)

12	Tsinghua University	MAO CHUNLIU	Subcontractor-Academic Institutes and Private Sector	Assessment and methodological improvement of the impact and emission reduction effects of climate change mitigation actions
13	Institute of Atmospheric Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences	HAN SHENGHUI	Subcontractor-Academic Institutes and Private Sector	Preparation of National Greenhouse Gas Inventory for Agricultural (Farmland) Activities (Consortium with Rural Energy and Environment Agency, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs)
14	Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development in Agriculture, CAAS	ZHU ZHIPING	Subcontractor-Academic Institutes and Private Sector	Preparation of National Greenhouse Gas Inventory for Agricultural (Livestock) Activities (Consortium with Sino-Japan Friendship Centre for Environment Protection (Environmental Development Centre of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment))
15	Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development in Agriculture, CAAS	LI YUE	Subcontractor-Academic Institutes and Private Sector	Research on Vulnerability, Impact, and Adaptation to Climate Change
16	Sino-Japan Friendship Centre for Environment Protection (Environmental Development Centre of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment)	DI HUIPING	Subcontractor - Government Stakeholder	Climate Change Vulnerability, Impact, and Adaptation Capacity Building - Enhancing the Capacity of Climate Adaptable Cities Project
17	Ecology and Nature Conservation Institute, Chinese Academy of Forestry	ZHU JIANHUA	Subcontractor-Academic Institutes and Private Sector	Preparation of National Greenhouse Gas Inventory for Land Use, Land Use Change, and Forestry (Consortium with Institute of Ecological Conservation and Restoration; Chinese Academy of Forestry, Institute of Forestry, Chinese Academy of Forestry; Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development in Agriculture, CAAS; Institute of Atmospheric Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences )
18	Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Sciences	MA ZHANYUN	Subcontractor-Academic Institutes and Private Sector	Preparation of National Greenhouse Gas Inventory for Waste Management (Consortium with Research Center for Eco-Environmental Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences )

19	National Climate Centre	MA LIJUAN	Subcontractor - Government Stakeholder	Prepare a report on greenhouse gas concentration, climate observation and monitoring in China
20	The Administrative Center for China's Agenda 21	LIU JIAYAN	Subcontractor - Government Stakeholder	Climate change mitigation and adaptation technology needs assessment
21	United Nations Development Programme	LI DAN	UNDP Programme Officer	Responsible for oversight and monitoring project implementation and ensuring adherence to UNDP and GEF policies and procedures

## **Annex 7. List of Documents Reviewed**

### **List of Documents Received from the UNDP Country Office (CO) in Beijing:**

1. Project Identification Form (PIF)
2. GEF Review Sheet at PIF Stage
3. GEF Non-Expedited Enabling Activity Approval Letter
4. CEO Approval of Enabling Activity
5. Delegation of Authority
6. Project Document (ProDoc)
7. Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP)
8. CEO Endorsement Request Document (CERDoc)
9. Inception Report
10. 2023-2024 Two-Year Work Plan (TYWP)
11. 2024-2025 Two-Year Work Plan (TYWP)
12. 2023 Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting Minutes
13. 2024 Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting Minutes
14. Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC) Meeting Minutes
15. 2023 Project Progress Report (PPR)
16. 2023 Combined Deliver Report
17. Micro Assessment Report for the Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center (FECO) of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE)
18. Consolidated Risk-Based Partner Capacity Assessment Tool (PCAT)
19. 2021 Design & Appraisal Stage Quality Assurance Report
20. 2022 Implementation Stage Quality Assurance Report
21. List of Mid-Term Outputs
22. GEF Tracking Tool at Mid-Term

### **List of Documents Self-Procured by the MTR Team:**

23. China's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC), 2015
24. China's Achievements, New Goals and New Measures for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), 2021
25. Progress on the Implementation of China's Nationally Determined Contributions, 2022
26. China First Biennial Update Report (BUR1) on Climate Change, 2016
27. China Second Biennial Update Report (BUR2) on Climate Change, 2018

**28. China Third Biennial Update Report (BUR3) on Climate Change, 2023**

**29. China Fourth National Communication (4NC) on Climate Change, 2023**

**Annex 8. Co-Financing Table**

<b>Sources of Co-financing</b>	<b>Name of Co-financier</b>	<b>Type of Co-financing</b>	<b>Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement / Approval</b>	<b>Investment mobilized</b>	<b>Materialized co-financing as of Jun 30, 2024</b>
Recipient Government	Ministry of Ecology and Environment	In Kind	1,366,000	Recurrent expenditures	1,012,000
GEF Agency	UNDP	In Kind	100,000	Recurrent expenditures	20,000



## Annex 9. Signed UNEG Code of Conduct Form

### Evaluators/Consultants:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.
8. Must ensure that independence of judgement is maintained and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.
9. Must confirm that they have not been involved in designing, executing or advising on the project being evaluated.

### MTR Consultant Agreement Form

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

Name of Consultant: Wang Gen

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): International Copper Association (China)

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

Signed at Shanghai (Place) on 2/9/2024 (Date)

Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_

## Annex 9. Signed UNEG Code of Conduct Form

### Evaluators/Consultants:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
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4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.
8. Must ensure that independence of judgement is maintained and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.
9. Must confirm that they have not been involved in designing, executing or advising on the project being evaluated.

### MTR Consultant Agreement Form

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

Name of Consultant: Gao Enyuan

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): Chinese Association of Refrigeration

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

Signed at Beijing (Place) on 2/9/2024 (Date)



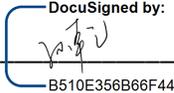
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Annex 10. Signed MTR Final Report Clearance Form**

**Midterm Review Report Reviewed and Cleared By:**

**Commissioning Unit**

Name: Qian Sun

Signature:  Date: 11-Sep-2024  
B510E356B66F44F...

**UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor**

Name: Eloina Felix

Signature:  Date: 11-Sep-2024  
E6EE544211884CB...

**Annex 11. Audit Trails from Received Comments on Draft MTR Report (Separate File)**

The Audit Trails has been submitted as a separate file.

## Annex 12. Relevant Midterm Tracking Tools

CROSS-CUTTING STRATEGIC AREAS					
Core Indicator 11		People benefiting from GEF-financed investments			
		Number			
		Expected		Achieved	
		PIF Stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
Female				95	
Male				94	
Total		-	-	189	-

## **Annex 13. List of Outputs Produced To-Date**

The UNDP CO in Beijing has provided a list of the Outputs that have been prepared and submitted prior to this MTR.

### **I. Outputs Submitted to the UNFCCC**

1. The People's Republic of China Fourth National Communication on Climate Change
2. The People's Republic of China Third Biennial Report on Climate Change

### **II. Outputs<sup>20</sup> Submitted by Subcontractors per Component**

#### **Component 2: Impact of vulnerability and adaptation to climate change**

3. Mid-term Progress Report on Climate Change Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation (draft)
4. Report on Effectiveness Analysis on Implemented Climate Change Adaptation Policies (draft)

#### **Component 3: Policies and actions for climate change mitigation**

5. Report on Impact Assessment and Emission Reduction Estimation of Implemented CCM Actions (draft)
6. Report on Refined Methodology for Assessing the Impact and Emission Reduction of CCM Actions (finalized draft)

#### **Component 4: National circumstances, related financial, technical, and capacity needs, and other relevant information**

7. Overview of National Circumstances Related to Climate Change in China (draft)
8. Report on Raising Public Awareness of Climate Change (finalized draft)
9. Overview of Current Observations of the Climate System in China (draft)
10. Overview of Basic Research on Climate Change in China (draft)

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<sup>20</sup> Outputs of subcontracted projects have Chinese versions only, and each subcontracted project will submit a Project Implementing Report in both Chinese and English version at the end of the project.

### Annex 14. Risks to Achieving Project Outcomes

Summarize risks that might affect the achievement of desired outcomes and the mitigation measures which are planned or already undertaken to address these. The risk rating should reflect the *residual* risk to achieving outcomes after considering the implementation of mitigation measures. The rating scale is: High, Substantial, Moderate, Low. See the *GEF Risk Appetite* document ([GEF/C.66/13](#)) for more information and its Annex B for a description of each risk category. Note that the rating for the “Environment and Social” category should be the same as the risk rating for Safeguards.

RISK CATEGORIES	DEFINITIONS	Linkage to UNDP ERM Risk Categories	RATINGS	ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION MEASURES
<b>CONTEXT</b>				
Climate	<p>This is the project or program’s residual risk stemming from the potential for adverse consequences of a climate-related hazard, or of adaptation or mitigation responses to such a hazard, on lives, livelihoods, health and well-being, ecosystems and species, economic, social and cultural assets, services (including ecosystem services), and infrastructure. Risk results from the interaction of vulnerability (of the affected system), its exposure over time (to the hazard), as well as the (climate-related) hazard and the likelihood of its occurrence. Addressing these risks requires identifying the hazards; assessing vulnerability and exposure; identifying measures to manage the risk; and finally rating the residual risk.</p>	Social and Environmental	Low	<p>The project involves no field work, but traveling of project team members, for example to meeting and workshop venues, can be disrupted by climate. Power supply that can be disrupted by climate events can also be a potential risk but in the case of China’s power infrastructure, this is considered low risk. The project will ensure the prevention of such risks by utilizing online tools for communications, backed up with adequate electric power supply, in cases of extreme climate events happen, following government safety and emergency procedures.</p>
Environment and Social	This category captures the risk that environmental and social changes pose to	Social and Environmental	Low	The procurement of

	<p>the viability of an intervention or its achievement of targeted outcomes. This includes environmental factors such as toxic pollution, biodiversity loss, soil degradation or water scarcity (including those linked to climate factors above), as well as social factors such as demographic change, labor dynamics, or patterns of social exclusion. The Environmental and Social Safeguard exercise in projects and programs, as required by Agency and GEF policy and guidelines (SD/PL/03; SD/GN/03) includes analysis of these factors and how to mitigate negative project-related effects on people. This includes special attention to gender equality, youth, indigenous peoples, and activity and engagement in fragile and conflict-affected situations. The rating reported by project under this category is identical to the Overall Safeguards Risk rating provided at PIF, CEO Endorsement, MTR and TE stage.</p>			<p>human resource inputs for the project implementation will be based in a gender-equitable, and equal opportunity manner. The project implementing partner will carry out adequate and conscientious planning and implementation of project-related procurement activities. This involves the preparation and implementation of appropriate procurement plans for the employment of all qualified and capable people, while ensuring that proper government procurement and labor laws/regulations will be applied and complied with.</p>
<p>Political and Governance</p>	<p>Political and Governance risks describe situations that may interfere with preparation, implementation and the achievement of the project or program outcomes in areas such as the political context of a country (or region in the case of transboundary projects), governance situation and security. This could include considerations of change in political developments (elections, change in government), governance challenges (transparency, accountability), or security context (terrorism, armed conflict, violence). It may also include the likely</p>	<p>Organizational (for Governance) and Safety and Security (for Political)</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>The risk will be fully addressed through the capacity building on, and development of the assessment procedures that will be used by national and local governments in preparing the national and provincial</p>

	consequences of such changes or economic developments on co-financing.			greenhouse gas emission inventories and assessments of the impacts of CCM and CCA initiatives and policies.
<b>INNOVATION</b>				
Institutional and Policy	This category covers risk related to innovative approaches adopted by a project or program to address institutional and policy challenges and create an enabling environment for success. This may include new laws, regulations, market mechanisms or standards that support investment objectives, when there is some degree of uncertainty as to whether these will be adopted or achieve their intended outcomes. It also captures the uncertainty of success of activities aimed at reforming informal institutions and behaviors (values, beliefs, customs, traditions, consumer preferences). It may also include targeted change in organizations and the relationships among them—such as novel efforts to devolve authority from national to local agencies; to empower farmers’ organizations or religious, cultural, and civil society advocacy networks; or to tap the influence of industry and trade organizations or other business associations.	Regulatory	Low	The inventory of GHG emissions in the various sectors, and assessment of the CCM and CCA efforts will involve all pertinent stakeholders in the country. The risk will be fully addressed through the capacity building on, and development of the assessment procedures that will be used by national and local governments in preparing the national and provincial greenhouse gas emission inventories and assessments of CCM and CCA technology options, technology financing and the impacts of CCM and CCA initiatives and policies.
Technological	This category relates to the uncertainty of success from the development or application of technological innovations applied in projects and programs to support environmental objectives and enable transformation. Examples include	Strategic	Not rated	Not applicable

	harnessing “big data,” remote sensing, or artificial intelligence to improve the targeting of interventions or improve service delivery; testing new crop management, transportation solutions or waste cleanup practices; or piloting novel nature[1]based solutions to replace more carbon- and resource-intensive infrastructure. It reflects the risk that such technological innovation may not achieve intended environmental outcomes (or not at the pace or scale intended), which may increase for experimental technologies with limited track record, or technical solutions that are untested in the particular context in which they will be applied.			
Financial and Business Model	This category captures risk carried by any financing mechanism that helps mobilize financing by tapping new funding sources or by engaging new financing partners to support solutions promoted by the project or program. This includes financial mechanisms that: enhance the ‘efficiency’ of financial flows by reducing delivery time and/or cost; expand the reach of an intervention far beyond the scale of the initial investment; or deepen its impact and durability. This category also covers risk related to the uncertainty of success from new business models intended to deliver environmental benefits, for example by restoring ecosystems, reducing waste, or shifting consumer behaviors.	Financial	Not rated	Not applicable
<b>EXECUTION</b>				
Capacity for Implementation	This category addresses risk stemming from the capacity of the Executing Entity and other key actors to execute the project or program activities in a way that supports the achievement of expected environmental outcomes. Assessing this risk requires considering capacity elements required for successful design, adaptive management during implementation, and monitoring and evaluation arrangements through to project or program completion. Capacity elements may cover the availability of adequate organizational processes, staff with adequate skills and knowledge, extent of reliance on third-party providers, coordination and convening	Operational	Low	MEE and the PMU maintain close working relations with relevant departments of the State Council and make necessary adjustments to the work in a timely manner according to the adjustment of national policies, which can ensure the implementation of the project and

	power, as well as the quality of monitoring and evaluation resources and information systems.			achieve optimal results.
Fiduciary	This category captures risk related to financial management and procurement arrangements of a project or program, including the successful implementation of measures to ensure full compliance with relevant policies. Agencies assess fiduciary risks and develop and implement mitigation measures under their own internal controls, processes, policies and practices in adherence with GEF minimum standards. This includes reviewing that sufficient skilled staff are available to support the project, with clear lines of accountability and separation of functions in procurement and financial management, clear performance targets in contracts and manageable delays in undertaking procurement, as well as clear mechanisms to identify and report wrongdoing.	Organizational	Low	MEE and PMU have sufficient skilled staff to support the project, with clear lines of accountability and separation of functions in procurement and financial management, clear performance targets in contracts and manageable delays in undertaking procurement, as well as clear mechanisms to identify and report wrongdoing.
Stakeholder	This category relates to the risk associated with inadequate participation, engagement and inclusion of stakeholders in projects and programs, and how this may impact results. Such risk may affect country ownership and partnerships, including with civil society, Indigenous Peoples, communities and the private sector. It may also affect the ability of the project or program to harness the knowledge, experience and capabilities of affected and interested individuals and groups. Mitigation measures include: consultations or co-design processes undertaken to ensure that design reflects concerns and priorities expressed by diverse stakeholders; project or program management arrangements that incorporate key stakeholder groups in decision-making; and multi-stakeholder dialogue processes to support the achievement and durability of outcomes.	Strategic	Low	The inventory of GHG emissions in the various sectors, and assessment of the CCM and CCA efforts will involve all pertinent stakeholders in the country. The risk will be fully addressed through the capacity building on, and development of the assessment procedures that will be used by national and local governments in preparing the national and provincial greenhouse gas

				emission inventories and assessments of CCM and CCA technology options, technology financing and the impacts of CCM and CCA initiatives and policies.
Other	Additional risks may arise beyond those covered in the nine categories above. The “other” category is optional and may be used to describe one or more important risks that may affect achievement of outcomes from a project or program and are not already covered. Examples may include mobility restrictions related to a pandemic or other health emergency, natural disasters, or rapid shifts in global market conditions.	As relevant	Not rated	Not applicable
Overall Risk Rating			Low	All potential risks identified above are rated low.

**Risk Significance:** based on the likelihood and impact the risk significance level (High, Substantial, Moderate or Low) is determined using the ERM Risk Matrix shown below.

<b>UNDP ERM - Risk Matrix</b>						
<b>Impact</b>	<b>5</b>					
	<b>4</b>					
	<b>3</b>					
	<b>2</b>					
	<b>1</b>					
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Likelihood</b>						
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <span style="background-color: #2d6a4f; color: white; padding: 2px 5px;">High</span> <span style="background-color: #a4c639; color: white; padding: 2px 5px;">SUBSTANTIAL</span> <span style="background-color: #548235; color: white; padding: 2px 5px;">MODERATE</span> <span style="background-color: #d9e1f2; color: white; padding: 2px 5px;">LOW</span> </div>						

**ERM Criteria Model – Determining Likelihood and Impact**

**Determining Likelihood (at Project, Programme/Unit, Corporate levels):**

Likelihood	Not likely 1	Low likelihood 2	Moderately likely 3	Highly likely 4	Expected 5
Description ("The risk is expected to materialize...")	Every 5 years or less <b>and/or</b> very low chance (<20%) of materializing	Every 3-5 years <b>and/or</b> low chance (20% - 40%) of materializing	Every 1-3 years <b>and/or</b> chance of materializing between 40% - 60%	Once or twice a year <b>and/or</b> high chance of materializing (60% - 80%)	Several times a year <b>and/or</b> chance of materializing above 80%

**Determining Impact:**

***Project Level –***

Impact	Negligible 1	Minor 2	Intermediate 3	Extensive 4	Extreme 5
Description ("If the risk materializes...")	Negligible/no impact on project results, positive or negative. Negligible or no potential adverse impacts on people and/or environment.	5-20 % of the applicable and planned results affected, positively or negatively. Potential adverse impacts on people and/or environment very limited and easily managed.	20-30% of the applicable and planned results affected positively or negatively. Potential adverse impacts on people and/or environment of low magnitude, limited in scale and duration, can be avoided, managed or mitigated with accepted measures.	30-50% of the applicable and planned results/outcome affected positively or negatively. Potential adverse impacts on people and/or environment of medium to large magnitude, spatial extent and duration.	More than 50% of the applicable and planned results/outcome affected positively or negatively. Adverse impacts on people and/or environment of high magnitude, spatial extent and/or duration.