

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Final Evaluation of UNDP/GEF Biodiversity Management in Coastal Areas of China's South Sea (SCCBD)

1. Background

China is a “mega-biodiversity” country, having about one-tenth of the total number of species in the world. In terms of coastal and marine biodiversity, the highest levels are found in the tropics and sub-tropics along the South China Sea. However, China's coastal and marine biodiversity is under threat. For the past 15 years, the south-east of China has experienced unprecedented economic growth, social change and population growth. This continues today and is threatening the health of ecosystems which include a significant portion of the world's biodiversity.

Despite this rather bleak overall picture, the nature and intensity of threats are such that many sites that are borne to globally significant biodiversity are still in condition amenable to intervention to sustainably remove the threats. The UNDP/GEF Biodiversity Management in the Coastal Area of China's South Sea (SCCBD) seeks to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine biodiversity along China's South Sea coastline through innovative mechanism of demonstrations and cross-learning among multiple sites. The project will concentrate activities at four demonstration sites within five coastal provinces. The project has three immediate objectives: (i) Strengthen conservation and sustainable use management capacities at four existing Marine Protected Areas. (ii) Develop, test and demonstrate tools, instruments and approaches for addressing the root causes of critical threats to marine biodiversity in China's South Sea coastal areas, and (iii) Implement appropriate tools for conservation and sustainable use at the six sites and promote their broader adoption across China's South Sea coastal area.

Approved by the GEF Council in November, 2004 and signed in March, 2005, the SCCBD project was launched in November 2005. According to Project Document, SCCBD lasts for eight years, the first four years to be supported by GEF and the remaining four years to be completely financed by Government of China. In order to implement the project, State Oceanic Administration of China as the national implementing partner has created project implementation organizations at national and local levels to ensure achievement of the project results.

SCCBD is implemented in partnership with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the United States (NOAA) as well as Stora Enso who has contributed to marine environment monitoring and restoration of mangroves in coastal areas of project demonstration site in Guangxi. SCCBD was supported by ESRI and other private sector in terms of software and trainings to their application. Implemented through a total of 17 subcontracts, SCCBD has already awarded all subcontracts and a draft of the comprehensive project report detailing the status of marine biodiversity of all projects sites is completed.

2. Description of the Assignment

The purposes of the evaluation are 1) To review development and policy environment relating to coastal biodiversity conservation over the life of SCCBD, commenting on how these might have affected project performance and assess the extent to which the project remained relevant to the needs of its targets; 2) To perform final assessment of the extent to which SCCBD has successfully accomplished its objectives in terms of activities, outputs and outcomes as defined in the agreed Project Document (logic frame), and assess the likelihood of achieving them upon project completion in 2011; 3) identify implementing agency's institutional strengths and weaknesses; 4) To evaluate the impacts and sustainability of project outcomes.

3. Scope of Services

Under the supervision of UNDP CO in consultation with Implementing Partner of SCCBD, the final evaluation team will accomplish the following tasks:

1) **Project design and its relevance** in relation to:

- a) *Development priorities* at the national level;
- b) *Stakeholders* – assess if the specific needs were met;
- c) *Country ownership / drivenness* – participation and commitments of government, local authorities, public services, private sector and communities;

2) **Performance** - look at the progress that has been made by the project relative to the achievement of its objective and outcomes;

- a) *Effectiveness* - extent to which the project has achieved its objectives and the desired outcomes, and the overall contribution of the project to national strategic objectives;
- b) *Efficiency* - assess efficiency against overall impact of the project for better projection of achievements and benefits resulting from project resources, including an assessment of the different implementation modalities and the cost effectiveness of the utilisation of GEF resources and actual co-financing for the achievement of project results;
- c) *Timeliness* of results,

3) **Management arrangements** focused on project implementation:

- a) *General implementation and management* - evaluate the adequacy of the project, implementation structure, including the effectiveness of the National Steering Committee and partnership strategy and stakeholder involvement from the aspect of compliance to UNDP/GEF requirements and also from the perspective of “good practice model” that could be used for replication
- b) *Financial accountability* – extent to which the sound financial management has been an integral part of achieving project results, with particular reference to adequate reporting, identification of problems and adjustment of activities, budgets and inputs
- c) *Monitoring and evaluation on project level* – assess the adoption of the monitoring and evaluation system during the project implementation and for its sustainable development , focusing to relevance of the performance indicators, that are:
 - Timeliness and quality of inputs;
 - Timeliness and cost-effectiveness of activities undertaken;
 - Ability of the project to utilize efficiently the inputs available to it;

- Quality and quantity of outputs produced;
- Achievement of immediate objectives;
- Factors that have facilitated or deterred the achievement of project objectives.

3) Project impact

- To determine the extent to which the project objectives are expected to be achieved and what are the short-term and long-term impact of the project, including efficiency of the project, cost-effectiveness of the project, impact on MPA management in China, generation of income to local communities, replication and dissemination of project results within and outside project areas; awareness raised of marine biodiversity by the public and decision makers.

4) Replication

To analyze replication potential of the project best practices in country and in the region, and present recommendations and lessons of broader applicability for follow-up and future support of UNDP and/or the Government, highlighting the best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to the evaluation scope.

5) Sustainability of project outcomes

- To analyze the risks and assumptions that are likely to affect the persistence of the project outcomes, including financial resources, socio-political, institutional and environmental risks.

6) Recommendations and lessons learnt

- Success stories;
- Problems in project implementation;
- Lessons learnt;
- Recommendations.

4. The Requested Services and Activities

The team will use the information generated by SCCBD including baseline and information generated by the M&E framework, and seek the necessary contextual information to assess the significance and relevance of the results. Though SCCBD goes across Phase III and Phase IV of the GEF, the final evaluation will use the strategic priorities of biodiversity portfolio in GEF Phase III as benchmark for evaluation.

In order to carry out the evaluation tasks, the team will carry out the following activities during the assignment period:

- 1) Review of background material and preparation of a tentative evaluation plan to be agreed with UNDP CO and PCU of SOA;
- 2) Desk review of documents provided by UNDP CO attached to this TOR;
- 3) Interviews and discussions with relevant stakeholders including:
 - PCU of SOA;
 - UNDP CO;
 - NOAA (through email communications);

- Ministry of Finance;
- Private sector representatives including Stora Enso in Guangxi and ESRI in Beijing;
- Local Project Steering Committee members of the project sites;
- Local beneficiaries including representatives from the beneficiary MPAs in the project, Village Conservation Group in Guangxi, school teachers of Dongshan No.2 Middle School, fishermen in Guangdong and Fujian, township representative in Nanji;
- Subcontractors, including Guangxi Mangrove Center in Guangxi, Third Institute of Oceanography, second Institute of Oceanography, Institute of South China Sea of CAS, etc.

4) Field visits to the four selected demonstration sites. At least visits should be made to Shankou MPA, Sanya MPA, Nanji Island, and one site from Dongshan or Nan'ao.

5) Debriefing at the UNDP CO on the preliminary findings after the meetings and visits with participation of key stakeholders;

6) Preparation and finalisation of evaluation report by incorporating any additional comments from the UNDP CO and SOA.

5. Qualifications

The final evaluation team will consist of an international consultant and a national consultant. All the international and national consultants are expected to have Master's Degree on environmental science or related areas and at least five years of evaluation experiences. In addition, it is desired that the international and national consultants have as many as possible the following qualifications:

- 1) Project development, implementation and evaluation experience;
- 2) Familiarity with natural resources management in particular marine and coastal biodiversity policies;
- 3) Expertise in economic and social development issues;
- 4) Knowledgeable about the relevant policies of the GEF;
- 5) Good communications and writing skills in English;
- 6) Knowledge of MPA management, integrated coastal management, natural resources co-management, integrated planning, etc;
- 7) Knowledge of GEF projects and project requirements;
- 8) Professional experiences in working in China and with Chinese counterparts.

6. Outputs

The consultant team are expected to deliver the following outputs:

- 1) An evaluation report presenting evaluation results of the project and recommendations. The report should be submitted to UNDP CO and PCU/SOA within six weeks from the date when the consultants are contracted. The documents should be submitted in electronic format.
- 2) Presentation of findings to UNDP CO and SCCBD key stakeholders in a wrap-up meeting in UNDP CO.

The findings of the evaluation will be used by Ministry of Finance as the GEF Focal Point in China, SOA as the implementing partner and UNDP to conclude the project.

7. Duration of the Contracts

Three work weeks, including travel time required. The consultant will travel to Beijing, Beihai, Sanya, Nanji Island and Guangdong or Fujian. The consultant will meet with government officials, project participants, and other stakeholders in order to evaluate the project implementation and impact. The travel schedule and logistics will be developed by UNDP in consultation with PCU/SOA.

8. Payment Schedule

30% of the total amount due the consultant will be paid upon signature of the contract for mobilization. The remaining 70% is payable upon acceptance by UNDP of the evaluation report in its final form.

9. Start of the Assignment

As soon as possible

10. Documents to be provided to the consultants:

- Project brief
- Project document;
- Project implementation reports (PIRs);
- Comprehensive report of subcontracts (in Chinese).

11. Final Evaluation Report: Sample Outline

1. Executive summary

- Brief description of project;
- Context and purpose of the evaluation;
- Main conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned;

2. Introduction

- Purpose of the evaluation;
- Key issues addressed;
- Methodology of the evaluation;
- Structure of the evaluation.

3. The project and its development context

- Project start and its duration;
- Problems that the project seeks to address;
- Immediate and development objectives of the project;

- Main stakeholders;
- Results expected.

4. Findings and Conclusions

4.1 Project Formulation

- ✓ Implementation
- ✓ Stakeholder participation
- ✓ Replication approach
- ✓ Cost effectiveness
- ✓ Linkage of the project and other interventions within the sector
- ✓ Indicators

4.2. Project Implementation

- ✓ Delivery
- ✓ Financial management
- ✓ Monitoring and evaluation
- ✓ Execution and implementation modalities
- ✓ Management by UNDP and other partners
- ✓ Coordination and operational issues

4.3 Results to date

- ✓ Attainment of Objectives
- ✓ Sustainability
- ✓ Contribution to upgrading skills at National level

5.0 Lessons learned

6.0 Conclusions and recommendations, including overall rating of project implementation and the achievement of project outcomes and objective.

7.0 Evaluation report Annexes

- Evaluation TORs , Itinerary and list of persons interviewed
- Summary of field visits, including evaluators findings, issues raised and recommendations by different stakeholders
- List of documents reviewed
- Questionnaire used and summary of results if any
- Comments by stakeholders (only in case of discrepancies with evaluation findings and conclusions)