**Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Wild Relatives of Crops in China**

**PIMs: 2277**

**Response to the Terminal Evaluation**

**Dec. 16, 2013**

**I. Background**

This document summarizes the response of the project management to the Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the “Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Wild Relatives of Crops in China” (CWRC) Project. The project is implemented between 2007 and 2013 in China. It is a GEF-funded project, executed by the UNDP and implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture of China.

The TE was undertaken by an evaluation team (ET) including one international consultant (Ms Eugenia Katsigris) and one national consultant (Prof LI Ninghui) during July 14 –October 27 in 2013. The TE purpose is threefold: (1) transparency for accountability; (2) lessons learned to benefit future projects; (3) sustainability and next steps to ensure ongoing benefits from project results after closure. During the TE, the TE puts greatest focus at outcome level. Outcomes provide gauge of meaningful impacts being achieved, rather than simple completion of activities. TE first covers “big picture” view of relevance, changes to the baseline, results, and potential impacts on future. Next, it covers findings regarding each of CWRC’s five outcomes. Strong emphasis is put on justifying conclusions with evidence from field visits and interviews. TE also covers sustainability, cost effectiveness and expenditure analysis, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, special topics (women and ABS), and recommendations, lessons learned, and next steps.

The project was evaluated using standard UNDP / GEF evaluation criteria, against the specific development objectives established in the Project Document. The TE also considers the extent to which the project is supporting the Government of China to achieve relevant national strategic objectives, and its contribution to UNDP CPAP Outputs, the strategic priorities of UNDAF and the biodiversity portfolio in GEF Phase IV.

The draft report was received on the 24th of August 2013, and was circulated for comments, which were compiled and sent to the lead consultant. The completed final report was submitted on 25th of October 2013.

**II. Overview Response to the TE**

UNDP and the Ministry of Agriculture of China appreciate the TE findings that, overall, the TE offers very positive assessment of the CWRC Project rating highly satisfactory in both effectiveness and execution. Some concerns about relevance (for future sites) of mainstreaming-in-agriculture methodology and cost effectiveness/expenditures were identified. The large amount of information that is included in the ANNEXES of the TE report will be useful for guiding the post project action. The evaluation ratings given to the overall project and each of the 5 project Outcomes under the GEF evaluative foci of Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency are an indication to be transparency for accountability and to benefit future projects, sustainability and next steps to ensure ongoing benefits from project results after EOP.

The PMO has facilitated deliberation on key issues raised in the TE report with key stakeholders to review the findings of the TE and make necessary post project action plan accordingly.

**III. Detailed Response to the TE’s Recommendations**

The TE Team identified a number of issues and made several recommendations.

The following are specific responses to the recommendations made by the PMO:

**Outcomes 1: Baseline Survey, Demo and Replication Sites, Dissemination**

* Take measures to ensure 72 project sites are incorporated into national care, so that funding is provided for annual follow-up surveys.

PMO: It is extremely likely the 72 sites will be incorporated into national care, e.g. the WRC conservation programme launched by the MoA.

* Improve indicators. Indicators should be expanded to include invasive species and non-point pollution.

PMO: A SC entitled “Threat Evaluation of IAS on WRC” has been awarded to the CAAS. Follow-up actions will be taken accordingly.

* TE Team recommends guidelines for the mainstreaming-into-agriculture approach of WRC conservation (the MiA approach) should be developed and disseminated in a publication.

PMO: the PMO facilitated deliberation on key issues raised in the TE report and developed MiA guidelines and a method for assessing conservation options (i.e. physical isolation versus MiA) at new sites. The PMO is in midst of preparing two books, one on WRC policy and one on the “MiA” approach, i.e. incentives. The PMO will include both the MiA guidelines and the conservation approach assessment methodology in the second book they are preparing. Besides, In Sept. 2013 (after submission of the draft version of TE report), the PMO, jointly with the UNDP CO, held a major conference in Kunming, Yunnan province including representatives from all of China’s provinces to further disseminate the guidelines on the “MiA” approach and relevant best practices.

**Outcome 2: Policy**

* Assess situation of IAS at all sites to see how common a threat it is. If it is common at project sites, guidelines should be developed for addressing.

PMO: A SC entitled “Threat Evaluation of IAS on WRC” has been awarded to the CAAS. Follow-up actions will be taken accordingly.

* Link future “mainstreaming-in-agriculture” approach WRC conservation site selection with poverty alleviation sites, if possible, so that dual benefits may be achieved.

PMO: it has been integrated in the guidelines on the “MiA” approach and disseminated at the Kunming Conference.

* When relevant, support direct utilization of conserved wild agricultural plants (such as a gynostemma processing machine in Tongbai, Henan).

PMO: The PMO and the MoA has recognized the need to address the issue, and has integrated it in the guidelines on the “MiA” approach. Actually, the project has supported sustainable utilizations of conserved WRCs by local villagers, e.g. Kiwi Fruit, wild tea and some other ones with commercial values except the Gynostemma.

* Follow up regarding *Seed Law* revisions if needed.

PMO: The PMO has learnt from the MOA that the latter is going to propose adding WRC conservation into Seed Law revisions.

* Ensure that the MIA approach is a priority agenda item for discussion in upcoming expert meetings to design the 13th Five-Year Plan.

PMO: Both the PMO and the MoA believe the MIA approach is preferable, and is intent to make sure the MiA approach is a priority agenda item for upcoming 13th Five-Year Plan discussions. The MoA’s annual budget for WRCs will be expanded to include training and livelihoods work.

* Consider work on ecological compensation for WRC conservation as a closing part of this project or as follow-up work.

PMO: both the PMO and the MoA have recognized the need to address the issue, and is intent to make sure the issue, i.e. ecological compensation for WRC conservation, is a priority agenda item for upcoming 13th Five-Year Plan discussions.

**Outcome 3: Capacity Building**

* Assess possibility and potential benefits of continued FFS at existing project sites.
* Adopt not only participatory classroom approach of FFS in future projects, but also the multi-topic curriculum approach that incorporates farmer input into determining topics to be taught.
* For future projects targeting mindset change, reference CWRC’s success via utilization of a multi-pronged approach (training, livelihood incentives, discussions with officials, posters in village, etc.) and particularly the importance of focusing on livelihood benefits.

PMO: Both the PMO and the MoA have recognized the need to address the issue, and is intent to make sure the FFS will be an essential tool for setting up WRC conservation sites in the future. Moreover, The PMO has awarded a SC to develop curriculum (courseware) of agro-biodiversity, in particular WRC for agriculture universalities in China.

**Outcome 4: M&A System and Germplasm Research**

* Make strong efforts to obtain approval for inclusion of the 64 sites (after confidential information is removed) in the online M&A system. Efforts might also be made to obtain approval for the same sort of inclusion of the 170 physical isolation sites.

PMO: Agree. Both the PMO and the MoA have recognized the needs of this issue, and is making plans to make sure that the operator of M&A system will keep on doing so right after the approval by the MoA.

* Encourage follow-up germplasm research for the demo sites and new germplasm research for the replication sites. This should involve comprehensive outreach to germplasm researchers so that they can be aware of the opportunity (including plant types available) and benefits of working with *in situ* WRC resources. It will also involve the development of streamlined processes, so that researchers can easily understand what may be available and apply for access.

PMO: The MoA has enacted specific regulations governing the issue. The PMO will facilitate in publicizing further the regulations nationwide.

**Other Recommendations**

* Scope: For current project, in dissemination materials, clarify that scope of project objective has been two-fold: (1) to promote the “mainstreaming-in-agriculture” approach to WRC conservation, which is new to China; and (2) to promote conservation of WRCs in China more generally (regardless of approach) through capacity building, publicity, and policy improvements.

PMO: The project is revising the project brochure accordingly, and will distribute it nationwide.

* Extending livelihoods approach to other conservation efforts: Given success of project, consider extending the livelihoods approach to other conservation efforts, such as grassland conservation.

PMO: Actions will be taken by both the PMO and the MoA to promote the best practices of the project including incentives (livelihoods approach) to other conservation efforts.

* Ideas for Future Projects, e.g. An IAS project, with focus on WRCs or with more general scope, etc.

PMO: the PMO, in cooperation with the UNDO CO, is developing relevant GEF projects, e.g. PIF on capacity building and demonstration of IAS prevention and control in China, etc.