**UNDP Management Response Template – Mid Term Review**

**Project Title: China’s Protected Area Reform (C-PAR) for Conserving Globally Significant Biodiversity (C-PAR1)**

**Date: Mar. 28, 2022**

UNDP PIMS ID: 5688

GEF ID: 9679

MTR Completion Date: 11 March 2022

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**Overall comments:**

The project is rated as ‘Satisfactory’ through the Mid Term Review (MTR). It is progressing very well at midterm.

With the strong support from all parts of FECO/MEE, UNDP, the 3 National Park(NP) pilots and the specialists and contractors, it is on target to meet all 12 project indicators and progress towards the objective and all three outcomes is satisfactory. The project is making an effective contribution to China’s protected area reform and institutional innovation, and to increasing the coverage of protected areas and improving effectiveness of protected area management. As part of this, the project is making an important contribution to national deliberations around the legal framework and policies for national parks by submitting the policy recommendations to the key governmental sections based on the project outputs and/or by workshops to reach consensus among key stakeholders. The project reported an expansion of the protected area network by 7.9404 million hectares, through the establishment in 2021 of the Three River Source and Giant Panda National Parks, which is an impressive increase. Besides, the Three River Source and Giant Panda National Parks are the first NPs in China, the project outputs in these NP pilots provided a leading model roles for the future NPs. The project has also recorded substantial improvements in PA management effectiveness and capacity and a highly significant increase in the available PA financing, and has made well-targeted interventions in national-level and local-level initiatives around tourism concessions, human-wildlife conflict and alternative livelihoods in PAs.

We agree with the conclusions of the MTR Report. This is a very objective and clearly thought-out report. For the affirmative part, the PMO will continue to maintain and strive to improve. For problems and suggestions, the PMO will take detailed actions and have proposals approved by the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and the Regional Technical Advisor (RTA).

During the remaining phases of the project, the PMO will strengthen the advantages, overcome difficulties and improve the weakness to work with all parties and continue to implement project activities in accordance with the approved work plans. Meantime, the project will focus on sharing, dissemination, and radiation of project lessons to ensure delivery of project results and realization of project objective.

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| **Evaluation Recommendation 1:** Finalize the Environmental and Social Risk Assessment (ESIA), Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) and Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) as a matter of urgency, while ensuring that SES requirements for disclosure are adhered to |
| **Management Response[[1]](#footnote-1):** Fully Accept |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking[[2]](#footnote-2)** |
| **Status[[3]](#footnote-3)** | **Comments** |
| 1.1 Finalize the ESIA and ESMP, and implement C-PAR1 ESMP and periodically monitoring in accordance with the comments from safeguard specialists until it is cleared by UNDP Safeguards Team | 2022.02 -2022.06 | UNDP/PMO/Social and environmental safeguards (SES) specialists | Initiated |  |
| 1.2 Establish Grievance Redress Mechanism per the ESMP immediately.  | 2022.02 -2022.06 | UNDP/PMO/Social and environmental safeguards (SES) specialists | Not initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation 2:** When the ESMP is finalized, review all project outputs and activities (including those completed, underway and future) against the ESMP to ensure risks are appropriately managed, make any necessary changes to the design of activities and identify any required remedial actions, and have the findings endorsed by the PSC and RTA |
| **Management Response:** Fully Accept |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 2.1 Review all project outputs and activities against the ESMP to ensure risks are appropriately managed, take any required remedial actions and have the findings endorsed by the PSC and RTA | 2022.06-2022.12 | PMO/ Pilot Sites /Subcontractors/Consultants/PSC/UNDP CO/RTA | Not initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation 3: (to be answered by UNDP)**Provide enhanced technical oversight and support, including targeted capacity building, to CO and other stakeholders for the complex processes involved in managing high-risk safeguards projects |
| **Management Response:** Fully Accept |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 3.1 UNDP CO will appoint focal point for safeguard issues to ensure the full compliance with SES standards and procedures. | 2022.03-2022.06 | UNDP CO | Initiated  |  |
| 3.2 UNDP Regional Office will enhance capacity building of CO and strengthen the technical oversight on safeguard compliance/ensurance. | 2022.04-2024.12 | UNDP Regional Office | Not initiated  |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation 4:** Review the processes followed in environmental and social risk management in this project since CEO endorsement, identify lessons learned and opportunities to improve safeguards outcomes in future projects |
| **Management Response:** Fully Accept |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 4.1 The lessons learned will be identified as important reference for other/future projects. Coordinate with other CPAR Project to prepare communication material (including Biodiversity Exposure and PANORAMA Solutions) | 2022.03-2024.12 | UNDP CO, RTA, PMO,  | Initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation 5:** Coordinate implementation of the recommendations on environmental and social risk management at a C-PAR programmatic level to maximize identification of systemic issues, opportunities for improvement and lessons learned |
| **Management Response:** Fully Accept |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 5.1 Coordinate the international safeguards consultants and 3 child project PMOs at a C-PAR programmatic level to maximize identification of systemic issues, opportunities for improvement and lessons learned | 2022.02-2024.12 | C-PAR1 PMO, C-PAR2 PMO, C-PAR3 PMO, UNDP CO, SES specialists | Initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation 6:** Prepare a revised results framework for approval by the PSC and RTA with all baselines and targets reviewed and confirmed and with clarity around how each will be measured and reported. |
| **Management Response:** Fully Accept |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 6.1 Prepare and submit the revised results framework to the PSC and RTA for approval | 2022. 03-2022.12 | PMO/PSC/UNDP CO /RTA | Initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation 7:** Establish end-of-project targets for the KAP survey under Indicator 12d and have these approved by the PSC and RTA |
| **Management Response:** Fully Accept |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 7.1 Establish and submit the propose of end-of-project targets to PSC and RTA for approval | 2022.03-2022.12 | PMO/specialists/PSC/RTA | Initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation 8:** Revise the wording of the EOP target for Indicator 3 to be more specific and measurable and to be within the control of the project to achieve |
| **Management Response:** Fully Accept |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 8.1 Revise and submit the revised target for Indicator 3 to the PSC and RTA for approval | 2022. 03-2022.12 | PMO/ specialists /UNDP CO/PSC/RTA | Initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation 9:** Revise the EOP target for Indicator 2 to shift the primary focus to the total area of expansion, without being specific about the contributions of the pilot NPs, and support this proposed change with an analysis of the biodiversity conservation benefits (including KBA coverage) that have been delivered by the establishment of the large areas of TRS and GP NPs. |
| **Management Response:** Fully Accept |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 9.1 Revise the EOP target for Indicator 2 to shift the primary focus to the total area of expansion and get approval by RTA. | 2022.03-2022.12 | PMO//Pilot sites /UNDP CO/RTA | Initiated |  |
| 9.2 Analysis of the biodiversity conservation benefits (including KBA coverage) that have been delivered by the establishment of the large areas of TRS and GP NPs. | 2022.03-2024.12 | PMO/Pilot sites/ UNDP CO/RTA | Initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation 10:** Reorient the strategy for Xianju to pursue its declaration as a protected area in a category other than a NP, to achieve enhanced biodiversity protection andfurther contribute to PA system reforms |
| **Management Response:** **Fully Accept** |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 10.1 Reorient the strategy for Xianju to pursue its declaration as a protected area in a category other than a NP further contribute to PA system reforms | 2022.03-2024.12 | PMO/Pilot sites | Initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation 11:** Prepare an end-of-project CPAR program report (at terminal evaluation) that assesses 1. Progress against program indicators and 2. Progress towards outcomes and achievements beyond individual child projects |
| **Management Response:** Fully Accept |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 11.1 Accumulate C-PAR child projects program reports and have them in stock (1. Progress against program indicators and 2. Progress towards outcomes and achievements beyond individual child projects) | 2022.03-2024.12 | PMO, C-PAR2 PMO, C-PAR3 PMO, C-PAR4 PMO, C-PAR5 PMO, C-PAR6 PMO | Initiated |  |
| 11.2 Draft the end-of-project C-PAR program report (1. Progress against program indicators and 2. Progress towards outcomes and achievements beyond individual child projects) | 2024.06-2024.12 | PMO | Not Initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation 12:** Improve regular interaction between those involved in related project work at national and local levels to provide better strategic guidance, share knowledge and facilitate input to each other’s work |
| **Management Response:** Fully Accept |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 12.1 Improve bimonthly meeting mechanisms between PMO and 3 pilot sites to provide better strategic guidance, share knowledge and facilitate input to each other’s work | 2022.03-2024.12 | PMO/Pilot sites | Initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation 13:** Use the expertise and enthusiasm of the PSC by continuing to hold more than one PSC meeting per year and involving them in strategic discussions about the complex matters that the project is addressing |
| **Management Response:** Fully Accept |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 13.1 Adopt more flexible approaches to involve PSC members in strategic discussions about the complex matters that the project is addressing | 2022.03-2024.12 | PMO, PSC | Initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation 14:** Drive a new focus on achieving targets for female participation and on optimising gender mainstreaming outcomes, by 1. developing annual genderaction plans and 2. updating the gender action plan that was developed during project preparation (Annex I of the project document) after the completion ofthe ESIA, in line with the SESP risk mitigation measure described in the project document |
| **Management Response:** Fully Accept |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 14.1 Develop and update annual gender action plans after ESIA is finalized in line with the SESP risk mitigation measure described in the project document | 2022.07-2024.12 | PMO/Pilot sites/gender focal points/4 gender experts | Not Initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation 15:** Develop a corridor policy and guideline that can be used by projects for ecological-based planning, establishment and management of corridors. |
| **Management Response:** Fully Accept |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 15.1 Develop a corridor policy and guideline that can be used by projects for ecological-based planning, establishment and management of corridors | 2022.06-2024.12 | PMO, specialists | Not Initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation 16:** Undertake trial implementation of the climate-responsive PA planning and monitoring guideline at the three NP pilots, to inform biodiversity managementin the pilots and to validate and strengthen the national guideline and improve the quality of the scientific assessments. |
| **Management Response:** Fully Accept |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 16.1 Develop climate-responsive PA planning and monitoring guideline | 2022.03-2024.12 | PMO, specialists | Initiated |  |
| 16.2 Demonstrate trail implementation among the 3 NP pilots, to inform biodiversity management in the pilots and to validate and strengthen the national guideline and improve the quality of the scientific assessments. | 2023.12-2024.12 | PMO, specialists | Not Initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation 17:** Develop a sustainability plan during the final year of the project to identify how the project’s results can be continued beyond the GEF funding and upscaledwhere possible. |
| **Management Response:** Fully Accept |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 17.1 Develop a sustainability plan in 2024 and upscalewhere possible. | 2024.06-2024.12 | PMO, FECO, specialists | Not Initiated |  |

1. Select one: Fully Accept, Partially Accept, Reject [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Select one: Not initiated, Initiated, Completed, Completed, No longer applicable [↑](#footnote-ref-3)