***China***

**Mid-Term Review**

**Atlas Project ID: 00059938; PIMS: 4072**

**CBPF: Strengthening Globally Important Biodiversity Conservation through Protected Area Strengthening in Gansu Province**

****

Michael J.B. **Green** and **Wang** Yexu

**9 June 2013**

**Front cover:**  … © M.J.B. Green

CONTENTS

PROJECT DETAILS iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY iv

1. INTRODUCTION 1

**1.1** **Project background** 1

**1.2** **Purpose of the review** 1

**1.3** **Methodology of the review** 2

**1.4** **Structure of the review report** 4

2. PROJECT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT 6

**2.1** **Project start and duration** 6

**2.2** **Problems that the project seeks to address** 6

**2.3** **Immediate and development objectives of the project** 7

**2.4** **Main stakeholders** 8

**2.5** **Results expected** 10

3. FINDINGS 11

**3.1** **Project formulation** 11

**3.2** **Project implementation** 15

**3.3** **Project results** 21

4. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS 29

**4.1** **Conclusions** 29

**4.2** **Corrective actions for Project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation** 31

**4.3** **Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the projec** 38

**4.4** **Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives** 38

**4.5** **Lessons learned** 39

Annex 1: Terms of Reference 40

Annex 2: Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement Form 47

Annex 3: Itinerary and Persons Interviewed 48

Annex 4: List of Documents Reviewed 54

Annex 5: Questionnaire Survey Results 56

Annex 6: Progress in Delivery of Project Outcomes and Outputs 58

Annex 7: Project Steering Committee Members (Former and Present) 62

Annex 8: Evaluation of Project Performance Indicators and Delivery Status 64

Annex 8a: Analysis of Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) 67

Annex 9: Logical Framework Matrix– proposed changes 70

**ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| APR | Annual Progress Report |
| AWP | Annual Work Plan |
| CAS | Chinese Academy of Sciences |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| CBPF | China Biodiversity Partnership and Framework for Action |
| CO | Country Office (UNDP) |
| CTA | Chief Technical Advisor |
| GAAHD | Agricultural & Animal Husbandry Department |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GEPD | Gansu Environmental Protection Department |
| GFD | Gansu Forestry Department |
| GoC | Government of China |
| GWA | Gansu Wildlife Administration |
| IC | International Consultant |
| LFM | Logical Framework Matrix |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MEP | Ministry of Environmental Protection |
| METT | Monitoring and Evaluation Tracking Tool |
| MTR | Mid-Term Review |
| NC | National Consultant |
| NDRC | National Development and Reform Commission |
| NEX | National Execution |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NR | Nature Reserve |
| OVI | Objectively Verifiable Indicators |
| PA | Protected Area |
| PIR | Project Implementation Review |
| PM | Project Manager |
| PMO | Project Management Office |
| ProDoc | Project Document |
| PSC | Project Steering Committee |
| RCB | Regional Centre in Bangkok (UNDP) |
| RMB | Renmibi (Chinese currency) |
| RTA | Regional Technical Advisor (UNDP – GEF) |
| SFA | State Forestry Administration |
| SGP | Small Grants Programme (GEF) |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (analysis) |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| TPR | Tripartite Review |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| US $ | United States dollar |

# PROJECT DETAILS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| UNDP/GEF Project Title: | **CBPF: Strengthening Globally Important Biodiversity Conservation through Protected Area Strengthening in Gansu Province** |
| GEF Project ID No:  UNDP Project ID No: | **3864 (Atlas Project ID: 00059938)**  **PIMS: 4072** |
| Evaluation Time Frame:  Date of Evaluation Report: | **25 February – 27 March 2013**  **March 2013** |
| Region and Countries included in the Project: | **Asia and the Pacific, China** |
| GEF Focal Area: | **Biodiversity** |
| GEF Strategic Program: | **SP1: Sustainable Financing of Protected Area Systems at the National Level**  **SP3: Strengthening Terrestrial Protected Area Networks** |
| Implementing Agency  Executing Agency:  Project Partners: | **UNDP China**  **Gansu Forestry Department**  **Gansu Financial Department, Gansu Wildlife Administration, 4 demonstration PAs (Gahai-Zecha, Taohe, Lianhuashan and Taizishan nature reserves)** |
| Review Team Members: | Michael J.B. **Green** and **Wang** Yexu |

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A great many people willingly and enthusiastically met with the Mid-Term Reviewers, often at short notice, to share their experiences and observations about this project, all of which helped to inform this review. Details of those officially met and interviewed are given in **Annex 3.** Their contributions are very much appreciated.

The mission was hosted by the Project Management Office and supported throughout by members of the Gansu Forestry Department, all of whom graciously, diligently and efficiently attended to the needs and many requests of the consultants. Particular thanks are due to **Ma** Xuming (PMO Director), **Li** Qian (Project Manager), **Ouyang** Feng (CTA) and **Wang** Huali (Interpreter) who devoted a huge amount of their time and energy to our arrangements and accompanied us throughout our field visits. We are also most grateful to **Guo** Ping (National Project Director) for joining us for the entire round of field visits and to **Lian** Xuebin (Director of Project Executing Office) for participating in the last of these visits.

The Evaluators very much welcomed the commitment of **Ma** Chaode (UNDP Programme Manager of Energy & Environment), who joined us the first few days of our mission in Gansu.

The opinions and recommendations in this report are those of the consultants and do not necessarily reflect the position of GEF, UNDP or Gansu Forestry Department. The consultants are responsible for any errors or omissions.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Summary Table** | | | | |
| **Project Title:** CBPF: Strengthening Globally Important Biodiversity Conservation through Protected Area Strengthening in Gansu Province | | | | |
| **GEF Project ID:**  **Atlas ID:** | 3864  00059938 |  | ***at endorsement (Million US$)*** | ***at Mid-Term (Million US$)*** |
| **UNDP Project ID:** | PIMS: 4072 | **GEF financing:** | 1.738 |  |
| **Country:** | China | **IA/EA own:** |  |  |
| **Region:** | Asia & Pacific | **Government:** |  |  |
| **Focal Areas:** | Biodiversity | **Other:** |  |  |
| **Operational Program:** |  | **Total co-financing:** | 7.280 |  |
| **Executing Agency:** | Gansu Forestry Department | **Total Project Cost:** | 9.018 |  |
| **Other Partners involved:** | Gansu Financial Department, Gansu Wildlife Administration, 4 demonstration PAs | **ProDoc Signature (date project began):** | 18.01.2011 |  |
| **(Operational) Closing Date:** | 17.01.2015 (4 years) | Actual: |

##### Brief description of Project

*Strengthening globally important biodiversity conservation through protected area strengthening in Gansu Province* is a four-year UNDP/GEF full-size project that commenced on the signing of the Project Document on 18 January 2011, seven months after the Project’s approval in June 2010.

Gansu Province (45.4 million ha) in China is extremely rich in biological diversity and forms part of a global biodiversity hotspot, known as the Mountains of Southwest China. For example, it is the 4th richest province in mammal species and 7th in bird species, among which are significant numbers of endemics (e.g. 55 endemic fish species) as well as threatened species. Gansu is also among the poorest provinces in China, with the 4th lowest Human Development Index and 2nd lowest per capita GDP in 2006. Its population of over 26 million people is predominantly rural (68%) and involved mainly in primary production (57%), mostly agriculture including animal husbandry. Most of the economy is based on mining for oil and minerals extraction.

In response to rural and development pressures on its natural resources, Gansu has established a system of 64 protected areas (PAs) that covers 100,334 km2 and comprises 22% of the Province (based on 2012 data). Barriers exist, however, to the provincial government’s efforts to conserve biodiversity, notably a weak regulatory framework, limited institutional capacity and a lack of know-how in managing and sustainably financing its PAs system. It is in this context that the present Project has been designed to:

“*strengthen protected areas’ sustainability in Gansu Province through improved effectiveness of PA management and sustainable financing.”*

This objective of the Project is intended to contribute to a broader **goal** to:

“effectively conserve globally significant biodiversity in China.”

The Project seeks to remove the barriers to conserving Gansu’s globally important biodiversity by a combination of interventions that focus on: (i) policy and institutional development at system and institutional levels; and (ii) demonstration of sustainable management and financing of four PAs in the Taohe Basin, namely Lianhuashan, Gahai-Zecha, Taohe and Taizishan nature reserves.

The primary beneficiaries of the Project are the Gansu Forestry Department and the individual PA authorities responsible for managing the 4 demonstration PAs. Some support is directed towards local communities in terms of developing cooperative agreements and community resource plans but the Project is not designed to resource the implementation and realisation of such initiatives.

##### Context and purpose of the review

Mid-term Review is an integral part of the UNDP/GEF project cycle. Its purpose is to identify potential project design issues, assess progress towards the achievement of objectives, identify and document lessons learned, and to recommend specific actions that might improve the project. It is expected to serve as a means of validating or filling the gaps in the initial assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency obtained from monitoring. Thus, the MTR provides an opportunity to assess early signs of project success or failure and prompt necessary adjustments.

##### Review approach and methods

This MTR was carried out by external international and national consultants in February - May 2013. It included 12 days in-country (5-16 March inclusive) meeting and interviewing partners and other stakeholders in Lanzhou and during field visits to three of the four demonstration PAs, namely Lianhuashan, Taizishan and Taohe nature reserves. The planned visit to Gahai-Zecha Nature Reserve was cancelled at short notice due to ‘ethnic tensions’. Subsequently time was spent reviewing information, report writing and reviewing feedback on the draft report.

The review was undertaken in as participatory a manner as possible in order to build consensus on achievements, short-comings and lessons learnt. Stakeholders were interviewed informally, with the help of interpretation as necessary. Interviews focused on: the strengths and weaknesses of Project implementation and its strategic direction to date; and future opportunities for their strengthening through adaptive management and other appropriate means. Evidence was cross-checked (triangulation) between as many different sources as possible to confirm its veracity. Initial findings were shared at a meeting with senior members of GFD, including the National Project Director (NPD), and PMO on 14 March 2013 in Lanzhou and the following day with UNDP in Beijing.

In addition to a descriptive assessment, Project achievements (outputs and outcomes), sustainability of outcomes, monitoring and evaluation system (design and application), were rated with respect to **either** the level of satisfaction achieved **or** the likelihood of various dimensions of the outcomes being sustainable at Project termination, as follows:

* + The Project objective and outcomes were rated according to their respective outputs (**Table 3.6**), based on evidence provided by PMO and assessed by the evaluators (**Annex 6**).
  + The status and quality of delivery of the Project objective and outcomes were evaluated by means of the targets established for indicators in the Logical Framework Matrix (LFM), (**Annex 8**).
  + Project performance was rated using a range of measures to cover key areas, such as monitoring and evaluation, sustainability and impact, as well as Project formulation, implementation and results. These ratings are presented in **Table 3.7**.

##### Review results

The Project’s (development) objective, “*strengthen protected areas’ sustainability in Gansu Province through improved effectiveness of PA management and sustainable financing”*, which is part of a broader goal to “effectively conserve globally significant biodiversity in China”, comprises two outcomes. The first addresses the policy, regulatory and institutional framework for effective and financially sustainable management of PAs; and the second focuses on demonstrating how PAs can be effectively managed and sustainably financed within part of a global biodiversity hotspot in the Taohe Basin. Both outcomes are closely inter-connected and rely on the establishment of a legal and management framework for sustainably conserving globally important biodiversity within Gansu’s PAs.

**The Project is evaluated as Moderately Satisfactory with respect to the achievement of its objective,** based on assessment of Project outcomes and outputs (detailed in **Annex 6** and summarised in **Table 3.6**), Project performance (summarised in **Table 3.7**) and Project performance indicators (**Annex 8**).

**Table 3.6** Mid-Term Review ratings of Project outcomes and outputs, based on evidence provided in **Annex 6**

| **Objectives and Outputs** | | **Rating\*** | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| HS | S | MS | MU | U | HU |
| Outcome 1 | Strengthened provincial policy framework and institutional capacity for sustainable management and financing of Gansu’s PA system. |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Output 1.1 | Systematic PA development and management strategy adopted by Provincial Government. |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Output 1.2 | Economic valuation of the PA system in Gansu conducted and a PA system financing plan developed. |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  |
| Output 1.3 | Legislative and regulatory framework for the PA system in Gansu improved. |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  |
| Output 1.4 | Gansu PA Forum established with the sectoral agencies and stakeholders aiming to enhance PA management effectiveness. |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  |
| Output 1.5 | Provincial level PA database and knowledge management system developed. |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Output 1.6 | Institutional capacities for effective PA planning and management strengthened. |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Output 1.7 | Training curricula and institutes are in place at provincial level for enhancing knowledge and skills of PA staff. |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Outcome 2 | Sustainable protected area management and financing demonstrated in Taohe Basin. |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  |
| Output 2.1 | Consistent PA management tools are developed and utilised at the demonstration PA sites with clear action and monitoring mechanisms installed. |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  |
| Output 2.2 | Local level biodiversity monitoring and evaluation system in place in the four demonstration PAs. |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Output 2.3 | Financial sustainability of the demonstration PAs improved with use of financial planning tools and diversification of revenue stream. |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |  |
| Output 2.4 | Collaborative approaches between PAs and local PA partners developed, demonstrating improved PA management and cost effectiveness |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Output 2.5 | Skills and competencies of PA staff improved with use of a performance management system and the creation of incentive mechanisms. |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  |

**\*** **HS** = **H**ighly **S**atisfactory; **S** = **S**atisfactory; **MS** = **M**oderately **S**atisfactory;

**MU** = **M**oderately **U**nsatisfactory; **U** = **U**nsatisfactory; **HU** = **H**ighly **U**nsatisfactory

Key points to note are as follows:

* **Outcome 1** is rated as **Moderately** **Satisfactory**, in line with the ratings of the majority of its outputs. Much of the technical groundwork has been satisfactorily achieved with respect to **Outputs 1.2, 1.3** and **1.4** but the challenging task of drafting and having approved a sustainable financing plan and a regulatory framework for PAs lies ahead. In the case of the Taohe Forum, it is not really functioning as meets only every two years, nor does it have any representation of local communities.

Less progress has been achieved with respect to **Outputs 1.1**, **1.5**, **1.6** and **1.7**. A ToR for a Provincial PA strategy (**Output 1.1**) was developed in 2011 but has yet to be contracted out. The development of a provincial knowledge management system (**Output 1.5**) lies dormant, ever since the national consultant submitted a framework in July 2012. Progress in institutional capacity building (**Outputs 1.6** and **1.7**) has been limited to identifying training needs and a training institution (Provincial Wildlife Administration); training curricula are unlikely to become operating before late 2013.

* **Outcome 2** is rated as **Satisfactory**, a majority of outputs having been rated as such. Satisfactory progress has been made with respect to the development of management plans (**Output 2.1**), business plans(**2.3**) and performance management systems with incentive mechanisms(**2.5**) for each of the demonstration PAs. However, management and business planning have yet to be integrated, as well as linked to community resource and tourism plans.

Less good progress has been made with **Output 2.2** (biodiversity monitoring), for which a framework has been designed and plans developed for each demonstration PA but surveys have yet to be undertaken. Moreover, the huge, planned investments in monitoring are not currently supported by database systems and rigorous scientific analysis to inform management. With respect to **Output 2.4**, the four PA administrations have developed collaborative approaches with demonstration villages but there appears to be limited awareness of the Project among some communities members and few tangible benefits in return for their cooperation.

Progress towards meeting end of Project targets, established for the indicators in the LFM, has also been assessed and rated (**Annex 8**). Ratings indicate **Moderately Satisfactory** (N=8) and **Satisfactory** (N=3) progress towards 2014 targets for the majority of indicators, exceptions being the two **Moderately Unsatisfactory** results for the establishment of an Information Management System and specialised training and skills development programmes for PAs staff.

In line with GEF requirements (UNDP-GEF 2012), performance has also been rated in terms of project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impacts, as well as the quality of M&E systems (**Table 3.7**).

**Table 3.7** Project performance ratings

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Component / Objective** | **Rating** | **Comments** | |
| **Project Formulation** (using 6-point satisfaction scale) | | | |
| Conceptualization/Design | **MS** | Simple, well conceived design in line with national policies and priorities. Significant weaknesses are: (i) over-ambitious scale within available timeframe and GEF funds; and (ii) limited provision for benefits to accrue to demonstration villages under planned co-management agreements (see **Section 3.1.1** and SWOT analysis in **Table 3.1**). | |
| Stakeholder participation | **S** | Close involvement of most key stakeholders (provincial agencies and PA administrations) from outset of Project formulation, especially in identifying baseline conditions through use of METT and other scorecards. However, no evidence in Project Document of community involvement (see **Sections 2.4** and **3.1.2**). | |
| **Project Implementation** (using 6-point satisfaction scale) | | | |
| Implementation Approach | **S** | Some significant short-comings in implementation but these have been/are being progressively addressed. | |
| *Use of logical framework* | **MS** | No record of LFM having been reviewed during Project inception phase. RTA recalls that “logframe was looked at but there was no particular issues necessitating any change”. Subsequent identification of shortcomings in LFM during MTR suggests a lack of critical examination during inception phase. | |
| *Adaptive management* | **S** | PMO is stable, competent and highly committed in its work as a result of considerable adaptive management on the part of the Implementing Agency (UNDP), particularly with respect to:   * Inexperience with GEF/ UNDP accounting and reporting procedures at provincial level, necessitating training and more oversight by UNDP in 2011. * Facilitating staff changes within PMU and also at NPD level in 2012. * Recruitment of key national and international consultants.   PMO’s proposed budget re-allocation, brought to the attention of the Evaluators, is indicative of their enhanced capabilities in planning and adapting for the future. | |
| *Use / establishment of information technologies* | **MU** | Project has progressed slowly in developing a knowledge management system (Output 1.5). It established a web site in August, 2012 but this is not fully functional (<http://www.gsgeftaohe.com>). Information (in Chinese only) is limited to such items as consultant CVs and Taohe Declaration. Outputs such as management and business plans are not available, nor are the videos developed for each of the 4 PAs. | |
| *Operational relationships between the institutions involved* | **S** | Provincial government is strongly committed to Project, evident from its high level of cash co-financing, and there are good inter-agency relations, notably between GFD and Gansu Finance Department. Relationships nurtured by mechanisms such as PSC and Taohe Forum, both of which are represented by wide range of institutions and other stakeholders including PA administrations. PMO is well respected by partners and actively engaged in facilitating, supporting and servicing these mechanisms and its various partnerships. Stronger links need to be established with Legislative Office in order to expedite policy/law reforms. | |
| *Technical capacities* | **S** | Observations from meetings and review of technical outputs indicate that the Project is serviced by technically competent and highly committed professionals within PMO and supported by national and international consultants proficient in their respective areas of expertise. | |
| Monitoring and evaluation | **S** | Currently satisfactory but there were serious weaknesses and oversights during the inception phase (see **Section 3.2.2**). | |
| Stakeholder participation | **S** | There has been close involvement and collaboration with partners and other stakeholders throughout Project implementation to date. All stakeholders have spoken highly of the Project without exception.  Main weakness is the absence of any mechanism through which communities can voice their interests and concerns, which is more a reflection of the Project’s design rather than its implementation. | |
| *Production and dissemination of information* | **MS** | A wide range of materials, mostly in Chinese, have been produced by the Project, including management and business plans for each of the 4 PAs, along with PRAs, incentive schemes and monitoring protocols. The policy environment and capacity needs have also been assessed. Currently, there is a lack of integration between certain outputs, notably the PRAs, management and business plans (see **Sections 3.2.3 and 3.3.3**).  Materials have been disseminated via the PA administrations and provincial agencies but are currently not available via the Project’s website. Best practices need to be distilled from outputs and widely disseminated. | |
| *Local resource users and NGOs participation* | **MS** | Awareness of the Project’s objective and potential benefits is low and even confused among some members of the demonstration villages. Community participation in co-management of resources needs to be progressively improved as mutual trust develops between respective parties.  There is no NGO involvement at community level, none exists. | |
| *Establishment of partnerships* | **S** | Co-management agreements have been established between each PA administration and a respective demonstration village, the emphasis of which is on nature conservation with little attention to the development of sustainable livelihoods.  The Taohe Forum has been established as a public service platform to promote the sustainable management, financing and development of Gansu’s PAs. Realising its Charter, adopted on 19 December 201, would seem to be constrained by meeting only once every two years (see **Table 4.1**). | |
| *Involvement / support of government institutions* | **HS** | High level of ownership of Project by GFD (Executing Agency) and strong support from Gansu Finance Department, Environment Protection Department and the individual demonstration PAs, as reported in **Section 3.2.3**. | |
| **Project Results** (using 6-point satisfaction scale) | | | |
| Achievement of objective | **MS** | Overall rating based on **Table 3.6**.and evidence provided in **Annex 6.** | |
| Attainment of Outcome 1 | **MS** | Rating taken from **Table 3.6**.and evidence provided in **Annex 6.** | |
| Attainment of Outcome 2 | **S** | Rating taken from **Table 3.6**.and evidence provided in **Annex 6.** | |
| **Overall Quality of Project Outcomes** (using 6-point satisfaction scale) | | | |
| *Relevance* | **R** | See comments under **Section 3.3.2**. | |
| *Effectiveness* | **MS** | See comments under **Section 3.3.3**. | |
| *Efficiency* | **MS** | See comments under **Section 3.3.3**. | |
| **Sustainability** (using 4-point likelihood scale) | | | |
| Overall Likelihood of Sustainability | **L** | See comments under **Section 3.3.4**. | |
| *Financial resources* | **L** | See comments under **Section 3.3.4**. | |
| *Socio-economic* | **ML** | See comments under **Section 3.3.4**. | |
| *Institutional framework and governance* | **ML** | See comments under **Section 3.3.4**. | |
| *Environmental* | **L** | See comments under **Section 3.3.4**. | |
| **Impact** (using 3-point impact scale) | | | |
| *Environmental status improvement* | **S** | **Likely** significant improvement in effective management and sustainable financing of PAs, resulting in improved conservation status of globally significant biodiversity in core areas of Gansu’s PAs. Drivers are strengthened capacity of authorities to effectively manage PAs, collaboration with local communities in protecting and conserving biodiversity, and Provincial Government’s increasing financial commitment to PAs management. | |
| *Environmental stress reduction* | **M** | Minimal reduction in environmental stress anticipated as core areas of PAs thought to be already protected reasonably effectively, while transition areas likely to be subject to increased pressures from tourism and associated infrastructural developments. | |
| *Progress towards stress/status change* | **M** | Minimal progress to date as some Project interventions only recently beginning to take effect and others are outstanding. | |
| **Overall Project Results**  (using 6-point satisfaction scale) | **MS** |  | |
| **Satisfaction scale**: **H**ighly **S**atisfactory, **S**atisfactory, **M**oderately **S**atisfactory, **M**oderately **U**nsatisfactory, **U**nsatisfactory, **H**ighly **U**nsatisfactory  **Relevance scale:** **R**elevant; **N**ot **R**elevant | | | **Sustainability scale:** **L**ikely, **M**oderately **L**ikely, **M**oderately **U**nlikely, **U**nlikely  **Impact scale:** **S**ignificant, **M**inimal, **N**egligible |

##### Conclusions

The Project is well on its way to achieving its objective and goal, having made some very impressive progress during the last 9 months, in terms of outputs delivered. This follows in the wake of a long, slow and rather unproductive inception phase that inevitably impacted Project performance and outputs to date (by mid-term). Thus, the Project, its partners and other stakeholders are to be applauded for achieving an overall **Moderately Satisfactory** MTR result, in spite of all the challenges it has had to address.

Clearly, lessons have been learned and the Project is now well-positioned and suitably determined to consolidate its achievements to date, particularly with respect to integrating and further strengthening many of its initial outputs and catching up on its schedule. The present capability, motivation and stability of its PMO, as well the vigorous leadership shown by its current NPD, augur well for the future.

The main conclusions of this MTR with respect to the implementation of the Project are summarised by way of a SWOT analysis in **Table 4.1**. This analysis, together with the results of a questionnaire survey distributed to stakeholders**,** provides the basis to the recommendations below. The Reviewers are confident that the Project will be able to address most if not all shortcomings in the remaining time available and achieve an even better result by the end of its term, based on these recommendations.

**Table 4.1** SWOT analysis of project implementation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **STRENGTHS** | **WEAKNESSES** |
| * + China’s nature reserves are based on UNESCO MAB Biosphere Reserve model, comprising core area(s), buffer zone(s) and transition area(s). Thus, great potential to realise conservation and sustainable development.   + Project is well supported by Gansu Provincial Government, as evidenced by financial commitment of RMB 4 million for 4 demonstration PAs at its onset.   + Strong leadership and commitment shown by GFD and its NPD, including exemplary willingness to learn lessons from slow, fragile beginnings and from models and experience elsewhere.   + PMO developed into talented and closely-knit team, after painful gestation, having good working relations within GFD, demonstration PAs, other stakeholders. Committed to address earlier shortfalls evident during and following inception phase and very open to learning opportunities.   + Demonstration PAs working enthusiastically with Project and delivering well in relation to their present technical capabilities (e.g. management, business and community resource plans).   + Establishment of Taohe Forum provides a platform generating synergy among those with vested interests in biodiversity conservation and PAs management.   + Range of collaborative agreements established between PA authorities and demonstration villages.   + Much new capacity developed in sustainable financial planning for PAs through training workshops and production of business plans by PA staff.   **THREATS**   * + The slow start to Project implementation has meant that many outputs are behind schedule. This is most concerning for strategy and policy development under **Outcome 1**, as they require much time for consultation and any associated regulatory processes are even more lengthy. Delays in delivery of **Outcome 2** outputs will limit opportunities for consolidation of best practices and, of course, replication. While a no-cost extension of six months may be helpful in this regard, it is unlikely to be affordable given the relatively small size of the GEF grant.   + The lack of specific Project funds to invest in improving local livelihoods in the demonstration villages is a potential threat to the way in which the Project is perceived by those living in or peripheral to PAs. It can be alleviated by PMO facilitating villager/community access to other funding sources.   + The way in which some of the LFM indicators have been designed or measured to establish the 2009 baseline is likely to jeopardise successful achievement of the Project’s objective. Potential flaws have been identified that need to be addressed. | * + Provincial level outputs (e.g. PA strategy, financing plan and legal framework) well behind schedule, jeopardising opportunities for application once approved.   + Taohe Forum, launched in December 2012 with a charter and declaration, lacks community representatives and is top heavy with government representatives. Its role and links to provincial government not defined; and currently it does not contribute to the Project in any significant way.   + Plans for provincial PA information management system overambitious; meanwhile, no progress on refining its scope in consultation with partners and in making products (e.g. management, business and community resource plans) accessible via website.   + Training programme and curricular development will not be completed before late 2013, so only one year remains for piloting.   + Weaknesses in strategic and technical capabilities of PMO contributed to limited collaboration between/among partners and consultants, resulting in poorly integrated outputs (e.g. management, business and community resource plans).   + Good relations between PMO and partners undermined by lack of precision and detail in work plans for demo PAs and slow (several months) reimbursement of funds for work undertaken.   + Extensive and intensive biodiversity monitoring planned in PAs welcomed but unclear as to what extent it is designed to better inform PA management. (i.e. Is it cost-effective?)   + Awareness of Project with PA demo villages not noticeably high, which probably reflects its limited tangible benefits as perceived by local communities.   **OPPORTUNTIES**   * + Water quality, a key measure of ecosystem health, is being monitored in two of the demonstration PAs. It should be extended to all four demonstration PAs and subsequently be adopted by all PAs in Gansu.   + GEF Small Grants Programme can be accessed to support new income generating activities in the demonstration villages to help consolidate their emerging collaboration with PA authorities. It may also be possible to establish micro-financing schemes.   + Energy efficiency initiatives can be developed alongside ecotourism, which is already being pioneered by the Project. House insulation, fuel-efficient stoves for cooking and heating, and solar heating of water may be eligible for grants or loans. This helps to reduce the impacts of increasing numbers of visitors, meeting their heating, cooking and washing requirements by use of renewables. |

##### Recommendations

*Corrective actions for project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation*

1. **Revise LFM with respect to those outputs that are (i) overambitious and (ii) not clearly differentiated from each other.** Specifically, change **Output 1.5** to read:

*Web-based Information Management System for protected areas developed, using a common architecture and platform, and popularised with data and information generated by the Project in the four demonstration sites.*

and merge **Outputs 1.6** and **1.7** to read:

*Institutional capacity for effective and financially sustainable PA planning and management strengthened.*

1. **Strengthen collaboration between PA administrations and village communities by enhancing existing and creating new mechanisms to enable villagers’ interests to be expressed and influence PA policy, planning and management.** More precisely, the following interventions are recommended:
   1. Establish stakeholder forums for individual PAs.
   2. Expand current membership of the regional Taohe Forum to include representatives of village communities and also the private sector.
2. **Review the scope of the provincial PA Development and Management Strategy and the means of its delivery**, in order to fast-track preparation of **Output 1.1** and allow adequate time for its consultation and adoption. Given the ambitious nature of **Output 1.1** and relatively limited time remaining, it is recommended that:
3. The scope of the Strategy is focused on PAs under the remit of GFD in order to reduce time spent in developing consensus among the other three partners responsible for Gansu’s PAs.
4. Preparation of the Strategy is lead by consultant(s) hired by directly PMO, rather than subcontracted to GEFD as currently planned.
5. **Review the scope of the PA System Financing Plan (Output 1.2) and expedite its development, while ensuring that it is consistent and integrated with the PA Development and Management Strategy.**
6. **Expedite the development of policies and legislation necessary to improve the regulatory framework for Gansu’s PA system (Output 1.3) by establishing a task force, or similar mechanism, to fast-track the process.**
7. **Clarify more precisely the role and membership of the Taohe Forum, and determine how it will fulfil its purpose beyond the life of the Project.** In order for the Forum to fulfil its function as a public service platform for promoting the sustainable development of Gansu’s PAs system, as defined in Article 1, its constitution needs to be modified and further developed along the following lines:
8. The role of the Forum should be clarified.
9. Membership of the Forum should be clarified.
10. The Forum’s access to provincial government should be clarified.
11. Better and more frequent use of the Forum should be made by the Project for consultation purposes.
12. There should also be provisions for the Forum to contribute to awareness raising among the wider public.
13. **(i) Review the management, community resource and tourism plans recently produced or drafted for each of the four demonstration PAs and integrate their objectives, outputs and activities into an Action Plan** that covers the outstanding implementation period of its respective management plan. **(ii) Revise and annually update the Business Plan for each demonstration PA in accordance with its respective Action Plan.**
14. **Review the biodiversity monitoring and evaluation system planned for each of the four demonstration PAs with a view to: (i) monitoring is designed to sample the full diversity of habitats and species occurring within the PA; (ii) ensuring that data are properly maintained in a database common for all PAs and routinely, rigorously analysed to inform management; and (iii) including water quality monitoring throughout all of Gansu’s PAs.**
15. **A revised management structure should be adopted by the Project, based on that shown in Figure 3.4**, in order reflect the current situation and the need to clarify reporting lines and the relationship of the recently established Taohe Forum to the Project.
16. **The Annual Work Plan would benefit from greater, more specific detail** and, based on feedback from stakeholders, its implementation by partners and consultants needs to be improved and enhanced by the following measures:
    1. PMO to clarify the precise roles of partners, especially those involved in the demonstration PAs, with respect to tasks, available resources and timeframes.
    2. PMO to ensure that partners are reimbursed promptly for undertaking their tasks.
    3. PMO to ensure that consultants work in an integrated and coordinated manner and that they report back on their findings not just to GFD and its PMO but also to stakeholders, including the demonstration villages.
    4. Training programmes and courses should be routinely assessed by means of a standard questionnaire completed by all participants at the end of training.
17. **Comprehensive information about and generated by the Project should be readily accessible via its website[[1]](#footnote-1),** particularly with respect to events, news, published guidelines, strategies, plans and other reports, minutes of PSC and Taohe Forum meetings, APRs etc.
18. **The Project Steering Committee should engage more robustly and proactively in its oversight, coordination and integration of Project activities,** which is difficult to achieve from meeting just once annually. Recognising that more frequent meetings is not a pragmatic option, based on UNDP’s experience, it is recommended that:
    1. At least one of the forthcoming annual meetings should be convened at one of the demonstration PAs and combined with a day’s field visit to see/experience Project initiatives first hand and meet with stakeholders, especially village communities.
    2. Meetings should be well prepared in advance, with a progress report and briefings on items to be discussed provided to members at least one week in advance. This will enable the Chairperson to concentrate on items that merit discussion, including concerns or clarifications raised by members, and help to ensure that time is used to maximum effect. Time should also be allocated for findings/results generated by implementing partners and consultants to be briefly presented to members.
19. **A number of LFM indicators for the Objective and Outcome 1, based on monitoring changes to baselines established from the Financial Sustainability, Capacity and METT scorecards, need to be modified because they are either not readily repeatable or incorrect. Specifically:**
    1. Objective – 1st indicator: financial sustainability baseline score of 32.5% was generated from a workshop on 19 August 2009 attended by 22 participants, including staff from GFD and 7 PAs[[2]](#footnote-2). It may not be reliable for tracking financial sustainability because the approach cannot be replicated.
    2. Objective – 2nd indicator: METT baseline score of 65 needs to be clarified.
    3. Outcome 1 – 2nd indicator: capacity to implement policies … baseline score of 54.2% does not agree with the Capacity scorecard assessment in the Project Document (pp. 132-135, hard copy).
    4. Outcome 1 – 3rd indicator: capacity to engage and build consensus … baseline score of 56.7% does not agree with the Capacity scorecard assessment in the Project Document (pp. 135-136, hard copy).
    5. There are a number of other corrections that should be made to the LFM with respect to the METT baseline scores.
20. **The total METT score for Taohe National NR has decreased by 9% and mean scores for several METT criteria have declined significantly since 2010, so these should be examined critically by PMO, in collaboration with demonstration PAs, and issues addressed.**
21. **Facilitate opportunities for demonstration village communities to improve their livelihoods from micro-financing and small grant schemes.** The following, therefore, are recommended:
    1. UNDP to facilitate linkages between the Project and GEF Small Grants Programme, particularly with respect to ecotourism development opportunities. These might also be combined with energy efficiency interventions.
    2. Explore opportunities for establishing micro-loan fund(s) for demonstration villages. This should be possible, for example, through the Rural Credit Corporation (Shin Yua Shur).
22. **Enhance annual appraisal system for PA staff by including self-appraisal (180 degrees appraisal) as part of improving performance (Output 2.5).**

**Procure additional expertise** to advise the Project in key strategic areas of policy development to help provide a solid foundation for the effective management and sustainable financing of Gansu’s PAs system over the long-term. There may be financial constraints in trying to adopt this recommendation, even with the appointment of a national consultant. One option may be to bring in international expertise using volunteer schemes that deploy retired professionals.

**Lessons**

A number of lessons, based on best and worst practices have been tentatively identified. These will need to be reviewed and expanded on during the terminal evaluation of the Project.

# INTRODUCTION

## **Project background**

Gansu Province (45.4 million ha) lies in the centre of China at an average altitude of 1,000 m, featuring the Inner China Plateau to the north-east, Tibetan Plateau to the south-west and the Loess Plateau in the east. Annual precipitation is low (decreasing to 600 mm in the south-east to <100 mm in the north-west), most of which falls during the summer. The Province has a diverse climate, ranging from subtropical conditions in the south to warm temperate and cold temperate, continental conditions in the north, with warm summers and very cold winters.

This diversity of topography and climate in reflected in Gansu’s biological diversity. The Province is the 4th richest in mammal species and 7th in bird species, among which are significant numbers of endemics (e.g. 55 endemic fish species) as well as threatened species.

Parts of several WWF Ecoregions fall within Gansu Province, including the Gobi Desert, Forests of the Upper Yangtze, Mountains of Southwest China and peat lands in the south. The Mountains of Southwest China are a global biodiversity hotspot[[3]](#footnote-3), which means that this biogeographic region is a globally significant reservoir of endemic species that are threatened from human activities[[4]](#footnote-4). Additionally, 14 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) have been identified in the Province and one wetland (Gansu Gahai Wetlands Nature Reserve) has been designated in September 2011 as internationally important, especially as waterfowl habitat, under the Ramsar Convention.

Gansu’s population exceeds 26 million people, is predominantly rural (68%) and involved primarily in primary production (57%), mostly agriculture including animal husbandry. It is among the poorest provinces in China, with the 4th lowest Human Development Index and 2nd lowest per capita GDP in 2006. Most of the economy is based on mining for oil and minerals extraction.

In response to rural and development pressures on the natural resources, Gansu has been establishing a system of protected areas (PAs) since 1978 that, by 2012, comprised 64 nature reserves and covered 10,033,410.6 ha or 22% of the Province. This system provides sanctuary to 90% of Gansu’s rare and threatened species and encompasses 80% of its wetlands. Most of the nature reserves (48 sites, covering 90% of the total area of Gansu’s PAs system) fall under the administration of the Gansu Forestry Department. Other provincial agencies responsible for nature reserves are the Agricultural & Animal Husbandry Department (3), in the case of aquatic species and habitats, Land & Resources Department (3), for geological sites, and the Environmental Protection Department (4).

Barriers exist, however, to the provincial government’s efforts to conserve Gansu’s biodiversity, notably a weak regulatory framework, limited institutional capacity and a lack of know-how in managing and sustainably financing its PAs system. It is in this context that the present Project has been designed to conserve Gansu’s globally important biodiversity over the long term. The Project is intended to improve capacities at provincial level, as well as at four demonstration PAs in the Taohe Basin, selected on account of its location within a global biodiversity hotspot.

## **Purpose of the review**

The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy[[5]](#footnote-5) has two overarching objectives at the project level, namely: to promote accountability for the achievement of GEF objectives through the assessment of results, effectiveness, processes and performance of the partners involved in GEF activities; and to improve performance by the promotion of learning, feedback and knowledge sharing on results and lessons learned among the GEF and its partners, as a basis for decision-making on policies, strategies, programme management, projects and programmes.

Mid-term review is an integral part of the UNDP/GEF project cycle. Its purpose is to identify potential project design issues, assess progress towards the achievement of objectives, identify and document lessons learned, and to recommend specific actions that might improve the project. It is expected to serve as a means of validating or filling the gaps in the initial assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency obtained from monitoring. Thus, the MTR provides an opportunity to assess early signs of project success or failure and prompt necessary adjustments. To this end, the MTR is intended to:

1. strengthen the adaptive management and monitoring functions of the project;
2. enhance the likelihood of achievement of the project and GEF objectives through analysing project strengths and weaknesses and suggesting measures for improvement;
3. enhance organizational and development learning;
4. enable informed decision-making; and
5. create the basis of replication of successful project outcomes achieved so far.

Particular emphasis is placed on the current project results and the possibility of achieving all the objectives in the given timeframe, taking into consideration the speed, at which the project is proceeding. Further details can be found in the Terms of Reference (**Annex 1**).

## **Methodology of the review**

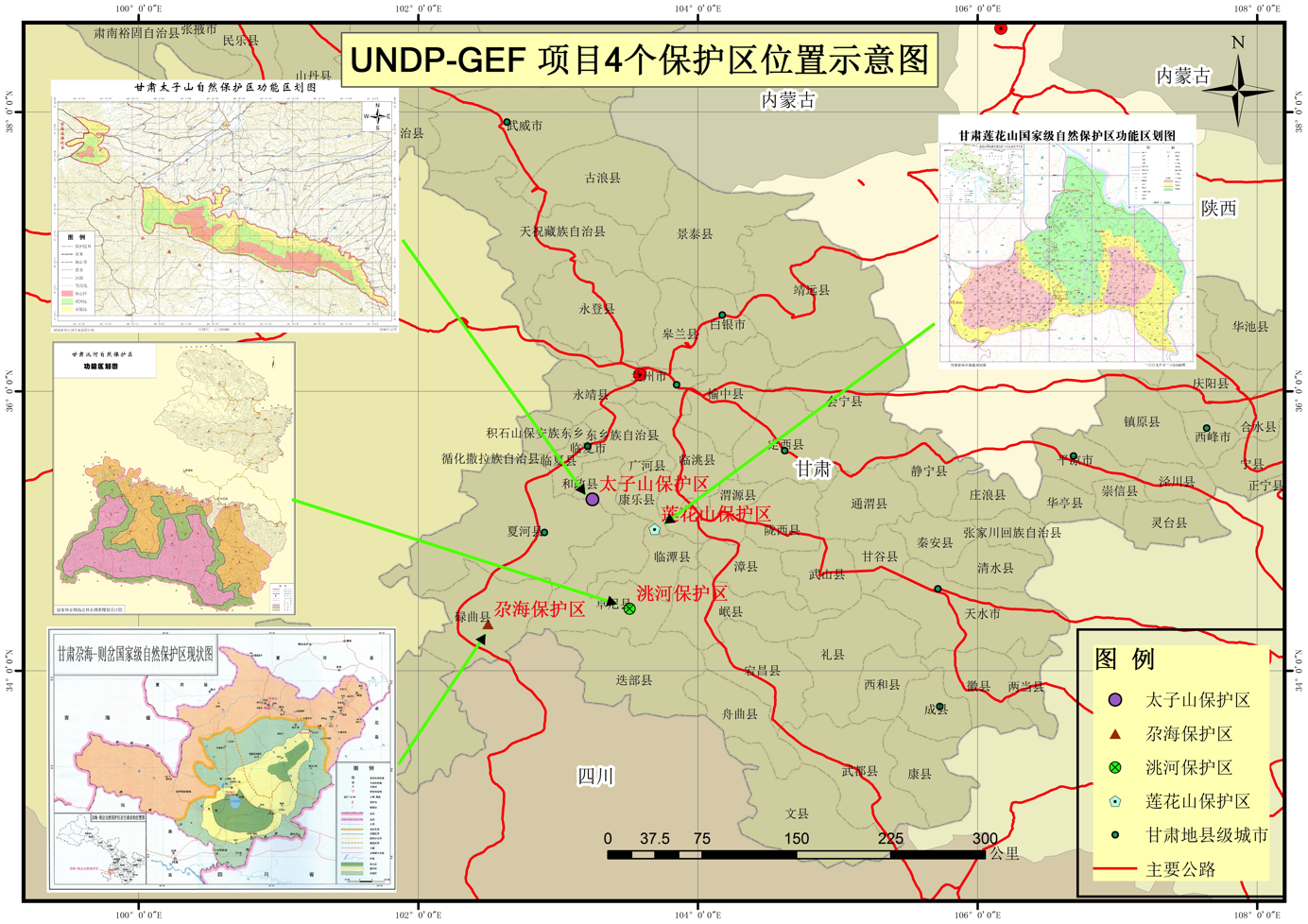
This Mid-Term Review follows the aforementioned GEF monitoring and evaluation policy3 and, as appropriate, the recent *Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-Financed Projects* (UNDP Evaluation Office, 2012).

The review process is independent of GEF, UNDP, Gansu Forestry Department (GFD) and Project partners. Opinions and recommendations in this MTR are those of the Review Team, comprising an international and a national consultant. These do not necessarily reflect the position of GEF, UNDP, GFD or any other Project stakeholders. Once accepted, the MTR becomes a recognised, publicly accessible component of the Project’s documentation.

The MTR has been undertaken in line with GEF principles concerning independence, credibility, utility, impartiality, transparency, disclosure, ethical, participation, competencies and capacities3. The consultants have signed the Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement Form (**Annex 2**), thereby agreeing to abide by the UNEG Code of Conduct in the UN System (2008).

Mid-term review is an evidence-based assessment of the Project concept and design, its implementation and its outputs, outcomes and impacts as documented in the Annual Progress Reviews (APRs), Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) and Logical Framework Matrix (LFM), which provides indicators and targets for measuring success in implementation.

The MTE was carried out in February - April 2013. The field mission comprised: 12 days in-country (5-16 March inclusive) meeting and interviewing partners and other stakeholders in Lanzhou and during field visits to three of the four demonstration PAs, namely Lianhuashan, Taizishan and Taohe nature reserves[[6]](#footnote-6). The planned visit to Gahai-Zecha Nature Reserve was cancelled at short notice, as the area became closed to foreigners due to ‘ethnic tensions’. Instead, the consultants met with PA staff and one community representative from Gahai-Zecha in Lanzhou. It was also not possible to visit Taohe Nature Reserve for the same reasons; instead, the evaluators met with staff in the field and visited the nearby Taohe Yeliguan National Forest Park. Details of the in-country itinerary, including field visits, and stakeholders met are provided in **Annex 3**. The locations of the four demonstrations PAs are shown in **Figure 1.1**.



**Figure 1.1** Locations of the four demonstration protected areas in Taohe Basin, clockwise from top right inset: Lianhuashan, Gahai-Zecha, Taohe and Taizishan nature reserves.

The approach was based on the ToR in **Annex 1**. It included:

* desk review of project documents and relevant related literature (**Annex 4**);
* briefings by UNDP and PMO, followed by 1:1 interviews with staff and project consultants;
* interviews with key stakeholders, including Project implementing partners, provincial government agencies;
* questionnaire survey of the Project’s strengths and weaknesses distributed to all participants of the plenary meeting with stakeholders on 8 March 2013 (**Annex 5**); and
* visits to three of the four demonstration sites to meet PA staff and community representatives.

The review was undertaken in as participatory a manner as possible in order to build consensus on achievements, short-comings and lessons learnt. Stakeholders were interviewed informally, with the help of interpretation as necessary. Interviews focused on: strengths and weaknesses of project implementation and its strategic direction to date; and future opportunities for its strengthening through adaptive management and other means. Evidence was cross-checked (triangulation) between as many different sources as possible to confirm its veracity.

Opportunities were taken to acknowledge, challenge and encourage Project partners in an open, objective manner on the basis of preliminary findings from Project reports and interviews, before committing these to paper. Initial findings were shared at a meeting with senior members of GFD, including the National Project Director (NPD), and PMO on 14 March 2013 in Lanzhou and the following day with UNDP in Beijing.

In addition to a descriptive assessment, Project achievements (outputs and outcomes), sustainability of outcomes, monitoring and evaluation system (design and application), were rated with respect to **either** the level of satisfaction achieved **or** the likelihood of various dimensions of the outcomes being sustainable at Project termination. Also, three criteria (relevance, effectiveness and efficiency) were used, as appropriate, to evaluate the levels of achievement attained with respect to the Project objective and outcomes in accordance with GEF requirements. The different scales for rating various criteria are shown in **Table 1.1**, and further defined in **Table 1.2** in the case of the likelihood of sustainability.

**Table 1.1** Ratings and their scales defined for different evaluation criteria (UNDP, 2012)[[7]](#footnote-7)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, I&E Execution** | **Sustainability** | **Relevance** |
| **6. Highly Satisfactory (HS):** no shortcomings in achievement of objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency  **5. Satisfactory (S):** only minor shortcomings  **4 Moderately Satisfactory (MS):** moderate shortcomings  **3.** **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU):** significant shortcomings  **2.** **Unsatisfactory (U):** major shortcomings  **1. Highly Unsatisfactory (HU**): severe shortcomings | **4. Likely (L)**: negligible risks to sustainability  **3. Moderately Likely (ML)**: moderate risks  **2. Moderately Unlikely (MU)**:significant risks  **1. Unlikely (U):** severe risks | **2. Relevant (R)**  **1. Not relevant (NR)** |
| **Additional ratings if relevant** | **Impact** |
| **Not Applicable (N/A)**  **Unable to Assess (U/A)** | **3. Significant (S)**  **2. Minimal (M)**  **1. Negligible (N)** |

**Table 1.2** Definitions of levels of risk to sustainability of Project outcomes (UNDP, 2012)4

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Rating** | **Definition** |
| **Likely (L)** | **Negligible risks** to sustainability, with key outcomes expected to continue into the foreseeable future. |
| **Moderately Likely (ML)** | **Moderate risks**, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained. |
| **Moderately Unlikely (MU)** | **Substantial risk** that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on. |
| **Unlikely (U)** | **Severe risk** that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained. |

The Project objective and outcomes were rated according to their respective outputs (**Table 3.6**), based on evidence provided by PMO and assessed by the evaluators (**Annex 6**), and by means of performance indicators () using the 6-point satisfaction scale (**Table 1.1**). Other aspects of performance were assessed using the full range of ratings shown in **Table 1.1**.

UNDP was provided with a draft report on 2 May 2013 to share with the Executing Agency and its partners. Feedback was received by the Evaluators on 23 May and reviewed. The report was finalised and submitted to UNDP on 9 June 2013.

## **Structure of the review report**

The structure of this MTR report is based on that provided in the ToR, while taking into account UNDP’s latest, 2012 guidance on evaluations of GEF-Financed Projects4. This first introductory chapter describes the purpose of evaluation and methods used. Chapter 2 describes the Project and its objectives, within the development context of Gansu Province and China. Findings from the MTE are presented in Chapter 3, focusing in turn on the formulation, implementation and results (outputs, outcomes and impacts) of the Project. Aspects of each of these three components of the project cycle were assessed using the rating systems outlined above in Table 1.1. Conclusions are drawn in Chapter 4, highlighting the strengths, weaknesses and outcomes of the Project. Lessons learned from the experience are identified, along with practical, feasible recommendations that build on the Project’s interventions.

# PROJECT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

## **Project start and duration**

Implementation of This UNDP/GEF full-size project entitled *Strengthening globally important biodiversity conservation through protected area strengthening in Gansu Province* officially commenced on 18 January 2011, when the Project Document was jointly signed. This was approximately seven months after the Project’s approval in June 2010; and 21 months following the approval of the Project Identification Form (PIF) and Project Preparation Grant (PPG) on 2 April 2009. The duration of the Project is four years, ending in 17 January 2015. This MTR falls just after two years of implementation, 22 months prior to the end of the Project.

Milestones achieved during the somewhat protracted Inception Phase include the following:

* + Inception Workshop held on 15 April 2011, in which some 50 stakeholders participated and members of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) met for the first time.
  + Establishment of the PSC on 22 July 2011.
  + Draft Inception Report completed on 22 December 2011 (this should have been approved by the PSC but, according to UNDP, it was cleared by the RTA).

## **Problems that the project seeks to address**

Reference has already been made to globally (and nationally) significant biodiversity that occurs in Gansu Province (**Section 1.1**). This is subject to a wide range of threats and impacts, much of which can be attributed to Gansu’s human population rising from 9.7 million in 1949 to 25.6 million in 2000. This is further exacerbated by rapidly increasing per capita consumption over the last 20 years, leading to many forms of unsustainable use of natural resources that are cumulative and characterised by fragmentation and degradation of habitats. Examples include:

* + Forests have been reduced in extent by 30% since the 1980s and now cover only 6% of Gansu’s total land surface.
  + Wetlands, now amounting to 3.6 million hectares, have declined in extent by 80% since the 1960s due to conversion for farmland and diversion of water for use in industry, agriculture (irrigation) and public water supply.
  + Almost all of the Province’s 16.6 million hectares of grassland is characterised by various degrees of degradation, much of which has been caused by overgrazing, along with digging up of grass and peat, collection of fuel wood and medicinal plants, declining water tables and damage from rodents and insect pests that are no longer kept in check by their natural predators.

Overharvesting of biological resources has been driven by a central government policy that for many decades was focused on 10% annual economic growth. In Gansu Province, unlike many parts of eastern China where export-oriented manufacturing is the powerhouse of their economy, economic growth has been based on industries dependent on natural resources, such as mining, forestry, hydro-electricity generation and animal husbandry. Thus, the nation’s drive for economic growth manifested itself in Gansu Province favouring industrial and urban development and agricultural subsidies (e.g. for irrigation schemes) over sustainable management of natural resources in dry lands.

Although Gansu has developed a impressive network of PAs that cover 22% of the Province, within which collection of biological resources is prohibited or subject to various regulatory controls, the proximity of so many people to PAs and large number of residents within them who are extremely poor, combined with inadequate PA budgets for enforcement, has meant that illegal harvesting occurs with impunity. The situation is complicated further in Gansu Province by ambiguities over land tenure and access to traditional resources inside PAs, as well as the fact that many of these people are from ethnic minorities, which are not subject to the national policy of one-child per family.

A further pressure is unplanned and inappropriate tourism development inside forest PAs, which accounted for 15% of China’s total tourism sector in 2006. Some US $ 4.5 billion was invested nationally in forest PAs in 2001-2006, much of which would have been for infrastructural development of accommodation and other visitor facilities. The focus on income generation from tourism development in PAs, rather than biodiversity conservation, research, education and nature and culture based activities, is eroding PA values.

The long-term solution identified in the Project Document is to develop an effectively managed nature reserves system to conserve globally important biodiversity for the long-term. The ideal scenario is a provincial nature reserve agency with the institutional and operational capacity to:

* + - 1. effectively planning and managing the provincial nature reserve system based on scientific understanding;
      2. mitigating threats to, and pressures on, the unique biodiversity contained within the PAs;
      3. cost effectively planning and sourcing sustainable financing for PA management; and
      4. ensuring better integration of the socio-economic development priorities of residents and neighbours in PA management operations.

Two macro-level barriers to achieving the proposed long-term solution are identified as follows:

**Barrier 1:** Weak provincial legal and regulatory framework and institutional capacity for sustainable management and financing of Gansu’s PA system.

**Barrier 2:** Absence of effective PA management and business planning, and operation at site and sub-system level.

These barriers are elaborated in considerable detail in the Project Document, informed by findings from the work financed from the PPG.

## **Immediate and development objectives of the project**

The overall (development) **objective** of the Project, as defined in the Project Document, is to:

“*strengthen protected areas’ sustainability in Gansu Province through improved effectiveness of PA management and sustainable financing.”*

This will contribute to the broader **goal** to:

“effectively conserve globally significant biodiversity in China.”

The project seeks to remove the barriers to conserving Gansu’s globally important biodiversity by a combination of interventions that focus on: (i) policy and institutional development at system and institutional levels; and (ii) demonstration of sustainable management and financing of four PAs in the Taohe Basin, which lies within a global biodiversity hotspot.

In order to achieve the development objective, two outcomes were formulated, together with a set of outputs (**Table 2.1**). These were not changed during the Inception Phase, judging from the absence of their review in the Inception Report.

**Table 2.1** Project outcomes and respective outputs, as specified in Project Document and subsequently adopted in the Inception Report

|  |
| --- |
| **OUTCOME 1: Strengthened provincial policy framework and institutional capacity for sustainable management and financing of Gansu’s PA system** |
| * 1. Systematic PA development and management strategy adopted by Provincial Government.   2. Economic valuation of the PA system in Gansu conducted and a PA system financing plan developed.   3. Legislative and regulatory framework for the PA system in Gansu improved.   4. Gansu PA Forum established with the sectoral agencies and stakeholders aiming to enhance PA management effectiveness.   5. Provincial level PA database and knowledge management system developed.   6. Institutional capacities for effective PA planning and management strengthened.   7. Training curricula and institutes are in place at provincial level for enhancing knowledge and skills of PA staff. |
| **OUTCOME 2:** Sustainable PA management and financing demonstrated on Taohe sub-system |
| * 1. Consistent PA management tools are developed and utilised at the demonstration PA sites with clear action and monitoring mechanisms installed.   2. Local level biodiversity monitoring and evaluation system in place in the four demonstration PAs.   3. Financial sustainability of the demonstration PAs improved, with use of financial planning tools and diversification of revenue streams.   4. Collaborative approaches between PAs and local partners developed, demonstrating improved PA management and cost effectiveness.   5. Skills and competencies of PA staff improved with use of performance management system and creation of incentive mechanisms. |

## **Main stakeholders**

The main stakeholders and their roles, as identified in the Project Document, are listed in **Table 2.2**. There is no indication in the Inception Report that this list was reviewed during the Project’s Inception Phase.

**Table 2.2** Main stakeholders, their roles and interests in the Project

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stakeholder** | **Roles/Interests in Project** |
| Gansu Forestry Department | National executing agency of Project, responsible for:   * Project implementation, including regular communication with UNDP and other stakeholders to ensure smooth progress in delivery of outcomes and outputs; * integration of Project products in provincial programs on PAs and biodiversity; * approval of the provincial nature reserves financing strategy and ensuring its implementation; * approval of by-laws and regulations necessary to put in place mechanisms for nature reserves to generate their own revenue streams; * coordinatiing launch of Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool for nature reserves; and * ensuring that Project replication strategy is developed, coordinated among relevant organizations and put in place; and * ensuring that Government co-financing is available. |
| Gansu Department of Finance | * Key partner in reviewing and approving Project budget and ensuring financoial management is in line with Government of China and UNDP requirements. * Able to increase regular financial resources for PAs key agency and liaise with other relevant provincial departments to take concerted actions support Project implementation. |
| Gansu Development and Reform Commission | * Provide Project with lessons and experiences from other international and national projects, either completed or ongoing. * Extend lessons and experiences gained in this Project to other international and national projects. * Mobilise future government-supported projects to support implementation of recommendations and strategies proposed by this Project. * Support drafting and promoting legislative and regulatory changes that may be necessary in order to achieve Project’s objectives. |
| Gansu Department of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry | * Coordinates programmes to conserve aquatic biodiversity inside PAs. * Coordinates programmes to reduce overgrazing inside PAs. * Replicates lessons and experiences from this Project in their own projects and daily work. |
| Gansu Department of Water Resources | * Partner in the development of PES mechanisms for PAs to benefit from their hydrological services. * Partner in drafting and promoting legislative and regulatory changes that may be necessary in order to achieve Project’s objective. |
| Gansu Environmental Protection Department | * Coordinates all PA work in Gansu Province. * Partner in drafting and promoting legislative and regulatory changes that may be necessary in order to achieve Project’s objective. * Replicates lessons and experiences from this Project in their own projects and daily work. |
| Gansu Tourism Bureau | * Partner in promoting tourism activities in PAs. * Partner in developing tourism plans for pilot sites and reviewing policy on generation and allocation of tourism revenues. * Partner in drafting and promoting legislative and regulatory changes that may be necessary in order to achieve Project’s objective. |
| Provincial Government Legislative Office | * Partner in drafting and promoting legislative and regulatory changes that may be necessary in order to achieve the project’s objectives * Coordinate with ADB-GEF Op 12 Project, which involves drafting new provincial legislation relating to land degradation |
| Nature reserves directors and staff | * Take leadership in creating and supporting PPPs . * “Owners” and beneficiaries of nature reserve business plan preparation process. * Major role in implementation of demonstration site-level Project activities. |
| General Station for Forest Technology Extension | * Training provider on nature reserve management under the Gansu Provincial Bureau. * Conducts training in July and August each year. Capacity of this institution will be developed so that it can continue capacity needs assessment and capacity development in effective PA management planning and implementation, as well as in business planning. |
| Local governments including prefecture, county and township levels | * Participate in and benefit from PPPs. * Participate in development and implementation of nature reserves business plans. * Assist with establishment of nature reserve-community agreements on conservation management |
| - Local communities and residents | * Take part in the decision making process of nature reserves management. * Implement project activities, including community-based nature reserves management, development of alternative sources of livelihood (ecotourism, sustainable harvesting of natural resources), awareness raising, etc. |
| Private sector | * Possible provider of funds for nature reserves management * Partner in operating businesses in PAs. |
| Universities and research organizations | * Partner in providing technical assistance to Project. * Possible sub-contractors to Project. |
| International and domestic non- governmental conservation organizations, such as WWF, CI, Shan Shui | * Partner in providing technical assistance to Project. * Possible sub-contractors to Project. |
| Press and media | * Partner in disseminating Project results. * Partner in raising public awareness about biodiversity conservation. |

The primary beneficiaries of the Project are the GFD and the individual PA authorities responsible for managing the 4 demonstration nature reserves, as the focus is largely on strengthening the policy environment and institution capacity at provincial level, and delivering more effective and financially sustainable biodiversity conservation on the ground within individual PAs. Some support is directed towards local communities in terms of developing cooperative agreements and community resource plans but the Project is not designed to resource the implementation and realisation of such initiatives.

## **Results expected**

The results expected by the end of the Project are anticipated in the Project document to be as follows:

1. **Overall policy, legal and institutional arrangements for PAs** will have been strengthened so that they are able to better address threats to globally valuable biodiversity and sustain their activities through strategic partnerships and sustainable financing**. GEF involvement** will also ensure strong coordination and collaboration with similar projects and programmes in Gansu, other parts of China, and in the rest of Asia and the world. **Lessons from this project** will also be better documented and communicated to the wider world so that future programmes benefit from experiences here.
2. **Global benefits:** The Project’s focus on strengthening nature reserves management capacity and financing at the provincial level will produce significant global and national benefits by reducing threats to many globally and nationally endangered species, and by serving as a model for replication and applying lessons learned to nature reserve systems in other provinces of China and in other countries. Global benefits include reduced pressures on biodiversity in the Taohe River Basin, the northern part of the "Mountains of Southwest China", a biodiversity hotspot with several globally important species, such as the Chinese Grouse (*Bonasa sewerzowi*) and Giant Panda (*Ailuropoda melanoleuca*). The area also hosts many endemics, including 11 genera of plants and animals and 15% of all of China’s endemic species. These include the Sichuan Jay (*Perisoreus internigrans*) and the Sichuan Wood Owl (*Strix davidi*), six species of fishes and reptiles and five amphibian species.
3. **National and local benefits** will accrue directly through the conservation and sustainable use of nationally important biodiversity at the Project demonstration sites and also indirectly in all of Gansu’s PAs. Other benefits will include: improved ecosystem services, such as better quality water from the watershed in Taohe; extensive capacity building from provincial to local levels; nationally improved cost-effectiveness of resource use and contributions to conservation from multiple non-governmental sources; locally improved relationships between nature reserves, local governments and better monitoring of outcomes by a wide range of stakeholders having vested interests.

The Project falls under the umbrella of China Biodiversity Partnership and Framework for Action (CBPF), which is China’s primary investment strategy for biodiversity conservation through the GEF and other partners. Specifically, it will contribute directly to the following results of the agreed CBPF Framework:

**Result 4**: Financial flows to biodiversity conservation increase over current baseline.

**Result 18:** NRs and PNRs are effectively managed.

**Result 19:** NNRs and PNRs have stable and sufficient financing.

**Result 20:** In NNRs and PNRs, local communities, NGOs and/or the private sector are involved in PA co-management and development.

Further, more specific, details of expected results can be found in **Table 2.1**, with respect to outputs, and in the LFM () with respect to targets for indicators of the two outcomes.

# FINDINGS[[8]](#footnote-8)

## **Project formulation**

* + 1. *Project concept and design, including logical framework matrix*

The Project is simply and well conceived with respect to: (i) selecting a small number of key PAs within which to demonstrate effective and financially sustainable conservation management of internationally important biodiversity in the Taohe Basin, part of global biodiversity hotspot; and (ii) using this experience to inform PA policy and the development of a sustainable financing strategy for Gansu Province’s PAs system. Moreover, the Taohe Forum provides a mechanism for linking developments on the ground with strategies and policies emerging at provincial level and vice versa.

The main weaknesses in design concern the overambitious nature of the Project, given time and financial constraints, and the limited support directed towards local communities and their livelihoods. Further details of key strengths and weaknesses of the concept and its design are provided in **Table 3.1**, together with opportunities to address some of the latter. Recommendations with respect to addressing these weaknesses and exploring the potential opportunities are outlined in **Section 4.2.1**.

**Table 3.1** Analysis of key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the Project concept and its design

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **STRENGTHS** | **WEAKNESSES** |
| * + Project concept is simple and rationale, with two mutually reinforcing outcomes that focus on developing policy and capacity at provincial and local levels to conserve globally and nationally important biodiversity effectively in PAs that are financially sustainable.   + The level of co-financing is high and includes US$ 1.5 million in cash, indicative of a strong level of commitment from Gansu Provincial Government.   + Outcome 2 focuses on building capacity and demonstrating of best practice in 4 different PAs within the same region (Taohe Basin), which is more cost-effective in terms of logistics (visits, workshops etc) and gives PAs more opportunity PAs to share know-how and experience.   + Taohe Basin lies within a global biodiversity hotspot.   + Taohe Forum provides a mechanism for networking among stakeholders, as well as communicating between PAs plus their stakeholders and provincial authorities to inform decision and policy-making. | * + Project is overambitious with respect to certain outputs, given the timeframe (4 years) and size of GEF grant (less than US $ 2million[[9]](#footnote-9)). Such outputs concern: * legal/regulatory reform for provincial PAs system (1.2), * deveopment of a provincial knowledge management system for PAs (1.5).   + Outcome 2 includes provisions to reduce threats of overgrazing and illegal encroachment and harvesting by local residents through outreach and community participation in PA management. However, the emphasis of co-management and other agreements between PA and local communities (Output 2.4) is on biodiversity conservation, with no direct resourcing to develop more sustainable livelihoods for those residing in or near PAs.   + Overlap/lack of clarity between Outputs 1.6 and 1.7, both of which are concerned with building capacity in PA planning and management. |
| **OPPORTUNITIES** | **THREATS** |
| * Partnership with GEF Small Grants Programme to support development of more sustainable livelihoods in demonstration villages, such as ecotourism. * Development of community-based ecotourism can be linked to sustainable energy and energy efficiency funding initiatives. | * Communities in demonstration villages disenfranchised by the limited benefit sharing mechanisms and initiatives conceived within the project. (Also identified as a risk in the LFM with respect to local communities not seeing sufficient benefits to enter into co-management agreements.) |

Project baselines were established in 2009 during the PPG using a suite of Indicators for each of the two outcomes. They are detailed in the Logical Framework Matrix (LFM) that accompanies the Project Document (Section II, Part II). Many of these indicators were generated from the application of Financial Sustainability, Capacity Development and Monitoring & Evaluation Tracking Tool (METT) scorecards. No changes were made to the LFM during the Inception Phase, as indicated by the absence of its review in the Inception Report.

* + 1. *Stakeholder participation*

The extent to which stakeholders were involved in and supported the development of the Project is not clearly articulated in the Project Document. However, the use of scorecards to establish baselines for financial sustainability, capacity development and management effectiveness suggests that there was extensive consultation with stakeholders at provincial and individual PA levels.

In the case of the METT scorecard, information gathered from the four demonstration PAs during the MTE mission indicates that a self-assessment approach was adopted involving fairly large numbers of PA staff in the case of Lianhuashan and Taizishan NRs (**Table 3.2**). However, there is no evidence of any involvement of community representatives in order to gain their perceptions from the outset of the Project’s formulation. By mid-term, only Lianhuashan NR had included local villagers in its assessment of management effectiveness.

**Table 3.2** PA staff involvement in METT assessment, as reported to Mid-Term Evaluators

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Protected area** | **Number of PA staff completing METT scorecard** | | |
| **Baseline (2009)** | **Mid-Term (2013)** | **Staff overlap** |
| **Gahai-Zecha National NR** | 16  [includes 6 from 3 protection stations] | 13  [from different divisions] | 6-7 (50%) |
| **Lianhuashan National NR** | 30 | 40  [includes 10 villagers] | 25 (63%) |
| **Taizishan National NR** | 140  [includes 10 from each protection station] | 60 | 60 (100%) |
| **Taohe National NR** | 8 | 8 | 1 (13%) |

There are also numerous references to stakeholders in the Project Document and provision for the establishment of a multi-sectoral Gansu PA Forum[[10]](#footnote-10), whose membership includes all those listed in **Table 2.2**. This demonstrates a strong emphasis on designing stakeholder participation into the Project at all levels.

* + 1. *Replication approach*

The Project has been designed with replication very much in mind, whereby knowledge, best practices and lessons learned from experience gain during implementation will be shared and communicated through training, workshops and other mechanisms. Crucial aspects of the Project’s design to enhance opportunities for replication include the following:

* Acquiring and applying the knowledge and skills to effectively manage biodiversity and sustainably finance conservation in four PAs, thereby providing models of best practice for replication elsewhere in Gansu Province.
* The role of GFD includes: ensuring that a replication strategy is developed; and coordinating its implementation (**Table 2.2**).
* The Gansu PA Forum is expected to “… serve as the primary means to communicate the efforts and outputs of the project broadly to relevant stakeholders, to solicit input from stakeholders, leading to wider replication of best practice.” (Project Document, paragraph 118)
* Similarly, replication will be facilitated through the development of a knowledge management system, including the Project’s website, will enable information and experience to be shared. (Project Document, paragraph 124)
* It is also anticipated in the Project Document (paragraphs 159-160) that the Project’s actions will be replicable for similar projects being designed for other provinces in China through coordination with CBPF (China Biodiversity Partnership and Framework for Action).
  + 1. *Cost-effectiveness*

The design of the Project in terms of its cost-effectiveness[[11]](#footnote-11) is not specifically described in the Project Document. However, its strengths in this regard include the following:

* The overall selection of a suite of demonstration sites, representing a variety of geographical, biodiversity, social and economic contexts that present a diversity of challenges and opportunities for sustainable management, within a single region (Taohe) is more cost-effective than a ‘scatter gun’ approach, as highlighted in **Table 3.1**.
* Output 2.4 concerns developing collaborative approaches between PAs and local partners (i.e. communities) to demonstrate “… improved management and cost-effectiveness.”
* Inclusion of the METT provides a tool for monitoring changes in cost-effectiveness of PA management resulting from Project implementation.

Cost-effectiveness with respect to efficient use of Project resources is reviewed in **Section 3.3.3**.

* + 1. *Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector*

The Project falls within the umbrella of the China Biodiversity Partnership and Framework for Action (CBPF), which is China’s primary investment strategy for biodiversity conservation and assists in the implementation of China’s National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. It is well aligned with several national and provincial policies and programmes. These include:

* 11th National Five-year Plan (2006 - 2010), which identifies “protecting the eco-environment” as a key strategy and clearly stipulates the principle that “the explorer is responsible for protection”. One of the key principles guiding China’s Western Development Strategy for the 11th Five Year Plan period is the need to strengthen on-going ecological construction and environmental protection activities. It emphasises the need for sustainable use of natural resources to provide ecological security for the Western Provinces.
* 11th Five Year Plan of Gansu Province, which provides actions to support integrated planning and implementation of ecological protection and integrating watershed management. The Plan also gives high priority to natural forest resources and wildlife protection, setting up and strengthening existing nature reserve management, and protecting water sources with the catchment areas of the Yellow River.
* China’s 11th Five-Year National Socio-economic Development Plan (2006-2010), which specifies “developing the recycling economy, protecting the environment and speeding up the construction of a resource-saving and environment-friendly society” as one of its core strategies.
* China’s Millennium Development Goals (MDG), its United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and UNDP’s Country Programme Document (CPD). For example, MDG 7, Target 9 seeks to reverse the loss of environmental resources, by integrating principles of sustainable development into policies and programmes, and China’s UNDAF (2006-2010) includes an outcome on “more effective conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.”
  + 1. *Management arrangements*

The Project is being implemented by UNDP over a four-year period and nationally executed (NEX) by Gansu Forestry Department (GFD), in accordance with UNDP procedures for NEX projects and its Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP). The International Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Finance of the People’s Republic of China and GFD are the signatories to the grant agreement with UNDP. The Executing Agency is accountable to UNDP for the disbursement of funds and the achievement of the Project objective and outcomes, according to the approved work plan. The International Division of Gansu’s Finance Department has established a special account specifically for the Project, which is subject to annual audit in accordance with UNDP rules. The planned organisational structure is shown in **Figure 3.1** but has not been implemented precisely as shown. A revised structure that reflects more accurately the existing structure and current needs is proposed in **Section 3.2.3** (**Figure 3.4**).

**Project Steering Committee**

**Project Coordination Office** (in International Division, Gansu Finance Department)

**Reference Group**

Donors, NGOs, CBOs, academic institutions, business community representatives etc.

**Project Organization Structure**

**Project Technical Team**

(various contractors)

PA system planning, economic valuation, legislative review PA management planning, business planning, training etc.

**PA Management Specialist** - Field Coordination in Taohe Basin

**Project Director**

**Gansu Forestry Department**

**Project Management Office**

Project Manager, Project Administration and Finance Officer, interpreter, consultants etc.

**Figure 3.1** Project organisational structure as shown in the Inception Report, updated slightly from the original Project Document version with respect to PMO staff composition.

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) is chaired by the National Project Director (NPD) and meets annually. Its role is defined in the Project Document as follows:

* + - 1. achieve co-ordination among the various government agencies;
      2. guide project implementation, ensuring it is aligned with national and local statutory planning processes, and sustainable resource use and conservation policies, plans and conservation strategies;
      3. ensure that activities are fully integrated with other developmental initiatives in the region;
      4. review project progress, annual work plans and annual reports; and
      5. make decisions regarding project changes, etc.

PSC members specified in the Project Document comprise the following government agencies:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Provincial Finance Department | * Science and Technology Department |
| * Legislation Office of Provincial Government | * Agro-Animal Husbandry Department |
| * Policy Research Office of Provincial Government | * Water Resources Department |
| * Development and Reform Commission | * Forestry Department |
| * Land Resources Department | * Tourism Administration |
| * Environmental Protection Department | * Poverty Reduction Office |

The Project Coordination Office is instituted in the Provincial Finance Department and its International Division is responsible for routine work. Its duties are to coordinate the member units of the Project Steering Committee (PSC), support broadening of financing channels for PAs, provide co-financing and supervise the use of funds.

The Project Management Office (PMO) is established in the Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Office of GFD, Executing Agency of the Project. The Executing Agency is responsible for co-ordinating, guiding and overseeing the work of the Project implementation units. PMO is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Project. It is headed by a Project Manager, who is technically assisted by a Senior Biodiversity and PA Planning Specialist (also referred to as the Chief Technical Advisor, CTA, during Project implementation). The Reference Group is intended to assist the Project on technical matters and ensure coordination. This Group was established as the Taohe Forum (see **Section 3.1.2**). Management arrangements are detailed further in the Project Document, along with procedures to monitor, report and evaluate Project implementation.

## **Project implementation**

* + 1. *Financial management*

The total budget in the Project Document is US$ 9.018 million, of which US$ 1.738 million (19%) is grant-aided by GEF and US$ 7.280 million is co-financed by the Provincial Government of Gansu via its Forestry Department (GFD) in consultation with Gansu Finance Department. Co-financing comprises US$ 1.500 million in cash and US$ 5.780 million in-kind, representing 17% and 64% of the total budget, respectively. The cash co-financing includes RMB 4 million (US$ 0.635[[12]](#footnote-12) million) for the four demonstration PAs, which is being disbursed at a rate of RMB 1 million per year. Details are provided in **Table 3.3**.

**Table 3.3** Co-financing committed at time of signing Project Document in January 2011

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Co-financing** | **IA own financing** | | **Government** | | **Other sources\*** | | **Total financing** | |
| **Type/Source** | **(US$ million)** | | **(US$ million)** | | **(US$ million)** | | **(US$ million)** | |
|  | **Proposed**# | **Actual**+ | **Proposed**# | **Actual**+ | **Proposed**# | **Actual**+ | **Proposed**# | **Actual**+ |
| **Grant** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Gansu Provincial Government\*\* |  |  | 1.500 | 1.3127 |  |  | 1.500 | 1.3127 |
| **Credits** |  |  |  |  |  |  | 0 | 0 |
| **Loans** |  |  |  |  |  |  | 0 | 0 |
| **Equity** |  |  |  |  |  |  | 0 | 0 |
| **In-kind** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Gansu Provincial Government |  |  | 5.780 | 5.4488 |  |  | 5.780 | 5.4488 |
| **Non-grant instruments** |  |  |  |  |  |  | 0 | 0 |
| **Other \*** |  |  |  |  |  |  | 0 | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | **0** | **0** | **7.280** | **6.7615** | **0** | **0** | **7.280** | **6.7615** |

\*Contributions from multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, private sector and others.

#Proposed co-financing refers to co-financing proposed at time of CEO endorsement.

\*\*Includes RMB 4 million (RMB 1 million per year of implementation) committed by Gansu Provincial Government Finance Department at the onset of Project implementation. (Exchange rate: US $1 = RMB 6.3)

+Actual co-financing refers to co-financing disbursed to date (i.e. 2011-2012).

**Table 3.4** Annual budgets, including cash and in-kind co-financing for 2011-2014\*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PIMS 4072** | **Total** | **Annual budget (US $)** | | | | **Total** |
| **Donor** | **2011-2012** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2011-2014** |
| GEF Contribution | 691,490 | 128,740 | 562,750 | 380,350 | 666,160 | 1,738,000 |
| **Total** | **691,490** | **128,740** | **562,750** | **380,350** | **666,160** | **1,738,000** |
| **Cash co-financing – partner managed** | | | | | | |
| Gansu Province | 900,000 | 450,000 | 450,000 | 450,000 | 150,000 | 1,500,000 |
| **Total** | **900,000** | **450,000** | **450,000** | **450,000** | **150,000** | **1,500,000** |
| **In-kind co-financing** | | | | | | |
| Gansu Province | 3,000,000 | 1,500,000 | 1,500,000 | 1,500,000 | 1,280,000 | 5,780,000 |
| Others | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **3,000,000** | **1,500,000** | **1,500,000** | **1,500,000** | **1,280,000** | **5,780,000** |
| **Grand Total** | **4,591,490** | **2,078,740** | **2,512,750** | **2,330,350** | **2,096,160** | **9,018,000** |

\*Data sourced from biennial work plan budget of 2012 and2013, developed in 2012.

**Table 3.5** Annual disbursements, including cash and in-kind co-financing

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PIMS 4072** | **Subtotal** | **Annual disbursements (US $)** | | | | **Total** |
| **Donor** | **Disbursed** | | **Planned** | |
| **2011-2012** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2011-2014** |
| GEF Contribution |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| -Outcome 1 | 211,112 | 84,660 | 126452 | 326,140 | 267,198 | 804,450 |
| - Outcome 2 | 277,165 | 600 | 276565 | 328,000 | 154,585 | 759,750 |
| - Project Management | 74,216 | 41,212 | 33,004 | 49,792 | 49,792 | 173,800 |
| **Total** | **562,493** | **126,472** | **436,021** | **703,932** | **471,575** | **1,738,000** |
| **Cash co-financing – partner managed** | | | | | | |
| Gansu Province | 955,865 | 433,406 | 522,460 | 385,405 | 158,730 | 1,500,000 |
| **Total** | **955,865** | **433,406** | **522,460** | **385,405** | **158,730** | **1,500,000** |
| **In-kind co-financing** | | | | | | |
| Gansu Province | 4,019,882 | 1,835,332 | 2,184,549 | 1,760,118 | 0 | 5,780,000 |
| Others | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Grand Total** | **4,019,882** | **1,835,332** | **2,184,549** | **1,760,118** | **0** | **5,780,000** |
| **Grand Total** | **5,538,240** | **2,395,210** | **3,143,030** | **2,849,455** | **630,305** | **9,018,000** |

The total annual budgets for 2011-2014 and total annual disbursements for 2011 and 2012 are shown in **Tables 3.4** and **3.5**, respectively. Reference to **Figures 3.2** and **3.3** shows the pattern of expenditure during the initial two years of the Project. Keys points to note are:

* The annual budget (**Table 3.4, Figure 3.2**) has changed from that in the Project Document, which peaks to US$ 614,200 in Year 2 and then declines progressively to US$ 337,900 in Year 4. Instead, the budget peaks to US$ 666,160 in Year 4, which is counter-intuitive as disbursements are usually highest in the middle years of a Project. However, this has been addressed, as **Table 3.5** shows planned disbursements to be highest (US$ 703,932) in Year 3.

**Figure 3.2** Cumulative annual budgets and disbursements expressed as a percentage of the total GEF grant (US$ 1.738 million). Note that cumulative disbursements for 2011 and 2012 are the percentages actually disbursed; those for 2013 and 2014 are planned.

**Figure 3.3** Cumulative annual disbursements by Outcome, expressed as a percentage of the total annual disbursement of the GEF grant (US$ 1.738 million). Note that cumulative disbursements for 2011 and 2012 are the percentages of the annual total actually disbursed; those for 2013 and 2014 are planned disbursements.

* Very little (7%) of the total GEF grant was dispersed in 2011 (**Table 3.5** and **Figure 3.2**), which is often the case during the Inception Phase and in accord with the fact that Project did not become fully operational until late 2011.
* Expenditure picked up in 2012 and then it is planned to increase further in 2013 (**Table 3.5)** in excess of the budget (**Table 3.4**) and reduce in the final year (2014). The overall trend, as shown in **Figure 3.2**, is a steep incline with no plateau towards the end. This suggests that major activity continues to the end of the Project, leaving little time for consolidation, learning lessons and replication, but this may be inevitable given the slow start and the Project’s relatively short duration (4 years).
* Investment inputs towards the delivery of Outcomes 1 and 2 have been (2011-12) and are planned to be (2013-14) consistent over the 4-year life of the Project, with the exception of Outcome 2 in Year 1 (2011). The exception is in accord with the time necessary to work with the relevant authorities and set up the demonstration PAs (**Figure 3.3**).
  + 1. *Monitoring and evaluation\**

Monitoring and evaluation is rated as **Satisfactory** with respect to project implementation, as indicated in **Table 3.7**.

The Project Document provides an indicative Monitoring and Evaluation Work Plan, which outlines various reporting and review mechanisms that include Quarterly Progress Reports, APRs/PIRs, Tripartite Reviews, PSC meetings and independent evaluations (mid-term and terminal). It also specifies the following:

* “A detailed schedule of project review meetings will be developed by the project team and incorporated in the project Inception Report (PIR). Such a schedule will include: (i) tentative time frames for Project Board Meetings and (ii) project related Monitoring and Evaluation activities. Day- to-day monitoring of implementation progress will be the responsibility of the Project Coordinator based on the project's Annual Work Plan and its indicators.” [paragraph 179 in hard copy; paragraph 182 in electronic copy]
* Measurement of impact indicators related to global biodiversity benefits will occur according to the schedules defined in the Inception Workshop, using METT scores. [paragraph 180 in hard copy; paragraph 183 in electronic copy]
* Measurement of means of verification for Project purpose indicators will be carried out by hired third party assessment during the Inception Phase. [Table 1, paragraph 196 hard copy].

None of the above is considered in the Inception Report. Indeed, the first item is copied verbatim into the Inception Report (page 32 under Monitoring and Evaluation) without addressing it. Absolutely nothing is reported to have be done to review and consolidate this indicative Work Plan during the inception phase.

In other respects, the Project has been adequately monitored in accordance with this indicative Work Plan, which comprises routine UNDP and GEF accounting and reporting procedures.

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) has met annually in Lanzhou in line with Project Document specifications (**Section 3.1.6**). Members of the PSC are listed in **Annex 7**. PSC and Tripartite Review meetings are combined, with the result that participants exceed 50 persons. This suggests that meetings must be rather unwieldy and more about rubber stamping reports and proposals than having quality time to consider the interests of the Project and its longer term outcomes (repercussions) in more detailed and dynamic ways. It is also questionable as to whether or not the PSC can fulfil its role by meeting just annually. Members need to be exposed to what is actually happening in the field, as well as providing stakeholders with the opportunity to engage with them directly, all of which takes time but contributes to decisions being more informed and members becoming better ambassadors of the Project.

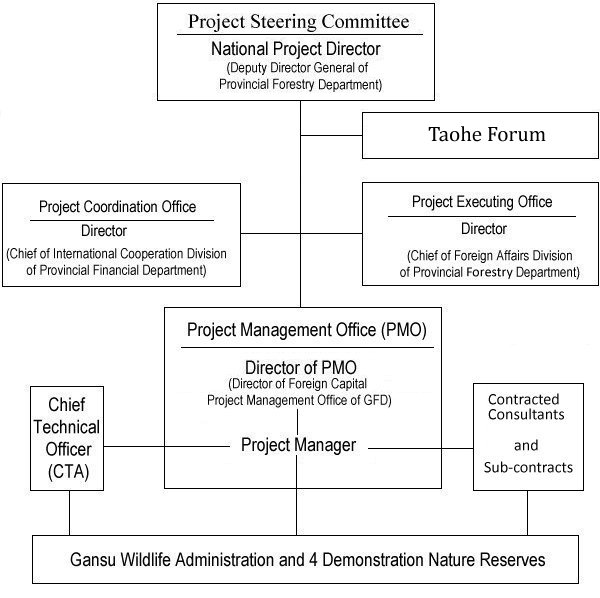
The Logical Framework Matrix (LFM), attached as **Annex 8**, provides the basis for monitoring performance in Project implementation. Many of the indicators in the LFM make use of various GEF Tracking Tools deployed by the Project to monitor PA management effectiveness, PA capacity development and the financial status of Gansu’s PA system. The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) has been used prior to implementation and at mid-term (**a**) but to date it has not been possible for PMO to facilitate mid-term assessments of capacity development and financial status using the respective GEF Tracking Tools.

The overambitious nature of the Project has already been mentioned (**Section 3.1.1**). There are a number of proposed changes to the design of the LFM, including rationalisation of outputs (without making to changes to outcomes), which would help to make implementation more realistic, These have been discussed with UNDP and PMO and a revised version is provided in **Annex 9** for their further guidance.

* + 1. *Execution and implementation modalities*

The Project is currently in sound condition with respect to being executed by a committed agency (GFD), with strong leadership from the National Project Director (NPD) and having a talented, efficient, well-integrated and highly dedicated PMO to facilitate implementation, supported by some good national consultants and an international consultant whose terms concluded in 2012. Moreover, the Project has established good working relationships with its stakeholders. Those responsible for its implementation were consistently appreciated and applauded, without exception, by those stakeholders whom the evaluators encountered. Particularly notable and laudable was the open, receptive attitude of the Executing Agency (GFD), PMO and implementing partners to take full advantage of the opportunity afforded by the MTE to review progress, learn lessons and consider best practices and experience from elsewhere.

All of the above augurs well for the future and, despite the slow start in 2011[[13]](#footnote-13), staffing issues continuing into 2012[[14]](#footnote-14)and minor constraints and weaknesses identified by stakeholders (**Annex 5**), there is sufficient evidence at mid-term to suggest that a very successful Project can be delivered. Such evidence is based on the present capacity and commitment of the Executing Agency and its PMO, their good working relationships with the administrations responsible for demonstrating effective and financially sustainable management of PAs, the emerging cooperation between PA administrations and village communities, as well as the large number of outputs delivered between mid-2012 and the MTR in March 2013. Outputs include community resource, PA management and PA business plans for each of the four demonstration sites.



**Figure 3.4** Proposed organisational structure of the Project, based on the structure existing at the time of the MTE and some further modifications to clarify reporting lines.

The key challenges to achieving a very successful Project are considered to be: the limited remaining time available (21 months); integration of technical outputs; outstanding policy and strategic inputs; and long-term sustainability considerations, particularly with respect to stakeholders. These and other challenges, along with minor constraints and weaknesses identified by stakeholders, are considered in more detail in **Section 4.2**. Other aspects of implementation are considered elsewhere, such as adaptive management, technical capacities and partnerships in **Table 3.7**.

Regarding the way in which the Project is organised, it is clear the structure originally planned in the Project Document has not been applied in its entirety. This is not an issue in itself but it is important to document the present structure and clarify reporting lines, particularly with respect to the role and responsibilities of the Project Manager. A revised organisational structure is proposed in **Figure 3.4**, based on the *status quo* and minor revision of reporting lines. This revised structure has been discussed with and welcomed by the NPD, PMO staff and UNDP CO. It should be noted that the Taohe Forum replaces the Reference Group shown in **Figure 3.1**.

* + 1. *Management by UNDP Country Office*

The Implementing Agency, UNDP China Country Office, enjoys a close working relationship with Gansu Provincial Government, particularly its Forestry and Finance Departments who have critical roles in Project execution. It has dedicated much time and effort to building the capacity of Provincial Government departments and also PMO with respect to managing the Project in accordance with financial and other reporting procedures required by GEF and UNDP. UNDP communicates regularly with the PMO in Lanzhou and its Programme Manager (Energy & Environment) has demonstrated considerable support and commitment, visiting the Project on 6 occasions to date, including at the commencement of the MTR. Together with the Regional Technical Advisor (RTA), they have provided crucial assistance in improving efficiency of governmental processes to address barriers to the sustainable management of protected areas, advising on and resolving staffing issues within PMO, and identifying appropriately qualified and experienced national and international consultants to help implement the Project.

The challenging areas for particular support by the Implementing Agency over the remaining term of the Project are considered to be:

* Development and mainstreaming of PA strategy and policy at provincial level within the national context.
* Facilitating and fostering links between the Project and other initiatives, such the GEF Small Grants Programme, to resource strategies and plans developed by the Project.
* Developing a sustainable exit strategy for the Project.

## **Project results**

* + 1. *Attainment of objectives***\***

|  |
| --- |
| **The Project is evaluated as Moderately Satisfactory with respect to the achievement of its objective,** based on assessment of Project outcomes and outputs (detailed in **Annex 6** and summarised in **Table 3.6**), Project performance (summarised in **Table 3.7**) and Project performance indicators (). |

The Project’s (development) objective, “*strengthen protected areas’ sustainability in Gansu Province through improved effectiveness of PA management and sustainable financing”*, which is part of a broader goal to “effectively conserve globally significant biodiversity in China”, comprises two outcomes. The first addresses the policy, regulatory and institutional framework for effective and financially sustainable management of PAs; and the second focuses on demonstrating how PAs can be effectively managed and sustainably financed within part of a global biodiversity hotspot in the Taohe Basin. Both outcomes are closely inter-connected and rely on the establishment of a legal and management framework for sustainably conserving globally important biodiversity within Gansu’s PAs.

Much has been achieved towards realising this objective and goal and the Project is to be congratulated on some very impressive progress made during the last 9 months, in terms of outputs delivered, despite some significant and prolonged constraints that should have been contained and addressed within the inception phase. Clearly, lessons have been learned and the Project is now well poised and suitably determined to build on its recent successes, catch up on its schedule and deliver its planned outputs within the remaining time available.

A qualitative, evidence-based assessment of the extent to which these outcomes have been addressed, is provided in **Annex 6** for each project output. This takes into account what was originally planned in the Project Document, given the absence of any subsequent modifications during the inception phase, and includes a self-assessment by PMO on the Project’s progress to date. Outputs have also been rated on the basis of this qualitative assessment, the results of which are shown in **Table 3.6**.

**Table 3.6** Mid-Term Review ratings of Project outcomes and outputs, based on evidence provided in **Annex 6**

| **Objectives and Outputs** | | **Rating\*** | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| HS | S | MS | MU | U | HU |
| Outcome 1 | Strengthened provincial policy framework and institutional capacity for sustainable management and financing of Gansu’s PA system. |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Output 1.1 | Systematic PA development and management strategy adopted by Provincial Government. |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Output 1.2 | Economic valuation of the PA system in Gansu conducted and a PA system financing plan developed. |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  |
| Output 1.3 | Legislative and regulatory framework for the PA system in Gansu improved. |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  |
| Output 1.4 | Gansu PA Forum established with the sectoral agencies and stakeholders aiming to enhance PA management effectiveness. |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  |
| Output 1.5 | Provincial level PA database and knowledge management system developed. |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Output 1.6 | Institutional capacities for effective PA planning and management strengthened. |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Output 1.7 | Training curricula and institutes are in place at provincial level for enhancing knowledge and skills of PA staff. |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Outcome 2 | Sustainable protected area management and financing demonstrated in Taohe Basin. |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  |
| Output 2.1 | Consistent PA management tools are developed and utilised at the demonstration PA sites with clear action and monitoring mechanisms installed. |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  |
| Output 2.2 | Local level biodiversity monitoring and evaluation system in place in the four demonstration PAs. |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Output 2.3 | Financial sustainability of the demonstration PAs improved with use of financial planning tools and diversification of revenue stream. |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |  |
| Output 2.4 | Collaborative approaches between PAs and local PA partners developed, demonstrating improved PA management and cost effectiveness. |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Output 2.5 | Skills and competencies of PA staff improved with use of a performance management system and the creation of incentive mechanisms. |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  |

**\*** **HS** = **H**ighly **S**atisfactory; **S** = **S**atisfactory; **MS** = **M**oderately **S**atisfactory;

**MU** = **M**oderately **U**nsatisfactory; **U** = **U**nsatisfactory; **HU** = **H**ighly **U**nsatisfactory

Key points to note in **Table 3.6** are as follows:

* **Outcome 1** is rated as **Moderately** **Satisfactory**, in line with the ratings of the majority of its outputs. Much of the technical groundwork has been satisfactorily achieved with respect to **Outputs 1.2, 1.3** and **1.4** but the challenging task of drafting and having approved a sustainable financing plan and a regulatory framework for PAs lies ahead. In the case of the Taohe Forum, it is not really functioning as meets only every two years, nor does it have any representation of local communities.

Less progress has been achieved with respect to **Outputs 1.1**, **1.5**, **1.6** and **1.7**. ToR for a Provincial PA strategy (**Output 1.1**) was developed in 2011 but has yet to be contracted out. The development of a Provincial knowledge management system (**Output 1.5**) lies dormant, ever since the national consultant submitted a framework in July 2012. Progress in institutional capacity building (**Outputs 1.6** and **1.7**) has been limited to identifying training needs and a training institution (Provincial Wildlife Administration); training curricula are unlikely to become operating before late 2013.

* **Outcome 2** is rated as **Satisfactory**, a majority of outputs having been rated as such. Satisfactory progress has been made with respect to the development of management plans (**Output 2.1**), business plans(**2.3**) and performance management systems with incentive mechanisms(**2.5**) for each of the demonstration PAs. However, management and business planning have yet to be integrated, as well as linked to community resource and tourism plans.

Less good progress has been made with **Output 2.2** (biodiversity monitoring), for which a framework has been designed and plans developed for each demonstration PA but surveys have yet to be undertaken. Moreover, the huge, planned investments in monitoring are not currently supported by database systems and rigorous scientific analysis to inform management. With respect to **Output 2.4**, the four PA administrations have developed collaborative approaches with demonstration villages but there appears to be limited awareness of the Project among some communities members and few tangible benefits in return for their cooperation.

Progress towards meeting end of Project targets, established for the indicators in the LFM, has also been assessed and rated (**Annex 8**). Ratings indicate **Moderately Satisfactory** (N=8) and **Satisfactory** (N=3) progress towards 2014 targets for the majority of indicators, exceptions being the two **Moderately Unsatisfactory** results for the establishment of an Information Management System and specialised training and skills development programmes for PAs staff.

In line with GEF requirements (UNDP-GEF 2012), performance has also been rated in terms of project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impacts, as well as the quality of M&E systems. These ratings are provided in **Table 3.7**, along with a brief justification based on evidence outlined earlier in this report or in the sub-sections below.

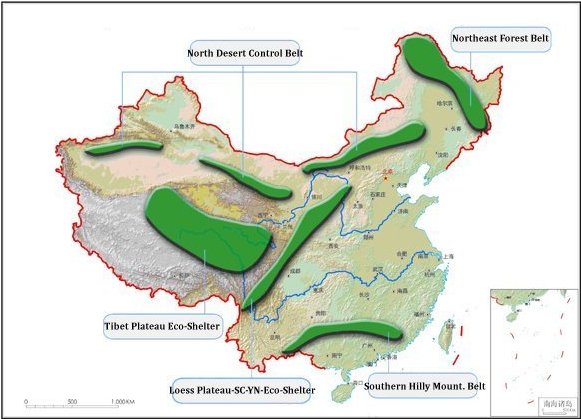
**Table 3.7** Project performance ratings

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Component / Objective** | **Rating** | **Comments** | |
| **Project Formulation** (using 6-point satisfaction scale) | | | |
| Conceptualization/Design | **MS** | Simple, well conceived design in line with national policies and priorities. Significant weaknesses are: (i) over-ambitious scale within available timeframe and GEF funds; and (ii) limited provision for benefits to accrue to demonstration villages under planned co-management agreements (see **Section 3.1.1** and SWOT analysis in **Table 3.1**). | |
| Stakeholder participation | **S** | Close involvement of most key stakeholders (provincial agencies and PA administrations) from outset of Project formulation, especially in identifying baseline conditions through use of METT and other scorecards. However, no evidence in Project Document of community involvement (see **Sections 2.4** and **3.1.2**). | |
| **Project Implementation** (using 6-point satisfaction scale) | | | |
| Implementation Approach | **S** | Some significant short-comings in implementation but these have been/are being progressively addressed. | |
| *Use of logical framework* | **MS** | No record of LFM having been reviewed during Project inception phase. RTA recalls that “logframe was looked at but there was no particular issues necessitating any change”. Subsequent identification of shortcomings in LFM during MTR suggests a lack of critical examination during inception phase. | |
| *Adaptive management* | **S** | PMO is stable, competent and highly committed in its work as a result of considerable adaptive management on the part of the Implementing Agency (UNDP), particularly with respect to:   * Inexperience with GEF/ UNDP accounting and reporting procedures at provincial level, necessitating training and more oversight by UNDP in 2011. * Facilitating staff changes within PMU and also at NPD level in 2012. * Recruitment of key national and international consultants.   PMO’s proposed budget re-allocation, brought to the attention of the Evaluators, is indicative of their enhanced capabilities in planning and adapting for the future. | |
| *Use / establishment of information technologies* | **MU** | Project has progressed slowly in developing a knowledge management system (Output 1.5). It established a web site in August, 2012 but this is not fully functional (<http://www.gsgeftaohe.com>). Information (in Chinese only) is limited to such items as consultant CVs and Taohe Declaration. Outputs such as management and business plans are not available, nor are the videos developed for each of the 4 PAs. | |
| *Operational relationships between the institutions involved* | **S** | Provincial government is strongly committed to Project, evident from its high level of cash co-financing, and there are good inter-agency relations, notably between GFD and Gansu Finance Department. Relationships nurtured by mechanisms such as PSC and Taohe Forum, both of which are represented by wide range of institutions and other stakeholders including PA administrations. PMO is well respected by partners and actively engaged in facilitating, supporting and servicing these mechanisms and its various partnerships. Stronger links need to be established with Legislative Office in order to expedite policy/law reforms. | |
| *Technical capacities* | **S** | Observations from meetings and review of technical outputs indicate that the Project is serviced by technically competent and highly committed professionals within PMO and supported by national and international consultants proficient in their respective areas of expertise. | |
| Monitoring and evaluation | **S** | Currently satisfactory but there were serious weaknesses and oversights during the inception phase (see **Section 3.2.2**). | |
| Stakeholder participation | **S** | There has been close involvement and collaboration with partners and other stakeholders throughout Project implementation to date. All stakeholders have spoken highly of the Project without exception.  Main weakness is the absence of any mechanism through which communities can voice their interests and concerns, which is more a reflection of the Project’s design rather than its implementation. | |
| *Production and dissemination of information* | **MS** | A wide range of materials, mostly in Chinese, have been produced by the Project, including management and business plans for each of the 4 PAs, along with PRAs, incentive schemes and monitoring protocols. The policy environment and capacity needs have also been assessed. Currently, there is a lack of integration between certain outputs, notably the PRAs, management and business plans (see **Sections 3.2.3 and 3.3.3**).  Materials have been disseminated via the PA administrations and provincial agencies but are currently not available via the Project’s website. Best practices need to be distilled from outputs and widely disseminated. | |
| *Local resource users and NGOs participation* | **MS** | Awareness of the Project’s objective and potential benefits is low and even confused among some members of the demonstration villages. Community participation in co-management of resources needs to be progressively improved as mutual trust develops between respective parties.  There is no NGO involvement at community level, none exists. | |
| *Establishment of partnerships* | **S** | Co-management agreements have been established between each PA administration and a respective demonstration village, the emphasis of which is on nature conservation with little attention to the development of sustainable livelihoods.  The Taohe Forum has been established as a public service platform to promote the sustainable management, financing and development of Gansu’s PAs. Realising its Charter, adopted on 19 December 201, would seem to be constrained by meeting only once every two years (see **Table 4.1**). | |
| *Involvement / support of government institutions* | **HS** | High level of ownership of Project by GFD (Executing Agency) and strong support from Gansu Finance Department, Environment Protection Department and the individual demonstration PAs, as reported in **Section 3.2.3**. | |
| **Project Results** (using 6-point satisfaction scale) | | | |
| Achievement of objective | **MS** | Overall rating based on **Table 3.6**.and evidence provided in **Annex 6.** | |
| Attainment of Outcome 1 | **MS** | Rating taken from **Table 3.6**.and evidence provided in **Annex 6.** | |
| Attainment of Outcome 2 | **S** | Rating taken from **Table 3.6**.and evidence provided in **Annex 6.** | |
| **Overall Quality of Project Outcomes** (using 6-point satisfaction scale) | | | |
| *Relevance* | **R** | See comments under **Section 3.3.2**. | |
| *Effectiveness* | **MS** | See comments under **Section 3.3.3**. | |
| *Efficiency* | **MS** | See comments under **Section 3.3.3**. | |
| **Sustainability** (using 4-point likelihood scale) | | | |
| Overall Likelihood of Sustainability | **L** | See comments under **Section 3.3.4**. | |
| *Financial resources* | **L** | See comments under **Section 3.3.4**. | |
| *Socio-economic* | **ML** | See comments under **Section 3.3.4**. | |
| *Institutional framework and governance* | **ML** | See comments under **Section 3.3.4**. | |
| *Environmental* | **L** | See comments under **Section 3.3.4**. | |
| **Impact** (using 3-point impact scale) | | | |
| *Environmental status improvement* | **S** | **Likely** significant improvement in effective management and sustainable financing of PAs, resulting in improved conservation status of globally significant biodiversity in core areas of Gansu’s PAs. Drivers are strengthened capacity of authorities to effectively manage PAs, collaboration with local communities in protecting and conserving biodiversity, and Provincial Government’s increasing financial commitment to PAs management. | |
| *Environmental stress reduction* | **M** | Minimal reduction in environmental stress anticipated as core areas of PAs thought to be already protected reasonably effectively, while transition areas likely to be subject to increased pressures from tourism and associated infrastructural developments. | |
| *Progress towards stress/status change* | **M** | Minimal progress to date as some Project interventions only recently beginning to take effect and others are outstanding. | |
| **Overall Project Results**  (using 6-point satisfaction scale) | **MS** |  | |
| **Satisfaction scale**: **H**ighly **S**atisfactory, **S**atisfactory, **M**oderately **S**atisfactory, **M**oderately **U**nsatisfactory, **U**nsatisfactory, **H**ighly **U**nsatisfactory  **Relevance scale:** **R**elevant; **N**ot **R**elevant | | | **Sustainability scale:** **L**ikely, **M**oderately **L**ikely, **M**oderately **U**nlikely, **U**nlikely  **Impact scale:** **S**ignificant, **M**inimal, **N**egligible |

* + 1. *Relevance\**

Relevance is rated as **Relevant** (**Table 3.7**). The objective of the Project to strengthen PAs sustainability in Gansu Province and its wider goal, with respect to effectively conserving globally significant biodiversity in China, remain as relevant today as when the Project was first conceived five or more years ago. During the intervening period there have been a number of developments initiated by the Government of China to which the Project is directly relevant, for example:

* *In situ* conservation of biodiversity is one among 10 priorities in the recently updated China National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan (2011-2030), which includes a number of priority actions of direct relevance to the Project, specifically: coordinated improvement of national nature reserve planning and management; enhancing biodiversity conservation in the priority areas; applying standard development practices to nature reserves to improve their management quality; monitoring biodiversity for early warning and other purposes; enhancing the scientific study of biodiversity conservation; addressing climate change; and establishing participatory mechanisms and building partnerships for biodiversity conservation.
* In response to the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, the Government of China developed its own action programme within which biodiversity and nature reserve management is one of 10 thematic areas. There is emphasis on the supervision and management of nature reserves, improving law enforcement system the adoption of an ecosystem approach as a new model for biodiversity conservation.
* In December 2010, the State Council issued a land use planning policy that provides for four types of Key Function Zones: Optimized Development Zone, Key Development Zone, Restricted Development Zone and Prohibited Development Zone. All national nature reserves embraced by the Project fall into the category of Prohibited Development Zone.

****

**Figure 3.5** Map of China showing the national ecological security strategy, comprising ecological shelters and belts. The project lies within the Loess Plateau-Sichuan-Yunnan shelter.

This policy also addresses ecological security in China by defining two ecological shelters (Tibet Plateau and Loess Plateau-Sichuan-Yunnan) and three ecological belts (Northeast Forest, Northern Desert Control and Southern Hilly Mountainous belts), as shown in **Figure 3.5**. The Gansu Taohe PAs Project is located in the Loess Plateau-Sichuan-Yunnan Ecological Shelter, where nature conservation is the priority form of land use in the area.

This strategy for ecological security has been mainstreamed into the *Outline of 12th Five Year Plan of National Economic and Social Development*, which plays a paramount role in the social development of China. The importance of enhancing the protection and management of nature reserves in support of the strategy is also highlighted in the *Outline*.

* + 1. *Effectiveness and efficiency\**

Effectiveness and efficiency are both rated as **Moderately Satisfactory** (**Table 3.7**). Effectiveness concerns the extent to which objectives are achieved or likely to be achieved, Efficiency concerns the extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible; also called cost effectiveness or efficacy14.

**Effectiveness** To date, the Project objective to “*strengthen protected areas’ sustainability in Gansu Province through improved effectiveness of PA management and sustainable financing”* and thereby contribute to the broader goal of effectively conserving China’s globally significant biodiversity has been delivered **moderately satisfactorily** with respect to Outcome 1 and **satisfactorily** with respect to Outcome 2 in terms of their respective outputs (**Table 3.6**). Effectiveness is currently constrained by the following:

* lack of integration between certain outputs (e.g. community resource, management and business plans for PAs); and
* limited progress for a number of outputs (e.g. provincial PA strategy, knowledge management system and training curricula development; awareness of village communities and mechanisms for their participation in PA policy development, planning and co-management).

It is anticipated that many of these shortcomings will be addressed in 2013, as the Project builds on its improved performance over the last 9 months and recent achievements. This should leave sufficient time in 2014 for the Project to consolidate its achievements and put in place a sustainable exit strategy.

Reference to the review of performance indicators and delivery status of the Project objective and outcomes in **Annex 8** shows a predominance of **moderately satisfactory** and **satisfactory** performance. The **unlikely** delivery of the Project’s objective and, under Outcome 1, a 200% increase in the total annual budget for PA management and development activities in Gansu Province, is largely a reflection of the over-ambitious setting of the respective targets. Also, in the case of the first indicator (Financial sustainability score (%) for national systems of protected areas), the indicator misleadingly refers to national PA systems. Proposed revisions to improve the LFM are identified in **Annex 9**.

**Efficiency** Huge delays in implementing activities, coupled with the initial inexperience and instability of PMO, jeopardised progress during the first 18 months of the Project. This situation has been addressed and there has been considerable improvement in the delivery of outputs, hence outcomes and objective.

Reference to the Project’s financial management (**Section 3.2.1**) shows that expenditure to date has been expeditious, with 32% of the US$ 1.738 million budget spent by mid-term, December 2012 (**Figure 3.2**). On the other hand, it can be argued that the slow start to the Project has been costly in terms of time and financial resources, given the very limited progress towards the delivery of Project outputs. Reference to the Project’s Inception Report provides some indication of the poor performance during 2011:

* The Report itself is essentially a slimmer version of the Project Document; most of the text is copied verbatim from the Project Document; and the new material relates to activities in Annexes 1-2 for Year 1 (and budgets in Annex 3) that are so generic and obvious as to be of no practical value.
* There is no critical review of the LFM, stakeholder analysis, risks and assumptions etc and other new developments that might have a bearing on implementation.
* The Report provides no clear guidance on how the different outputs should be implemented, let alone integrated with each other.

Such evidence suggests that significant time and resources were wasted during the inception phase. Again, as in the case of effectiveness, there have been huge improvements in efficiency as lessons have been learned and capacities developed.

* + 1. *Sustainability***\***

The Project has been designed with considerable attention to sustainability, which overall is rated as **Moderately Likely[[15]](#footnote-15)**. The four dimensions of sustainability are rated separately in **Table 3.7** and evidence, taken from the Project Document, is provided below with respect to each:

* **Institutional sustainability** The approach is based predominantly on building capacity among existing institutions rather than supporting the establishment of new ones. This includes the institutionalisation of training in PA planning and management, for which the Provincial Wildlife Administration has been identified. An exception is the Taohe Forum, created by the Project to support the sustainable development of PAs across throughout Gansu Province. More thought needs to be given to its development into an effective and sustainable entity. Governance is also a key issue, especially as PA administrations demonstrate collaborative approaches to management that involve local communities. Institutional sustainability is considered to be **Moderately Likely** at mid-term and anticipated to become more likely as the Provincial Wildlife Administration takes on a training role for PAs.
* **Environmental sustainability** is considered to be **Likely** because the emphasis of the Project is biodiversity conservation. Therefore, no policies or practices are anticipated to negatively impact on the environment. [Note: This does exonerate the Project from possible indirect negative repercussions on the environment. For example, tourism development should meet environmental and social sustainability criteria.]
* **Social sustainability** is assessed as **Moderately Likely**, based on current progress in collaboration between PA administrations and demonstration villages. The GEF Small Grants Programme provides a potential opportunity to build on the collaborative agreements established between PA administrations and local communities, enabling the latter to generate more tangible benefits from, for example, safeguarding ecosystem services. There is also a priority need for communities to be represented on Taohe Forum, alongside other stakeholder interest groups involved in influencing and shaping PA policy.
* **Financial sustainability** is considered to be **Likely,** given the strong co-financing commitment, including US$ 1.5 million in cash, of the Provincial Government. Such support will be informed by a sustainable financing plan that is due to be developed by the Project. More needs to be done to establish grants and micro-credits that enable local communities to help themselves and develop more sustainable livelihoods.
  + 1. *Impact*

Project impacts concern longer-term global environmental benefits.[[16]](#footnote-16) Very often such impacts cannot be discerned until long after a project’s completion. While it is premature to assess impacts in the case of the present project, it is instructive to consider **‘likely’** impacts and these are considered in **Table 3.7**, based on the following considerations:

* Most of the global environmental benefit arising from the Project is likely to be the long-term conservation of globally important biodiversity within the core zones of PAs. Elsewhere, in the buffer and transition zones of PAs, pressures on the environment are likely to persist because the Project is not resourced to address local livelihood needs. Moreover, increased tourism can be expected in transition zones, based on recent trends. This is likely to be supported by environmentally unsustainable forms of infrastructural developments, judging by facilities recently built in such areas.

# CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS

## **Conclusions**

The Project is well-positioned mid-term to consolidate its achievements to date, particularly with respect to integrating and further strengthening many of its initial outputs, and poised to bring to fruition on-going and outstanding activities and outputs in a satisfactory if not highly satisfactory manner. Much has been achieved during the last nine months with respect to both outputs and, importantly, the capability, motivation and stability of its PMO, as well the vigorous leadership shown by its current NPD, all of which augurs well for the future. Such achievements would not have materialised without the strong support of the Provincial Government (Executing Agency) in tandem with the oversight and timely interventions of the UNDP Country Office (Implementing Agency).

The recent period of high productivity follows in the wake of a long, slow start in January 2011, with most of that year spent establishing PMO and completing the inception phase. It took time for the International Division of the Provincial Financial Department to develop the capacity to manage a GEF project for the first time; and for PMO to get up to speed, while also having to address a high turnover of key staff. Inevitably, these slow, painful beginnings have impacted on performance and outputs by mid-term but the Project, its partners and other stakeholders should be applauded for achieving an overall **Moderately Satisfactory** evaluation result, in spite of the challenges it has had to address. The reviewers are confident that the Project will be able to resolve outstanding shortcomings in the remaining time available and achieve an even better result by the end of its term, based on the recommendations provided below in **Sections 4.2-4.4** and any other adaptive management interventions considered necessary to deal with unforeseen issues that may emerge as implementation progresses.

At the time of this MTR, the Project had undertaken the following:

* + spent US$ 562,493 (32%) of its US$ 1,738,000 GEF funds and utilised US$ 955,865 (64%) of its US$ 1,500,000 co-financing up to December 2012 (**Table 3.5**);
  + engaged one international and some seven national experts in servicing the Project, together with the four partner PA administrations;
  + hosted approximately 20 consultative meetings, workshops, study visits etc. involving some 15 stakeholder organizations as well as communities at four demonstration villages ;
  + produced over 40 plans and reports relating to the majority of the 12 Project outputs.

This provides a quick glimpse of the size and scope of the Project. Importantly, all those met by the evaluators were complimentary about the Project and its PMO and, even when challenged to voice its weaknesses, there was only a small amount of feedback. This related primarily to: delays in reimbursing funds for activities undertaken by the PA administrations; insufficient applied training and, in the case of GIS, lack of opportunity to apply it; and frustrations among the PAs not knowing how much funding support they were likely to receive. Further details from stakeholders, based primarily on a questionnaire survey, is summarised in **Annex 5**.

The main conclusions to this MTR with respect to the implementation of the Project are summarised by way of a SWOT analysis in **Table 4.1**. This analysis, together with feedback on the Project’s strengths and weaknesses from a questionnaire survey distributed at a plenary meeting with stakeholders on 8th March (**Annex 3),** provides the basis to the recommendations and lessons learnt in the subsequent sections.

**Table 4.1** SWOT analysis of project implementation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **STRENGTHS** | **WEAKNESSES** |
| * + China’s nature reserves are based on UNESCO MAB Biosphere Reserve model, comprising core area(s), buffer zone(s) and transition area(s). Thus, great potential to realise conservation and sustainable development.   + Project is well supported by Gansu Provincial Government, as evidenced by financial commitment of RMB 4 million for 4 demonstration PAs at its onset.   + Strong leadership and commitment shown by GFD and its NPD, including exemplary willingness to learn lessons from slow, fragile beginnings and from models and experience elsewhere.   + PMO developed into talented and closely-knit team, after painful gestation, having good working relations within GFD, demonstration PAs, other stakeholders. Committed to address earlier shortfalls evident during and following inception phase and very open to learning opportunities.   + Demonstration PAs working enthusiastically with Project and delivering well in relation to their present technical capabilities (e.g. management, business and community resource plans).   + Establishment of Taohe Forum provides a platform generating synergy among those with vested interests in biodiversity conservation and PAs management.   + Range of collaborative agreements established between PA authorities and demonstration villages.   + Much new capacity developed in sustainable financial planning for PAs through training workshops and production of business plans by PA staff.   **THREATS**   * + The slow start to Project implementation has meant that many outputs are behind schedule. This is most concerning for strategy and policy development under **Outcome 1**, as they require much time for consultation and any associated regulatory processes are even more lengthy. Delays in delivery of **Outcome 2** outputs will limit opportunities for consolidation of best practices and, of course, replication. While a no-cost extension of six months may be helpful in this regard, it is unlikely to be affordable given the relatively small size of the GEF grant.   + The lack of specific Project funds to invest in improving local livelihoods in the demonstration villages is a potential threat to the way in which the Project is perceived by those living in or peripheral to PAs. It can be alleviated by PMO facilitating villager/community access to other funding sources.   + The way in which some of the LFM indicators have been designed or measured to establish the 2009 baseline is likely to jeopardise successful achievement of the Project’s objective. Potential flaws have been identified that need to be addressed. | * + Provincial level outputs (e.g. PA strategy, financing plan and legal framework) well behind schedule, jeopardising opportunities for application once approved.   + Taohe Forum, launched in December 2012 with a charter and declaration, lacks community representatives and is top heavy with government representatives. Its role and links to provincial government not defined; and currently it does not contribute to the Project in any significant way.   + Plans for provincial PA information management system overambitious; meanwhile, no progress on refining its scope in consultation with partners and in making products (e.g. management, business and community resource plans) accessible via website.   + Training programme and curricular development will not be completed before late 2013, so only one year remains for piloting.   + Weaknesses in strategic and technical capabilities of PMO contributed to limited collaboration between/among partners and consultants, resulting in poorly integrated outputs (e.g. management, business and community resource plans).   + Good relations between PMO and partners undermined by lack of precision and detail in work plans for demo PAs and slow (several months) reimbursement of funds for work undertaken.   + Extensive and intensive biodiversity monitoring planned in PAs welcomed but unclear as to what extent it is designed to better inform PA management. (i.e. Is it cost-effective?)   + Awareness of Project with PA demo villages not noticeably high, which probably reflects its limited tangible benefits as perceived by local communities.   **OPPORTUNTIES**   * + Water quality, a key measure of ecosystem health, is being monitored in two of the demonstration PAs. It should be extended to all four demonstration PAs and subsequently be adopted by all PAs in Gansu.   + GEF Small Grants Programme can be accessed to support new income generating activities in the demonstration villages to help consolidate their emerging collaboration with PA authorities. It may also be possible to establish micro-financing schemes.   + Energy efficiency initiatives can be developed alongside ecotourism, which is already being pioneered by the Project. House insulation, fuel-efficient stoves for cooking and heating, and solar heating of water may be eligible for grants or loans. This helps to reduce the impacts of increasing numbers of visitors, meeting their heating, cooking and washing requirements by use of renewables. |

## **Corrective actions for Project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation**

The strengths of the Project’s design and implementation have been identified, respectively, in the SWOT analyses provided in **Table 3.1** (Section 3.1) and **Table 4.1** (above), along with their weaknesses. Corrective actions to address the weaknesses are identified below.

* + 1. *Project design recommendations*

1. **Revise LFM with respect to those outputs that are (i) overambitious and (ii) not clearly differentiated from each other.**

Specifically, the following changes to outputs are recommended:

* 1. Development of a provincial level database and knowledge management system (**Output 1.5**) should be limited in scope to address the data and information management needs of the four demonstration PAs, while also providing a common platform and architecture so that data can be readily collated and analysed at provincial level for reporting and other purposes. This is critical for the databases and GIS.

Data and information management needs are likely to include:

* Information about the local administration responsible for the PA and its organisational structure and roles, partners and their roles, co-management agreements with communities etc.
* Downloadable publications, reports and minutes providing such information as manuals, best practices guidelines, survey and monitoring reports, PA management/business/ community resource/other plans and strategies, PA annual reports, minutes of committee and other meetings, workshop proceedings/outputs, training materials etc.
* Images, maps and descriptions of main natural, cultural and other features of PA of potential interest to visitors, together with information about ecotourism and other facilities available to visitors (with contact details).
* Plant, animal and socio-economic databases for georeferenced survey and monitoring data (and non-georeferenced records).
* Taxonomic database of plants and animals, with scientific, common English and Chinese names, as well as synonyms, that are linked to plant and animal databases. Other field should include endemism status (endemic, native or introduced species), threatened status of species (IUCN international and national threatened status according to IUCN classification system), national protection status of species (based on national legislation) and international trade status of species (based on CITES classification system).
* GIS with basic map layers, such as topography, infrastructure, administrative boundaries, habitats/vegetation types, natural and cultural features, as well as survey transects/plots and links to plant, animal and socio-economic georeferenced data.
* Links to other relevant websites.

Thus, it is proposed that this Output should be changed to read:

**Output 1.5** *Web-based Information Management System for protected areas developed, using a common architecture and platform, and popularised with data and information generated by the Project in the four demonstration sites.*

In delivering this revised Output, the following points should noted:

* PMO, its national consultant and the PA administations should collaborate closely with Gansu Wildife Administration (GWA), which is the designated agency responsible for the management of all nature reserves in the forest sector of Gansu Province, to determine the most useful framework for the design of the Information Management System (IMS) to meet nature reserve and provincial level interests.
* It is recognised that it may not be practicable to populate the IMS with all of the above data and information by the end of the Project. The System can be designed to accommodate such data and information as outlined above, once confirmed as being most appropriate by GWA and the PA administrations. Efforts should then focus on populating it with the survey and monitoring data, basic map layers and information generated by the Project (i.e. all publications and other reports).
  1. **Outputs 1.6** and **1.7** are not clearly defined or differentiated with respect to institutional capacity building and training needs assessment. It is proposed, therefore, to merge them into a single Output that reads:

**Output 1.6** *Institutional capacity for effective and financially sustainable PA planning and management strengthened.*

Activities under this modified Output should comprise:

* Training in effective and financially sustainable PA planning and management instituionalised within Provincial Wildlife Adminstration.
* Capacity and training needs assessment undertaken for effective and financially sustainable PA planning and management, and training programme designed.
* Training curricula developed and piloted among staff from four demonstration and other PAs. **Note** that piloting should be completed in 2013 in order to consolidate the institutionalisation of training in 2014.

1. **Strengthen collaboration between PA administrations and village communities by enhancing existing and creating new mechanisms to enable villagers’ interests to be expressed and influence PA policy, planning and management.** As highlighted in **Tables 3.7 and 4.1**, a variety of conservation and other agreements have been made between the PA authorities and the demonstration villages under **Output 2.4** but there are no long-term, sustainable mechanisms in place to ensure that local communities can voice their interests and participate in decision-making processes at local and provincial levels.

More precisely, the following interventions are recommended:

* 1. Establish stakeholder forums for individual PAs. These should be set up and administered by the PAs and comprise representatives of local NGOs, communities, businesses, as well as other relevant, local government agencies, and meet regularly (2-4 times annually) to be informed about existing progress in delivering the current management plan and to consider planned and proposed changes. Representation, particularly with respect village communities, should seek to achieve a balance of genders. Meetings should provide a vehicle for the views of stakeholders to influence planning and management, as well as an opportunity for learning about new developments and issues, and sharing ideas and concerns.
  2. Expand current membership of the regional Taohe Forum to include representatives of village communities and also the private sector. Inclusion of the former is more in line with the original concept of the ‘Reference Group’, which included Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in its membership as described in the Project Document. Inclusion of the private sector is also considered important, raising awareness about environmental and social issues, as well as potential future opportunities for support and partnerships. [Also, see **Recommendation 7**.]
     1. *Project implementation recommendations*

1. **Review the scope of the provincial PA Development and Management Strategy and the means of its delivery**, in order to fast-track preparation of **Output 1.1** and allow adequate time for its consultation and adoption. The ToR for this strategy was developed in 2011, with a view to it being implemented jointly by the Biodiversity and PA Planning and PA Management NCs by December 2012. This was not achieved, since when it was planned to sub-contract the task to Gansu Environmental Protection Department (GEPD) at the beginning of 2013, which has also not yet happened. The drafting and consultation stages are likely to be lengthy because four different agencies are responsible for the management of Gansu’s PAs: GFD, GEPD, Agricultural & Animal Husbandry Department (GAAHD) and Land & Resources Department.

As detailed in **Section 1.1**, 48 of Gansu’s 64nature reserves are administered by GFD and these cover 90% of the total area of Gansu’s PAs system. Given the ambitious nature of **Output 1.1** and relatively limited time remaining, it is recommended that:

1. The scope of the Strategy is focused on PAs under the remit of GFD in order to reduce time spent in developing consensus among the other three partners responsible for Gansu’s PAs[[17]](#footnote-17). Thus, the Strategy would consider: (i) background context to Gansu’s existing PAs system; (ii) roles of each of the four agencies in conserving biodiversity and managing PAs; (iii) strengths and weaknesses of representativeness of biodiversity, including its provincial, national and global values, within Gansu’s existing PAs; (iv) short-comings in policies and effectiveness of management with respect to Gansu’s PAs; and (v) the future role and priorities of GFD in contributing to the development of a PAs system that is adequately representative of Gansu’s biodiversity, effectively managed and sustainably financed. This revised scope will avoid potential conflict between the different agencies in whom should manage what biodiversity in future, for which much time may be required to reach consensus, and provide a lead (model) for the other agencies to follow with respect to component (v) of the Strategy. Once (post Project) all four agencies have clearly identified their part in contributing to the conservation and effective management of a financially sustainable PAs system, then the way forward should be come clearer and consensus on next steps easier to achieve. [**Note** that the Strategy should be consistent and integrated with findings and recommendations from the PA System Financing Plan produced under **Output 1.2**.]
2. Preparation of the Strategy is lead by consultant(s) hired directly by PMO, rather than subcontracted to GEFD as currently planned. This will provide a certain independence of thinking and ensure that current interests and responsibilities of all agencies with respect to PAs are duly considered and reported without prejudice. It will also enable PMO to fast-track preparation of the Strategy, rather than be subject to the timetable and priorities of another agency.
3. **Review the scope of the PA System Financing Plan (Output 1.2) and expedite its development, while ensuring that it is consistent and integrated with the PA Development and Management Strategy.** The current financing of Gansu’s PA system has been reviewed from an international perspective by the IC Business Planning, as a precursor to developing a financial strategy for the future. The latter is the remit of the NC Business Planning and needs to be expedited in concert with the PA Development and Management Strategy (Output 1.1). These two outputs are very much inter-related and, therefore, their scope should be similar. Thus, the scope of the PA System Financing Plan should also be focussed on GFD and not attempt to address sustainable financing with respect to the other PA agencies.
4. **Expedite the development of policies and legislation necessary to improve the regulatory framework for Gansu’s PA system (Output 1.3) by establishing a task force, or similar mechanism, to fast-track the process.** An assessment of the existing legal framework for biodiversity conservation and its effective management and sustainable financing within PAs has been undertaken. Experience from GEF PAs projects elsewhere suggests that a task force should be set up to expedite development of the legal framework. Members should include representatives from Gansu’s Legislation Office, GFD and its main partners (e.g. GEPD, GWA, GAAHD, Land & Resources Department). The task force would be serviced by PMO and provide technical direction, input and review to the drafting of policy and legislation by the Project’s legal consultant. Draft material would be then shared with key stakeholders for their feedback, following which a final draft would be produced for endorsement by the task force prior to being submitted to GFD for due legislative processing. The task would meet at least monthly and be given until the end of 2013 to complete its task, leaving one year for legislative processing. [**Note:** **Outputs 1.1** and **1.2** should inform the development of PA policies and legislation. Thus, PMO will need to coordinate the integration of these three outputs.]
5. **Clarify more precisely the role and membership of the Taohe Forum, and determine how it will fulfil its purpose beyond the life of the Project.** The Taohe Forum has a Chapter (i.e. constitution), adopted at its first meeting on 19 December 2012, in which its purpose is defined broadly in terms of promoting the sustainable development of Gansu’s PAs system, particularly those with Taohe River Basin, based on an ecological approach to conserving biodiversity. Its Council, which meets biennially, comprises 20-30 representatives from relevant government departments, organisations, media, social celebrities entrepreneurs, nature reserves and communities.

While such provisions are helpful, they are imprecise and do not define clearly the actual role of the Forum, how it will achieve its purpose and its precise membership. Furthermore, it is not clear how such a Forum can perform effectively by simply meeting every two years, or indeed annually as now planned. Also unclear is whether membership of the Forum is open to anyone, by invitation or subject to meeting certain criteria. It is presumed that the Council of 20-30 representatives is elected or selected from the membership but the process is not specified for in the Constitution. In practice, Fifty four persons participated in the Forum’s first meeting (31% women, 69% men), of which 29 were provincial government agency officials, 13 were from the four PA administrations involved with the project, 2 were university academics, 5 were media, one was from another project (Gansu Green Camel Bell) and 4 represented PMO. No non-government organisations, village communities or private enterprises were represented.

Another important consideration is that the Forum was originally intended to be a ‘Reference Group’ of stakeholders, comprising donors, NGOs, CBOs, academic institutions, business community representatives etc., to whom the Project referred for technical advice and support in coordination (see Figure 2 in Project Document). Inclusion of government departments within its membership (Article 5) confuses this advisory role because the Forum no longer appears to have a direct interface with the Project or, in the future, provincial government. Instead, it has become more like a talking shop, without a clearly defined outlet for its technical and other advice. Thus, the Forum’s relationship to provincial government needs to be reviewed in order to address its long-term sustainability beyond the life of the Project, which currently meets its running costs.

In order for the Forum to fulfil its function as a public service platform to promote the sustainable development of Gansu’s PAs system, as defined in Article 1, its constitution needs to be modified and further developed along the following lines:

1. The role of the Forum should be clarified with respect to: its membership comprising stakeholders with a special interest in biodiversity conservation and the effective and financially sustainable management of protected areas; and its provision of technical assistance, policy advice and collaboration with provincial government on the development of an effective PAs system in Gansu Province. The current predominance of provincial government members is inappropriate for an advisory/reference group; much more emphasis should be given to non-government stakeholders.
2. Membership of the Forum should be clarified with respect to: whether or not it is open to any non-government body; and the different categories of organisations and communities to be represented on the Forum Council (e.g. 3 seats for conservation NGOs, 3 seats for CBOs, 3 seats for private corporations, 5 seats for village communities within PAs, 2 seats for social celebrities etc). [**Note** that membership of the Council should be limited to about 24 persons to avoid it becoming unmanageable. Also, in the absence of being able to achieve gender balance, at least 30% of members should be women.]
3. The Forum’s access to provincial government should be clarified either via GFD or maybe GEPD, given the latter’s coordinating role for all PAs in Gansu Province. This should be enhanced by ensuring that the Chairperson and one other nominated member represent the Forum’s interests on an appropriate body in GFD/GEPD. Provincial government will need to assume responsibility for the Forum, including funding provisions, before the Project is ended.
4. Better and more frequent use of the Forum should be made by the Project for consultation purposes, for example with respect to draft strategies, plans and legal frameworks under **Outputs 1.1-1.3**. This will also help to develop the capacity and status of the Forum as a vehicle for informing and influencing the design of PA policies and strategies.
5. There should also be provisions for the Forum to contribute to awareness raising among the wider public, bringing stakeholders together at public events, lectures, conferences, exhibitions, performances, road shows etc, to share: academic knowledge and scientific research on biological and cultural diversity; art, music and drama that celebrate and explore such diversity; traditional knowledge and skills from local communities and ethic minorities; and experience from businesses involved in sustainable enterprises within, abutting and even beyond PAs.
6. **(i) Review the management, community resource and tourism plans recently produced or drafted for each of the four demonstration PAs and integrate their objectives, outputs and activities into an Action Plan** that covers the outstanding implementation period of its respective management plan. This is likely to be a more pragmatic alternative to revising each PA management plan, given that these have already been published. **(ii) Revise and annually update the Business Plan for each demonstration PA in accordance with its respective Action Plan.** Note that the Business Plans developed by the International Consultant are activity-based operational plans for one year that need to be updated annually.
7. **Review the biodiversity monitoring and evaluation system planned for each of the four demonstration PAs with a view to: (i) monitoring is designed to sample the full diversity of habitats and species occurring within the PA; (ii) ensuring that data are properly maintained in a database common for all PAs and routinely, rigorously analysed to inform management; and (iii) including water quality monitoring throughout all of Gansu’s PAs.** A monitoring plan has been developed for each of the four demonstration PAs, based on a common framework designed under the guidance of the Project. Monitoring is due commence in each PA in 2013 at fairly intensive and extensive scales. While this is to be applauded, there may be some weaknesses in the monitoring plans. For example, transects should be aligned along rather than contour altitudinal gradients and cover all aspects (north, south, east and west) in order to capture the maximum diversity of species and their habitats with the minimum of effort (time and other resources)[[18]](#footnote-18). Also unclear are the research and management questions addressed in the monitoring plans. For example, core areas are to be monitored for disease because this is government policy. Such a policy seems to be taken at face value without considering potential implications, such as the worrying prospect of PA managers applying pesticides to control disease in what are supposed to be ‘undisturbed’ areas where natural, ecological and, indeed, evolutionary processes are supposed to prevail. More relevant research would be to monitor the status of biodiversity in core areas so that significant changes can be detected, which might trigger further research, changes in management policy, or benign management and mitigation interventions.

Thus, monitoring plans merit critical review to ensure that resources are being used wisely: cost-effectively and in ways that inform management. This also requires the data to be entered into computer databases using a structure that is common for all PAs, then analysed rigorously to inform further research and/or management.

Two (Gahai-Zecha and Taohe) of the four demonstration PAs are monitoring water quality, which is a key indicator of ecosystem health and relatively easy to undertake with appropriate laboratory support. For these reasons, it is strongly recommended that water quality is monitored in all PAs, not just wetlands, using such indicators as temperature, turbidity, pH, dissolved oxygen, nitrates and phosphates. This will inform the responsible authorities about the way in which the PA and, importantly, its catchment is being managed with respect to damaging agricultural, forestry and other practices, resulting in turbidity (from erosion) and pollution from pesticides and nutrients (fertilisers, sewage). Furthermore, such monitoring will provide a measure of the potential value of the water for downstream uses such as public water supply and drinking. It will also inform managers whether biodiversity and residents within a PA are at risk from poor quality water originating from the PA’s wider catchment area.

1. **A revised management structure should be adopted by the Project, based on that shown in Figure 3.4**, in order reflect the current situation and the need to clarify reporting lines and the relationship of the recently established Taohe Forum to the Project.
2. **The Annual Work Plan would benefit from greater, more specific detail** and, based on feedback from stakeholders, its implementation by partners and consultants needs to be improved and enhanced by the following measures:
   1. PMO to clarify the precise roles of partners, especially those involved in the demonstration PAs, with respect to tasks, available resources and timeframes.
   2. PMO to ensure that partners are reimbursed promptly for undertaking their tasks.
   3. PMO to ensure that consultants work in an integrated and coordinated manner and that they report back on their findings not just to GFD and its PMO but also to stakeholders, including the demonstration villages. Such practices should be specified in their ToRs and rigorously supervised by the Project Manager and/or CTA.
   4. Training programmes and courses should be routinely assessed by means of a standard questionnaire completed by all participants at the end of training. The feedback should be assessed by PMO and fed back to the trainers in a non-attributable manner.
3. **Comprehensive information about and generated by the Project should be readily accessible via its website[[19]](#footnote-19),** particularly with respect to events, news, published guidelines, strategies, plans and other reports, minutes of PSC and Taohe Forum meetings, APRs etc. The website could also be used to solicit feedback on draft strategies and plans. Currently there is a very limited amount of useful and interesting information on the website.
   * 1. *Monitoring and evaluation*

In general, M&E is considered to be **satisfactory** (**Table 3.7**), following a very shaky inception period that lacked rigour, scrutiny and review of the *status quo*. Much of the monitoring of Project implementation is achieving by routine accounting and reporting procedures, which are proceeding well. More effort needs to be made to enhance the role and performance of the Project’s Steering Committee in guiding, coordinating and integrating Project implementation. It is also clear from this MTR that monitoring some Outcome 1 indicators is not readily repeatable.

1. **The Project Steering Committee should engage more robustly and proactively in its oversight, coordination and integration of Project activities,** which is difficult to achieve from meeting just once annually. Experience from GEF and other projects of a similar nature elsewhere shows that such committees perform more effectively when they meet 2-4 times annually and are provided with the opportunity to visit project sites. However, this is not a pragmatic option in China according to UNDP’s experience. Thus, it is recommended that:
   1. At least one of the forthcoming annual meetings should be convened at one of the demonstration PAs and combined with a day’s field visit to see/experience Project initiatives first hand and meet with stakeholders, especially village communities. Better informed about implementation progress, members will be more able to fulfil their role, as well as becoming ambassadors of the Project.

While it is recognised that most PSC members are very busy senior persons, even they do appreciate the opportunity to get away from their offices and have some quality time to witness and learn from what is happening on the ground within their constituency/area of responsibility. The challenge lies with PMO and the NPD to use PSC meetings as learning, as well as reporting, opportunities; and field visits can be combined with other events, such as opening ceremonies, exhibitions, cultural shows and so on, to maximise the worthwhileness of time and other resources in travelling to project sites.

* 1. Meetings should be well prepared in advance, with a progress report and briefings on items to be discussed provided to members at least one week in advance. This will enable the Chairperson to concentrate on items that merit discussion, including concerns or clarifications raised by members, and help to ensure that time is used to maximum effect. Time should also be allocated for findings/results generated by implementing partners and consultants to be briefly presented to members.

1. **A number of LFM indicators for the Objective and Outcome 1, based on monitoring changes to baselines established from the Financial Sustainability, Capacity and METT scorecards, need to be modified because they are either not readily repeatable or incorrect.** Specifically:
   1. Objective – 1st indicator: financial sustainability baseline score of 32.5% was generated from a workshop on 19 August 2009 attended by 22 participants, including staff from GFD and 7 PAs[[20]](#footnote-20). It may not be reliable for tracking financial sustainability because the approach cannot be replicated. Not all of the same people can be involved again (e.g. international and national consultants) and it is unclear whether scoring was done by averaging individual scores or by consensus, except in the case of Component 2 of the scorecard that involved interviewing 4 staff from key branches of GFD. At best there will need to be a repeat workshop involving at least 50% of the same individuals and employing a consensus approach facilitated by an expert, preferably someone involved in the original workshop, in order to generate a meaningful result that bears comparison with the baseline score.
   2. Objective – 2nd indicator: METT baseline score of 65 needs to be clarified. It is unlikely to be based on METT scores of 8,940,529 ha for nature reserves managed by GFD as specified in the LFM. Most probably it is based on the average METT scores of the 4 demonstration PAs (their average value is 65.25!).
   3. Outcome 1 – 2nd indicator: capacity to implement policies … baseline score of 54.2% does not agree with the Capacity scorecard assessment in the Project Document (pp. 132-135, hard copy). The total score is 21.4 out of 45 = 47.6%. There is also potential confusion with the 8th item for which no score is indicated.
   4. Outcome 1 – 3rd indicator: capacity to engage and build consensus … baseline score of 56.7% does not agree with the Capacity scorecard assessment in the Project Document (pp. 135-136, hard copy). The total score is 7.5 out of 15 = 50.0%.
   5. There are a number of other corrections that should be made to the LFM with respect to the METT baseline scores. Not all of them appear to have been correctly summated, as evident from the matrix of 2010 and 2013 METT scores for each of the four demonstration PAs in **Annex 8a**.
2. **The total METT score for Taohe National NR has decreased by 9 % and mean scores for several METT criteria have declined significantly since 2010, so these should be examined critically by PMO, in collaboration with demonstration PAs, and issues addressed.** Overall progress has been good with respect to improving management effectiveness of PAs, evident from the increase in the mean the mean METT score from 59 (61%) in 2010 to 77 (76%) in 2013 (**Annex 8a**). However, scores for a significant number of criteria have declined and lessons should to be learned from those that are common to all demonstration PAs, be they real deficiencies or due to shortfalls in applying the methodology.

## **Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project**

A number of opportunities are identified in **Table 4.1** that would enhance or reinforce the benefits of the Project. They are elaborated further under the respective recommendation.

1. **Facilitate opportunities for demonstration village communities to improve their livelihoods from micro-financing and small grant schemes.** Much of the emphasis of the collaboration between PA authorities and village communities to date has focussed on the conservation of shared natural resources to reduce threats from overgrazing, forest fires, and illegal harvesting (**Output 2.4**). Some villagers benefit from casual employment with the PA authority, as labourers planting trees and engaged in other management activities, and from being provided with free seedlings which for planting in their homes. However, little has been achieved to date with respect to creating new economic opportunities, such as through sustainable tourism and harvesting of natural resources. While the Project does not have its own funds to invest in such opportunities, it is important to facilitate their creation in order to address livelihood issues and secure the goodwill and support of local communities over the longer term. The following, therefore, are recommended:
   1. UNDP to facilitate linkages between the Project and GEF Small Grants Programme, particularly with respect to ecotourism development opportunities. These might also be combined with energy efficiency interventions, such as fuel efficient/solar stoves, insulation of new/renovated accommodation and other facilities for tourists, solar panels for hot water and photovoltaic panels for lighting.
   2. Explore opportunities for establishing micro-loan fund(s) for demonstration villages. Farmers tend to be reluctant to apply for micro-credits, hence the importance of demonstrating how this can be effectively achieved by affordable means. This should be possible, for example, through the Rural Credit Corporation (Shin Yua Shur), especially as addressing poverty is a high priority within provincial government.
2. **Enhance annual appraisal system for PA staff by including self-appraisal (180 degrees appraisal) as part of improving performance (Output 2.5).** The four demonstration PAs have developed and applied a common performance management and incentive framework to improve skills and competencies among staff. There is also an existing annual appraisal system for staff, which should be reviewed as part of improving performance under Output 2.5. The introduction of self-assessment by staff as part of their annual appraisal would be a first step in improving this appraisal mechanism and, in due course, could be developed further by incorporating appraisal by peers (360 degrees appraisal), all of which are considered to be hallmarks of good management practice.

## **Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives**

1. **Procure additional expertise** to advise the Project in key strategic areas of policy development to help provide a solid foundation for the effective management and sustainable financing of Gansu’s PAs system over the long-term. Three months of consultancy delivered in a series of monthly inputs over the next 18 months could make a significant difference to the quality of certain outputs. Such an advisor should be expert in strategy development, policy making and sustainable financing of PAs. Their role would include the following:

* Oversee the drafting of a strategy for the development and management of Gansu’s PA system (Output 1.1), while ensuring that it is informed by the financing plan and the proposed regulatory framework.
* Provide guidance on the design of the Information Management System (Output 1.5).
* Review the training curriculum that is currently under development (Output 1.7).
* Provide technical support to the development of the proposed Action Plan for each of the four demonstration PAs, ensuring that outputs from the community resource plans and tourism plans are integrated with those from the management plan (Output 2.1).
* Provide technical support to the further review and development of the monitoring protocols developed for each demonstration PA (Output 2.2).
* Develop an exit strategy for the Project.

There may be financial constraints in trying to adopt this recommendation, even with the appointment of a national consultant.. One option may be to bring in international expertise using volunteer schemes that deploy retired professionals.

## **Lessons learned**

* + 1. *Best practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success*

The Project’s main strengths have already been identified in **Table 4.1**. Best practices that warrant further highlighting are considered to be as follows:

* + The high level of cash co-financing provided by the Provincial Government is indicative of its high level of commitment to the Project. This sends a very positive message to the Project partners and also more widely to others involved in the biodiversity conservation sector.
  + Strong, mutually supporting partnerships between the Implementing Agency (UNDP), Executing Agency (GFD) and its partners (Gansu Finance Department, GEPD, PA authorities), all of which have been supported by a committed PMO, are clearly evident in this Project from its emerging success. Likewise, PMO’s good relations and high standing among stakeholders is the second part of the equation that makes for a successful formula.
    1. *Worst practices addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success*

The Project’s main weaknesses have also been identified in **Table 4.1**. Arguably, the most significant lesson concerns the importance of rigorous planning during the inception phase and subsequent technical oversight and coordination of the Project’s key activities in order to produce integrated, quality outputs. The fact that the Project has made a strong comeback after experiencing such constraints is a significant achievement in itself.

# Annex 1: Terms of Reference

**Consultants for Mid-Term Review of**

**UNDP-GEF Strengthening Globally Important Biodiversity Conservation through**

**Protected Area Strengthening in Gansu Province (Gansu Project)**

**1. Background**

The project forms a key element of the China Biodiversity Partnership Framework (CBPF). Gansu Province covers a total land area of 454,000 [km²](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Square_kilometre), harbouring 19% of all vertebrate species recorded in China, and ranking 4th of all Chinese provinces in terms of mammal species richness and 7th in terms of bird species richness. Given the global and national importance of biodiversity in the Protected Areas (PAs) in Gansu Province, the long-term solution proposed by this project is an effectively managed nature reserves system in Gansu to conserve globally important biodiversity for the long-term. However, a number of barriers hamper effective management of the PAs, such as: (i) the management system for the Gansu nature reserves system suffers from fundamental weaknesses that undermine conservation effectiveness, and (ii) the Gansu nature reserves system suffers from inadequate financial resources. The ideal solution requires that the nature reserves agency has adequate systemic, institutional and operational capacity to: (i) effectively plan and manage the nature reserves network in the province based on scientific data and information; (ii) mitigate the threats to, and pressures on, the unique biodiversity contained within the PAs; (iii) effectively plan and source sustainable financing for nature reserve management and ensure cost effectiveness of the nature reserves operation; and (iv) ensure better integration of the socio-economic development priorities of the residents and neighbours in nature reserves management operations. The project will focus on improving PA system management capacities and the financial sustainability of the PAs at the provincial level as well as the site level at four field demonstration PAs in the Taohe Basin. The present TORs focus exclusively on the Mid-Term Review of UNDP-GEF Strengthening Globally Important Biodiversity Conservation through Protected Area Strengthening in Gansu Province (Gansu Project).

The project goal is that of the CBPF as a whole, i.e., to significantly reduce biodiversity loss in China as a contribution to sustainable development. The project objective is to “strengthen protected areas’ sustainability in Gansu Province through improved effectiveness of PA management and sustainable financing.” This will contribute to the broader goal to “effectively conserve globally significant biodiversity in China.”

In order to achieve the above objective, and overcome the barriers identified above, it is essential to ensure a comprehensive approach that tackles the barriers at systemic, institutional and operational levels. The project’s intervention therefore has been organised into two outcomes: **Outcome 1:** Strengthened provincial policy framework and institutional capacity for sustainable management and financing of Gansu’s PA system. **Outcome 2:** Sustainable PA management and financing demonstrated in Taohe Basin.

The project was approved by the GEF Council in 2009 and the Project Document was signed on 18 January 2011, and the project Inception Workshop was organized on 15 April 2011.

**2. Description of the Assignment**

The purpose of the review is to help guide the project’s implementation, from now till the end of the project, to achieve its objective. The MTR will review project activities, output and project governance and management to date and will synthesize lessons to help improve the project design and implementation of project activities. The MTR will do this by:

1) reviewing development and policy environment relating to China Biodiversity Partnership Framework (CBPF), commenting on how these might have affected project performance and assessing the extent to which the project remained relevant to the needs of its targets;

2) performing an interim assessment of the extent to which Gansu Project has accomplished/not accomplished its objectives in terms of activities, outputs and outcomes as defined in the agreed Project Document (logframe), and assess the likelihood of achieving them upon project completion;

3) identifying bottlenecks and proposing corrective actions for enhancing the project’s effectiveness, which could include modification of activities, project management responsibilities, schedule of activities and budget allocations, among others;4) reviewing project governance and identify implementing agency’s institutional strengths and weaknesses, and identify potential options for improving project implementation capacities; reviewing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of project outcomes.

**3. Scope of Services**

Three main elements to be reviewed are Delivery, Implementation and Finances. Each component will be reviewed using four criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness

**Project delivery**: The MTR will assess to what extent the Gansu project has achieved its immediate objectives. It will also identify what outputs, impacts and results have been produced and how they have enabled the project to achieve its objectives. The consultants are required to make assessment of the following issues under each priority area outlined below:

**Institutional arrangement**

* Preparatory work and implementation strategies
* Consultative processes
* Technical support
* Capacity building initiatives
* Project outputs
* Assumptions and risks
* Project related complementary activities

**Outcome, results and impacts**

* Effectiveness and efficiency of all project activities under the three major components
* Progress in the achievement of the immediate objectives (include level of indicator achievement when available)

**Partnerships**

* Assessment of provincial level stakeholder involvement and perception
* Assessment of local partnerships, and involvement of stakeholders at the site level
* Assessment of collaboration between government, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

**Risk management**

* Were problems/constraints, which impacted on successful delivery of the project identified at the project design stage and implementation?
* Were there new threats/risks to project success that emerged during project implementation?
* Were risks appropriately dealt with?

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

* Assess the extent, appropriateness and effectiveness of adaptive management at all levels of the project implementation
* Has there been a monitoring and evaluation framework for the project and, if so, how was this developed?
* Is the reporting framework effective/appropriate?
* Is this framework suitable for replication/continuation by the end of the project?

**Project Implementation**

* Review the project management and implementation arrangements at all levels, in order to provide an opinion on its efficiency and cost effectiveness. This includes:

1. Processes and administration:

* Project related administration procedures
* Milestones(Log-frame matrix)
* Key decisions and outputs,
* Major project implementation documents prepared with an indication of how the documents and reports have been useful

1. Project oversight and active engagement by UNDP and project steering committee
2. Project execution: Gansu Forestry Department as the executing agency and project sub-executing agencies
3. Project implementation: UNDP as the Implementing Agency

**Project Finances**

# How well and cost effectively have financial arrangements of the project worked? This section will focus on the following three priority areas:

1. Project disbursements

* Provide an overview of actual spending against budget expectations
* Critically analyze disbursements to determine if funds have been applied effectively and efficiently.

1. Budget procedures

* Did the Project Document provide adequate guidance on how to allocate the budget?
* Review of audits and any issues raised in audits and subsequent adjustments to accommodate audit recommendations;
* Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and provide an opinion on the appropriateness and relevancy of such revisions

1. Coordination mechanisms

* Review appropriateness and efficiency of coordinating mechanisms between Implementing agency and executing agency, UNDP and Gansu Forestry Department;
* Does the Gansu Project approach represent an effective means of achieving the objectives?
* How can the approach be improved?

# Under the supervision of UNDP CO in consultation with Implementing Partners of Gansu Project, the mid-term evaluation team will accomplish the following tasks:

**1) Review of the project design, planning and implementation**

* Whether problems to be solved by the project are clear, the project approaches and strategy are sound, and immediate objectives and outputs are properly stated and verifiable in the project’s logical framework;
* Whether project problems to be solved still stand, and whether project responses strategies and project adaptive management measures are still relevant to national priorities and GEF strategies;
* Whether the designed institutional arrangement for the project has been performing effectively during the project implementation and whether allocated responsibilities among key stakeholders are still relevant;
* Whether the timeframe of the project is feasible and practicable; and
* Whether the project budget allocation is reasonable and practical based on the situation changes and policy progress.

**2) Review of project performance**

* Timeliness and quality of inputs;
* Timeliness of activities undertaken;
* Project budget performance and cost-effectiveness of budget performance;
* Ability of the project to utilize efficiently the inputs available to it;
* Quality and quantity of outputs produced;
* Achievement of immediate objectives;
* Factors that have facilitated or deterred the achievement of project objectives; and
* Co-funding mobilized till date;

**3) Project impact**

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

**4) Sustainability of project outcomes**

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

**5) Recommendations and lessons learnt**

* Success stories;
* Problems in project implementation;
* Lessons learnt including technical, management, policy, capacity building and implementation arrangement;
* Recommendations including budget allocation adjustment suggestions etc.

**4. The Requested Services and Activities**

The team will use the information generated by the Gansu Project including baseline and information generated by the M&E framework, and seek the necessary contextual information to assess the significance and relevance of the results. The strategic priorities of biodiversity portfolio in GEF Phase IV will be used as the benchmark for evaluation by the mid-term review.

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

1. Review of background material and preparation of a tentative evaluation plan to be agreed with UNDP CO and PMO of Gansu Project;
2. Desk review of documents provided by UNDP CO before start of the assignment;
3. Interviews and discussions with relevant stakeholders including:

* Project Steering Committee members including MOF, UNDP, related provincial departments etc.
* PMO and NPD of Gansu Project;
* UNDP CO and UNDP RTA as required;
* NRs officials in Taohe River;
* Local beneficiaries in project pilot sites;
* Key subcontractors and consultants, etc.

1. Field visits to selected demonstration sites to be agreed with UNDP CO and PMO/Gansu Forestry Department.
2. Debriefing at the UNDP CO on the preliminary findings after the meetings and visits with participation of key stakeholders;
3. Preparation and finalisation of the review report by incorporating any additional comments from the UNDP CO and PMO/Gansu Forestry Department.

**5. Qualifications**

The mid term review team will consist of an international consultant and a national consultant. Both the international and national consultants are expected to have relevant academic qualification and evaluation experiences. In addition, it is desirable that the international and national consultants should have the following qualifications:

The team should ideally have the following competencies and attributes:

* Post-graduate education in integrated natural resources management, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services or relevant fields;
* Expertise in capacity building and strengthening institutions
* Knowledge and experience in PA management strengthening community-based natural resource management;
* Extensive knowledge and experience in the field of biodiversity conservation, ecological zoning, regulation and policy, etc.
* Demonstrated experience of evaluation of donor-funded development projects, specifically undertaking complex programmatic reviews.

Some prior knowledge of the following would be preferable:

* relevant policies of the GEF, UNDP reporting frameworks, project requirements;
* GEF principles and expected impacts in terms of global benefits;
* The Principles of the Ecosystem Approach of the Convention on Biological Diversity; and,
* CBD work programs and 2010 targets；

Competency in the following is also required:

* Demonstrated experience in institutional analysis;
* Excellent English writing and communication skills.
* Demonstrated ability to assess complex situations in order to succinctly and clearly distil critical issues and draw forward looking conclusions;
* Ability to assess complex situations in order to succinctly and clearly distil critical issues and draw forward looking conclusions;
* Professional experiences in working in China and with Chinese counterparts is an asset； and,
* Excellent facilitation skills.

**6. Expected Outputs**

The consultant team is expected to deliver the following outputs:

1. A review report presenting review results of the project of approximately 40-50 pages, structured along the outline indicated, and clear and implementable recommendations for remaining timeframe of the project.

* A detailed record of consultations with stakeholders will need to be kept and provided (as part of the information gathered by the evaluators), as an annex to the main report.
* If there are any significant discrepancies between the impressions and findings of the evaluation team and stakeholders these should be explained in an Annex attached to the final report.

2) **Power Point Presentation** (circa 20-25 slides) covering the key points of the MTE，Debriefing of findings to UNDP CO, PMO and the GEF focal point.

A draft of both 1) and 2) above should be submitted within two weeks of the end of the in-country component of the evaluators’ mission, and a final copy within two weeks after receiving written comments on the drafts from UNDP and PMO. The documents should be submitted in electronic format.

The findings of the evaluation will be used by Ministry of Finance as the GEF Focal Point in China, Gansu Forestry Department as the implementing partner and UNDP to better adjust project strategy and approaches to guide the project implementation in the remaining period.

**7. Duration of the Contracts**

Four working weeks (28 days), including travel time required. The consultant will visit Beijing and Lanzhou city, Gansu Province, as well as the target PAs as agreed between UDNP CO and PMO of Gansu Project. The consultants will meet with government officials, project participants, and other stakeholders in order to review the project implementation and impact. The travel schedule and logistics will be developed by UNDP CO in consultation with PMO of Gansu Project.

**8. Payment Schedule**

30% of the total amount due to the consultants will be paid upon signature of the contract. The remaining 70% is payable upon acceptance by UNDP CO of the MTR report in its final form.

**9. Start of the Assignment**

Early March of 2013.

**10. Documents to be provided for the Consultants:**

**I.             Management Reports produced by the UNDP-GEF Project:**

1. Project Document and Project Brief, agreement/contact
2. Inception report
3. Original Log Frame and any revision made to it
4. Tripartite Review (TPR) / Project Steering Committee minutes
5. Annual Work Plans
6. Project Implementation Reports (PIR)
7. Annual Project Reports (APR)
8. Annual audit reports and Annual Financial Statements
9. Annual M & E Reports/ Spread Sheets
10. All contracts with sub-contractors and related stakeholders (even in Chinese)
11. Meeting minutes including PSC, PMO meetings (even in Chinese)

**II.           Technical Reports produced by the UNDP-GEF Project team and consultants**

***Law and legislation:***

* 1. Gansu Province Biodiversity Conservation Law and Legislation Evaluation Report (Technical report)
  2. Gansu Province Protected Area Law and Legislation Framework Evaluation Report(Technical report)

***Institutional Capacity Building:***

* 1. Gansu Province Institutional Capacity Building In Protected Area Planning and Management Action Proposal

***Training Materials:***

* 1. Gansu Protected Area Management And Sustainable Development Training Material

***Protected Area Participatory Management Plan:***

* 1. Lianhuashan Protected Area Management Plan
  2. Taizishan Protected Area Management Plan
  3. Taohe Protected Area Management Plan
  4. Gahai-zecha Protected Area Management Plan

***Monitoring and Evaluation:***

* 1. Lianhuashan Protected Area Biodiversity Monitoring Regulations
  2. Taizishan Protected Area Biodiversity Monitoring Regulations
  3. Taohe Protected Area Biodiversity Monitoring Regulations
  4. Gahai-zecha Protected Area Biodiversity Monitoring Regulations

***Financial planning tools:***

* 1. Taohe Catchment Protect Area Business Plan (English, Technical report)
  2. Lianhuashan Protected Area Business Plan (Technical report)
  3. Taizishan Protected Area Business Plan (Technical report)
  4. Taohe Protected Area Business Plan (Technical report)
  5. Gahai-zecha Protected Area Business Plan (Technical report)
  6. Taohe Catchment Protected Area Overall Tourism Development Plan (Technical report)

***Partnership with Local Community:***

* 1. Lianhuashan Protected Area PRA Survey Report
  2. Taizishan Protected Area PRA Survey Report
  3. Taohe Protected Area PRA Survey Report
  4. Gahai-zecha Protected Area PRA Survey Report
  5. Lianhuashan Protected Area Community Resources Management Plan
  6. Taizishan Protected Area Community Resources Management Plan
  7. Taohe Protected Area Community Resources Management Plan
  8. Gahai-zecha Protected Area Community Resources Management Plan

***Performance Management:***

* 1. Lianhuashan Protected Area Staff’s Capacity Development Plan
  2. Taizishan Protected Area Staff’s Capacity Development Plan
  3. Taohe Protected Area Staff’s Capacity Development Plan
  4. Gahai-zecha Protected Area Staff’s Capacity Development Plan

***Other useful and supporting documents and materials such as technical reports, work reports, campaign manual/books, etc.***

Established Forum of Strengthening Globally Important Biodiversity Conservation through Protected Area Strengthening in Gansu Province, produced two formal documents:

* “Forum Chapter” and
* “Taohe Declaration”

Relevant news corresponding articles and TV interviews about the Forum are to be collected and sorted out ready by beginning of the February.

**III.         Any map illustrating the project interventions**

**IV. Others**

1. a list of all output documents produced by the project (and copies of these),
2. planned and actual expenditure by output (and activity) - for UNDP, GEF funds as well as for sources of co-financing (planned and actual expenditure including any in-kind contributions) ,
3. project baseline information,
4. the M&E Plan,
5. any other key monitoring or evaluation reports / reports from the CTA.
6. GEF BD-1 tracking tool with mid-term assessment and update on the progress towards indicator targets as per the logframe.

**11. Sample Outline for the MTR Report**

1. Executive summary

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

1. Introduction

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

1. The project(s) and its development context

* Project start and its duration;
* Problems that the project seek to address;
* Immediate and development objectives of the project;
* Main stakeholders;
* Results expected.

4) Findings and Conclusions

4.1 Project Formulation

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

4.2. Project Implementation

* Delivery
* Financial management
* Monitoring and evaluation
* Execution and implementation modalities
* Management by UNDP, World Bank and other partners
* Coordination and operational issues

4.3 Results to date

* Attainment of Objectives
* Sustainability
* Contribution to upgrading skills at National level

5) Lessons learned

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

7) MTR report Annexes

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

# Annex 2: Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement Form

Evaluators:

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

**Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form[[21]](#footnote-21)**

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

**Name of Consultant:** Wang Yexu

**Name of Consultancy Organization** (where relevant)**:**

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

**Signed at** Lanzhou **on** 6 March 2013

**Signature: **

**Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form**

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

**Name of Consultant:** Michael J.B. Green

**Name of Consultancy Organization** (where relevant)**:**

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

**Signed at** Lanzhou **on** 6 March 2013

**Signature:**  ****

# Annex 3: Itinerary and Persons Interviewed

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Activity** | **Parties/Staff Involved** | **Location** |
| March  5th | 12:00-3:00: CA1271 Flight from Beijing to Lanzhou  17:00-18:30: Meeting with UNDP on the general picture of the project implementation from the UNDP point of view.  21:00-22:30: resumed meeting with UNDP | Michael Green, Wang Yexu,  Ma Chaode | Lanzhou Hotel |
| March  6th | AM: Group interview with PMO staff  PM: PMO Debriefing on the issue of budget revision request  PM: Interview (one-to-one) with PMO Director, CTA, consultants of business plan, MIS, and Laws and regulations, and project accountant | Michael Green, Wang Yexu,  Ma Chaode, PMO staff | PMO |
| March  7th | AM: 1. Interview with Gansu Wildlife Administration; 2. Interview with Department of Environmental Protection  PM: 1. Interview with Department of Finance; 2. Interview with provincial Legislation Office | Michael Green, Wang Yexu,  Ma Chaode, PMO staff | Related Department offices |
| March  8th | AM: MTE plenary meeting with key stakeholders, chaired by PD, Briefed by NPD, and followed by meeting discussion. Questionnaire was handed out and collected.  PM: Interview meeting with management staff and local villager of Gahai-zecha Nature Reserve | NPD, Michael Green, Wang Yexu, Ma Chaode, PMO staff and specialists, relate Gansu provincial Departments | Lanzhou Hotel |
| March  9th | AM: Travel to Yeliguan National Forest Park of Taohe Nature Reserve  PM: Interview meeting with PA staff | NPD, Michael Green, Wang Yexu,  PMO Director, PM, CTA, and Interpreter, Taohe PA staff | Taolin Hotel |
| March 10th | AM: Visiting Yeliguan National Forest Park and the local villagers in Yeliguan Village  PM: Travel to Lianhuashan Nature Reserve and interview meeting with the PA staff | NPD, Michael Green, Wang Yexu, PMO staff, Local villagers and PA staff | Yeliguan Forest Park, Yeliguan Village, and Lianhuashan NR |
| March 11th | AM: Visiting Lianhuashan National Forest Park, Badu Management Station, Tangfangtan Management Station, and the monitoring system installed;  PM: Visiting the demonstration village in Lianhuashan Nature Reserve and interviewing with two households.  PM: Travel to Taizishan Nature Reserve, and interview with Project Manager | NPD, Michael Green, Wang Yexu, PMO staff,  and specialists, PA staff, local community | Lianhuashan Nature Reserve |
| March 12th | AM: Interview meeting with Taizishan NR staff in Taizhishan Nature Reserve  PM: Visiting households in Liewa demo village and visiting Songmingyan National Forest Park in Taizishan Nature Reserve, and interview with NPD | NPD, Michael Green , Wang Yexu, PMO staff and specialists, PA staff, local community | Lianhuashan NR |
| March 13th | AM: Travel Back to Lanzhou City  PM: Interview with consultants of PA Planning and Tourism Planning | Michael Green, Yexu, related consultants | Lanzhou Hotel |
| March 14th | AM: Internal discussion on Mid-Term Review and preparation of presentation report  PM: Debriefing and discussion with NPD, Gansu Forestry Department, and PMO staff | NPD, Michael Green, Wang Yexu,  Related divisions of Forestry Department,  PMO staff and CTA | Lanzhou Hotel |
| March 15th | AM: Flight to Beijing, CA1274 (11:20-13:40)  PM: Debriefing in UNDP Office | Michael Green, Wang Yexu, UNDP team | UNDP CO |
| March 16th | Discussions between the two MTR consultants | Michael Green, Wang Yexu | Beijing |

**Persons interviewed**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Name** | **Position in Project** | **Title** | **Organization/unit** |
| Mr. | Carstern Germer | Implementing Agency | Team Leader | Energy & Environment Team, UNDP China |
| Mr. | Ma Chaode | Implementing Agency | Programme Manager | Energy & Environment Team, UNDP China |
| Ms. | Midori Paxton | Implementing Agency | Regional Technical Advisor | UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre, Bangkok |
| Mr. | Ma Xuming | PMO Director | Director | Provincial Forestry Foreign Capital Project Management Office |
| Mr. | Wang Yaolin | Project staff | Deputy Director | Provincial Forestry Foreign Capital Project Management Office |
| Ms. | Li Qian | Project staff | Project Manager | Project Management Office |
| Mr. | Ouyang Feng | Project staff | Chief Technical Advisor | Project Management Office |
| Ms. | Ma Yan | Project staff | Accountant | Project Management Office |
| Ms. | Wang Huali | Project staff | Interpreter | Project Management Office |
| Ms. | Gao Songxia | Project staff | Project Officer | Project Management Office |
| Ms. | Kang Lei | Project staff | Cashier | Project Management Office |
| Mr. | Wang Wei | Project staff | Information Officer | Project Management Office |
| Ms. | Shi Liuyan | Project staff | Administration assistant | Project Management Office |
| Ms. | Wang Huiling | National Consultant | Business planning | Lanzhou University |
| Mr. | Yang Sanzhen | National Consultant | Law and Regulation | Lanzhou University |
| Mr. | Yao Xiaojun | National Consultant | MIS | Northwest Normal University |
| Mr. | Wu Jiawei | National Consultant | Tourism Consultant | Chengdu Biological Research Institute of Chinese Academy of Sciences |
| Mr. | Li Xiaohong | National Consultant | PA management | Tianshui Normal College |
| Mr | Andy Thompson | International Consultant | Sustainable financing | Department of Conservation, New Zealand |
| Mr. | Wu Quanguo | GWA PMU Director | Director | Gansu Wildlife Administration (GWA) |
| Mr. | Yang Yuxiang |  | General Secretary | Gansu Wildlife Administration (GWA) |
| Mr. | Zhao Changqing | PSC member | Deputy Director | Gansu Wildlife Administration (GWA) |
| Mr. | Liu Zhigang |  | Chief | Nature conservation Division of GWA |
| Ms. | Wu Wenjie |  | Chief | Plan and Finance Division of GWA |
| Mr. | Gao Jun |  | Director | Giant Panda Protection Division of GWA |
| Mr. | Guo Zongshu |  | Deputy Director | General Office of GWA |
| Ms. | Jin Qiuyan |  | Officer | Nature conservation Division of GWA |
| Mr. | Cai Ming |  | Deputy Chief | Wetland Conservation Division of GWA |
| Mr. | Zhang Xiwu |  | Deputy Chief | Nature conservation Division of GWA |
| Mr. | Wang Rubin | PSC member | Chief | International Cooperation Division of Gansu Environmental Protection Department |
| Mr. | Zhang Jun |  | Chief | Nature Conservation Division of Gansu Environmental Protection Department |
| Mr. | Chen Yuexin |  | Officer | International Cooperation Division of Gansu Environmental Protection Department |
| Mr. | Zhang Jian | PSC member | Chief | International Cooperation Division of Gansu Financial Department |
| Ms. | Zhou Mei |  | Officer | International Cooperation Division of Gansu Financial Department |
| Ms. | Wang Jing | PSC member | Chief | Administration Legislation Division of provincial Legislation Office |
| Mr. | Bai Wei |  | Deputy Chief | Administration Legislation Division of provincial Legislation Office |
| Mr. | Su Min |  | Officer | Administration Legislation Division of provincial Legislation Office |
| Mr. | Qin Dun |  | Officer | Administration Legislation Division of provincial Legislation Office |
| Ms. | Guo Ping | National Project Director | Deputy Director General | Gansu Forestry Department |
| Mr. | Zhang Gaoping | PSC member | Deputy Inspector | Policy Research Office of Gansu Provincial Government |
| Ms. | Wang Lijun | PSC member | Chief | Foreign Investment Division of Provincial Development and Reform Commission |
| Mr. | Jin Yuhu | PSC member | Chief | Environment Division of Provincial Land and Resource Department |
| Mr. | Lou Fengcun | PSC member | Chief | Social Development Division, Department of Science and Technology of Gansu Province |
| Mr. | Zhang Zihua | PSC member | Deputy Chief | Foreign Economy and Foreign Affairs Division, Department of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry |
| Mr. | Lian Xuebin | Director of Project Executing Office | Chief | Foreign Cooperation Division of Gansu Forestry Department |
| Mr. | Zhu Xizhao | PSC member | Chief | Technology and Foreign Affairs Division, Department of Water Resources |
| Mr. | Zhang Hua | PSC member | Chief | International Division of Provincial Tourism Bureau |
| Mr. | Xue Yongdong | PSC member | Chief | Project Division II of Provincial Poverty Alleviation Office |
| Mr. | Ma Tingrong | PSC member | Director | Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Dou Gejia | Director of Gahai-Zecha PMU | Deputy Director | Gahai-Zecha Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Wang Chenrong | Director of Taizishan PMU | Deputy Director | Taizishan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Yang Ying |  | Deputy Director | Taohe Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Li Junzhen |  | Chief | Wetland Conservation Division of Gahai-Zecha NR Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Xu Changji |  | Deputy Chief | Financial Division of Gahai-Zecha NR Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Zhao Long |  | Officer | Office of Gahai-Zecha NR Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Li Shiyang |  | Technician | Gahai-Zecha Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Cai Wangjia |  | Villager | Gahai-Zecha Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Gou Xiaochen | Director of Taohe PMU | Chief | General Office of Taohe Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | He Houjun | Taohe PMU member | Chief | Financial Division of Taohe Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Zhang Douhou | Taohe PMU member | Staff | Taohe Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Yang Linshen | Taohe PMU member | Staff | Taohe Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Not specified |  | Forest ranger | Yeliguan National Forest Park |
| Mr. | Not specified |  | Family Hotel owner | Yeliguan National Forest Park |
| Mr. | Mao Shipin |  | Villager | Yeliguan Village |
| Mr. | Yang Pei |  | Deputy Director | Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Liu Xiushen |  | Deputy Director | Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Ma Yuqing |  | Deputy Director | Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Chao Xiaorong |  | Deputy Director | Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Dong Xueren |  | Deputy Director | Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Gao Fucai |  | Deputy Secretary | Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Du Pugang |  | Chief | General Office of Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Wang Jianping |  | Deputy Chief | General Office of Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Ms. | Li Qinxia |  | Chief | Personnel Division of Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Ms. | Chang Peilan |  | Chief | Financial Division of Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Zhang Changli | Director of Lianzishan PMU | Chief | Technical Division of Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Ms. | Zhang Xuexia |  | Deputy Chief | Scientific Research Division of Lianhuashan NR Administation Bureau |
| Mr. | Tang Yuan |  | Deputy Chief | Product Development Division of Lianhuashan NR Administation Bureau |
| Mr. | Zhang Yongyi |  | Staff | Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Chen Yonghong |  | Staff | Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Wang Youfu |  | Staff | Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Ms. | Chang Yali |  | Staff | Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Ms. | Liu Meixiang |  | Staff | Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Ms. | Xu Meifeng |  | Staff | Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Ms. | Liu Yunxia |  | Staff | Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Wang Linhao |  | Staff | Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Ma Kewei |  | Staff | Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Wang Dejun |  | Director | Badu Management Station of Lianhuashan Nature Reserve |
| Mr. | Xi Wei |  | Director | Tangfangtan Management Station of Lianhuashan Nature Reserve |
| Mr. | Zhang Zhongming |  | Villager | Lianhuashan Village |
| Mr. | Zhang Zhongchen |  | Villager | Lianhuashan Village |
| Mr. | Yin Dehuai |  | Director | Taizishan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Shi Yanbing |  | General Engineer | Taizishan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Bu Wangui |  | Deputy Director | Taizishan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Ma Dehai |  | Deputy Director | Taizishan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Wang Jianping |  | Deputy General Secretary | Taizishan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Ma Xuyun |  | Director | Forest Fire Control Office of Taizishan NR Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Ma Yingzhong |  | Director | General Office of Taizishan NR Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Ma Wen |  | Chief | Scientific Research Division of Taizishan NR Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Ma Quanlin |  | Chief | Personnel Division of Taizishan NR Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Ma Peifeng |  | Chief | Nature Resource Division of Taizishan NR Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Gao Shengcai |  | Chief | Investigation Division of Taizishan NR Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Ma Fujun |  | Chief | Quarantine Division of Taizishan NR Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Liu Zhonghua |  | Chief | Financial Division of Taizishan NR Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Ma Feihu |  | Vice President | Worker's Union of Taizishan NR Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Ding Xuhua |  | Secretary | Worker's Union of Taizishan NR Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Liu Wenbin |  | Chief | Education Division of Taizishan NR Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Ma Dezheng |  | Deputy Director | Genearl Office of Taizishan NR Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Wang Jian | PMU staff | Staff | Taizishan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Ma Qingrong | PMU staff | Staff | Taizishan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Ma Shangzhi | PMU staff | Staff | Taizishan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Ci Yongqiang | PMU staff | Staff | Taizishan Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Mr. | Wang Jinhu |  | Villager | Director of Liewa Village Committee |
| Mr. | Wang Jinyi |  | Villager | Liewa Village |
| Mr. | Ding Kashen |  | Director | Songmingyan Management Station of Taizishan Nature Reserve |
| Mr. | Liu Yi |  | National Coordinator | GEF SGP China |
| Mr. | Wang Peng |  | Officer | Foreign Affairs Division of Gansu Forestry Department |
| Ms. | Shi Linming |  | Officer | Foreign Affairs Division of Gansu Forestry Department |
| Mr. | Hong Guangkuan |  | Officer | Foreign Capital Project Management Officer |
| Mr. | Li Li |  | Officer | Foreign Capital Project Management Officer |
| Mr. | Wang Jingyi |  | Officer | Foreign Capital Project Management Officer |

# Annex 4: List of Documents Reviewed

|  |
| --- |
| ***PROJECT MANAGEMENT DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS*** |
| TOR of Mid-Term Review for the Gansu Project |
| Project documents of Strengthening Globally Important Biodiversity Conservation throgh PA Strengthening in Gansu Province |
| Inception Report of Gansu PA project |
| PSC and TPR meeting minutes in December 19, 2012 |
| Annual Workplan of Year 2011 |
| Annual Workplan of Year 2012 |
| 1st-4th Quarters Workplan of Year 2012 |
| Biennial Workplan of Year 2012-2013 |
| Budget Revision on December 2012 |
| 1st Quarter Workplan of Year 2013 |
| Annual Progress Report of Year 2011 |
| Annual Progress Report of Year 2012 |
| ***Laws and Regulations*** |
| Assessment Report on Nature Reserve Policies and Laws in Gansu Province |
| Assessment Report on Laws and Regulations related to Biodiversity Conservation in Gansu Province |
| Assessment Report on Laws and Regulations Framework of Nature Reserve System in Gansu Province |
| ***Capacity Building*** |
| Proposal of Institutional Capacity Building on Effective NR Planning and Management in Gansu Province (Staff Training Plan) |
| Staff Skill Development Plan for Taohe River National Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Staff Skill Development Plan for Taizishan National Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| Staff Skill Development Plan for Lianhuashan National Nature Reserve Administration Bureau (2013-2015) |
| Staff Skill Development Plan for Gahai-Zecha National Nature Reserve Administration Bureau (2013-2015) |
| METT Scorecards of the Four Demo Nature Reserves on December 2012 |
| ***Nature Reserve Participatory Management Plan*** |
| Management Plan of Taohe National Nature Reserve in Gansu Province (2012-2014) |
| Management Plan of Taizishan National Nature Reserve in Gansu Province (2013-2015) |
| Management Plan of Lianhuashan National Nature Reserve in Gansu Province (2013-2017) |
| Management Plan of Gahai-Zecha National Nature Reserve in Gansu Province (2012-2015) |
| ***Financial Planning Tools*** |
| Financing Protected Areas in China's Gansu Province--An International Perspective |
| Financial Status of the GEF Taohe's Project Four Demonstration sites in Gansu--a Brief Summary |
| Business Plan for Gahai-Zecha National Nature Reserve for the 2013 Financial Year by international consultants |
| Business Plan for Lianhuashan National Nature Reserve for the 2013 Financial Year by international consultant |
| Business Plan for Taohe National Nature Reserve for the 2013 Financial Year by international consultant |
| Business Plan for Taizishan National Nature Reserve for the 2013 Financial Year by international consultant |
| Business Plan for Gahai-Zecha National Nature Reserve by national consultant |
| Business Plan for Lianhuashan National Nature Reserve by national consultant |
| Business Plan for Taohe National Nature Reserve by national consultant |
| Business Plan for Taizishan National Nature Reserve by national consultant |
| Overall Tourism Development Plan in Taohe River Basin of Gansu Province (2012-2014) |
| ***Monitoring and Evaluation*** |
| Technical Protocol for Monitoring of Nature Reserve Group in Taohe River Basin |
| Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Biodiversity Monitoring Regulations |
| Taizishan Nature Reserve Biodiversity Monitoring Regulations |
| Taohe Nature Reserve Biodiversity Monitoring Regulations |
| Gahai-zecha Nature Reserve Biodiversity Monitoring Regulations |
| ***Performance Management and Incentives*** |
| Incentive Mechanism in Lianhuashan Nature Reserve |
| Incentive Mechanism in Taizishan Nature Reserve |
| Incentive Mechanism in Taohe Nature Reserve |
| Incentive Mechanism in Gahai-Zecha Nature Reserve |
| ***Taohe Forum*** |
| Charter of Taohe Forum on Biodiversity Conservation in Taohe River Basin |
| Declaration of Taohe River--Promoting Harmonious Development to Build a Beautiful Gansu |
| ***Database and Information System*** |
| Assessment Report on the Administration of Nature Reserve System Database and Information Management System in Gansu Province |
| ***Partnership with Local Communities*** |
| Survey Report of PRA in Tazha Village in Taohe Nature Reserve |
| Survey Report of PRA in Liewa Village in Taizishan Nature Reserve |
| Survey Report of PRA in Lianhuashan Village in Lianhuashan Nature Reserve |
| Survey Report of PRA in Zecha Village in Gahai-Zecha Nature Reserve |
| Management Plan of Community Resources in Taohe Nature Reserve |
| Management Plan of Community Resources in Liewa Village in Taizishan Nature Reserve |
| Management Plan of Community Resources in Lianhuashan Village in Lianhuashan Nature Reserve |
| Management Plan of Community Resources in Zecha Village in Gahai-Zecha Nature Reserve |
| ***Training Materials*** |
| Nature Reserve Management and Sustainable Development in Gansu Province |

**NB** Other literature consulted is referenced.

# Annex 5: Questionnaire Survey Results

The results of a questionnaire survey of the Project’s strengths, weaknesses and benefits are summarised in the table below. Survey forms were distributed to all stakeholders participating in the Plenary Meeting on 8 March 2013, of which a total of 25 were completed (10 from PA staff, 9 from government officials and 6 from Project consultants and PMO members). Supplementary feedback obtained from stakeholders during the field visits is also included in the Table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Strengths** | **No.** | **Weaknesses** | **No.** | **Benefits Received** | **No.** | **Others** | **No.** |
| New concepts introduced | 8 | Stability of PMO staff | 1 | Capacity being improved | 4 | Coordination among consultants | 1 |
| Momentum built | 2 | Prioritization of activities | 1 | Rehabilitation and conservation of environment | 2 | Adjustment of Project Design | 1 |
| Sustainable development | 1 | Focusing on specific PA needs | 3 | Awareness being raised | 2 | Enhancing consultation with 4 PAs | 1 |
| Additional financial support | 4 | More and applied training | 12 | Biodiversity conservation experience shared |  | Data sharing | 1 |
| Basic data collection | 1 | Further capacity enhancement | 3 | New concepts and theory learned | 3 | Monitoring protocols aligning with existing norm and standard | 1 |
| PA capacity being improved | 10 | Field investigation and study tour | 4 | Improved monitoring system | 1 | Increasing multi-financing channels | 1 |
| Coordination and mainstreaming of biodiversity | 1 | Communication between stakeholders, particulary communities | 4 | Financial and equipment support received | 2 | Domesticating endangered species to be included in the project | 1 |
| explicit project objectives | 1 | Demonstration and replication | 4 | Improved performance evaluation and incentives | 1 | Ecotourism and Environmentally friendly production | 1 |
| Good progress achieved | 1 | Enhancing Community development | 5 | Understanding of GEF project and its implementation | 2 | Rehabilitation of degraded vegetation to be included in the project | 2 |
| Institutional and systematic capacity building | 8 | Awareness raising and publicity | 2 | Related plans being developed for PAs | 1 | Sustainable support needs to be sought | 1 |
| Sound management and coordination mechanism established | 1 | Understandability and clearness of project work plan | 1 |  |  | Providing support to infrastructure construction and equipment | 1 |
| Project management system | 2 | Integration and replication of project results | 1 |  |  | Enhancing communication with local religious groups | 1 |
| Identified demo villages | 1 | Improvement of PA monitoring system | 2 |  |  | **Supplementary feedback from field visits** | |
| Improved monitoring system | 1 | Eco-compensatoin mechanism establishment | 1 |  |  | Cost should be timely reimbursed | 1 |
|  |  | Participatory management & implementation | 2 |  |  | No GEF grant received so far | 1 |
|  |  | Delay in project implementation | 1 |  |  | No starting fund to involve in eco-tourism, such as family hotel. | 2 |
|  |  | Direct financial support to PAs from project | 2 |  |  |  |  |
| **Total: Strengths** | **42** | **Total: Weaknesses** | **49** | **Total: Benefits** | **18** | **Total: Others** | **13** |

**Questionnaire for Mid-Term Review of Taohe Project (8 April, 2013)**

(IMPORTANT: The information you provide in this questionnaire is will be treated in confidence by the consultants undertaking the Mid-term Review of Taohe Project. Please hand in your completed questionnaire directly to MTR consultants.)

* 1. What are the most successful aspects of Taohe Project so far?

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

* 1. What should be improved in the implementation of Taohe Project?

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

* 1. What benefits your organization/unit received from Taohe Project?

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

* 1. What do you think need to be focused in the next stage of Taohe Project?

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

* 1. Other comments of suggestions to Taohe Project?

Thanks for your support to the Mid-Term Review of Taohe Project.

MTR Team: Michael JB Green, Wang Yexu

Your Name:

Organization/Unit:

Tel:

Email:

# Annex 6: Progress in Delivery of Project Outcomes and Outputs

| **Project Outcomes and Outputs** | **Mid-Term Status**  **(reported by PMO in March 2013)** | **Mid-Term Review comments** | **Ratings**\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Objective: to strengthen protected areas sustainability in Gansu Province through improved effectiveness of PA management and sustainable financing** | * Financial sustainability score (%) * Improved management effectiveness of 8,940,529 ha o nature reserves managed by the Gansu Forestry Department as per average METT scores: | The project has carried out the METT scorecard survey at the submission of the project and the Mid-Term Review point respectively (see annex I). The results were summarized in the Annex I, and a preliminary analysis was following the result matrix. | MS |
| **Outcome 1: Strengthened provincial policy framework and institutional capacity for sustainable management and financing of Gansu’s PA system** | * At least 200% increase in the available total annual budget for PA management and development activities in Gansu province: * Capacity Scorecard: * Presence of the PA system wide strategy and planning framework for effective management adopted at the PA Council meeting by relevant stakeholders: * New Comprehensive PA Database exists: | **No Capacity Scorecard assessment was carried out at the time of MTE.**  The other indicators have not been fully achieved at the mid-point of the project implementation. | MS |
| **Output 1.1: Systematic PA development and management strategy adopted by Provincial government** | * The TOR of *Systematic PA development and management strategy* has been developed in 2011 and reviewed in early 2012. * Workshop convened in September 2012 and reviewed 6 outlines, i.e. *Systematic PA development and management strategy*, *Assessment report on development of management plan of nature reserves in Gansu Province, Assessment report on addressing climate change of nature reservs in Gansu, Assessment report on performance of nature reserves in Gansu, Proposal on assessment of nature reserve ranking in Gansu, and Proposal on ranking classification of nature reserves in Gansu* * Arrangements were made for implementation in 2013. | The related 6 TORs have been completed and ready for implementation. The TORs identified key aspects to be addressed in the strategy, including conservation plan, climate change, and ranking and performance assessment. The delay was mainly caused by inter-department coordination because the project is trying to sub-contract the output with Environmental Protection Department which is responsible for the overall supervision of Nature Reserve policies. | MS |
| **Output 1.2: Economic valuation of the PA system in Gansu conducted and a PA system financing plan developed** | * The TOR of Financing Plan for PA system in Gansu has been developed by the end of 2011. * In the middle of July 2012, the international consultants has got started on the field investigation and development of financing plan and business plan. * In September 2012, workshop was held to discuss and promote the development of *Economic value assessment of Nature Reserve in Gansu, Business Plan and Overall Tourism Plan,* and assignments were made to related consultants and organizations. * By the end of 2012, in regards to the three pillars of financing plan for PA system, an O*verall eco-tourism plan for Nature Reserves in Taohe River Basin* and Two sets of *Business plans* for each of the four Nature Reserves have been developed, i.e. the international point of view and being based to develop a set of localized business plans. * The nearly drafted report of *Economical value assessment of nature reserves in Gansu* has been commented by PMO and CTA for improvement and revised version can be submitted in the 1st quarter of the 2013. * The development of Financing Plan will be started in early 2013. | This output was achieved in combination with output 2.3. Participatory approach was used for the development of business plan and tourism plan with guidance from both international and national consultants. And the national consultants for business plan and tourism plan are very experienced and adaptive to the local situation. The detailed guidance for tourism development has been drafted, and eco-tourism is one of the key actions for NR financing. | S |
| **Output 1.3: Legislative and regulatory framework for the PA system in Gansu improved** | * The TOR of assessment of related laws and regulations was developed by the end of 2011. * By 2012, *Assessment Report on Laws and Regulations related to Biodiversity Conservation in Gansu Province* and *Assessment Report on Laws and Regulations Framework of Nature Reserve System in Gansu Province* were drafted, and the above two reports was then combined into *Assessment Report on Nature Reserve Policies and Laws in Gansu Province* as required by the project. The assessment report analyzed the overall legal structures and specific articles related to PA and biodiversity conservation from international convention to local laws and regulations. * The Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Regulations has been listed in provincial legislation pipeline. | Three assessment reports have been produced with comprehensive analysis of law and regulation system in Gansu related to both biodiversity and nature reserve. The analysis addressed the international and national background and local needs.  The Lianhuashan Nature Reserve Regulation has been listed in the provincial legislation pipeline. | S |
| **Output 1.4: Gansu PA Forum established with the sectoral agencies and stakeholders aiming to enhance PA management effectiveness** | * Preparation was initiated since 2011. * On 19 December 2012, the forum of “Strengthening Globally Important Biodiversity Conservation through Protected Area Strengthening in Gansu Province” (in short Taohe Forum) was launched, with more than 40 participants from provincial government departments, local NGOs, academic and research institutions, and universities, which provides an information exchange and sharing platform for diverse stakeholders and initiatives regarding the biodiversity conservation and establishes a multi-stakeholder coordinating mechanism for biodiversity conservation in Gansu Province. * The Taohe Forum Charter was adopted. * The Taohe Declaration was announced. | During a relative short time, the Forum charter has been agreed among different stakeholders, and the declaration announced at the first forum event. And the forum has performed as part of coordination mechanism and contributed much to awareness raising. | S |
| **Output 1.5: Provincial level PA database and knowledge management system developed** | * By July 2012, the *Assessment Report on the Administration of Nature Reserve System Database and Information Management System in Gansu Province* has been reviewed and finalized which describes the basic needs and framework of PA Database and MIS for Gansu Nature Reserves. | Up till now, the needs assessment and the institution assessment have been conducted, and a framework has been developed. However, the fully achievement of the output seems highly difficult due to the objective set by the project is too ambitious. | MS |
| **Output1.6: Institutional capacities for effective PA planning and management strengthened** | * During September-November 2012, the investigation and needs assessment were carried out on capacity building of nature reserve planning and management. * In November, 2012, workshop was held on discussion and finalization of *Proposal of Institutional Capacity Building on Effective NR Planning and Management in Gansu Province (Staff Training Plan)*. * A training curricula focusing on PA staff’s capacity have been developed through several rounds of discussions. *Staff Skill Development Plans* for the four demonstration Nature Reserve Administration Bureau have been drafted. | Again, the participatory approach was used for the development of the action plan of capacity building in effective planning and management of nature reserve in Gansu. The objectives and tasks have been clearly defined. And the criteria for selection of training institutes has been set up. | MS |
| **Output 1.7: Training curricula and institutes are in place at provincial level for enhancing knowledge and skills of PA staff.** | * In 2012, an training organization at provincial level has been identified, i.e. the Gansu Wildlife Administration, and a capacity enhancement plan on training organization has been drafted in combination with the staff skill development plans. * The training material has been developed, i.e. *Nature Reserve Management and Sustainable Development in Gansu Province*, and *Application of GIS in NR management in Gansu Province* | Up till now, two training books have been produced.  It was recommended and fully agreed to combine output 1.6 and output 1.7 as an integral output to streamline the project implementation for effective training. | MS |
| **Outcome 2: Sustainable PA management and financing demonstrated in Taohe sub-system** | * Improved management effectiveness as per METT   Lianhuashan NR 57 85  Taizishan NR 52 88  Gahai-Zecha NR 54 52  Taohe NR 72 60   * Number of park planning tools developed   Management Plan 0 4  Business Plan 0 4  Tourism Plan 0 1 | See Annex I for the METT analysis.  The other indicators listed in the project logframe will be provided by the PMO as agreed. | S |
| **Output 2.1: Consistent PA management tools are developed and utilized at the demonstration PA sites with clear action and monitoring mechanisms installed** | * During April-June 2012, the trainings for development of management plan of the 4 demo nature reserves have been carried out. * In December 2012, the review meeting was held on the developed management plans of the 4 demo nature reserves. * 27 February 2013, the management plans of the 4 demo nature reserves were approved by the provincial forestry department. | Lots of tools have been developed and ready for implementation in 2013. Although there are some weakness in terms of multi-supportive, the adaptive method has been included in the project implementation. And the only provincial level nature reserve among the 4 demo nature reserves has been upgraded to national level recently. | S |
| **Output 2.2: Local level biodiversity monitoring and evaluation system in place in the four demonstration Pas** | * In November 2012, the Technical Protocol for Monitoring of Nature Reserve Group in Taohe River Basin has been drafted. * During November-December 2012, The Monitoring Programmes of the 4 demo nature reserves and the related implementation regulations have been formulated. | Although the biodiversity monitoring and evaluation system has not been implemented on the ground, a suite of protocols have been developed with the guidance of related experts. And the biodiversity monitoring program could then be implemented to inform the decision-maker, together with the existing patrolling system. | MS |
| **Output 2.3: Financial sustainability of the demonstration Pas improved, with use of financial planning tools and diversification of revenue streams** | * During July-September 2012, the trainings on development of PA business plan has been conducted under the guidance of international consultant, and the Business Plans for four demo nature reserves were developed. * During August-December 2012, based on social economic investigation in the nature reserve, the national consultant of business plan made the revision and improvement of the business plans for the 4 demo nature reserves developed by the international consultant. * In December 2012, An *Overall Tourism Development Plan in Taohe River Basin of Gansu Province* has been developed and approved on the workshop. | The government investment, particularly the central government, has seen a great increase to the nature reserve with the economic growth, which is so identified in the business plan. And it can be reasonably predicted as the importance of nature conservation attached by the governments in different level. In the same time, the business plan will enhance the economic sustainability of the nature reserve. See also 1.2 | S |
| **Output 2.4: Collaborative approaches between PAs and local partners developed, demonstrating improved PA management and cost effectiveness** | * During September-December 2012, the four demo nature reserve have conducted the PRA survey and formulated the PAR investigation reports under the guidance of project consultant. * In November 2012, the management plans of community resources in the 4 nature reserves have been reviewed and finalized. * In November 2012, the four nature reserves have signed the co-management agreements with local communities. | The NRs maintained good cooperation with local government and communities. The newly conducted PRA and the community resource management plan (with several co-management agreements) enhanced the collaboration to move in the right direction. | MS |
| **Output 2.5: Skills and competencies of PA staff improved with use of performance management system and creation of incentive mechanisms** | * By the end of 2012, the performance management and incentive mechanism in the four nature reserves has been formulated. * The Staff Skill Development Plans in the four nature reserves have been approved. * In 4th quarter of 2012, the training on law enforcement has been conducted in the 4 nature reserves. | Actually, the project improved the existing performance management system and incentives through the introduction of theoretical analysis and good practices. And related regulations and evaluation system have been drafted for implementation. | S |

*\*Satisfaction rating scale:* **H**ighly **S**atisfactory, **S**atisfactory, **M**oderately **S**atisfactory, **M**oderately **U**nsatisfactory, **U**nsatisfactory, **H**ighly **U**nsatisfactory

# Annex 7: Project Steering Committee Members (Former and Present)

**UNDP-GEF利用生态方法保护洮河流域生物多样性项目**

**指导委员会主任、成员变更情况**

**UNDP-GEF利用生态方法保护洮河流域生物多样性项目指导委员会自2011年7月22日成立至今，由于各指导委员会成员单位人事调整等原因，指导委员会主任及部分成员发生了变更。情况汇总如下：**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **前任Former** | | **现任Present** | |
| **姓名Name** | **职务Position** | **姓名Name** | **职务Position** |
| **主任NPD:** | | | |
| 张肃斌Zhang Subin | 省林业厅副厅长  Deputy Director of Gansu Forestry Department | 郭平  Guo Ping | 省绿化委员会办公室副主任  Deputy Director of Gansu Greening Committee Office |
| **成员PSC Member:** | | | |
| **姓名Name** | **职务Position** | **姓名Name** | **职务Position** |
| 叶建第  Ye Jiandi | 财政部国际司国际金融组织三处处长  Division Chief, International financial Organization III Division, International Department of Ministry of Finance | 叶建第  Ye Jiandi | 财政部国际司国际金融组织三处  处长  Division Chief, International financial Organization III Division, International Department of Ministry of Finance |
| Napoleon Navarro | 联合国开发计划署驻华代表处副国别主任  Deputy Country Director of UNDP China | Carsten Germer | 联合国开发计划署驻华代表处助理国别主任  Deputy Country Director of UNDP China |
| 张健  Zhang Jian | 省财政厅国际处处长  Division Chief,  International Division of Gansu Finance Department | 张健  Zhang Jian | 省财政厅国际处处长  Division Chief,  International Division of Gansu Finance Department |
| 王丽君  Wang Lijun | 省发改委外资处处长  Division Chief, Foreign Investment Division of Provincial Development and Reform Commission | 王丽君  Wang Lijun | 省发改委外资处处长  Division Chief, Foreign Investment Division of Provincial Development and Reform Commission |
| 金玉虎  Jin Yuhu | 省国土资源厅地质环境处处长  Division Chief, Environment Division of Provincial Land and Resource Department | 金玉虎  Jin Yuhu | 省国土资源厅地质环境处处长  Division Chief, Environment Division of Provincial Land and Resource Department |
| 罗凤存  Luo Fengcun | 省科技厅社会发展处处长  Division Chief, Social Development Division, Department of Science and Technology of Gansu Province | 罗凤存  Luo Fengcun | 省科技厅社会发展处处长  Division Chief, Social Development Division, Department of Science and Technology of Gansu Province |
| 王汝滨  Wang Rubin | 省环保厅国际合作处处长  Division Chief, International Cooperation Division of Department of Environmental Protection of Gansu Province | 王汝滨  Wang Rubin | 省环保厅国际合作处处长  Division Chief, International Cooperation Division of Department of Environmental Protection of Gansu Province |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 张自华  Zhang Zihua | 省农牧厅外经外事处副处长  Deputy of Division Chief, Foreign Economy and Foreign Affairs at the Provincial Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Department | 张自华  Zhang Zihua | 省农牧厅外经外事处副处长  Deputy of Division Chief, Foreign Economy and Foreign Affairs at the Provincial Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Department |
| 连雪斌  Lian Xuebin | 省林业厅外事合作处处长  Division Chief, Foreign Cooperation Division of Gan Forestry Department | 连雪斌  Lian Xuebin | 省林业厅外事合作处处长  Division Chief, Foreign Cooperation Division of Gan Forestry Department |
| 朱希昭  Zhu Xizhao | 省水利厅科技外事处处长  Division Chief，Technology and Foreign Affairs Division, Department of Water Resources of Gansu Province | 朱希昭  Zhu Xizhao | 省水利厅科技外事处处长  Division Chief，Technology and Foreign Affairs Division, Department of Water Resources of Gansu Province |
| 王晶  Wang Jing | 省政府法制办行政法规处处长  Devision Chief, Administrative Regulation Division, Legal System Office of Provincial Government | 王晶 | 省政府法制办行政法规处处长  Devision Chief, Administrative Regulation Division, Legal System Office of Provincial Government |
| 张高平  Zhang Gaoping | 省政府研究室处长  Division Chief, Research Office of Gansu Provincial Government | 张高平  Zhang Gaoping | 省政府研究室副巡视员  Deputy Inspector, Research Office of Gansu Provincial Government |
| 张华  Zhang Hua | 省旅游局国际处处长  Division Chief, International Division of Provincial Tourism Bureau | 张华  Zhang Hua | 省旅游局国际处处长  Division Chief, International Division of Provincial Tourism Bureau |
| 薛永东  Xue Yongdong | 省扶贫办项目二处处长  Division Chief, Project II Division of Provincial Poverty Alleviation Office | 薛永东  Xue Yongdong | 省扶贫办项目二处处长  Division Chief, Project II Division of Provincial Poverty Alleviation Office |
| 马旭明  Ma Xuming | 省林业外资项目管理办公室主任Director  Gansu Provincial Forestry Foreign Capital Project Management Office | 马旭明  Ma Xuming | 省林业外资项目管理办公室主任Director  Gansu Provincial Forestry Foreign Capital Project Management Office |
| 张永科  Zhang Yongke | 省野生动植物管理局党委书记、副局长  Secretary of the Party Committee/Deputy Director, Gansu Wildlife Conservation Bureau | 赵长青  Zhao Changqin | 省野生动植物管理局副局长  Deputy Director, Gansu Wildlife Conservation Bureau |
| 马廷荣  Ma Tingrong | 甘肃省莲花山国家级自然保护区管理局局长  Director, Lianhuashan National Nature Reserve Administration Bureau | 马廷荣  Ma Tingrong | 甘肃省莲花山国家级自然保护区管理局局长  Director, Lianhuashan National Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| 袁峰晓  Yuan Fengxiao | 甘肃省尕海-则岔国家级自然保护区管理局局长  Director., Gahai-Zecha National Nature Reserve Administration Bureau | 母金荣  Mu Jinrong | 甘肃省尕海-则岔国家级自然保护区管理局局长  Director., Gahai-Zecha National Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| 刘志江  Liu Zhijiang | 甘肃省洮河国家级自然保护区管理局局长  Director., Taohe National Nature Reserve Administration Bureau | 刘志江  Liu Zhijiang | 甘肃省洮河国家级自然保护区管理局局长  Director., Taohe National Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |
| 高生祥  Gao Shengxiang | 甘肃太子山国家自然保护区管理局局长  Director., Taizishan National Nature Reserve Administration Bureau | 高生祥  Gao Shengxiang | 甘肃省太子山国家级自然保护区管理局党委书记  Secretary of the Party Committee., Taizishan National Nature Reserve Administration Bureau |

甘肃省GEF洮河项目办公室

2012年12月19日

# Annex 8: Evaluation of Project Performance Indicators and Delivery Status

###### *#Status of delivery colour codes:* Green / completed – indicator shows successful achievement

Yellow – indicator shows expected completion by the end of the project

Red – Indicator show poor achievement - unlikely to be complete by end of Project

*\*Satisfaction rating scale:* **H**ighly **S**atisfactory, **S**atisfactory, **M**oderately **S**atisfactory, **M**oderately **U**nsatisfactory, **U**nsatisfactory, **H**ighly **U**nsatisfactory

| **Objective/ Outcome** | **Indicator** | **2009 Baseline** | **2014 End of Project target** | **Mid-Term Status**  **(reported by PMO in April 2013)** | **Mid-Term Review comments** | **Rating** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective** To strengthen protected areas’ sustainability in Gansu Province through improved effectiveness of PA management and sustainable financing | Financial sustainability score (%) for national systems of protected areas | 32.5% | 70.0% | 35.0%  [NB Percentage is average of 4 demo PAs, not 64 PAs.] | Modest improvement to date, resulting in part from extra RMB 1 million awarded annually to 4 demo PAs. This increase expected to be maintained beyond Project.  **Note:** (i) Indicator is misleading as it refers to national PAs system, whereas objective focuses on provincial system. (ii) Unlikely to know whether or not 2014 target is achievable/has been achieved as difficult to re-assess indicator for Gansu’s entire system of 64 PAs using same method in a consistent manner, hence delivery status shown as red. | MS |
| Improved management effectiveness of 8,940,529 ha of nature reserves managed by the Gansu Forestry Bureau as per average METT scores | 65.0 | 75.0 | 76%  [NB Average score of 4 demo PAs, not 64 PAs.] | Satisfactory progress with respect to 4 demo PAs, which appear to provide the basis of baseline score and have been used for assessing mid-term status. However, indicator and, therefore target, concerns entire system of PAs in Gansu, which appears not to have been assessed for each PA to establish baseline. Unlikely to achieve target for entire Gansu PA system, hence delivery status shown as red. | MS |
| **Outcome 1**  Strengthened provincial policy framework and institutional capacity for sustainable management and financing of Gansu’s PA system | At least 200% increase in the available total annual budget for PA management and development activities in Gansu province. | US$ 14.8 m | US$ 44.4 m | US $10,480,000.0  [NB Sum of 4 demo PA budgets, not 64 PAs.] | 4 demo PAs, as national nature reserves, have received increased financial support from national government. Only able to assess PA budgets for Project sites as financial data for entire PA system in Gansu not readily available - hence delivery status shown as red. | MS |
| “Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes” component of the Capacity Scorecard | 54.2% | 65.0% | 64.2%  [NB Percentage is average of 4 demo PAs, not 64 PAs.] | Capacity in implementation is current limited because policies, strategies and legislation are not yet in place. | MS |
| “Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders” component of the Capacity Scorecard | 56.7% | 65.0% | 65.0%  [NB Percentage is average of 4 demo PAs, not 64 PAs.] | Cooperation among various sectors has formed a sound basis for building consensus, and Taohe Forum provides potential, sustainable mechanism for range of stake-holders in influencing policies and decisions. | S |
| Presence of the PA system wide strategy and planning framework for effective management adopted at the PA Council meeting by relevant stakeholders | No such strategy exist | Strategy formulated and adopted by stakeholders  PA Council established and meeting regularly | Outlines of systematic PA development and management strategy have been developed. | Slow progress in developing strategy and legal framework strategy. Unclear as to whether or not the PA Council exists – it was never mentioned during the mission. There may be some confusion here with the Taohe Forurm, in which case this should be clarified. | MS |
|  | New comprehensive PA Database exists strengthening the effective use of limited human and financial resources | No PA Database exists | Database maintained and regularly updated | Assessment Report of Gansu Nature Reserve Management System and Management Agency has been developed. | Provincial PA information management system is unrealistic within time and funds available. No progress since assessment undertaken by consultant. Needs rapid review and action (see **Recommendation 1.i**). | MU |
| **Outcome 2**  Sustainable PA management and financing demonstrated in Taohe sub-system | Improved management effectiveness as per METT scores for individual sites  - Lianhuashan National NR  - Taizishan Provincial NR  - Gahai-Zecha National NR  - Taohe National NR | ~~60~~ 59%  ~~55~~ 54%  ~~73~~ 56%  ~~73~~ 75% | 69  64  84  84 | ~~64~~ 82%  ~~60~~ 93%  ~~80~~ 62%  ~~78~~ 66% | Good progress, with the exception of Taohe NNR: mean METT score of 4 demo PAs has risen from 59 (61%) in 2010 to 77 (76%) in 2013 but that for Taohe has declined by 9%. **Note:** (i) The case of Taohe should be investigated and, if necessary, re-done in the same manner as undertaken in 2010. (ii) METT scores have decreased for 5 criteria: PMO should examine these and address any issues. (iii) It is no longer appropriate to use totals because METT criteria have changed, as has the maximum total score from 96 to 102 (Annex 8a - see below this LFM). Comparisons should be made using percentages of the total score. | S |
| Number of park planning tools developed and implemented in the demo PAs  - Management Plan  - Business Plan  - Tourism Plan | 0  0  0 | 3  3  1 | 4  4  (in preparation) | Good progress with management and business planning, although they have yet to be integrated with each other. Tourism plan is still under preparation. | S |
| Increase in park revenue/budget  (CNY million)  - Lianhuashan National NR  - Taizishan Provincial NR  - Gahai-Zecha National NR  - Taohe National NR | 8  16.6  4.5  31.4 | 11.5  25.4  6.5  39.4 | 15.9  16.0  15.3  48.9 | Four demo PAs have received financial increases from national government due to their NNR status; and RMB 4 million from provincial government. However, park revenue declined in Taizishan NR in 2013: attributed by PMO to market factors such as fluctuation in seedling prices, unbalanced demand and supply, and cost changes, etc. | MS |
| Systematic local level biodiversity monitoring system enhancing PA management | No mechanism for monitoring exist | Monitoring mechanism in place | Monitoring regulations and programmes have been developed within four PAs | Monitoring has yet to be implemented in PAs; recommended to robustly review details with respect to informing management. | MS |
| PA staff with at least 30% women trainers completing specialised training and/or skills development programmes  - Short course training  - Mentoring programme  - Train-the-trainers programme | 0  0  0 | 20  5  5 | 1  0 | Little or no progress with mentoring and train-the-trainers programmes. | MU |
| Reduced threats to PAs: Number of co-management agreements with resident communities reducing threats related to overgrazing, forest fire and illegal hunting and harvesting. | 0 | 20 | 12 | Good progress in developing collaborative agreements with demo villages. More needs to be achieved in facilitating provision of benefits to local communities. | MS |
| Increased cost efficiency of PA management: Number of joint and PA management activities between the four demonstration PAs leading to increased cost efficiency of PA management | 0 | 10 | 0 | Demo PAs have worked together in developing common frameworks for monitoring effective management and providing incentives to staff to improve performance. Further streamlining and cost-saving joint initiatives should be built into management and business plans, and mainstreamed via provincial PA strategy. | MS |

# Annex 8a: Analysis of Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT)

Analysis of the METT data from the four demonstration PAs shows the following:

* 2009 baseline and 2013 mid-term totals are based on slightly different sets of measures, during to modification of the METT by GEF. Both sets of METT are shown below so that the changes are self-evident.
* Management effectiveness has increased markedly from mean value of 61% in 2009 to 76% in 2013.
* However, in 5 measures there has been a decrease in mean score (highlighted yellow in the last column), some of which are siginificant.

Such instances should be examined in detail in order to understand the reasons and consider appropriate remedial interventions.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **METT: Measure of Management Effectiveness - as used in 2010 to establish baseline** | **Gaha-zecha** | | **Lianhuashan** | | **Taohe** | | **Taizishan** | | **Mean score** | | **METT: Measures of Management Effectiveness - as modified by GEF and used to track status at MTR** |
| **2010** | **2013** | **2010** | **2013** | **2010** | **2013** | **2010** | **2013** | **2010** | **2013** |
| **1. Legal status:** *Does the protected area have legal status?* | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | **3.0** | **3.0** | 1. Legal status: Does the protected area have legal status (or in the case of private reserves is covered by a covenant or similar)? |
| **2. Protected area regulations** *Are inappropriate land uses and activities (e.g. poaching) controlled?* | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | **2.0** | **2.5** | 2. Protected area regulations: Are appropriate regulations in place to control land use and activities (e.g. hunting)? |
| **3. Law enforcement** *Can staff enforce protected area rules well enough?* | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | **2.0** | **1.8** | 3. Law Enforcement: Can staff (i.e. those with responsibility for managing the site) enforce protected area rules well enough? |
| **4. Protected area objectives** *Have objectives been agreed?* | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | **2.3** | **2.5** | 4. Protected area objectives: Is management undertaken according to agreed objectives? |
| **5. Protected area**  *Does the protected area need enlarging, corridors etc to meet its objectives?* | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | **2.3** | **3.0** | 5. Protected area design: Is the protected area the right size and shape to protect species, habitats, ecological processes and water catchments of key conservation concern? |
| **6. Protected area boundary demarcation** *Is the boundary known and demarcated?* | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | **2.8** | **2.5** | 6. Protected area boundary demarcation: Is the boundary known and demarcated? |
| **7. Management Plan**  *Is there a management plan and is it being implemented?* | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | **1.8** | **2.0** | 7. Management plan: Is there a management plan and is it being implemented? |
| **Additional points:** The planning process allows adequate opportunity for key stakeholders to influence the management plan | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | **0.5** | **1.0** | 7.a Planning process: The planning process allows adequate opportunity for key stakeholders to influence the management plan |
| **Additional points:** There is an established schedule and process for periodic review and updating of the management plan | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 1 | **0.0** | **1.0** | 7.b Planning process: There is an established schedule and process for periodic review and updating of the management plan |
| **Additional points:** The results of monitoring, research and evaluation are routinely incorporated into planning | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | **0.0** | **0.5** | 7.c Planning process: The results of monitoring, research and evaluation are routinely incorporated into planning |
| **8. Regular work plan** *Is there an annual work plan?* | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | **1.8** | **2.3** | 8. Regular work plan: Is there a regular work plan and is it being implemented |
| **9. Resource inventory** *Do you have enough information to manage the area?* | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | **2.0** | **2.8** | 9. Resource inventory: Do you have enough information to manage the area? |
|  |  | 1 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 3 |  | **2.3** | 10. Protection systems: Are systems in place to control access/resource use in the protected area? |
| **10. Research**  *Is there a programme of management- orientated survey and research* work? | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | **1.8** | **2.5** | 11. Research: Is there a programme of management-orientated survey and research work? |
| **11. Resource Management**  *Is the protected area adequately managed (e.g. for fire, invasive species, poaching)?* | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | **2.3** | **2.8** | 12. Resource management: Is active resource management being undertaken? |
| **12. Staff numbers**  *Are there enough people employed to manage the protected area?* | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | - | 2 | 3 | **2.5** | **2.0** | 13. Staff numbers: Are there enough people employed to manage the protected area? |
| **13. Personnel management**  *Are the staff managed well enough?* | 3 |  | 2 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | **2.0** |  |  |
| **14. Staff training**  *Is there enough training for staff?* | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | **1.8** | **1.5** | 14. Staff training: Are staff adequately trained to fulfil management objectives? |
| **15. Current budget** *Is the current budget sufficient?* | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | **1.5** | **1.5** | 15. Current budget: Is the current budget sufficient? |
| **16. Security of Budget**  *Is the budget secure?* | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | - | 2 | 3 | **1.5** | **1.5** | 16. Security of budget: Is the budget secure? |
| **17. Management of budget**  *Is the budget managed to meet critical management needs?* | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | **0.8** | **2.3** | 17. Management of budget: Is the budget managed to meet critical management needs? |
| **18. Equipment**  *Are there adequate equipment and facilities?* | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | **1.5** | **1.5** | 18. Equipment: Is equipment sufficient for management needs? |
| **19. Maintenance of equipment**  *Is equipment adequately maintained?* | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | **2.0** | **2.3** | 19. Maintenance of equipment: Is equipment adequately maintained? |
| **20. Education and awareness programme** *Is there a planned education programme?* | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | **1.0** | **1.8** | 20. Education and awareness: Is there a planned education programme linked to the objectives and needs? |
|  |  | 2 |  | 2 |  | 2 |  | 2 |  | **2.0** | 21. Planning for land and water use: Does land and water use planning recognise the protected area and aid the achievement of objectives? |
|  |  | 1 |  | 1 |  | 1 |  | 1 |  | **1.0** | 21a. Land and water planning for habitat conservation: Planning and management in the catchment or landscape containing the protected area incorporates provision for adequate environmental conditions to sustain relevant habitats. |
|  |  | 1 |  | 1 |  | 1 |  | 1 |  | **1.0** | 21b. Land and water planning for habitat conservation: Management of corridors linking the protected area provides for wildlife passage to key habitats outside the protected area. |
|  |  | - |  | - |  | - |  | - |  | **0.0** | 21c. Land and water planning for habitat conservation: "Planning adresses ecosystem-specific needs and/or the needs of particular species of concern at an ecosystem scale" |
| **21. State and commercial** **neighbours**  *Is there co-operation with adjacent land users?* | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | **2.3** | **2.3** | 22. State and commercial neighbours::Is there co-operation with adjacent land and water users? |
| **22. Indigenous people** *Do indigenous and traditional peoples resident or regularly using the PA have input to management decisions?* | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | **1.0** | **2.0** | 23. Indigenous people: Do indigenous and traditional peoples resident or regularly using the protected area have input to management decisions? |
| **23. Local communities**  *Do local communities resident or near the protected area have input to management decisions?* | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | **1.5** | **2.3** | 24. Local communities: Do local communities resident or near the protected area have input to management decisions? |
| **Additional points:** There is open communication and trust between local stakeholders and protected area managers | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | **1.0** | **1.0** | 24 a. Impact on communities: There is open communication and trust between local and/or indigenous people, stakeholders and protected area managers |
| **Outputs:** Programmes to enhance local community welfare, while conserving protected area resources, are being implemented | - | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1 | **0.3** | **0.8** | 24 b. Impact on communities: Programmes to enhance community welfare, while conserving protected area resources, are being implemented |
|  |  | 1 |  | 1 |  | - |  | 1 |  | **0.8** | 24 c. Impact on communities: Local and/or indigenous people actively support the protected area |
| **29. Economic benefit assessment:** Is the protected area providing economic benefits to local communities? | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | **2.3** | **2.5** | 25. Economic benefit: Is the protected area providing economic benefits to local communities, e.g. income, employment, payment for environmental services? |
| **30. Monitoring and evaluation:** Are management activities monitored against performance? | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | **1.5** | **2.0** | 26. Monitoring and evaluation: Are management activities monitored against performance? |
| **24. Visitor facilities**  *Are visitor facilities (for tourists, pilgrims etc) good enough?* | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 |  | 3 | **1.3** | **2.5** | 27. Visitor facilities: Are visitor facilities adequate? |
| **25. Commercial tourism** *Do commercial tour operators contribute to protected area management?* | 1 | - | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | **2.3** | **1.8** | 28. Commercial tourism operators: Do commercial tour operators contribute to protected area management? |
| **26. Fees**  *If fees (tourism, fines) are applied, do they help protected area management?* | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | **2.0** | **3.0** | 29. Fees: If fees (i.e. entry fees or fines) are applied, do they help protected area management? |
| **27. Condition assessment**  *Is the protected area being managed consistent to its objectives?* | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | **2.3** | **3.0** | 30. Condition of values: What is the condition of the important values of the protected area as compared to when it was first designated? |
| **Additional points:** There are active programmes for restoration of degraded areas within the protected area and/or the protected area buffer zone | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | **0.8** | **1.0** | 30a: Condition of values: The assessment of the condition of values is based on research and/or monitoring |
| **28. Access assessment:** *Is access/resource use sufficiently controlled?* | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | **1.8** | **1.0** | 30b: Condition of values Specific management programmes are being implemented to address threats to biodiversity, ecological and cultural values |
| **29. [moved to below 23, above]** |  | 1 |  | 1 |  | 1 |  | 1 |  | **1.0** | 30c: Condition of values: Activities to maintain key biodiversity, ecological and cultural values are a routine part of park management |
| **30. [moved to below 29, above]** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Maximum total score [96 in 2010]** | 96 | 102 | 96 | 102 | 96 | 102 | 96 | 102 |  |  | **Maximum total score [102 in 2013]** |
| **Number of questionnaires completed by participants involved in monitoring** | ? | 16 | ? | 110 | ? | 83 | 140 | 60 | **96** | **102** |  |
| **TOTAL SCORE** | 54 | 63 | 57 | 84 | 72 | 67 | 52 | 95 | **58.8** | **77.3** | **TOTAL SCORE** |
| **PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SCORE** | 56% | 62% | 59% | 82% | 75% | 66% | 54% | 93% | **61%** | **76%** | **PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SCORE** |

# Annex 9: Logical Framework Matrix– proposed changes

| **Objective/ Outcome** | **Indicator** | **2009 Baseline** | **2014 End of Project target** | **Mid-Term Status**  **(reported by PMO in April 2013)** | **Source of Information** | **Risks and Assumptions** | **MTE Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective** To strengthen protected areas’ sustainability in Gansu Province through improved effectiveness of PA management and sustainable financing | Financial sustainability score (%) for Ganu’s provincial system of protected areas | 32.5% | 70.0% | 35.0%  [NB Percentage is average of 4 demo PAs, not 64 PAs.] | Annual Financial Sustainability Scorecard | Assumptions:  - The government commits to an incremental growth in the grant funding allocation to finance the protected area network. | **Note:** (i) Indicator is misleading as it refers to national PAs system, whereas objective focuses on provincial system. (ii) Unlikely to know whether or not 2014 target is achievable/has been achieved as difficult to re-assess indicator for Gansu’s entire system of 63 PAs using same method in a consistent manner. |
| Improved management effectiveness of 8,940,529 ha of nature reserves managed by the Gansu Forestry Bureau as per average METT scores | 65.0 | 75.0 | 70.5  [NB Average score of 4 demo PAs, not 64 PAs.] | METT applied at Mid-Term Review and Final Evaluation | Risks:  - Climate change related and other natural disaster drastically shift the priorities of the national and provincial governments. | 2009 baseline is likely to have been based on 4 demo PAs as mean of the 4 PAs is 65.25. Will be challenging to do for all PAs in Gansu but a good capacity building exercise. The figure of 70.5 reported by PMO for 2013 does not agree with the score of 77 (76%) calculated in **Annex 8a**. |
| **Outcome 1**  Strengthened provincial policy framework and institutional capacity for sustainable management and financing of Gansu’s PA system | At least 200% increase in the available total annual budget for PA management and development activities in Gansu province. | US$ 14.8m | US$ 44.4m | US $10,480,000.0  [NB Sum of 4 demo PA budgets, not 64 PAs.] | Financial reports of the Gansu Forestry Bureau  Financial reports of the State Forestry Administration | Assumptions:  - Legislative and regulatory adjustments are supported and adopted by Government, and provide for enabling framework for co-management | Financial data for entire PA system in Gansu is not readily available, as discovered by the International Consultant when trying develop a susy=tainable financial strategy for Gansu’s Ps. Data provided for the MTR are based on the Project sites, which is not what was intended in the Project’s design and does not address the issue of tracking fincnaing capacity at provincial level. Suggest the scope is limited to PAs under GFD’s jurisdiction – even so it will be a significant but important challenge to access and collate the data. |
| “Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes” component of the Capacity Scorecard | 54.2% | 65.0% | 64.2%  [NB Percentage is average of 4 demo PAs, not 64 PAs.] | Capacity Scorecard assessment | - Sectoral agencies and departments are willing to participate and collaborate at the coordination forum | Not really appropriate to do for individual PAs – designed for PA system using the Capacity Scorecard (not METT). |
| “Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders” component of the Capacity Scorecard | 56.7% | 65.0% | 65.0%  [NB Percentage is average of 4 demo PAs, not 64 PAs.] | Capacity Scorecard assessment | - It is possible to change relevant policies and regulations at provincial and/or local level without requiring changes at the national level. | Not really appropriate to do for individual PAs – designed for PA system using the Capacity Scorecard (not METT). |
| Presence of the PA system wide strategy and planning framework for effective management adopted at the PA Council meeting by relevant stakeholders | No such strategy exist | Strategy formulated and adopted by stakeholders  PA Council established and meeting regularly | Outlines of systematic PA development and management strategy have been developed. |  | - PA staff have proper training and equipment to collect and analyze data. | PA council thought not to exist –in which case we have no target! This needs to be amended and tied in with the recommendations concerning the Taohe Forum. |
|  | New comprehensive PA Database exists strengthening the effective use of limited human and financial resources | No PA Database exists | Database maintained and regularly updated | Assessment Report of Gansu Nature Reserve Management System and Management Agency has been developed. |  | Risks:  - The legal reform processes to support the effective management and increase financing prolonged and drawn out | Ought to link database to web as latter concerns access to info by stakeholders. |
| **Outcome 2**  Sustainable PA management and financing demonstrated in Taohe sub-system | Improved management effectiveness as per METT scores for individual sites  - Lianhuashan National NR  - Taizishan Provincial NR  - Gahai-Zecha National NR  - Taohe National NR | ~~60~~ 59%  ~~55~~ 54%  ~~73~~ 56%  ~~73~~ 75% | 69  64  84  84 | ~~64~~ 82%  ~~60~~ 93%  ~~80~~ 62%  ~~78~~ 66% | METT applied at Mid-Term and Final Evaluation | Assumption:  Demonstration sites can be readily accessed (except in winter). | METT scores for 2010 need amending in line with **Annex 8a** and percentages used, for reasons explained there, rather than total scores. The target should also be reviewed, having first taken into account the extent to which the METT is being applied consistently within and across the demonstration sites. |
| Number of park planning tools developed, integrated with each other and implemented in the demo PAs  - Management Plan  - Business Plan  - Tourism Plan | 0  0  0 | 3  3  1 | 4  4  (1) | Park Management and Business Plans for each of the four parks  An integrated tourism development plan for the four parks | Assumptions:  - Stakeholder institutions constructively engage in the development of a PES scheme. | Good to add the word ‘integrated’ as all these plans should be linked to each other!  The Tourism Plan is in preparation – not completed at the time of the MTR. |
| Increase in park revenue/budget  (CNY million)  - Lianhuashan National NR  - Taizishan Provincial NR  - Gahai-Zecha National NR  - Taohe National NR | 8  16.6  4.5  31.4 | 11.5  25.4  6.5  39.4 | 15.9  16.0  15.3  48.9 | Financial records of four PAs, business plan of each PA and financial scorecard of each PA. | - Individual PAs will continue to be able to retain its income |  |
| Systematic local level biodiversity monitoring system enhancing PA management | No mechanism for monitoring exist | Monitoring mechanism in place | Monitoring regulations and programmes have been developed within four PAs |  | Risks:  - Resident and neighbouring communities do not see sufficient benefit to enter into co-management agreements | Good to have more specific measure, such as 2 years monitoring data collected and stored in a database that has a common platform for all PAs. |
| PA staff with at least 30% women trainers completing specialised training and/or skills development programmes  - Short course training  - Mentoring programme  - Train-the-trainers programme | 0  0  0 | 20  5  5 | 1  0 |  |  | This target needs close attention and review to check it remains realistic. |
| Reduced threats to PAs: Number of co-management agreements with resident communities reducing threats related to overgrazing, forest fire and illegal hunting and harvesting. | 0 | 20 | 12 |  |  |  |
| Increased cost efficiency of PA management: Number of joint and PA management activities between the four demonstration PAs leading to increased cost efficiency of PA management | 0 | 10 | 0 |  |  | This indicator needs close attention and a strategy for joint management developed – otherwise it will not be addressed. |

**Proposed changes to outputs (in italics and underlined):**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Outcome 1 | Strengthened provincial policy framework and institutional capacity for sustainable management and financing of Gansu’s PA system. |
| Output 1.1 | Systematic PA development and management strategy adopted by Provincial Government *Forestry Department*. |
| Output 1.2 | Economic valuation of the PA system in Gansu conducted and a PA system financing plan developed. |
| Output 1.3 | Legislative and regulatory framework for the PA system in Gansu improved. |
| Output 1.4 | Gansu PA Forum established with the sectoral agencies and stakeholders aiming to enhance PA management effectiveness. |
| Output 1.5 | ~~Provincial level PA database and knowledge management system developed.~~  *Web-based Information Management System for protected areas developed, using a common architecture and platform, and popularised with data and information generated by the Project in the four demonstration sites.* |
| Output 1.6 | Institutional capacities for effective *and financially sustainable* PA planning and management strengthened. |
| ~~Output 1.7~~ | ~~Training curricula and institutes are in place at provincial level for enhancing knowledge and skills of PA staff.~~ |
| Outcome 2 | Sustainable protected area management and financing demonstrated in Taohe Basin. |
| Output 2.1 | Consistent PA management tools are developed and utilised at the demonstration PA sites with clear action and monitoring mechanisms installed. |
| Output 2.2 | Local level biodiversity monitoring and evaluation system in place in the four demonstration PAs. |
| Output 2.3 | Financial sustainability of the demonstration PAs improved with use of financial planning tools and diversification of revenue stream. |
| Output 2.4 | Collaborative approaches between PAs and local PA partners developed, demonstrating improved PA management and cost effectiveness |
| Output 2.5 | Skills and competencies of PA staff improved with use of a performance management system and the creation of incentive mechanisms. |

1. <http://www.gsgeftaohe.com> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Details can be found in the note on page 90 of the Project Document (hard copy version). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Mittermeier, R. A., Robles-Gil, P., Hoffmann, M., Pilgrim, J. D., Brooks, T. B., Mittermeier, C. G., Lamoreux, J. L. & Fonseca, G. A. B. 2004. *Hotspots Revisited: Earth’s Biologically Richest and Most Endangered Ecoregions*. CEMEX, Mexico City, Mexico. 390 pp. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. To qualify as a hotspot, a region must meet two strict criteria: it must contain at least 1,500 species of vascular plants (> 0.5 percent of the world’s total) as endemics, and it has to have lost at least 70 percent of its original habitat (Mittermeier et al., 2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy 2010*, Evaluation Document November 2010, No. 4. 32 pp. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. All four PAs are national nature reserves, although Taizishan was a provincial nature reserve at the time of the Project’s formulation. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-Financed Projects,* UNDP Evaluation Office, 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. In addition to a descriptive assessment, all criteria marked with an asterisk are rated. The relevant subsections are marked by an asterisk; the rating and its justification are provided immediately at the beginning of the subsection, followed by the evidence. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. It is interesting to note that only 36 (17%) of 218 approved UNDP-GEF Full-Size projects were awarded grants less than US $ 2million. In the case of China, 3 (19%) of 16 projects fall within these criteria. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. This is also referred to as the Taohe Forum, the term adopted by the Project following its establishment. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Not to be confused with the Project’s objective, which concerns sustainable financing, of which cost-effectiveness is an important aspect. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Exchange rate: US$ 1 = RMB 6.3 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Very little was achieved with respect to Outputs under Outcomes 1 and 2 in 2011. Efforts focused on establishing mechanisms at Provincial level for administering the Project, establishing PSC and provincial, as well as Project Management Units within each of the 4 demonstration PAs, designing project activities and developing ToRs for consultants (see **2011 APR**). All of this relates to the Project inception phase, which should have been completed within 3-6 months, especially given the Project’s relatively short time frame (4 years). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. These included a change in NPD, two changes in National Project Director (NPD) and a change in the Senior Biodiversity and PA Planning Specialist (see **2012 APR**). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. All the risk dimensions of sustainability are critical. Therefore, the overall rating for sustainability should not be higher than the lowest rated dimension (2012 *UNDP Guidance for Terminal Evaluation of GEF-funded and UNDP-implemented Projects*). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Project impacts are defined in the *2012 UNDP Guidance for Terminal Evaluation of GEF-funded and UNDP-implemented Projects* as: Actual or anticipated, positive or negative changes in global environmental benefit, as verified by environmental stress and/or status change, and also taking into account sustainable development impacts, including changed livelihoods. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Output 1.1 to be changed from “… Provincial Government” to “… Provincial Forestry Department” (Annex 9). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. This is known as ‘gradsect’ sampling, further details of which can be found in: Green M.J.B., How, R., Padmalal, U.K.G.K. and S.R.B Dissanayake (2009). The importance of monitoring biological diversity and its application in Sri Lanka. *Tropical Ecology, Special Issue* 50(1): 41-56. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. <http://www.gsgeftaohe.com> [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Details can be found in the note on page 90 of the Project Document (hard copy version). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct [↑](#footnote-ref-21)