# GOVERNMENT OF CHINA, UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME / GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Wild Relatives of Crops

Mid-Term Evaluation Report August – September 2011







Report by: Sophie van der Meeren and Professor Wang Changyong

# Mid-Term Evaluation Report

August - September 2011

# Undertaken by Sophie van der Meeren and Professor Wang Changyong

Government of China United Nations Development Programme Global Environment Facility

Country:	PIMS Number	2277		
People's Republic of China	Atlas Project Number	00053198		
	Project Type	FSP x MSP EA		
Implementing Agency	Ministry of Agriculture			
GEF Focal Area	Biodiversity			
GEF Focal Area Strategic	SO-2: To Mainstream Biodiversity in Production			
Objective and Strategic	Landscapes/Seascapes and Sectors;			
Priority	SO-4: To build capacity on access and benefit sharing.			
GEF Operational Programme	OP 13: Conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity			
	important to agriculture.			
UNDAF Goal	More efficient management of natural resources and			
	development of environmentally friendly behaviour in order to			
	ensure environmental sustai	nability		
CPAP Output	National and local Biodive	ersity Action Plans updated and		
	mainstreamed into the national and local Five Year Plan (7.2)			
	Capacity of CSOs and communities to participate in biodiversity			
	conservation activities strengthened (7.3)			
	National co-ordination mechanism established (7.4)			

Project timeframe:	Project Budget:
Project Document Signature Date: 17/05/ 2007	Total budget: US\$20,898,000 of which:
Original Planned Closing Date: 16/06/2012	GEF funds US\$8,056,000
Current Planned Closing Date: 30/12/2013	UNDP funds US\$650,000
Planned Project Duration: 72 months	Ministry of Agriculture funds: US\$6,210,000
	Local Government funds: US\$6,210,000

# Acronyms and abbreviations used in the Report

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۵BS	Access and Renefit Sharing	
	Agricultural Environmental Monitoring Station	
APR	Annual Project Report	
AWP	Annual Work Plan	
BCAP	Biodiversity Conservation Action Plan	
BD2	GEE Strategic priority area 2 in the Biodiversity Focal Area	
CAAS	Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences	
CGRIS	Crop Germplasm Resources Information System	
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan (UNDP)	
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity	
CCA	Country Cooperation Agreement	
CEARD	Centre of Excellence in Agrobiodoversity Research and Development (CAAS-	
	IPGRI partnership Agency)	
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	
CO	Country Office	
<del>CoP</del> COP	Conference of the Parties	
CP	Country Programme (between UNDP and the Government of China)	
СТА	Chief Technical Officer	
CWRC	Conservation and Sustainable Utilisation of Wild Relatives of Crops project	
DoA	Department of Agriculture	
DoG	Departments of Local County/City Government	
ET	Evaluation team	
GEF	Global Environment Facility	
GoC	Government of County/City	
GM	Genetically modified or Genetic modification	
IR	Inception Report	
IAS	Invasive Alien Species	
IS	Introduced Species	
IW	Inception Workshop	
km	kilometre	
LF	logical framework	
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation	
MoA <u>MOA</u>	Ministry of Agriculture [Pls use MOA in all the text]	<b>Formatted:</b> Highlight
MoF <u>MOF</u>	Ministry of Forestryinance [PIs use MOA in all the text]	
MTA	Material Transfer Agreement	
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation	
NBSAP	China National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan	
NGO	Non-governmental organisation	
NPD	National Project Director	
	Project Implementation Review Pis use PiR in all the text	<b>Formatted:</b> Highlight
	Project Manager	
	Project Management Onice	
	Regional Coordination Onit (of ONDP/GEP)	
	State Environmental Distaction Agency/dministration	
SEPA	State Environmental Protection A <del>gency annustration</del>	
	State Forestry <u>Authinistration</u> <del>Actionally</del> Spacific Massurable, Achievable/Appropriate, Bealistic and Time bound	
	Terms of Reference	
TPP		
TTP	Terminal tri-nartite review	
	I Inited Nations Development Assistance Framework	
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme	
GINDI	Since reactions Development rogramme	

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Background

Evaluation and Rating of Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency

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Background Evaluation and Rating of Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency

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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- The Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Wild Relatives of Crops (CWRC) project was jointly funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture (MoAMOA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The project has a total budget of US\$20,692,000, of which, US\$8,056,000 are contributed by GEF.
- The project concept grew from <u>MoA's-MOA's</u> concern over the limitations of existing approaches to conserve wild relatives of crops and increasing recognition of the need to involve farmers in conservation activities instead of physically separating conservation from agricultural production.
- 3. The Project Document includes analysis of the main barriers to effective conservation of wild relatives of crops at project design. It highlights pressure to intensify productivity of scarce arable land as one of the root causes of species loss in China<sup>1</sup> with threats to wild species being exacerbated by the fact that they are often found in close proximity to land under agricultural production. Key threats identified in project design included: land conversion, eradication of wild crops as weeds within agricultural practice, intensification of land use and increased use of herbicides within agricultural systems, spread of invasive species, environmental pollutants, impact of genetically modified crops, new roads, mines, un-controlled grazing, pollution and desertification.
- 4. The underlying causes of these threats were identified to include a focus on short-term economic development measures by Provincial and County governments and the inherent conflict between agricultural production and biodiversity conservation objectives when land is taken out of production to support conservation; weak and ineffective legislation; a lack of accurate information for effective monitoring of populations of wild relatives, as well as weak support for and awareness of the importance of agro biodiversity by County level agricultural extension services and a focus on promoting new cultivars and techniques. The Project Document pointed out that, if unaddressed, these issues would result in loss of genetic resources for China and the world.
- 5. The Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Wild Relatives of Crops (CWRC (Pls use CWRC only from now on) Project focuses on the conservation of wild relatives of soybean, wheat and rice in their natural habitats in eight provinces and autonomous regions of China. The project was designed to include project sites in divergent ecological and socio-economic conditions in order to 'yield lessons that will be widely applicable across China'. The focus species identified in the project document align with the MoA's MOA's Strategy for Conservation of Wild Relatives in its focus on major staple crops (MoA MOA SCWR category 1).
- 6. The Project's immediate development Objective is 'to mainstream conservation of wild relatives of crops in agricultural landscapes in eight provinces of China', contributing to the overall Goal to 'sustainably conserve wild relatives of crop plants in China'
- 7. The development of a participatory, incentive based approach under Outcome 1 is supported by capacity building under Outcome 3 and review and revision of the policy and legal framework for CWRC under Outcome 2. Outcome 4 strengthens monitoring and information systems on the status of WRC at local and central levels in order to provide 'accurate and timely' information to decision makers. Outcome 5 then scales up project impact so that project outcomes and lessons learnt 'create conditions for replication and expansion of conservation programmes'.
- 8. The Ministry of Agriculture is the institution responsible for CWRC in China and operates in the Provinces through Agricultural Departments and through Agricultural Bureaux at County and Township levels. The Project is executed by the Ministry of Agriculture (MoAMOA) through a Project Management Office (PMO) in Beijing, with UNDP Country Office as the Implementing Agency. A Project Steering Committee (PSC) provides multi-sector guidance and review at the national level. At the local level, in the eight focal Provinces of project implementation, Local

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> 'It is estimated that 2.5 million ha of arable land are lost every year' project document p8

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Project Management Offices (LPMO) have been established within County Agricultural Bureaux. Local Project Steering Committees (LPSC) have also been established at this level within the multi sector Leading Groups for Conservation of Wild Relatives of Crops (LGWRC).

- 9. The MTE found that Implementing and Executing Agencies have adaptively managed the project, making refinements to planned project implementation mechanisms based on learning from this and other projects, and in order to adapt to the changing, and increasingly receptive, development context. Project managers have also successfully leveraged considerable additional co-financing which has helped to minimise the impact of the devaluation of the US\$ relative to Yuan Renminbi on the project. The main shortcoming of project Implementing and Executing Agencies performance to date has been in the management of GEF outcome budgets.
- 10. The project's design remains relevant and to align with national, UNDP and GEF strategic objectives. However, the MTE found the performance indicators established at project design to be weak. These and the lack of a monitoring and evaluation plan do not support effective monitoring and evaluation of project impact. The indicators are not SMART and in some cases actively detract from the intended focus of Outcome and Project impacts.
- 11. Overall, the MTE found that the project has made good progress and has set solid foundations to support achievement of the Project's overall Objective by EOP. In particular, it has developed and demonstrated the potential effectiveness of an approach to in-situ conservation of wild relatives of crops that integrates WRC conservation with agricultural production at a number of pilot sites. The main challenge over the remaining life of the project will be to scale up and mainstream the approach to securing sustainable impacts.
- 12. Project design and implementation processes at the County and Provincial levels are rooted in the relevant administrative structures for CWRC, helping to support sustainable impact at the institutional level. The project has significantly increased the capacity of key CWRC management institutions in the Counties where the pilot sites are located. In particular it has helped to build the capacity of relevant sections within Agricultural Bureaux and to support Leading Groups for Conservation of Wild Relatives of Crops (LGWRC) to work as platforms for a range of relevant sector agencies to form partnerships and co-ordinate livelihoods and biodiversity conservation support at the pilot sites.
- 13. The project has also supported outputs at the central level, in order to strengthen the 'enabling environment' for CWRC. The design of a Monitoring and Alerting System provides a framework for local to central level management of data on wild relatives of crops. The system allows for easy manipulation of this data to provide information useful for decision makers at central and local levels. The development of baseline and assessment methodology under Outcome 1 offers an approach to monitor the effectiveness of in-situ conservation of WRC, although the socio-economic data collection component of the system still needs to be finalised, and there is currently no socioeconomic data in the system. The overall Monitoring and Alerting System is also compatible with the national CGRIS database. Equipment was provided under the project at the central level within CAAS and at Provincial and County levels to support the eight pilot sites. Data collection has been completed at the eight pilot sites and County level staff have been trained in baseline and monitoring survey techniques. At MTE the Monitoring and Alerting System can be seen to provide a useful framework for monitoring and analysis of data on WRC in China, however, the socioeconomic components of the system need to be revised and finalised and use of the CWRC baseline and monitoring approach needs to be institutionalised and scaled up. Currently decision makers are able to access the CGRIS data through the system, and resource and environmental data from the eight pilot sites.
- 14. The need to strengthen the policy and regulatory framework for CWRC at national, Provincial and County levels was identified in design as a key barrier to effective CWRC. The project has supported a number of policy and regulatory studies, has made recommendations on policy and regulatory modifications to support agro-biodiversity conservation and has drafted regulations to support invasive species management within the agricultural sector. The CWRC regulatory framework at the pilot sites has also been strengthened though support to modify Provincial / County and village level

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regulations in support of conservation of wild relatives of crops. However, the project is a long way from achieving the Outcome 2 objective whereby 'the policy, legal and regulatory system supports conservation of wild relatives'. The MTE found that risks and assumptions identified in design and inception have had a significant impact on the project's ability to achieve policy and regulatory impacts at the national level. The MTE recommend that project managers re-assess opportunities to support MoA to effect policy and regulatory change in order to strengthen the overall enabling environment for CWRC at the national, Provincial and Central levels, over the remaining life of the project. Although the invasive species management regulatory environment, the MTE encourage project managers to keep a clear focus on intended impacts and not to get side tracked on to trying to establish effective invasive species management which would not be feasible give the resources and time frame of the current project.

- 15. In order to achieve the Project's five component Outcomes and overall Objective, by EOP, project managers will need to establish a clear focus on scaling up and mainstreaming impacts across the eight Provinces. At project end Provincial Departments of Agriculture in the eight Provinces and the Agricultural Bureaux in Counties within those Provinces, as well as Provincial and County level Leading groups for Conservation of Wild Relatives of Crops (LGWRC) should have the capacity and intent to continue to integrate in-situ CWRC with agricultural production, through the approach developed under the project. To demonstrate this at EOP these institutions will need to have embedded the approach within operating procedures and forward work plans. Equally the Monitoring and Alerting System developed under the project should have been established as an integral part of MoA's planning and monitoring framework and have incorporated socio-economic data collection and analysis. Equally, the policy and regulatory studies supported under the project will need to have had an actual impact in strengthening the regulatory enabling environment for CWRC at central and Provincial levels.
- 16. The MTE puts forward six key recommendations to strengthen the likelihood of the Project achieving sustainable impact and to build on the lessons learnt and project progress to date. These are:

Recommendation 1: Secure the institutional and financial sustainability of project impacts in the eight focal Provinces, particularly to mainstream the sustainable livelihood, incentive based approach to in-situ CWRC within key institutions.

Recommendation 2: Revise the logframe indicators, develop a project monitoring and evaluation plan, work plan and associated budget to EOP.

Recommendation 3: Finalise the Monitoring and Alerting System and establish the institutional and financial sustainability of the WRC monitoring system developed under the project.

Recommendation 4: Strengthen Policy and Regulatory Impact

Recommendation 5: Strengthen Project Monitoring, Evaluation & Financial Management

Recommendation 6: Assess potential opportunities to apply and share lessons learnt from this project.

# **Mid-Term Evaluation Ratings**

Summary of Mid Term Evaluation Ratings		
Rating	Comments	
Project Concept and Design	Satisfactory	
Implementation approach	Satisfactory	
Monitoring and Evaluation		
M&E Plan Design	Moderately unsatisfactory	
M&E Implementation	Moderately Satisfactory	
Achievement of outcomes		
Outcome 1	Highly Satisfactory	
Relevance	Highly Satisfactory	
Effectiveness	Highly Satisfactory	
Efficiency	Highly Satisfactory	
Outcome 2	Satisfactory	
Relevance	Satisfactory	
Effectiveness	Satisfactory	
Efficiency	Satisfactory	
Outcome 3	Satisfactory	
Relevance	Satisfactory	
Effectiveness	Satisfactory	
Efficiency	Satisfactory	
Outcome 4	Moderately Satisfactory	
Relevance	Satisfactory	
Effectiveness	Moderately Satisfactory	
Efficiency	Unable to Assess	
Outcome 5	Satisfactory	
Relevance	Satisfactory	
Effectiveness	Satisfactory	
Efficiency	Satisfactory	
Overall assessment of the prospects for sustainability	Moderately Likely	
Financial sustainability	Moderately Likely	
Socio-economic	Moderately Likely	
Institutional	, , Likely	
Environmental	, Moderately Likely	

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Mid-Term Evaluation Report

# **1.** INTRODUCTION

## Purpose of the Evaluation

- 17. The mid term evaluation (MTE) was an opportunity to review all aspects of the CWRC Project, from formulation, implementation and financing arrangements, to an assessment of the processes that affected attainment of results and the extent of achievement of outputs and outcomes to date, towards the likelihood of achieving sustainable impacts by the end of Project (EOP).
- 18. The project was evaluated using standard UNDP / GEF evaluation criteria, against the specific development objectives established in the Project Document. The MTE also considers the extent to which the project is supporting the Government of China to achieve relevant national strategic objectives, and it's contribution to UNDP CPAP Outputs, the strategic priorities of UNDAF and the biodiversity portfolio in GEF Phase IV.
- 19. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the evaluation form ANNEX I to this report. They set the purpose of the mid-tem evaluation as: "to guide the project's implementation from now till end of the project", and in so doing "to synthesize lessons to help improve the project design and the implementation of project activities".

# Methodology

- 20. The mid-term evaluation was undertaken by a national and international consultant team with complementary experience in monitoring and evaluation, biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods and agro-biodiversity. The evaluation team (ET) was given access to a range of documents, provided throughout the course of the evaluation, some in English others in Chinese. The list of documents consulted and reviewed is given in Annex V
- 21. The ET undertook a series of semi structured interviews and participatory assessments with key stakeholder groups and site visits to three of the eight pilot sites. Questionnaires were prepared and used by the ET to enable quantified analysis of feedback from key stakeholders at the project sites. Annex III records the Itinerary achieved by the ET and Annex IV the respondents with whom the evaluators were able to meet. Annex X presents a summary analysis of the findings of the questionnaire surveys.
- 22. The preliminary findings of the MTE were discussed at a debriefing meeting with UNDP, PMO, MoA and CICETE in Beijing on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2011. The ET then compiled a draft report, submitted to UNDP and PMO. Comments received on the draft were considered and incorporated by the ET to finalise the report.

## Structure of the Evaluation Report

- 23. The evaluation report is structured in the following sections:
  - The first section of the report outline the Purpose and Methodology of the Evaluation
  - The second section then presents the **Project Development Context** and gives a background to the conservation of wild relatives of crops in China
  - This is followed by a review of **Project Concept and Design**.
  - The fourth section of the report assesses Project Implementation and the impact of processes that affected attainment of the intended results. It includes analysis and rating of Stakeholder Involvement. It also includes an assessment of Implementing and Executing Agencies Performance and assesses Financial Management of the project. Section 4.4 evaluates the mechanisms used to monitor, evaluate and adaptively manage the delivery and performance of the Project this includes assessment of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and the implementation and effectiveness of Monitoring and Evaluation activities.

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- The fifth major section of the report reviews and evaluates the **Results** achieved under each of the five main component Outcomes, assessing relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of project delivery to date.
- The sixth key section assesses the Likelihood of Sustainable Impact.
- The final section of the report summarises Lessons Learnt to date and draws together the evaluators' Recommendations to consolidate the results achieved and increase the likelihood of sustainable impact at EOP.
- 24. Evaluation Ratings are provided by the MTE as an indication of the overall conclusions reached by the ET on the core aspects of Project Design, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation, Stakeholder Involvement and the extent of achievement of each of the 5 project Outcomes under the GEF evaluative foci of Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency<sup>2</sup>. The likelihood of Sustainable impact is also rated, looking specifically at financial, institutional, socio-economic and environmental aspects of sustainability, following the GEF sustainability rating criteria<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The Evaluation Rating applied is based on the following 6-point scale: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), and Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The Evaluation Rating applied to sustainability used the GEF scale of likely (L), Moderately Likely (ML), Moderately Unlikely (MU), Unlikely (U), Highly Unlikely (HU), Not Applicable (N/A), Unable to Assess (U/A)

# 2. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

# 2.1: Importance of Wild Relatives of Crops to Chinese Agricultural Development and National Food Security

- 25. China is one of the seven independent centres of crop origin in the world. It is estimated that of about 1,200 crop species harvested worldwide, 600 are found in China, and of those up to half originated in China. Rice wheat and soybean are important agricultural crops world wide. Wild relatives of the three crops are found in China with extensive distribution, large areas and high diversity<sup>4</sup>.
- 26. Food production has always been a high agricultural priority in China. It is projected that the population of China will reach 1.6 billion by the year 2030 and demand for food production will increase by at least 60 percent to keep pace with population growth. This rapid population increase and urbanization is likely to result in loss of valuable farmland and other natural resources; increasing the productivity of existing farmland is a key agricultural priority of the Chinese Government.
- 27. The 2011 -2015 UNDAF points to the increasing pressure that economic development is placing on China's natural resource base and to concerns over the sustainability of productive systems. It states that: 'Rural-urban income and gender disparities have grown sharply, and despite considerable policy effort, the gap between eastern and western provinces has not narrowed. Rapid growth has come at a serious environmental and natural resource cost raising concerns about sustainability.'
- 28. Drought, soil salinity and acidity are key threats to agricultural production worldwide, resulting in severe yield losses of all major food crops. In China, the northwest region is prone to drought, with water supply a major limitation for crop production; in south and central China, soil acidity is a major limiting factor that reduces crop yield; salinity occurs in large areas in the east coastal region.
- 29. Wild relatives of crops (WRC) have good drought, pest and disease resistance. Wild relatives of rice in China are known to have drought and low fertility tolerance, pest and disease resistance, salinityalkali tolerance and high yield. Wild soybean is widely distributed across China and is known to have a high protein content, disease resistance, vigour at low temperatures and high altitude, large variation in leaf shapes, colours, sizes of seeds and colours of flowers. Chinese wild wheat species are rich in protein and high in quality of straw and are also known to be tolerant to pests, disease, drought, salinity, alkalinity and cold temperatures.
- 30. Drought, soil salinity and acidity are also conditions that are being exacerbated by climate change and there is national and international recognition that crop breeders will need to use wild relatives of crops as 'reservoirs of genes' to produce new varieties that are adapted to environmental conditions not previously encountered in agricultural systems.

# 2.2: Policy and Regulatory Context of the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Wild Relatives of Crops in China

- 31. China's Steering Committee for the Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity was established by the State Council of China in 1992, consisting of 24 government sectors at central level. It is responsible for coordinating biodiversity-related policy among sectors and for supporting policy development. A National Coordination Committee for Biological Resources Management was formed in 2003 to coordinate biodiversity conservation activities across different sectors.
- 32. A number of national agencies have biodiversity conservation responsibilities including the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), State Forestry Administration (SFA), Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP), National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), Ministry of Land and Resources,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Three wild rice species are distributed in 743 communities of 140 counties of 8 provinces/autonomous regions, the distribution of three wild soybean species covers 28 out of 32 provinces and wild relatives of wheat have 160 species / subspecies mainly distributed in arid and less-populated areas

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Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST) and the National Management Office for Rural Development and Poverty Reduction.

- 33. The Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) has overall responsibility at the national level for the coordination of biodiversity conservation in China. MEP was established in March 2008 as a cabinet level ministry. It sits directly under the State Council and has responsibility for environmental policies, laws and regulations. It also funds research and development activities to support its regulatory role. MEP replaced the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) which was the main agency responsible for national coordination of biodiversity conservation at the time of project design.
- 34. The MoA is responsible for management of agricultural land, covering the majority of locations where wild relatives of rice, soybean and wheat are found. It is also directly responsible for the management and monitoring of wild relatives of crops, except those found in forests, which fall under the State Forestry Administration (SFA). Between 2001 and 2003 the MoA established a number of different groups and committees relevant to the management and conservation of WRC including: 'The Lead Group for Wild Relatives Conservation'; 'The Expert Committee for Examination and Approval of Wild Relatives Conservation; 'The Lead Group to Control Invasive Exotic Species, 'The Management Office and Lead Group for Safety of Genetically Modified Agroproducts.'
- 35. A series of laws, regulations and policies refer directly to the protection of wild relatives of crops in China. These include: the law of seeds, regulations for wild plant protection, China 21<sup>st</sup> agricultural agenda and CBD-related national biodiversity strategy and action plan.
- 36. The MoA has also developed specific regulations on the conservation and management of wild relatives of crops and has enacted various management approaches including: the management approach for agricultural wild plants; the management approach for crop germplasm resources; the collection and management approach of *Ephedra* and *Glycyrrhiza* and the implementation approach for management of the safety of agricultural genetic engineering.
- 37. A series of conservation activities have been implemented by MoA with a priority focus on wild relatives of important food species such as rice, soybean, and wheat. Agricultural environmental monitoring is undertaken by the Research and Monitoring Institute for Environmental Protection within MoA. Sub-stations have been established across China for agricultural environmental monitoring in the different regions.
- 38. A number of academic institutions are also involved in the conservation of wild relatives of crops. These include scientific institutions, such as the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS). CAS and CAAS undertake scientific research on wild relatives and also provide technical support to local government agencies and to farmers.
- 39. At the local level MoA operates through Departments of Agriculture and Agricultural Bureaux. There is a Department of Agriculture (DoA) in each Province. Within each Province, each County has an Agricultural Bureau. Multi-sector Leading Groups for Wild Relatives of Conservation are also found at the Provincial and County levels. Provinces have enacted their own regulations concerning wild relatives conservation. However part of the rationale for the current project was the recognition that the range of laws, regulations, rules and policies concerning conservation of wild relatives of crops has a number of flaws and weaknesses and the policy and legal framework for conservation of WRC needs to be rationalised and strengthened. The rationale for the Project was also based on the recognition that a Provincial DoA and County Agricultural Bureaux need a more effective approach and increased capacity for in-situ conservation of wild relatives of crops that can be integrated alongside agricultural production.

# 2.3: Issues and Challenges faced in the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Wild Relatives of Crops in China

- 40. Wild relatives of crops occur in both non-domesticated ecosystems and as weeds on agricultural land. However in the more prosperous regions of China WRC are rarely found due to the rapid pace of economic development. Surviving populations are mostly found in the more remote and less fertile agricultural areas.
- 41. Agricultural activities often result in the destruction of habitat for WRC. For example wild rice is often cleared to enable planting of cash crops of tropical fruit and rubber trees, and aquaculture is often used to supplement crop based incomes, for which fishponds are excavated. Wild soybean sites are often good areas for farmers to plant cash crops of peanut or sesame, and in some wild soybean areas a national reforestation project has recently been initiated which pays farmers to establish forest plantations. The wild soybean is considered by farmers to be a weed and cash crops and plantations often result in significantly reduced size or health of wild soybean populations due to competition for light and nutrients. Wild relatives of wheat are mostly distributed in the dry deserts and grasslands of the northwest; opportunities for income generation in these areas are largely limited to increasing herd sizes, leading to overgrazing on the wild wheat.
- 42. One of the key challenges to conserving wild relatives of crops is that conservation efforts target a specific and rather limited number of species. In addition, although wild relatives have historically contributed to the present-day value of agricultural crops, they often have no commercial value themselves. This means that there are limited possibilities for generating financial incentives for conservation of wild relatives of crops through sustainable management and harvesting.
- 43. The Chinese government has been supporting efforts to collect and conserve both cultivated crops and their wild relatives since the 1950s. At the time of project conception two long-term gene banks and 20 mid-term gene banks had been constructed to store collected germplasm, with 355,000 accessions conserved in the form of seedlots in the gene banks. 32 ex-situ conservation gardens had been constructed to conserve perennial plants and vegetative plants, accommodating 32,000 accessions.
- 44. Although national conservation efforts mostly focussed on ex-situ conservation, MoA had increasingly recognised the importance of in-situ conservation. The China Agricultural Agenda 21 (1999) identified a large number of important in-situ conservation sites for wild relatives of crops.
- 45. At the time of project design MoA's in-situ conservation efforts focussed on building physical barriers around WRC conservation zones. However, a significant number of key in-situ conservation sites lacked adequate protection and the MoA recognised the need to increase conservation effectiveness of WRC. A number of limitations to the physical isolation approach had been identified by MoA including the loss of potentially productive agricultural land by isolation, resentment felt by local communities at the loss of productive land and the lack of understanding by famers of the need for conservation of WRC, as well the cost and time burden on MoA of maintaining conservation plots. The MoA identified the need to adopt a more integrated and participatory approach to conservation of WRC and to strengthen institutional capacity, particularly at Provincial and County levels.

# 3. PROJECT CONCEPT AND DESIGN

Summary Rating – Project Concept and Design Satisfactory

# 3.1 Project Design

- 46. The project concept grew from MoA's concern over the limitations of existing approaches to conserve wild relatives of crops in China. MoA worked with CAAS to develop a concept paper that outlined a more participatory approach to conservation of wild relatives, that could involve farmers as part of the conservation effort, and minimise the impact of conservation efforts on land under agricultural production.
- 47. MoA decided to work with UNDP GEF to design a project that would strengthen conservation efforts for wild relatives of crops by integrating conservation in to agricultural production landscapes. The origins of the project and the fact that it was designed to work within and build the capacity of key agencies responsible for CWRC in China continues to support good national ownership of project outcomes and the project's ongoing relevance in helping to address a nationally identified strategic priority.
- 48. The project was designed to focus on in-situ conservation of wild relatives of crops, the objective being 'to mainstream conservation of wild crop relatives in agricultural production landscapes by targeting wild relatives of rice, soybean and wheat in eight provinces of China'. It aims to support County and Township Agricultural Bureaux to establish participatory conservation measures with farmers and to build the capacity of relevant sections within Provincial Departments of Agriculture and County Agricultural Bureaux to establish and promote agricultural development options that incorporate conservation of wild relatives. The project also aims to strengthen systems for monitoring wild relatives of crops, increase awareness and information dissemination on CWRC and improve the policy and regulatory framework to support CWRC. It was designed as a six year project with a total budget of USD 20,898,000 (US\$8.056 million contribution from GEF), with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) as the national executing agency.
- 49. The project document outlines the main barriers to mainstreaming conservation of wild relatives within agricultural production at the time of project design. Assessment of threats and barriers to CWRC and the root causes of species loss pointed to the immense pressure to intensify productivity of scarce arable land and the rapid decline of available land for agriculture<sup>5</sup>. Threats to wild species were found to be exacerbated by the fact that they are often found in close proximity to land currently under agricultural production. Key threats identified at project start up include:
- 50. <u>Land conversion</u>: including for infrastructure and urban development and conversion of wild rice habitats in to fish ponds, lotus root ponds etc; conversion of soybean habitats in to fruit gardens and commercial forest plantations
- 51. <u>Eradication</u> of wild crops as weeds within agricultural practice
- 52. Intensification of land use and increased use of herbicides within agricultural systems. In pasture systems wild rice, soybean and wheat are considered high quality pasture and are harvested for stall feeding and used for open range grazing. Increases in livestock numbers have put severe pressure on populations of wild relatives of crops.
- 53. Spread of Invasive Species which outcompete and displace wild relatives of crops.
- 54. <u>Pollution</u> particularly due to the location / re-location of polluting enterprises in rural areas as part of efforts to improve the quality of urban environments and to create employment opportunities in rural areas.
- 55. <u>Impact of genetically modified crops.</u> Identified as a potential threat due to the increasing demand for GM crop release.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> 'It is estimated that 2.5 million ha of arable land are lost every year' project document p8

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- 56. <u>Short term development strategies by local government</u> Economic development is viewed as a priority in the majority of sites where wild relatives are found as many of these areas are also 'national poverty reduction' counties. The strategic focus by local government on increasing household income increases pressure to intensify land use and encourage industrial development.
- 57. Institutional constraints to implementation of conservation regulations. Few counties have conservation focused government bodies to implement or promote conservation activities.
- 58. Focus of agricultural system on promotion of new cultivars and techniques. Often agricultural extension approaches do not recognise the long term benefits of conservation of wild relatives and focus too heavily on approaches that maximise short term yield.
- 59. Lack of information on wild relative populations including the need to develop an inventory of wild populations and associated monitoring of population status to inform development of effective conservation strategies.
- 60. The Project Document develops a series of outcomes and outputs that together aim to strengthen conservation of WRC and to develop an approach to address the identified barriers and threats in eight Provinces. It builds on good development practice, promoting farmer participation, sustainable livelihood support, capacity building and strengthened monitoring of WRC at the local level and improvements to the overall policy, regulatory and monitoring 'enabling environment' at the national level, in order to mainstream conservation in to agricultural production.
- 61. The project strategy focuses on five strategic outcomes. The Goal towards which the CWRC Project is to contribute is: To sustainably conserve wild relatives of crop plants in China. This directly reflects the objective of MoA's national Strategy for Conservation of Wild Relatives of Crops. The project's immediate development Objective is: To mainstream conservation of wild relatives of crop plants in agricultural production landscapes in eight provinces of China. The five major component Outcomes, which together are intended to achieve the project Objective are:

Outcome 1: Generation of sustainable financial and other incentives for conservation of wild relatives at the county level in eight provinces.

Outcome 2: The policy, legal and regulatory system supports conservation of wild relatives.

Outcome 3: Stakeholders at the central and local level have adequate capacity to conserve wild relatives.

Outcome 4: Accurate and timely information concerning the status of wild relatives is available and utilized

Outcome 5: Lessons and experiences from target provinces create conditions for replication and expansion of conservation programmes

- 62. The development of a participatory, incentive based approach at eight pilot sites under Outcome 1 is supported by capacity building at local and national levels under Outcome 3 and review and revision of the national and local policy / legal framework for CWRC under Outcome 2. Outcome 4 strengthens monitoring and information systems at both local and national levels to establish a system that can provide 'accurate and timely' information on the status of WRC to decision makers. Outcome 5 then focuses on scaling up project impact so that project outcomes and lessons learnt 'create conditions for replication and expansion of conservation programmes'.
- 63. The project focuses on the conservation of wild relatives of soybean, wheat and rice in their natural habitats in eight provinces and autonomous regions of China. The Project Document clearly outlines the importance of both national level and local level impacts in achieving project purpose (Objective). 'At the central level, the project will build institutional and systemic capacity to mainstream conservation of wild relatives with agricultural development by developing sustainable incentive measures that promote conservation by farmers, by modifying the legal and policy environment, and by building institutional capacity to support such measures, including the capacity to monitor changes in populations of wild relatives...At the local level, the project will work with farmers in some of the most important sites for wild relative diversity by helping to develop

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incentive systems to provide farmers with financial benefits from conservation, raising awareness of the importance of conservation, and involving farmers in measures to add value to wild relatives<sup>6</sup>.

64. The focus species identified in the project document for the pilot sites aligns with the MoA's Strategy for Conservation of Wild Relatives in its focus on major staple crops (MoA SCWR category 1). Site and species selection is both relevant and effective in supporting achievement of the overall project objective. The rationale for site and species selection was also 'because they are found in divergent ecological and socio-economic situations. The inclusion of eight provinces, and the project strategy involving the development of sustainable models of sustainable financing and incentive systems, will thus yield lessons that will be widely applicable across China'.7.



# Figure 1 Distribution of pilot sites

- 65. Sites identified during design include Bagua Village, Qingshan Township, Yanchi County in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region and Baiyanggou Village, Gangou Town, Urumchi County in Xinjiang Vygur Autonomous Region for wild relatives of wheat; Wenhua Village, Laotougou Town, Longjing City, Yanbian Korean Ethnic Autonomous Prefecture in Jilin Province, Zhenfa Village, Fujiang Town, Bayan County in Heilongjiang province and Guxian Town, Tongbai County, Henan Province in Henan Province for wild relatives of soybean; Panshi Village, Muge Town, Zhaoping County in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Jinghong City, Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province and Hulu Village, Donglu Town, Wenchang City in Hai'nan Province for wild relatives of rice.
- 66. Performance indicators were established in the Project Document at the Objective and Outcome level. Output indicators were developed later as part of the Inception process. The MTE has found indicators at all levels to be poorly designed, and in some cases to be misleading; they are not Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time Bound (SMART) and do not enable effective monitoring and evaluation of the level of achievement of intended objectives. This is discussed in more detail under Section 4.4 which evaluates the Design and Implementation of project Monitoring and Evaluation.
- 67. Indicators should enable project managers and evaluators to clearly monitor and evaluate the level of achievement of the project Objective and component Outcomes. The Objective level indicator for

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> & <sup>7</sup> Project Document

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this project focuses entirely on WRC species distribution and land area under agricultural production at the eight local project *sites*; it is relevant to Outcome 1 but does not capture any measurement of the project Objective: the extent to which conservation of wild relatives of crop plants has been *mainstreamed in agricultural production across eight provinces*. The Outcome Indicators also do not enable effective measurement of the level of achievement of outcomes or the likelihood of sustainable impact.

68. The project document also includes an assessment of Assumptions and Risks. However, this assessment is tied directly to the indicators selected. The weakness of the indicators means that the assessment of assumptions and risks is also a weak part of project design. It would have been more appropriate and useful for this key section of the report to focus on the assumptions and risks associated with achievement of the overall Project Objective and Outcomes as well as to identify any assumptions and risks inherent in the proposed project implementation approach.

## Table 1:CWRC Project Components and Indicators

Objective Statement	Performance Indicators		
<b>Goal:</b> To sustainably conserve wild relatives of crop plants in China			
<b>Objective:</b> To mainstream conservation of wild relatives of crop plants in agricultural production landscapes in eight provinces of China	<ul> <li>Wild relatives shows no decline at the mid-point and end of the project compared with the area in 2005</li> <li>At all target sites, at the mid-point and end of the project, no land on which populations of wild relatives occur has been taken out of agricultural production</li> </ul>		
<b>Outcomes</b> Outcome 1: Generation of sustainable financial and other incentives for conservation of wild relatives at the county level in eight provinces.	<ul> <li>At the end of the project, farmers, both women and men, at the target sites in eight provinces with wild relatives growing on their land, report that they are receiving financial or other benefits for conserving wild relatives</li> <li>At the mid-point of the project, the proportion of financial incentives paid to farmers at each site that originates from government or project funds is less than 40%; at the end of the project it is o%</li> </ul>		
Outcome 2: The policy, legal and regulatory system supports conservation of wild relatives.	<ul> <li>At the end of the project, all identified legislative shortcomings have been resolved, or the process has been initiated</li> <li>At the end of the project, staff of provincial Departments of Agriculture and County Agricultural Bureaux report no cases where implementation of conservation activities was prevented due to regulatory shortcomings</li> </ul>		
Outcome 3: Stakeholders at the central and local level have adequate capacity to conserve wild relatives.	<ul> <li>At the end of the project, threat reduction assessment at each target site indicates a reduction in threats of at least 80%. At the midpoint of the project, this figure is 30%</li> <li>At the end of the project, 75% of farmers both women and men, at the project sites are actively conserving wild relatives. At the mid-point of the project, this figure is 40%</li> </ul>		
Outcome 4: Accurate and timely information	• Within 2 years of the start of implementation,		
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concerning the status of wild relatives is available and utilized		local and central level policy makers are able to describe the status of populations of wild relatives
	•	By the end of the project, conservation work plans of the MoA are based on information generated by the information management system
Outcome 5: Lessons and experiences from target provinces create conditions for replication and expansion of conservation programmes.	•	By the end of the project, parallel initiatives have been initiated in at least 50 additional sites
	•	By the end of the project, MoA and concerned agencies have integrated lessons from the project into agricultural development policy.

# 3.2 Project Management Structure and Stakeholder Involvement

- 69. The involvement of key stakeholder groups in the design process has helped to ensure that project implementing mechanisms support national CWRC decision making structures and processes and that project objectives align with national strategic priorities.
- 70. The MoA is the project's executing agency, reflecting their lead responsibility for conservation of wild relatives of crops and for management and development of agricultural production in China. UNDP Country Office oversees project implementation. As is standard practice for UNDP / GEF projects, project management is led by a national Project Management Office (PMO) under the direction of a National Project Director (NPD). The PMO and NPD are supported by a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA). The National Project Director (NPD) is the Head of the Science Technology and Education Department of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoAMOA). The Division Chief of that Department's Division of Resources and Environment, which has responsibility for conservation of agro-biodiversity, is the deputy director of PMO. The overall strategic direction of the project is quided by a Project Steering Committee (PSC) composed of the MOA NPD (Chair), The State Council Leading Group, Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development (CPAD), National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), Ministry of Finance (MoFMOF), The Ministry of Land and Resources (MoLR), The Ministry of Science the Technology (MoST), State Forestry Administration (SFA), State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) (now the Ministry of Environmental Protection, MEP), Development Research Centre of the State Council (DRC) and UNDP CO.
- 71. Between Project design and the Project's Inception phase a Ministerial reshuffle had significant implications for biodiversity conservation in China; the State Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) was restructured and became the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP). MEP has overall responsibility for biodiversity conservation in China. As is outlined in the Inception report MEP participate in the PSC in place of SEPA.
- 72. The project document stresses the importance of local level Provincial Departments of Agriculture (DoA) and County Agricultural Bureaux for project implementation in the eight focal Provinces of project implementation and that these institutions should be a key focus of capacity building outcomes. Local project management structures were strengthened during the inception process by extending the implementation structure of Project Management Office (PMO) and Project Steering Committee (PSC) to the eight project sites through the establishment of Local PMO (LPMO) and Local PSC (LPSC).
- 73. At the Provincial level MoA operates through Departments of Agriculture (DoA), each Department has an environmental protection agency. At the County and Township levels DoA work through Agricultural Bureaux which also have units responsible for environmental protection. The project established local project management offices (LPMO) within County Agricultural Bureaux, in these

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administrative authorities in charge of agro-environmental protection<sup>8</sup>. LPMO play a key role in implementation and management of project activities at the project sites and Agricultural Bureaux staff involvement in the project forms part of national co-financing commitments.

- 74. Each of the eight Provinces under the project also has multi sector Leading Groups for Conservation of Wild Relatives of Crops (LGWRC) which operate at Provincial and County levels. Each LGWRC has an 'administrative office' based in the relevant environmental protection section of Departments of Agriculture and County Agricultural Bureaux. The project established local project steering committees in the LGWRC. The LPSC are multi-sector groups which perform a similar advisory and multi-sector co-ordination role to the national PSC.
- 75. The Project Document also stresses the importance of involving Farmers Associations and farming communities directly in project implementation, at the pilot sites, supported by the County Agricultural Bureaux.
- 76. The importance of close collaboration between the project and other interventions within the Sector is also underlined in the project document, in particular with the China Biodiversity Partnership Framework. Two projects under this Framework were identified to have particular relevance to the CWRC project: the MoA-MOA and GIZ projects for Sustainable Agro biodiversity Management in the Southern Mountain areas of China (2007 2011); and the project for 'Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Agro-biodiversity in Hunan and Hai'nan Provinces' (2006 2009).

## 3.3 Contribution to UNDP and GEF Strategic Objectives

- 77. At the time of project design in 2006 the CWRC project was developed to contribute to 'three of twelve United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) objectives namely:
  - Objective 3: 'Enhance Food security and nutrition, especially at the household level';
  - Objective 9: 'Improve environmental management capacity, especially in the western region' and
  - Objective 11: 'Support the implementation of the consensus of the UN conventions and conferences by the government and the civil society'<sup>9</sup>;
- 78. Within the 2006 -2010 UNDP Country Programme for the Peoples Republic of China the project contributed to Programme Outcome 7 'Conservation and Sustainable Use of biodiversity is more effective', and specifically to outputs:

7.2: National and local Biodiversity Action Plans updated and mainstreamed into the national and local Five Year Plan

7.3: Capacity of CSOs and communities to participate in biodiversity conservation activities strengthened

7.4: National co-ordination mechanism established

- 79. The Project also contributes to the Sustainable Environment and Energy Development Programme Area of UNDP's China Country Cooperation Framework, specifically to the first strategic programme area: 'environmental governance that emphasises building national capacity in implementing policy, legal and regulatory measures'.
- 80. At the time of design the project was also developed to support GEF Biodiversity Strategic Priority 2 'Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Production Landscapes and Sectors' and GEF eligibility criteria under GEF Operational Programme 13, 'Agrobiodiversity' particularly the GEF strategic areas of:

<sup>9</sup> Project Document

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> These are named differently across different counties and may be called: Agricultural Technology & Environmental Extension office, Agro-Technology Extension Centre, Rural energy and eco-environmental protection office, etc

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'demonstrating and applying techniques to sustainably manage biodiversity important to agriculture, including wild relatives of domesticated plants; integrating agricultural biodiversity conservation and sustainable use objectives in land use and natural resources use management plans; and supporting capacity building efforts that promote preservation and maintenance of indigenous and local communities knowledge, innovation and practices'.

# 3.4 Contribution to National Strategic Objectives

- 81. The project was designed and implemented within the context of <u>MoAs\_MOA's</u> Strategy for Conservation of Wild Relatives of Crops which puts a priority on efforts to conserve wild relatives of important food species such as rice, soybean and wheat. The Strategy organises <u>MoAs\_MOA's</u> conservation approach in to four categories. The first category contains main stable crops, including rice, wheat and soybean. The other four categories include wild relatives of minor crops, tree crops, and non-food crops.
- 82. The project was also designed to support a number of other national strategic priority areas including:
  - The China <u>National</u> Biodiversity Conservation <u>Strategy and</u> Action Plan, <u>BCAPNBSAP</u>, in which Objective 4 is to conserve genetic resources related to crops and domestic livestock, with a focus on in-situ conservation;
  - The China Agriculture Biodiversity Action Plan, which includes five major objectives, one of which is to strengthen the in-situ conservation of key ecological systems and species and to establish a network of nature reserves and protected sites;
  - The Regulation on the Protection of Wild Plants, issued by the State Council in 1996, to guide the conservation of and research into wild species, focusing on the wild relatives of productive species. Article V states that the government encourages and supports scientific research on wild plants, and supports in-situ and ex-situ conservation
  - The China Agricultural Agenda 21 (1999 which identified 20 important in-situ conservation sites for wild relatives of rice, soybean and wheat, located across China, representing a wide range of climatic, topographic, and socio-economic conditions.

The Project also aligned with and contributed to China's 10<sup>th</sup> 5 year plan which stresses the importance of integrating environmental sustainability with economic development.

# 3.5 Implications of Project Design for Effective Project Implementation towards Sustainable Outcomes

- 83. Overall, project design is well conceived, the Project Document presents a logical strategy to address the identified limitations of existing CWRC approaches in China and to overcome identified barriers. It builds on an MoA strategic priority area and the implementation approach is rooted in the relevant institutions responsible for CWRC in China, namely the Ministry, Department and associated Bureaux of Agriculture and Leading Groups for Conservation of Wild Relatives of Crops. The PSC provides an important multi-sector advisory and co-ordination mechanism at the national level, given the cross cutting nature of the biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihood and poverty alleviation approach supported under the project. The extension, during project inception, of the implementation framework to establish Local PMO and Local PSC at the project's pilot sites has helped to strengthen the design of both project implementation and capacity building arrangements.
- 84. The design process involved consultation with key stakeholder groups and this is reflected in both the current levels of support given to the project by a range of key stakeholder groups and the continued alignment of project outcomes to relevant national and local strategic priorities.
- 85. The overall approach put forward by the project is based on good development practice involving a participatory, consultative approach that strengthens the capacity of key management agencies and local stakeholders at pilot sites and also strengthens the national enabling environment for

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management and monitoring of WRC. The inclusion of both local and national level outcomes helps to increase the likelihood of sustainable impacts by EOP. Pilot sites are intended to develop on the ground, practical approaches that integrate conservation with production, by identifying and establishing 'sustainable incentive mechanisms' that work to support biodiversity conservation. The experience generated through the pilot sites is intended to establish an approach that can be mainstreamed within eight provinces and eventually at a national level. The proposed support under outcomes 2 and 4 to analyse and strengthen both the national policy / regulatory framework for CWRC and systems for monitoring the status of WRC is important in order to strengthen the overall enabling environment and strategic framework for CWRC in China.

86. The main weakness in the project's design is in the selection of impact indicators and the associated analysis of risks and assumptions, which is discussed in more detail under report section 4.4.

#### 3.6 Continued Relevance of Project Design to UNDP, GEF and National Strategic Priorities

- 87. The project continues to contribute strongly to the MoA's Strategy for Conservation of Wild Relatives of Crops and also aligns with China's 12<sup>th</sup> 5 year plan<u>FYP</u> which emphasises the importance of biodiversity conservation to support sustainable development, particularly relevant to sustaining efficient agricultural production.
- 88. The national strategic context for biodiversity conservation and particularly relative to agro biodiversity has strengthened considerably since project design. The updated Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan issued by the State Council of China in September 2011 emphasizes in its strategic tasks that priority should be given to in-situ conservation of agricultural germplasm resources. It highlights the importance of establishing a monitoring and warning system for the conservation sites of agricultural wild plants, establishing incentive mechanisms for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including agro-biodiversity, and the importance of implementing livelihood demonstration projects in ecologically vulnerable regions of northwest China. In addition it stresses the importance of saving endangered wild plants with small populations through the establishment of protected areas.
- 89. The project also continues to support the GEF 5 biodiversity strategy, the objective of which is to support the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecosystem goods and services. The GEF 5 biodiversity strategy has five objectives:
  - To improve the sustainability of protected area systems;
  - To mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes/ seascapes and sectors;
  - To build capacity to implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;
  - To build capacity on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing; and integrate CBD obligations into national planning processes through enabling activities.

The project continues to contribute to the strategic area of mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in to production landscapes / seascapes and sectors.

- 90. The Government of China and the United Nations developed a new UNDAF framework in 2011 to guide the UN-China partnership over the coming five years, during the period of China's 12th Five Year Plan. The 2011 2015 UNDAF focuses the work of the UN in China on three overall Outcome Areas and thirteen specific Outcomes:
  - UNDAF Outcome 1: Government and other stakeholders ensure environmental sustainability address climate change, and promote a green, low carbon economy.
  - UNDAF Outcome 2: The poorest and most vulnerable increasingly participate in and benefit more equitably from China's social and economic development.
  - UNDAF Outcome 3: China's enhanced participation in the global community brings wider mutual benefits.

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- 91. Strategic assessment as part of the development of the 2011 -1015 UNDAF pointed to the UN's comparative advantage in it's 'ability to bring to China the best of global experience and expertise' and 'by helping pilot innovative approaches'
- 92. The 2011 -2015 UNDAF report stresses that in China 'climate change threatens livelihoods and employment, especially in arid rural areas and coastal regions...increasing temperature levels could have a negative impact on agricultural production: production of major crops could be reduced by as much as 37% by the second half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And given that women are responsible for 60-90% of agricultural production in China, climate change impacts on Chinese farming women and their potential role as agents of change must be addressed'.
- 93. The CWRC project continues to align with and contribute to the 2011 -2015 UNDAF and particularly to Outcomes 1 and 2.

Outcome 1: Government institutions and other stakeholders ensure environmental sustainability, address climate change, and promote a green, low carbon economy

Outcome 1.2 : Policy and implementation mechanisms to manage natural resources are strengthened, with special attention to poor and vulnerable groups. Outputs:

- Strengthened Government capacity to effectively manage land and water resources, ensuring
  poor and vulnerable groups' access to these resources is improved.
- Government capacity to conserve biodiversity and ecosystems is enhanced, and communities are empowered to increasingly benefit from the development of eco-based livelihood resources.
- Strengthened Government capacity to develop and implement policies that ensure compliance with environmental health and safety requirements

Outcome 1.3. China's vulnerability to climate change is better understood and adaptation responses are integrated into Government policy. Outputs:

- Strengthened Government capacity to perform vulnerability assessments on the impacts of climate change and develop innovative adaptation strategies and programmes that are sensitive to its impacts on livelihoods and migration.
- Business, civil society and individuals better understand China's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, ensuring that appropriate behaviours and policies are adopted.

<u>Outcome 2:</u> The poorest and most vulnerable increasingly participate in, and benefit more equitably from, China's social and economic development. In particular the project contributes to achievement of:

Outcome 2.1: The poorest and most vulnerable play a more active role in China's social, economic and cultural development. Outputs:

- Equal access to justice and a supportive legal and policy environment strengthens the capacity of communities and civil society organizations to empower poor and vulnerable groups to fully participate in shaping China's cultural and socioeconomic development.
- Ethnic minorities are empowered to participate in cultural, socio-economic and political life to a greater degree and benefit from culture-based economic development.
- 94. The project also continues to contribute to the following outcomes and country outputs in the new 2011 -2015 UN Country Programme Results and Resources Framework:

Outcome 1: Deepen the reforms that address disparities, promote equitable distribution of public resources and foster equal access to social services and livelihood support

Country programme output 1.2: Integrated approaches that provide rural communities with access to land, technology, financial services and markets and that enable them to adapt to climate change, are promoted.

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Outcome 4: Low carbon and other environmentally sustainable strategies and technologies are adapted widely to meet China's commitments and compliance with Multilateral Environmental Agreements

Country programme output: 4.1 Policy and capacity barriers for the sustained and widespread adoption of low carbon and other environmentally sustainable strategies and technologies removed

Outcome 5: The vulnerability of poor communities and ecosystems to climate change is reduced. Output 5.1: A strengthened policy, legal, institutional framework for the sustainable use of land, water, the conservation of biodiversity, and other natural resources in fragile ecosystems is enforced and 5.2: the integration of gender, vulnerability assessments, risk reduction and adaptation to climate change into local development planning and service delivery in support of poor communities is promoted.

# **4. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

Summary Rating – Implementation approach	Satisfactory
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## 4.1 Impact of Institutional Arrangements on effective Project Implementation

- 95. The Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Wild Relatives of Crops (CWRC) project was signed off by the GEF Council in 2006, formally launched in June 2007 and is scheduled to be implemented over six years. The inception meeting of the project was held in December of 2007 and made some adjustments to project design as has been discussed in Section 3 above. The current end date for the project is December 2013.
- 96. Institutional arrangements for project management and implementation were executed in line with the structure established during design<sup>10</sup>. A national Project Management Office (PMO) was established in Beijing within MoA and a national Project Steering Committee (PSC) was established to guide the overall strategic direction of the project.
- 97. Following project inception, project managers decided that there was no longer a need to establish new Conservation Units within Agricultural Bureaux at the County level, (identified in the project document under Output 3.1) because Agricultural Bureaux had already established environmental sections as part of ongoing national strengthening of environmental management structures. The issue identified in the Project Document that 'few counties have conservation focussed government bodies to implement or promote conservation activities' was no longer seen to be a limiting factor for the Provinces and Counties where the project was to be implemented.
- 98. Instead, the project was implemented at the pilot sites through the newly established sections of County Agricultural Bureaux responsible for biodiversity conservation and environmental management. Local Project Management Offices (PMO) established within Agricultural Bureaux in the eight Provinces under the Project perform the main, on the ground, project management role at the pilot sites, with the national PMO providing an overall planning, review, co-ordination and monitoring role. The direct involvement of Agricultural Bureaux as Local Project Management Offices has helped to build their capacity for CWRC. In particular it has helped to build their support and capacity for implementing an approach to CWRC that combines in-situ conservation objectives with agricultural production and sustainable livelihood support. It has also increased the knowledge of these Agricultural Bureaux on WRC and their capacity for monitoring the status of WRC.
- 99. The integration of LPSC within the Leading Groups for Conservation of Wild Relatives of Crops in each of the Provinces and Counties where the pilot sites are located has also worked extremely effectively to build the capacity and support of these groups for an approach to CRWC that integrates conservation with sustainable livelihood support. The project has helped to catalyze a collaborative approach to CWRC where member institutions of LGWRC identify opportunities to achieve their own strategic objectives while at the same time supporting conservation of WRC. This multi-sector partnership arrangement has delivered real on the ground impacts at the pilot sites and has been central to the effectiveness of the project at the pilot sites visited by the ET. The involvement of key Provincial level decision makers in the project has also helped to secure

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> as outlined in the project document and inception report

Provincial level support for the approach developed at the project sites and to increase their awareness of the importance of CWRC.

- 100. The role of the national and local technical advisors (CTA and LTA) in providing expert advice to local management institutions has also been critical in ensuring that project activities and implementation strategies are based on sound knowledge of WRC and biodiversity conservation.
- 101. At the national level, overall project implementation is managed and co-ordinated through the national PMO. At this level however the PMO members themselves are not long term staff of the MoA's Department of Science Technology and Education, Division of Resources and Environment. This differs from the LPMO who are long term staff members of local Agricultural Bureaux. The national PMO has seven full-time staff: a coordinator/manager, a senior policy adviser, an information officer, a communication officer, a contract officer, a project assistant and a project secretary. The PMO team specialise in implementing international and national development projects and are responsible for managing a number of projects concurrently. This is unusual for a UNDP GEF project PMO which is normally dedicated to one specific UNDP GEF project. However, in this instance the multi-project management role of the PMO does not appear to have detracted from their ability to oversee project implementation.
- 102. The national PMO has actively managed the project, maintaining regular telephone communication with LPMO and LPSC and with technical advisors. They appeared to the ET to have forged close working relationships with the key local stakeholder institutions consulted during the MTE and to be effective in performing an overall co-ordination, management, monitoring, planning and networking role. PMO have also drawn on their experience in managing development and biodiversity conservation projects to apply lessons from other projects to support adaptive management of this project, as will be discussed further below.
- 103. A number of sub contracts were managed by PMO for national level project activities and in order to support the project with short term inputs from national and international experts. These were in particular to support: the policy review and strengthening objectives of Outcome 2, national level awareness raising and capacity building objectives under Outcome 3, development of the overall Monitoring and Alerting System under Outcome 4 and publicity and information dissemination under Outcome 5. Management of these contracts by PMO appears to have been effective. The ET was not provided with copies of all products but those that were provided appeared to be of a reasonable standard and PMO / UNDP CO did not report any concerns over the delivery or standard of any products delivered by the sub contractors.
- 104. PMO have catalogued the various information products developed under the project and currently has copyright of key documents. Training and awareness raising material was disseminated to LPMO for use in local project activities, as well as to national and local project steering committee members.
- 105. The national level PSC was established on July 24, 2008. MoA chairs the PSC (Department of Science, Technology and Education) which is composed of representatives from 9 departments and agencies including, MOF (Department of International Cooperation), The State Council Leading-Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, The Ministry of Science the Technology (Department of Development Planning, MOST), State Forestry Administration (Chinese Academy of Forestry, SFA), Ministry of Environmental Protection (Foreign Economic Cooperation Office, MEP), Ministry of Land and Resources, the All-China Women's Federation (Department of Women's Development) and UNDP China.
- 106. At the national level the PSC performs an important multi-sector advisory role, helping to ensure that the project remains aligned with relevant national biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation strategies, and to share project learning and impact across a range of relevant agencies. The central level PSC have actively supported project implementation through the annual combined PSC - Tri Partite meetings. A number of additional PSC meetings have also been called when PMO / UNDP CO felt it to be necessary to get additional guidance and support.

107. UNDP County Office provides an advisory, monitoring, review and oversight role as the Project's Implementing Agency. It has worked consistently with the PMO in review of quarterly monitoring reports, annual progress reports, and in developing annual work plans. UNDP CO has also supported PMO in undertaking annual Performance Implementation Reviews and in preparing for key project planning and evaluation activities, such as at project inception and for mid term evaluation. UNDP CO also co-ordinate with UNDP Regional Office in providing overall strategic guidance to the project. The current project managers at UNDP Country Office, and at UNDP / GEF Regional office have recently been appointed. The ET's evaluation of these offices' past contribution to project implementation is based on discussions with the current managers, PMO and from review of the literature.



Figure 2: Schematic Representation of the Institutional Arrangements for Project Implementation.

## 4.2 Financial Planning and Management

108. The Project Document records a total budget of US\$20,898,000, including \$8,056,000 of GEF funds, US\$650,000 contributed by UNDP, US\$5,982,000 of co financing from the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture and US\$6,210,000 from local government. To date US\$4,958,433 of GEF funds have been spent and US\$14,402,736 of co-financing. Planned and Actual expenditure relating to the 5 project Outcomes is recorded in Table 2 for GEF funds and Table 3 for Co-Financing.

Table 2: CWRC Project Planned and Actual expenditure to date: GEF Funds		
Outcome Budgets	Planned Budget	Actual Expenditure
US\$	US\$	US\$

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Totals	7,850,000	4,958433
Outcome 5.	1,180000	349,233
Outcome 4.	270,000	968,119
Outcome 3.	1,250,000	1,520,168
Outcome 2.	900,000	266,548
Outcome 1.	4,250,000	1,854,365

Table 3: CWRC Project Planned and Actual e	expenditure to date: Co-Financing
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Outcome Budgets US\$	Planned Budget US\$	Actual expenditure US\$
Outcome 1.	450,000	6,023,000
Outcome 2.	200,000	269,459
Outcome 3.	1,810,000	4,157,354
Outcome 4.	4,312,000	3,952,923
Outcome 5.	1,370,000	-
Totals	10,713,660	14,402,736

- 109. The China International Centre for Economic and Technical Exchanges (CICETE) was appointed to manage the GEF funds under the project. They are not responsible for co-financed funds. CICETE is an administratively autonomous agency which operates directly under the Ministry of Commerce, established in 1983 to provide professional management service for international aid programmes. CICETE signed a financial management service agreement with MoA to support the current UNDP /GEF/MoA project in 2007. The main financial management tool used by CICETE is the Project Management System (PMS). They use the quarterly work plan and annual work plan provided by PMO to manage project budgets, applying to UNDP for pre-payment in to exclusive RMB and US\$ accounts set up by CICETE for the project. Payments for project activities or contracts that are supported by GEF Funds are managed by CICETE who review invoices and require a payment confirmation paper signed by the national project director (NPD). CICETE submits quarterly Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditure (FACE) reports to UNDP at the end of each quarter and a Combined Delivery Report (CDR) to PMO and UNDP at the end of each financial year.
- 110. To date, F63.16% of total GEF funds have been spent, a reasonable level of expenditure after just over three and a half years of project implementation. PMO stated to the ET that they feel confident that the remaining GEF budget is adequate to cover planned GEF supported activities until EOP in December 2013, particularly given the increase in levels of co-financing. They also however felt that certain components of the original budget were unrealistic, particularly the budget for under Outcome 4 to support the proposed germplasm study and establishment of the monitoring and alerting system.
- 111. Overall co-financing expenditure represents a 134.43% increase in the total amount budgeted until end of project. Of the total, US\$1,672,307 is in-kind support, an increase of 121.18% from the original budget for the entire project. PMO assured the ET that the significant increase in actual versus planned expenditure reflects an increase in overall co-financing levels rather than the fact that the project had already spent funds allocated for the last two years of project implementation. PMO assured the ET that they feel confident that the project will continue to have a strong level of co-financed support until EOP. However, they were unable to provide the ET with any detail of likely financing levels over the remaining two years, four months of project implementation, and explained that this would be agreed with relevant government institutions based on the annual

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work plan and project implementation at the 64 demonstration sites. CICETE does not have any detail of co-financing expenditure or future budgets.

- 112. The effective partnership arrangements fostered through the LGWRC and the links to national initiatives such as the village head training scheme contributed greatly to the additional co-financing leveraged by the project. The increase in co-financing not only demonstrates a strong level of support and commitment to the project by key national institutions, it has also significantly contributed to the effectiveness of project implementation which would otherwise have been negatively affected by the devaluation of the US dollar relative to the Yuan Renminbi (RMB) over the life of the project.
- 113. Management of GEF outcome budgets has however been far from satisfactory. Outcome 3 is 121.61% overspent at mid term and Outcome 4 is 258.56% overspent. PMO and CICETE stated to the ET that they were unaware that GEF budgets needed to be managed by Outcome. They regarded the GEF funds as 'a single pot' available to be spent on any of the agreed outputs, so long as these contributed to the overall project Objective, and were not activities / outputs originally identified as to be supported by co-financing. The annual budget and expenditure that led to the significant overspend on Outcomes 3 and 4 was signed off by UNDP CO and MoA, and discussed and reviewed by the PSC. More capacity building for There seems to have been a generic lack of understanding of effective financial management of project budgets and of updated GEF rules and regulations both PMO and, including by UNDP CO.
- 114. The decision by project managers to invest considerably more GEF funds in Outcomes 3 and 4 than had been budgeted was explained by PMO as due to a range of factors:
  - Opportunities identified to build on learning from other projects and to link in to national awareness raising initiatives in order to increase project impact required additional funding than was originally planned in the Outcome 3 budget.
  - The increase in co-financing for Outcome 1 led PMO to believe that additional GEF resources could be spent on other Outcomes
  - The cost of contracting professional agencies to undertake germplasm assessments was significantly more than had been identified in the budget at design. US\$459,700 was spent on the germplasm study, which was more than the original entire project budget for Outcome 4 which was US\$270,000.
  - An identified need to purchase vehicles for the extension services of Agricultural Bureaux to
    enable them to undertake livelihood support, awareness raising and monitoring activities
    at the pilot sites and as part of capacity building support at the local level. Again an expense
    / input not identified in project design and involving a total cost (US\$340,000) of more than
    the entire original project budget for Outcome 4.
- 115. PMO explained that the under spend of only 29.62% of funds on Outcome 2 was due to the fact that project management are waiting for decision by MoA senior managers and central state agencies on CWRC related policy and regulatory changes at the national level. This process is beyond the scope of influence of the project. However, if national level policy and regulatory changes are put in place this would then require the project to support awareness raising activities and to strengthen the related regulatory framework the Provincial and County levels.
- 116. The expenditure deviations from planned Outcome budgets are of significant concern, given the extent of overspending on Outcomes 3 and 4. Under GEF regulations<sup>11</sup>, project amendments are categorized as either minor or major depending on the degree of the impact / change in project design and implementation. Budget re-allocations among Outcomes with amounts involving 10% of the total project grant or more are considered to be major amendments. Major amendments after

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> GEF guideline on Project and Programmatic Approach Cycles, section on Project Amendment, Cancellation/Termination and Extension (October 2010)

a project has been endorsed/approved by the CEO require the project to be CEOendorsed/approved again and may need to be re-circulated to the GEF Council for a four week comment period, prior to the CEO's endorsement of the amendments.

- 117. Minor amendments involving amounts of less than 10% of the total project budget may be undertaken at the discretion of the responsible GEF Agency and should be reported as part of the annual Project Implementation Review (PIR) reports, submitted to the GEF Secretariat.
- 118. It would appear from the information provided to the ET that the expenditure variations for each Outcome overspend / under spend are just within the 10% limit and therefore would be classified as 'minor amendments'. However, it should also be noted that the information and expenditure figures given to the ET were hand written figures provided by PMO on the second to last day of the evaluation. Neither adequate time nor information was provided to enable the ET to undertake a thorough assessment of the impacts of expenditure to date, analysis provided in this report is based on the verbal and hand written information provided to the ET by PMO. It is strongly recommended that a more formal audit process be undertaken to document planned / actual expenditure to date for GEF funds and for co-financing. The audit should be reviewed by UNDP CO and UNDP RO to determine whether expenditure is acceptable and to assess any implications for the project budget and likelihood of achieving outcomes by EOP. The results of the audit should also be reported in the next PIR.
- 119. Based on the information provided, the ET consider that, overall, project expenditure to date has contributed to strengthen project achievements. There does not appear to have been any misuse of funds, although the changes to outcome budgets should have been reported and reviewed within PIR. Expenditure in support of Outcome 3 has enabled the project to link in to national training schemes and to introduce the Farmer Field School approach to training and capacity building. These were not activities identified during project design but have contributed to project achievements to date and have significantly contributed to Outcome 1 and support Outcomes 2 and 5. The real cost / benefit ratio of activities budgeted under Outcome 3 can be spread across four Outcomes. The increased expenditure on Outcome 4 appears to be in part due to the actual cost of undertaking activities identified in design (the germplasm study under output 4.4) being considerably more than was predicted at the time of design. However it will be important for the audit to assess whether increased expenditure on the germplasm study was reasonable and in line with intended costs / benefits. The cost of purchasing vehicles to enable County Agricultural Bureaux to have year round access to project sites was an new, additional cost and input not originally budgeted in project design. Although PMO appear to have budgeted the purchase of vehicles under Outcome 4 as part of project support for WRC monitoring activities, the vehicles have also enabled Agricultural Bureaux to have year round access to pilot sites supporting Outcome 1. The vehicles are also likely to increase the ability of Agricultural Bureaux to provide CWRC support in the long run, contributing to Outcomes 3 and 5. Again therefore the real cost / benefit ratio of this expense can be spread across four Outcomes. It is not possible, however, for the ET to come to any real assessment as to whether the purchase of vehicles was an acceptable use of GEF funds without further information on the current resources available to Agricultural Bureaux, the process followed to purchase the vehicles and provisions for on-going maintenance of vehicles following EOP. It is recommended that this also form part of a more detailed end of year audit.

#### 4.3 Stakeholder Involvement

Summary Rating

Satisfactory

- 120. As outlined above, project design and implementation mechanisms are working effectively to support relevant CWRC administrative structures at Provincial and County levels.
- 121. The direct involvement of Provincial Departments of Agriculture, County Agricultural Bureaux and Provincial and County Leading Groups for Wild Relatives of Crops (LGWRC) in the design and implementation of project activities at the pilot sites is building their capacity for CWRC. As discussed above DoA and Agricultural Bureaux are the main national institutions responsible for

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CWRC in the Provinces and the LGWRC are performing a key multi-sector co-ordination role. By embedding development of the livelihoods, incentive based approach to CWRC, capacity building activities and development of the monitoring and alerting system within relevant local institutions in the eight Provinces, the project has supported the likelihood that these institutions will establish the approach and monitoring system as part of their way of working and that the project will therefore achieve a sustainable impact.

- 122. At the County level, where the pilot sites are located, the effective involvement of key institutional stakeholders in project implementation appears to be working to overcome one of the limitations identified during project design that 'often agricultural extension approaches do not recognise the long term benefits of conservation of wild relatives and focus too heavily on approaches that maximise short term yield'. County and Provincial representatives of Agricultural Bureaux and Departments, and the representatives of institutions involved in the LGWRC who were consulted during the MTE all expressed their support for CWRC and for the integration of WRC conservation in to agricultural production and felt that their capacity had been raised through involvement in the project.
- <sup>123.</sup> The Project has adopted an effective participatory approach to involve farmers and community members in the design and implementation of project activities at the pilot sites. The identification of alternative livelihood opportunities that also support conservation of wild relatives of crops was achieved with farmers, supported by relevant staff from the extension services of County Agricultural Bureaux and project technical advisors, in discussion with LGWRC. Equally, the training materials developed under the project were based on training needs identified by farmers, supported by technical advice. The direct involvement of farmers in designing and developing project activities has established their support for the project, built their capacity for new, more sustainable livelihoods and increased their understanding of the importance of conserving wild relatives of crops. The project has also paid close attention to gender equity and has promoted the involvement of women in project training activities<sup>12</sup> and livelihood support activities.
- 124. At the national level, the Project Steering Committee is an important vehicle for involvement of key national level stakeholders. The PSC has been actively involved in reviewing project work plans, impacts and in providing multi-sector advice. It has helped to ensure that the project continues to align with and support national strategic priorities relative to CWRC and is also a means to share project learning and impact across a range of relevant Ministries.

Responsibility	Member Agencies
Leadership	Deputy mayor who is also in charge of the division of the Department of Agriculture's responsible for agriculture , science and technology.
Associate Heads	Heads of the Municipal Government Office and of the Agricultural bureaux are associate heads of the group
Member	Municipal Bureau of Forestry
Member	The Women's Federation
Member	Municipal Bureau of Environmental Protection

Table 4: Example of the composition of the Leading Group for Conservation of Wild Relatives of Plants established by Jinghong Municipal Government, Yunnan Pilot Project

<sup>12</sup> For example the project measures training in 'person time of training and in Yunan Province women received 467 person time of training, In Heilongjiang: 275 'person time', Ningxia: 363, Jiling: 650, Henan: 300, Guangxi: 290, Hai'ana: 416

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Member	Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development.
Administrative Office	Located in the Municipal Agricultural Bureau

# Table 5: Example of key Project Implementation Team for the Yunnan Pilot Project

Breakdown of Responsibility	Responsible People No.	Who/which agencies
Leadership	1*	Jinghong City Vice-mayor
Director	1*	Jinghong Agri-Bureau Director
Plan and technical head	1*	Jinghong Agri-Environ Protection Station Senior Agronomist
Credit	1*	Jinghong Rural Credit Cooperative Director
Pig house construction	2*	Jinghong veterinary station senior engineer
FFS establishment	1*	Jinghong Agri-Environ Protection Station Senior Agronomist
Student awareness	1	Jinghong Agri-Environ Protection Station Senior Agronomist
Wild rice survey and monitoring	1	Jinghong Agri-Environ Protection Station Agronomist
Development of monitoring and warning system	2	Jinghong Agri-Environ Protection Station Agronomist
Publicity campaign	1	Jinghong Agri-Environ Protection Station Agronomist
Financial management	1	Jinghong Agri-Environ Protection Station Accountant-general

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implementation at village level	4	Jingna Township government vice-director Jingna Township agri-service centre director Nanling village director and community head
Total	17	

\* indicates individual is a member of LPMO

# Table 6: National and Local Level Stakeholders and their Principal Functions in the Project

Outcomes	Institutions <sup>13</sup>	Principal Functions	
Outcome 1	MoA	<ul> <li>Leadership and coordination at national and provincial levels.</li> </ul>	
	DoA/AEMS	<ul> <li>Provide technical guidance/consultation, conduct baseli survey of WRC, establish FFS, and hold training courses</li> </ul>	ne
	CAAS	<ul> <li>Development of threat assessment methodology and Design of incentive mechanisms</li> </ul>	
	ВоА	<ul> <li>Responsible for Local Project Management and for implementation of the incentive livelihood based suppo at the pilot sites.</li> </ul>	rt
	CTA (local and national)	<ul> <li>Provide advice and support in design and implementation at project sites.</li> </ul>	วท
	GoC	<ul> <li>Involvement of relevant governmental departments wh participated in the project</li> </ul>	ich
	DoG	<ul> <li>Provide co-finance and technical support for implementation of pilot site activities.</li> </ul>	
	Township and Village	<ul> <li>Design and establishment of incentive based alternative livelihood activities at the pilot sites; participation in awareness raising activities and training; revision of villa and township regulations.</li> </ul>	e Ige
	Women's Federation	<ul> <li>Organize local women to take part in the training event and identify potential livelihood support.</li> </ul>	S
Outcomes 2, 3 and 4	National Research Institutes and universities	<ul> <li>Conduct policy/regulation study and provide recommendations for modification/formulation of policies/regulations related to CWRC.</li> </ul>	
	Provincial & local		

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> AEMS: Agricultural Environmental Monitoring Station, which is not an administrative agency but can provide technical support for its DoA; BoA Bureau of Agriculture at County/City Level; CGRIS: Crop Germplasm Resources Information System in China; DoA: Department of Agriculture at Provincial Level; DoG: Departments of Local County/City Government relevant to implementation of support at the Pilot Sites, mainly including Transportation Bureau, Forestry Bureau, Poverty Reduction Office, Water Conservation Bureau, Rural Credit Cooperative; GoC: Government of County/City; MoA: Ministry of Agriculture of China

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	Governmental Departments	•	Provide assistance for policy/regulation consultations. Participate in capacity building and organize relevant training
Outcome 3	Experts from national and local research institutes	•	Develop training materials and provide advice
Outcome 4	National Research Institutes and universities AEMS at County/City Level		Develop the monitoring and alerting system Conduct WRC monitoring Detection of superior germplasm in WRC
Outcome 5	Similar to Outcome 1 / To be determined as part of next phase of the project		Similar to Outcome 1 / To be determined as part of next phase of the project

# 4.4: Monitoring & Evaluation

Summary Rating	
Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Design	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation	Moderately Satisfactory

## 4.4.1: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Design

- 125. The Project Document sets out the standard UNDP / GEF monitoring and evaluation procedures and an overall budget for key monitoring and evaluation activities. The Project Document specifies that further detail on monitoring responsibilities and events should be developed as part of the project's inception phase.
- 126. The Inception Report provides some further detail on monitoring responsibilities. Output indicators were also identified as part of project inception although a specific Monitoring and Evaluation Plan was not developed; the monitoring and evaluation section of the Inception Report is essentially the same as the text of the Project Document.
- 127. Key elements of project monitoring within the CWRC project design include: Annual Project Reports (APR) to be prepared by PMO as part of monitoring and reporting procedures for the UNDP Country Office and annual Performance-Project. Implementation Reviews (PIR) to be prepared by PMO and UNDP CO as the main monitoring tool required by the GEF. Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings provide high level strategic review and advice and meet annually or more regularly if required; an annual Tripartite Review <u>Report</u> (TPR) is the highest policy level meeting of the parties directly involved in project implementation. The APR and PIR form the main information documents for the TPR. Day to day monitoring is the responsibility of the Project Coordinator and CTA with the PMO also required to prepare quarterly progress reports. Periodic thematic reports should be submitted to UNDP CO and UNDP GEF regional office by PMO as required. Independent mid term and final evaluations are key components of project evaluation.
- 128. As well as outlining the key components of project monitoring and evaluation, the Project Document also clearly outlines the project logic and rationale, which is important to any assessment of the effectiveness of project impact and achievements. The overall framework of Objective / Outcome / Output is clear and logical within the text of the document and the logframe. The Project Document specifies indicators at the Objective and Outcome level. Output indicators were

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developed later as part of the inception phase. However, critically, the indicators developed in the Project Document for measuring project progress and impact, and those developed subsequently for the outputs, are not Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time Bound (SMART) and do not support effective monitoring and evaluation of project impact.

## Limitations of the Monitoring and Evaluation 'Plan'

- 129. No specific monitoring and evaluation plan was developed, although monitoring and evaluation activities are incorporated in to annual work plans, and as outlined above both the Project Document and the Inception Report outline the key monitoring and evaluation processes and reporting requirements. Responsibility, budget and an indication of timeframe for key monitoring and evaluation activities are included as part of design within the Project Document, Inception Report and annual work plans.
- 130. The main flaw in the design of the monitoring and evaluation framework is the weakness of indicators, at all levels in the logframe. **Table 7** Shows the project Objective and component outcomes and the indicators selected at project design to demonstrate achievement of these at mid term and end of project evaluations.

## Table 7: Project Objective, Outcomes and Indicators

	Ind	icators
<b>Objective:</b> To mainstream conservation of WRC in agricultural production landscapes in eight provinces in China	• •	In all target sites, the area occupied by wild relatives shows no decline at the mid-point and end of the project compared with the area in 2005 At all target sites, at the mid-point and end of the project, no land on which populations of wild relatives occur has been taken out of agricultural production
Outcomes		
Outcome 1: Generation of sustainable financial and other incentives for conservation of wild relatives at the county level in eight provinces.	•	MTE: Proportion of financial incentives paid to farmers by Govt or the project is less than 40% Farmers receiving financial or other incentives.
Outcome 2: The policy, legal and regulatory system supports conservation of wild relatives.	•	legislative shortcomings resolved by EOP Implementation of conservation activities at local level not hindered by regulations / legislation
Outcome 3: Stakeholders at the central and local level have adequate capacity to conserve wild relatives.	•	EOP: threat reduction 80%; 75% of farmers actively conserving wild relatives MTE: threat reduction 30%; 40% of farmers actively conserving wild relatives
Outcome 4: Accurate and timely information concerning the status of wild relatives is available and utilized	•	MTE: local & central policy makers are able to describe the status of wild relatives populations. EOP: Conservation work plans of MoA based on information generated by the information management system
Outcome 5:	•	EOP: parallel initiatives in 50 sites
Lessons and experiences from target provinces create	•	EOP: MoA and concerned agencies have

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conditions for replication and expansion of conservation	integrated lessons from project into ag dev
programmes.	policy

- 131. Some examples of the weakness of the current indicators are given below. Section 7 of this MTE report strongly recommends that all project indicators are revised and strengthened following the MTE, to enable effective monitoring over the remaining life of the project and evaluation of impact at EOP.
- 132. The Project Objective is: To mainstream conservation of WRC in agricultural production landscapes in eight provinces in China

Currently, the indicators that were developed to show that this has been achieved are:

- In all target sites, the area occupied by wild relatives shows no decline at the mid-point and end of the project compared with the area in 2005
- At all target sites, at the mid-point and end of the project, no land on which populations of wild relatives occur has been taken out of agricultural production
- 133. Both indicators focus solely on the pilot sites, one looks at the area occupied by the target species at the sites and the other focuses on the impact of conservation activities on the land area under agricultural production at the target sites. Both indicators have a strong focus on impacts relating to outcome 1; they do not measure the extent of achievement of the project's overall objective of mainstreaming conservation of WRC in agricultural landscapes in eight provinces in China.
- 134. Indicators at the objective level should demonstrate *mainstreaming* in eight provinces and enable an assessment of the sustainability of project impacts. For example objective level indicators should enable measurement of the extent to which:
  - Leading groups for CWRC and Departments of Agriculture (DoA) in all 8 provinces have adopted the incentive, livelihood based approach to CWRC developed under the project.
  - Capacity assessments demonstrate that Departments of Agriculture in all eight provinces and associated Bureaux of Agriculture and Leading Groups for CWRC have the capacity to initiate and manage incentive based conservation of WRC without the need for external UNDP GEF project support.
  - The CWRC monitoring and alerting system developed under the project has been adopted by DoA / BA in eight provinces, and is sustainable in the long term (funding sources identified / monitoring activities and data analysis built in to relevant work plans)
  - The incentive based conservation mechanisms at all project sites have demonstrated the likelihood of sustainable impact, and farmers and other key local stakeholder groups support the approach and are actively supporting CWRC.

The above points are not intended as recommended indicators, but rather as an indication of the type of impacts that SMART indicators should seek to capture.

135. The indictors developed under Outcome 1 are also evaluated to be inappropriate and ineffective.

Outcome 1 aims to achieve: 'Generation of sustainable financial or other incentives for conservation of wild relatives at the county level in eight provinces'

The current indicators of impact are that:

- At the end of the project farmers, both women and men at the target sites in eight provinces with wild relatives growing on their land report that they are receiving financial or other benefits for conserving wild relatives.
- At the mid point of the project the proportion of financial incentives paid to farmers at each site that originates from government or project funds is less than 40% at the end of the project it is 0%

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- 136. The first indicator does not necessarily indicate the generation of *sustainable* financial or other incentives, it merely asks whether at the time of the evaluation farmers are receiving some form of financial or other benefit.
- 137. The second indicator is particularly confusing in that it has been interpreted by PMO to be a measure of the % of project funds spent at the project sites. This is understandable given the wording of the indictor. However measuring the % expenditure is not really an indication of impact. The fact that at project end no funds will be being spent at the sites is merely a statement of fact that the project had ended, not a measurement of impact; it would seem obvious that at the end of the project o% of financial incentives paid to farmers will come from the project! Equally, the fact that at mid term less than 40% of project funds have been spent on the project does not demonstrate the 'Generation of sustainable financial or other incentives for conservation of wild relatives at the county level in eight provinces'. This project indicator would have been more appropriately worded the other way around, ie: if it assessed whether adequate and sustainable incentives for conservation of wild relatives of crops at the project sites were being generated from sustainable non-government / not project sources.
- 138. The above examples are intended to illustrate the weakness of the current indicators. Indicators must provide a means of measuring the level of achievement of the intended Objective / Outcome / Output objective and must be SMART.

## 4.4.2: Monitoring & Evaluation Plan Implementation

- 139. In practice project monitoring has been undertaken through both formal and informal mechanisms. APRs and PIRs have been completed each year and provide a useful review of project progress. APRs identify major achievements, constraints and lessons learnt. The PSC and TPR meetings were combined as one annual meeting and were reported to the ET to be effective and active in providing overall strategic guidance, review and decision making. Additional PSC meetings were called when PMO felt the need for specific guidance on key issues.
- 140. The national PSC function has been replicated in the eight provinces where the project's pilot sites were located. Local Project Steering Committees (LPSC) provide an effective co-ordination, strategic guidance, review and decision making mechanism at the local level.
- 141. Active telephone information exchange and communication has also been important in enabling the national level PMO and CTA to keep abreast of project implementation at the local sites and forms an 'informal' but important part of project monitoring. PMO and the CTA keep in regular telephone contact with LPMO, LTA and where necessary LSPC at the project sites and with sub contractors. This active management and communication appears to be effective in enabling PMO to informally monitor project progress and adaptively manage the project despite the vast geographic spread of the project sites.
- 142. However, effective execution of the 'Monitoring and Evaluation Plan' is limited by both the weak logframe indicators and by the absence of any specific monitoring and evaluation plan to link monitoring at the local project sites with generic monitoring systems at the national level. Although standard procedures for monitoring and evaluation of UNDP / GEF projects are outlined in the Project Document and Inception Report, no specific Monitoring and Evaluation Plan has been developed to guide the type and frequency of monitoring information collected at local project sites or the flow of information between LPMO / LTA / LPSC and national PMO / CTA and PSC. In practice PMO ask LPMO to write quarterly project progress reports which provide PMO with the information needed for their quarterly project progress reporting to UNDP. These reports are largely narrative and are not based on any specific monitoring framework or indicators. If a report is not received on

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time or lacks key information PMO / CTA will call the LPMO to gather the information through 'informal' telephone communication.

- 143. Monitoring and evaluation of the project would be greatly strengthened through development of a clear Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and SMART indicators.
- 144. The MTE has been held almost a year later than planned; the inception report states that the 'Mid-Term Evaluation will be undertaken at the end of the second year of implementation'. The fact that there are only two years, three months remaining before project closure presents the PMO with additional challenges in ensuring the project objective is achieved before EOP than if the MTE had been held at mid term.
- 145. It should also be noted that a number of PSC members commented that the PMO's mid term progress report did not provide them with adequate detailed information on project achievements to date. Although the mid term report prepared by PMO provides useful analysis and information, it is certainly 'lighter' than would normally be expected and the MTE would also have benefited from further detail and quantitative data and further information on project achievements and implementation mechanisms.
- 146. The need for an effective and robust Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and sound indicators will become even more important in the last half of project implementation with 64 replication sites planned and 64 local management groups consequently involved in project implementation.<sup>14</sup>

## 4.4.3: Contribution of Monitoring and Evaluation to Adaptive Management of the project

- 147. In project management it is good practice to regard the project plan and logical framework as 'live' documents used to guide planning and monitoring but also open to revision and refinement as circumstances evolve, and as project monitoring produces feedback on what works and what needs to be done differently. This is the basis of "adaptive management" of the project.
- 148. PMO have regularly assessed lessons learnt from project implementation within APR reports and have used this learning to guide and strengthen implementation of the CWRC project. As will be examined further in section 5, both PMO and LPMO have also used informal monitoring and information exchange and learning from other projects to actively and adaptively manage project implementation.
- 149. The ET strongly recommend however that the MTE is used as a springboard for a more formal process of adaptive management, including a thorough revision of progress indicators in the logframe, development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and adjustment of planned activities and budgets under the five project outcomes so as to strengthen the likelihood of achieving sustainable impact at EOP, in line with the Project Objective.

# 4.5 Implementing and Executing Agencies' Performance and the Effectiveness of Project Management in Adapting to the Changing Development Context in China.

150. Implementing and Executing Agencies appear to be working closely together to plan, manage and review overall project implementation and have maintained a good working relationship with PSC members. Annual Work Plans are developed by PMO in the final quarter of the previous year and are discussed with UNDP CO before being submitted to the annual PSC / Tripartite meeting. Comments and recommendations by PSC members are then used to modify the annual work plan after which it is sent to NPD for approval and finally to UNDP CO.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> potentially 64 LPMO, LPSC as well as the project managers at the national level.

- 151. Project implementation mechanisms and impacts support the strategic objectives of the Ministry of Agriculture and have been adapted to align with national administrative structures for CWRC and to build on the increasingly receptive environment for biodiversity conservation in China.
- 152. The structures established at inception for project implementation at the local level in the eight focal Provinces, whereby LPMO are integrated in to Agricultural Bureaux and LPSC are integrated in to Leading Groups for Conservation of WRC, are working effectively to build capacity at Provincial and County levels and to support project outcomes.
- 153. The central PMO have worked actively to co-ordinate overall project implementation and have also performed an important networking role, forging partnerships with other national initiatives that have contributed to the effectiveness and efficiency of project implementation mechanisms. Project managers have effectively identified opportunities to align project implementation with national initiatives and in so doing to scale up and mainstream impact. An example of this is in the incorporation of training on biodiversity conservation in to the national village Head Training Scheme. Also in the decision not to initiate Trust Funds at the pilot sites but to support farmers to access financial loan mechanisms as part of newly implemented national agricultural support policies in the Counties.
- 154. PMO work well together as a team and work closely with LPMO, LPSC and the CTA and LTA in overseeing implementation of project activities at the pilot sites. They have also managed sub-contracts with individuals and agencies to produce a number of key studies, publications, to procure equipment, and to support development of the Monitoring and Alerting System. Some of the reports produced and equipment procured were inputs / outputs planned at design, others were identified by PMO during project implementation as being relevant to support achievement of outcome and project objectives.
- 155. Project activities supported under the project to date have contributed to the overall Project Objective. However, the allocation of activities to support component Outcomes and outputs in some cases does not follow the structure intended in design. An example is in development of the assessment methodology for the monitoring and alerting system, and the activities to subsequently undertake the baseline survey and monitoring. These were completed under Outcome 1 (activities 1.1.2 and 1.1.3) as they were identified by project managers to be a core component of the incentive mechanism developed at the pilot sites. These activities are also, however, core components of the monitoring and alerting system under Outcome 4.
- 156. Implementing and Executing agencies have also effectively built on increasing national support for biodiversity conservation to secure additional co-financing for the project, and to promote the project's contribution to the national strategic priority of agro-biodiversity conservation. The amount of additional co-financing that was reported to the ET by PMO is commendable and demonstrates national support for and interest in project outcomes, which in turn bodes well for sustainable impact.
- 157. PMO have also effectively incorporated lessons learnt from other initiatives in order to strengthen project implementation mechanisms and have worked closely with the UNDP / GEF China Biodiversity Partnership Framework to share project experiences. Examples include drawing on experience from the EU project for "Sustainable Agro-Biodiversity Management in the Mountain Areas of Southern China" which had introduced farmer field schools and applying the farmer field school approach to support establishment of the alternative livelihood, incentive based approach at the pilot sites. PMO also drew on experience from the TVE project to establish a specialized team for "Development of a Project Communication Strategy, Placement Plan and Publicity Materials".
- 158. The main weaknesses in project management to date has been in financial management, particularly in outcome budgeting and in monitoring project impact. As discussed above both PMO and UNDP CO failed to manage outcome budgets in line with planned expenditure. Based on the information provided, the ET considers however that expenditure under the project has worked to support overall project impact.

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- 159. Monitoring of project impact is also another weak area of project management by Implementing and Executing Agencies, the weakness in monitoring systems is largely due to the development of inappropriate indicators as part of project design, however, and also in the lack of a clear monitoring and evaluation plan.
- 160. Overall, Implementing and Executing agencies have worked effectively to achieve good impact by MTE and to adapt project implementation to build on the changing strategic context of CWRC in China. Project managers have also worked effectively to incorporate lessons from other projects and to align project activities with relevant national initiatives and strategies. Project Implementing and Executing agencies will however need to be careful to maintain a clear focus on achieving the five Outcomes, through their component outputs in order to secure a sustainable impact by EOP. Rationalisation of activities and budgets within work plans to support component outputs and outcomes will be important as will effective outcome budgeting and development of a clear Monitoring and Evaluation plan. A number of recommendations are made in the final section of this report to further strengthen project management and increase the likelihood of sustainable project impact by EOP.

# **5: ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT RESULTS**

- 161. This section of the MTE reviews the CWRC Project's achievements under each of the 5 main component Outcomes and overall, in relation to progress towards achieving the planned Project Objective.
- 162. A result is defined by GEF as 'a describable or measurable development change resulting from a cause-and-effect relationship. For GEF MTE evaluations the main focus is at the Outcome level. Evaluation assesses the extent to which outcome level results, through the component outputs, activities and implementation approach, are likely to contribute to achievement of Outcome and Project objectives by EOP. Outcomes and outcome 'results' are evaluated according to their 'relevance', 'effectiveness' and 'efficiency'.

## 5.1: Project Goal and Objective

- 163. The Goal towards which the CISG Project is to contribute is 'To sustainably conserve wild relatives of crop plants in China'. Part of the rationale for the current project is to provide experience and lessons generated at the local level, in eight Provinces, representing a diverse range of ecological and socio-economic conditions, in order to inform the development of appropriate strategies for conservation of wild relatives of crop plants throughout China.
- 164. The project's **Objective** is to mainstream conservation of wild relatives of crop plants in agricultural production landscapes in eight provinces of China.

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Objective:	Indicators
To mainstream conservation of wild relatives of crop plants in agricultural production landscapes in eight provinces in China	<ul> <li>In all target sites, the area occupied by wild relatives shows no decline at the mid-point and end of the project compared with the area in 2005</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>At all target sites, at the mid –point and end of the project, no land on which populations of wild relatives occur has been taken out of agricultural production</li> </ul>

- 165. As has been discussed in section 3 of this report, in the evaluation of the Monitoring and Evaluation system, the MTE has found the objective level indicators to be weak. They do not enable any measurement of the level of achievement of the project Objective and are not SMART. The indicators focus solely on the pilot sites, not on the extent to which the project has been able 'to mainstream conservation of wild relatives of crop plants in agricultural production landscapes in eight provinces in China'. The indicators are more relevant to Outcome 1 than to evaluation of impact at the Project's Objective level.
- 166. The following evaluation of achievements under each of the project's component Outcomes indicates that overall satisfactory progress is being made. The project has developed some key outputs and set a good foundation for achieving the overall project Objective by EOP. However, as will be discussed in the section of this report that assesses the likelihood of sustainable impact, it will be critical for project managers to maintain a clear focus on achieving the intended objectives of each Outcome and on ensuring that project outputs and outcomes are sustainable following EOP.

## 5.2: Project Outcomes

Outcome 1: Generation of sustainable financial or other incentives for their conservation at the county level in eight provinces;

Outcome 2: Policy, legal and regulatory system supports conservation;

Outcome 3: Stakeholders at the central and local level have adequate capacity to conserve wild relatives;

Outcome 4: Accurate and timely information concerning the status of wild relatives is available and utilized; and

Outcome 5: Lessons and experiences from target provinces create conditions for replication and expansion of conservation programs. In addition, this project will also contribute to alleviating poverty, improving educational levels and promoting gender equality at the wild crop relative sites.

5.2.1: Outcome 1

Summary Rating

Highly Satisfactory

Table x. Outcome 1 and indicators

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Generation of sustainable · At the end of the project, farmers, both women financial or other incentives for conservation of wild relatives at relatives growing on their land, report that they	Outcome 1.	Indicators
<ul> <li>the county level in eight provinces</li> <li>receiving financial or other benefits for conserving receiving financial or other benefits for conserving receiving financial or other benefits for conserving receiving financial or other benefits for conservation wild relatives</li> <li>At the mid-point of the project, the proportion financial incentives paid to farmers at each site originates from government or project funds is than 40%; at the end of the project it is 0%</li> </ul>	Generation of sustainable financial or other incentives for conservation of wild relatives at the county level in eight provinces	<ul> <li>At the end of the project, farmers, both women and men, at the target sites in eight provinces with wild relatives growing on their land, report that they are receiving financial or other benefits for conserving wild relatives</li> <li>At the mid-point of the project, the proportion of financial incentives paid to farmers at each site that originates from government or project funds is less than 40%; at the end of the project it is 0%</li> </ul>

## Sources: Project logical framework

## **Background**

- 167. Outcome 1 has been a core focus of project implementation to date. Activities under Outcome 1 have developed a sustainable livelihood, incentive based approach to in-situ conservation of wild relatives of crops. The approach identifies threats to WRC and supports communities to establish alternative livelihood activities that increase socio-economic benefits for local communities, improve farmers understanding of and support for CWRC and work to reduce threats to WRC. The approach supports conservation of WRC and agricultural production / alternative livelihoods and in so doing it strongly contributes to the project's overall Objective of incorporating conservation of CWRC in to 'agricultural production landscapes'.
- 168. Outcome 1 aimed to develop and test an approach at pilot sites in eight Provinces that could provide an alternative mechanism for in-situ conservation of WRC. The approach aligns with nationally identified priorities and increasing recognition by MoA and the Chinese Government of the critical importance of agro-biodiversity to China. The original project concept emerged from recognition by MoA of the limitations of existing in-situ and ex-situ conservation methods and a desire to develop an approach to CWRC that could be incorporated alongside agricultural production. Part of the rationale for mainstreaming CWRC within agricultural production is the need to maximise use of available agricultural land. It also reflects MoA's recognition of the need for a more participatory approach that works with farmers.
- 169. Five component outputs are outlined in the Project Document:

**Output 1.1**: Local Stakeholders design a socially appropriate incentive system

**Output 1.2**: Local authorities establish the administrative and regulatory structures necessary to implement the system

**Output 1.3**: Appropriate methods to ensure equitable distribution of financial or other benefits are established with participation of farmers

**Output 1.4**: The effectiveness of the incentive system is assessed and lessons learned are used in preparing refinements

Output 1.5: Experiences and lessons are learned from other countries

- 170. As has been briefly discussed under the section on Monitoring and Evaluation, the indicators established during design, to enable monitoring and evaluation of the level of achievement of Outcome 1, are neither SMART nor appropriate. This does not appear to have affected the impacts achieved under Outcome 1 to date but equally does not support effective monitoring or evaluation of impacts.
- 171. The fact that ' At the end of the project, farmers, both women and men, at the target sites in eight provinces with wild relatives growing on their land, report that they are receiving financial or other benefits for conserving wild relatives' does not demonstrate the 'Generation of <u>sustainable</u> financial or other incentives for conservation of wild relatives'. The indicator merely requires farmers to be receiving some form of financial or other benefits. The ET assume that the second indicator aims to establish some measure of sustainability when taken alongside the first indicator and that it was

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intended to demonstrate that the financial or other benefits received for CWRC are not reliant on government or project funds. However, it is somewhat ambiguous and again is not SMART. PMO have taken this second indicator to mean that at mid term less than 40% of project funds are being used to support incentive mechanisms at the project sites and that at project end this figure will be 0%. Again this is not an indicator of sustainable impact. The fact that at project end 0% of project or government funds will be used to support the incentive mechanisms shows that the project has ended, it does not demonstrate any sustainable positive impact! What is required here is some measure of the sustainability of measures established to decrease threats to WRC and / or of incentive mechanisms that directly conserve WRC at each site. The ET strongly recommend that the Project develops new SMART indicators that are able to capture this impact, based on the knowledge and understanding that the project now has of the sustainable livelihood, incentive based approach that has been developed.

- 172. A number of activities have been undertaken under Outcome 1. The main activities and outputs to date are:
  - Design of the baseline and monitoring assessment methodology to assess the status of WRC target resource, environmental and socio economic conditions at the pilot sites. (This output also directly contributes to Outcome 4)
  - Undertaking the baseline survey and subsequent monitoring, based on the assessment methodology developed, training of local Agricultural Bureaux staff in data collection and analysis and involvement of local farmers. (These activities also directly contribute to Outcome 4)
  - Design of the 'incentive mechanism' for the eight pilot sites.
  - Implementation of the 'incentive mechanism' at the eight pilot sites and good progress to establish the approach at six sites.
  - Quarterly and annual monitoring of project progress at the eight sites, as part of overall project monitoring, and the commissioning of an independent assessment report on the incentive mechanism.
  - An International Study Tour to Australia and New Zealand. Officials responsible for agrobiodiversity conservation, provincial agricultural leaders from the eight Provinces and a number of national experts were supported under the project to travel to New Zealand and Australia to study incentive mechanisms, laws and policies on biodiversity conservation.
  - Participation in the International Conference on Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Agrobiodiversity.
  - Assessment of the potential application of access and benefit sharing (ABS) mechanisms in China. The project organised an ABS Training Workshop, held in Beijing, with over 90 participants including national and international experts, Provincial and County breeding institutions, seed companies and villagers from the project sites. Experts from India and Costa Rica were invited to present the experiences, best practice and lessons learnt from their countries in establishing ABS. Material Transfer Agreements (MTA) between researchers who wish to access the target crops and farmers were identified as a potential mechanism to facilitate ABS at the pilot sites. The project has drawn up an MTA agreement and is currently helping to co-ordinate discussions between national researchers and farmers in order to encourage both parties to sign the agreement.
- 173. The aim at project design was to select eight pilot sites with a wide range of environmental and socio-economic economic conditions, which were also important sites for conservation of wild relatives of wheat, rice and soybean. This was in order to enable the project to develop an approach that would be widely applicable across China, and specifically that could be mainstreamed within the eight focal Provinces for project implementation.
- 174. Despite the wide range of environmental conditions encountered across the selected sites, there is some similarity in the socio-economic issues across all sites, reflecting the fact that significant

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populations of wild relatives of crops tend to be found in more remote areas and less developed areas in China.

## The sites selected as the project's pilot sites are:

Wild Rice:

- Zhaoping, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region
- Wenchang, Hainan Province
- Jinghong, Yunnan Province

## Wild Wheat:

- Urumqi, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
- Yanchi, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region

## Wild Soybean:

- Guxian, Tongbai, Henan Province
- Bayan, Heilongjiang Province
- Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, Jilin Province
- 175. The sustainable livelihood, incentive-based approach to CWRC developed at each site was based on analysis of the site specific threats to CWRC and understanding of baseline conditions established through the survey of the resource, environmental and socio-economic conditions and consultation with local stakeholders. This enabled the livelihood support mechanisms to be tailored to meet the real needs of both the communities and for effective in-situ conservation of the target resource.
- 176. Design of the baseline and monitoring methodology and subsequently activities to undertake the baseline survey and monitoring have been implemented under Outcome 1. They also however form a core component of Outcome 4. The ET understands the rationale for PMO having subsumed development of the threat assessment, baseline and monitoring under Outcome 1 as it a key building block for development of the sustainable livelihood, incentive-based approach. The resource, environmental, socio-economic and threat analyses provide the information base that enables the 'incentive mechanisms' to be tailored to the specific context of each site and effectively designed to directly reduce threats and support livelihoods. The ET agrees these assessments should be a core part of the sustainable livelihood, incentive based approach. The MTE will assess the contribution of these activities and outputs to both Outcomes 1 and 4.
- 177. Although the specific livelihood and incentive mechanisms supported at each site are different and are tailored to the specific socio-economic and conservation needs of that site, the overall approach followed has a number of generic components.
- 178. The overall approach was designed with the support of a specialised team and through extensive consultation with key stakeholders at the project sites. It also drew on international experience. Provincial agricultural leaders form the eight Provinces and a number of national experts were supported under the project to undertake a study tour to Australia and New Zealand. The individuals consulted during the MTE all felt this to have been useful and to have increased their understanding of effective agro-biodiversity approaches. The project's involvement in the International Conference on Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Agro-biodiversity also helped the project to build on lessons learnt and approaches developed internationally for in-situ conservation.
- 179. Project reports by PMO suggest that development of the 'incentive mechanism' consists of '3 parts, namely policy incentive mechanism, livelihood substitution and funds incentive mechanism'. PMO's mid term progress report states that the overall approach was developed:

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"though rounds of discussion, with consideration of great diverse in location, resources, environment and nationality etc of the project sites, the design principle of 'adaptation to local conditions' .... with the legal system as the basic issue, alternative livelihoods as the key activities, financial incentives as the backing and awareness enhancement as the approach"

180. The ET suggest, however, that there are seven core components to the incentive mechanisms developed at each site:

1. The WRC resource, socio-economic and environmental baseline survey and threat assessments, and analysis of the data resulting from these surveys, led by the sections of Agricultural Bureaux responsible for agro biodiversity conservation.

2. Design of site specific WRC conservation and livelihood support mechanisms with local farming communities, led by technical staff of Agricultural Bureaux, and involving close collaboration with the Leading Group for Conservation of Wild Relatives of Crops (LGWRC) in order to identify opportunities for multi-sector support to livelihoods and WRC conservation.

3. Policy and regulatory review and the modification of relevant regulations at the Provincial, / County and village level to strengthen the local regulatory support framework for CWRC.

4. Incorporation of CWRC and biodiversity conservation in to the local school curriculum and introduction of a scholarship scheme for 'double excellence' at primary and secondary schools.

5. Direct support to farmers to enable them to establish sustainable, alternative livelihoods though a participatory, consultative approach that is led by Agricultural Bureaux and relies on the involvement of farmers, and Leading Groups for Wild Relatives of Crops, and technical support from relevant experts. Direct support includes:

- The design and delivery of various types of training to build the capacity of farmers for alternative livelihood strategies and to raise their awareness and understanding of biodiversity conservation and CWRC. The training at some sites has included support to enable farmers to form co-operatives or business associations.
- Establishment of a Farmer Field School as the centre where the training will be delivered, including agricultural facilities that will build farmers' skills to enable them to establish alternative sustainable livelihoods.
- Construction of facilities (eg: roads, greenhouses, animal shelters, wells etc) and the provision
  of equipment and resources (eg: tools, seeds and seedlings) to initiate alternative livelihood
  activities. The support provided involves co-ordinated contributions form institutions within
  the Leading Groups for Wild Relatives of Crops (LGWRC) and the direct participation of
  farmers who provide 'in-kind' support for construction activities.
- Financial assistance to encourage and enable farmers to take out loans under Government schemes that support farmers to improve agricultural production. Support provided under the project is delivered to farmers who demonstrate that they want to establish more sustainable livelihoods that support CWRC.

6. Monitoring of the resource status of target WRC and of environmental and socio-economic conditions against the baseline established under 1, and data input to the Monitoring and Alerting System to inform local and national planners and decision makers.

7. Annual assessment of CWRC and livelihood / incentive support needs at the sites based on information from monitoring, and ongoing communication with local farmers. Delivery of extension support by MoA as required, and co-ordination with the LGWRC for any additional support needed to ensure sustainable impacts and effective CWRC.

181. The following sections assesses the overall relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the approach developed and the overall impact of achievements at the pilot sites by MTE. More detailed summaries of project support to the individual pilot sites are included in **Annex IX**.

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182. Overall, the ET considers the achievements by MTE under Outcome 1 to be highly satisfactory. The project has developed and demonstrated the potential effectiveness and relevance of an approach that can integrate conservation of wild relatives of crops in to agricultural production to support insitu CWRC, more efficient production and more sustainable livelihoods. The sustainable livelihood, incentive based approach outlined above has been tested at six pilot sites and is a cornerstone of project impact to date. Although the project has not yet completed implementation at two of the intended pilot sites, this was due to externalities beyond the project's control and instead project managers have moved ahead with planning for replication and scaling up of impact under Outcome 5, increasing the likelihood that the approach and lessons learnt from Outcome 1 will be scaled up and mainstreamed towards a sustainable impact by EOP.

## Evaluation and Rating of Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency

## Relevance (Highly Satisfactory)

- 183. At mid term the project has established and demonstrated the effectiveness of an approach that can be replicated as part of MoA's overall approach to in-situ CWRC in China. The participatory, sustainable livelihood based approach to conservation of WRC that has been developed under the project is highly relevant to MoA's strategic priorities and to the Project's overall Objective.
- 184. At the level of the pilot sites themselves, the approach has enabled the project to deliver livelihood support activities that are directly relevant to the socio-economic, environmental and WRC conservation needs of the target areas: design of support mechanisms is based on assessment of the specific socio-economic, environmental and WRC resource context, involves direct participation by farmers and close consultation with key local institutions through the LGWRC, led by the Agricultural Bureau which is the main institution responsible for CWRC at the local level. Capacity building and awareness raising support has therefore been relevant to meet both the institutional and livelihood needs of local stakeholders and to conservation of WRC. The inclusion of primary and secondary schools within awareness raising support is relevant to increasing understanding of agrobiodiversity in the long term. Policy and regulatory amendments are also relevant to support the objectives of both Outcomes 1 and 2 and to support sustainable CWRC impacts at the pilot sites.
- 185. The relevance of the support provided at the individual pilot sites both increases the likelihood of sustainable socio-economic and CWRC conservation impacts at those sites and demonstrates the potential of the approach for broader application in China. The achievements under Outcome 1 to date are providing a workable, alternative approach for in-situ CWRC that combines biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihood support and is directly relevant to national agro-biodiversity conservation objectives and to the Project's Objective. The approach developed also has potential relevance and applicability internationally.

The study tour to New Zealand and Australia, International Conference on Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Agro-biodiversity and Beijing workshop on ABS all provided opportunities for key stakeholders to increase their knowledge and understanding of CWRC mechanisms and gain access to relevant information on international best practice and lessons learnt. The information has been directly applied within the project in the development of the in-situ sustainable livelihood, incentive based approach and in identifying MTA as a potential mechanism to support access and benefit sharing in China. The exposure of key stakeholders to increase the effectiveness of approaches developed in China.

## Effectiveness (Highly Satisfactory)

- 186. The participatory, knowledge based approach developed under the project demonstrates good development practice at a number of levels. It combines structured, scientific assessment of threats to WRC with the identification of potential sustainable livelihood opportunities that could reduce those threats and provide real benefits to local communities. It is based on an assessment of the socio-economic, environmental and target resource context at the proposed development site. The direct involvement of communities in identifying potential livelihood opportunities has helped to ensure that support delivered under the project is appropriate and meets local needs, and has fostered active community support for project activities. This participatory, knowledge based approach has strongly supported sustainable socio-economic outcomes at the majority of pilot sites. In addition, project implementation at the pilot sites combined the delivery of livelihood training and support with awareness-raising and education activities on the importance of CWRC and with support to strengthen local regulations for CWRC.
- 187. The multi-faceted approach has contributed strongly to the likelihood of sustainable socioeconomic, institutional, financial and biodiversity conservation outcomes at the project sites: communities have an increased understanding of CWRC and, due to the socio-economic benefits generated by the alternative livelihood activities supported under the project, they are prepared to move away from activities that threaten WRC.
- 188. The local institutional arrangements for implementation of the approach have also been highly effective, both in building the capacity of relevant institutions for effective CWRC and in catalysing support from a wide range of institutions to deliver real results at the project sites.
- 189. The sustainable livelihood, incentive based approach was designed with and implemented by the relevant sections within Agricultural Bureaux who are the institutions directly responsible for on the ground CWRC. This has helped to embed the approach as part of their *modus operandi* for in-situ CWRC and to build their capacity. The establishment of LPMO within these institutions has been effective however the project should ensure that the administrative authorities in charge of agro-environmental protection within Agricultural Bureaux have both the institutional and financial support and the capacity to continue to implement the approach at EOP. The next phase of the project will also need to scale up the impact across the eight Provinces.
- 190. The Leading Groups for Conservation of Wild Relative of Crops have been highly effective as platforms for multi-sector co-operation. The approach developed under the project enables a range of agencies to align their work plans to meet each institutions own strategic objectives and to support effective conservation of wild relatives of crops. The involvement of a range of institutions in delivering support at the pilot sites has enabled the project to deliver real livelihood impacts by MTE. The project has also helped to demonstrate the potential role of these groups in supporting effective in-situ conservation of WRC and poverty alleviation / livelihood support.
- 191. The training and awareness raising approach supported under the project also appears to have been highly effective in both developing farmers' skills to enable them to establish alternative, sustainable livelihoods and in raising their awareness on the importance of CWRC. Project managers built on experience from a previous EU supported project for "Sustainable Agro-Biodiversity Management in the Mountain Areas of Southern China" which had introduced farmer field schools with good effect. Although good results have been achieved by MTE, project managers will need to establish and demonstrate the financial and institutional sustainability of the Farmer Field Schools before EOP.
- 192. The incorporation of CWRC and biodiversity conservation in to the school curriculum is also likely to have an ongoing impact in raising the awareness of both children and farming communities on the importance of agro-biodiversity. Equally, the incorporation of CWRC in to village and county regulations has helped to increase awareness of the importance of CWRC and to strengthen the local regulatory environment for CWRC.
- 193. The project has also worked hard to ensure equitable distribution of benefits and particularly gender equity. A considerable number of women have been trained and supported under the project. Although the ET were not provided with precise figures on the overall involvement of women across

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all the project sites, the following table indicates the number of women involved in project training activities at the Yunnan pilot site visited by the ET.

Training courses	No. of Total participants	No. of women	%
Pinus-planting	125	no record	
Australian nut-planting	54	no record	
Tea plantation improvement	57	23	40.4
pig-breeding	85	40	47.1
rice-planting	40	17	42.5
corn-planting	45	22	48.9
Conservation and sustainable use of WRC	115	82	71.3
Mean			50.0

### Table 8: Participation of Women in Training Courses in Yunnan Province

## Efficiency (Highly Satisfactory)

- 194. The project leveraged considerable additional support through the involvement of a range of institutions. The role of the Leading Groups for Wild Relatives of Crops (LGWRC) was highly efficient in providing a platform for a range of institutions to co-ordinate their inputs towards CWRC, poverty alleviation and livelihood support objectives.
- 195. PMO also used experience from previous projects to increase the efficiency of project implementation. An example of this is in the decision to support farmers to apply for micro-loans under new Government supported schemes, rather than establishing Trust Funds. Although in project design Trust Funds had been identified as a potential mechanism to develop financial incentives for CWRC at the pilot sites, project managers were aware of the pit falls associated with establishing trust funds in rural China, through lessons learnt from previous projects. Instead they identified the potential to tie in project support to new opportunities that were emerging for farmers. The Chinese Government introduced agricultural subsidies and tax reduction under San Nong. This in turn meant that there was a reduced need for the project to establish local credit facilities. Project managers identified an opportunity to support farmers to apply for loans. Supported was given to farmers who wanted to establish more sustainable livelihood strategies and who demonstrated commitment to CWRC whereby the project covered the cost and associated risk of paying off interest on loans. The loans are enabling a number of farmers to establish local enterprises that support CWRC objectives.

## 5.2.2: Outcome 2

Summary Rating

Satisfactory

Tablev	Outcome	Objectives	diadiantara
I dDie X.	Outcome 2	Objectives and	a mulcators

Outcome 2.	Indicators
The policy, legal and regulatory system supports conservation of wild relatives	<ul> <li>At the end of the project, all identified legislative shortcomings have been resolved, or the process has been initiated</li> <li>At the end of the project, staff of provincial Departments of Agriculture and County Agricultural Bureaux report no cases where implementation of conservation activities was prevented due to regulatory shortcomings</li> </ul>

Sources: Project logical framework

## <u>Background</u>

- 196. Outcome 2 aims to create a more effective enabling environment for conservation of wild relatives. The component outputs are together intended to address the weakness identified during design that in China: 'a complex and incomplete legal framework prevents effective enforcement of (CWRC) regulations'.
- 197. The Project Document briefly outlines the national processes involved in drafting or modifying policies, laws, rules and regulations in China. At the central level, modification or drafting of laws requires decision by the National People's Congress while any modification or drafting of regulations requires review and approval by the State Council. The Project Document points out that at this central level 'any change to laws is very complicated and time consuming and the possibility during the project period is very low'
- 198. Modification or drafting of the 'implementation rules' for laws or regulations at the Provincial or County level can, however, be undertaken by Provincial governments through a process that involves drafting of any modifications by the administrative agency concerned and extensive consultation with related agencies to ensure consistency with other laws and regulations. The Project Document suggests that this Provincial and County level of impact is much more achievable within the timeframe and influence of the project.
- 199. The inception report recommends increasing the risks associated with achieving Outcome 2 from a 'low' to 'moderate' rating due to the time involved in the complex national processes that require decision making by the National People's Congress and State Council for the modification and formulation of laws, regulations and policies. The inception report recommends that the role of the project should be more one of 'providing recommendations to concerned authorities or local government on improvement of policies and implementing rules' than one of actually changing policies and rules. However, no change was made to the outputs, outcome or indicators at inception.
- 200. Following the MTE it would be useful for project managers to reassess risks and assumptions and to assess how achievable the current indicators are. The first indicator is somewhat ambiguous; there is a big difference between having 'resolved' 'all legislative shortcomings' by EOP, which would be an impact that overcomes all of the assumptions and risks identified, and 'the process' having been 'initiated', which, given the complexity of the decision making process, is rather unclear.

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201. The second performance indicator focuses on the Provincial and County level, requiring the project to have modified the regulatory environment to the extent that 'staff of Provincial Departments of Agriculture and County Agricultural Bureaux report no cases where implementation of conservation activities was prevented due to regulatory shortcomings'. It would be useful for project managers to assess to what extent it is possible for the project to achieve the situation whereby there are 'no cases where effective CWRC is prevented due to regulatory shortcomings', if policy, legal and regulatory changes have not also been made at a national level.

202. Outcome 2 has four component outputs:

**Output 2.1**: Preliminary analyses of legislative weaknesses undertaken during the preparatory phase are reviewed and proposals for policy and regulatory improvement are prepared

**Output 2.2**: The Ministry of Agriculture drafts new or modified regulations or implementation rules to address identified shortcomings

Output 2.3: Reports received by the State Council on modification of legislation and consultation

**Output 2.4**: The Ministry of Agriculture implements regulations necessary to operationalize the legal framework, including training of personnel in Agricultural Bureaux in technical and legal aspects of the regulations.

203. To date the project has supported the following activities and outputs:

- A series of reviews on the 'Impact of Agricultural Laws, Policies and Regulations on Biodiversity' in the fields of 'crops, livestock, grassland, fresh water fishery, marine fishery and rural industry'. A summary report from these reviews on the impact of agricultural policies on agro-biodiversity was then prepared and recommendations were developed for policy and regulatory amendments to strengthen ago-biodiversity conservation.
- An international study of agro-biodiversity related laws and regulations in countries with similar characteristics to China.
- A 'Report on the Impact of Alien Invasive Species' and drafting of regulations on the management of alien invasive species, within the sphere of agricultural laws, policies and regulations. These IAS regulations were submitted for consultation to 12 relevant Ministries, 9 departments within the MoA and to Departments of Agriculture in 17 Provinces. Their comments were incorporated and the regulations have been submitted to the 'Ministerial Conference'.
- A training course on agro-biodiversity related laws and regulations and Farmer Field School establishment was held in Beijing as a 'training of trainers' course for 92 members of Provincial, Township and County staff of Agricultural Departments and Bureaux in the eight focal Provinces. The trainees have subsequently played a key role in supporting project implementation at Provincial and County levels and have trained other staff in their agencies, with over 2000 people having been trained in total.

## Evaluation and Rating of Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency

## Relevance (Satisfactory)

- 204. Strengthening the policy, legal and regulatory enabling environment for conservation of wild relatives of crops is highly relevant to the project's overall objective. The need for policy, legal and regulatory reform at the national level is however likely to affect the extent to which 'the policy, legal and regulatory system' can be modified and strengthened at the Provincial level to support conservation of wild relatives in the eight Provinces that are the focus of the project's Objective statement.
- 205. The studies undertaken and outputs produced to date go beyond the intended focus of outputs 2.1 to 2.3 in providing an analysis: of Agricultural Laws, Policies and Regulations on Biodiversity in

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China, across a broad range of areas; of international agro-biodiversity related laws and regulations in countries with similar characteristics to China, and in the drafting of Regulations on the Management of Alien Invasive Species. Although not the intended focus of outputs 2.1 to 2.3, these outputs are relevant to agro-biodiversity conservation in China and therefore also to conservation of wild relatives of crops.

- 206. Both the 'training of trainers' approach and the content of the training courses for Provincial, Township and County level staff from agriculture related institutions in the project's eight focal Provinces appear to have been highly relevant to the Outcome and Project Objective and are directly relevant to achieving output 2.4. The training focussed on increasing participants' knowledge of the policy, legal and regulatory framework for CWRC, effective enforcement and biodiversity conservation, particularly CWRC.
- 207. Although completed as part of Outcome 1, it should also be mentioned here that the modifications to village and county regulations, supported by the project as part of the incentive mechanism, are also relevant to strengthening the regulatory framework for conservation of wild relatives of crops at the local level.

## Effectiveness (Satisfactory)

- 208. The series of outputs from 2.1 to 2.4 present a focussed approach to effecting policy, regulatory and legal change, in order to achieve the Outcome objective whereby 'The policy, legal and regulatory system supports conservation of wild relatives'. The text of both the Project Document and the Inception Report however highlight the risks and assumptions associated with the project actually achieving the Outcome objective, given that it is outside the immediate sphere of influence of the project to achieve policy, regulatory and legal change, particularly at the national level, and may not be achievable within the project timeframe.
- 209. The following evaluation of effectiveness assesses the extent to which project activities and outputs have supported achievement of the intended impacts of outputs 2.1 to 2.4 towards achieving the overall Outcome objective. It also, however takes in to consideration the assumptions and risks highlighted at design and inception.
- 210. In the Project Document, Outputs 2.1 to 2.3 outline a strategic approach whereby the 'Preliminary analyses of legislative weaknesses undertaken during the preparatory phase' are reviewed to prepare 'proposals for policy and regulatory improvement'. This was then intended to enable MOA to 'draft new or modified regulations or implementation rules to address identified shortcomings' (output 2.2). The results of outputs 2.1 and 2.2 were intended to provide the information base for output 2.3 whereby MoA would develop and submit a report and recommend new or modified regulations or implementation rules to the State Council. Output 2.4 then requires the MoA to 'implement regulations necessary to operationalize the legal framework'. The focus of outputs 2.1 to 2.4 was intended therefore to be firmly on identifying, developing and implementing the policy, legal and regulatory changes needed to support effective conservation of WRC. In so doing it aims to address the barrier identified during design that in China: 'a complex and incomplete legal framework prevents effective enforcement of (CWRC) regulations'.
- 211. In fact the project has supported studies and regulatory recommendations that have broader relevance to the regulatory framework for biodiversity conservation related to agricultural laws, policies and regulations.
- 212. The study on the Impact of Agricultural Laws, Policies and Regulations on Biodiversity is comprehensive and provides useful analysis and recommendations for policy makers and decision makers across a range of divisions within MoA. PMO's mid term progress report heralds it as 'the first of its kind in China' and the study was also praised by the division chief of MoA's Division of Resources and Environment<sup>15</sup>'. The study goes beyond the intended focus of output 2.1 however to look at the impact of laws and by-laws in 'the agricultural fields of crops, livestock, grassland, fresh

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> also the deputy director of PMO

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water fishery, marine fishery and rural industry' and to make recommendations for policy improvement in all of the above areas. The international study of agro-biodiversity related laws and regulations in countries with similar characteristics to China is also broader than the intended scope of output 2.1.

- 213. The intended focus of output 2.1 is however captured in the summary report from these reviews and the associated recommendations for policy and regulatory improvement in relation to agrobiodiversity.
- 214. It will only really be possible to assess the effectiveness of these studies and the associated policy and regulatory recommendations, if MoA and the State Council use the studies to actually make changes to the existing policies, laws and regulations that strengthen the overall regulatory framework for CWRC. At the time of the MTE this impact has not been achieved. However, given the assumptions and risks highlighted in the Project Document and Inception report, this lack of impact in effecting policy and regulatory change is reasonable at mid term.
- 215. The Report on the Impact of Alien Invasive Species and drafting of regulations on IAS management is an important contribution to biodiversity conservation as it relates to agricultural management in China. Effective IAS management is a core part of agro-biodiversity conservation and therefore of CWRC and was identified as a critical gap in the existing policy, regulatory and legal framework in China. Here again, however, it will only be possible to judge the effectiveness of the IAS regulations developed under the project in strengthening the overall regulatory framework for CWRC if / when these are approved and implemented.
- 216. Effective IAS management and the regulatory framework needed to support it is a highly complex area, involving many sectors and levels of management. Project managers should be careful not to get sidetracked in to trying to establish effective management of IAS which would not be feasible within the scope and timeframe of the current project. However, the fact that the studies supported under the project have highlighted the need for improved IAS regulation and management, and that regulations have been drafted under the project, is in itself a significant contribution to the regulatory environment for CWRC in China.
- 217. Under output 2.4, the 'training of trainers' course was reported to the ET to have been highly effective in increasing the knowledge of key members of staff in Provincial Departments and County Agricultural Bureaux on CWRC related regulations. The effectiveness of the training is evidenced in the fact that 92 members of Provincial Departments of Agriculture and Township and County Agricultural Bureaux in the eight focal Provinces have been able to use the knowledge gained from this training course to both support project implementation and train a considerable number of other staff within their agencies. The approach used, both in training trainers, and in ensuring that the training was directly applied within project implementation reflects good development practice.
- 218. The modifications to village and county level regulations and policies, implemented under Outcome 1, as part of the incentive mechanisms at the pilot sites, have also been effective in strengthening the local policy and regulatory framework of CWRC. At the sites visited by the ET, villagers confirmed that the inclusion of conservation of WRC in to village regulations has been effective in changing peoples' behaviour and awareness. Equally, the development and modification of local county and provincial regulatory mechanisms has strengthened the local enabling environment for CWRC. Examples are in development of 'The protection policy of wild relatives of crops' formulated by Jinjhong City Government of Yunnan Province and the 'Wild relatives of crops protection policy' developed by Heilongjiang Province, Bayan County People's Government.
- 219. Overall, at mid term, the ET considers that the effectiveness of project activities and outputs to date has been satisfactory. There remains a lot for the project to achieve over the remaining two years, three months of project implementation in order to attain the overall Outcome 2 objective of establishing a policy, legal and regulatory system that supports conservation of wild relatives. However, the ET considers that, given the risks and assumptions highlighted during design and inception, the project has made a number of important contributions to strengthen the knowledge

base on the regulatory framework for CWRC in China and to recommend policy and regulatory reform to strengthen that framework.

- 220. The ET considered giving a 'moderately satisfactory' rating to the effectiveness of Outcome 2 due to the fact that to date there has been no modification of or impact on the overall regulatory framework for CWRC. The ET felt that the broadened scope of the studies undertaken may have to some extent detracted from the intended focus of outputs 2.1 to 2.4 which was intended to be firmly on CWRC related policy, legal and regulatory reform. However, taking in to consideration the risks and assumptions highlighted at inception and the fact that at mid term it would be unlikely for the project to have been able to achieve an actual impact in modifying policies, laws and regulations at the national level; and taking in to consideration the clarifications given by MoA, UNDP and PMO at the MTE debriefing on the significance of the studies for agro-biodiversity conservation in China, the ET feel that at mid term the effectiveness of the outputs is satisfactory.
- 221. However, as is outlined in section 7 of this report, the ET strongly recommends that project managers establish a clear focus on achieving the intended output and Outcome impacts over the remaining life of the project, in order to strengthen the overall policy, legal and regulatory system for effective conservation of wild relatives. Project activities should encourage and support MoA, DoA and Agricultural Bureaux to revise, modify and implement relevant policies and regulations at the central level and in the eight focal Provinces, where ever possible, in order to achieve the outcome objective by EOP.

## Efficiency (Satisfactory)

- 222. The training of trainers approach deserves special mention in terms of its efficiency in enabling over 2000 people to be trained across eight provinces, from a single training course involving 92 participants.
- 223. Only 29. 62% of the intended GEF budget for Outcome 2 has been spent to date, funds being mostly used to cover the salaries of experts. PMO advised the ET that remaining GEF funds were being reserved to support training at the Provincial and County levels if regulations / policies are amended at the national level. The ET recommends that following the MTE, project managers should reassess the likelihood of policy and regulatory modifications being made at the national level policy and regulatory changes are made in time for the project to support related training and capacity building before EOP and b) if either decision makers at the national level do not approve the proposed amendments or the national level decision-making timeframe is too long to enable the project to support effective training and capacity building before EOP.

## 5.2.3: Outcome 3

Summary Rating	Satisfactory

Table x. Outcome 3 Objectives and indicators

Outcome 3.	Indicators
Stakeholders at the central and local level have adequate capacity to conserve wild relatives	<ul> <li>At the end of the project, threat reduction assessment at each target site indicates a reduction in threats of at least 80%. At the mid-point of the project, this figure is 30%</li> <li>At the end of the project, 75% of farmers both women and men, at the project sites are actively conserving wild relatives. At the mid-point of the project, this figure is 40%</li> </ul>

Sources: Project logical framework

## **Background**

- 224. Outcome 3 focuses on building the capacity of key stakeholder groups for conservation of wild relatives of crops. The Project Document points out that 'effective conservation requires adequate capacity at the local level, supported by commitment and capacity at higher levels' Outputs 3.1 to 3.3 aim to build the capacity of county level Agricultural Bureaux, Output 3.4 is an educational campaign to increase farmers understanding of the value of wild relatives. Output 3.5 is an awareness and educational campaign for government officials at both central and local levels, while output 3.6 promotes inter-sectoral co-ordination of CWRC at both local and central levels.
- <sup>225.</sup> Currently the indicators for Outcome 3 measure conservation effectiveness at the pilot sites and would be more appropriate to measuring impacts under Outcome 1.<sup>16</sup> Indicators of impact for Outcome 3 should measure an increase in capacity<sup>17</sup> for CWRC within key Central, Provincial and County level institutions and amongst farmers at the pilot sites.
- 226. The Project Document sets the following outputs to achieve Outcome 3:
  - **Output 3.1**: Conservation organisations are established in every County where wild relatives are located in the project sites

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Figures given to the ET by PMO do indicate that at the time of the MTE threat reduction assessments at the six pilot sites where project activities have been implemented show a threat reduction of over 30% and that over 50% of farmers at the six pilot sites are actively involved in livelihood activities that support conservation of WRC. Two of the eight sites have yet to become fully operational due to externalities beyond the project's control.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> against a start of project baseline

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**Output 3.2**: Training in conservation approaches is provided to staff of local conservation organisations

**Output 3.3**: Training is provided to staff of agricultural extension services to enable them to take account of the need to conserve wild relatives in providing technical assistance to farmers

**Output 3.4**: An educational campaign assists farmers in understanding the value of wild relatives and approaches to integrate conservation with production.

**Output 3.5**: An awareness and education campaign increases commitment among government officials at central and local levels

**Output 3.6**: Inter – sectoral bodies promote coordination in conservation of wild relatives at central and local levels.

To date the project has supported the following activities and outputs:

- Assessment of training needs and subsequent development of relevant training materials for the staff of County level Agricultural Bureaux, and for farmers.
- Establishment of Farmer Field Schools at the eight pilot sites and training on WRC laws and regulations and agro biodiversity, integrated with technical training to support farmers to establish alternative livelihoods. More than 700 people have been trained through 20 training sessions, including 300 women.
- Integration of biodiversity conservation training in to the national Village Head Training Programme and co-financed support for 60 trainees from the pilot sites to be included in the training programme. To date 6000 village level administrative staff have been given training under the programme and responses from 4000 questionnaires demonstrate an increased awareness and understanding of biodiversity conservation.
- Establishment of Local Project Management Offices (LPMO) within the administrative authorities in charge of agro-environmental protection in Agricultural Bureaux, and of Local Project Steering Committees (LPSC) within the Leading Groups for Conservation of Wild Relatives of Crops (LGWRC), contributing to the original objectives of output 3.1 and 3.6.

Activities supported under other Outcomes have also supported the Outcome 3 objective: The 'training of trainers' course supported under Outcome 2 contributed to Outcome 3, with subsequent training sessions being integrated in to Farmer Field Schools, and the publicity and communication outputs under Outcome 5 also contributed to awareness raising under Outcome 3, particularly to outputs 3.4 and 3.5

## Evaluation and Rating of Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency

## **Relevance** (Satisfactory)

- 227. Building the capacity of key stakeholder groups, particularly the institutions responsible for conservation of WRC is a cornerstone of effective project implementation and sustainable impact. It is particularly relevant for approaches that mainstream conservation of WRC in to agricultural production landscapes as this is a concept that has not been applied in China. The training materials produced under Outcome 3 were based on assessment of the training needs of different stakeholder groups and were consequently relevant and could be applied effectively to support other project Outcomes, and particularly to support Outcomes 1 and 2.
- 228. Output 3.1 was deemed by project managers to no longer be directly relevant, because between project design and implementation Bureaux of Agriculture across China had already established administrative structures responsible for environmental management and agro biodiversity. Instead of 'assisting in the formulation of conservation sections in County Agricultural Bureaux' therefore project managers decided that it would be more relevant for the project to build the capacity of

extension services or environment protection stations within the Agriculture Bureaux in the eight focal Provinces.

229. The establishment of local Project Steering Committees (LPSC) within Leading Groups for Wild Relatives of Crops (LGWRC) was highly relevant to meeting the objective of output 3.6 which aimed to 'directly support inter-sectoral coordination at the local level through support to inter-agency planning bodies'

## Effectiveness (Satisfactory)

- 230. The incorporation of Local Project Management Offices (LPMO) in to sections of Agricultural Bureaux responsible for biodiversity conservation has been effective in building their capacity for CWRC. In many ways the project's implementation approach is helping to achieve Outcome 3, through all the project Outcomes; project management in the eight provinces is led by the local institutions and multi-sectoral bodies responsible for CWRC and their involvement in the project is in itself helping to build their capacity. Training under the project is directly applied to CWRC activities and therefore has a sustainable impact. The participatory approach to project implementation at the project sites has also been highly effective in building the capacity of both County Agriculture Bureaux staff and farmers and in securing their support for CWRC.
- 231. The role of the Leading Groups for Conservation of Wild Relatives of Crops (LGWRC) as Local Project Steering Committees (LPSC) for the pilot sites, strongly supports output 3.6 and has also proved the potential effectiveness of LGWRC in providing support for in-situ CWRC that integrates conservation and agricultural production. Direct involvement of the LGWRC as LPSC has been effective both in supporting project implementation and in building their capacity for CWRC.
- 232. Training provided under the project appears to have been very effective, both in meeting the real needs of participants and in supporting direct application of skills learnt to achieve livelihood and conservation impact. Examples include the direct application of livelihood related training by farmers at the project sites to establish new or modified livelihoods, and the direct application of monitoring training provided to the staff of Agricultural Bureaux in monitoring WRC. The 'training of trainers' approach used to support Outcome 2 was also effective in increasing the capacity of relevant staff of Agricultural Bureaux in the eight Provinces and in multiplying up the impact.
- 233. By incorporating biodiversity conservation training and agro biodiversity in to the national Village Head Training Programme PMO also effectively mainstreamed project awareness raising impacts at a national level and leveraged additional co-financing support for training of village and county level stakeholders from the project sites. It also demonstrates the way in which PMO has pro-actively identified opportunities to increase project impact and to effectively adapt project activities to the increasingly receptive strategic environment for biodiversity conservation in China.
- <sup>234.</sup> Project managers also drew on experience from an earlier EU project for "Sustainable Agro-Biodiversity Management in the Mountain Areas of Southern China" which had introduced farmer field schools with good effect. Again this demonstrates adaptive management by PMO, building on lessons learnt from other initiatives to strengthen impact in this project. The incorporation of farmer field schools at the project sites has been effective in building farmers capacity for alternative livelihood approaches, increasing their understanding of agro biodiversity conservation and reducing threats to WRC. The incorporation of awareness-raising on CWRC alongside technical livelihood based training appears to have built farmers support for and interest in CWRC. The ET received positive feedback from consultations with farmers at the project sites visited. It was even reported that the awareness raising impact had spread to neighbouring communities, who seeing the livelihood support impacts of the project at the pilot sites, were keen to also find WRC in their villages so that they could also receive alternative livelihood and CWRC support. One previously unknown area of wild rice was discovered in Yunnan Province because of this.

## Efficiency (Satisfactory)

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- 235. The identification by PMO of the opportunity to link in to the national Village Head Training scheme helped to increase project impact and cost efficiency, by mainstreaming biodiversity conservation awareness-raising nationally and ensuring sustainable impact as part of an on-going national scheme.
- 236. The training of trainers approach was also very efficient in achieving broad impact within the eight Provinces.
- 237. The decision to incorporate support for Farmer Field Schools appears to be working effectively to build capacity and support for CWRC at the pilot sites. However, it has resulted in increased expenditure under Outcome 3 which is currently 121.6% overspent in relation to the original budged specified in the Project Document until EOP. The ET assess that project managers decision to use project funds to establish Farmer Field Schools is reasonable; it built on lessons learnt from a pervious project, is supporting good impact at the project sites and is an approach that will be useful for Departments and Bureaux of Agriculture and LGWRC to replicate in the future. Although PMO report that Farmer Field Schools were budgeted under Outcome 3, they also strongly support achievement of Outcome 1. It is recommended, however, that a full audit be undertaken of project expenditure to date (refer sections 4.2 and 7). It will also be important for project managers to ensure the institutional and financial sustainability of Farmer Field Schools following EOP, both as training centres at the pilot sites and as an approach that will continue to be supported by Departments and Bureaux of Agriculture.

## 5.2.4: Outcome 4

Summary Rating	Moderately Satisfactory	
Table x.     Outcome 4 Object       Outcome 4.     0 outcome 4 Object	ctives and indicators Indicators	
Accurate & timely information concerning the status of wild relatives is available and utilized	<ul> <li>Within 2 years of the start of implementation, local and central level policy makers are able to describe the status of populations of wild relatives</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>By the end of the project, conservation work plans of the MoA are based on information generated by the information management system</li> </ul>	

Sources: Project logical framework

# <u>Background</u>

- 238. Outcome 4 is to provide accurate and timely information concerning the status of wild relatives to decision makers. It has the following component outputs:
  - **Output 4.1**: A central level monitoring system and some provincial level sub-systems are designed and implemented
  - **Output 4.2**: The capacity of County Agricultural Bureaux to collect data required to monitor populations of wild relatives is developed
  - **Output 4.3**: Priorities for conservation are identified, based on information generated by the monitoring system
  - **Output 4.4**: Opportunities for direct benefits from wild relatives are identified through evaluation of populations of wild relatives.
- 239. Outputs 4.1 to 4.3 aim to design and establish a central level monitoring system and provincial level sub-systems in the eight focal Provinces (output 4.1), build the capacity of County Agricultural

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Bureaux to collect and use monitoring data (output 4.2) and identify priorities for conservation based on the information generated by the monitoring system (output 4.3).

- 240. Output 4.4 is not directly related to the establishment and implementation of the monitoring system or generation of accurate and timely information concerning the status of wild relatives. It aims to identify opportunities to generate direct benefits from wild relatives and sits somewhat uneasily under Outcome 4. However the project document points out that 'evaluation of the genetic and non-genetic properties of wild relatives needs to be integrated with the monitoring system both because the research should be directed by conservation priorities, and because the impact on populations of wild relatives of the commercial uses identified through research need to be monitored.'
- 241. The indicators selected to measure achievement of Outcome 4 are relevant to the Outcome objective. They have a good focus on the use of information generated by the information management system for planning and decision making on CWRC priorities. The indicators imply, however, that accurate and timely information on the status of wild relatives will 'describe the status of populations of wild relatives' and be used as the basis for conservation work plans at a national level, which may not be achievable given the project's core Objective level focus on eight Provinces. The ET recommend that as part of the overall review of indicators following the MTE, project managers should assess whether indicators for Outcome 4 should be revised to demonstrate establishment of a central level system, but use of specific information on in-situ WRC populations within work plans of Departments and Bureaux of Agriculture in the eight focal Provinces.

The activities and outputs undertaken to date to support achievement of Outcome 4 are:

- Design of information management software for monitoring of information on resource, socio-economic and environmental data from the project sites, that is also compatible with the national Chinese Genetic resources Information System (CGRIS) Establishment of protocol for management of data. Data on WRC location and status is treated as highly confidential and is sent via disk between County, Provincial and Central levels.
- Establishment of the Monitoring and Alerting System, a digital computerised monitoring system based on the software developed and provision of technical equipment to establish a central terminal within CAAS and provincial and county level terminals for data collection and monitoring in the eight focal Provinces.
- Data input from the eight pilot sites, based on the assessment methodology developed and baseline and monitoring surveys undertaken under Outcome 1. Data on WRC resource and environmental conditions have been entered in to the system but no socio-economic data has yet been entered. This was reported to the ET to be because the socio-economic data collection system developed under the project had generated too much information and data input and analysis was consequently too time consuming. This is a key flaw in the system. Baseline data and monitoring of socio-economic factors will be central to effective monitoring at in-situ conservation sites that are based on the livelihoods, incentive based approach. The data collection framework for socio-economic baselines and monitoring needs to be reviewed and streamlined. Socio economic data collection should be organised in to discrete categories for example to measure changes in the: level of biodiversity conservation awareness; level of participation in CWRC activities; economic and social wellbeing; % of community engaged in CWRC-friendly livelihood activities; % of community engaged in livelihood activities that threaten WRC etc. Once the socio-economic data sets have been rationalised and streamlined, socio-economic data should be input to the system.

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• An assessment of the germplasm of wild relatives or rice, soybean and wheat at the project sites was also commissioned by PMO to meet output 4.4. The assessment took three years to complete and identified several superior genetic materials. Wild rice varieties at the project sites were found to have cold resistant properties, soybean to have high protein content, and wild relatives of wheat to have good drought resistance. PMO's mid term progress report points out that this output 'protected valuable genes...and ensures the benefit sharing and the protection of intellectual property'. The information produced has been linked in to the national GGRIS system.

## Evaluation and Rating of Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency

## Relevance (Satisfactory)

- 242. The Monitoring and Alerting System developed by the project is relevant to both the Outcome objective and the monitoring needs of County Agricultural Bureaux, Provincial Agricultural Departments and MoA. The incorporation of WRC resource, environment and socio-economic data sets within the monitoring system enables planners and decision makers to assess the impact of in situ conservation measures on both agro biodiversity and livelihoods and therefore to assess the likely sustainability of the conservation approach at each site.
- 243. The Monitoring and Alerting System also enables relevant data sets to be accessed by decision makers at different levels (County, Provincial and Central) and enables manipulation of data in to forms (graphs, tables etc) that can be easily used by planners and decision makers.
- 244. The fact that the Monitoring and Alerting System is compatible with the national CGRIS system also increases its relevance to national planners and decision makers who can access different types of data within the same system. It also indicates that the system may be able to be adapted to other uses, for example it may be possible to incorporate monitoring of invasive species in to the system, which would further strengthen its relevance as a key national planning and monitoring tool.
- 245. The software developed has also demonstrated relevance to other biodiversity conservation initiatives and is currently being used by the 'Project of Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Headwaters of the Huihe River Basin'
- 246. The germplasm assessment of wild relatives of rice, soybean and wheat at the project site is directly relevant to output 4.4 and provided data of potential local, national and international relevance through the identification of superior genetic material. The research undertaken also has potential relevance to future ABS mechanisms.

## Effectiveness (Moderately Satisfactory)

- <sup>247.</sup> Although the system developed under the project is sophisticated and has provided a national framework for monitoring the status of WRC and assessing the impact of conservation approaches, it is currently incomplete. Socio economic data has not been input to the system and the data collection approach developed to establish the socio-economic baseline, and for subsequent monitoring of socio-economic conditions, appears to be too complex and data heavy to be easily applied. Although the ET were only given a brief overview of the data collection framework developed, CAAS reported that the reason that there was currently no socio-economic data in the system was because of the mass of data generated through the socio-economic questionnaires, which would be too time consuming to analyse and up load. It also appeared to the ET that the data sets are currently project focussed; the baseline and monitoring framework should be developed as a system to be used by Agricultural Bureaux within an overall system to be adopted by the MoA.
- 248. As assessed under Outcome 1, the lack of an effective socio-economic data collection and monitoring system does not appear to have negatively impacted the measures established to support in situ CWRC and sustainable livelihoods at the pilot sites to date. This is likely to be largely due to the effective participatory approach used at the pilot sites and the close collaboration of

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Agricultural Bureaux staff with farmers. However, an effective system for assessing and monitoring socio-economic conditions will become essential once the approach is mainstreamed to a larger number of WRC sites where a more structured approach will be important. Scaling up data collection to a greater number of sites, and streamlining of the socio-economic data sets should be a priority activity during the next phase of the project.

- 249. The Monitoring and Alerting System has the potential to be highly effective. It establishes a framework whereby different levels of decision makers can access relevant data for effective planning, monitoring and evaluation of CWRC strategies. Data security has also been effectively built in to the system, which is important given that WRC information is highly confidential in China.
- 250. The effectiveness of the system is also greatly enhanced through its compatibility with CGRIS. This means that decision makers and planners can access relevant data on a vast number of sites and species.
- <sup>251.</sup> The germplasm assessment of wild relatives of rice, soybean and wheat was effective in identifying superior genetic material of potential local, national and international relevance as described above.

# Efficiency (Unable to Assess)

252. The GEF budget for Outcome 4 is currently 358% overspent. The reasons for this have been discussed above under Section 4.2 of the report which evaluates 'Financial Planning and Management'. On the basis of the information with which they were provided, the ET consider that the expenditure was used to support activities and outputs that are in line with the overall objective of Outcome 4. However without further information on the process used by project managers to assess the costs / benefits associated with the expenditure it is not possible to evaluate their cost effectiveness. As is recommended in Section7 of this report, it will important for the project to commission an audit to assess whether expenditure under the project to date has been acceptable and efficient. This should include assessment of the process used by project managers to:

a) Commission the germplasm study, and develop TOR for this study, which in itself cost almost double the original GEF budget for the entire Outcome (US\$459,700). The audit should enable UNDP to assess whether the overspend was because the original budget in the project document was unrealistic, or because PMO commissioned a study that was more detailed than was required by the project, and / or too costly.

b) assess costs/ benefits associated with the purchase of vehicles for local Agricultural Bureaux (which involved a cost of US\$340,000, again more than the entire budget intended for Outcome 4), the process used to purchase these vehicles and whether any co-financing commitments have been secured to ensure effective maintenance of the vehicles.

## 5.2.5: Outcome 5

Summary Rating

Satisfactory

Table x. Outcome 5 Objectives and indicators

Outcome 5.	Indicators	
Lessons and experiences from	• By the end of the project, parallel initiatives have	
target provinces create conditions for replication and	been initiated in at least 50 additional sites	
expansion of conservation programmes	By the end of the project, MoA and concerned agencies have integrated lessons from the project into agricultural development policy	

### Background

Sources: Project logical framework

- 253. Outcome 5 aims to scale up the impact of the project and to promote replication and expansion of conservation programmes and the dissemination of lessons and experience.
- <sup>254.</sup> The Project document points out that 'although taken together the eight sites represent a significant amount of genetic diversity of wild relatives of the three crops, it is nevertheless necessary to extend the models developed...to other sites, and ultimately to other crops....replication in this context does not imply simple repetition...activities must go beyond simple publication and dissemination, in order to assist additional stakeholders in developing their own locally applicable systems.'
- 255. The indicators selected are relevant to the outcome objective, although the ET again suggest that they could be significantly strengthened through a review following the MTE.
- 256. Outcome 5 has three component outputs:

**Output 5.1**: Information exchanged and disseminated among sites and with farmers and Agricultural Bureaux from additional sites, including participatory evaluation of model systems

Output 5.2: Project results and lessons disseminated widely

Output 5.3: Conservation goals incorporated in policy and operational programmes

- 257. Outcome 5 will become a core component during the last half of the project given its focus on replicating impact to additional sites, and disseminating lessons learnt. The project has already made good progress in assessing lessons learnt from the existing pilot sites, identifying replication sites, and initiating capacity building activities at the proposed replication sites. The number of sites identified goes far beyond the focus of the Project Objective 'to mainstream conservation of wild relatives of crops in agricultural production landscapes in eight provinces'; Replication sites have been selected in 15 Provinces. This is certainly ambitious.
- 258. If successful, wide application of project impact would help to mainstream the approach in China and contribute to the project's overall Goal. However, the project should not risk failing to achieve its overall Objective by too thin a spread across such a large number of Provinces. Project managers should carefully assess the assumptions and risks associated with trying to initiate demonstration sites across 15 Provinces and should develop a clear strategic work plan in order to achieve sustainable impact in the eight core Provinces before EOP, given the time and resources available. The project has established a good foundation at MTE and it would be unwise to jeopardise this by too ambitious a strategy under Outcome 5 for the final two years, three months of project implementation.
- 259. The project has also supported the main publicity and information dissemination activities and outputs under Outcome 5. A dedicated team was established to manage the communication and publicity components of the project, building on lessons learnt from an earlier project which had strengthened project impact by establishing a specialised team and strategy for information dissemination and outreach.

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260. The following activities and outputs have been supported under Outcome 5:

Initiate replication of the sustainable livelihood, incentive based approach to CWRC

- The development of criteria for replication site selection based on the distribution area of the target species, the degree of threats and managerial capacities of local Agricultural Bureaux.
- The identification of project replication sites across 15 provinces, with new sites selected in the eight focal Provinces as well as in seven additional Provinces including Gansu, Inner Mongolia, Hubei, Hunan, Anhui and Tianjin.
- Two training sessions for relevant stakeholders in the selected Provinces, Counties, townships and villages of the 64 replication sites. Training was delivered on agro-biodiversity conservation, baseline survey methodology and design of the incentive mechanism, presenting case studies from the pilot sites.
- Guidelines were developed on 'incentive mechanism construction' and these have been disseminated to the 15 Provinces.
- Review and amendment of the assessment methodology originally developed for wheat, rice and soybean to enable this to be applied to woody plants and aquatic plants. The amended methodology is under trial to establish baseline information at a number of replication sites.

Information Dissemination and Publicity

- Establishment of a specialized team for 'Development of Project Communication Strategy, Placement Plan and Publicity Materials'
- Launch of the project website and publication of a project 'working briefing' and booklets
- Development of media advertising strategies
- Production of TV documentary films on each of the eight pilot sites, broadcast on local TV stations.
- Production of a three series TV programme (War on Seed) by a professional team from China Central Television and broadcasting on CCTV-4, 9 and 10 in support of the 2011 International Biodiversity Year campaign.
- Development of biodiversity themed calendars to support the 2011 International Biodiversity Year campaign and distribution to departments and divisions within MoA and to the pilot site counties and villages.
- Organisation of side events on wild soybean conservation at the 8<sup>th</sup> World Soybean Conference that was held in China in 2009.
- Design and publication of a brochure promoting the conservation of wild relatives of crops in collaboration with the UNDP /EU 'Sustainable Agro-biodiversity management in the Mountain Areas of Southern China' project.

## Evaluation and Rating of Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency

## Relevance (Satisfactory)

- 261. The focus of activities and outputs under Outcome 5 on replication and information dissemination is directly relevant to scale up impact achieved under other Outcomes towards the Project's overall Objective of mainstreaming conservation of wild relatives of crops in eight Provinces and to contribute to the Project's Goal of conserving wild relatives of crop Plants in China.
- 262. The publicity and outreach products developed under the project have been directly relevant to support awareness-raising on CWRC in the eight Provinces, at the central level and more broadly across China. The activities supported under Outcome 5 have in particular been directly relevant to support output 3.5.

263. The activities undertaken to date to select additional replication sites are relevant, although, as discussed above, the ET recommend that project managers prioritise replication in sites within the eight Provinces that are directly relevant to the Project's Objective.

## Effectiveness (Satisfactory)

- 264. At mid term the project appears to have made good progress towards initiating replication. As discussed above, the ET is concerned about the potential effectiveness of supporting so many replication sites across so many Provinces. Project Managers are more likely to be effective in achieving the intended project impact by EOP if they maintain a clear focus on achieving sustainable Outcomes in the eight Provinces.
- 265. Although no surveys have been undertaken on the impact of the publicity and outreach activities to date, a number of anecdotes were reported to the ET which demonstrate that publicity materials have had an effective impact in raising awareness on CWRC. The project's CTA, Professor Yang received more than 300 letters from viewers requesting further information, following the CCTV documentary series 'War on Seed'. The biodiversity calendar was also reported to be extremely popular and received special note from the deputy general director of MoA who stated that the calendar had helped to increase his knowledge and appreciation of biodiversity conservation.

# Efficiency (Satisfactory)

Project funds have been used efficiently to initiate replication at the demonstration sites and for information dissemination and publicity outputs to date. 29.6% of GEF funds have been spent on Outcome 5 which is appropriate given that it will become an increasing focus of project implementation during the last half of the project.

# 6. SUSTAINABILITY

Rating of the	likelihood of	Sustainability
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Overall	Moderately Likely
Institutional	Likely
Financial	Moderately Likely
Socio-economic	Moderately Likely
Environmental	Moderately Likely

## Introduction

- 266. Evaluation of the likelihood of sustainability ultimately assesses the likelihood of sustainable impact in relation to the project's Objective, of 'mainstreaming conservation of wild relatives of crop plants in agricultural production landscapes in eight provinces of China'. It assesses whether it is likely that key institutions and institutional frameworks across those Provinces will have the capacity and necessary financial and regulatory support to mainstream conservation of WRC in agricultural production landscapes. It also assesses whether the project's approaches and outcomes are likely to generate sustainable socio-economic and environmental impacts in the Provinces. Part of this assessment therefore focuses on the likelihood of sustaining impacts at the pilot sites however, it also evaluates the likelihood that the project will sustain broader institutional, financial, socioeconomic and environmental impacts, towards mainstreaming the project's approach and outcomes across the eight provinces.
- 267. The ET has found good prospects for sustainable impact in the approaches developed by the project and in the achievements to date. However, it will be important for project managers to move beyond a focus on project implementation at the pilot sites to ensure that the approaches

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developed are 'institutionalised' and 'mainstreamed' across the eight Provinces before EOP. This is no criticism of project achievements to date; it was essential for the project teams to develop a sound and workable approach at the pilot sites before that approach can be applied more broadly. However, to achieve sustainable impact by EOP it will be important for project managers to now focus on scaling up and securing the likely sustainability of project impacts.

## 6.3.1: Institutional (likely)

- 268. At EOP, institutional sustainability of project outcomes will be demonstrated if the institutions responsible for conservation of wild relatives of crops in the eight Provinces<sup>18</sup> have the capacity and intent to continue to initiate and implement the livelihood, incentive based approach to CWRC and to continue with awareness raising, training, policy support and WRC monitoring activities. At EOP the Departments and Bureaux of Agriculture in the eight Provinces will need to demonstrate that they have incorporated the livelihood, incentive based approach to CWRC and regular monitoring of WRC in to their annual / five year work plans and have allocated sufficient funding to undertake these activities.
- 269. Achieving institutional sustainability will be key to achieving the project Objective of 'mainstreaming conservation of wild relatives of crop plants in agricultural production landscapes in eight provinces of China'.
- 270. Although Departments and Bureaux of Agriculture are the institutions directly responsible for in-situ CWRC activities in the eight provinces, they also need to be supported at the central level through relevant policies, regulations and funding allocations. Institutional Sustainability also therefore requires the project to have strengthened this central 'enabling environment' for CWRC.
- 271. In addition, the incentive, livelihoods based approach to CWRC developed under the project at the eight project sites relies on the support and involvement of a range of local stakeholders. To be mainstreamed and sustained in the long term, the role of the LGWRC in supporting in-situ conservation will need to be 'institutionalised'. The experience of the project to date indicates that it is unlikely that effective support for the incentive, sustainable livelihood based approach to CWRC could be achieved by Departments and Bureaux of Agriculture alone. The plausibility of delivering real, sustainable livelihood support to farming communities, which can provide a long term alternative to use patterns that destroy WRC, depends on the input of a range of agencies. The coordinating, partnership building function of LGWRC is essential to the approach developed under the project. Here again, institutional sustainability will be demonstrated at EOP if the member agencies of the LGWRC have incorporated the incentive, livelihood based approach to CWRC in to their work plans and if they have the capacity to continue to initiate and co-ordinate similar initiatives once the current UNDP /GEF/ MoA project has ended, with the support of their 'administrative offices' within the environmental sections of Departments and Bureaux of Agriculture.
- <sup>272.</sup> The participatory, knowledge based approach developed by the project has led to good prospects for sustainable institutional impact at the pilot sites themselves. Farmers and community organisations have been directly involved in designing and implementing project activities and have established good working relations with local Bureaux of Agriculture and Chief Technical Advisors. In most project sites the approach appears to have secured livelihood benefits for communities which improve economic opportunities *and* directly reduce the threats to wild relatives of crops. The project has also worked with community organisations to strengthen village regulations so that these support conservation of wild relatives of crops and has built education and awareness-raising in to livelihood support activities and local educational curriculum. Project learning and regulatory impact has also therefore been 'institutionalised' at the local level, supporting the likelihood that both the livelihood initiatives developed and the villagers' commitment to conserve wild relatives of crops will be sustained beyond EOP.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> the Provincial level Departments and County level Bureaux of Agriculture and the multi-sector Leading Groups for Conservation of Wild Relatives of Crops

- 273. The project's implementing structure supports institutional sustainability. The Local Project Management Offices (LPMO) in the eight Provinces are situated within the administrative authorities in charge of agro-environmental protection in Agricultural Bureaux. LPMO are also the 'administrative offices' of the multi-sector Leading Groups for Wild Relatives of Crops (LGWRC). Therefore, although the project's implementation structure is through *Project* Management Offices and *Project* Steering Committees, the agency representation within PMO and PSC reflects national mandates for CWRC and the project is working to build their capacity.
- 274. Project training activities and 'on the job' learning are strengthening the capacity of these institutions, particularly the relevant environmental sections of the Departments and Bureaux of Agriculture in the eight Provinces, and Provincial and County Leading Groups for Wild Relatives of Crops. One additional point highlighted in the project document is that in China training of staff members under the project is likely to have a sustained impact in that ' staff of County and Prefecture Agricultural Bureaux tend to spend their entire careers in the same location.' Therefore 'brain drain' of trained individuals is unlikely to occur.
- 275. At the national level the project has been designed and implemented within the context of MoA's Strategy for Conservation of Wild Relatives, in particular in response to the "Notice on Work Programme for Conservation of Agricultural Wild Plants" issued by MoA in September in 2003. The national project director (NPD) is also director of the Department of Science, Technology and Education of the Ministry of Agriculture, responsible for agricultural biodiversity conservation, agricultural environmental protection, invasive species management and China's obligations under relevant agricultural treaties. The division chief responsible for conservation of agro-biodiversity from the Division of Resources and Environment is the deputy director of PMO. The project therefore has the backing of, and is embedded within, the relevant division of the national agency responsible for CWRC in China, this again is likely to support sustainable institutional learning and impact.
- 276. The establishment of a national monitoring system for wild relatives of crops is another important project contribution to institutional strengthening for effective conservation of WRC. The project has provided equipment and training to the units within Agricultural Bureaux and Departments in the eight Provinces and has also established a national level database within CAAS to monitor data on WRC and provide information to central decision makers. The institutional sustainability of this system will be demonstrated at EOP if MoA / CAAS are actively using the data in the system for decision making on CWRC, if MoA demonstrate that they plan to extend the monitoring system to other key sites, and if MoA indicate that funding will be provided to CAAS to maintain, update and expand the system. Equally, if at EOP it is clear that monitoring activities within the Departments and Bureaux of Agriculture in the eight Provinces have been built in to annual work plans and funding has been allocated, this will help to demonstrate the institutional sustainability of the system.
- 277. The ET conclude that it is 'likely' that the project will have a sustainable institutional impact by EOP, however a clear focus needs to be maintained by project managers on scaling up and mainstreaming impact within the eight Provinces, and on strengthening the central level 'enabling environment for CWRC. The Project should support key institutions to build the approaches and outcomes developed under the project in to multi-year planning and ensure that they have the capacity to mainstream conservation of WRC in to agricultural production landscapes once the project has ended.

# 6.3.2: Financial (moderately likely)

278. To demonstrate financial sustainability, each of the key institutional responsibilities for CWRC described above will need to have adequate budget provisions within the institutions concerned. If at EOP Departments and Bureaux of Agriculture in the eight Provinces can demonstrate adequate budget allocations to enable them to continue to initiate and implement livelihood, incentive based approaches to CWRC and to support ongoing monitoring of WRC that will help to demonstrate financial sustainability of key project outcomes. Although there is currently no firm indication that

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CWRC activities supported under the project will have adequate financial support at EOP, the fact that project activities have been incorporated in to the work plans, and therefore budgets, of the key institutions responsible for CWRC in the eight Provinces, supports the likelihood of financial sustainability. Project activities are also working to increase the efficiency and capacity of these institutions and this is likely to increase cost effectiveness and therefore to contribute to the potential for financial sustainability.

- <sup>279</sup>. The establishment of effective partnership arrangements for CWRC within LGWRC has in itself established a good framework for financial sustainability; where as it is unlikely that DoA / BoA alone would have adequate finances to be able to support the livelihood, incentive based approach to CWRC across entire Provinces, the involvement of a range of agencies through the LGWRC has helped to build a good platform for financial sustainability of the approach. Likelihood of financial sustainability at EOP however will be demonstrated if LGWRC members demonstrate that their agencies will continue to allocate the necessary financial support to establish the incentive based, sustainable livelihood approach to CWRC at new sites in the Provinces and to maintain support at existing sites, once the project has ended.
- 280. At the local pilot sites, the approach developed by the project aims to establish financially sustainable incentives that support conservation of the target species of WRC. The training and support delivered to the communities under the project is intended to build capacity so that at project end farmers are able to pursue alternative, more sustainable livelihoods without the need for external project support. The project approach at the pilot sites therefore aims to achieve financially sustainable outcomes. At the project sites visited by the ET the project appeared to have achieved good results by mid term.
- 281. At the central level, the division chief from MoA's Division of Resources and Environment which is responsible for conservation of agro-biodiversity, who is also the deputy director of PMO, informed the evaluation team that funding earmarked for conservation of wild relatives of crops in the 2011-2015 National Agricultural and Rural Economic Development Plan, has been increased to 150 million Yuan per year, from 30 million per year in the former plan. However, he could not confirm at this stage whether part of these funds would be used to support the approaches and outcomes developed under the project.
- 282. The ET conclude that it is 'moderately likely' that the project will achieve financial sustainability; although project design and implementation provide a good basis for achieving financial sustainability by EOP, it will be important for project partner agencies to ensure that financing of the livelihood, incentive based approach to CWRC and ongoing monitoring of WRC, is built in to agency budgets, in support of multi-year, multi-sector CWRC focussed work plans, before EOP.

## 6.3.3: Socio-economic (moderately likely)

- 283. Evaluation of the likelihood of sustainable socio-economic impact can be assessed at two levels: Firstly, whether the socio-economic outcomes at the pilot sites themselves are likely to be sustainable, which in turn influences the potential for the approach to be scaled-up across the eight Provinces. Secondly, the likelihood that the approaches developed by the project will result in sustainable socio-economic impacts across the eight provinces.
- 284. At the three sites visited by the ET, the project is having considerable success in establishing sustainable alternative livelihood opportunities for local farming communities. The approach developed at the pilot sites demonstrates sound development practice. The ET consider there to be a good likelihood of sustainable socio-economic outcomes at the three sites visited: Alternative livelihood activities supported by the project were flourishing and had already produced good economic returns for local farmers, communities had developed skills and capacity to manage new livelihood activities, the project had also worked hard to secure equitable distribution of benefits and in particular benefits for women; the awareness raising and education activities had increased communities knowledge of and support for CWRC; and local village regulations incorporated CWRC.

In addition the project had helped to forge a close working relationship between the staff of local Bureaux of Agriculture and the farming communities.

- 285. As outlined under the analysis of institutional sustainability above, the role of the multi-sector LGWRC has also been critical in enabling a range of agencies to co-operate in providing real, substantial livelihood support.
- 286. The ET considers that the approach developed by the project at the pilot sites provides a good platform for replication and for scaling up impact to other key sites across the Provinces. The likelihood of sustainable socio-economic impact at a Provincial level however depends on the extent to which the approach is institutionalised and mainstreamed in agricultural production landscapes in the eight Provinces and the likelihood of sustainable financing to support this. Currently socio-economic outcomes are restricted to six localised sites, to have a sustainable socio-economic impact at the Provincial level, impacts will need to be scaled up and mainstreamed. At mid term the ET conclude that the likelihood of the project achieving a sustained broader socio-economic impact across the eight Provinces is 'moderately likely'. Project managers should focus on supporting the relevant institutions to mainstream the approach over the remaining life of the project in order to increase the likelihood of sustainable socio-economic outcomes at a Provincial level.
- 287. Effective evaluation of the sustainability of socio-economic impacts will also depend on data being generated by the monitoring and alerting system developed under the project. Currently there is no socio-economic data in the system; completion of the socio-economic components of the monitoring and alerting system will be important in enabling effective assessment of the sustainability of socio-economic outcomes.

## 6.3.4: Environmental (moderately likely)

- 288. The likelihood of sustainable environmental impact again can be assessed at two levels: the likelihood that project interventions at the pilot sites themselves will result in sustainable environmental outcomes; and the likelihood of the project achieving sustainable outcomes across the eight Provinces at the Objective level.
- 289. As outlined above, the approach developed by the project has had considerable success in reducing anthropogenic threats to WRC at the pilot sites visited by the ET. The likelihood of sustainable environmental impact at the pilot sites is directly related to the likelihood of sustained socioeconomic outcomes and of institutional and financial sustainability. The likelihood that communities will continue to adopt livelihood activities that work to conserve WRC will depend on whether these livelihoods continue to generate sustainable socio-economic benefits. It will also depend on whether local government agencies adopt planning and economic development strategies that support CWRC and whether Bureaux of Agriculture continue to provide effective support for in-situ CWRC.
- 290. The ET consider that there are good prospects for sustained environmental impact at the three sites visited during the MTE. As outlined above the approach developed provides a sound foundation for replication and mainstreaming across the eight Provinces. Currently however impacts are restricted to six sites; mainstreaming and institutionalisation of the approach will significantly increase the likelihood of sustainable environmental impact across the Provinces towards fulfilment of the Project Objective. The ET consider that it is 'moderately likely' that the project will achieve this Objective level sustainable environmental impact before EOP.
- 291. On going monitoring of the status of WRC at the project sites and across the Provinces will be essential for effective evaluation of the likelihood of sustainable environmental impact. As outlined above, it will be important for the project to finalise the Monitoring and Alerting System and ensure that it is 'institutionalised' within the relevant Bureaux and Departments of Agriculture as well as at the national level, with monitoring activities built in to annual work plans and adequate budget provisions to support this.

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# 7. LESSONS LEARNT AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

<sup>292.</sup> The following section explores some of the key lessons learnt to date and presents the MTE's recommendations for establishing sustainable impacts towards achieving the Project's overall Objective by EOP.

# 7.1 Lessons Learnt

## Benefits of a Participatory, Knowledge-based Approach to Project Implementation.

<sup>293.</sup> The participatory, knowledge based approach developed under the project has strongly supported sustainable socio-economic and WRC conservation outcomes at the majority of pilot sites. It combines structured, scientific assessment of threats to WRC with the identification of potential sustainable livelihood opportunities that could reduce those threats and provide real benefits to local communities. The direct involvement of communities in identifying potential livelihood opportunities has helped to ensure that support delivered under the project is appropriate and

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meets local needs, and has fostered active community support for project activities. The involvement of technical experts and extension staff within the Agricultural Bureaux has ensured that the livelihood strategies developed are technically sound and based on professional feasibility assessments. The approach has also built effective collaboration between Agricultural Bureaux and local farming communities.

<sup>294.</sup> Although the above 'lesson learnt' perhaps sounds more like a statement of good development practice, it is all too common in evaluation of conservation and development projects to find that communities are frustrated by too much consultation ('talk') and not enough real livelihood results; and / or that project activities have supported either conservation or livelihood impacts, but not managed to marry the two; and /or to find that staff in extension services have become frustrated by a lack co-operation from local farmers. The impacts achieved under this project at MTE are commendable and the lesson learnt is in the importance of combining a consultative approach with the delivery of technical support and real on the ground impacts, based on a sound understanding of both the socio-economic and environmental management baseline.

# Importance of Embedding Project Implementation within Relevant National Institutional Frameworks.

- 295. Project implementation at the local sites was managed directly through the sections of Agricultural Bureaux responsible for CWRC, with the Leading Groups for Conservation of WRC in each County and Province. The support of decision makers at the National and Provincial levels was also built in to the project's design and implementation structure.
- 296. By working through national administrative structures, rather than creating specific project management units, the project has helped to build the capacity of national administrative structures for effective CWRC. In so doing it has both strengthened the likelihood of sustainable impact following EOP and demonstrated the potential role of these groups in mainstreaming CWRC in to agricultural production landscapes in China.
- 297. One of the lessons learnt at the pilot sites is that the delivery of real on the ground livelihood support to farming communities that also works to reduce threats to WRC, depends on the input of a range of agencies; it is unlikely that effective levels of support could be achieved by Departments and Bureaux of Agriculture alone. The Leading Groups for Conservation of Wild Relatives of Crops (LGWRC) in each of the eight pilot sites have played a pivotal role in effective implementation of the incentive, livelihoods based approach to CWRC. They provided the platform for a range of relevant sector agencies to form partnerships and to co-ordinate livelihoods and biodiversity conservation support.
- 298. The lesson learnt is both in the importance of the co-ordinating, partnership building function of LGWRC for effective CWRC. Also in the potential of the in-situ livelihoods and incentive based approach to provide a mechanism through which individual institutions within LGWRC can work together to meet both their own strategic objectives and support effective CWRC. The approach developed under the project has helped to develop a way of working that can be mainstreamed across LGWRC in China to support CWRC.

## Applying Training to Support Project Outcomes and to meet the needs of Key Stakeholder Groups

- 299. Implementation of the CWRC project at the pilot sites demonstrates the benefit of ensuring that training provided under the project is based on a sound assessment of capacity building needs and is applied to achieve real impact, through activities supported under the project. This is evidenced in the delivery of training to farmers for new production methods /activities within farmer field schools that directly supports them to establish new livelihood activities. Also, in the training delivered to Agricultural Bureaux staff on baseline assessments and monitoring, and direct application of this at the project sites.
- 300. Again it may sound more like a statement of good development practice than a lesson learnt, however all too often conservation and development projects support numerous 'workshops' or

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training sessions that fail to build capacity because follow up activities have not been supported to enable participants to actually use the training to achieve real change.

301. Another lesson learnt under the project has been the positive impact of combining the delivery of livelihood support and training, with awareness-raising and education on the importance of CWRC. This has helped to build understanding of and support for agro-biodiversity conservation amongst farmers through the association of conservation with improved livelihoods; biodiversity conservation is introduced as an integral part of improved livelihoods rather than as an issue of conflict with existing livelihoods.

## Importance of Developing Sound Indicators and a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan as part of Design.

- 302. The importance of ensuring that SMART indicators are developed in project design and / or that they are revised and adapted to support effective monitoring of project impact during project implementation is a more negative lesson learnt from project implementation to date. Linked to this is the importance of developing a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan at inception, to support effective monitoring of project impact towards intended Outcome and Project objectives.
- 303. Although the structure and logic of project design is sound, the indicators developed do not support effective monitoring and evaluation of impact. A number of indicators are ambiguous and have diverted project managers' focus away from intended Outcome objectives and from measuring progress towards achieving the overall Project Objective. A considerable number of indicators have a heavy bias on the pilot sites, and many of these do not capture the intended impacts of component outputs.

# Inclusion of National and International Candidates within the Selection Process for the position of CTA to support Effective Project Implementation

304. Sound knowledge of national strategies and project context is critical for a project's Chief Technical Advisor, alongside an internationally competitive level of expertise in the given field. Initial recruitment of CTA for the project only considered international candidates, however the support provided by the current national CTA was reported by project stakeholders to have been more effective than that provided by the two international CTA initially recruited. A lesson learnt from this project is that recruitment of long term CTA for projects in China may be most appropriate as a competitive selection process between international and national consultants.

## 7.2 : Recommendations

- 305. The project has set good foundations for achieving the Project Objective by EOP. In the remaining two years of project implementation, project mangers should, however, establish a clear focus on ensuring the sustainability of project outcomes and on scaling up impact. Approaches, systems and knowledge products developed under the project need to be 'institutionalised' so that project impact can be mainstreamed in agricultural production landscapes across the eight focal provinces by EOP.
- <sup>306.</sup> The following recommendations are intended to guide PMO and other key stakeholders on approaches and actions that will help to strengthen the likelihood of achieving sustainable impact.

# Recommendation 1: Secure the Institutional and Financial Sustainability of Project Impacts in Eight Provinces

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- Although the project has had considerable success in developing a sustainable livelihoods, incentive based approach to in-situ CWRC at the pilot sites, the focus of project activities over the remaining life of the project should be firmly on ensuring that conservation of WRC is mainstreamed in agricultural production landscapes in eight provinces in China by EOP.
- The demonstration sites should be viewed as one mechanism to achieve this. They provide a handson approach to enable key stakeholder groups to develop capacity for the incentive, livelihood based approach to conservation of WRC, and for on-going testing and development of the approach. Establishment of 64 replication sites is not an end in itself, it is a means of strengthening the likelihood of long term social, institutional, financial and environmental sustainability of project impacts in eight provinces and towards the project Goal 'to sustainably conserve wild relatives of crop plants in China'.
- It will be important for the project team not to get carried away with too great a focus on implementation of a further 64 replication projects before EOP, but to ensure that capacity is established within key institutions so that project outcomes are sustainable. It is recommended that the activities/outputs and indicators developed for the remaining life of the project have a clear focus on establishing sustainable institutional impact at the Objective level across eight provinces. Project managers currently plan to implement demonstration projects over 15 Provinces. Extension of project impact to additional Provinces is commendable and may contribute to 'mainstreaming' impact across China and therefore to the Project's overall Goal. However, at EOP evaluation of project achievements will primarily be on the extent to which the project has achieved sustainable impact at the Objective level and therefore in mainstreaming CWRC in to agricultural production landscapes in eight Provinces; Project managers should ensure that by spreading project activities more broadly they do not jeopardise the likelihood that the Project will this Objective.
- Project implementation at the demonstration sites should focus on ensuring that Leading Groups for CWRC and their associated management offices, and the Departments and Bureaux of Agriculture in all relevant counties within the eight Provinces function as long term 'steering committees' and 'management offices' for effective in-situ CWRC once the project has ended. If at EOP Leading Groups for CWRC and their associated offices, and Departments and Bureaux of Agriculture in the 8 provinces have the capacity and the institutional and financial support to continue to identify, design, co-ordinate, manage and monitor incentive, livelihood based initiatives for CWRC in existing and new sites, and to share their expertise with other Provinces in China, that will greatly contribute to the likelihood of sustainable institutional, financial, social and environmental impact at EOP. It will also greatly strengthen the likelihood that the project achieves its Objective of mainstreaming conservation of WRC in agricultural production landscapes in eight provinces in China.
- Develop a 'how to' manual on the design and implementation of sustainable livelihood, incentive based initiatives for in-situ conservation of wild relatives of crops in China, building on the brief guidelines developed under Outcome 5. This would be a useful, practical tool for Leading Groups on Wild Relatives of Crops and for Departments / Bureaux of Agriculture across China. The manual could include step by step guidance and case study examples from the project sites and could be tested in the demonstration sites. It would follow the generic approach developed under Outcome 1, stressing the importance of ensuring that incentive mechanisms are tailored to the specific socio-economic, target WRC resource, environmental and threat assessment context of individual sites. If found to be effective the project should aim to encourage MoA and the WRC Leading Groups to 'institutionalise' the manual, as an MoA guide to initiating and implementing incentive based conservation initiatives once the project has ended.
- Transfer copyright / ownership of documents and software developed under the project from PMO, to MoA before EOP.
- Review capacity building needs within Departments and Bureaux of Agriculture in relevant counties in
  eight Provinces and develop an associated training plan to ensure that Departments and Bureaux of
  Agriculture have the capacity to lead and implement the sustainable livelihood, incentive based
  approach to in-situ conservation of WRC post project and to transfer this knowledge to Departments
  and Bureaux of Agriculture in other Provinces across China.

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- Establish the institutional and financial sustainability of Farmer Field Schools, to ensure that FFS continue to function as training centres at the pilot sites following EOP and that the FFS approach continues to be supported by Departments and Bureaux of Agriculture and by LGWRC.
- Support MoA and relevant Departments of Agriculture to integrate the sustainable livelihood, incentive based approach to CWRC in to long- and mid-term agricultural development plans.
- Continue to support learning, exchange and networking between leading groups for WRC and their
  offices across different provinces and counties. The project might like to consider initiating web based
  forums for LGWRC to exchange information.
- Assess the potential to increase the involvement of Departments and Bureaux of Environment in
  project activities at demonstration sites and to actively promote knowledge transfer and networking
  between Departments and Bureaux of Environment and Departments and Bureaux of Agriculture in
  the eight Provinces, given the Ministry of Environment's (and associated Department and Bureaux of
  Environment) overall role in supporting biodiversity conservation.
- Continue to support learning, exchange and networking between villagers involved in the project, particularly through the village head training scheme.
- Assess risks / assumptions associated with proposed support to material transfer agreements (MTA) given the lack of a national legal framework.

## Recommendation 2: Revise the logframe indicators, develop a Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, work plan and associated budget to EOP

- PMO / CTA organise a review and planning workshop with key stakeholders, including representatives from all key CWRC management institutions in the eight Provinces. The workshop should review the impact of the project to date, assess lessons learnt, assumptions and risks and develop a comprehensive work plan for the remaining two years of the project, drawing on the findings of the MTE. In developing the future project work plan, the allocation of activities between relevant outputs / outcomes should be rationalised and revised, along with an assessment of budget needs / allocations / sources and timeframe. Any concerns that PMO have over the budget or timeframe required to achieve the Project Objective should be discussed with UNDP CO and UNDP/GEF Regional office.
- The project team should engage an international Monitoring and Evaluation expert to provide advice and support in developing SMART indicators for the logframe, and to provide advice on the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. Development of SMART indicators and the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan should also however form a core part of the stakeholder review and planning meeting. Discussion of impact indicators and development of an M&E framework in itself provides a useful focus for key stakeholders to pin point desired impacts and means of assessing achievement of these. This will be a useful capacity building process for stakeholders and the project management teams.
- PMO should add further detail to their mid term progress report, as requested by a number of the PSC members during the MTE. The revised mid term progress report should provide precise, quantified information on key outputs and impacts achieved to date and should be distributed, along with the MTE report, as a resource document for the review and planning workshop.

## Recommendation 3: Finalise the Monitoring and Alerting System

 The socio-economic data component of the Monitoring and Alerting System should be revised and streamlined in to relevant categories, for example to measure changes in the: level of biodiversity conservation awareness; level of participation in CWRC activities; economic and social wellbeing of the community; % of community engaged in CWRC-friendly livelihood activities; % of community engaged in livelihood activities that threaten WRC etc. Once the socio-economic data sets have been rationalised and streamlined, socio-economic data should be input to the system.

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Although the system has been linked to the national CGRIS monitoring database and therefore includes data on a considerable number of sites and species, use of the Monitoring and Alerting system to monitor the extent to which conservation of WRC has been mainstreamed in agricultural landscapes is currently limited to 6 project sites. Use of the system should be scaled up over the remaining two years of project implementation and be institutionalised as part of the regular work plan of relevant institutions.

## **Recommendation 4: Strengthen Policy and Regulatory Impact**

- Support MoA to initiate and catalyse the recommended policy and regulatory revisions in support of CWRC at the national level, where possible
- Continue to support the Provinces and Counties to modify existing regulations or implementation rules (output 2.1) and effectively implement existing regulations (output 2.4)
- Continue to support policy improvements for management of IAS, recognising that establishing effective IAS control is beyond the scope of this project and should not be a core focus of project activities.
- Assess the likelihood of policy and regulatory modifications being made at the national level and develop a strategic approach to achieve Outcome 2 under a) the scenario that national level policy and regulatory changes are made in time for the project to support related training and capacity building before EOP and b) if either decision makers at the national level do not approve the proposed amendments or the decision-making timeframe is too long to enable the project to support effective training and capacity building before EOP.

## Recommendation 5: Strengthen Project Monitoring, Evaluation and Financial Management

- Develop a Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. The M&E Plan should include baseline information, status at mid term, SMART indicators and a clear structure detailing responsibilities for project M & E at local and national project management levels.
- Deliver training to PMO /CICETE /UNDP Country Office on GEF project management rules / regulations and procedures, particularly outcome planning and budgeting.
- Conduct a full end of year Audit of the expenditure of GEF funds to date under the project the TOR for which should include more in depth analysis of the expenditure items / rationale which led to Outcome 3 being 121.61% overspent and Outcome 4 being 358.56% overspent at mid-term. PMO / UNDP CO should seek guidance on and clear accountability and reporting requirements for this expenditure abnormality from the UNDP Regional Office.
- Ensure thorough preparation and planning for the project's Terminal Evaluation, to include:
  - → Preparation by the CTA / PMO of a full EOP report which includes quantitative and qualitative data on key impacts and achievements; preparation of project expenditure data detailing planned versus actual expenditure for GEF funds and co-financing. Preparation of all key literature to be sent to the ET prior to the literature review component of the evaluation.
  - → Allocation of adequate time for the Terminal Evaluation. Time allocated for mid term and terminal evaluations should be based on an assessment by UNDP / PMO of the number of stakeholder meetings to be held, literature to be reviewed and the time required for site visits. Inadequate time was allocated for the MTE given the large travel distances / time involved in visiting project sites and number of stakeholders consulted.

# Recommendation 6: Assess potential opportunities to apply and share lessons learnt from this project to other biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihood and poverty alleviation initiatives.

The lessons learnt, approaches and systems developed under the project may have potential application to other biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihood support initiatives. The following are examples only. The ET is not recommending that the project implement the following activities before EOP as they go beyond the remit of the project's Objective. However it may be useful for UNDP CO and Regional office and the PSC to consider the potential application of project outcomes to other initiatives.

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- The potential to adapt the manual / guidelines on incentive-based conservation of WRC suggested under Recommendation 1 as an international resource, written in English. It should be noted however that this activity goes beyond the immediate development objective of this project; the time and resources required to develop an internationally useful resource should be considered an additional input / output and should not detract from achieving the Project's core Objective.
- The potential to adapt the incentive, livelihood based approach to Invasive Species Management in China. Internationally successful examples exist of the use of incentive, livelihood based approaches to support management of IAS impacts on biodiversity. The Monitoring and Alerting System may also have potential application for monitoring of IAS and IAS impacts.
- The potential to apply approaches and learning from the current project to support poverty alleviation initiatives implemented by the National Management Office for Rural Development and Poverty Reduction whose 2010 – 2020 guidelines emphasise the importance of environmental sustainability and sustainable livelihoods to national poverty alleviation objectives.

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