Terminal Evaluation Report

UNDP-GEF Project: Strengthening Marine Protected Areas in SE China to conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity / China-Protected Areas System Reform (C-PAR) Program, Child Project #4 (C-PAR4)

UNDP PIMS ID: 5379 GEF Project ID: 9463

Country:	People's Republic of China
Region:	Asia and the Pacific
Focal Area:	Biodiversity
GEF Agency:	United Nations Development Programme
Executing Agency:	National Forestry and Grassland Administration

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12 July 2024	v1	First draft
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Opening Page

PROJECT DETAILS:	
Project Name:	Strengthening Marine Protected Areas in SE China to conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity (C-PAR4)
Project ID:	UNDP PIMS ID: 5379 GEF Project ID: 9463
Country:	People's Republic of China (China)
Region:	Asia and the Pacific
Focal Area:	Biodiversity (GEF-6)
Focal Area Programming:	**BD-1 Program 1: Outcome 1.1**. Increased revenue for protected area systems and globally significant protected areas to meet total expenditures required for management; **Outcome 1.2.** Improved management effectiveness of protected areas. **BD-1 Program 2: Outcome 2.1.** Increase in area of terrestrial and marine ecosystems of global significance in new protected areas and increase in threatened species of global significance protected in new protected areas.
Funding Source:	GEF Trust Fund
Implementing Agency:	United Nations Development Programme
Implementation Modality:	National Implementation
Executing Agency:	National Forestry and Grassland Administration
Responsible Parties:	None
FINANCIALS:	
Co-financing total:	USD 22,362,852
GEF Project Grant:	USD 2,652,294
GEF Agency Fees:	USD 238,706
PROJECT TIMELINE:	
Received by GEF:	29 March 2016
Concept Approved:	25 October 2016
Project Approved for Implementation:	11 October 2018
Start Date:	03 October 2019
Project Closing Date (original):	02 October 2024 **Project Closing Date (revised):** n/a
TERMINAL EVALUATION DETAILS:	
TE Timeframe:	June-September 2024
TE team:	James Lenoci, International Consultant / Team Leader Huali Wang, National Consultant
TE Reporting Language:	English

The terminal evaluation (TE) team would like to acknowledge the informative feedback and logistical support provided by the project stakeholders, including government officials, project implementation stakeholders, project partners, project beneficiaries, the UNDP CO staff, and project team members.

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Executive Summary

The project was implemented under the GEF-6 replenishment cycle through a national implementation modality with the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA) as the Executing Agency (Implementing Partner), supported by the UNDP as the GEF Implementing Agency. Basic project information and finances are summarized below in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Project information table

Project title:	**Strengthening Marine Protected Areas in SE China to conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity**		
Project Details:		**Project Milestones:**	
Project ID:	UNDP PIMS 5379	**PIF Approval Date:**	25 Oct 2016
GEF Project ID:	9463	**CEO Endorsement Date:**	11 Oct 2018
UNDP Atlas Business Unit, Award ID, Project ID:	Award ID: 96238 Output ID: 100216	**ProDoc Signature Date (start date):**	03 Oct 2019
Country:	China	**Date Project Manager hired:**	Dec 2019
Region:	Asia and the Pacific	**Inception Workshop date**	24 Dec 2019
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	**Midterm Review Completion date:**	22 Apr 2022
GEF Operational Programme or Strategic Priorities/Objectives	GEF-6 (BD-1-1; BD-1-2)	**Terminal Evaluation Completion date:**	Sep 2024
		Operational Closure date	02 Oct 2024
Trust Fund:	GEF Trust Fund		
GEF Agencies	United Nations Development Programme		
Implementing Partner (GEF Executing Entity):	National Forestry and Grassland Administration		
NGOs/CBOs involvement:	Contracted for execution of project activities; participated in Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships.		
Private sector involvement:	Participated in Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships.		
Geospatial coordinates of project sites:	Shankou Mangrove NNR: 21.28-21.37 N, 109.37-109.47 E Hepu Dugong NNR: 21.30 N,109.38 E; 21.30 N, 109.46 E; 21.18 N, 109. 34 E; 21.18N, 109.44E Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR: 22.11 N - 22.24 N, 113.4 E Jiangmen CWD PNR: 21.5 N, 112.59 E; 21.46 N, 112.59 E; 21.46 N, 113.4 E; 21.53 N, 113.4 E; 21.53 N, 113.1 E; 21.51 N, 113.1 E; 21.50 N, 113.1 E Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR: 24.23-24.44 N, 117.57-118.26		
Financial Information:			
PPG:	**at approval (USD)**	**at PPG completion (USD)**	
GEF grant for preparation:	100,000	100,000	
Co-financing for preparation:	0	0	
Project:	**at CEO Endorsement (USD)**	**at TE (USD)***	
[1] UNDP contribution:	150,000	150,000	
[2] Government:	22,212,852	29,261,855	
[3] Other multi-/bi-laterals	0	0	
[4] Private Sector:	0	0	
[5] NGOs:	0	110,604	
[6] Other:	0	0	
[7] Total co-financing [1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6]:	**22,362,852**	**29,522,459**	
[8] Total GEF funding:	2,652,294	2,141,723*	
[9] Total project funding [7 + 8]:	**25,015,146**	**31,664,182**	

*Note: total GEF expenditures reported through 30 June 2024

TERMINAL EVALUATION PURPOSE

The TE has the following complementary purposes:

- To promote accountability and transparency.
- To synthesize lessons that can help to improve the selection, design, and implementation of future UNDP-supported GEF-financed initiatives; and to improve the sustainability of benefits and aid in overall enhancement of UNDP programming.
- To assess and document project results, and the contribution of these results towards achieving GEF strategic objectives aimed at global environmental benefits.
- To gauge the extent of project convergence with other development priorities, including poverty alleviation, strengthening resilience to the impacts of climate change, reducing disaster risk and vulnerability, as well as cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, women's empowerment, and supporting human rights.

METHODOLOGY

The TE was an evidence-based assessment, relying on feedback from individuals who have been involved in the design, implementation, and supervision of the project, review of available documents, and findings of the TE mission. Feedback was gathered through face-to-face interviews, online meetings, and email exchanges with the various governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. Interviews were also conducted with individuals who benefitted directly from the project through the alternative livelihood initiatives.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project objective is to conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity in South-East (SE) China through integrated seascape planning and threat management, MPA network expansion and strengthened MPA operations. The baseline analysis described in the project document outlines how coastal ecosystems and their biodiversity in SE China are under extreme pressure from dense human populations, intensive natural resource exploitation and disturbance, conversion of natural habitats and pollution. The project design focuses on coastal ecosystems using the iconic Chinese white dolphin (CWD) as an indicator and flagship species to engage multiple stakeholders in novel ecosystem-based approaches.

To achieve this objective, the project has implemented three general strategies (Project Components). The components were designed to remove the following barriers to achieving the long-term goal of conserving globally significant coastal biodiversity in SE China: 1) Inadequate MPAs and enabling framework for integrated coastal biodiversity conservation; 2) Lack of experience, capacity and participation to apply ecosystem-based approaches; 3) Inadequate coordination, knowledge management and information systems for effective threat management. These barriers were envisaged to be removed through a suite of activities whose results would contribute towards accomplishment of the project outcomes. The three project components are listed below.

- Component 1: Strengthened MPA legal framework and mainstreaming and expansion of MPA network.
- Component 2: Demonstrations of improved MPA and ESA management.
- Component 3: Monitoring, evaluation and sharing of knowledge and information on coastal habitats and species.

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

The project has been successful in generating important global environmental benefits, including stable or increasing populations of the Chinese White Dolphin CWD (Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphin, *Sousa chinensis*, IUCN Red List: vulnerable VU) and other threatened and endangered species, such as the Horseshoe Crab (*Tachypleus tridentatus*, IUCN Red List: endangered: EN) at the target MPAs. Management effectiveness has been improved across 105,250 ha of MPAs, including the Shankou Mangrove National Nature Reserve (NNR), Hepu Dugong NNR, Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR, Jiangmen CWD NNR, and Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR. The project implementation timeframe coincided with the governmental program on integration and

optimization of protected areas in the country. According to available information on proposed integration and optimization results from provincial governments, the marine protected area system nationwide is expected to increase by approximately 130,000 ha, which includes a proposed 1,960-ha expansion of one of the five target MPAs under the project, namely the Shankou Mangrove NNR. At the time of the TE in July 2024, the final decision of the integration and optimization process is pending approval by the State Council.

GEF ADDITIONALITY

The additionality of the GEF funding next to the robust investments by the Government of China towards environmental protection was primarily associated with the benefits of knowledge and information sharing among the partners involved in the project, including the NFGA, the three provincial governments, five municipal governments and five MPA management administrations. These partners have limited opportunities to collaborate under business-as-usual circumstances. The GEF-financed project facilitated strategic interactions among partners, leading, for example, to the establishment of a MPA network for Southeast China.

Much of the governmental funding for protected areas is often specifically earmarked, e.g., only available for a particular purpose, such eradication of invasive alien species. Protected areas, including the five target MPAs under the project, do engage with local communities, including hiring local people as rangers and financing nature education programs. The GEF funding demonstrated some different approaches for engaging with local communities, such as promoting an eco-labelling initiative and engaging civil society partners in facilitating engagement with the MPAs.

CROSS-CUTTING BENEFITS

The project has also generated substantive cross-cutting benefits. There have been several awareness-raising and publicity interventions supported by the project, including environmental education initiatives in local schools, mobilizing volunteers for beach-cleaning activities, participating in CWD Awareness Day and Ocean Day events. The number of people reached through these activities exceed 40,000, and of whom an estimated 60% were women/girls. A reported number of 1,555 people (51% women) received training on various topics. With respect to livelihood related benefits, 12 local tourism sector merchants in Sanniangwan village have participated in the eco-labelling initiative, 31 people in Qinzhou received training on conservation and sustainable CWD watching tourism, and 415 families in Yong'an and Beijie villages benefitted from renting their aquaculture ponds to the Shankou Mangrove nature reserve for ecological restoration research and development, an activity the nature reserve funded through their co-financing contribution.

These awareness-raising initiatives also contributed towards strengthening resilience to the impacts of climate change and nature disasters, through better understanding of the value of coastal and marine ecosystems. Support towards restoration of coastal ecosystems, including mangroves and seagrass beds, further strengthens resilience.

Facilitating collaboration among multiple stakeholders is an important aspect leading to improved governance of coastal and marine ecosystems. The establishment of the Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships demonstrated a viable process for bringing diverse partners together, albeit these mechanisms did not effectively garner support from governmental level stakeholders.

COHERENCE: CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE C-PAR PROGRAM

The project has also made important contributions to the C-PAR program, as summarized below.

C-PAR Program Component 1: Improved legal and institutional framework at national and provincial level

The most substantive contribution under the C-PAR4 project was the establishment of the MPA network for SE China. Financial sustainability improved across each of the target MPAs; ecological compensation appropriations from the government continue to increase; and an Ecological Protection Compensation

Financing Mechanism for the Xiamen Rare Marine Species nature reserve was drafted to better guide the implementation of existing ecological compensation mechanisms.

C-PAR Component 2: Systematic PA planning and mainstreaming at national, provincial, county spatial planning and sectors

Institutional capacities of the management administrations of the target MPAs were strengthened through training, as well as increased levels of interactions and knowledge exchange across the three provinces, five municipalities and five MPAs. Expansion of more than 130,000 ha in the coverage of MPAs in the three target provinces through the governmental PA integration and optimization process; however, final approval from the State Council is pending. Also under this program level component, the C-PAR project supported progress towards reducing threats to CWD and other globally significant biodiversity.

C-PAR Program Component 3: Site level management and supervision standards raised for different PA types

Management effectiveness of the target MPAs improved over the timeframe of the project, as measured by independent assessment using the GEF-6 BD tracking tool. Populations of the CWD have remained stable or show signs of increase in the target areas, as shown through science-based monitoring. More than 1,500 people (51% women), and 31 people in Qinzhou and 415 families in Beihai (50% women/girls) in the communities near the target areas benefitted from awareness-raising and/or livelihood support.

C-PAR Program Component 4: Program Coordination, Knowledge Management, and M&E

The project has proactively disseminated information and knowledge on a variety of topics related to conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources. The established MPA network for SE China is envisaged to primarily provide a mechanism for information and knowledge sharing among members and other interested stakeholders. The project also supported the development of a GIS-based platform for MPAs that is linked to the existing information management system at the NFGA for terrestrial protected areas.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The institutional reforms that coincided with the start of the project in 2018-2019 included assigning the mandate for the oversight of MPAs to the NFGA, a vice ministry level administration under the Ministry of Natural Resources. This project provided a timely opportunity for the NFGA to benefit from GEF funding with an initiative aimed at strengthening management of MPAs in the country. NFGA leadership recognized this and in turn ensured a high level of country ownership across multiple levels, i.e., national, provincial and local. Although the GEF project grant was fairly modest at approx. USD 2.65 million, there was a high level of interest and influence throughout the implementation phase.

Despite challenges associated with the institutional reforms and the COVID-19 pandemic, financial delivery was generally satisfactory, and the project is scheduled to close according to the original completion date. This achievement was facilitated by experienced project management. The project also benefitted from strategic technical advisory support.

The project did a good job on communications, actively disseminating information, posting updates and promoting recognition of the project's activities. A unique logo was developed and used extensively on signboards, various promotional materials, and publications developed under the project. The project also regularly organized publicity activities on special days including World Oceans Day, CWD Protection and Publicity Day, National Science Popularization Day, World Environment Day, World Wetland Day, etc. It also organized various forms of major events including a fun run, marine wetland art festival, etc. to raise awareness on CWD protection. The city of Zhuhai is in the process of adopting the CWD as the city's mascot through legislation. The project also maintained close communication with the media and released major events on different platforms, promoting the project to various media outlets, etc.

The establishment of a MPA network for Southeast China is a notable achievement under the project. This provides a viable mechanism for continued collaboration and information-sharing among the MPAs and

other key stakeholders in this part of the country. The sustainability of the mechanism depends largely on the NFGA's leadership, including having the Academy of Forest Inventory and Planning (AFIP) as the secretariat for the network.

As mentioned above, facilitating interactions among the project stakeholders, namely officials from the provincial government units, municipal government units and MPA management administrations, was one of the main strengths of the project. There was also some interaction among the contracted service providers, e.g., sharing ideas on the best approach for the Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships (CBPs). There was, however, room for improvement for ensuring coordination and collaboration among scientific partners engaged by the project and other partners. For instance, each of the target MPAs were deploying innovative techniques for monitoring CWD populations. It would have been useful to promote knowledge sharing among these partners – this is something that should be part of the action plan for the MPA network for SE China.

In each of the three target provinces, the project made efforts to establish multiple stakeholder CBPs. Contracted service providers, including NGOs and research institutes, conducted stakeholder analyses, facilitated one to two meetings and developed action plans. The process of establishing the CBPs demonstrated the potential for multiple stakeholder collaboration. The challenge across each of the provinces was obtaining commitment from government level units to officially participate in the CBPs. Officials observed the meetings but did not want to formally endorse the process. Without genuine government level participation, the sustainability of the CBPs is unlikely.

Gender mainstreaming objectives were integrated into the project design, with specific actions outlined in the project's gender action plan. The project consistently encouraged and reported women participation in capacity building and awareness raising activities and promoted representation in committees and other collaborative mechanisms. Specific support to women's groups fell short of expectations described at project entry.

Limited evidence of regional and international cooperation, e.g., neighboring countries, other GEF projects, etc. There was some evidence showing cooperation and exchange with other child projects of the C-PAR program and the GEF 5 Flyway project to share experience and lessons on risk management and gender mainstreaming. The project may have benefited, for example, from cooperation with the North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN) and gained experience on design and operation of the MPA network in SE China. Limited budget allocation for international learning exchange also constrained such cooperation.

Marine spatial planning (MSP) was an integral part of the project strategy, as a tool to facilitate mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation among sectors and stakeholders in the marine space, building upon the ecological red-lining process in the country. Ecological red lining has progressed in recent years, although the red-lined areas have not yet been officially approved. The three CBPs established in the target provinces demonstrated the willingness for non-governmental stakeholders to collaborate on conservation and sustainable use. However, the sustainability of the CBPs seems unlikely and, to that effect, the project fell short with respect to the mainstreaming related objectives.

Confirmed co-financing from the four municipal/provincial oceanic bureaus (now forestry bureaus) exceeded the committed sums at the time of CEO endorsement. The project did not make efforts to report co-financing contributions that were mobilized during implementation. For example, a sampling of three sub-contractors as part of the TE interviews revealed that each of these partners contributed co-financing on top of the GEF funds that were allocated for their contracted services. Contributions from NFGA have also not been reported. Information on such contributions from multiple partners would substantially support the evaluation of the likelihood that the results achieved will be sustained. The project team reported information on contributions from additional partners, including the NFGA, after the TE mission.

EVALUATION RATINGS:

Evaluation ratings are summarized below in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Evaluation ratings

Criteria	Rating	Comments
1. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)		
M&E design at entry	**Satisfactory**	The M&E plan and budget presented in the project document were prepared according to UNDP policies and procedures for GEF-financed projects. The M&E budget was USD 198,230, which is 7.5% of the GEF grant
M&E plan implementation	**Satisfactory**	M&E implementation closely followed the M&E plan. Progress was reported regularly, including in the annual project implementation reports (PIRs), which the TE team found to provide candor descriptions of key issues and challenges. Results were communicated to the PSC members. Increased attention to project risk management was placed in the 4th and 5th PSC meetings, and this topic became a fixed agenda item and progress made was reported to the PSC
Overall quality of M&E	**Satisfactory**	The overall quality of M&E is rated as satisfactory.
2. Implementing Agency (IA) Implementation & Executing Agency (EA) Execution		
Quality of UNDP Implementation / Oversight	**Satisfactory**	UNDP oversight and assurance was provided through its country office and regional hub for Asia and the Pacific. Apart from this project, UNDP is the GEF agency for three other C-PAR child projects. The UNDP Country office has provided strategic and administrative guidance to the project, actively participating in the PSC meetings, and contributing co-financing to the project. The UNDP Regional Hub has also provided important strategic oversight. The COVID-19 related restrictions impeded travel for a large part of the implementation phase. The UNDP also played an important role in the social and environmental risk management of this project.
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	**Satisfactory**	The NFGA, supported by the AFIP, has been the Implementing Partner for several GEF-financed projects. High level engagement was delivered by NFGA for this project. This project provided a good opportunity for the NFGA to strengthen institutional capacity regarding marine conservation. Good and consistent project management was provided for this project. The Chief Technical Advisor provided important strategic advisory support. There was frequent turnover of administrative support positions in the PMO; the project was utilizing interns at the time when the TE mission was arranged in June 2024.
Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	**Satisfactory**	The overall quality of implementation / execution is rated as satisfactory.
3. Assessment of Outcomes		
Relevance	**Highly satisfactory**	The project strategy was closely aligned with the Government of China's principle of ecological civilization, and directly contributes to the ongoing integration and optimization of protected areas in the country. The focus on strengthening management of MPAs is also consistent with the ongoing PA reforms occurring in China. The project contributes to the objectives of UNDP China's Country Program Document, the UNDP Strategic Plan and also UNDP's Ocean Promise.
Effectiveness	**Satisfactory**	Project effectiveness is rated as satisfactory; progress towards achievement of the project objective and outcomes is described below.
Objective: To conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity in South-East (SE) China through integrated seascape planning and threat management, MPA network expansion and strengthened MPA operations		
Each of the target MPA sites have reported stable and/or increasing trends in the populations of CWD over the timeframe of the project. Expansion of the MPA system in the target provinces is likely to occur; however, the proposed adjustments are pending approval by the State Council. Substantial numbers of people have benefitted from the GEF investment and more than 50% of those are women/girls.	**Satisfactory**	
Outcome 1: Expanded and strengthened MPA network with biodiversity mainstreamed into marine spatial planning		
A moderately satisfactory rating is applied for Outcome 1 because of the unlikely sustainability of the Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships, which were envisaged to help facilitate mainstreaming of marine biodiversity conservation. Important policy and regulatory advances were made in the target areas during the project implementation phase, and financial sustainability of the MPAs has significantly improved.	**Moderately satisfactory**	
Outcome 2: Improved management effectiveness of MPA/ESAs in the project pilot areas		
Institutional capacities and management effectiveness of the target MPAs increased with support of the project. Community engagement also was expanded with some innovative approaches, e.g., eco-labelling in the local tourism sector, threats in the target MPAs reduced over the course of the project implementation phase, and the understanding of the value of MPAs increased among surveyed members of the general public and decision-makers.	**Satisfactory**	

Criteria	Rating	Comments
Outcome 3: MPA network functioning for improved data and knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation		
The establishment of the MPA network for SE China is one of the most significant achievements of the project, a GIS platform for information and knowledge sharing for MPAs was developed, and the project was effective at communicating information about the project and disseminating results.	**Satisfactory**	
Efficiency	**Satisfactory**	The project has done a good job at efficiently utilizing the project resources to satisfactorily achieve the expected project results within the 5-year implementation timeframe. Considering that the project start coincided with significant institutional reforms in the country and the COVID-19 pandemic extended from the early to middle phase of implementation, the delivery achieved is particularly commendable.
Overall project outcome rating	**Satisfactory**	The overall project outcome rating is satisfactory.
4. Sustainability		
Financial sustainability	**Likely**	The Government of China continues to invest substantially in environmental protection. The findings reported in the Financial Sustainability Scorecard, part of the GEF-6 BD tracking tool, support this. Ecological compensation schemes are also evolving in the country, and biodiversity offsetting is becoming commonplace. The prospect of an effective MPA network for SE China functioning also enhances the likelihood that financing for marine biodiversity conservation will be sustained, e.g., as a result of information sharing between NFGA and the other members on funding opportunities.
Socio-political sustainability	**Likely**	The project provided important experiences and lessons on different modalities of engaging local communities, e.g., using local NGOs to help communicate and facilitate an eco-labelling initiative. MPAs in the target areas and in other parts of China have built up extensive experience on engaging local communities. Local community members are often hired as rangers, for example, and ecological compensation schemes are formulated to ensure communities in or near important conservation areas are adequately compensated.
Institutional framework and governance sustainability	**Moderately likely**	Enhances sustainability: the MPA network for SE China is likely to be sustained, but requires commitment and funding from the NFGA. Diminishes sustainability: CBPs seem unlikely to be sustained after project closure.
Environmental sustainability	**Likely**	Enhances sustainability: Robust funding in biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration, as well as scientific research. Diminishes sustainability: continued development pressure and loss of critical coastal ecosystems; and potential impacts of climate change.
Overall likelihood of sustainability	**Moderately likely**	Overall, the likelihood that benefits and results achieved under the project will be sustained after project closure is considered moderately likely. There are robust sustainability systems and structures in place, including committed government financing, qualified research and development, and the NFGA-led MPA network for SE China. A moderately likely rating is applied because of the unlikely sustainability of the Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships, which were envisaged to provide mechanisms for increasing non-governmental (civil society, private sector) involvement in conservation and sustainable use of the target coastal and marine ecosystems.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

TE recommendations are presented below in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Recommendations table

No.	Recommendation	Responsible Entities	Timeframe
Corrective actions:			
1.	**Global environmental benefits should be reported on the GEF Core Indicator worksheet (for GEF-6 and GEF-7 projects)**. Through this process the project should also consider reporting global environmental benefit not included in the project's results framework, e.g., Core Indicator 5: Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity, and Indicator 3.4: Area of wetlands restored (includes mangroves, estuary ecosystems).	PMO	Prior to operational closure

No.	Recommendation	Responsible Entities	Timeframe
2.	**The end of project METT assessments should be updated**, with more details on biodiversity indicators (Data Sheet 2), threat reduction (Data Sheet 3), and the METT assessment form (Data Sheet 4). Observations of the TE team of inconsistencies in the METT assessments are summarized in Section 3.2.4 of this TE report.	PMO	Prior to operational closure
3.	**Co-financing contributions that materialized during project implementation should be reported**. The project team has expanded the co-financing table with additional entries after this recommendation was discussed at the TE debriefing. It would be advisable to also inquire with the project's contracted service providers on the contributions they made, parallel to the allocated GEF funds for the activities executed.	PMO	Prior to operational closure
Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project:			
4.	**Strengthen the sustainability structures for the MPA Network for SE China.** The MPA network action plan (2024-2028) identifies three key tasks and four priorities, all of which are general ideas without detailed timeframe or budget allocation.	NFGA-AFIP, PMO	Prior to operational closure
5.	**Deliver training to stakeholders on the use and functions of the GIS platform for MPAs.** This platform has been recently developed and awareness is limited. It would be advisable to deliver training on the use and functions of the platform to key stakeholders, including provincial and municipal government units and MPA management administrations.	NFGA-AFIP, PMO	Prior to operational closure
Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives:			
6.	**Implement marine spatial planning to support collaborative management and governance of critical seascapes**. Marine biodiversity occurs across protected and production areas of seascapes and, consequently, the conservation and sustainable use of the species, habitats and ecosystem services require multiple sector and stakeholder collaboration. Marine spatial planning can be an effective tool to help facilitate effective stakeholder collaboration.	NFGA-AFIP	Within next five years

LESSONS

Good practices and lessons learned on the project are presented below.

Good Practices:

- **Facilitating interactions, knowledge-sharing across the target areas.** This was one of the main strengths of the project, providing opportunities for provincial, municipal and site level stakeholders to share experiences and lessons, building up a collaborative space for the MPA Network for SE China. Given the current emphasis in China on strict earmarking of government funding, e.g., for specific restoration purposes or for infrastructure, the added value of GEF funding is primarily associated with knowledge management, multiple stakeholder collaboration and capacity building.
- **Proactive communications**. The project was effective at communicating information on the project across numerous media outlets and was proactive with respect to project branding.
- **Establishing the PMO at the national level**, within the NFGA, helped ensure consistently high levels of country ownership.
- **Adaptive management**. Not only did the project effectively adapt to the institutional reform that was coincident with the project start-up. The project also made successful adjustments to project certain activities, including setting up the GIS platform under NFGA's current system, and using the public account of NFGA and AFIP at WeChat for publicity instead of developing a website.

Lessons Learned:

- **Multi-stakeholder collaboration mechanisms**. Establishing cross-sectoral and multiple stakeholder collaboration mechanisms requires deeper risk analysis, assessing appropriate modalities for ensuring both governmental and non-governmental (civil society and private sector) are included.

- **Regional and international cooperation**. GEF projects can provide opportunities for collaboration with complementary regional and international initiatives. In order to realize such cooperation, it is important to incorporate specific activities and corresponding budget into the project design and/or at the midterm review stage.
- **The need to develop national and local level capacities on UNDP safeguard policies and procedures**. Assessing social and environmental risks, developing relevant safeguard instruments to mitigate the risks, and overseeing the management of the risks requires national and local level experience and knowledge. Development and implementation of GEF-financed, UNDP-supported projects in China would benefit from having trained national and local level specialists on UNDP safeguard policies and procedures.
- **The need to clarify monitoring & evaluation methods and approaches at project inception**. It would be advisable to expand the project M&E plan at project inception, with detailed descriptions of methods and approaches for monitoring and evaluation of the indicators and targets in the project results framework.
- **The need for more effectively involving local government units in the design and implementation of community engagement activities**. Based on feedback shared during the TE interviews, the community engagement activities supported by the project would have benefitted from more effective involvement of local government units.
- **Formulating specific activities and allocating sufficient budget aimed at delivering direct benefits to women and/or women's groups**. To enable achievement of gender mainstreaming objectives, it would have been advisable to incorporate specific activities and allocate budget for interventions that are aimed at directly benefitting women and/or women's groups.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFIP	Academy of Forest Inventory and Planning
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BD	Biodiversity
BRC	Guangxi Biodiversity Research and Conservation Association
CBAP	Coastal Biodiversity Action Plan
CBPs	Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships
CBPF	China Biodiversity Partnership and Framework for Action
CDR	Combine delivery report
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CNY	Chinese Yuan
CPD	Country Programme Document
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
C-PAR	China-Protected Areas System Reform
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
CWD	Chinese white dolphin
CWDCA	Chinese White Dolphin Conservation Alliance
EA	Executing Agency
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EN	Endangered
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
FACE	Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FECO	Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center
FSS	Financial Sustainability Scorecard
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GHG	Greenhouse gas
IA	Implementing Agency
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KAP	Knowledge Attitudes and Practices
MARA	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MEE	Ministry of Ecology and Environment
MEP	Ministry of Environmental Protection
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MNR	Ministry of Natural Resources
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSL	Main streams of life (name of the GEF-financed Wetland PA System Strengthening Program)
MSP	Marine spatial planning
MTR	Midterm review
NDRC	National Development and Reform Commission
NEAMPAN	North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network
NFGA	National Forestry and Grassland Administration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

NIM	National Implementation Modality
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NPD	National Project Director
PA	Protected Area
PFD	Program Framework Document
PIMS	Project Information Management System
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PMO	Project Management Office
PNR	Provincial Nature Reserve
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor (UNDP)
SCCBD	Biodiversity Management in the Coastal Area of China's South Sea
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SE	South-East
SEE	Society of Entrepreneurs & Ecology
SESP	Social and environmental screening procedure
SFA	State Forestry Administration
SMART	Smart, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound
SOA	State Oceanic Administration
TE	Terminal evaluation
TIO	Third Institute of Oceanography
TOR	Terms of reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP CO	United Nations Development Programme Country Office
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USD	United States Dollar
VU	Vulnerable
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

1 Introduction

This document is the terminal evaluation (TE) report of the UNDP supported, GEF financed project entitled: "Strengthening Marine Protected Areas in SE China to conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity (C-PAR4)" (UNDP PIMS 5379). The C-PAR4 project is the 4th child project of the China-Protected Areas System Reform (C-PAR) Program.

1.1 Purpose and Objectives of Evaluation

The TE has the following complementary purposes:

- ✓ To promote accountability and transparency.
- ✓ To synthesize lessons that can help to improve the selection, design, and implementation of future UNDP-supported GEF-financed initiatives; and to improve the sustainability of benefits and aid in overall enhancement of UNDP programming.
- ✓ To assess and document project results, and the contribution of these results towards achieving GEF strategic objectives aimed at global environmental benefits.
- ✓ To gauge the extent of project convergence with other development priorities, including poverty alleviation, strengthening resilience to the impacts of climate change, reducing disaster risk and vulnerability, as well as cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, women's empowerment, and supporting human rights.

The **objectives** of the TE are to assess the design, implementation and achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP and GEF programming in China and elsewhere.

1.2 Evaluation Scope and Methodology

The overall approach and methodology of the evaluation follows the guidelines outlined in the following guidance documents:

- UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects, 2020
- Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluation for Full-sized Projects, Approved by the GEF IEO Director on 11th of April 2017

The TE was an evidence-based assessment, relying on feedback from individuals who have been involved in the design, implementation, and supervision of the project, review of available documents, and findings of the TE mission. Feedback was gathered through face-to-face interviews, online meeting, phone calls and email exchanges with the various governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

The evaluation included following activities:

- ✓ A TE mission was conducted over the period of 21-28 June 2024. The itinerary of the TE mission is presented in **Annex 1**.
- ✓ As a data collection and analysis guidance tool, the evaluation matrix included as **Annex 2** was used to guide the evaluation. Evidence gathered during the evaluation was cross-checked among as many sources as practicable, to validate the findings.
- ✓ The TE team interviewed key project stakeholders. A list of interviewed people is included in **Annex 3.**
- ✓ A desk review was made of available reports and other documents, listed in **Annex 4**.
- ✓ A summary of the TE mission along with a few representative photographs are compiled in **Annex 5**.
- ✓ The project results framework was used as an evaluation tool, in assessing attainment of the project objective and outcomes against the indicators and targets (see **Annex 6**).

- ✓ The TE team reviewed information regarding cofinancing realized throughout the duration of the project; the filled in cofinancing table is compiled in **Annex 7**.

The TE methodology followed a Contribution Analysis approach, which entailed evaluating the project theory of change against the results achieved and according to the assumptions behind the theory of change. The project was designed to overcome the three barriers outlined in the theory of change (see **Figure 1**: Project theory of change (Figure 2 of the Project Document).

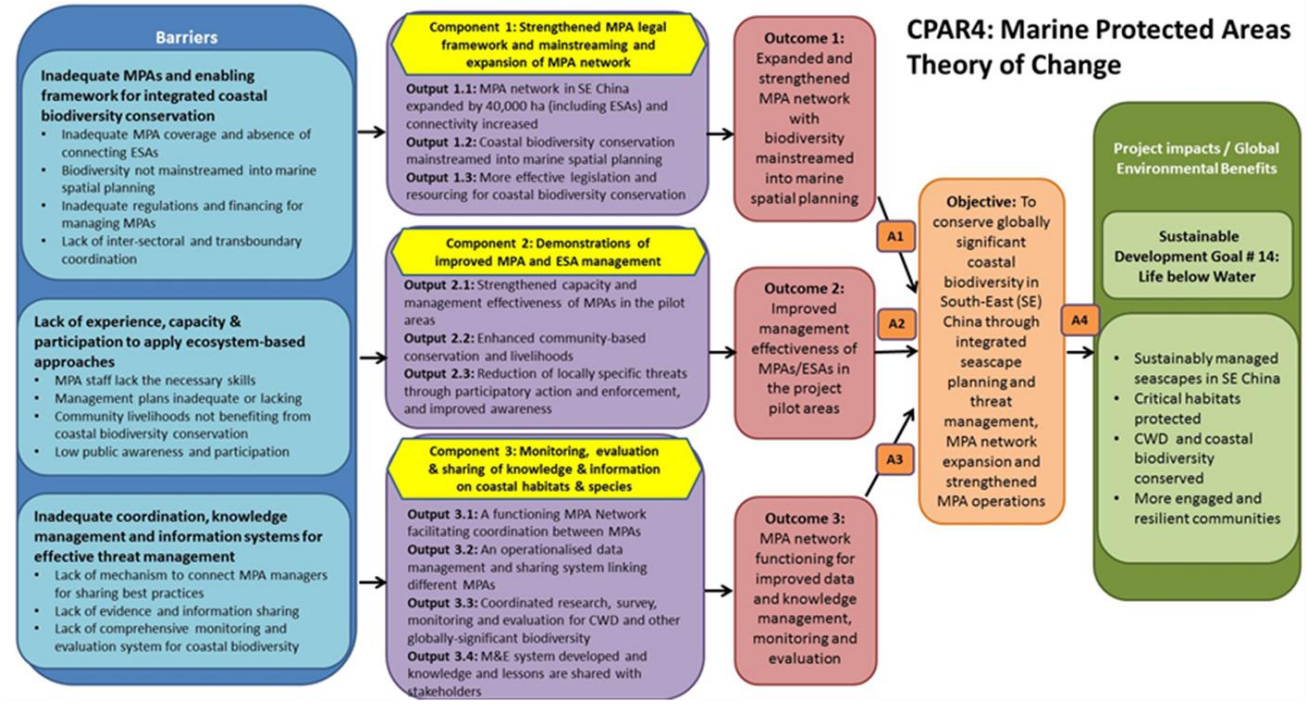

Figure 1: Project theory of change (Figure 2 of the Project Document)

With respect to Barrier No. 1 and corresponding Component 1 of the project, the TE tested how MPA coverage and connectivity has increased, to what degree has biodiversity conservation been mainstreamed into marine spatial planning and what advancements have been made to the regulatory framework to facilitate more effective management of coastal and marine resources. These proposed achievements were underpinned by assumption A1 in the theory of change, i.e., "The national, provincial and municipal authorities are willing to expand the network of MPAs and prioritize the conservation of globally significant biodiversity, including through mainstreaming into marine spatial planning and allocating additional finances". The TE interviews and document review focused on assessing the level to which this assumption held and the achievement of the agreed metrics in the results framework.

Similarly, the TE team assessed how the interventions under Component 2 contributed towards overcoming Barrier No. 2, in line with assumption A2, i.e., "Increased capacity of MPA staff, together with greater participation of communities in MPA management will improve MPA management effectiveness and reduce locally specific threats to coastal biodiversity". The TE interview questions and supporting document review were conceived to analyze the effectiveness of capacity building interventions and participatory conservation initiatives on reducing threats to coastal and marine biodiversity, while generating livelihood co-benefits.

The envisaged functional MPA network facilitated under Component 3 was an important part of the project strategy, addressing the constraints associated with inadequate coordination, knowledge sharing and information systems. Following the Contribution Analysis approach, the TE assessed the validity of assumption A3, i.e., "Networking, improved monitoring and evaluation and sharing of knowledge institutionalized in the project and the proposed MPA Network will enhance capacity for sustainable ecosystem management and conservation of globally significant coastal biodiversity", through targeted questioning of project stakeholders and review of available documentary evidence.

The TE process included measurement of progress towards the predetermined project objective and outcomes, according to the agreed metrics incorporated into the project design. An evaluation matrix was prepared during the TE inception phase to guide the TE team.

Phase I of the TE consisted of evaluating secondary data through desk reviews, starting with review of self-assessed progress towards achievement of results, specifically as reported in the available project implementation reports (PIRs). The desk review phase continued during the data collection/analysis phase (Phase 2). The data collection/analysis phase continued through analysis of primary data, gathered from semi-structured interviews conducted by the TE team, using the evaluation matrix as a general guide and stakeholder-specific questions agreed upon by the TE members prior to each of the interviews, as well as direct observations made during visits to project sites as part of the TE mission. Findings of the semi-structured interviews and direct observations were triangulated with information contained in project reports and other deliverables, publicly available information, and observations in the field during the TE mission. Phase 3 of the TE involved drafting the TE report.

Gender equality and women's empowerment concerns were incorporated into the evaluation matrix. The TE team made concerted efforts to assess progress towards achievement of gender mainstreaming objectives, the semi-structured interviews included inquiries regarding gender-responsiveness of the project, segregated interviews were conducted with women stakeholders for questions related gender mainstreaming, and one women's group was interviewed directly.

1.3 Structure of the TE report

The TE report begins with a description of the project, indicating the duration, main stakeholders, and the immediate and development objectives. The findings of the TE are broken down into the following sections:

- ✓ Project Formulation
- ✓ Project Implementation
- ✓ Project Results

The discussion under **project formulation** focuses on an evaluation of how the coherence and practicability of the project's objectives and components, whether project outcomes were designed according to SMART criteria (Smart, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound), and how gender equality and women's empowerment considerations were integrated into project design.

Project formulation also covers how capacities of executing agencies were assessed when designing the project, if partnership arrangements were identified and negotiated prior to project approval, and an assessment of how assumptions and risks were considered.

The report section on **project implementation** first looks at how the logical results framework was used as an M&E tool during project implementation and to what extent adaptive management was conducted. The effectiveness of partnerships and the degree of involvement of stakeholders were evaluated. **Project finance** was assessed by looking at the degree of cofinancing materialized in comparison to what was confirmed at project entry, and whether additional cofinancing was mobilized during the implementation phase. The cost-effectiveness of the project was evaluated by analyzing how the planned activities met or exceeded the expected outcomes over the designed timeframe, and whether an appropriate level of due diligence was maintained in managing project funds.

The quality of execution by both the implementing agency and the executing agency was evaluated and rated in the project implementation section of the report. This evaluation considers whether there was sufficient focus on results, looks at the level of support provided, quality of risk management, and the candor and realism represented in the annual reports.

The project implementation section contains an evaluation and rating of the project M&E system. The appropriateness of the M&E plan is assessed, as well as a review of how the plan was implemented, e.g., compliance with progress and financial reporting requirements, how were adaptive measures taken in line with M&E findings, and management response to the recommendations from the mid-term review.

In GEF terms, **project results** include direct project outputs, short- to medium-term outcomes, and longer-term impacts, including global environmental benefits, replication efforts, and local effects. The focus of the evaluation is at the outcome level, as most UNDP supported GEF financed projects are expected to achieve anticipated outcomes by project closing and recognizing that global environmental benefit impacts are difficult to discern and measuring outputs is insufficient to capture project effectiveness.

In addition to assessing outcomes, the report includes an evaluation of country ownership, mainstreaming**, sustainability** (which is also rated), catalytic role, mainstreaming, and impact.

With respect to **cross-cutting benefits**, the evaluation assesses the extent to which the project was successfully mainstreamed with other UNDP priorities, including poverty alleviation, improved governance, the prevention and recovery from natural disasters, and gender.

In terms of **progress towards impact**, the TE team assessed whether the project has demonstrated: (a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, (b) verifiable reductions in stress (pressure) on ecological systems (e.g., environmentally sensitive areas ESAs), and/or (c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements.

The TE team also assessed how the project has mainstreamed other development priorities, including but not limited to gender mainstreaming, poverty alleviation, improved governance, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster prevention and recovery, human rights, and capacity development, South-South cooperation, knowledge management, volunteerism, etc., as applicable, and how the project incorporated the UNDP commitment to rights-based approaches in the design.

Finally, the evaluation presents **recommendations** for reinforcing and following up on initial project benefits. The report concludes with a discussion of **lessons learned** which should be considered for other GEF and UNDP interventions.

1.4 Evaluation Ratings

The findings of the evaluation are compared against the targets set forth in the logical results framework and analysed according to developments that occurred over the course of the project. The effectiveness and efficiency of project outcomes are rated according to the 6-point GEF scale, ranging from Highly Satisfactory (no shortcomings) to Highly Unsatisfactory (severe shortcomings). Monitoring & evaluation and execution of the implementing and executing agencies were also rated according to this scale. Relevance is evaluated to be either relevant or not relevant. Sustainability is rated according to the 4-point scale, ranging from Likely (negligible risks to the likelihood of continued benefits after the project ends) to Unlikely (severe risks that project outcomes will not be sustained). More detailed descriptions of the rating scales are compiled in **Annex 8**.

1.5 Ethics

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines for Evaluators, and the TE team members have signed the Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement form (see **Annex 9**).

1.6 Audit Trail

Upon review of the TE report, the TE team responded to comments in an audit trail matrix, which is annexed in a separate file to the final version of the TE report.

1.7 Limitations

The TE was carried out according to the Terms of Reference (**Annex 11**) and UNDP and GEF guidelines for terminal evaluations of GEF-financed projects.

There were no significant limitations associated with language. The TE team consisted of an international consultant/team leader and a national consultant. Moreover, independent interpretation was provided to support the interviews.

The TE team was provided with the documents requested prior to the TE mission, to support development of the TE inception report. Further information and documents were provided during and after the mission. During the TE mission, the TE team visited each of the five target MPAs, and four of the five cities where the sites were situated in three provinces and had extensive interviews with stakeholders at all levels. There were no major limitations in the implementation of the TE. The only potential limitation was due to the bad weather in southeast China during July, which caused one flight delay. However, the project team took immediate actions and changed to an early morning flight. Therefore, the follow-up schedule proceeded as planned.

Overall, the TE team concludes that the information and feedback obtained sufficiently captured the results achieved by the project and prospects for sustaining results after GEF funding ceases.

2 Project Description

2.1 Project start and duration

Key project dates are listed below:

Project Preparation Grant Approved:	25 October 2016
Project approved for implementation by GEF Secretariat (date of GEF CEO endorsement):	11 October 2018
Project start (project document signed by Government):	03 October 2019
Project inception workshop:	24 December 2019
Midterm review (report):	22 April 2022
Terminal evaluation (report):	July 2024
Project completion (planned):	02 October 2024

The project preparation grant was approved on 25 October 2016, and the project was approved for implementation by the GEF Secretariat on 11 October 2018. The Project Document was signed on 03 October 2019, which marked the official start of the project. There was more than a year between GEF approval and the signing of the Project Document by the Government. The delay was primarily associated with the institutional reforms in China at this time. The State Oceanic Administration (SOA), which was identified as the Implementing Partner (i.e., Executing Agency) at CEO endorsement, was dissolved as part of the reforms and the agency's functions were transferred to the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and the Ministry of Environment and Ecology (policy related functions). Transferring the role of Implementing Partner to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA), an entity of MNR responsible for overseeing the terrestrial and marine protected areas in the country, took time to sort out.

The project inception workshop was held on 24 December 2019, which was also the date when the first Project Steering Committee meeting was convened. The midterm review report was issued on 22 April 2022. The project closing date is 02 October 2024; there were no time extensions requested for this 5-year duration project.

2.2 Development context

The southeast coast of China is highly developed and a major economic hub in the country. Coastal development pressures remain high and expansion of MPAs in this region is a challenge, taking into account the competing interests of multiple stakeholders.

During the project implementation phase the Government of China initiated an integration and optimization review of all protected areas in the country, with the aim of resolving overlaps in categorization of the various types of protected areas and streamlining the classification into three main categories. At the time of the TE, the three provincial governments in the provinces where the project pilot sites are located had submitted their reports of the integration and optimization process to the MNR. The TE team was informed that the MNR has technically approved the inputs from the provinces nationwide and final approval is pending from the State Council.

At the time of project preparation, in 2017, as documented in the Project Document, the process had begun to apply the Ecological Red-lining System to control development and safeguard coastal and marine ecology through strict management and mandatory protection of Ecologically Sensitive Areas and other areas in key coastal habitats. Interviewed stakeholders informed the TE team during the July 2024 mission that the red-lining maps have been prepared but have not yet been officially approved and made public. The red-lined areas, however, are taken into consideration internally, e.g., as part of environmental impact assessment review procedures.

2.3 Problems that the project sought to address

The baseline analysis described in the Project Document outlines how coastal ecosystems and their biodiversity in SE China are under extreme pressure from dense human populations, intensive natural resource exploitation and disturbance, conversion of natural habitats and pollution. The project design focuses on coastal ecosystems using the iconic Chinese white dolphin (CWD) as an indicator and flagship species to engage multiple stakeholders in novel ecosystem-based approaches.

2.4 Immediate and development objectives of the project

The envisaged socio-economic benefits generated through the project, particularly adjacent to the pilot areas, included reducing the lost-opportunity costs that arise from environmental mismanagement, such as destruction of valuable marine habitats, over-harvesting of marine resources and marine pollution. This was expected to be achieved through mainstreaming MPAs and biodiversity into marine spatial planning and the work of other sectors. The project also aimed to support local governments to strengthen the resilience of coastal communities through the development of sustainable livelihoods, primarily associated with the Qinzhou-Beihai pilot area, where there are more communities adjacent to the protected aeras. Additionally, the proactive work to conserve CWD and globally significant biodiversity adjacent to the major urban centres of the other two pilot areas was envisaged to help them demonstrate their commitment to a prosperous and sustainable blue economy.

2.5 Theory of change

The project objective is to conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity in South-East (SE) China through integrated seascape planning and threat management, MPA network expansion and strengthened MPA operations. To achieve this objective, the project implemented three general strategies (Project Components). The components were designed to remove the following barriers to achieving the long-term goal of conserving globally significant coastal biodiversity in SE China: 1) Inadequate MPAs and enabling framework for integrated coastal biodiversity conservation; 2) Lack of experience, capacity and participation to apply ecosystem-based approaches; 3) Inadequate coordination, knowledge management and information systems for effective threat management. These barriers were envisaged to be removed through a suite of activities whose results would contribute towards accomplishment of the project outcomes. The three project components are listed below.

- **Component 1**: Strengthened MPA legal framework and mainstreaming and expansion of MPA network.
- **Component 2**: Demonstrations of improved MPA and ESA management.
- **Component 3**: Monitoring, evaluation and sharing of knowledge and information on coastal habitats and species.

Component 1 was designed to improve the planning, legislation and enforcement, mainstreaming and resourcing of MPAs for coastal biodiversity conservation. Central to this was the application of ecosystem-based approaches at seascape scale which were envisaged to result in: a) expansion in coverage and enhanced connectivity of the MPA/ESA network to conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity; b) shift the focus from single species conservation within individual MPAs to ecosystem-based conservation across whole seascapes including multiple MPAs; c) provide a platform to engage multiple sectors and communities in coastal biodiversity conservation through mainstreaming MPAs and biodiversity into marine spatial planning and the regular programs and budgets of related agencies (e.g., the Environmental Protection Bureau and the Agriculture and Water Supplies Bureau which are responsible for many land- based issues affecting the marine environment such as pollution and control of infrastructure development); and d) increase and improve the effectiveness of existing and new financial resources through improved budget coordination and by exploring and demonstrating innovative financing mechanisms, including eco-compensation to support MPAs including through community co-management (these will be explored in close collaboration with the C-PAR6 project which shares a related outcome).

The focus of Component 2 was on implementing the enabling mechanisms developed under Component 1 to improve the management effectiveness of MPAs in the three pilot areas (Xiamen Bay coastal waters,

Zhuhai-Jiangmen coastal waters and Qinzhou-Beihai coastal waters) in the context of their wider coastal ecosystem, as measured by the GEF BD- 1 Tracking Tool. These enabling mechanisms were designed to be implemented for six target MPAs: the five existing target MPAs within the pilot areas, as well as building management effectiveness for the proposed new Sanniang Bay MPA in Qinzhou Municipality established under Component 1. The focus was on capacity building of the MPA staff and related agencies in ecosystem-based approaches, improved management planning, and participatory management that engages multiple stakeholders. Communities, particularly in the Qinzhou-Beihai coastal waters pilot area, will be mobilized and facilitated to participate in MPA management and the stewardship of marine resources. In this pilot area, a transition to more sustainable livelihoods was envisaged to be facilitated and where necessary incentivized, with particular attention to gender issues. The support of adjacent urban communities to help address key threats was expected to also be harnessed in all pilot areas through awareness raising and participatory action.

Under Component 3, the project strategy includes establishment and operationalization of an MPA network for SE China, starting with the target MPAs. The MPA network was designed to focus on building a coherent and dynamic MPA "family", actively sharing knowledge and best management practices using effective communication and training tools. The C-PAR4 project was envisaged to collaborate actively with other international MPA networks to gain international best practices, address new marine conservation challenges and help to keep the global MPA agenda moving forward, meeting the 2017 UN Oceans Conference "Call for Actions" with regional "human" networks of MPA managers showing their added value at regional scale to strengthen MPAs.

2.6 Expected results

The project aimed to support the improved management of 1,139,200 hectares of coastal waters including MPAs. The project area in SE China includes the coastal waters of three provinces (Fujian, Guangdong and Guangxi), with a total coastline of 9,493 km and an area of 5 million ha. Expected project results are summarized below.

- 40,000 ha of new MPAs / ESAs gazetted.
- 3,500 people benefiting directly from project (50% women); 750 people have received training (C-PAR Program target for C-PAR4) (35% women).
- Improved management effectiveness of the target MPAs, achieving a METT score of at least 67%, representing "sound" management.
- At least two improved/new provincial rules, regulations, management measures, and at least two new local rules, regulations, management measures.
- Population size of Chinese white dolphin stable or improved from baseline.
- Reduction in threats, including a 10% reduction in the number of CWD and other cetaceans found dead with external injuries due to human activities, 10% reduction in incidents of illegal fishing in the target MPAs, and a 10% reduction in the weight of debris/litter collected during volunteer beach clean-ups.
- 30% increase in scores in the GEF-6 BD Financial Sustainability Scorecard, and USD 200,000 per year delivered for eco-compensation.
- Three Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships (CBPs) implementing Coastal Biodiversity Action Plans across three pilot areas.
- Operational MPA Network for SE China established for improved data collection, sharing of knowledge and information and best practices for integrated MPA seascape planning and threat management
- Strengthened subnational institutional capacities for protected area planning and management.
- Increased level of understanding among decision makers and public on value of PA systems.

2.7 Total resources

The project is operating under a national implementation modality (NIM), with the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA) as Lead Implementing Partner. The GEF project grant is USD 2,652,294 (excluding agency fee) and committed cofinancing at project entry was USD 22,362,852.

2.8 Main stakeholders

An extensive stakeholder analysis was made during the project preparation phase, supporting the development of the project's stakeholder engagement plan. The plan outlines broad engagement with stakeholders at national, provincial and local levels. The NFGA was the primary stakeholder at the national level, coordinating closely with other governmental stakeholders via the existing governance structures at national, provincial and municipal levels, while the MPA management authorities and offices collaborated with county and village administrations, NGOs and the private sector. The establishment of Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships was envisaged to be a key mechanism for targeted stakeholder engagement to focus on MPAs and coastal biodiversity conservation in an integrated way.

Upon the launch of the project, the project team updated the stakeholder analysis, including descriptions of expected stakeholder roles in the project. The updated stakeholder analysis table was included in the project inception report (see below in **Table 4**).

Table 4: Project stakeholders and their roles (copied from project inception report)

Stakeholder	Mandate	Role in the Project
National level stakeholders		
Ministry of Finance (MoF) (website: http://www.mof.gov.cn/index.htm)	MoF has many responsibilities over public finance, taxation, the treasury, government properties, operations of government monopolies, and revenue-generating enterprises. The ministry is also vested with the power to provide loan guarantees for the governmental agencies, financial institutions, and state enterprises.	MoF is the GEF Operational Focal point of China responsible for coordinating the programming of GEF resources and overseeing the China GEF portfolio with the GEF Agencies. MoF will be the recipient of GEF grant on behalf of the Chinese Government.
Ministry of Agriculture and and Rural Affairs (MARA) (Formerly Ministry of Agriculture) (Website: http://www.moa.gov.cn)	MARA is in charge of agriculture and rural economic development, research and development of strategies and long-term and mid-term development plans for agriculture and the rural economy. It has the responsibility to: draw up agricultural development plans and supervise their implementation; to study on and draw up agricultural industry policies, direct the rational structural adjustment of agricultural industries, rational allocation of agricultural resources and improvement of produce quality; to put forward policy suggestions regarding prices of agricultural products and means of agricultural production, tariff adjustment, circulation of agricultural staples, rural credit, taxation and rural financial subsidies; to organize the drafting of laws and provisions regarding various agricultural industries such as crop production, animal husbandry, fishery, rural and township enterprises.	MARA is the competent authority of CWD and CWD NRs in the pilot areas. MoA will be particularly involved in the project Components 1 and 3, i.e., expansion of MPA (proposed Sanniang Bay CWD MPA), as well as establishment of MPA Network.
National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA) (formerly State Forestry Administration) (http://www.forestry.gov.cn)	Until 17 March 2018, the State Forestry Administration (SFA) was the competent authority for forestry under the State Council, responsible for supervising the establishment and management of nature reserves of forests, terrestrial wild animals, and wetlands. Following the national institutional reform, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA) was established on April 10, 2018. The new Administration is mainly responsible for the monitoring and management of forest, grassland, wetland and desert; the development, utilization and protection of wildlife; ecological protection, restoration, reforestation, as well as management of all protected areas including National Parks. It is under the management of the Ministry of Natural Resources.	Through its Natural Protected Area Department, NFGA is the national implementing partner for this project, responsible for all project components and providing a national project director and ensuring quality and timely results monitoring and reporting of the project. NFGA will coordinate those MPAs to join the MPA Network and any other MPAs that are transitioned under the ministry as part of institutional reform underway. The stakeholder engagement plan, particularly national agencies, will be revised during inception phase as the structure of new Ministries and allocation of functions becomes clearer.
Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)	The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) was created on 17 March 2018, replacing the Ministry of Land & Resources, State Oceanic Administration (SOA), the National Surveying and Mapping Bureau and many functions of several other ministries and agencies, and is responsible for overseeing the development and protection of China's natural resources, setting up a spatial planning system and establishing a system for payment of ecosystem services. This ministry is mandated with responsibility over the national PA system,	This ministry was created at the end of the PPG phase. The ministry will be involved via NFGA and also SOA. Institutional reform is being finalized. The stakeholder engagement plan, particularly national agencies, will be revised during inception phase as the structure of new

Stakeholder	Mandate	Role in the Project
	through the subordinate National Forest and Grassland Administration / State National Park Authority.	Ministries and allocation of functions becomes clearer.
Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE; formerly Ministry of Environmental Protection, MEP)	From 17 March 2018, the functions of the Ministry of Environmental Protection were absorbed into the newly established Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE), which has also been mandated with the duties of overseeing river, marine and soil pollution, as well as climate change issues previously held by other ministries and departments. Until 17 March 2018 when MEE was created, MEP was responsible for establishing a sound basic system for environmental protection; responsible for the overall coordination, supervision and administration of major environmental problems; undertakes the responsibilities for attaining national pollution reduction targets; guided, coordinated, and oversaw ecological conservation effort; Responsible for the supervision and administration of the prevention and control of environmental pollution, etc.	This ministry was created at the end of the PPG phase. The FECO division of MEP is expected to remain in place, under the new MEE. MEP was the competent authority of Hepu Dugong NNR in the pilot area and some other MPAs in the project area. These functions could transition to SFGA/MNR. Institutional reform is being finalized. The stakeholder engagement plan, particularly national agencies, will be revised during inception phase as the structure of new Ministries and allocation of functions becomes clearer.
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – China Country Office (website: http://www.undp.org)	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 focuses on helping countries build and share solutions in three main areas: • Sustainable development • Democratic governance and peacebuilding • Climate and disaster resilience UNDP-China office is a close development partner of SOA	UNDP is the GEF Agency for the project and is therefore responsible for oversight and monitoring project implementation and ensuring adherence to UNDP and GEF policies and procedures.
Provincial level stakeholders		
Fujian Provincial Department of Forestry	Fujian Provincial Department of Forestry is responsible for the implementation of the central government's guidelines, policies, laws and regulations related to the construction of ecological civilization; the supervision and the management of the development, utilization and protection of forest, wetlands, desert and terrestrial wildlife and plant resources; ecological protection and restoration; afforestation and land greening; the management of various nature reserves.	Fujian Provincial Department of Forestry is a key stakeholder of the project, and will coordinate and participate in the project, especially in Output 1.1, 1.2 and Component 3.
Guangdong Provincial Department of Forestry	Guangdong Provincial Department of Forestry is responsible for the implementation of the central government's guidelines, policies, laws and regulations related to the construction of ecological civilization; the supervision and the management of the development, utilization and protection of forest, wetlands, desert and terrestrial wildlife and plant resources; ecological protection and restoration; afforestation and land greening; the management of various nature reserves.	Guangdong Provincial Department of Forestry is a key stakeholder of the project, and will coordinate and participate in the project, especially in Output 1.1, 1.2 and Component 3.
Department of Forestry of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region	Department of Forestry of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region is responsible for the implementation of the central government's guidelines, policies, laws and regulations related to the construction of ecological civilization; the supervision and the management of the development, utilization and protection of forest, wetlands, desert and terrestrial wildlife and plant resources; ecological protection and restoration; afforestation and land greening; the management of various nature reserves.	Department of Forestry of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region is a key stakeholder of the project, and will coordinate and participate in the project, especially in Output 1.1, 1.2 and Component 3.
Third Institute of Oceanography, Ministry of Natural Resources (TIO, MNR)	TIO was founded in 1959, is subordinate to the Ministry of Natural Resources and is a comprehensive Marine Science Research Institute of national public welfare. TIO is mainly engaged in research and application of marine biology, marine chemistry, marine geology, marine dynamics, marine remote sensing, marine acoustics, marine environment and ecology, polar and deep-sea science, and global change science. APEC Marine Sustainable Development Centre of TIO aims to promote the practical cooperation among the APEC economies in fields such as marine economy development, ecosystem management, response to climate change and marine disaster preparedness, establishment of collaborative partnerships, and in a joint effort to advance the marine sustainable development for the Asia-Pacific region.	TIO is a key provider of technical expertise on CWD conservation. The project will collaborate with TIO for species conservation work, and it will be a collaborator for the systematic biodiversity monitoring, evaluation and strengthening of Component 3. The APEC Centre will collaborate on knowledge sharing.
Pilot area level stakeholders- enforcement agencies		
Xiamen Municipal Natural Resources and Planning Bureau	This bureau is in charge of performing the ownership of all natural resources such as land, minerals, forests, grasslands, wetlands, water, and oceans; performing control over the usage of national land; implementing the national laws, regulations and rules on natural resources and planning and mapping of national land; drafting and implementing local regulations, rules and policies on natural resources and planning and mapping of national land.	Key stakeholder at local level and will play a leading role in many activities related to Xiamen Bay Pilot area, especially in output 1.2, 1.3 and 2.3.
Zhuhai Municipal Natural	This bureau is in charge of performing the ownership of all natural resources such as land, minerals, forests, grasslands, wetlands, water, and oceans; performing control over the usage of national land; drafting and implementing	Key stakeholder at local level and will play a leading role in many activities related to

Stakeholder	Mandate	Role in the Project
Resources Bureau	local regulations, rules and policies on natural resources and planning and mapping of national land.	Zhuhai-Jiangmen Pilot area, especially in output 1.2, 1.3 and 2.3.
Jiangmen Municipal Natural Resources Bureau / Ocean Bureau	Jiangmen Municipal Natural Resources Bureau / Ocean Bureau is in charge of performing the ownership of all natural resources such as land, minerals, forests, grasslands, wetlands, water, and oceans; performing control over the usage of national land; drafting and implementing local regulations, rules and policies on natural resources and planning and mapping of national land.	Key stakeholder at local level and will play a leading role in many activities related to Zhuhai-Jiangmen Pilot area, especially in output 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 2.3.
Qinzhou Municipal Forestry Bureau	This bureau is responsible for the supervision and management of the city's forestry and its ecological construction, and the protection and development of the city's forest resources as well as the city's natural reserves. This bureau organizes, coordinates, guides and supervises the protection and rational development and utilization of the city's terrestrial wildlife and plant resources, as well as afforestation, wetland protection and desertification control.	Key stakeholders at local level and will play a leading role in many activities related to Qinzhou-Beihai Pilot area, especially in output 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 2.3.
Aquatic and Husbandry Bureau of Qinzhou	The Bureau is in charge of the safety supervision of aquatic animal products and aquatic animal production in Qinzhou, supervision and management of ecological aquaculture, circular aquaculture, fisheries rights and cruises, and safeguarding the rights and interests of national marine fisheries.	Key stakeholder at local level and will play a leading role in many activities related to Qinzhou-Beihai Pilot area, especially in output 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 2.3.
Beihai Municipal Natural Resources Bureau / Forestry Bureau	This bureau is in charge of performing the ownership of all natural resources such as land, minerals, forests, grasslands, wetlands, water, and oceans; performing control over the usage of national land; implementing the national and the autonomous region's laws and regulations on natural resources and planning and mapping of national land; drafting related local regulations, rules and policies and planning and mapping of national land.	Key stakeholder at local level and will play a leading role in many activities related to Qinzhou-Beihai Pilot area, especially in output 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 2.3.
Pilot area level stakeholders- target MPAs		
Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR	In 1991, the Xiamen Amphioxus NR was established. In 1995, the Dayu Island Egret PNR was established by the Fujian Provincial government. In 1997, Xiamen CWD PNR was established by the Fujian Provincial government. In 2000, Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR was established, including CWD PNR, egret PNR and amphioxus MNR, with total protected area of 7,588 Ha. The reserve is affiliated to MoA, and its operation is supervised by Xiamen Oceans and Fisheries Bureau.	Key target MPA in the Xiamen Bay pilot area. The project will collaborate with it for species conservation work and systematic biodiversity monitoring, especially for outputs in Components 2 and 3.
Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR	The Pearl River Estuary Provincial Nature Reserve was established in Oct 1999 and upgraded to National Nature Reserve in 2003. The reserve is located in the Pearl River Estuary, with total protected area of 46,000 ha. The Reserve is managed by Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR Administrative Bureau, which fully implements national laws, regulations, guidelines and policies on nature reserves; the Bureau draws up the overall planning and various administrative systems and implements unified administration for the reserve.	Key target MPA in the Zhuhai-Jiangmen pilot area, the project will collaborate with it for species conservation work and systematic biodiversity monitoring, especially for outputs in Components 2 and 3.
Jiangmen CWD PNR	The Jiangmen CWD PNR was established in Oct, 2003. The reserve has a total protected area of 10,747 ha. The reserve is affiliated administratively to Jiangmen Municipal Natural Resources Bureau/Ocean Bureau, and its operation is supervised by Guangdong Provincial Department of Forestry. It is a public institutional organization in deputy-director level.	Key target MPA in the Zhuhai-Jiangmen pilot area. The project will collaborate with it for species conservation work and systematic biodiversity monitoring, especially outputs in Components 2 and 3.
Hepu Dugong NNR	In 1986, the Hepu Dugong Provincial Nature Reserve was established, and it was upgraded to Hepu Dugong National Nature Reserve in 1992. The reserve has a protected area of 35,000 ha. Hepu Dugong NNR is affiliated to the Ministry of Environmental Protection, and its operation is supervised by Guangxi Environmental Protection Bureau. The Reserve is managed by Guangxi Hepu Dugong National Nature Reserve Administrative Station and is a section level institutional organization.	Key target MPA in the Qinzhou-Beihai pilot area. The project will collaborate with it for species conservation work and systematic biodiversity monitoring, especially outputs in Component 2 and 3.
Shankou Mangrove NNR	The Shankou Mangrove National Nature Reserve was established in 1990. In July, 1993, it joined the network of "Chinese Man and Biosphere". In 2000, it was listed as a member of "UNESCO Man and Biosphere" Reserve, and in 2002, it was listed as a Ramsar site. The reserve is affiliated to the SOA. The Reserve is a public institutional organization with administrative law enforcement and management functions.	Key target MPA in the Qinzhou-Beihai pilot area. The project will collaborate with it for species conservation work and systematic biodiversity monitoring, especially outputs in Component 2 and 3.
Pilot area level stakeholders-local communities		
Sanniang Bay village (Qinzhou)	The Sanniang Bay village, located in the south of Xiniujiao town in Qinzhou City, is currently the only village that carries out dolphin watching tourism industry in China. This village is also a national 4A level scenic spot. There are small levels of ethnic minorities, most of whom speak Mandarin and read Standard Chinese.	Key beneficiary of the marine resources and biodiversity. Potential major role in local habitat conservation, controlling of poaching, and natural resource management. Critical participant for Output 2.2 and 2.3. The establishment of Proposed Sanniang Bay MPA will restrict local traditional fishing activities, some livelihoods support need to be provided.

Stakeholder	Mandate	Role in the Project
Shanliao village (Beihai)	Shanliao village is in the southeast of Shuinan Town and composed of 7 natural villages and 7 village groups. There is a total of 169 households and a total of 618 people in the village, among which are 189 men and 180 women in the labor force. There are small levels of ethnic minorities, most of whom speak Mandarin and read Standard Chinese.	Key beneficiary of marine resources and biodiversity. It has a potentially major role in local habitat conservation, controlling of poaching, and natural resource management. Critical participant in the output 2.2 and 2.3. Strengthening MPA management and law enforcement will restrict local traditional fishing activities, some livelihoods support needs to be provided.
Nanwan village (Jiangmen)	Nanwan village is located in the Chixi Town, Taishan City of Jiangmen, which has a population of 254 people. However, the actual resident population is no more than 30 in the village. The young and strong villagers go out for work, while teenagers go out to study; only some of the elderly stay in the village. There are small levels of ethnic minorities, most of whom speak Mandarin and read Standard Chinese.	Key beneficiary of the marine resources and biodiversity. It has a potential role in local habitat conservation and natural resource management. Nanwan village will be involved in the output 2.2 and 2.3.
Local and International NGOs		
Local NGOs	There are many local NGOs (such as China Mangrove Conservation Alliance, Xiamen Birdwatching Society, Xiamen Xiaoxiao'Ou Nature Ecology Education Center, Guangxi Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Research Centre ("Nature School"), Guangxi Biodiversity Research and Conservation Association etc.) working in the field of nature conservation and public awareness education.	Relevant local NGOs will be invited to participate in the project Technical Advisory Consortium and may be requested to support specific activities (e.g. on training, awareness raising etc.) during the project implementation phase.
WWF-HK (website: http://www.wwf.org.hk)	WWF- Hong Kong was the first major environmental group set up in Hong Kong in the 1980s. It has much technical expertise and a specific programme related to CWD conservation.	WWF-HK can provide knowledge, experiences and lessons learned, as well as technical support to the project. WWF-HK is a potential partner for several components of the project and has expressed a strong willingness to participate.
WWF-China (website: https://en.wwfchina.org)	WWF has been active in China since 1979, when it was invited by the Chinese government as the first international NGO to work on nature conservation. The Beijing office opened in 1996, and there are now 8 additional field programme offices spread across China.	WWF-China can provide knowledge, experiences and lessons learned, as well as technical support to the project. WWF-China has expressed a strong willingness to participate in the project and has signed the letter for cooperation.
Local academic institutions, media and others		
Academic institutions	There are lots of academic institutions (such Xiamen University, Shantou University, Nanjing Normal University, Institute of Hydrobiology, Chinese Academic of Science, Sun Yat-Sen University, Guangxi Academy of Science and Qinzhou University etc) study on CWD and other marine biodiversity conservation, as well as MPA management.	Relevant local NGOs will be invited to participate in the project Technical Advisory Consortium and may be requested to provide technical inputs on training, monitoring and evaluations during the project implementation phase.
CWD Conservation Union	The CWD Conservation Union was established in December 2017, led by MoA. So far, more than 30 members (including CWD competent authorities, academic institutions, MPAs, aquariums and NGOs) have joined the Union. Meanwhile, a CWD Conservation Action Plan (2017-2026) was launched by the MoA in order to protect CWDs and their habitats along the SE coast of China.	Many of the members of CWD Conservation Union are CWD conservation and management departments, they also participate in the project, many activities need their coordination, organization and implementation.
Local media	There are lots of local media in the pilot area and project area, such as China Ocean News, Xiamen Daily, Xiamen Evening News, Hercynian Morning News, Yangcheng Evening News, as well as CCTV, Xiamen TV, Zhuhai TV, Qinzhou TV and Beihai TV etc., which have important influence in local cities even throughout China.	Key partners for the publicity and education about this Project through information dissemination and adding relevant programs and lessons.

Source: Project inception report

In 2023, along with the update of the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP), the project revisited the roles and responsibilities of its stakeholders, as documented in the Environmental and Social Safeguards Capacity-Building Measures report. Based on analysis and mapping of project stakeholders' roles and responsibilities, project stakeholders were classified into three categories:

- **Key stakeholders** are actors without whose support and participation the targeted results of a project usually cannot be achieved,
- **Primary stakeholders** are actors who are directly affected by the project, either as designated project beneficiaries, because they stand to gain – or lose – power and privilege or because they are impacted by the project in some other way, for instance, if they must be resettled,

- **Secondary stakeholders** are actors whose involvement in the project is only indirect or temporary.

Stakeholder	Abbreviation	Roles: Key, Primary, Secondary
National level stakeholders		
Ministry of Finance (MoF) (Website: http://www.mof.gov.cn/index.htm)	MOF	Key
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) Formerly Ministry of Agriculture) (Website: http://www.moa.gov.cn)	MARA	Primary
National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA) (formerly State Forestry Administration) (http://www.forestry.gov.cn)	NFGA	Key
Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)	MNR	Primary
Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE; formerly Ministry of Environmental Protection, MEP)	MEE	Key
National Development and Reform Commission https://en.ndrc.gov.cn	NDRC	Primary
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – China Country Office (Website: http://www.undp.org)	UNDP-China	Key
Provincial level stakeholders		
Fujian Provincial Department of Forestry	FPDF	Key
Guangdong Provincial Department of Forestry	GPDF	Key
Department of Forestry of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region	DFGZR	Key
Pilot area level stakeholders- enforcement agencies		
Xiamen Municipal Natural Resources and Planning Bureau	XPDF	Key
Zhuhai Municipal Natural Resources Bureau	ZMNRB	Key
Jiangmen Municipal Natural Resources Bureau / Ocean Bureau	JMNRB	Key
Qinzhou Municipal Forestry Bureau	QMFB	Key
Aquatic and Husbandry Bureau of Qinzhou	AHBQ	Secondary
Beihai Municipal Natural Resources Bureau / Forestry Bureau	BMNRB	Key
Pilot area level stakeholders- target MPAs		
Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR	X-NNR	Key
Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR	P-CWD NNR	Key
Jiangmen CWD PNR	J-CED PNR	Key
Hepu Dugong NNR	HD-NNR	Key
Shankou Mangrove NNR	SM-NNR	Key
Pilot area level stakeholders-local communities		
Sanniang Bay village (Qinzhou)	Qinzhou	Secondary
Shanliao village (Beihai)	Beihai	Secondary
Nanwan village (Jiangmen)	Jiangmen	Secondary
Local and International NGOs		
Guangxi Biodiversity Research and Conservation Association BRC	BRC	Secondary
WWF-HK (website: ttp://www.wwf.org.hk)	WWF-HK	Secondary
WWF-China (website: https://en.wwfchina.org)	WWF-China	Secondary
Local unions and syndicate, academic institutions, media and others		
Academic institutions	AI	Primary
CWD Conservation Union	CED CU	Primary
Local media	LM	Secondary

Source: Environmental and Social Safeguards Capacity-Building Measures report

3 Findings

3.1 Project design / formulation

3.1.1 Project strategy

The project strategy was aligned with the following GEF-6 Biodiversity focal area programming directions:

- **BD-1 Program 1: Outcome 1.1**. Increased revenue for protected area systems and globally significant protected areas to meet total expenditures required for management; **Outcome 1.2**. Improved management effectiveness of protected areas.
- **BD-1 Program 2: Outcome 2.1.** Increase in area of terrestrial and marine ecosystems of global significance in new protected areas and increase in threatened species of global significance protected in new protected areas.

The project objective and components were clearly articulated, in accordance with the problem analysis and theory of change formulated during the project preparation phase and aligned with the overall program framework document (PFD) of the China-Protected Areas System Reform (C-PAR) Program. This project is one of the six child projects of the C-PAR program, and the only one addressing conservation of marine biodiversity.

3.1.2 Analysis of results framework

As part of the TE, the project results framework for the project was assessed against "SMART" criteria, to evaluate whether the indicators and targets were sufficiently specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound. With respect to the time-bound criterion, all targets are assumed compliant, as they are set as end-of-project performance metrics.

The project results framework was found to be generally SMART-compliant, apart from the issues outlined below in **Table 5**.

Table 5: SMART analysis of project results framework

Indicator	Baseline	End-of-Project target	MTR SMART analysis					Comments / analysis
			S	M	A	R	T	
Objective: ***To conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity in South-East (SE) China through integrated seascape planning and threat management, MPA network expansion and strengthened MPA operations***								
Indicator 1: # direct project beneficiaries (disaggregated by gender)	a) and b) = 0	a) 3,500 people benefiting directly from project (50% female) b) 750 people have received training (C-PAR Program target for C-PAR4) (35% female)	Q	Y	Y	Y	Y	Generally SMART compliant; it would have been advisable to provide a clearer definition of "people benefiting directly from project" (part a).
Indicator 2: MPA network in SE China expanded by 40,000ha (including ESAs)	0 ha (baseline year is 2016)	40,000 ha of new MPAs / ESAs gazetted	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	SMART compliant
Indicator 3: Population size of Chinese white dolphin as indicator of globally significant biodiversity in the pilot areas a) BQCW: Behai-Qinzhou Coastal Waters b) ZJCW: Zhuhai-Jiangmen Coastal Waters c) XBCW = Xiamen Bay Coastal Waters	a) BQCW: >=230 individuals b) ZJCW: close to 2000 individuals c) XBCW: 60-76 individuals	a) - c) Stable or improved from baseline	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	SMART compliant
Outcome 1: ***: Expanded and strengthened MPA network with biodiversity mainstreamed into marine spatial planning***								

Indicator	Baseline	End-of-Project target	MTR SMART analysis					Comments / analysis
			S	M	A	R	T	
Indicator 4: Established collaborative governance and planning mechanism for MPAs in the context of wider seascapes	No framework exists for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation from MPAs into wider seascapes	3 CBPs implementing CBAPs across pilot areas, with at least annual meetings held Up-scaling mechanism agreed by NFGA.	Y	Y	Q	Y	Y	Generally SMART-compliant, except that the up-scaling mechanism agreed by NFGA was a challenging target for the 3 CBPs considering the normal top-down practice in China.
Indicator 5: Extent of rules, regulations and management measures for MPAs/ESAs and mainstreaming in marine spatial planning. a) New/improved provincial Rules, regulations and management measures e.g. for transboundary (provincial/municipal) design of MPAs b) new/improved local rules, regulations and management measures for sustainable MPA management and eco-compensation	0	a) At least 2 improved/new provincial rules, regulations, management measures b) At least 2 new local rules, regulations, management measures	Y	Y	Q	Y	Y	The timeframe for achieving new or improved rules and regulations is often beyond the typical implementation period of a GEF-financed project.
Indicator 6: Financial sustainability and resourcing for MPAs: a) amount of financing from new eco-compensation mechanism (diverse sources including governmental, private sector etc.); and b) improved financial sustainability as measured by the Financial Sustainability scorecard. **FSS Components:** 1. Legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks 2. Business planning and tools for cost-effective management 3. Tools for revenue generation (average of the three pilot areas)	a) $0 for eco-compensation b) FSS Comp. 1: (41) 43% FSS Comp. 2: (21) 36% FSS Comp. 3: (9) 13% **Total (71) 32%** * * Average of the three pilot areas	a) $200,000 per year delivered for eco-compensation b) 30% increase in total FSS score	Q	Y	Y	Y	Y	There are several eco-compensation schemes in China. It may have been more appropriate to focus on allocation approaches of existing schemes, and/or financing mechanisms (as done in Xiamen under the project).
Outcome 2: ***Improved management effectiveness of MPA/ESAs in the project pilot areas***								
Indicator 7: Capacity of MPA agencies in pilot areas, as measured by Capacity Development Scorecard.	a) Beihai = 56% b) Qinzhou = 53% c) Zhuhai = 64% d) Jiangmen= 54% e) Xiamen = 66%	a) Behai = 80% b) Qinzhou = 76% c) Zhuhai = 84% d) Jiangmen = 77% e) Xiamen = 89%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	SMART compliant
Indicator 8: Management effectiveness of target MPAs of global significance, indicated by the percentage increase in the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores	Baseline revised after MTR to the following: ~~a) Proposed Sanniang Bay CWD NR = n/a~~ b) Shankou Mangrove NNR = 56.67% c) Dugong NNR = 53.33% d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 63.33%	End target revised after MTR to the following: ~~a) Proposed Sanniang Bay CWD NR = 70%~~ b) Shankou Mangrove NNR = 70% c) Dugong NNR = 70% d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 70%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	SMART compliant

Indicator	Baseline	End-of-Project target	MTR SMART analysis					Comments / analysis
			S	M	A	R	T	
	e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 61.11% f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 67.78%	e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 70% f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 70%						
Indicator 9: Extent of community engagement in MPA conservation: a) # citizens (disaggregated by gender) participating in actions for MPAs (volunteer marine debris cleans, marine debris surveys, CWD sightings reports by smartphones), voluntary MPA rangers etc.). b) # eco-labelled tourism operations (boat operators, tour guides, restaurants, shell-fishers etc.) - mainly Behai-Qinzhou c) # of people (gender disaggregated) benefiting from enhanced and more sustainable livelihoods as a result of project activities for MPAs	a) 0 b) 0 c) 0	a) 4 citizen participatory action programmes (1000 participants, 50% women) b) 10 businesses eco-labelled c) 30 (at least 50% women)	Q	Y	Y	Y	Y	The term "eco-labelled" could have been better defined, e.g., whether the initiative is certified by an independent entity.
Indicator 10: Reduction in key threats to biodiversity in pilot areas: a) # CWD and other cetaceans found dead with external injuries due to human activities b) # incidents of illegal fishing* in target MPAs c) Weight of debris/litter collected during volunteer beach cleans * Measured separately for shell-fishing/mud digging in BQCW	Baseline revised after MTR to the following: a) # of CWD and other cetaceans found dead with external injuries due to human activities BQCW: 7 ZJCW: 12 XBCW: 3 (average 2012-16) b) # incidents of illegal fishing in target MPAs BQCW: 21* ZJCW: N/A XBCW: 16 * Illegal fishing: 6 *Shell-fishing/Mud digging: 15 c) Weight of debris/litter collected during volunteer beach cleans BQCW: 237.86 kg ZJCW: 203.02 kg XBCW: 154.53 kg	a) 10% reduction b) 10% reduction c) 10% reduction	Q	Y	Y	Y	Y	With the low baseline number of CWD and other cetacean fatalities, it would have been more appropriate to specify an expected number by the end of the project rather than a 10% reduction.
Indicator 11: Level of understanding on value of MPAs among public and decision makers, as measured by KAP (Knowledge Attitudes and Practices) survey score	a) BQCW: X b) ZJCW: X c) XBCW: X Baseline to be completed in Year 1 (gender disaggregated)	15% improvement	Q	Y	Y	Y	Y	It would have been more informative to assign separate end targets for each group assessed, i.e., separate targets for the public and decisionmakers.
Outcome 3:								
Indicator 12: Operational MPA Network for SE China established for improved data collection, sharing of knowledge and information	Does not exist	10 members Network operational and with dedicated resources for operation	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	SMART compliant

Indicator	Baseline	End-of-Project target	MTR SMART analysis					Comments / analysis
			S	M	A	R	T	
and best practices for integrated MPA seascape planning and threat management.		Operationalized information and knowledge management and sharing system linking different MPAs Working groups on: CWD, habitats and species monitoring						
Indicator 13: Number of key project lessons and strategies for sustainable coastal management documented, disseminated and adopted at local, provincial and national levels.	Baseline (2017): 0	All project results and lessons learned shared through MPA Network website and media (30% female participants); lessons learned presented to MPA administration and Municipal authorities for adoption in coastal zone planning processes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Generally SMART compliant, with specific and achievable end of project targets.
SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound Green: SMART criteria compliant (Y); Yellow: observation (Q) noted regarding SMART criteria; Amber: not (N) compliant with SMART criteria								

Broader development objectives were captured in Indicator 1 (direct beneficiaries, which were gender disaggregated) and in Indicator 9 (strengthened engagement with local communities).

Some adjustments to the outcome level indicators and targets were made in response to recommendations made by the midterm review (MTR), as discussed in Section 3.2.4 of this report.

3.1.3 Assumptions and risks

The following four assumptions were outlined in the project theory of change:

- A1: The national, provincial and municipal authorities are willing to expand the network of MPAs and prioritize the conservation of globally significant biodiversity, including through mainstreaming into marine spatial planning and allocating additional finances.
- A2: Increased capacity of MPA staff, together with greater participation of communities in MPA management will improve MPA management effectiveness and reduce locally specific threats to coastal biodiversity
- A3: Networking, improved monitoring and evaluation and sharing of knowledge institutionalized in the project and the proposed MPA Network will enhance capacity for sustainable ecosystem management and conservation of globally significant coastal biodiversity
- A4: The expected outcomes within the pilot areas are sufficient to conserve their globally significant coastal biodiversity, and mechanisms are in place to up-scale the results throughout the project area

These assumptions are relevant and were used in the development of the project strategy.

An extensive set of risks to project implementation were assessed, including social and environmental risks analyzed in accordance with the UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure. Operational, institutional, political and financial risks were also assessed. The institutional risk was focused on the challenge of obtaining cross-sectoral collaboration, something that the project design envisaged would be facilitated by the Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships. This risk proved to be a significant challenge – and maybe could have been rated higher in the original risk analysis.

The global COVID-19 pandemic was not foreseen at the time when the project was being prepared.

3.1.4 Gender responsiveness and social and environmental safeguards

A gender analysis was conducted during the project preparation phase and a gender action plan was incorporated into the project design. The key gender mainstreaming strategies outlined in the action plan included the following:

a) Mobilize support from gender specialists
b) Designate gender focal points to be responsible for gender related activities
c) Build capacity of the project management staff to promote gender equality
d) Ensure women's genuine and equal representation (e.g., in task forces, committees, training, sustainable livelihoods etc., allocating women-targeted budgets if necessary to achieve this)
e) Ensure women's equal access to project information (e.g., by ensuring specific consultations with women's groups.

A UNDP gender marker of GEN2 was applied; however, there were no dedicated gender-responsive outputs in the project design. The project document mentioned activities regarding establishment of women's groups and also allocated budget for small grant support for community organizations and women's groups.

Unlike some of the other C-PAR child projects, this project had a risk rating of moderate at project entry. The main difference was that only a small number of ethnic minorities were residing in or near or accessing the target areas. An Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) was developed jointly with the other three UNDP-supported child projects under the C-PAR program. The ESMF identified the steps for detailed screening and assessment of the projects' potential social and environmental risks, and for preparing and approving the required management plans for avoiding, and where avoidance is not possible, reducing, mitigating, and managing these adverse impacts.

3.1.5 Planned stakeholder participation

An extensive stakeholder analysis was made during the project preparation phase, and key stakeholders were consulted through workshops and bilateral meetings. As a result of the institutional reforms that were initiated in 2018-2019, at the time of CEO endorsement, the roles of certain stakeholders changed. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) was formerly the competent authority of the CWD nature reserves in the target areas. These responsibilities were transferred over to the Ministry of Natural Resources, specifically the NFGA. The planned stakeholder participation at the subnational level was similarly affected by the changes resulting from the institutional reform process.

The stakeholder analysis also included non-governmental partners, including local and international civil society organizations, local communities, academic institutions, and local media. Private sector partners were envisaged to be involved in the Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships (CBPs), be potential sources of diversified eco-compensation, and potentially involved in managing or approving the planned eco-labelling initiative.

The project design described the importance of ensuring engagement of women, especially women's group's participation. The project strategy included a plan to establish women's groups and provide training for making and marketing traditional or handmade products such as traditional local food, MPA-friendly sea products, handmade shell-works, maritime painting, maritime photos, etc. There was also budget allocated for implementation of these activities.

The project had metrics on representation of women according to the targets of the project's gender action plan, e.g., in working groups and activities such as capacity building and awareness programmes. Under Output 2.2, the project also planned to support building and diversifying sustainable livelihoods, with particular attention to supporting the livelihoods of women, including where necessary the piloting of eco-compensation mechanisms. The project strategy further described how women's engagement both in livelihoods and conservation activities will be proactively incentivized and prioritised, including through a targeted programme of small grants to community organisations, women's groups and NGOs, with small grant support to engage the time of community champions.

3.1.6 Lessons from other relevant projects

Lessons from previous GEF-financed projects on coastal and marine environments were taken into account in the design of the project. The ones mentioned in the project document include the UNEP-GEF "Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand" project (GEF ID 885, 2002-2008); the UNDP-GEF "Biodiversity Management in the Coastal Area of China's South Sea (SCCBD) (GEF ID 1128, 2005-2011)" project; the World Bank-GEF "Guangdong Agricultural Pollution Control" project (GEF ID 5452), the FAO-GEF "Demonstration of Estuarine Biodiversity Conservation, Restoration and Protected Area Networking in China" (GEF ID 4175) project – which was expected to begin implementation near the same time as the C-PAR projects; and the UNDP-GEF CBPF-MSL Strengthening the Management Effectiveness of the Wetland Protected Area System in Hainan for Conservation of Globally Significant Biodiversity (GEF ID 4811). The SCCBD project and the Hainan wetlands project had considerable geographical and thematic complementarity with the current project and reportedly provided important lessons learned for the baseline.

3.1.7 Linkages between project and other interventions

One of the benefits of being part of a program, in this case the C-PAR program, is the potential for linkages among the child projects. There was planned linkage with the other C-PAR child projects in terms of knowledge sharing, social and environmental safeguards (e.g., common approaches), hosting the program level steering committee on a rotating basis by the different child projects, etc. There was an expectation described in the project design that this project would link up with the CWD initiative being led by the WWF Hong Kong office, and there was a letter of cooperation signed by WWF China. There was also mention in the project document of planned engagement with the GEF IW:LEARN knowledge platform, as well with other projects being implemented in the South China Sea.

3.1.8 Replication approach

The project's replication approach covered both within the project itself, as well as to other marine ecosystems in China. There was a planned sharing of the relatively advanced experiences in Xiamen Bay and the Zhuhai-Jiangmen areas with the target areas in Sanniang Bay in Guangxi Province. The proposed MPA network for SE China offered the most significant mechanism for upscaling, i.e., inclusion of additional partners and/or replication to other coastal and marine ecosystems in the country. The focus on the flagship species CWD also offered replication opportunities for replication to other key marine species in other areas. Moreover, the GIS-based information and knowledge management platform under Component 3 was envisaged to increase knowledge exchange across the project and nationally.

3.2 Project implementation

3.2.1 Adaptive management

The project needed to make substantive adaptive management adjustments during the implementation phase. It took more than one year between the date with the project obtained GEF CEO endorsement to when the Government of China signed the project document, which signifies the official start of the project. The delay in starting the project was primarily due to deliberations on institutional arrangements, as there were major institutional reforms initiated in the same time period. Shifting oversight responsibility of MPAs to the NFGA resulted in a different Lead Implementing Partner (i.e., Executing Agency) as compared to the description in the project document. There was also limited institutional knowledge in the NFGA on marine biodiversity conservation.

The other externality that led to significant adaptive management was the COVID-19 pandemic. The restrictions on travel and physical meetings forced the project to rethink how some of the activities would be delivered, e.g., trainings, workshops, etc.

The project midterm review (MTR) (final report issued in April 2022) also resulted in some adjustments, including some changes to the outcome level indicators, e.g., reflecting the changes brought on by the

institutional reforms in the country and also to clarify some of the metrics. These changes were approved by the PSC; further information is provided below in Section 3.2.4. Another substantive recommendation from the MTR was an updated assessment of social and environmental risks, according to the UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure.

Another example of an adaptive management measure implemented by the project was the engagement of interns by the PMO, in response to frequent turnover of full-time PMO administrative staff.

3.2.2 Actual stakeholder participation and partnership arrangements

Having the project management office (PMO) hosted by the AFIP, an entity of the NFGA, proved very efficient in garnering a high level of country ownership. Director general level oversight was maintained throughout the implementation phase, facilitating reciprocal involvement of high-level officials at the provincial, municipal and autonomous regional levels, extending down to the level of the MPA management administrations.

Project activities were procured centrally by the PMO, with contracts and agreements made between the AFIP and contracted service providers, including research institutes, universities, local NGOs and others. There were small to moderate value agreements (ranging from USD 4,285 to USD 85,741 – see summary in **Annex 4**). The target MPA management administrations, the primary beneficiary of the contracted activities, were actively involved in identifying the interventions, reviewing the terms of references and offers, as well as being closely involved in the oversight of the execution. This modality resulted in strengthening existing partnerships and establishing new ones that contribute to the overall sustainability of the project.

The institutional reform process led to some changes in stakeholder engagement, particularly at the national level. At project entry there was more engagement envisaged with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA), but actual involvement was fairly limited, as the mandate for MPA oversight was transferred to NFGA. MARA is still responsible for conservation and management of marine species, including the CWD, including in areas outside MPAs.

There was also close cooperation expected with WWF, namely with the CWD conservation activities they are managing from their Hong Kong office. There was no specific evidence available on cooperation with WWF during the implementation phase. And there was also limited engagement with complementary initiatives in the region or globally.

The project did make a concerted effort to involve women and maintained records of participation.

One of the approaches implemented by the project to ensure involvement of a diverse group of stakeholders was the establishment of the CBPs, which include civil society, academic and private sector partners, as well as government level partners engaged as observers.

During implementation, the project team organized consultations and discussions among the three provinces to ensure synergy and consistency among the CBPs of the three provinces, including involvement of women's groups. The community efforts in Sanniang Bay established links with various local government departments and received support for the eco-labelling incentive. The community livelihood transformation and sustainable development sub-project in Zhuhai engaged local women's groups and achieved positive results.

Delivering project activities through contracting multiple service providers also provided engagement of a wide range of partners, including leading universities, research institutes and NGOs active in the marine conservation sector.

3.2.3 Project finance and co-finance

Project Finance:

Based on the combine delivery reports (CDRs) for 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 (Q1 and Q2), project expenditures through 30 June 2024 were USD 2,141,722.90, or 81% of the GEF grant (see **Table 6**).

Table 6: Project expenditures

Component	Project expenditures						Indicative ProDoc budget
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 (Q1+Q2)	Total	
Component 1	64,740.51	212,025.61	155,543.35	223,304.86	20,694.73	676,309.06	780,000
Component 2	111,125.97	241,429.51	177,077.50	277,914.18	64,690.84	872,238.00	1,048,000
Component 3	42,849.98	98,970.39	156,454.95	168,970.34	52,930.32	520,175.98	700,000
Sub-total	**218,716.46**	**552,425.51**	**489,075.80**	**670,189.38**	**138,315.89**	**2,068,723.04**	**2,528,000**
Project Management	2,128.48	9,733.78	14,939.23	-1,665.89	33,652.00	58,787.60	124,294
Exchange Gains/Losses	-8,194.90	-1,039.94	26,155.71	-2,708.61	0.00	14,212.26	N/A
TOTAL expenditure	**212,650.04**	**561,119.35**	**530,170.74**	**665,814.88**	**171,967.89**	**2,141,722.90**	**2,652,294**
					Balance:	**510,571.10**	

Figures in USD.
Source of budget figures: approved Project Document
Source of expenditures: Combined Delivery Reports (CDR), provided by UNDP.

Component level expenditures generally match the proportions allocated in the budget presented in the project document. Project management costs (USD 58,787.60) are low, 2.8% of the sub-total costs of the technical components incurred through June 2024. Apart from the Project Manager, there has been turnover among the other PMO positions, and the project was utilizing interns at the time of the TE mission in June 2024. However, project management costs do not seem to properly reflect the project management-related services rendered. Costs associated with the project management team were spread across the technical components as well as project management. There were also gaps in the project management team due to turnover; this resulted in lower than planned project management costs. The project also utilized interns for extended periods of time, which also influenced the low levels of project management costs reported. Based on the large difference of annual level project management costs, it seems that there was an inconsistent protocol on the allocation of project management costs.

Project Assets:

Project investments were limited to information technology and communication equipment. The value of the asset register reviewed by the TE team was USD 13,983.74.

Financial audits:

One financial audit report was available for review by the TE team, for the year 2020. This audit report identified internal control risks on project accounting system management, and listed one audit recommendation that the implementing partner should check and reconcile with the project expenditures recorded by the accounting department when preparing and submitting FACE to ensure the accuracy of actual expenditures recorded in FACE and CDR, and the accounting department should improve the bookkeeping efficiency. The project management commented that the financial department will improve the bookkeeping efficiency during the project implementation, and the project office will also strengthen inspection to ensure that FACE corresponds to the subledger of the finance department. The overall risk rating was low through audit assessment.

A micro assessment from an independent company was conducted in 2021 to assess the financial and operations management policies, procedures, systems and internal controls of the AFIP. The overall risk rating was low. One recommendation was given to apply adequate insurance policies for fixed assets.

Co-finance:

Materialized co-financing is reported to be USD 29,522,459, which exceeds the committed sum of 22,362,852 at project entry (see **Annex 7**). In response to a recommendation by the TE during the TE mission,

contributions mobilized during project implementation was reported from the following additional co-financing partners: NFGA, SEE Foundation, China Environmental Protection Foundation, and the Beijing Office of Oxfam-Hong Kong.

3.2.4 Monitoring & evaluation

M&E design at entry

M&E design at entry is rated as: Satisfactory

The M&E plan and budget presented in the project document were prepared according to UNDP policies and procedures for GEF-financed projects. The M&E budget was USD 198,230, which is 7.5% of the GEF grant.

M&E implementation

M&E implementation is rated as: Satisfactory

M&E implementation closely followed the M&E plan. Progress was reported regularly, including in the annual project implementation reports (PIRs), which the TE team found to provide candor descriptions of key issues and challenges. Results were communicated to the PSC members. Increased attention to project risk management was placed in the 4th and 5th PSC meetings, and this topic became a fixed agenda item and progress made was reported to the PSC.

Tracking tools:

The GEF-6 Biodiversity tracking tools were used by the project – both the management effectiveness tracking tool (METT) and the financial sustainability scorecard (FSS). The METT and FSS were filled in with sufficient detailed explanations and references. The following observations are noted in response to the review of the end of project METT assessments.

- Data Sheet 2 (Key biodiversity indicators). There is limited supporting information provided (date of survey, methodology used, institution(s) that conducted the monitoring, etc.).
- Data Sheet 3 (Protected area threats). There is limited quantitative information provided on progress towards reducing threats, e.g., indicating for the Dugong NNR the following entry was made for end of project status: “The monitoring data in 2023 showed that the encounter rate of commercial trawlers has decreased compared to the mid-term”. This does not provide sufficient information to evaluate progress towards the 10% reduction target. Entries for the other sites similarly provide limited quantitative information.
- Data Sheet 4 (METT Assessment Form). Some of the entries were answered with zero (“0”), whereas a not applicable (N/A) response may have been more appropriate and the maximum possible score adjusted downward accordingly. For example, the comment provided for Question 28 (Commercial tourism operators: Do commercial tourism operators contribute to protected area management?) indicated that “No commercial tourism in the reserve”. In this case, a zero (“0”) is not an appropriate answer. Similar observations were made for other entries in this worksheet and the worksheet for other sites. For instance, local stakeholders informed the TE team that Indigenous peoples do not reside or regularly use the target sites. However, each of the METT assessments indicate that Indigenous and traditional peoples have some input into discussions relating to management but no direct role in management (answer “1”).
- Annual budget (US$) for recurrent (operational) funds – excluding staff salary costs. The entries made for this line item for the Dugong NNR, JW CWD PNR, and XM RMS NNR are considerably lower than the baseline and midterm figures. This seems inconsistent with the information provided in the Section III worksheets (Financial Sustainability Scorecards).

Responses to midterm review recommendations:

A summary of the management responses take in response to the MTR recommendations is presented in **Table 7** below.

Table 7: Summary of management responses to MTR recommendations

Midterm review recommendation	Status at terminal evaluation
1. Undertake a targeted assessment and identification of management measures in accordance with the process outlined in the ESMF for the project	This recommendation was fully accepted by the project team in the management response. With assistance from UNDP China, in February 2023, the project team recruited one international and one national safeguard expert to do the work. Following the ESMF for the project, the two experts reviewed all project outputs and activities (including those completed, underway and future), updated the SESP, and developed the Safeguard Risk Management Assessment Report, Environmental and Social Safeguards Capacity-Building Measures, and Livelihood Action Plan. The Safeguard Risk Management Assessment Report designed thorough mitigation measures in terms of environmental, social and governance. In July 2023, the package was cleared by UNDP and approved by the RTA and disclosed on UNDP's website. Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews)
2. Review all project outputs and activities (including those completed, underway and future) as part of the targeted assessment and identification of management measures, make any necessary changes to the design of activities and identify any required remedial actions, and have the findings endorsed by the PSC and RTA	This recommendation was fully accepted by the project team in the management response. The review was done with joint efforts from the project team, the CTA, and international and national safeguard experts. All updated and newly developed reports have been cleared by the PSC and RTA. Several activities were designed following the targeted assessment. In March 2023, the project team commissioned the Forth Institute of Oceanography, MNR to conduct a study on the evaluation of the impact of environmental risks on marine protected areas and their important protected species. In September 2023, the project team organized the Training Course on GEF Project Cycle Management for the MPA staff, among which thematic training on risk assessment of environmental and social safeguards and gender mainstreaming was an important component. Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews)
3. Participate in a programmatic review of the processes followed in environmental and social risk management in C-PAR projects 1, 2, 3 and 4 since CEO endorsement, including considering the requirements for this Moderate-risk project, to identify lessons learned and opportunities to improve safeguards outcomes in these projects and future projects (including identifying roles, responsibilities and resources required to oversee and implement the requirements)	This recommendation was fully accepted by the project team in the management response. The project maintained close communication with C-PAR 1, 2, 3 to exchange experience on environmental and social risk management and organized a study group to Qinghai to learn from their practices in 2023. Lessons learned from environmental and social risk management were well documented in reports including progress reports and PIRs and project risks were well reported and noted in annual PSC meetings. Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews)
4. Update the SESP for the project	This recommendation was fully accepted by the project team in the management response. The SESP was updated along with the development of the Safeguard Risk Management Assessment Report, Environmental and Social Safeguards Capacity-Building Measures, and Livelihood Action Plan. In July 2023, the package was cleared by UNDP, approved by the RTA, and disclosed on UNDP's website. Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews)
5. Drive a new focus on female participation and optimising gender mainstreaming outcomes, by 1. developing annual gender action plans in accordance with relevant activities under different components, 2. updating the gender action plan that was developed during project preparation (Annex G of the project document) after the SESP has been updated, and 3. reporting annually on progress against these action plans and the project's gender action plan	This recommendation was partially accepted by the project team in the management response. The project updated the Gender Analysis and Action Plan in June 2021 to reflect changes to the project after the institutional reform. The stakeholder mapping and engagement plan was also updated as part of the environmental and social safeguards capacity-building measures. The project team maintained regular reporting of gender information in its reports, including progress reports and PIRs, and actively participated in exchange events to share its experience in gender mainstreaming with other C-PAR projects and also with the GEF7 Flyway project. To note, the project attached great importance to the implementation of the gender

Midterm review recommendation	Status at terminal evaluation
	action plan and designed gender indicators in its contracts with subcontractors. Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews)
6. Develop and implement an Internal Communication and Coordination Action Plan to enhance the efficiency of information exchange, prevent duplication or conflict in work undertaken, and optimise delivery of all project components; this plan should identify all internal stakeholders, analyse their role in the project, map the relationships between stakeholders and their roles, and identify communication solutions and methods	This recommendation was fully accepted by the project team in the management response. This had been well included in the work plan and daily operation of the project. The project designed targeted activities to eliminate duplication in work and optimize delivery of the three components in the context of COVID-19. The project organized online meetings with the three subcontractors responsible for the establishment of CBPs in the three project provinces and forestry bureaus at all levels to discuss a shared template for the CBP agreement. The project also consciously created opportunities for stakeholders to exchange and communicate to strengthen exchange and communication among the three project provinces. Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews)
7. Set baselines for Indicators 10b (using 2021 data) and 10c (using 2020 data) as soon as possible	This recommendation was fully accepted by the project team in the management response. This change was approved at the 2022 PSC meeting in March 2022 and cleared by the RTA in August 2023. Since the project's 2023 PIR report was submitted in early July 2023, adjustments to the indicators were mentioned in the 2023 PIR report, but the results framework had not yet been updated. Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews)
8. Use data from 2021 to set the baseline for Indicator 10b (illegal fishing), because the levels of enforcement activity were very low during 2020 due to COVID-19, and remove the midterm target for Indicator 10b	This recommendation was fully accepted by the project team in the management response. This change was approved at the 2022 PSC meeting in March 2022 and cleared by the RTA in August 2023. Since the project's 2023 PIR report was submitted in early July 2023, adjustments to the indicators were mentioned in the 2023 PIR report, but the results framework had not yet been updated. Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews)
9. Remove Indicator 8a, because Sanniang Bay NNR has not been established and a baseline cannot now be set at this stage of the project	This recommendation was fully accepted by the project team in the management response. This change was approved at the 2022 PSC meeting in March 2022 and cleared by the RTA in August 2023. Since the project's 2023 PIR report was submitted in early July 2023, adjustments to the indicators were mentioned in the 2023 PIR report, but the results framework had not yet been updated. Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews)
10. Develop a plan to address the impacts of COVID-19 that identifies potential solutions that are specific for different actions and that enhance project implementation; this should be integrated with the proposed Internal Communication and Coordination Action Plan	This recommendation was fully accepted by the project team in the management response. See status at terminal evaluation for recommendation 6. Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews)
11. Develop a sustainability plan to identify how the project's results can be continued beyond the GEF funding, including identifying institutional roles and responsibilities for the continuing operation of key project deliverables after the GEF project	This recommendation was fully accepted by the project team in the management response. The project included sustainability in its self-assessment report and elaborated in terms of mainstreaming, environmental sustainability, social sustainability, financial sustainability, and institutional sustainability. Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews)
12. Review key activities in the context of climate change after the project SESP has been updated, identify any changes or new	This recommendation was fully accepted by the project team in the management response. The review was done with joint efforts from the project team, the CTA, and international and national safeguard experts. The updated SESP and

Midterm review recommendation	Status at terminal evaluation
opportunities, and present the findings to the PSC and RTA	relevant reports have been cleared by the PSC and RTA. In March 2023, the project team commissioned the Forth Institute of Oceanography, MNR to conduct a study on the evaluation of the impact of environmental risks on marine protected areas and their important protected species. Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews)
13. Ensure that the Coastal Biodiversity Action Plans (CBAPs) all include climate change impacts and adaptation as core content.	This recommendation was partially accepted by the project team in the management response. The CBAPs were updated through an online meeting with the CBP-related government agencies and sub-contractors. Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews)

Overall assessment of M&E

Overall quality of M&E is rated as: Satisfactory

The overall quality of M&E is rated as satisfactory.

3.2.5 Project implementation and execution

UNDP implementation oversight

Quality of UNDP implementation / oversight is rated: Satisfactory

UNDP oversight and assurance was provided through its country office and regional hub for Asia and the Pacific. Apart from this project, UNDP is the GEF agency for four other C-PAR child projects under the C-PAR Program, having a total of six child projects.

The UNDP Country office has provided strategic and administrative guidance to the project, actively participating in the PSC meetings, and contributing co-financing to the project.

The UNDP Regional Hub has also provided important strategic oversight. COVID-19 related restrictions impeded travel over an extended period during the project implementation phase.

The UNDP also played an important role in the social and environmental risk management of this project. After the MTR, following the MTR recommendations, UNDP recruited one international and one national safeguard expert to conduct relevant assessments and prepare reports and the reports were cleared by PSC and the Regional Technical Advisor.

Implementing Partner execution

Quality of Implementing Partner execution is rated: Satisfactory

The NFGA, supported by the AFIP, has been the Implementing Partner for several GEF-financed projects. High level engagement was delivered by NFGA for this project. This project provided a good opportunity for the NFGA to strengthen institutional capacity regarding marine conservation.

Good and consistent project management was provided for this project. The Chief Technical Advisor provided important strategic advisory support.

There was frequent turnover of administrative support positions in the PMO; the project was utilizing interns at the time when the TE mission was arranged in June 2024.

Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings:

The project document was signed on 03 October 2019 by Ministry of Finance (MOF), NFGA, and UNDP China. The PSC was formerly established on 13 December 2019 through an official letter of NFGA. The PSC consisted of one director, one deputy director, both high level officials from NFGA, and 13 members from related units and organizations including MOF, UNDP, MEE, NFGA, three provincial competent authorities and four municipal competent authorities.

The PSC has convened five meetings from December 2019, which coincided with the inception workshop, to March 2024. Key notes from the five PSC meetings are presented below:

1st PSC meeting (24 December 2019 in Beihai City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region)
➢ Approval of 2020-2021 TYWP and Inception Report ➢ Project implementation closely combine with the integration and optimization of protected areas in the three provinces ➢ Scope of project objective indicator 2 expanded to the south-eastern coastal provinces ➢ Confirmed the name of each parallel co-financing government source as well as the amount ➢ Adaptive adjustments can be made according to the actual needs within the scope of the UNDP-GEF project ➢ Removal of budget cod 72600 and adjusted the budget to another budget item ➢ Update of Capacity Assessment Scorecard and METT for the newly assigned units after institutional reform to serve as new baseline in the results framework
2nd PSC meeting (18 March 2021 in Xiamen City, Fujian Province)
➢ Approval of 2021-2022 TYWP ➢ Called for a stronger focus on gender mainstreaming, publicity and increase of project cost-effectiveness ➢ Strengthen exchange and cooperation with other child projects of the C-PAR Program
3rd PSC meeting (29 March 2022 through virtual meeting)
➢ Approval of 2022-2023 TYWP ➢ MTR rated project as satisfactory ➢ Strengthen financial management, environmental and social risk management, gender mainstreaming, publicity and summarization ➢ Adjustment of results framework according to MTR recommendations
4th PSC meeting (01 March 2023 in Xiamen City, Fujian Province) The project adopted a new template for PSC meeting minutes which was more detailed-oriented, including a review of actions from previous meeting, review of project progress and results, review of project risks and challenges, review of the work plan for the next step as well as other matters.
➢ 2022 PSC meeting minutes well addressed ➢ Total expenditure of c. $1.3 million and total delivery rate reached 49% ➢ CBPs established in three provinces and GIS established for data collection and information sharing ➢ MPA expanded by 16400.65 ha and financing channels for MPAs expanded with more than 3million RMB support from other channels ➢ Management effectiveness of project NRs improved benefiting from project interventions ➢ Appropriate management of project risks and approval of 2023-2024 TYWP ➢ Updated PSC member list
5th PSC meeting (25 March 2024 in Zhuhai City, Guangdong Province)
➢ 2023 PSC meeting minutes well addressed ➢ Total expenditure of c. $1,987,985.51 and cumulative delivery rate of 75% ➢ Substantial results achieved in terms of mainstreaming and knowledge sharing ➢ Project risks properly managed ➢ Review and approval of 2024 work plan ➢ Updated PSC member list ➢ Approval of MPA network charter and award of member unit plaques

Overall implementation execution

Overall quality of implementation / execution is rated: Satisfactory

The overall quality of implementation and execution is rated as satisfactory.

3.2.6 Risk management

The project regularly monitored risks through maintenance of the project risk log, and reporting risk-related issues in project reports, including PIRs. Risk management became a fixed agenda of the PSC meeting since 2023.

Responding to one of the recommendations of the MTR, the project updated the screening of social and environmental risks in 2023. The overall rating was adjusted to low, from a moderate rating at project entry. Along with update of the SESP, the project also developed the Safeguard Risk Management Assessment Report, Environmental and Social Safeguards Capacity-Building Measures report, and a Livelihood Action Plan. The Safeguard Risk Management Assessment Report designed mitigation measures in terms of environmental, social and governance. In July 2023, the package was cleared by UNDP and approved by the RTA and disclosed on UNDP's website. This was also reported at the 2024 PSC meeting. The project followed

these developed safeguard instruments and used them as guidance for design and implementation of project activities.

One of the institutional risks identified during the project preparation phase was associated with the challenge of achieving genuine cross-sectoral and multiple stakeholder collaboration, something that the project design envisaged would be facilitated by the CBPs. This proved more difficult than envisaged, i.e., provincial level government sectors were reluctant to officially join the CBPs. A deeper analysis of the underlying risks of this reluctance may have resulted in a different approach or expectation for the CBPs.

3.3 Project results and impacts

3.3.1 Progress towards objective and expected outcomes (effectiveness)

Objective: To conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity in South-East (SE) China through integrated seascape planning and threat management, MPA network expansion and strengthened MPA operations	
Achievement rating:	**Satisfactory**

The achievement of the project objective is rated as satisfactory.

The project team has kept detailed records of people participating in project activities, including volunteers for beach clean-ups, people attending the CWD Awareness Day and Ocean Day, and training and publicity activities in local communities and schools. This number in the project's self-assessment report is 40,093 (60% female), significantly exceeding the 3,500 (50% female) end target. The definition in the results framework for this category was "50% of the population in target villages near project MPAs (Sanniangwan and Shanliao)". In the opinion of the TE team, this definition is more appropriate for "indirect beneficiaries".

Based on the definition of direct project beneficiaries in the project document, the total number of direct project beneficiaries should be the sum of people received training, which is indicator 1b), and people benefitting from improved livelihoods, which is calculated under indicator 9c). The reported number 40,093 mostly reflects people involved in awareness raising activities. It may have helped if there was clearer guidance provided during project inception on methodologies of monitoring and reporting these figures.

With respect to Indicator 2 (MPA network in SE China expanded by 40,000 ha), the project's self-assessment reports the following figures, reportedly from the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)-led PA integration and optimization process, that aims at resolving overlapping and unclear boundaries of terrestrial PA's and MPA's in the country.

Table 8: Breakdown of reported net increase in MPA coverage in project provinces

Project provinces	Areas of MPAs before integration and optimization (ha)	Area of MPAs after integration and optimization (ha)	Net increase in area (ha)
Fujian	96,966.63	109,988.56	13,021.93
Guangdong	467,880.29	581,377.28	113,496.99
Guangxi	46,916.02	53,247.39	6,331.37
Total			**132,850.29**

Source: Project self-assessment report, June 2024

After the TE mission, the project team provided a breakdown showing the number and area of MPAs in the three provinces before and after the integration and optimization process. However, the information is currently under review and pending approval by the State Council, and, hence, not publicly available. Because the State Council has not yet approved the results of the PA integration and optimization, achievement of the Indicator 2 target is considered not yet achieved.

Each of the target MPA sites conducting monitoring of CWD are supported by qualified scientific partners in the field assessments and estimations of the populations residing and visiting the MPAs. Based on interviews with the scientific partners and review of available reports, the TE team concurred with the reported stable and/or increasing trends in the populations of CWD.

Indicator	Baseline	Status at TE	End-of-Project target	TE Assessment
	2016/2017	Jun 2024	Oct 2024	
Indicator 1: # direct project beneficiaries (disaggregated by gender) Total of: a) 50% of the population in target villages near project MPAs (Sanniangwan and Shanliao) b) People receiving targeted training (including MPA and MPA system staff)	a) and b) = 0	a) Project is reporting 40,093 people (60% female) participating in beach cleanups, CWD Awareness Day and Ocean Day, and training and publicity activities in local communities and schools. b) Reporting 1,555 people (51% female) trained. Some of the people under category (a) do not seem to meet the definition of direct beneficiaries.	a) 3,500 people benefiting directly from project (50% female) b) 750 people have received training (C-PAR Program target for C-PAR4) (35% female)	**Achieved**
Indicator 2: MPA network in SE China expanded by 40,000 ha (including ESAs)	0 ha (baseline year is 2016)	Project reporting 132,850 ha of proposed expanded MPAs in the three target provinces, as a result of the MNR's PA integration and optimization process. The State Council has not yet approved the proposed figures.	40,000 ha of new MPAs / ESAs gazetted	**Not yet achieved**
Indicator 3: Population size of Chinese white dolphin as indicator of globally significant biodiversity in the pilot areas a) BQCW: Behai-Qinzhou Coastal Waters b) ZJCW: Zhuhai-Jiangmen Coastal Waters c) XBCW = Xiamen Bay Coastal Waters	a) BQCW: >=230 individuals b) ZJCW: close to 2000 individuals c) XBCW: 60-76 individuals	Information in the project's self-assessment report (verified during the TE mission) show stable or increasing populations of CWD in the target areas.	a) - c) Stable or improved from baseline	**Achieved**

COMPONENT 1: Strengthened MPA legal framework and mainstreaming and expansion of MPA network

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

The achievement of Outcome 1 is rated as moderately satisfactory.

Three provincial level Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships (CBPs) were established under the project (Indicator 4), facilitated by contracted NGOs and research institutions. Officials from provincial and local government units observed the CBP meetings convened, but these government level partners were reluctant to officially join the CBPs. For this reason, there is no up-scaling mechanism agreed by NFGA, rendering the sustainability of the CBPs unlikely. The project demonstrated that non-governmental partners, including civil society and the private sector, are willing to collaborate on improved management of coastal and marine ecosystems. It was envisaged that the CBPs would help facilitate biodiversity mainstreaming among key sectors, supported by marine spatial planning (leading into Indicator 5). This mainstreaming objective was not achieved. The ecological red-lining process that has been under implementation for a number of years in China, including at the time of project preparation, is a first step towards identifying priority conservation and sustainable use areas. The project was primarily centered around MPAs (except for Sanniang Bay), whereas marine spatial planning involves multiple sectors and stakeholders and covers conservation areas as well as production areas.

The project did not have a strong emphasis on the legal framework associated rules, regulations and management measures for MPAs/ESAs and mainstreaming in marine spatial planning (Indicator 5). One of the MTR recommendations for this indicator was to report only on those instruments that the project was involved in (including through co-financing). Through clarification from the project team, the Management Measures on Ecological Protection Compensation Financing Mechanism of Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve, Management Measures for Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve, Law Enforcement Manual for Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve were prepared with support from the project, all of which belong to local rules/regulations and management measures for sustainable MPA management and eco-compensation. The other provincial notices, and measures at provincial and local level listed below are considered from co-financing support. The others reported in the project's self-assessment report do not seem to align with the focus of this indicator, e.g., mainstreaming biodiversity in marine spatial planning.

The project has reported several government funding mechanisms, e.g., the Guangxi Shankou Mangrove Ecological National Nature Reserve Wetland Ecological Benefit Compensation project in the year 2022 (CNY 11.55 million, approx. USD 1.61 million). This single fund exceeds the USD 200,000 end target for Indicator 6. The indicator reflects diverse sources of eco-compensation funding, e.g., from the private sector. The concept of biodiversity off-setting is implemented in China, as discussed during the TE stakeholder interviews, e.g., associated with the 55-km long bridge built in Guangdong Province, connecting to Macau. The project's self-assessment report also mentions eco-compensation from the State Pipe Network Group and the Beihai Refining and Chemical Company; the value of these eco-compensation contributions was not reported.

Indicator	**Baseline**	**Status at TE**	**End-of-Project target**	**TE Assessment**
	2016/2017	**Jun 2024**	**Oct 2024**	
Indicator 4: Established collaborative governance and planning mechanism for MPAs in the context of wider seascapes	No framework exists for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation from MPAs into wider seascapes	Three CBPs established during the timeframe of the project; no evidence of up-scaling mechanisms; ESA's not officially recognized; ecological red-lining an independent process.	3 CBPs implementing CBAPs across pilot areas, with at least annual meetings held Up-scaling mechanism agreed by NFGA	**Partially achieved**
Indicator 5: Extent of rules, regulations and management measures for MPAs/ESAs and mainstreaming in marine spatial planning. a) New/improved provincial Rules, regulations and management measures e.g. for transboundary (provincial/municipal) design of MPAs b) new/improved local rules, regulations and management measures for sustainable MPA management and eco-compensation	0	a) 8 **Fujian:** Notice on Strengthening the Construction and Management of Nature Reserves (Co-financing supported) Notice on Further Strengthening the Comprehensive Management and disposal of Sea Debris/Garbage (Co-financing supported) Fujian Province Nature Reserve Identification Standards (Trial) (Co-financing supported) **Guangdong:** Measures on Economic Penalties for Damaging the Ecological Environment in Guangdong Province (Trial) (Co-financing supported) Notice on the Clarification of Relevant Matters of Guangdong National Park Construction Leading Group (Co-financing supported) **Guangxi:**	a) At least 2 improved/new provincial rules, regulations, management measures b) At least 2 new local rules, regulations, management measures	**Achieved**

		Measures for the Administration of Marine Ecological Compensation in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (Co-financing supported) Notice on the Implementation Opinions on Further Strengthening Biodiversity Protection (Co-financing supported) Notice on Joint Working Mechanism for Comprehensive Law Enforcement of Ecological and Environmental Protection in Guangxi Natural Protected Areas (Co-financing supported) b) 5 Management Measures for Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve (project supported, pending approval from Municipal Government) Management Measures for Ecological Protection Compensation Financing Mechanism of Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve (project supported, developed and submitted for review) Law Enforcement Manual for Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve (project supported, developed and submitted for review) Management Regulations for Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR (co-financing supported, pending approval) Management Measures for Jiangmen CWD PNR (co-financing supported)		
Indicator 6: Financial sustainability and resourcing for MPAs: a) amount of financing from new eco-compensation mechanism (diverse sources including governmental, private sector etc.); and b) improved financial sustainability as measured by the Financial Sustainability scorecard (FSS) - see **Annex B of ProDoc**) **FSS Components:** 4. Legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks 5. Business planning and tools for cost-effective management 6. Tools for revenue generation (average of the three pilot areas)	a) $0 for eco-compensation b) FSS Comp. 1: (41) 43% FSS Comp. 2: (21) 36% FSS Comp. 3: (9) 13% **Total (71) 32%** * * Average of the three pilot areas	a) Self-assessment reports several restoration and ecological compensation funds significantly exceeding the $200,000 per year target. b) End of project assessment of FSS: Comp 1: 58 (61%) Comp 2: 30 (50%) Comp 3: 22 (31%) Total:: 110 (49%) Exceeds the 30% increase target.	a) $200,000 per year delivered for eco-compensation b) 30% increase in total FSS score	**Achieved**

COMPONENT 2: Demonstrations of improved MPA and ESA management

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

The achievement of Outcome 2 is rated as satisfactory.

The project did a good job of delivering capacity building, and the MPA agencies in the pilot areas showing increased levels of capacities, as measured by the capacity development scorecard. Based on review of the end of project METT assessments and feedback from TE interviews, improvements in management effectiveness of the target MPAs were achieved through strengthened provincial and local regulations, improved enforcement capacities, increased communications on MPA boundaries, updated management planning, continued improvements in resource inventories, improved education and awareness initiatives, increased engagement of local communities and other stakeholders, improved monitoring and evaluation systems and capacities, and updated visitor facilities.

The project also achieved the envisaged result associated with increased community engagement (Indicator 9). The volunteer beach clean-ups, for example, drew high numbers of participants, of whom 60% were women or girls. The project also supported a local NGO in Sanniangwan Village in Beihai-Qinzhou in the development of an eco-labelling initiative among tourism operators (e.g., homestay services). During the TE field mission, the first 12 local merchants were provided with eco-labelling signboards. Local communities in Sanniang Bay were also provided capacity building on sustainable CWD watching tourism. The Shankou Mangrove NNR and the Dugong NNR are utilizing local community members among their ranger staff, and also rent aquaculture ponds from some of them as part of their research and development initiatives.

There were also good results achieved with respect to the reduction of threats to the target MPAs. There were no fatalities of CWD or other cetaceans reported within the timeframe of the project; there were more fatalities in the past, e.g., associated with fishing boats. The number of illegal fishing incidents were reduced, as a result of increased awareness and strengthened enforcement systems and capacities. The amount of marine debris, as measured by the amount of waste collected in successive beach clean-ups also reduced over the project's implementation time period. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic may have been a factor in the results, e.g., fewer people going to the beaches and lower amounts of waste dumped onshore and offshore due to reduced economic activity.

The understanding of the value of MPAs among the public and decision-makers has increased over time, based on the results of an end-of-project knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) survey made in 2024. The increase in the level of understanding exceeded or matched the 15% target, both among male and female respondents. It would have been useful to report the results of the survey separately for the general public and for decision-makers (lesson learned).

Indicator	**Baseline**	**Status at TE**	**End-of-Project target**	**TE Assessment**
	2016/2017	**Jun 2024**	**Oct 2024**	
Indicator 7: Capacity of MPA agencies in pilot areas, as measured by Capacity Development Scorecard.	a) Beihai = 56% b) Qinzhou = 53% c) Zhuhai = 64% d) Jiangmen= 54% e) Xiamen = 66%	a) Behai = 83% b) Qinzhou = 79% c) Zhuhai = 92% d) Jiangmen = 82% e) Xiamen = 90%	a) Behai = 80% b) Qinzhou = 76% c) Zhuhai = 84% d) Jiangmen = 77% e) Xiamen = 89%	**Achieved**
Indicator 8: Management effectiveness of target MPAs of global significance, indicated by the percentage increase in the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores	~~a) Proposed Sanniang Bay CWD NR = n/a~~ b) Shankou Mangrove NNR = 56.67% c) Dugong NNR = 53.33% d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 63.33% e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 61.11%	~~a) Proposed Sanniang Bay CWD NR = n/a~~ b) Shankou Mangrove NNR = 77.78% c) Dugong NNR = 73.74% d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 73.74% e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 74.75% f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 73.74%	~~a) Proposed Sanniang Bay CWD NR = 70%~~ b) Shankou Mangrove NNR = 70% c) Dugong NNR = 70% d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 70% e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 70% f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 70%	**Achieved**

	f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 67.78%			
Indicator 9: Extent of community engagement in MPA conservation: a) # citizens (disaggregated by gender) participating in actions for MPAs (volunteer marine debris cleans, marine debris surveys, CWD sightings reports by smartphones), voluntary MPA rangers etc.). b) # eco-labelled tourism operations (boat operators, tour guides, restaurants, shell-fishers etc.) - mainly Behai-Qinzhou c) # of people (gender disaggregated) benefiting from enhanced and more sustainable livelihoods as a result of project activities for MPAs	a) 0 b) 0 c) 0	a) 4 citizen action programmes, namely community beach clean-ups with a total of 1,599 people participating, of whom 59.5% were female. b) 12 local operators in Beihai-Qinzhou (Sanniangwan Village) participating in a project supported, local eco-labelling initiative. c) 31 people and 415 families in Beihai (50% women) involved in CWD conservation and sustainable dolphin watching tourism.	a) 4 citizen participatory action programmes (1000 participants, 50% women) b) 10 businesses eco-labelled c) 30 (at least 50% women)	**Achieved**
Indicator 10: Reduction in key threats to biodiversity in pilot areas: a) # CWD and other cetaceans found dead with external injuries due to human activities b) # incidents of illegal fishing* in target MPAs c) Weight of debris/litter collected during volunteer beach cleans * Measured separately for shell-fishing/mud digging in BQCW	a) # of CWD and other cetaceans found dead with external injuries due to human activities BQCW: 7 ZJCW: 12 XBCW: 3 (average 2012-16) b) # incidents of illegal fishing in target MPAs BQCW: 21* ZJCW: N/A XBCW: 16 * Illegal fishing:6 *Shell-fishing/Mud digging:15 c) Weight of debris/litter collected during volunteer beach cleans BQCW: 237.86 kg ZJCW: 203.02 kg XBCW: 154.53 kg	a) No fatalities reported within the project implementation timeframe b) BQCW: 18 ZJCW: 0 XBCW: 0 c) Reductions in the amount of waste collected in the beach clean-ups compared to baseline ranged from 17.43% in Yutang Bay, Chixi Town, Taishan, Guangdong to 68.72% in Houtian, Tong'an, Xiamen, Fujian.	a) 10% reduction b) 10% reduction c) 10% reduction	**Achieved**
Indicator 11: Level of understanding on value of MPAs among public and decision makers, as measured by KAP (Knowledge Attitudes and Practices) survey score	a) BQCW: 62% b) ZJCW: 65% c) XBCW: 62% Baseline determined in 2021 (gender disaggregated)	a) BQCW: 78% (16% increase) b) ZJCW: 81% (16% increase) c) XBCW: 79% (17% increase)	15% improvement	**Achieved**

COMPONENT 3: Monitoring, evaluation and sharing of knowledge and information on coastal habitats and species

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

The achievement of Outcome 3 is rated as satisfactory.

The establishment of the MPA Network for SE China (Indicator 12) is one of the most significant achievements of the project. The network was agreed upon during the 5th project PSC meeting in March 2024. Subsequently, additional partners agreeing to join include the First Institute of Oceanography of the MNR, the Third Institute of Oceanography, the Ocean University of China, and the Beibu Gulf University. The constitution, working mechanism, 2024 annual work plan and an action plan for 2024-2028 of the network have reportedly been formulated and were provided to the TE team after the field mission. In the 2024-2028 action plan, four priorities were identified for the network but no budget or resource allocated for their implementation. Before operational closure of the project, the sustainability of the network would be strengthened with an official announcement by the NFGA-AFIP, and some degree of clarity on resource allocation and an agreed first year work plan.

One of the notable achievements under Indicator 13 was the development of a GIS-based network knowledge and information sharing platform for MPAs, under the framework of the Forest Sense Intelligence system managed by NFGA. The interviewed MPA level stakeholders during the TE mission were largely unfamiliar with this new GIS platform; it would be advisable to deliver training prior to operational closure of the project. The project team was very proactive in disseminating information about the project over social media and other media outlets. A website for the MPA network has not been established (uncertain whether a website is the most efficient mechanism these days). With respect to training, contracted service providers, including local universities and research institutes, delivered training to MPA staff. The project developed 20 training modules and courses in four categories, and 500 learning accounts have been provided. The project commissioned the TIO, MNR to compile the Technical Guide for Cetaceans and Sea Turtles Rescue and the Guide for Chinese White Dolphins Monitoring and the two technical guides were well received.

Indicator	Baseline	Status at TE	End-of-Project target	TE Assessment
	2016/2017	Jun 2024	Oct 2024	
Indicator 12: Operational MPA Network for SE China established for improved data collection, sharing of knowledge and information and best practices for integrated MPA seascape planning and threat management.	Does not exist	The MPA network was established at the 5th project PSC meeting in March 2024, with members including the five target MPAs and AFIP. Invitations have been sent to 15 additional prospective partners, and four have accepted as of July 2024, bringing the total number of members to 10.	10 members Network operational and with dedicated resources for operation Operationalized information and knowledge management and sharing system linking different MPAs Working groups on: CWD, habitats and species monitoring	**Mostly achieved**
Indicator 13: Number of key project lessons and strategies for sustainable coastal management documented, disseminated and adopted at local, provincial and national levels.	Baseline (2017): 0	GIS platform for information and knowledge sharing for MPAs developed under the NFGA's system used for terrestrial PA's. Information on this platform has not yet been widely disseminated. The project team proactively disseminated information about the project on social media and other media outlets. Trainings delivered, particularly to MPA administration staff members; 20 training modules and courses in four categories, and 500 learning accounts; Technical Guide for Cetaceans and Sea Turtles Rescue and the Guide for Chinese White Dolphins Monitoring developed.	All project results and lessons learned shared through MPA Network website and media (30% female participants); lessons learned presented to MPA administration and Municipal authorities for adoption in coastal zone planning processes	**Mostly achieved**

3.3.2 Relevance

Relevance is rated as: Highly satisfactory

The project strategy was closely aligned with the Government of China's principle of ecological civilization, and directly contributes to the ongoing integration and optimization of protected areas in the country. The construction of a national park system is an important element of China's ecological civilization system. In September 2017, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued the General Scheme for the Establishment of a National Park System. In June 2019, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued the Guiding Opinions on the Establishment of a System of Nature Protected Areas Mainly Consisting of National Parks, which made it clear that by 2025, the integration and optimization of nature protected areas would be completed. On June 1, 2022, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA) issued a notice on the issuance of the Interim Measures for the Management of National Parks. On August 19, 2023, the Second National Parks Forum released the master plan for the first batch of national parks, Measures for the Management of Monitoring of National Parks, and Guidelines for the Monitoring of National Parks. This project is the only MPA project in the C-PAR program. MPAs are an important part of China's nature reserve system with national parks as the mainstay, and they are important ecological functional areas with high ecological value. The design of the project regarding the MPA network and the CBPs has important reference value for the management of the MPAs in SE China.

The project is consistent with Outcome 2 of Country Program Document of UNDP China*:* More people enjoy a cleaner, healthier environment as a result of improved environmental protection and sustainable green growth and is aligned with the **UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025)** Output Signature Solution #4 (Environment); contributing to UNDP SP Result 4.1: Natural resources protected and managed to enhance sustainable productivity and livelihoods; and Result 4.2: Public and private investment mechanisms mobilized for biodiversity, water, oceans, and climate solutions. The project also contributes to **UNDP's Ocean Promise**, Target 1: Accelerate sustainable blue economy transformation, target 2: Scaling up area-based ocean and coastal management, and target 3: innovate and finance ocean action.

The design also addresses the multiple objectives associated with management of coastal and marine biodiversity, balancing conservation related outcomes with the well-being of local communities who rely on the ecosystem services provided by these ecosystems.

3.3.3 Efficiency

Efficiency is rated as: Satisfactory

The project has done a good job at efficiently utilizing the project resources to satisfactorily achieve the expected project results within the 5-year implementation timeframe. The project has overcome the difficulty of staff turnover and recruited short-term interns through an adaptive management measure. The timing of key implementation milestones and risk management measures were on track. Financial management was maintained at high quality with no major shortcomings identified during the spot check and micro assessment.

There was limited variance between the indicative spending trajectory outlined in the Project Document with actual expenditures incurred, except for the first year of implementation in 2020. Considering that the project start coincided with significant institutional reforms in the country and the COVID-19 pandemic extended from the early to middle phase of implementation, the delivery achieved is particularly commendable. Component level expenditures have generally matched the proportions allocated in the Project Document budget, except for the project management cost, which was considerably lower than the 5% GEF threshold.

Monitoring and evaluation of the project has been generally carried out as planned, informing project management and the PSC, and ensuring the effective implementation.

Multiple partners were recruited to execute the project activities. Despite the high number of transactions, efficient project management helped ensure good value-for-money in the delivery of the project outputs.

3.3.4 Sustainability

Sustainability is generally considered to be the likelihood of continued benefits after the GEF funding ends. Under GEF criteria each sustainability dimension is critical, and the overall ranking, therefore, cannot be higher than the lowest one.

Overall:
Likelihood that benefits will continue to be delivered after project closure: Moderately likely

Overall, the likelihood that benefits and results achieved under the project will be sustained after project closure is considered moderately likely. There are robust sustainability systems and structures in place, including committed government financing, qualified research and development, and the NFGA-led MPA network for SE China. A moderately likely rating is applied because of the unlikely sustainability of the Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships, which were envisaged to provide mechanisms for increasing non-governmental (civil society, private sector) involvement in conservation and sustainable use of the target coastal and marine ecosystems.

Financial dimension:
Likelihood that benefits will continue to be delivered after project closure: Likely

The Government of China continues to invest substantially in environmental protection. The findings reported in the Financial Sustainability Scorecard, part of the GEF-6 BD tracking tool, support this. Ecological compensation schemes are also evolving in the country, and biodiversity offsetting is becoming commonplace. The prospect of an effective MPA network for SE China functioning also enhances the likelihood that financing for marine biodiversity conservation will be sustained, e.g., as a result of information sharing between NFGA and the other members on funding opportunities.

Socio-political dimension
Likelihood that benefits will continue to be delivered after project closure: Likely

MPAs in the target areas and in other parts of China have built up extensive experience on engaging local communities. Local community members are often hired as rangers, for example, and ecological compensation schemes are formulated to ensure communities in or near important conservation areas are adequately compensated.

The project provided important experiences and lessons different modalities of engaging local communities, e.g., using local NGOs to help communicate and facilitate an eco-labelling initiative. The Shankou Mangrove NNR management administration signed co-management agreements with local communities and provided job opportunities for local residents on ecological restoration program, providing alternative livelihoods for those depending on the mudflats for their livelihoods. The local people raised their awareness through their participation in ecological restoration, easing the contradiction between conservation and development. The NNR also rents 905 mu of aquaculture ponds from 415 local families, also contributing to diversified livelihoods for the local community.

Institutional framework and governance dimension:
Likelihood that benefits will continue to be delivered after project closure: Moderately likely

The MPA network for SE China is an important result of the project, strengthening collaborative governance of coastal and marine biodiversity in this heavily developed part of the country. The commitment of the NFGA, through the AFIP, to act as secretariat of the network significantly enhances the likelihood that the process will be sustained.

The Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships (CBPs), on the other hand, seem unlikely to be sustained, primarily based on the reluctance of government level sectors to join these partnerships. The project did help facilitate interactions with non-governmental partners, including civil society organizations, research institutions and the private sector. There are examples of multiple stakeholder mechanisms in China. For example, in 2017,

the Chinese White Dolphin Conservation Alliance (CWDCA) led by the Fishery Administration of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) was established. The members of the alliance are composed of relevant governmental agencies, international organizations, scientific research institutes, colleges and universities, protected areas, as well as enterprises and public institutions involved in CWC conservation. A deeper analysis during the project preparation phase may have helped identify a viable approach for the CBPs (lesson learned).

Environmental dimension:
Likelihood that benefits will continue to be delivered after project closure: Likely

The government continues to provide robust funding towards environmental conservation and restoration, e.g., significant finances were delivered for the control of the invasive *Spartina* grass, formerly widely occurring (and formerly introduced) along coastal ecosystems in China. Significant scientific research and development on innovative conservation topics are also being made by a wide range of Chinese research and academic institutions. In response to the MTR recommendations, in March 2023, the project team commissioned the Forth Institute of Oceanography to conduct a study on the evaluation of the impact of environmental risks on marine protected areas and their important protected species.

Climate change is an externality that is expected to affect coastal and marine habitats and ecosystems. Resilience to these impacts is strengthened through increased awareness, restoration of coastal ecosystems, and integrated planning.

3.3.5 Country ownership

Country ownership has been high, across multiple levels, extending from the national level, led by the NFGA, to provincial, municipal and autonomous regional levels, and also at the MPA management administration level. Materialized co-financing from governmental level partners exceeds the sums committed at CEO endorsement.

3.3.6 Gender equality and women's empowerment and other cross-cutting issues

The project has also generated substantive cross-cutting benefits. There have been several awareness-raising and publicity interventions supported by the project, including environmental education initiatives in local schools, mobilizing volunteers for beach-cleaning activities, participating in CWD Awareness Day and Ocean Day events. The number of people reached through these activities exceed 40,000, and of whom an estimated 60% were women/girls. A reported number of 1,555 people (51% women) received training on various topics. With respect to livelihood related benefits, 12 local tourism sector merchants in Sanniangwan village have participated in the eco-labelling initiative, 31 people in Qinzhou received training on conservation and sustainable CWD watching tourism, and 415 families in Yong'an and Beijie villages benefitted from renting their aquaculture ponds to the Shankou Mangrove nature reserve for ecological restoration research and development, an activity the nature reserve funded through their co-financing contribution.

The small grant support for women's groups (and other community organizations) included in the Project Document budget did not materialize. In the first PSC meeting, the PSC agreed to delete this budget item and use a different accounting code for the same activity. The reason for excluding the use of small grants was said to be due to the complicated procedures associated with on-granting, particularly since the project is implemented under a national implementation modality. The subcontract with Sun Yat University, with a contract value of CNY 100,000 (approx. USD 14,000), entailed a survey and survey report.

The project also issued a contract (value: CNY 420,000; approx. USD 60,000) to the civil society organization BRC in Beihai-Qinzhou for community development work. One task of the contract was to have at least 30 people (at least 50% women) benefit from sustainable livelihoods. At the time of the TE mission, the TE team witnessed the awarding of eco-labelling to local business owners. Some of the business owners were female. Whether they could benefit from this eco-labelling event remained unclear. If women or the women's groups have benefited from the project's activity, the project team would have reported this under Indicator 9c. However, the data the project reported were related to people participating in training, community surveys and the people renting their aquatic ponds. As a lesson learned, it would have been advisable to formulate

specific activities and allocate sufficient budget for interventions that were aimed at directly benefitting women and/or women's groups.

These awareness-raising initiatives also contributed towards strengthening resilience to the impacts of climate change and nature disasters, through better understanding of the value of coastal and marine ecosystems. Support towards restoration of coastal ecosystems, including mangroves and seagrass beds, further strengthens resilience.

Facilitating collaboration among multiple stakeholders is an important aspect leading to improved governance of coastal and marine ecosystems. The establishment of the Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships demonstrated a viable process for bringing diverse partners together, albeit these mechanisms did not effectively garner support from governmental level stakeholders.

3.3.7 GEF additionality

The additionality of the GEF funding next to the robust investments by the Government of China towards environmental protection was primarily associated with the benefits of knowledge and information sharing among the partners involved in the project, including the NFGA, the three provincial governments, three municipal governments and give MPA management administrations. These partners have limited opportunities to collaborate under business-as-usual circumstances. The GEF-financed project facilitated strategic interactions among partners, leading, for example, to the establishment of a MPA network for Southeast China.

Much of the governmental funding for protected areas is often specifically earmarked, e.g., only available for a particular purpose, such eradication of invasive alien species. Protected areas, including the five target MPAs under the project, do engage with local communities, including hiring local people as rangers and financing nature education programs. The GEF funding demonstrated some different approaches for engaging with local communities, such as promoting an eco-labelling initiative and engaging civil society partners in facilitating engagement with the MPAs.

3.3.8 Catalytic / replication effects

The increasing number of members agreeing to join the MPA network for SE China is one example of a catalytic effect the project has had. The sustainability of the network depends largely on the NFGA's leadership, including having the Academy of Forest Inventory and Planning (AFIP) as the secretariat for the network.

There are a couple of lessons learned from implementation of the project, namely multi-stakeholder collaboration mechanisms, regional and international cooperation, the need to develop national and local level capacities on UNDP safeguard policies and procedures, the need to clarify monitoring &evaluation methods and approaches at project inception and the need for more effectively involving local government units in the design and implementation of community engagement activities.

The project could have benefited if a deeper risk analysis was made on establishment of cross-sectoral and multiple stakeholder collaboration mechanisms. For example, the CBPs in three provinces may have been established more effectively and more sustainable after project closure. The lack of regional and international cooperation also limited the implementation of project activities. Development and implementation of GEF-financed, UNDP-supported projects in China would benefit from having trained national and local level specialists on UNDP safeguard policies and procedures. The project also could have benefited from expanding the M&E plan at project inception and more effective involvement of local government units.

3.3.9 Progress to impact

The project has been successful in generating important global environmental benefits, including stable or increasing populations of the Chinese White Dolphin CWD (Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphin, *Sousa chinensis*, IUCN Red List: vulnerable VU) and other threatened and endangered species, such as the Horseshoe Crab (*Tachypleus tridentatus*, IUCN Red List: endangered: EN) at the target MPAs.

3.3.10 Contributions towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The project has made contributions towards achieving the following SDGs.

SDG	Project Contribution:
	Establishment the MPA network for SE China will contribute towards achievement of coverage of protected aeras in relation to marine areas (target 15.5.1), and the number of countries making progress in implementing ocean-related instruments for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources (target 14.c.1).
	The improved management of the target MPAs promotes gender-sensitive development strategies, and facilitation of biodiversity-friendly livelihood ventures will contribute towards investments in poverty alleviation (aligned with SDG 1.b).
	Contribute to ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities and decision-making in the management of coastal and marine resources (target 5.5).
	Knowledge management and communications activities help ensure stakeholders have increased access to information and knowledge related to marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, as well as climate change (aligned with SDG 12.8).
	Increase awareness and strengthen institutional capacity on strengthened resilience of coastal areas, (target 13.3).
	Promote public-private partnerships on conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity and ecosystems, e.g., through establishment of Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships (target 17.17).

4 Conclusions, recommendations, and lessons

Summary of Conclusions

The institutional reforms that coincided with the start of the project in 2018-2019 included assigning the mandate for the oversight of MPAs to the Ministry of Natural Resources, namely the NFGA. This project provided a timely opportunity for the NFGA to benefit from GEF funding with an initiative aimed at strengthening management of MPAs in the country. NFGA leadership recognized this and in turn ensured a high level of country ownership across multiple levels, i.e., national, provincial and local. Although the GEF project grant was fairly modest at approx. USD 2.65 million, there was a high level of interest and influence throughout the implementation phase.

Despite challenges associated with the institutional reforms and the COVID-19 pandemic, financial delivery was generally satisfactory, and the project is scheduled to close according to the original completion date. This achievement was facilitated by experienced project management. The project also benefitted from strategic technical advisory support.

The project did a good job on communications, actively disseminating information, posting updates and promoting recognition of the project's activities. A unique logo was developed and used extensively on signboards, various promotional materials, and publications developed under the project. The project also regularly organized publicity activities on special days including World Oceans Day, CWD Protection and Publicity Day, National Science Popularization Day, World Environment Day, World Wetland Day, etc. It also organized various forms of major events including a fun run, marine wetland art festival, etc. to raise awareness on CWD protection. The city of Zhuhai is in the process of adopting the CWD as the city's mascot through legislation. The project also maintained close communication with the media and released major events on different platforms, promoting the project to various media outlets, etc.

The establishment of a MPA network for Southeast China is a notable achievement under the project. This provides a viable mechanism for continued collaboration and information-sharing among the MPAs and

other key stakeholders in this part of the country. The sustainability of the mechanism depends largely on the NFGA's leadership, including having the Academy of Forest Inventory and Planning (AFIP) as the secretariat for the network.

As mentioned above, facilitating interactions among the project stakeholders, namely officials from the provincial government units, municipal government units and MPA management administrations, was one of the main strengths of the project. There was also some interaction among the contracted service providers, e.g., sharing ideas on the best approach for the Coastal Biodiversity Partnerships (CBPs). There was, however, room for improvement for ensuring coordination and collaboration among scientific partners engaged by the project and other partners. For instance, each of the target MPAs were deploying innovative techniques for monitoring CWD populations. It would have been useful to promote knowledge sharing among these partners – this is something that should be part of the action plan for the MPA network for SE China.

In each of the three target provinces, the project made efforts to establish multiple stakeholder CBPs. Contracted service providers, including NGOs and research institutes, conducted stakeholder analyses, facilitated one to two meetings and developed action plans. The process of establishing the CBPs demonstrated the potential for multiple stakeholder collaboration. The challenge across each of the provinces was obtaining commitment from government level units to officially participate in the CBPs. Officials observed the meetings but did not want to formally endorse the process. Without genuine government level participation, the sustainability of the CBPs is unlikely.

Gender mainstreaming objectives were integrated into the project design, with specific actions outlined in the project's gender action plan. The project consistently encouraged and reported women participation in capacity building and awareness raising activities and promoted representation in committees and other collaborative mechanisms. Specific support to women's groups fell short of expectations described at project entry.

Limited evidence of regional and international cooperation, e.g., neighboring countries, other GEF projects, etc. There was some evidence showing cooperation and exchange with other child projects of the C-PAR program and the GEF 5 Flyway project to share experience and lessons on risk management and gender mainstreaming. The project may have benefited, for example, from cooperation with the North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN) and gained experience on design and operation of the MPA network in SE China. Limited budget allocation for international learning exchange also constrained such cooperation.

Marine spatial planning (MSP) was an integral part of the project strategy, as a tool to facilitate mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation among sectors and stakeholders in the marine space, building upon the ecological red-lining process in the country. Ecological red lining has progressed in recent years, although the red-lined areas have not yet been officially approved. The three CBPs established in the target provinces demonstrated the willingness for non-governmental stakeholders to collaborate on conservation and sustainable use. However, the sustainability of the CBPs seems unlikely and, to that effect, the project fell short with respect to the mainstreaming related objectives.

Confirmed co-financing from the four municipal/provincial oceanic bureaus (now forestry bureaus) exceeded the committed sums at the time of CEO endorsement. The project did not make efforts to report co-financing contributions that were mobilized during implementation. For example, a sampling of three sub-contractors as part of the TE interviews revealed that each of these partners contributed co-financing on top of the GEF funds that were allocated for their contracted services. Contributions from NFGA have also not been reported. Information on such contributions from multiple partners would substantially support the evaluation of the likelihood that the results achieved will be sustained. The project team reported information on contributions from additional partners, including the NFGA, after the TE mission.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been formulated based upon the findings of the TE.

No.	Recommendation	Responsible Entities	Timeframe
Corrective actions:			
1.	**Global environmental benefits should be reported on the GEF Core Indicator worksheet (for GEF-6 and GEF-7 projects)**. Through this process the project should also consider reporting global environmental benefit not included in the project's results framework, e.g., Core Indicator 5: Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity, and Indicator 3.4: Area of wetlands restored (includes mangroves, estuary ecosystems).	PMO	Prior to operational closure
2.	**The end of project METT assessments should be updated**, with more details on biodiversity indicators (Data Sheet 2), threat reduction (Data Sheet 3), and the METT assessment form (Data Sheet 4). Observations of the TE team of inconsistencies in the METT assessments are summarized in Section 3.2.4 of this TE report.	PMO	Prior to operational closure
3.	**Co-financing contributions that materialized during project implementation should be reported**. The project team has expanded the co-financing table with additional entries after this recommendation was discussed at the TE debriefing. It would be advisable to also inquire with the project's contracted service providers on the contributions they made, parallel to the allocated GEF funds for the activities executed.	PMO	Prior to operational closure
Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project:			
4.	**Strengthen the sustainability structures for the MPA Network for SE China.** The MPA network action plan (2024-2028) identifies three key tasks and four priorities, all of which are general ideas without detailed timeframe or budget allocation.	NFGA-AFIP, PMO	Prior to operational closure
5.	**Deliver training to stakeholders on the use and functions of the GIS platform for MPAs.** This platform has been recently developed and awareness is limited. It would be advisable to deliver training on the use and functions of the platform to key stakeholders, including provincial and municipal government units and MPA management administrations.	NFGA-AFIP, PMO	Prior to operational closure
Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives:			
6.	**Implement marine spatial planning to support collaborative management and governance of critical seascapes**. Marine biodiversity occurs across protected and production areas of seascapes and, consequently, the conservation and sustainable use of the species, habitats and ecosystem services require multiple sector and stakeholder collaboration. Marine spatial planning can be an effective tool to help facilitate effective stakeholder collaboration.	NFGA-AFIP	Within next five years

LESSONS

Good practices and lessons learned on the project are presented below.

Good Practices:

- **Facilitating interactions, knowledge-sharing across the target areas.** This was one of the main strengths of the project, providing opportunities for provincial, municipal and site level stakeholders to share experiences and lessons, building up a collaborative space for the MPA Network for SE China. Given the current emphasis in China on strict earmarking of government funding, e.g., for specific restoration purposes or for infrastructure, the added value of GEF funding is primarily associated with knowledge management, multiple stakeholder collaboration and capacity building.
- **Proactive communications**. The project was effective at communicating information on the project across numerous media outlets and was proactive with respect to project branding.
- **Establishing the PMO at the national level**, within the NFGA, helped ensure consistently high levels of country ownership.
- **Adaptive management**. Not only did the project effectively adapt to the institutional reform that was coincident with the project start-up. The project also made successful adjustments to project

certain activities, including setting up the GIS platform under NFGA's current system, and using the public account of NFGA and AFIP at WeChat for publicity instead of developing a website.

Lessons Learned:

- **Multi-stakeholder collaboration mechanisms**. Establishing cross-sectoral and multiple stakeholder collaboration mechanisms requires deeper risk analysis, assessing appropriate modalities for ensuring both governmental and non-governmental (civil society and private sector) are included.
- **Regional and international cooperation**. GEF projects can provide opportunities for collaboration with complementary regional and international initiatives. In order to realize such cooperation, it is important to incorporate specific activities and corresponding budget into the project design and/or at the midterm review stage.
- **The need to develop national and local level capacities on UNDP safeguard policies and procedures**. Assessing social and environmental risks, developing relevant safeguard instruments to mitigate the risks, and overseeing the management of the risks requires national and local level experience and knowledge. Development and implementation of GEF-financed, UNDP-supported projects in China would benefit from having trained national and local level specialists on UNDP safeguard policies and procedures.
- **The need to clarify monitoring & evaluation methods and approaches at project inception**. It would be advisable to expand the project M&E plan at project inception, with detailed descriptions of methods and approaches for monitoring and evaluation of the indicators and targets in the project results framework.
- **The need for more effectively involving local government units in the design and implementation of community engagement activities**. Based on feedback shared during the TE interviews, the community engagement activities supported by the project would have benefitted from more effective involvement of local government units.
- **Formulating specific activities and allocating sufficient budget aimed at delivering direct benefits to women and/or women's groups**. To enable achievement of gender mainstreaming objectives, it would have been advisable to incorporate specific activities and allocate budget for interventions that are aimed at directly benefitting women and/or women's groups.

Annex 1: TE mission itinerary

Date	Time	Theme	Venue	Participants	Remarks
2024/6/21 Friday	AM	Arrival in Beijing			Check in
		12:30-13:30 Briefing with UNDP	UNDP China	TE consultants, UNDP representatives	Organized by UNDP China
	PM	14:30-15:30 Meeting with National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA)	Meeting room 217 of NFGA	TE consultants, interpreter, NPD, DNPD, staff from Department of International Cooperation and PMO	
		16:00-17:30 Presentation by PMO	Meeting room 217 of NFGA	TE consultants, interpreter, PMO	
2024/6/22 Saturday	AM	Document Review	Hotel (in Beijing)	TE consultants	
	PM	Departure for field trip to Guangdong	Beijing-Zhuhai, CA1323 (14:00-17:30)	TE consultants, interpreter, PMO	Check-in in Zhuhai
2024/6/23 Sunday	AM	9: 00-10: 20 Visit the exhibition hall of the Pearl River Estuary Reserve	Chinese White Dolphin National Nature Reserve in Zhuhai	TE consultant, interpreter, representatives of the Reserve	project results and impacts performance
		10: 30-12: 00 Meeting with Representatives from Guangdong Forestry Administration, Zhuhai Natural Resources Administration, Jiangmen Natural Resources Administration, and nature reserve.	Chinese White Dolphin National Nature Reserve in Zhuhai	TE consultants, interpreter and staffs from Guangdong Forestry Administration, Zhuhai Natural Resources Administration, Jiangmen Natural Resources Administration, Chinese White Dolphin Provincial Nature Reserve in Jiangmen and Zhuhai, PMO	Inform colleagues from Guangdong and Jiangmen to come to Zhuhai
	Lunch				Working lunch
	PM	02: 30-04: 30 Meeting with subcontractors (Sun Yat-sen University, Guangdong Ocean Association)		TE Consultant, interpreter, subcontractor	inform subcontractors to departure from Guangzhou to Zhuhai
	Dinner				Working dinner
2024/6/24 Monday	AM	Departure for field trip to Xiamen	Zhuhai - Xiamen MF8828（10:05-11:25）	TE Consultant, interpreter, PMO staff	Check-in, Hotel Pullman Xiamen Powerlong
	Lunch				Working lunch

Date	Time	Theme	Venue	Participants	Remarks
	PM	14:00-14:15 Hotel to dock for embarkation Field visit to natural reserve	Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve	TE Consultant, colleagues from the Natural reserve, PMO	project results and impacts performance
		15:30-16:30 Meeting with representatives from Fujian Forestry Administration, Xiamen Natural Resources and Planning Administration and Natural reserve.	Meeting room, Xiamen Natural Resources and Planning Administration	TE consultants, interpreter, staff from Fujian Forestry Administration, Xiamen Natural Resources and Planning Administration, Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve Natural reserve, CTA and PMO	Inform colleagues of Fujian Forestry Administration to departure from Fuzhou to Xiamen
		16:30-17:30 Meeting with subcontractors（Chen Keliang's team from Ocean Institute 3, and Liu Zhenwen from Jimei University） 17:30-18:00 Interview with CTA	Meeting room, Xiamen Natural Resources and Planning Administration	TE consultant, interpreter, subcontractor	
	Dinner				Working dinner
2024/6/25 Tuesday	AM	Departure for field trip to Guangxi	Xiamen-Nanning, ZH9352, 10:00-12:00	TE consultants,interpreter, CTA and PMO	
	PM	15: 30-16: 20 Meeting at Guangxi Forestry Administration	Meeting room of Guangxi Forestry Administration	TE consultants, interpreter, staff from Guangxi Forestry Administration, CTA and PMO	
		16: 20--17: 50Meeting with subcontractor (Guangxi Academy of Sciences）	Meeting room of Guangxi Forestry Administration	TE consultants, interpreter, subcontractor	
	Dinner		Nanning		Working dinner, stay in Nanning
2024/6/26 Wednesday	AM	Departure from Nanning to Qinzhou by car		TE consultants, interpreter, staff from Guangxi Forestry Administration, CTA and PMO	vehicles arranged and accompanied by Guangxi Forestry Bureau.
		Meeting with subcontractor Guangxi Biodiversity Research and Conservation Association (BRC) Community Advocacy Activity	Sanniang Bay	TE consultants, interpreter, subcontractor	
	Lunch		Sanniang Bay		Working lunch
	PM	Visit trip to Sanniang Bay, investigate the Natural Classroom, and meeting with Team of Professor Wu Haiping from Beibu Gulf University	Sanniang Bay Natural Classroom	TE consultants,interpreter, staff from Guangxi Forestry Administration, CTA and PMO	Sanniang Bay Natural Classroom and ocean monitoring

Date	Time	Theme	Venue	Participants	Remarks
	Dinner		Qinzhou		Working dinner in Qinzhou (departure to Beihai after dinner)
2024/6/27 Thursday	AM	8:00 Departure from Beihai to Yingluo Station of Shankou Mangrove Reserve for study tour and research. 9:30-10:30 Meeting with representatives of Beihai Forestry Bureau, Dugong Reserve and Shankou Reserve.	Meeting room of Yingluo, Shankou Nature Reserve	TE consultants,interpreter, staff from Guangxi Forestry Administration, Beihai Forestry Administration, Dugong Natural Reserve, Shankou Nature Reserve, CTA and PMO	
		Go to Yong'an Conservation Point of the Reserve to inspect the demonstration site of mangrove ecological restoration, wetland compensation and bird island renovation.	Shankou Nature Reserve	TE consultants, interpreter, staff from Guangxi Forestry Administration, Beihai Forestry Administration, Dugong Natural Reserve, Shankou Nature Reserve, CTA and PMO	
		Depart for Shatian Township to hold a community forum in Xinxin Village.	Shatian Township	TE consultants,interpreter, staff from Guangxi Forestry Administration, Beihai Forestry Administration, Dugong Natural Reserve, Shankou Nature Reserve, CTA and PMO	
	12: 20-13: 20 Lunch		Shatian		Working lunch
	PM	Field trip to Hepu Dugong National Nature Reserve seagrass and coral cultivation research base, visiting the Science Museum, the equipment of life support system and the monitoring system of "air and space".	Hepu Dugong National Nature Reserve	TE consultants,interpreter, staff from Dugong Natural Reserve, Shankou Nature Reserve, CTA and PMO	
		17:30 Depart for Beihai Futian Airport Depart for Beijing	CA1910（19:55-23:25）		
2024/6/28 Friday	AM	Preparation and finalization of Terminal Evaluation Report	Hotel		
	PM	Debriefing with NFGA and UNDP	Conference room of NFGA		Organized by NFGA
2024/6/29 Saturday		Leave Beijing			

Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Relevance: Is the project relevant with respect to the environmental and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels?			
To what extent is the principle of the project in line with national and local priorities?	Level of participation of the concerned agencies in project activities. Consistency with relevant strategies and policies.	Minutes of meetings, Project progress reports, national and regional strategy and policy documents	Desk review, interviews
To what extent is the project aligned to the main objectives of the GEF focal area?	Consistency with GEF strategic objectives	GEF Strategy documents, PIRs, Tracking Tools	Desk review, interview with UNDP-GEF RTA
To what extent is the project aligned to the strategic objectives of UNDP?	Consistency with UNDP strategic objectives	UNDP Strategic Plan, Country Programme Document	Desk review, interview
Effectiveness: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?			
Assessment of progress made toward achieving the indicator targets agreed upon in the logical results framework			
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
What evidence is available showing sufficient funding has been secured to sustain project results?	Financial risks	Progress reports, sectoral plans, budget allocation reports, testimonial evidence	Desk review, interviews
How have individual and institutional capacities been strengthened, and are governance structures capacitated and in place to sustain project results?	Institutional and individual capacities	Progress reports, testimonial evidence, training records	Desk review, interviews
What social or political risks threaten the sustainability of project results?	Socio-economic risks	Socio-economic studies, macroeconomic information	Desk review, interviews
Which ongoing circumstances and/or activities pose threats to the sustainability of project results?	Risks to sustainability	Sectoral plans, progress reports, macroeconomic information	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Have delays affected project outcomes and/or sustainability, and, if so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?	Impact of project delays	Progress reports	Desk review, interviews
Impact: Are there indications that the project has contributed to, or enabled progress toward long lasting desired changes?			
What verifiable environmental improvements have been made?	Verifiable environmental improvements	Progress reports, sectoral plans, development plans	Desk review, interviews, theory of change analysis
What verifiable reductions in stress on environmental systems have been made?	Verifiable reductions in stress on environmental systems	Progress reports, sectoral plans, development plans	Desk review, interviews, theory of change analysis
How has the project demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements?	Progress toward impact achievements	Progress reports, sectoral plans, development plans	Desk review, interviews, theory of change analysis
Efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?			
How was the project efficient with respect to incremental cost criteria?	Incremental cost	National strategies and plans, progress reports	Desk review, interviews

Evaluation Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
To what extent were the project objective and outcomes realized according to the proposed budget and timeline?	Efficient utilization of project resources	Progress reports, financial records	Desk review, interviews
Country Ownership:			
How are project results contributing to national and subnational development plans and priorities?	Development planning	Government approved plans and policies	Desk review, interviews
Which governments policies or regulatory frameworks were approved in line with the project objective?	Policy reform	Government approved plans and policies	Desk review, interviews
How have governmental and other cofinancing partners maintained their financial commitment to the project?	Committed cofinancing realized	Audit reports, project accounting records	Desk review, interviews
Stakeholder Involvement and Partnership Arrangements:			
How has the project consulted with and made use of the skills, experience, and knowledge of the appropriate government entities, NGOs, community groups, private sector entities, local governments, and academic institutions?	Effective stakeholder involvement	Meeting minutes, reports, interview records	Desk review, interviews, field visits
How were partnership arrangements properly identified and roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project approval?	Partnership arrangements	Memorandums of understanding, agreements	Desk review, interviews
How have partnerships influenced the effectiveness and efficiency of project implementation?	Effective partnerships	Progress reports, interview records	Desk review, interviews, field visits
How have relevant vulnerable groups and powerful supporters and opponents of the processes been properly involved?	Inclusive stakeholder involvement	Meeting minutes, reports, interview records	Desk review, interviews, field visits
How has the project sought participation from stakeholders in (1) project design, (2) implementation, and (3) monitoring & evaluation?	Stakeholder involvement	Plans, reports	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Catalytic Role:			
How has the project had a catalytic or replication effect in the country?	Catalytic effect	Interview records, development plans	Desk review, interviews
Synergy with Other Projects/Programs			
How were synergies with other projects/programs incorporated in the design and/or implementation of the project?	Collaboration with other projects/programs	Plans, reports, meeting minutes	Desk review, interviews
Preparation and Readiness			
Were project objective and components clear, practicable, and feasible within its time frame?	Project coherence	Logical results framework	Desk review, interviews

Evaluation Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
How were the capacities of the executing institution(s) and its counterparts properly considered when the project was designed?	Execution capacity	Progress reports, audit results	Desk review, interviews
Were counterpart resources, enabling legislation, and adequate project management arrangements in place at Project entry?	Readiness	Interview records, progress reports	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Financial Planning			
Did the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allowed management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allowed for timely flow of funds?	Financial control	Audit reports, project accounting records	Desk review, interviews
Has there been due diligence in the management of funds and financial audits?	Financial management	Audit reports, project accounting records	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Has promised cofinancing materialized?	Realization of cofinancing	Audit reports, project accounting records	Desk review, interviews
Supervision and Backstopping			
How have GEF agency staff members identified problems in a timely fashion and accurately estimate their seriousness?	Supervision effectiveness	Progress reports	Desk review, interviews
How have GEF agency staff members provided quality support, approved modifications in time, and restructured the project when needed?	Project oversight	Progress reports	Desk review, interviews
How has the implementing agency provided the right staffing levels, continuity, skill mix, and frequency of field visits for the project?	Project backstopping	Progress reports, back-to-office reports, internal appraisals	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Monitoring & Evaluation			
Were intended results (outputs, outcomes) adequately defined, appropriate and stated in measurable terms, and were the results verifiable?	Monitoring and evaluation plan at entry	Project document, inception report	Desk review, interviews
How has the project monitoring & evaluation plan been implemented?	Effective monitoring and evaluation	Progress reports, monitoring reports	Desk review, interviews
How has there been focus on results-based management?	Results based management	Progress reports, monitoring reports	Desk review, interviews
Cross-cutting issues			
How were gender issues integrated in project design and implementation?	Greater consideration of gender aspects.	Project document, progress reports, monitoring reports	Desk review, interviews, field visits
How were effects on local populations considered in project design and implementation?	Positive or negative effects of the project on local populations.	Project document, progress reports, monitoring reports	Desk review, interviews, field visits

Annex 3: List of people interviewed and contacted

No.	Name	Gender	Position	Organisation
1	Yan Chenggao	Male	Level I Bureau Rank Official	Department of Nature Reserve Management, NFGA Chairman of National Project Steering Committee
2	Wu Lilei	Male	Level II Bureau Rank Official	Department of Nature Reserve Management, NFGA Member of National Project Steering Committee
3	Zheng Sixian	Male	Level III Division Rank Official	Department of International Cooperation, NFGA
4	Cheng Mengni	Female	Principal Staff Member	Department of Nature Reserve Management, NFGA
5	Yuan Jun	Male	Division Director	AFIP/NFGA Member of National Project Steering Committee
6	Sun Yulu	Female	Project Manager	AFIP/NFGA
7	Bian Yuefeng	Female	Short-term Assistant	AFIP/NFGA
8	Xu Rongman	Female	Internship Assistant	AFIP/NFGA
9	Yu Xingguang	Male	Project CTA	The Third Institute Oceanography
10	Wu Xiaomou	Male	Deputy Director-General	Guangdong Provincial Forestry Bureau
11	Huang Guocheng	Male	Level III Division Rank Official	Science and Technology Communication Division, Guangdong Provincial Forestry
12	Ou Wenxia	Female	Deputy Director	Nature Reserve Management Division, Guangdong Provincial Forestry Bureau
13	Zhao Liang	Male	Deputy Secretary-General	Zhuhai Municipal Government
14	Jiang Daoping	Male	Director	Zhuhai Municipality Natural Resources Bureau
15	Qiu Ye	Male	Deputy Director	Zhuhai Municipality Natural Resources Bureau
16	Luo Wenjun	Female	Section Chief	Forestry and Wetland Protection Section, Zhuhai Municipality Natural Resources Bureau
17	Shi Zhusheng	Male	Deputy Section Chief	Forestry and Wetland Protection Section, Zhuhai Municipality Natural Resources Bureau
18	Zhang Chaoming	Male	Director	the Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR
19	Chen Xi	Male	Senior Engineer	the Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR
20	Liu Jianxia	Female	Level IV Division Rank Official	Jiangmen Municipality Natural Resources Bureau
21	Liu Wei	Male	Senior Engineer	Jiangmen CWD PNR
22	Li Meiyun	Female	Researcher	Sun Yat-sen University
23	Li Yaling	Female	Researcher	Sun Yat-sen University
24	Zhang zhiman	Female	Researcher	Sun Yat-sen University
25	Cai Weizhen	Female	Resident	Qi'ao Community
26	Li Lifen	Female	Resident	Qi'ao Community
27	Li liping	Female	Resident	Qi'ao Community
28	Wu Huazhen	Female	Resident	Qi'ao Community
29	Zhong Guixia	Female	Resident	Qi'ao Community
30	Zhong Shaofang	Female	Resident	Qi'ao Community
31	Chen Zhu	Female	President	Guangdong Ocean Association
32	Chen Lingzhi	Female	Vice-President	Guangdong Ocean Association
33	Wang Yimei	Male	Deputy Director-General	Fujian Provincial Forestry Bureau
34	Zheng Shengwen	Male	Director	Reserve Division, Fujian Provincial Forestry Bureau

No.	Name	Gender	Position	Organisation
35	Zhang Youjian	Male	Level IV Division Rank Official	Science and Technology Communication Division, Fujian Provincial Forestry Bureau
36	Shen Ruiquan	Male	Deputy Director	Xiamen Municipal Natural Resources and Planning Bureau
37	Jin Zhuxing	Male	Director	Sea Area and Island Management Division, Xiamen Municipal Natural Resources and Planning Bureau
38	Cai Libo	Male	Director	Xiamen Nature Reserve Affairs Center
39	Liu Wei	Male	Deputy Director	Xiamen Nature Reserve Affairs Center
40	Liu Zhenwen	Male	Researcher	Jimei University
41	Wang Baoru	Female	Researcher	Jimei University
42	Chen Keliang	Male	Researcher	The Third Institute Oceanography
43	Yue Liang	Male	Researcher	The Third Institute Oceanography
44	Huang Zhengkang	Male	Deputy Director-General	Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Forestry Bureau
45	Mo Tao	Male	Level I Division Rank Official	Nature Reserves and Wetlands Management Division, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Forestry Bureau
46	Liang Yanhua	Female	Deputy Director	Nature Reserves and Wetlands Management Division, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Forestry Bureau
47	Chen Baoming	Male	Functionary	Nature Reserves and Wetlands Management Division, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Forestry Bureau
48	Peng Wen	Male	official	Hepu County Public Security Bureau
49	Wang Guangjun	Male	Chief	Nature Reserve Management Section, Beihai Forestry Bureau
50	Dong Suzhi	Female	official	Beihai Municipal People's Procuratorate
51	Zhang Hongke	Male	Director of the Management Center	Guangxi Hepu Dugong NNR
52	Wu Liguang	Male	Director	Guangxi Hepu Dugong NNR
53	Huang Shenghao	Female	janitors	Shankou Mangrove NNR, Guangxi
54	Su Binghuan	Male	janitors	Shankou Mangrove NNR, Guangxi
55	Ding Yipin	Male	janitors	Shankou Mangrove NNR, Guangxi
56	Chen Qiying	Male	janitors	Shankou Mangrove NNR, Guangxi
57	Luo Dong	Female	Deputy Director	Qinzhou Forestry Bureau
58	Qi Chaozhi	Male	Official	Qinzhou Forestry Bureau
59	Lin Jiade	Male	Director	Administration of CWD Protection, Qinzhou Agriculture and Rural Affairs Bureau
60	Liao Jinfeng	Male	Director	Economic Development Bureau, Qinzhou Sanniang Bay Tourism Management Zone Management Committee
61	Su Yusheng	Female	Member	Qinzhou Sanniang Bay Tourism Management Zone Management Committee
62	Xia Yongzhi	Female	Member	Qinzhou Sanniang Bay Tourism Management Zone Management Committee
63	Zhou Qiongjuan	Female	Member	Qinzhou Sanniang Bay Tourism Management Zone Management Committee
64	Guo Wenhai	Male	Member	Qinzhou Sanniang Bay Tourism Management Zone Management Committee
65	Fu Caikuan	Male	Vice Mayor	Rhinoceros Foot Township People's Government
66	Mo Shaohui	Male	Brigade Commander	Fisheries and Fishing Harbor Supervision and Management Detachment Xiniujiao Brigade
67	Huang Guojian	Male	Brigade Commander	the Qinzhou City Management and Administration Law Enforcement Detachment
68	Pang Yuchun	Male	Office Director	Rhinoceros Foot Town Market Supervision and Administration

No.	Name	Gender	Position	Organisation
69	Wu Yanyang	Female	Secretary	the Party Branch and Director of the Resident Committee of Sanniangwan Community, Rhiniuqi Town, Qinzhou City
70	Su Yanchun	Female	Principal	Sanniangwan Primary School
71	Luo Fangqiang	Male	Researcher	Joint Cetacean Research Team of Beibu Gulf University-Guangxi Academy of Sciences
72	Wu Haiping	Female	Researcher	Joint Cetacean Research Team of Beibu Gulf University-Guangxi Academy of Sciences
73	Huang Xianglin	Male	Researcher	Guangxi Academy of Sciences
74	Mai Guilian	Female	Production leader	Sanniangwan community
75	Huang Ze'en	Male	Production leader	Sanniangwan community
76	Dong Yifei	Female	Researcher	Guangxi Biodiversity Research and Conservation Association (Mei Jing Nature)
77	Guo Wenbo	Male	Manager	Environmental Art Department of Sanniang Bay Tourism Co.
78	Zhu Jihai	Male	General Manager	Guanglv Dolphin Bay Tourism Investment Co.
79	Yang Heguo	Male	Shop Owner	Sanniangwan Community
80	Yang Mingliang	Male	Shop Owner	Sanniangwan Community
81	Lu Fuyun	Female	Shop Owner	Sanniangwan Community
82	Yang Dongzhi	Male	Shop Owner	Sanniangwan Community
83	Lai Qifu	Male	Shop Owner	Sanniangwan Community
84	Yang Mingyuan	Male	Shop Owner	Sanniangwan Community
85	Lu Liping	Female	Shop Owner	Sanniangwan Community
86	Yang Mingrui	Male	Shop Owner	Sanniangwan Community
87	Wu Xiangxia	Female	Shop Owner	Sanniangwan Community
88	Sun Shimeng	Female	Shop Owner	Sanniangwan Community
89	Wang Suyan	Female	Shop Owner	Sanniangwan Community
90	Yang Guang Dong	Male	Shop Owner	Sanniangwan Community
91	Yin Baoxin	Male	Delivery Manager	Yijie Technology
92	Lin Jinjiao	Female	village branch secretary	Shangxin village, Shatian Town
93	Fu Dong'an	Male	deputy secretary of the village committee	Shangxin village, Shatian Town
94	Lai Yongkkun	Male	Village Team Member	Shangxin village, Shatian Town
95	Qiu Xiaoling	Female	Village Committee Member	Shangxin village, Shatian Town
96	Wu Wengguang	Male	Wealth Enabler	Shangxin village, Shatian Town
97	Chen Langchao	Male	a household out of poverty	Shangxin village, Shatian Town
98	Fu Yasheng	Male	a household out of poverty	Shangxin village, Shatian Town
99	Shen Yangmei	Female	Village Representative	Shangxin village, Shatian Town
100	Ma Chaode	Male	Assistant Resident Representative	UNDP China
101	Bipin Pokharel	Male	Regional Technical Advisor	UNDP Regional Hub for Asia and the Pacific
102	Li Qian	Female	Project Assistant	UNDP China
103	Wei Lai	Male	Internship Assistant	UNDP China

Annex 4: List of Information Reviewed

1 Program Framework Document (PFD) / concept note
2 UNDP Initiation Plan
3 Final UNDP-GEF Project Document with all annexes
4 CEO Endorsement Request
5 UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) and associated management plans (if any)
6 Inception Workshop Report
7 Mid-Term Review report and management response to MTR recommendations
8 Project Implementation Reports (PIRs): ➢ PIR for 2021, 2022 and 2023
9 Progress reports (quarterly, semi-annual or annual, with associated workplans and financial reports): ➢ PPR: 2020 Q2&Q3&Q4, first and last half of 2021, 2022 PPR, 2023 PPR; ➢ Work Plans: 2020-2021 TYWP, 2021-2022 TYWP, 2022-2023 TYWP, 2023-2024 TYWP and 2024 AWP
10 Oversight mission reports ➢ Back To Office Report of UNDP China dated December 2019, March 2021 and June 2021.
11 Minutes of Project Board Meetings and of other meetings (i.e. Project Appraisal Committee meetings) ➢ Minutes of the 1st PSC meeting dated December 24th, 2019 ➢ Minutes of the 2nd PSC meeting dated March 18th, 2021 ➢ Minutes of the 3rd PSC meeting dated March 29th, 2022 ➢ Minutes of the 4th PSC meeting dated March 1st, 2023 ➢ Minutes of the 5th PSC meeting dated March 25th, 2024
12 Tracking Tools (e.g. METT, Capacity Development Scorecard) (from CEO Endorsement, midterm and terminal stages) ➢ Financial scorecard, METT, capacity development scorecard from CEO endorsement ➢ Updated financial scorecard, METT, capacity development scorecard at project inception ➢ Updated financial scorecard, METT, capacity development scorecard at mid-term ➢ Updated financial scorecard, METT, capacity development scorecard by end of project
13 Not available: GEF/LDCF/SCCF Core Indicators (from PIF, CEO Endorsement, midterm and terminal stages); for GEF-6 and GEF-7 projects only
14 Financial data, including actual expenditures by project outcome, including management costs, and including documentation of any significant budget revisions, asset list ➢ CDR for 2020, 2021, 2022,2023, and 2024 (Q1 and Q2) by project and by activity ➢ Statement of Assets and Equipment valued⩾$1500 and <$1500
15 Co-financing data with expected and actual contributions broken down by type of co-financing, source, and whether the contribution is considered as investment mobilized or recurring expenditures in the Co-financing Template for TE. (If TE team is unable to access this template on the PIMS website, UNDP CO will share this template with the team) ➢ Cofinancing table with contributions from NFGA and subcontractors
16 Audit and spot check reports ➢ Micro Assessment Report for AFIP, NFGA dated October 2021 ➢ Audit Report for the year 2020
17 Electronic copies of project outputs (booklets, manuals, technical reports, articles, etc.) ➢ Reviewed. Refer to technical deliverables for more details.
18 Sample of project communications materials ➢ Abundant communications materials including signboards, public service posters, promotional leaflets, exhibition boards, videos and various promotional materials such as stickers, hat, year planner, keychain, mask, pendant, etc.
19 Summary list of formal meetings, workshops, etc. held, with date, location, topic, and number of participants ➢ List of training ➢ List of other project activities
20 Any relevant socio-economic monitoring data, such as average incomes / employment levels of stakeholders in the target area, change in revenue related to project activities ➢ N/A
21 List of contracts and procurement items over ~US$5,000 (i.e. organizations or companies contracted for project outputs, etc., except in cases of confidential information) ➢ Statement of Assets and Equipment valued⩾$1500 and <$1500 ➢ List of service providers
22 List of related projects/initiatives contributing to project objectives approved/started after GEF project approval (i.e. any leveraged or "catalytic" results) ➢ Integration and optimization of natural PAs launched by NGFA, MNR since 2020 ➢ Ecological red line demarcation led by MNR, MEE, NFGA since 2019

➢ Marine ecological protection and restoration projects funded by MOF since 2020
23 Data on relevant project website activity – e.g. number of unique visitors per month, number of page views, etc. over relevant time period, if available ➢ Use the AFIP, NFGA WeChat public account as main platform for publicity
24 UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD)
25 List/map of project sites, highlighting suggested visits ➢ Map in project document ➢ Schematic diagram of the project site in the project brochure
26 List and contact details for project staff, key project stakeholders, including Project Board members, RTA, Project Team members, and other partners to be consulted ➢ See annex 3-list of people interviewed and contacted
28 Final ESIA, SES, ESMP reports and GRM ➢ Updated SESP ➢ Safeguards Risk Management Assessment Report ➢ Environmental and Social Safeguards Capacity-Building Measures ➢ Livelihood Action Plan
29 Member list of Guangdong, Guangxi and Fujian CBP
30 Evidence report& media report to support the CWD population in three coastal areas ➢ Mostly media reports and also reports prepared by CWD NRs as well as population figures released on official website
31 Handbook for Managers of Xiamen NNR
32 MPA Network Action Plan & Charter ➢ Action Plan for the MPA Network of SE China (2024-2028) (DRAFT) ➢ Constitution ➢ Working Mechanism
33 Self-Assessment Report at MTR and TE prepared by PMO
34 Spreadsheet to support expansion of MPA in Guangdong, Guangxi and Fujian after integration and optimization of natural PAs
35 Conclusion Report on Compiling Training Materials for Capacity Building of Marine Protected Area and Conduct Verification Training
36 Conclusion Report on Organizing Volunteers for Beach-Cleaning Activities
37 CPAR4 KAP Survey Evaluation Report (Baseline and end-of-project)
38 Conclusion Report on Preparation of the Integrated Management Plan for the Hepu Dugong NNR in Guangxi and the Pearl River Estuary NNR in Guangdong
39 Conclusion Report on Feasibility study on the construction of a marine category reserve in Sanniangwan, Guangxi
40 Conclusion Report on Promoting the livelihood transformation and sustainable development of the community residents around the demonstration reserve (Zhuhai-Jiangmen)
41 Conclusion report on technical support for the delimitation of ecological corridors in the coastal waters of Qinzhou-Beihai
42 Report on Establishing the Guangxi Coastal Biodiversity Partnership
43 Conclusion report on community co-management and alternative livelihood activities in the demonstration area of the Qinzhou-Beihai project, and selection of sustainable products and piloting of eco-labelling mechanisms in selected pilot villages
44 Final Report of Guangdong Coastal Biodiversity Partnership Building Program
45 Report on establishment of the Fujian coastal biodiversity partnership
46 Conclusion report on development of nature education textbook for Guangxi Hepu Dugong National Nature Reserve
47 Report on Activities to Promote Community Involvement in the Conservation of CWDs in Zhuhai, Guangdong, China & Summary report on awareness-raising activities
48 Final Report on Activities to Reduce Marine Threats in Communities Surrounding Xiamen Bay
49 Final report on GIS-based knowledge and information platform for MPA network in SE China
50 Final Report on Preparation of the Measures for the Management of Xiamen National Nature Reserve for Rare Marine Species
51 Final Report on Preparation of Technical Guidelines on Field Population Monitoring of Chinese White Dolphins and Guidelines on Rescue of Endangered Marine Species (Cetaceans, Dolphins and Sea Turtles) along the Costal Areas of China
52 Final Report on Preparation of Nature Education Reader for Chinese White Dolphin for Primary Schools
53 Final report on recycling of derelict fishing nets in communities surrounding selected protected areas
54 Final report on demonstration of ecological larval culture of Chinese horseshoe crab (Tachypleus tridentatus)

55 Final report on demonstration of seagrass breeding device ecological aquaculture device
56 Electronic nautical charts of Xiamen Rare Marine Species Nature Reserve
57 Report on Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve Ecological Environment-Special Improvement of Sea-Drifting Garbage
58 Report on the Field Survey and Compilation of Information on the Impact of the Construction of the Second East Corridor of Xiamen on the Distribution and Migration of Chinese White Dolphins
59 Report on pilot drone monitoring in the Pearl River Estuary Chinese White Dolphin National Nature Reserve
60 Study Report on the Impact of Maritime Activities on Chinese White Dolphins in Sanniang Bay and Countermeasures
61 Law Enforcement Manual for Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve
62 Study report on the Financing Mechanism of Ecological Protection Compensation in Xiamen National Nature Reserve for Rare Marine Species
63 Ecological Corridor Study and Investigation Report on Chinese White Dolphins in Xiamen, Zhangzhou and Quanzhou
64 Study on the evaluation of the impact of environmental risks on marine protected areas and their key protected species
65 Conclusion Report on National Marine Park Planning Techniques
66 Conclusion Report on Technical Guidelines for the 3 Planning of National Geoparks
67 Conclusion Report on Xiamen Marine Engineering Chinese White Dolphin Protection and Rescue Training

Technical deliverables:

Service provider	Contract value (USD) (exch rate: 7)	Output	Deliverable description
Guangxi Academy of Science (GAS)	$56,857	Conclusion Report on Compiling Training Materials for Capacity Building of Marine Protected Area and Conduct Verification Training	The GAS conducted a survey on staff of six MPA NRs through an online questionnaire and classified their needs into four ratings. On this basis, 32 training curricula on MPA capacity building were designed, classified into 4 categories, and 13 modules. A MPA capacity-building training manual was developed. The GAS also proposed a framework for the MPA staff competency standard, setting up a standard for the MPA staff in SE China. Training was organized for Dugong NNR staff, providing training on law enforcement, CWD rescue, drone practice, etc. Online courses were also uploaded to the State Forestry and Grassland Administration Cadre Management Institute online platform to be shared with the public.
Sun Yat-sen University (SYU)	$85,741	Conclusion Report on Organizing Volunteers for Beach-Cleaning Activities	To undertake this subcontract, the SYU team designed and developed a WeChat applet named Whale Change Program, recruited 1031 volunteers for this beach cleaning activity, and conducted serial training for these volunteers. Through a survey, the SYU team selected four sites as the survey baseline and organized three beach cleaning activities. The data analysis revealed that the amount of trash in all four target areas had decreased significantly and that plastic was the dominant trash type in beach trash. The team also encouraged volunteers to actively conceptualize and create art from the waste they collected. The SYU team also made great efforts in communication and publicity. It actively promoted marine conservation by organizing marine art festivals and sharing sessions, designing tourism products, training women in the community, and participating in activities organized by UNDP. The team also formed a conservation group and trained volunteers, including local residents and merchants, as nature education instructors.
China Agricultural University	$21,428	CPAR4 KAP Survey Evaluation Report (Baseline and end-of-project)	The survey was conducted targeting six key groups, and data was collected mainly through a questionnaire. A total of 370 sample questionnaires were collected online and offline. The questionnaire consisted of four sections: knowledge, attitudes, practices, and information needs. A comparison of scores at baseline and at the end of the project revealed that A comparison of scores at baseline and at the end of the project revealed that the three provinces achieved the target of a 15% increase from the baseline, both in terms of the total KAP scores and the scores by gender.
Qingdao Blue Smart Valley Marine Technology Development Centre	$21,428	Conclusion Report on Exploring the establishment of marine-type national parks at Pearl River Estuary	The subcontractor systematically sorted out the current status of existing MPAs in Guangdong Province, organized the distribution range of key conservation targets, identified the distribution areas of core species and ecosystems, compared them with the distribution patterns of existing PAs, identified the weak and gap areas of MPAs in Guangdong Province, and evaluated the effectiveness of the existing PA system on the protection of potential habitats. In addition, based on the results of the protection gap analysis and the distribution pattern of existing PAs, and

			further considering the integrality and connectivity of the protection network as well as the cost of protection, a MPA system in Guangdong Province was constructed, with the Pearl River Estuary National Park as the representative, nature reserves as the main body, and marine parks as the complementary system.
EJdrone Technology Co., Ltd	$26,428	Conclusion Report on Preparation of the Integrated Management Plan for the Hepu Dugong NNR in Guangxi and the Pearl River Estuary NNR in Guangdong	The subcontractor developed a comprehensive management plan for the two NRs, which, based on a systematic review of the current management status of the two NRs and an analysis of the limiting and threatening factors, proposed five-year general management objectives for the two NRs and targeted conservation actions, accompanied by corresponding budgets, timetables for actions, and monitoring and evaluation plans. The comprehensive management plan for the two NRs had passed panel review.
Guangxi Lujin Ecological Technology Co.	$14,285	Conclusion report on feasibility study on the construction of a marine category reserve in Sanniangwan, Guangxi	The subcontractor team conducted a feasibility analysis and research on the construction of the MPA in Sanniang Bay, Guangxi, with the help of GIS through on-site research, data collection, discussion, and consultation, and clarified the main threats to the CWD. On the basis of analyzing threat mitigation and capacity enhancement, it is believed that the way of protection can be considered from near-term and long-term perspectives, and four suggestions were put forward from the perspective of near-term protection, and three suggestions were put forward from the perspective of long-term protection. The overall conclusion was that there were certain obstacles to the establishment of a marine-type reserve in Sanniang Bay in the near future, but that conservation-based community development and the establishment of community-based marine reserves were feasible and would produce better conservation results while laying the foundation for the subsequent establishment of reserves.
Sun Yat-sen University	$14,285	Conclusion report on promoting the livelihood transformation and sustainable development of the community residents around the demonstration reserve (Zhuhai-Jiangmen)	One of the key objectives of the sub-project is to enhance community-based conservation of nature and the sustainable development of residents' livelihoods in the project's demonstration protected areas. This sub-project explored the possible livelihoods for local residents through six rounds of field surveys, improved people's conservation awareness through a series of publicity activities, and also brought benefits for local communities. The SYU established the Whale Change Program, which brought together school and university students in China to promote marine environmental protection and organized a Beach Parent-Child Environmental Sharing Exchange and an Ocean Art Festival, which attracted more than 500 offline participants and more than 1 million views online.
Nanning Dazing Eco-Technology Co., Ltd	$14,285	Conclusion report on technical support for the delimitation of ecological corridors in the coastal waters of Qinzhou-Beihai	The Eco-Corridor Zoning and Construction Action Planning of the Qinzhou to Beihai coastal water area has been performed through data collection, site investigation, interviews, consultation, and GIS technology. The Eco-Corridor Zoning has been completed based on the distribution of Chinese White Dolphin, habitat biodiversity, functions of the alongshore ecological system, and connectivity of habitats. The EcoCorridor Zones had been identified through analyzing threats to dolphins from human activities in the Qinzhou and Beihai coastal water areas, diagnosing departments and organizations capacity gaps on conservation, and finding the dolphins distributed key points with heavy impacts from human activities and a lack of protecting capacities. The suggested Eco-Corridor area covers 5593.80 km2 and has a length of 51 km. It could be divided into three districts: the district of Tieshangang port, the district of Sanniangwan to Beihai port mariculture, and the district of Qingzhougang port. It also included three sheets: the sheet of sea-land interface in Sanniangwan, the sheet of sea-land interface in Xichungang port to Yinpan town, and the sheet of sea-land interface in Shatian town. There are seven focal estuaries: Yinluogang port, Tieshangang port, Yinpangang port, Xichungang port, Nanliujiang river, Dafengjiang river, and Qinzhouwan bay. Actions were suggested to be conducted in the EcoCorridor as public and sign system construction, conservation awareness raising, natural conservation network establishment, habitat protection, a series of enforcement prevention and control measures, scientific studies and monitoring and assessment, and sustainability management. The whole implementation of the Eco-Corridor Zoning and Planning is expected to last 4 years, from 2022 to 2025, with a budgeted investment of 307,350,000 RMB.
Guangxi Academy of Sciences (GAS)	$57,114	Report on Establishing the Guangxi Coastal	Guangxi CBP was established, and CBAP was developed with eight priority areas and 19 key actions for 2021–2030. Relevant exchange and publicity activities had been organized. The GAS has submitted an application to establish the Guangxi Ocean Society and

		Biodiversity Partnership	will have the biodiversity branch responsible for leading the Guangxi CBP. It also has other financing channels, e.g., the private sector, to support the implementation of the key actions in the CBAP.
Guangxi Biodiversity Research and Conservation Association	$60,000	Conclusion report on community co-management and alternative livelihood activities in the demonstration area of the Qinzhou-Beihai project, and selection of sustainable products and piloting of eco-labeling mechanisms in selected pilot villages	The purpose of this study was to promote the transformation of sustainable livelihoods in the pilot area by promoting the participation of two Qinzhou-Beihai fishing communities in the management of marine protected areas and marine resources and to provide a reference for the region and for the subsequent promotion of community involvement in marine conservation management. The subcontractor conducted a survey in two communities to learn about their dependency on fisheries. It also explored eco-labelling certification in the two communities and successfully awarded the first batch of eco-friendly tourism businesses in Sanniang Bay. Due to conflict between the Shanliao community and Dugong NNR, the subcontractor advocated for marine fisheries practitioners to promote ocean-friendly behaviors and sensitize communities to the close relationship between ecological conservation and sustainable livelihoods. Based on feedback from local villagers, many of them had benefited from livelihood opportunities provided by the NNR, and through cooperation with the NNR, local villagers' awareness of ecological conservation had increased, which also indicated that the subcontractor's effort in the community had a positive impact.
Guangdong Ocean Association	$56,857	Final Report of Guangdong Coastal Biodiversity Partnership Building Program	Guangdong CBP was established through extensive consultation with various stakeholders, reviewing of existing documents, and data collection with member units including government entities, private sectors, NGOs, research institutes, universities, the media, etc. A total of 18 agencies participated in the Symposium on Guangdong CBP. The CBP Initiative was jointly released, and a CBAP was developed with 10 key tasks.
Third Institute of Oceanography, MNR	$57,142	Report on establishment of the Fujian coastal biodiversity partnership	This report briefly reviewed the implementation of the Fujian Coastal Biodiversity Partnership (CBP) project and summarized the work carried out and outputs achieved, which mainly included identifying stakeholders in the project demonstration area, preparing the Fujian Coastal Biodiversity Partnership Initiative (CBPI), developing the minutes of the meeting of the CBP, publicizing and publishing the CBPI, conducting training and sharing management practices through the CBP, and preparing the Action Plan for the CBP to be extended to adjacent ecosystems, as well as providing technical support and services for the extension of the CBP to adjacent ecosystems. Fujian CBP was established through extensive discussion and coordination among stakeholders. A total of 20 agencies, including government agencies, research institutes, NGOs, universities, etc., participated in the workshop on the Fujian CBP Initiative. Fujian CBAP (2021–2030) was developed with four key tasks.
Huaxia Xintian BJ Technology Co., LTD	$21,428	Conclusion report on development of nature education textbook for Guangxi Hepu Dugong National Nature Reserve	In recent years, in order to improve science education on campus, the reserve has developed a number of species-themed nature education courses and conducted 123 science classes for primary and secondary school students, as well as rich study activities to help students in Beihai understand the ocean, raise awareness of marine biodiversity protection, and enhance students' conservation practices. "Call of the Mermaid" is a school book designed based on the reserve's years of experience in marine conservation and the need for future nature science education. It is divided into four chapters, starting with an introduction to the human and natural heritage of the reserve. The second chapter is about learning about the important species and ecosystems of the reserve, thirdly uncovering the rich benthic life of the intertidal zone through sea-catching activities, and finally showing the daily work experience of the reserve, including the code of conduct, laws and regulations, volunteers, and science museum reservations. It not only helps students to understand the reserve more comprehensively through reading and stimulates their interest in the ocean, but it also serves as a guiding book for school teachers to conduct scientific sea-catching study activities.
Zhuhai Blue Bay Coral Research Center	$4,285	Report on Activities to Promote Community Involvement in the Conservation of CWDs in Zhuhai, Guangdong, China & Summary report on awareness-raising activities	The subcontractor organized a visit to the Southern Tamarisk Garden in Zhuhai and the Qi'ao Mangrove Reserve in Zhuhai for the leading experts from UNDP China and the UNDP-GEF Marine Protected Areas Management Project Office and produced a written report on the activity. It also organized a publicity activity in Jinwan District, Zhuhai, to raise awareness about CWD protection.

Xiamen Blue Sea Cultural Industry Co., LTD	$21,428	Final Report on Activities to Reduce Marine Threats in Communities Surrounding Xiamen Bay	The management of marine protected areas cannot be separated from the active participation and promotion of the residents in the surrounding communities. The subcontractor organized a series of activities called "Empowering the Blue, Protecting Marine Biodiversity," which raised the awareness of the public about the protection of marine biodiversity and was widely reported by the media, covering more than 100,000 people.
Beijing Deepnature Technology Co., Ltd	$26,857	Final report on GIS-based knowledge and information platform for MPA network in SE China	Relying on the nature reserve supervision and management platform of the State Forestry and Grassland Administration, the subcontractor, based on the integration and optimization data of nature reserves in the Southeast Coastal Project Area, sorted out the basic elements and spatial data of the five project demonstration reserves and completed the construction of a set of GIS-based knowledge and application platforms for the network of marine reserves along the Southeast Coast of China, which covered the five demonstration reserves in Fujian, Guangdong, and Guangxi.
Fujian Tianheng United Law Firm	$25,714	Final Report on Preparation of the Measures for the Management of Xiamen National Nature Reserve for Rare Marine Species	The main task of this subcontractor was to implement the national principle of One Regulation for One NR, combine the actual situation of Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve and the development needs of nature reserves under the new situation, and prepare the management measures. The subcontractor team conducted the field research for 1 time, completed 3 research reports, issued 1 questionnaire, and completed the management measures of Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve.
Third Institute of Oceanography, MNR	$21,428	Final Report on Preparation of Technical Guidelines on Field Population Monitoring of Chinese White Dolphins and Guidelines on Rescue of Endangered Marine Species (Cetaceans, Dolphins and Sea Turtles) along the Costal Areas of China	The purpose of this sub-project was to provide standard process reference for the wild population monitoring of Chinese White Dolphin in China through the preparation of the Technical Guide for the Wild Population Monitoring of Chinese White Dolphin, so as to improve the comparability of the future monitoring results conducted in different regions and by different teams; Meanwhile, the Guidelines for the Rescue of Endangered Marine Species (Including Cetaceans and Sea Turtles) in China's coastal Areas was prepared to offer reference for relevant responsible units and departments in China's coastal areas to carry out standardized rescue for endangered marine species, so as to prevent non-professional treatment measures from aggravating animal casualties.
Hangzhou Mountain Rabbit Culture Communication Co.	$21,428	Final Report on Preparation of Nature Education Reader for Chinese White Dolphin for Primary Schools	This sub-project aimed to enhance the place-based, audience-specific, and practical nature of the Chinese White Dolphin nature education curriculum by developing the "Chinese White Dolphin Elementary School Nature Education Textbook." It aimed to increase public awareness and participation in the conservation of Chinese white dolphins, their habitats, and biodiversity. The project emphasized the importance of popularizing knowledge about Chinese White Dolphins, fostering students' interest, and cultivating a sense of conservation through the textbook and curriculum design. The project outcomes included the Chinese White Dolphin Popular Science Textbook, PPT courseware for the Chinese White Dolphin nature education curriculum, and a teacher's guidebook.
One Planet Nature Foundation	$14,285	Final report on recycling of derelict fishing nets in communities surrounding selected protected areas	The subcontractor collected advanced experiences on the disposal of discarded fishing nets at home and abroad and conducted community questionnaire surveys in the neighboring communities of the Jiangmen Chinese White Dolphin Provincial Nature Reserve to learn about the use of fishing gears and the fishermen's knowledge and attitude towards the Chinese White Dolphin and discarded fishing gears, and on the basis of community questionnaire surveys, formulated a strategy for the recycling of discarded fishing nets and carried out actions for the recovery of discarded nets, so as to raise the community's public awareness of discarded fishing nets and participation in the protection of the Chinese White Dolphin.
Beibu Gulf University	$14,285	Final report on demonstration of ecological larval culture of Chinese horseshoe crab (Tachypleus tridentatus)	The tri-spine horseshoe crab population is in global decline due to habitat destruction. One of the important ex-situ conservation approaches is through artificial breeding and culture to enhance their population in the natural environment. The traditional culture systems prefer tanks or cemented ponds that require complicated management procedures and have a lower juvenile mortality rate. This sub-project designed and manufactured an ecological-based tri-spine horseshoe crab culture system that meets the biological requirements of the species. The system comprised two water-circulating systems and four ecological filtration systems.

Guangxi Hai Shu Biological Pharmaceutical Group Co.	$14,285	Final report on demonstration of seagrass breeding device ecological aquaculture device	This project demonstrated a set of quasi-ecological seagrass breeding devices in the rescue center of Dugong National Reserve in Shatian Town, Hepu County, Beihai, Guangxi, consisting of five ecological breeding systems and one biochemical filtration system. By demonstrating the seagrass diversity propagation device of this group, it can be used for seagrass bed restoration, science popularization, display education, and other purposes, so as to more intuitively reflect the diversity and importance of marine life in the reserve and enhance the understanding and protection awareness of local institutions and the public about natural ecology.
Xiamen Weijing Environmental Technology Co.	$11,428	Conclusion Report on Xiamen Marine Engineering Chinese White Dolphin Protection and Rescue Training	The subcontractor trained the leaders, managers, and front-line employees of construction units, construction enterprises, and sea-related projects around Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve in Chinese White Dolphin protection and rescue knowledge and rescue ability and improved their awareness of Chinese White Dolphin protection, protection level, and rescue ability so that they can implement Chinese White Dolphin protection measures in the organization of the construction process and carry out on-site rescue work under emergency conditions for the Chinese White Dolphin.
Amos Asia Ship Service Co., Ltd	$20,971	Electronic nautical charts of Xiamen Rare Marine Species Nature Reserve	In order to improve the management effectiveness of monitoring and patrolling in Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR, strengthen law enforcement in the reserve, and reduce the occurrence of illegal fishing, dumping, illegal sand mining, illegal underwater blasting, and other illegal behaviors by ships in the nature reserve, the subcontractor, in accordance with the requirements of the Guidelines for Standardized Construction and Management of National Nature Reserves, marked Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR on electronic and paper charts based on the boundaries of the NNR in the Master Plan of Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR. It is visual information to inform ships coming and going from the sea about the scope of the Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve area and to warn of illegal intrusion and mistaken entry.
Xiamen Lanhit Information Technology Co.	$14,285	Report on Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve Ecological Environment-Special Improvement of Sea-Drifting Garbage	Based on on-site survey and satellite positioning methods, the subcontractor identified the cleaning areas of Jiyu Island and Dayu Island in the Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve, quantified the types of sea drift garbage by section method, and counted the amount of garbage. At the same time, the forward integration and reverse integration methods in the MIKE 21 Lagrangian particle tracking model are used to describe the migration and movement of sea drift garbage, predict and trace the garbage in the area, and put forward corresponding prevention and control suggestions.
Third Institute of Oceanography, MNR	$24,285	Report on the Field Survey and Compilation of Information on the Impact of the Construction of the Second East Corridor of Xiamen on the Distribution and Migration of Chinese White Dolphins	The development of Xiamen Island requires the construction of many bridges to connect it to the mainland. The construction of these bridges plays an important role in the development of Xiamen's economy, but they may also have a certain impact on the distribution and migration of Chinese white dolphins. In order to further clarify whether the construction of the Second East Corridor in Xiamen affects the migration and distribution of Chinese White Dolphins in Tong'an Bay, Tong'an Bay Estuary, and adjacent waters, this project proposes to take the Second East Corridor as an example to carry out a sample line survey and tracking and monitoring of Chinese White Dolphins in the adjacent waters of the Second East Corridor, to survey the activities of Chinese White Dolphins in the vicinity of the Second East Corridor during the operation period and their migratory routes, and to analyze the effects of the construction of the Second East Corridor on Chinese White Dolphins in a quantitative way. The quantitative analysis of the impact of the construction of the Second East Corridor on the Chinese White Dolphin can provide a scientific basis for the design of future bridge construction.
Beijing Institute of Technology, Zhuhai	$21,428	Report on pilot drone monitoring in the Pearl River Estuary Chinese White Dolphin National Nature Reserve	This sub-project used unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) mounted on ships to monitor the Pearl River Estuary Chinese White Dolphin National Nature Reserve in Guangdong and Chinese white dolphins. After conducting pilot monitoring, technical problems arising from the use of UAVs in field monitoring were found and solved, and the application mode of using UAVs for monitoring was studied and verified.
Beibu Gulf University (BGU)	$49,285	Study Report on the Impact of Maritime Activities on Chinese White Dolphins in Sanniang Bay and Countermeasures	The BGU conducted 35 investigations for the same line transact and identified the distribution of Chinese white dolphins in Sanniang Bay, Dafengjiang Costal Area, as well as its core distribution area. The BGU also prepared a natural classroom and delivered 33 sessions of courses on natural education, mainly for local students, and a study tour. Besides, it extensively publicized the CWD through online channels including WeChat, TikTok, Bilibili, Weibo, etc. and organized two sessions of training workshops for relevant practitioners. The investigation and

			publicity efforts of the BGU played a positive role in the conservation of the CWD in the Sanniang Bay coastal area and would contribute to the establishment of Sanning Bay, PA, as an important reference.
Fujian Tianyi Law Firm	$21,428	Law Enforcement Manual for Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve	The manual introduced the working procedures of the Center for Protected Area Affairs in dealing with violations of the law and the benchmarks for discretionary administrative penalties for violations involving protected areas, which provided convenience and basis for the subsequent enforcement work of the protected area. The manual has been completed and passed panel review.
Third Institute of Oceanography, MNR	$21,428	Study report on the Financing Mechanism of Ecological Protection Compensation in Xiamen National Nature Reserve for Rare Marine Species	The report studied the ways and means of financing ecological protection compensation for marine protected areas, combined with the basic ecosystem characteristics of the Xiamen National Nature Reserve for Rare Marine Species, put forward the necessity of financing ecological protection compensation for marine protected areas in Xiamen, analyzed the main problems of financing ecological protection compensation for marine protected areas and put forward recommendations, and presented three sets of proposals for financing ecological protection compensation for marine protected areas.
Jimei University	$21,428	Ecological Corridor Study and Investigation Report on Chinese White Dolphins in Xiamen, Zhangzhou and Quanzhou	This sub-project identified the gap for CWD conservation in the wider Xiamen Bay coastal waters through investigation and analysis and through model building and proposed potential ecological corridors for CWD conservation, providing a scientific basis and theoretical guidance for CWD conservation, and the report has been recognized by the government as a reference for decision-making.
Forth Institute of Oceanography, MNR	$42,857	Study on the evaluation of the impact of environmental risks on marine protected areas and their key protected species	The study analyzed the characteristics of major marine development and utilization activities' environmental risks (such as oil and gas exploration, sewage outfalls, construction of ports and shipping, reclamation works, mariculture risks, and offshore wind power), as well as the current status of marine protected areas and important protected species (Sousa chinensis). It analyzed the main environmental risks faced by Guangxi Sanniang Bay Chinese White Dolphin Nature Reserve (proposed, Qinzhou, Guangxi), Guangdong Pearl River Estuary Chinese White Dolphin National Nature Reserve, Guangdong Jiangmen Chinese White Dolphin Provincial Nature Reserve, and Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve and their important protected species (Chinese white dolphin). This study provided different guidance for the selection of indicators and weight determination of environmental risk impact assessment in different regions.
First Institute of Oceanography, MNR	$21,428	Conclusion Report on National Marine Park Planning Techniques	At present, there are more than 60 national marine parks in China. As an important basis for marine park management, national marine park planning can provide support for activity arrangements and schedule management within marine parks.
Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences	$21,428	Conclusion Report on Technical Guidelines for the 3 Planning of National Geoparks	In order to strengthen the management of national geoparks and standardize the construction of national geoparks, the Technical Guidelines for the Planning of National Geoparks were formulated in accordance with the relevant policy requirements of nature-protected areas in the new era, the Measures for the Administration of National Natural Parks (Trial Implementation), and the Technical Specifications for the General Planning of National Parks (GB/T 39736-2020).

Annex 5: Summary of TE mission

Froom 21 to 28 June 2024, with logistical support and coordination provided by the PMO and UNDP China, the TE team paid visits to three pilot areas of the project, including Zhuhai-Jiangmen coastal waters, Xiamen Bay coastal waters, and Qinzhou-Beihai coastal waters. The team visited four of the five project NRs and held extensive meetings and interviews with local government officials at various levels, staff of project NRs, key subcontractors, and village representatives. Summary findings in the three pilot areas are as follows:

Findings in Zhuhai-Jiangmen coastal waters

Ecological significance and conservation interventions. The waters are the most densely distributed area of CWD globally. The natural PA integration and optimization initiative has expanded the area of MPAs in the province while reducing the number of PAs. All PAs in the province have been included in the red line. The province's marine red line is 1.6 million hectares, and 30% of the marine red line is MPAs. Zhuhai intends to adopt legislation to define the Chinese white dolphin as the city's mascot, and the work is currently underway.

Improvements in laws and regulations. The provincial level has continued to improve relevant regulations, such as the Guangdong Provincial Measures on Compensation for Damage to the Ecological Environment (for Trial Implementation), the Guangdong Provincial Regulations on Environmental Protection, and the Guangdong Provincial Regulations on Wetland Protection. The Municipal People's Congress (MPC) attaches importance to white dolphin-related legislation and has achieved significant progress in advancing One Regulation for One NR. The management measures for the Jiangmen CWD PNR have been issued in 2022, and the management regulations for the Guangdong Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR have been submitted to the Provincial People's Congress (PPC) and are pending approval.

Cross-provincial and cross-sectoral cooperation and joint law enforcement. Guangdong, Fujian, Guangxi, and Hainan provinces jointly established the Chinese White Dolphin Protection Procuratorial Alliance to further strengthen the collaboration and cooperation of the procuratorial organs of the Alliance in public interest litigation and to focus on the protection of the Chinese White Dolphin and its habitat as the key target.

Science popularization and awareness-raising. A huge effort has been made toward science popularization and awareness-raising. Apart from Zhuhai municipality’s attempt to use the CWD as the city's mascot, the two project NRs, with abundant financial support from central and local government, did a good job of publicizing marine ecology, CWD, and biodiversity conservation through a well-designed museum (see Photo 1- Science Museum in the Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR), major events on theme days, etc. The local community was well motivated to participate in awareness-raising activities and actively introduced local plant species to study tour members (see Photo 2- Group photo of the women’s group in Qi’ao community).

List of stakeholders that the TE team interviewed and contacted in Zhuhai-Jiangmen coastal waters

Zhuhai-Jiangmen coastal waters	
Government agencies	Guangdong Provincial Forestry Bureau
	Zhuhai Municipal Government
	Zhuhai Municipality Natural Resources Bureau
	Jiangmen Municipality Natural Resources Bureau
Nature reserve	Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR
	Jiangmen CWD PNR
Subcontractors	The Third Institute Oceanography, MNR
	Guangdong Ocean Association
	Sun Yat-sen University
Community	Qi'ao Community

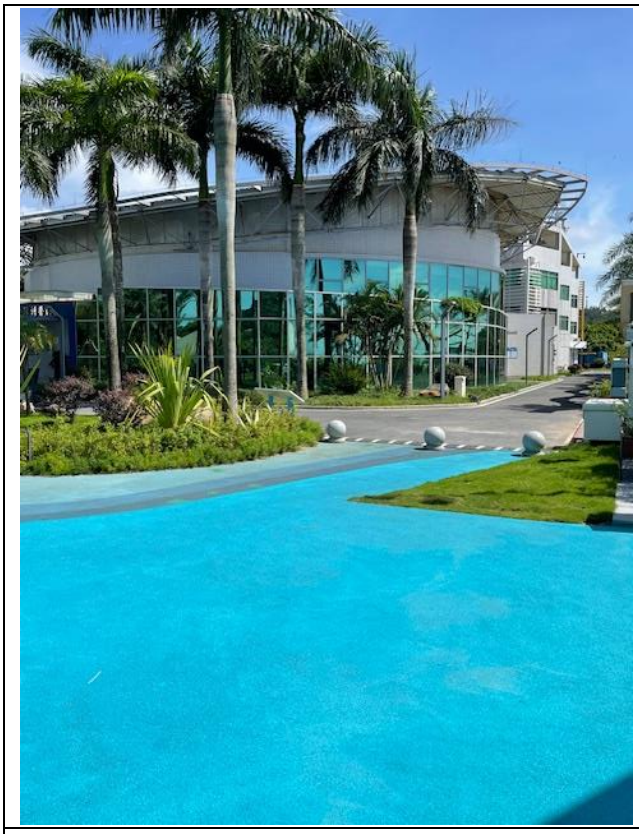	
Photo 1: Science Museum in the Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR	Photo 2: Group photo of the women's group in Qi'ao community

Findings in Xiamen Bay coastal waters

Integration and optimization of natural PAs: For the province, the total area of PAs increased by 13021.93 ha after integration and optimization of natural PAs. For Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR, its total area basically remained the same, with only minor adjustments made to its scope.

Background and key protection species of Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR: Before 2000, there used to be three nature reserves in the Xiamen Bay coastal waters, namely CWD Nature Reserve, Amphioxus Nature Reserve, and Egret Nature Reserve. As the central government and provincial and municipal governments attached great importance to the protection of these three species, they were combined into one nature reserve and also upgraded to national level in 2000. Thus, the key protection targets of Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR are the three key species, namely CWD, egret, and amphioxus.

Explorations on ecological compensation: The project supported the development of Measures for the Management of Compensatory Financing for Ecological Protection in Xiamen National Nature Reserve for Rare Marine Species, which was the first study of the same type nationwide. It served as a useful supplement to the Provisions on the Management of Compensation for Ecological and Environmental Damages at the provincial level.

List of stakeholders that the TE team interviewed and contacted in Xiamen Bay coastal waters

Xiamen Bay coastal waters	
Government agencies	Fujian Provincial Forestry Bureau
	Xiamen Municipal Natural Resources and Planning Bureau
Nature reserve	Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR
Subcontractors	Jimei University
	The Third Institute Oceanography

Findings in Qinzhou-Beihai coastal waters

Spatial planning, integration, and optimization of natural PAs. According to the Spatial Planning of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (2021-2035), by 2035, the marine ecological protection red line will reach 170,000 ha; through the integration and optimization of natural PAs, the area of Shankou NNR has been enlarged (the plan was reported to the State Council as 8,003 ha to 9,640 ha). Qinzhou and Sanniang Bay were delineated into the scope of the spatial planning and the ecological red line. The MPA network covered an area of 1,142,400 ha, and PAs and ecologically sensitive areas have been effectively connected.

Adequate funding for marine ecological protection and restoration. Guangxi, Qinzhou City, and Beihai City were included in the list of marine ecological protection and restoration projects of the MO in 2022 and 2024. Since 2020, finance at all levels has invested RMB330 million in forestry reform and development funds to support capacity building and restoration of MPAs, with improved MPA infrastructure and equipment and enhanced protection effectiveness. The pilot MPA in Guangxi for this project applied for RMB2 million in funds from the China Environmental Protection Foundation to support the restoration of seagrass beds, with matching RMB2.3 million in centralized forestry reform and development funds.

Science popularization and awareness-raising. Guangxi has invested a great deal of energy in science education in a variety of forms, including science museums, nature bases, nature education readers, and publicity on important festivals (see Photo 5- Publicity board made with support from the project). The project has also worked in the community through the intervention of local NGOs, easing the conflict between the reserve and the community and guiding the fishermen to change their livelihoods and to understand and cooperate with the ecological restoration work carried out by the nature reserve. (see Photo 4- Graffiti made by the subcontractor at the local elementary school).

Impressive ecological restoration work done by the MPAs. To make preparation for the re-introduction of Dugong from Malaysia, Guangxi Hepu Dugong NNR has made some impressive efforts, including the restoration of seagrass beds, mangroves, and coral reefs (see Photo 6: Mangrove Restoration). The NNR has invested a large amount of energy in seagrass and coral reef farming and is determined to restore coastal ecosystems. In Yong'an and Beijie villages in Shankou town, Guangxi Autonomous Region, there were 415 families benefiting from sustainable livelihoods by renting their aquaculture ponds (906 mu in total) to Shankou Mangrove NNR for ecological restoration.

List of stakeholders that the TE team interviewed and contacted in Qinzhou-Beihai coastal waters

Qinzhou-Beihai coastal waters	
Government agencies	Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Forestry Bureau
	Beihai Forestry Bureau
	Beihai Municipal People's Procuratorate
	Qinzhou Forestry Bureau
	Qinzhou Agriculture and Rural Affairs Bureau
	Hepu County Public Security Bureau
	Rhinoceros Foot Township People's Government
	Rhinoceros Foot Town Market Supervision and Administration
	Fisheries and Fishing Harbor Supervision and Management Detachment Xiniujiao Brigade
	Qinzhou Sanniang Bay Tourism Management Zone Management Committee
Nature reserves	Guangxi Hepu Dugong NNR
	Shankou Mangrove NNR, Guangxi
Subcontractors	Beibu Gulf University-Guangxi Academy of Sciences
	Guangxi Biodiversity Research and Conservation Association
	Yijie Technology

	Guangxi Academy of Sciences
Communities	Sanniang Bay Community
	Shangxin village, Shatian Town
Other stakeholders	Sanniang Bay Primary School
	Sanniang Bay Tourism Co.
	Guanglv Dolphin Bay Tourism Investment Co.

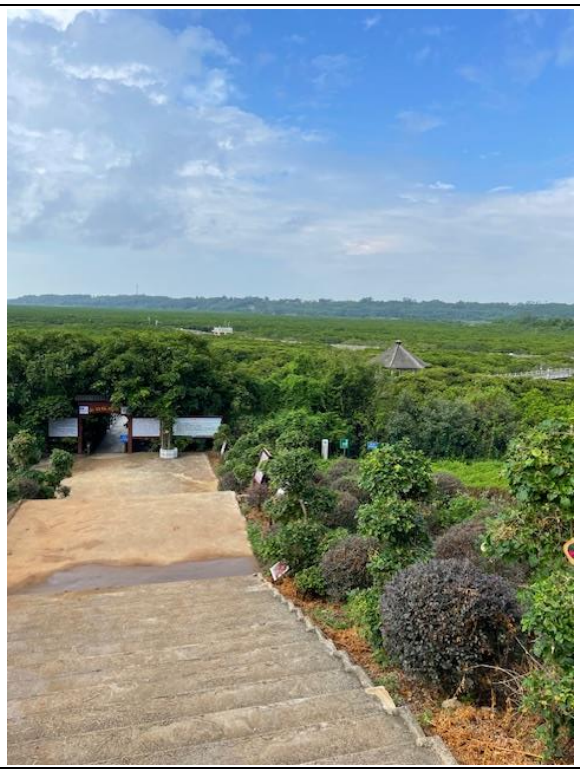

Photo 3: Shankou Mangrove NNR, Guangxi

Photo 4: Outdoor mural painted by a project subcontractor at the local elementary school

Photo 5: Publicity board made with support from the project

Photo 6: Mangrove and seagrass restoration area, Dugong NNR

Conclusions

The TE team found from the TE mission that: 1) Chinese governmental units at all levels have made marine ecological protection a priority and have invested large sums of money in protection and restoration work, as evidenced by such initiatives as territorial spatial planning, the delineation of ecological red lines, and the integration and optimization of natural PAs, which have been carried out in recent years; 2) Before the project started, a platform for Chinese White Dolphin conservation and communication among provinces along the southeast coast of China had already been established, and the implementation of the project, especially the establishment of the CBPs in the three provinces of the project, has deepened the communication and information sharing of this platform. The three provinces have expressed concern about the sustainability of the platform after the end of the project, and there is an urgent need for a higher-level government agency to take the lead in ensuring its sustainability; 3) All project implementation units recognized the importance of the project and considered it a valuable opportunity to share experiences and exchange ideas with other PAs in China. The MPAs also valued the involvement of NGOs in the community to alleviate conflicts between the MPAs and the local community and to raise awareness about the conservation of marine ecology; 4) Although the MPAs engaged various universities and research institutes to conduct investigations and monitoring on CWD, there still lacked shared information on the CWD population and monitoring data. The MARA formulated the Chinese White Dolphin Conservation Action Plan (2017–2026). In April 2014, four CWD NRs established the CWD Conservation Alliance. Despite these efforts, better information sharing on CWDs will contribute to the conservation of CWDs in Southeast China.

Annex 6: Matrix of Rating Achievement of Project Objective and Outcomes

Indicator	Baseline	End of Project target	Self-assessment (PIR 2023)	TE Comments
Objective: To conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity in South-East (SE) China through integrated seascape planning and threat management, MPA network expansion and strengthened MPA operations				
Indicator 1: Area of coastal and marine ESAs under improved management or conservation status # direct project beneficiaries (disaggregated by gender) Total of: 50% of the population in target villages near project MPAs (Sanniangwan and Shanliao) People receiving targeted training (including MPA and MPA system staff)	b) and b) = 0	c) 3,500 people benefiting directly from project (50% female) d) 750 people have received training (C-PAR Program target for C-PAR4) (35% female)	a) 2600 people benefiting directly from project during the reporting period (52% female). b) 1076 people have received targeted training (46% female).	a) 40,093 people benefiting directly from project during the reporting period (60% female). b) 1,555 people have received targeted training (51% female). Source: Self-assessment report Following is the definition of direct project beneficiaries in the project document: firstly, the government agency and MPA staff from the pilot areas who improve their knowledge and skills on ecosystem-based management of MPAs through the project's capacity building programme, as well as those who enroll in the proposed e-learning modules – 750 trainees (target of 35% female); and secondly, local community members who benefit from improved livelihoods arising from the wise stewardship and sustainable use of marine resources – 3,500 (target of 50% female). These community members will be from the Qinzhou-Beihai pilot area under Component 2 for community based natural resource management, including support for sustainable livelihoods. Based on this definition, the total number of direct project beneficiaries should be the sum of people received training, which is indicator 1b), and people benefit from improved livelihoods, which is calculated under indicator 9c). The design of these indicators divided one information into two different sections and misled the project team. The reported number 40,093 mostly contain people involved in awareness raising activities. The RTA clarified during interview that there had been clearer design of project beneficiaries for the GEF 7 and 8 project for the project team to better capture and calculate. It could have helped if there was clearer guidance provided on calculation of these figures.
Indicator 2: MPA network in SE China expanded by 40,000ha (including ESAs)	0 ha (baseline year is 2016)	40,000ha of new MPAs / ESAs gazetted	16,544.56 ha of new MPAs/ESAs issued officially by 2023 Q2.	132,850.29 ha in MPA expansion based on preliminary results of integration and optimization of natural PAs. Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews The project team provided following table in its self-assessment report. Through the field mission, these figures were validated and cross-checked. After the field mission, the project team provided a spreadsheet of more detailed information including number and area of MPAs in the three project provinces before and after the integration and optimization of natural PAs. Currently these technical reports are technically clear and are pending approval.

<table>
<tr><th>Indicator</th><th>Baseline</th><th>End of Project target</th><th>Self-assessment (PIR 2023)</th><th>TE Comments</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>
<table>
<tr><th>Provinces</th><th>Areas before (ha)</th><th>Areas after (ha)</th><th>Change in area (ha)</th></tr>
<tr><td>Fujian</td><td>96,966.63</td><td>109,988.56</td><td>13,021.93</td></tr>
<tr><td>Guangdong</td><td>467,880.29</td><td>581,377.28</td><td>113,496.99</td></tr>
<tr><td>Guangxi</td><td>46,916.02</td><td>53,247.39</td><td>6,331.37</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total</td><td></td><td></td><td>132850.29</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Indicator 3: Population size of Chinese white dolphin as indicator of globally significant biodiversity in the pilot areas
a) BQCW: Behai-Qinzhou Coastal Waters
b) ZJCW: Zhuhai-Jiangmen Coastal Waters
c) XBCW = Xiamen Bay Coastal Waters</td><td>a) BQCW: >=230 individuals
b) ZJCW: close to 2000 individuals
c) XBCW: 60-76 individuals</td><td>a) - c) Stable or improved from baseline</td><td>a) BQCW: 272
b) ZJCW: more than 2000 individuals
c) XBCW: 60-76 individuals</td><td>a) BQCW: 272, improved from baseline
b) ZJCW: about 2,500 individuals, improved from baseline
c) XBCW: about 80 individuals, improved from baseline

Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews
The project team and nature reserves commissioned universities and research institutes to help conduct such survey. The project team only saw the report for the CWD populations in the Behai-Qinzhou Coastal Waters supported by the project. The project provided lots of other supporting documents including public release on official website, television coverage, promotional videos, special edition of journal, etc.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Outcome 1: Expanded and strengthened MPA network with biodiversity mainstreamed into marine spatial planning</td></tr>
<tr><td>Indicator 4: Established collaborative governance and planning mechanism for MPAs in the context of wider seascapes</td><td>No framework exists for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation from MPAs into wider seascapes</td><td>3 CBPs implementing CBAPs across pilot areas, with at least annual meetings held

Up-scaling mechanism agreed by NFGA</td><td>3 CBPs established and meetings held.</td><td>3 CBPs established, CBAPs developed and under implementation, and annual meetings held
Up-scaling mechanism not in place and not agreed by NFGA

Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews
The project team commissioned three subcontractors for establishment of the three CBPs. The CBPs were established by joint releasing of CBP initiatives. CBAPs were also developed with general action plans identified. Currently the three subcontractors are undertaking their responsibilities based on their contract and they also expressed concern for sustainability of the CBP after project closure. There has not been an up-scaling mechanism yet and this requires mandate from higher level authority.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Indicator 5: Extent of rules, regulations and management measures for MPAs/ESAs and mainstreaming in marine spatial planning.
a) New/improved provincial Rules, regulations and management measures e.g. for</td><td>0</td><td>a) At least 2 improved/new provincial rules, regulations, management measures

b) At least 2 new local rules, regulations, management measures</td><td>The project engaged a legal expert instead of MPA legal and institutional task force
a) 1
Fujian: Measures for the Administration of the National Nature Reserve of The Rare Marine Species of Xiamen; Project intervention</td><td>a) 8
Fujian:
Notice on Strengthening the Construction and Management of Nature Reserves (Co-financing supported)
Notice on Further Strengthening the Comprehensive Management and disposal of Sea Debris/Garbage (Co-financing supported)</td></tr>
</table>

Indicator	Baseline	End of Project target	Self-assessment (PIR 2023)	TE Comments
transboundary (provincial/municipal) design of MPAs b) new/improved local rules, regulations and management measures for sustainable MPA management and eco-compensation			Guangdong: Guangdong Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR Administration Base Safety Emergency Plan (Trial)"; "Guangdong Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR Administration Ship Safety Emergency Plan (trial)" "Guangdong Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR Administration Anti-Typhoon Emergency Plan (Trial) b) 4 Fujian: The first draft of regulation on Ecological Protection Compensation Financing Mechanism of Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve	Fujian Province Nature Reserve Identification Standards (Trial) (Co-financing supported) **Guangdong:** Measures on Economic Penalties for Damaging the Ecological Environment in Guangdong Province (Trial) (Co-financing supported) Notice on the Clarification of Relevant Matters of Guangdong National Park Construction Leading Group (Co-financing supported) **Guangxi:** Measures for the Administration of Marine Ecological Compensation in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (Co-financing supported) Notice on the Implementation Opinions on Further Strengthening Biodiversity Protection (Co-financing supported) Notice on Joint Working Mechanism for Comprehensive Law Enforcement of Ecological and Environmental Protection in Guangxi Natural Protected Areas (Co-financing supported) b) 5 Management Measures for Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve (project supported, pending approval from Municipal Government) Management Measures for Ecological Protection Compensation Financing Mechanism of Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve (project supported, developed and submitted for review) Law Enforcement Manual for Xiamen Rare Marine Species National Nature Reserve (project supported, developed and submitted for review) Management Regulations for Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR (co-financing supported, pending approval) Management Measures for Jiangmen CWD PNR (co-financing supported) Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews The project reported many rules, regulations and notices under this indicator in its self-assessment report. The TE team advised the project team to only report on those that the project was involved in (including through co-financing). Some of the reported notices, plans do not seem to align with the focus of this indicator, i.e., mainstreaming biodiversity in marine spatial planning and are therefore not included in the report.
Indicator 6: Financial sustainability and resourcing for MPAs: a) amount of financing from new eco-compensation mechanism (diverse sources including governmental, private sector etc.); and b) improved	*a) $0 for eco-compensation* *b)* *FSS Comp. 1: (41) 43%* *FSS Comp. 2: (21) 36%* *FSS Comp. 3: (9) 13%*	*a) $200,000 per year delivered for eco-compensation* *b) 30% increase in total FSS score*	a) Over $200,000 has been delivered for eco-compensation; $328,571 (2.3 million yuan) of 2022 Central Finance Forestry Reform and Development Fund for Dugong NNR targeting at seagrass bed restoration and seagrass seedling breeding	a) Over $972,000 per year delivered for eco-compensation A total of 34.05 million RMB (approx. $4.86 million) were reported, and that is more than $972,000 per year over the 5-year project duration. 0.5 million RMB for Sun Yatsen University, one of project subcontractors, in Qi'ao Mangrove PNR in Zhuhai in 2022;

Indicator	Baseline	End of Project target	Self-assessment (PIR 2023)	TE Comments
financial sustainability as measured by the Financial Sustainability scorecard (FSS) - see **Annex B**) **FSS Components:** 7. Legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks 8. Business planning and tools for cost-effective management 9. Tools for revenue generation (average of the three pilot areas)	***Total (71) 32%*** * ** Average of the three pilot areas*		b) Increase of 9 from baseline (12.7% increase): Midterm achieved: FSS Comp. 1: (48) 51% FSS Comp. 2: (22) 37% FSS Comp. 3: (10) 14% Total (80) 36%	1.7 million RMB for China National Nuclear Corporation to supported construction of a science hall at Shankou Mangrove NNR in 2020 and 2021; 2.3 million RMB of 2022 Central Finance Forestry Reform and Development Fund for Dugong NNR targeting at seagrass bed restoration and seagrass seedling breeding; 5 million RMB for Shankou Mangrove NNR from wetland subsidy funds for mangrove conservation in 2019; 16.55 million RMB for implementation of wetland ecological benefit compensation project in Shankou Mangrove NNR in 2022 (received in two batches); 8 million RMB for implementation of wetland ecological benefit compensation project in Shankou Mangrove NNR in 2023; In addition, the project MPAs also benefited from contributions from local enterprises, for example the State Pipe Network Group, and Beihai Refining & Chemical Company through value-added release in The Guangxi Beihai at least once a year. b) 55% increase in total FSS score Increase of 39 from baseline (55% increase) FSS Comp. 1: (58) 61% FSS Comp. 2: (30) 51% FSS Comp. 3: (22) 31% Total (110) 49% Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews This indicates that through implementation of the project, the financial sustainability of three the three pilot areas have improved substantially and the end-of-project target has almost been double achieved. The large investment in eco-compensation greatly supports the increase in the FSS.
Outcome 2: Improved management effectiveness of MPA/ESAs in the project pilot areas				
Indicator 7: Capacity of MPA agencies in pilot areas, as measured by Capacity Development Scorecard.	a) Beihai = 56% b) Qinzhou = 53% c) Zhuhai = 64% d) Jiangmen= 54% e) Xiamen = 66%	a) Behai = 80% b) Qinzhou = 76% c) Zhuhai = 84% d) Jiangmen = 77% e) Xiamen = 89%	No statistics for this reporting period Midterm target level: a) Beihai =69% b) Qinzhou =65% c) Zhuhai =75% d)Jiangmen =67% e) Xiamen =78%	End-of-project target achieved and surpassed. a) Beihai 83% b) Qinzhou 79% c) Zhuhai 92% d) Jiangmen 82% e) Xiamen 90% Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews

Indicator	Baseline	End of Project target	Self-assessment (PIR 2023)	TE Comments
				The project commissioned a professional expert to guide the monitoring of the Capacity Development Scorecard, thus maintained the consistency and rationalization of scores given. Improvement in capacity of the five agencies also benefited from the training courses organized by the project.
Indicator 8: Management effectiveness of target MPAs of global significance, indicated by the percentage increase in the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores.	b) Shankou Mangrove NNR = 56.67% c) Dugong NNR = 53.33% d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 63.33% e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 61.11% f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 67.78%	b) Shankou Mangrove NNR = 70% c) Dugong NNR = 70% d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 70% e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 70% f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 70%	The project has removed the end target of 8a) according to the recommendations of MTR expert. And the changes have been submitted to RTA for approval. Mid-Term level b) Shankhou Mangrove NNR = 65.66% c) Dugong NNR = 62.63% d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR = 67.68% e) Jiangmen CWD PNR = 66.67% f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR = 69.70% The data will be updated before TE.	End-of-project target achieved and surpassed. b) Shankou Mangrove NNR =77.78% c) Dugong NNR =73.74% d) Pearl River Estuary CWD NNR =73.74% e) Jiangmen CWD PNR =74.75% f) Xiamen Marine Rare Species NNR =73.74% Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews Following the MTR recommendations, the project removed the end target of 8a). During the field mission, the TE team received feedback on the METT training from project NRs and the training was well received and useful for them.
Indicator 9: Extent of community engagement in MPA conservation: a) # citizens (disaggregated by gender) participating in actions for MPAs (volunteer marine debris cleans, marine debris surveys, CWD sightings reports by smartphones), voluntary MPA rangers etc.). b) # eco-labelled tourism operations (boat operators, tour guides, restaurants, shell-fishers etc.) - mainly Behai-Qinzhou c) # of people (gender disaggregated) benefiting from enhanced and more sustainable livelihoods as a result of project activities for MPAs	a) 0 b) 0 c) 0	a) 4 citizen participatory action programmes (1000 participants, 50% women) b) 10 businesses eco-labelled c) 30 (at least 50% women)	a) 3 citizen participatory action programmes (1254 participants, more than 60% women) . CWD sightings reports by smartphones . Marine debris surveys . Volunteer marine debris cleaning b) 6 businesses will be eco-labelled . the first six eco-labelled guesthouses . a preliminary plan for community sustainable fishery advocacy developed c) 31 people in Qinzhou and 415 families in Beihai (at least 50% women) *415 families benefiting from sustainable livelihoods by renting their aquaculture ponds (906 mu in total) to Shankou Mangrove NNR for ecological restoration *31 participants attended Chinese White Dolphin Conservation and Sustainable Dolphin-watching Tourism Development Training	a) 4 citizen participatory action programmes (1599 participants, 59.5% women) b) 12 businesses eco-labelled c) 31 people in Qinzhou and 415 families in Beihai (at least 50% women) Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews The citizen participatory action programmes consisted of four categories including CWD sighting by smartphone, marine debris surveys, volunteer marine debris cleaning and ocean friendly action advocacy. The TE team witnessed the eco-labeling certification awarding ceremony. The first batch of businesses most include homestay and catering practitioners. 31 people benefited from training on sustainable CWD-watching tourism development and 415 families benefited from sustainable livelihoods by renting their aquaculture ponds (906 mu in total) to Shankou Mangrove NNR for ecological restoration.
Indicator 10: Reduction in key threats to biodiversity in pilot areas:	a) # of CWD and other cetaceans found dead with external injuries due to human activities	a) 10% reduction b) 10% reduction	a) 31.8% decrease from 22 to 15 in total compare with baseline BQCW: 6 ZJCW: 9	a) 100% decrease from 22 to 0 BQCW: 0 ZJCW: 0 XBCW: 0

<table>
<tr><th>Indicator</th><th>Baseline</th><th>End of Project target</th><th>Self-assessment (PIR 2023)</th><th>TE Comments</th></tr>
<tr><td>d) # CWD and other cetaceans found dead with external injuries due to human activities
e) # incidents of illegal fishing* in target MPAs
f) Weight of debris/litter collected during volunteer beach cleans
* Measured separately for shell-fishing/mud digging in BQCW</td><td>BQCW: 7
ZJCW: 12
XBCW: 3
(average 2012-16)
b) # incidents of illegal fishing in target MPAs
BQCW: 21*
ZJCW: N/A
XBCW: 16
* Illegal fishing:6
*Shell-fishing/Mud digging:15
c) Weight of debris/litter collected during volunteer beach cleans
BQCW: 237.86kg
ZJCW: 203.02kg
XBCW: 154.53kg</td><td>c) 10% reduction</td><td>XBCW: 0
b)
BQCW: 10
* Illegal fishing:9
* Shell-fishing/Mud digging:1
ZJCW: 1
XBCW: 0
c) 62% decrease from 595.41kg to 223.944 kg.
BQCW: 103,944kg
XBCW: 120kg</td><td>Reporting period: July 2023 – June 2024
b) 38% decrease from 58 to 36
BQCW: 18*
ZJCW: 0
XBCW: 0
*Shell-fishing:15
* Mud digging:3
Reporting period: July 2023 – June 2024
c)
Reductions in the amount of waste collected in the beach clean-ups compared to baseline ranged from 17.43% in Yutang Bay, Chixi Town, Taishan, Guangdong to 68.72% in Houtian, Tong'an, Xiamen, Fujian.

Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews
Through the project interventions, threats to biodiversity in pilot areas reduced significantly. This benefited from the project's effort in the beach cleaning activities and the also from the enhanced joint law enforcement among different government sectors.</td></tr>
<tr><td><u>Indicator 11</u>: Level of understanding on value of MPAs among public and decision makers, as measured by KAP (Knowledge Attitudes and Practices) survey score.</td><td>a) BQCW: X
b) ZJCW: X
c) XBCW: X
Baseline to be completed in Year 1 (gender disaggregated)</td><td>15% improvement</td><td>Baseline survey completed by the team of Prof. Wang Libin from university of Agriculture, and final survey expected by the first half of 2024.

<table><tr><th></th><th>Full scores</th><th>Scores attained</th><th>Male scores</th><th>Female scores</th></tr><tr><td>BQCW</td><td>332</td><td>207.5</td><td>213.8</td><td>196.3</td></tr><tr><td>ZJCW</td><td>332</td><td>215.7</td><td>217.2</td><td>211.9</td></tr><tr><td>XBCW</td><td>332</td><td>206.7</td><td>203.6</td><td>211.4</td></tr></table></td><td>a) BQCW: 16% increase from baseline
b) ZJCW: 16% increase from baseline
c) XBCW: 17% increase from baseline

<table><tr><th></th><th colspan="3">Baseline survey</th><th colspan="3">Final survey</th><th colspan="3">Targets</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>Totals</th><th>Male</th><th>Female</th><th>Totals</th><th>Male</th><th>Female</th><th>Totals</th><th>Male</th><th>Female</th></tr><tr><td>Guangxi</td><td>62%</td><td>64%</td><td>59%</td><td>78%</td><td>80%</td><td>76%</td><td>77%</td><td>79%</td><td>74%</td></tr><tr><td>Guangdong</td><td>65%</td><td>65%</td><td>64%</td><td>81%</td><td>82%</td><td>80%</td><td>80%</td><td>80%</td><td>79%</td></tr><tr><td>Fujian</td><td>62%</td><td>61%</td><td>64%</td><td>79%</td><td>78%</td><td>79%</td><td>77%</td><td>76%</td><td>79%</td></tr></table>Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews
The 15% improvement has been realized in accordance with the final survey report prepared by the University of Agriculture dated March 2024, showing a more than 15% increase from the baseline, both in terms of the total KAP scores and the scores by gender. This represents that the target group's scores on knowledge, attitude and practice of marine biodiversity conservation have improved significantly, the frequency of receiving information related to marine biodiversity conservation has increased steadily, and the interest in receiving information has increased significantly. Overall, the publicity and</td></tr>
</table>

Indicator	Baseline	End of Project target	Self-assessment (PIR 2023)	TE Comments
				communication efforts of the project for the target group is effective. To note, in the final survey report, the team used the term "three provinces" to refer to the three coastal waters.
Outcome 3: MPA network functioning for improved data and knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation				
Indicator 12: Operational MPA Network for SE China established for improved data collection, sharing of knowledge and information and best practices for integrated MPA seascape planning and threat management.	Does not exist	10 members Network operational and with dedicated resources for operation Operationalized information and knowledge management and sharing system linking different MPAs Working groups on: CWD, habitats and species monitoring	More than 10 members with 5 demo Pas as founding members Institutional arrangements made with the director of AIP serving as the secretariat of MPA Network	10 members with 5 demo MPAs and AFIP as founding members Network operational with AFIP as the secretariat of the MPA network. Charter and working mechanism of the network was formed and several activities conducted. The network serves as an information and knowledge management and sharing mechanism at project currently and plans to extend to other MPAs in China. No working groups established. Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews The MPA network for SE China has been officially established, and the first six members, including five demonstration MPAs and AFIP, were awarded at the fifth PSC meeting. During the project period, the Third Institute of Oceanography will continue to support the network. After project closure, AFIP, as the secretariat of the MPA network, will take over. The network has developed an action plan for 2024-2028, in which four priorities were identified for the network.
Indicator 13: Number of key project lessons and strategies for sustainable coastal management documented, disseminated and adopted at local, provincial and national levels.	Baseline (2017): 0	All project results and lessons learned shared through MPA Network website and media (30% female participants); lessons learned presented to MPA administration and Municipal authorities for adoption in coastal zone planning processes	The key project lessons and strategies shared through MPA Network website and media (more than 30% female participants). *20 training modules and courses in four categories, and 500 learning accounts have been provided *Geographic Information System (GIS)-based network information system and knowledge management platform based on the marine reserve network *Third Institute of Oceanography of the Ministry of Natural Resources compiled the Technical Guide for Cetaceans and Sea Turtles Rescue and the Guide for Chinese White Dolphins Monitoring	Project results and lessons learned effectively shared through media and the official WeChat accounts of NGFA and AFIP; Lessons learned presented to MPA administration and municipal authorities and adopted. Source: Self-assessment report, desk review, interviews The project has developed a GIS-based knowledge and information sharing platform for MPAs in SE China under the current framework of NFGA. The five project MPAs were included in the platform. Thus, ensuring the sustainability of the platform after project closure. The project did a good job on communications, actively disseminating information, posting updates and promoting recognition of the project's activities. Technical Guide for Cetaceans and Sea Turtles Rescue and the Guide for Chinese White Dolphins Monitoring was developed and published with support from this project.

Annex 7: Cofinancing Table

Co-financing source	Type	GEF Agency		Recipient Government		Civil Society Organization		Private Sector		Other		Total Cofinancing	
		Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
GEF Agency:													
United Nations Development Programme	Grant	150,000	150,000									150,000	150,000
		150,000	**150,000**									**150,000**	**150,000**
Recipient Country Government													
NFGA	Grant			0	194,938							0	194,938
	In-kind			0	110,604							0	110,604
Oceanic Bureau of Qinzhou	Grant			7,409,304	7,384,609							7,409,304	7,384,609
	In-kind			271,072	1,099,025							271,072	1,099,025
Oceanic Bureau of Beihai	Grant			7,002,696	11,842,289							7,002,696	11,842,289
	In-kind			225,893	128,185							225,893	128,185
Oceanic Bureau of Guangdong (Zhuhai and Jiangmen)	Grant			4,367,273	4,999,087							4,367,273	4,999,087
	In-kind			376,489	435,409							376,489	435,409
Oceanic Bureau of Xiamen	Grant			2,409,530	2,877,240							2,409,530	2,877,240
	In-kind			150,595	190,469							150,595	190,469
Sub-total, Recipient Country Government				**22,212,852**	**29,261,855**							**22,212,852**	**29,261,855**
Civil Society Organization													
SEE Foundation						0	20,738					0	20,738
China Environmental Protection Foundation						0	69,128					0	69,128
Beijing Office of Oxfam-Hong Kong						0	20,738					0	20,738
Sub-total, Civil Society Organization						**0**	**110,604**					**0**	**110,604**
Private Sector													
N/A								0	0			0	0
Sub-total, Private Sector								**0**	**0**			**0**	**0**
Other													
N/A										0	0	0	0
Sub-total, Other										**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Total cofinancing for project implementation:		**150,000**	**150,000**	**22,212,852**	**29,261,855**	**0**	**110,604**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**22,362,852**	**29,522,459**
All figures in United States dollars (USD)													

Additional details provided by the PMO on materialized co-financing.

Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement / Approval	Investment co-financing as of June 30, 2024	Description
NFGA	Grants	N/A	194,938	Provide $67,745 for co-financing fund, 2019; Provide $58,067 for co-financing fund, 2020; Provide $13,825 for co-financing fund, 2021; Provide $20,738 for co-financing fund, 2022; Provide $20,738 for co-financing fund, 2023; Provide $13,825 for co-financing fund, 2024;
	in-kind	N/A	110,604	Venue: 3 offices, $82,953, 2019-2024; Conference room, $13,825, 2019-2024; Personnel Support: AFIP Specialist, S&T Division, Finance Division manpower support $12,443, 2019-2024; Catering support: $1383, 2019-2024;
UNDP	Grants	150,000	150,000	UNDP Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement / Approval in PIMS
Oceanic Bureau of Qinzhou	in-kind	271,072	1,099,025	Qinzhou Chinese White Dolphin Management Office- The Fishery resources enhancement and release project, 2020; Qinzhou Chinese White Dolphin Management Office- Law enforcement equipment construction project, 2020; Guangxi Maowei Sea Mangrove PNR- The Fishery resources enhancement and release project, 2020-2021; Guangxi Maowei Sea Mangrove PNR- Law enforcement equipment construction project, 2020-2021; Qinzhou mangrove protection and restoration special action plan, 2020-2025
	Grants	7,409,304	7,384,609	The Peacock Bay and Deer Earring River waters' 'Blue Bay Remediation Initiative' project till the end of 2021. Qinzhou Blue Bay Renovation Action, 2022;
Oceanic Bureau of Beihai	in-kind	225,893	128,185	Guangxi Hepu Dugong NNR- The administration, management and operational security, 2019; Guangxi Shankou Mangrove NNR- The construction of the management and care housing, 2021.
	Grants	7,002,696	11,842,289	Operational work projects, administration and operation security and project staff funding, 2020; Law enforcement and monitoring work, 2020- 2021; Black-faced Spoonbill, Spoonbill Sandpiper and other rare and key protected birds habitat modification and population monitoring project, 2021; Beihai Coastal Wetland Ecological Protection and Restoration Project, 2023; Guangxi Shankou Mangrove Reserve- Mission and Education, 2019-2021; Central Forestry Reform and Development Fund Wetland Subsidy 2019-2020; Guangxi Shankou Mangrove Reserve- Mangrove afforestation and restoration, 2022-2023； Guangxi Shankou Mangrove Ecological NNR- Central Forestry and Grassland Ecological Protection and Restoration Funds for Wetland Protection Project, 2024; Guangxi Shankou Mangrove Ecological NNR- Germplasm Resource Census, Collection and Utilization Project, 2024; Hepu Dugong NNR- Chinese White Dolphin and other key protected species resource survey, 2020, 2021; Guangxi Hepu Dugong NNR Management Center- Maintenance and reinforcement of sea animals' temporary and medical pools, 2021; Guangxi Hepu Dugong NNR- Optimization and Integration Program Preparation, 2020-2022; Guangxi Hepu Dugong NNR- Central Finance Forestry Reform and Development Fund - Wetland Protection and Restoration Project (Wetland Vegetation Restoration and Species Resource Monitoring and Investigation)， 2022-2023； Guangxi Hepu Dugong NNR- Beihai Coastal Wetland Ecological Protection and Restoration Project - Patrol System Construction, 2023;

Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement / Approval	Investment co-financing as of June 30, 2024	Description
Oceanic Bureau of Guangdong (Zhuhai and Jiangmen)	in-kind	376,489	435,409	Pearl River Estuary NNR- Jiangmen PNR & Zhuhai Qi'ao - Dangan Island NR-Vectorised map production and boundary survey, 2019; Pearl River Estuary NNR- Management and Protection, 2020.
	Grants	4,367,273	4,999,087	MPA management for Pearl River &Jiangmen NRs, 2020; Guangdong Province-Protection of Mangrove Resources, 2023; Construction of Chinese White Dolphin Rescue and Protection Base, infrastructure improvements and testing system upgrades for Jiangmen PNR, 2020; The Pearl River Estuary NNR- Construction of a science popularization system, 2021; The Pearl River Estuary NNR- Science popularization capacity enhancement, 2024; The Pearl River Estuary NNR- Construction of White Dolphin Rescue and Conservation Base and Comprehensive Management, 2023-2024; The Pearl River Estuary NNR- Real-time monitoring of coupled environment of Chinese white dolphin and habitat in the national important wetland of Chinese white dolphin in Guangdong Province, 2024; Qi'ao Dangan Island PNR- Demonstration of science popularization education, maintenance of patrolling stacks, demonstration of electronic fence construction (Phase I) and integrated management and protection of mangrove resources, 2023;
Oceanic Bureau of Xiamen	in-kind	150,595	190,469	Communal expenses, 2020
	Grants	2,409,530	2,877,240	Monitoring and surveillance system of Xiamen Nature Reserve and ecological enhancement of Mount Riding Horse, 2021; Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR- Nature reserve construction and management, 2021; Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR- public funding, 2021; Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR- development and construction of protected areas, 2023; Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR- Nature reserve construction and management, 2024; Xiamen Rare Marine Species NNR- Nature Reserve Supervision and Ecological Enhancement, 2024;
SEE Foundation	Grants	N/A	20,738	Sanniang Bay Chinese White Dolphin Dolphin Watching Tourism Science Base Construction, 2024
China Environmental Protection Foundation CEPF	Grants	N/A	69,128	Demonstration of Artistic Interventions for Sustainable Livelihood Alternatives and Practices in Protected Communities, 2022
Beijing Office, Oxfam-Hong-Kong	Grants	N/A	20,738	Implementation of Sanniang Bay community sustainable development component in the project of exploring sustainable development model of the Southwest Guangxi Karst Community Protected Area, including community nature education and capacity building work, 2022-2024
Total		22,362,852	29,522,459	132.02% of Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement / Approval has been achieved

Annex 8: Rating scales

Monitoring & evaluation rating scale:

Rating	Description
6 = Highly satisfactory (HS)	There were no short comings; quality of M&E design/implementation exceeded expectations
5 = Satisfactory (S)	There were minor shortcomings; quality of M&E design/implementation met expectations
4 = Moderately satisfactory (MS)	There were moderate shortcomings; quality of M&E design/implementation more or less met expectations
3 = Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)	There were significant shortcomings; quality of M&E design/implementation was somewhat lower than expected
2 = Unsatisfactory (U)	There were major shortcomings; quality of M&E design/implementation was substantially lower than expected
1 = Highly unsatisfactory (HU)	There were severe shortcomings in M&E design/implementation
Unable to assess (UA)	The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of M&E design/implementation

Implementation/oversight and execution rating scale:

Rating	Description
6 = Highly satisfactory (HS)	There were no shortcomings; quality of implementation/execution exceeded expectations
5 = Satisfactory (S)	There were no or minor shortcomings; quality of implementation/execution met expectations
4 = Moderately satisfactory (MS)	There were some shortcomings; quality of implementation/execution more or less met expectations
3 = Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)	There were significant shortcomings; quality of implementation/execution was somewhat lower than expected
2 = Unsatisfactory (U)	There were major shortcomings; quality of implementation/execution was substantially lower than expected
1 = Highly unsatisfactory (HU)	There were severe shortcomings in quality of implementation/execution
Unable to assess (UA)	The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of implementation and execution

Outcome rating scale: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency:

Rating	Description
6 = Highly satisfactory (HS)	Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no shortcomings
5 = Satisfactory (S)	Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor shortcomings
4 = Moderately satisfactory (MS)	Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings.
3 = Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)	Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings
2 = Unsatisfactory (U)	Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major shortcomings
1 = Highly unsatisfactory (HU)	Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe shortcomings
Unable to assess (UA)	The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of outcome achievements

Sustainability ratings scale:

Rating	Description
4 = Likely (L)	There are little or no risks to sustainability
3 = Moderately likely (ML)	There are moderate risks to sustainability
2 = Moderately unlikely (MU)	There are significant risks to sustainability
1 = Unlikely (U)	There are severe risks to sustainability
Unable to assess (UA)	Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability

Annex 9: Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement 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 and did not carry out the project's Mid-Term Review.

TE Consultant Agreement Form

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

Name of Consultants: James Lenoci, Wang Huali

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

Signatures:

26 August 2024	26 August 2024
	
James Lenoci, International Consultant / Team Leader	Wang Huali, National Consultant

Annex 10: Signed TE Final Report Clearance Form

(The signed TE Final Report Clearance Form will be uploaded on ERC separately)

Terminal Evaluation Report for (Project Title: Strengthening Marine Protected Areas in SE China to conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity& UNDP PIMS ID 5379) Reviewed and Cleared By:	
UNDP Country Office, Commissioning Unit (M&E Focal Point)	
Name:	
Signature:	Date:
UNDP GEF Regional Technical Advisor	
Name:	
Signature:	Date:

Annex 11: Terms of Reference for Terminal Evaluation