**Management response to the recommendations of Terminal Evaluation Report-** **Strengthening the Management Effectiveness of the Sub-system of Wetland Protected Areas for Conservation of Globally Significant Biodiversity**

The project CBPF-MSL: Strengthening the Management Effectiveness of the Sub-system of Wetland Protected Areas for Conservation of Globally Significant Biodiversity (NP project) is nearing the end after more than five years of smooth implementation with fruitful results under the strong support of leaders and stakeholders at different levels and through the efforts made by all project team members and partners.

The independent Terminal Evaluation (TE) has been carried out during Apr. 8-12, 2019 by a team of one international consultant (Mr. James Lenoci) /team leader and one national consultant (Dr. Liu Shuo) to review the project design and implementation in accordance with GEF guidelines.

The TE was an evidence-based assessment from the aspects of achieving expected project outcomes; the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of project implementation; the issues requiring decisions and actions; and the lessons learned about project design, implementation and management. The TE mission occurred interviews and group discussions with 25 involved stakeholders including government officials, service providers, PMUs and PMOs, etc.

The first draft TE report was received and circulated for comments from UNDP, CTA, and PMO on 22 May, which were compiled and sent back to the TE team. PMO received the final version of the TE report on 26 June 2019.

The TE concluded that the project has made satisfactory progress towards outcomes. The overall rating applied for the Project is “satisfactory” as evidenced by the achievements. The TE report included 6 recommendations to support improving project effectiveness and enhance the likelihood that project results will be sustainable after GEF funding ceases. All of the 6 TE recommendations are essentially agreed or supported by the PMO. The full responses to the specific recommendations are in the table below.

| **No.** | **Recommendation** | **Responsible Entities** | **Timeframe** | **Response** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project** | | | |  |
|  | **Prepare a sustainability strategy and action plan**. A sustainability strategy and action plan should be developed to guide enabling stakeholders in ensuring project results are sustained after GEF funding ceases. The strategy and action plan should be based on the project theory of change, e.g., focusing on the assumptions and impact drivers for achieving long-term impacts. The plan should outline the actions requiring follow-up after project closure, assigning roles and responsibilities and identifying timeframes. | **PMO,CTA** | Before project closure | Agreed. A sustainability strategy and action plan will be developed soon together with CTA to ensure the project to achieve not only a wrapping-up of all projected outcomes and outputs of the national project but a thoroughgoing assessment and summarization of the overall CBPF-MSL programmatic approach thus enhancing impacts and the visibility of results of the CBPF-MSL programmatic approach as a whole as outlined in the project document, and guarantee the sustainability from mainstreaming, environmental, social, institutional and financial aspects after closure of GEF CBPF-MSL programme. |
|  | **Reassess the GEF-5 BD-1 tracking tools, including the Financial Sustainability Scorecard and summary of METT scores.** The inconsistencies in the Financial Sustainability Scorecard should be resolved, and the METT scores for the 42 wetland nature reserves should be quality reviewed and the reporting updated. | **PMO** | Before project closure | Agreed. PMO will work together with the METT consultant and colleagues from provincial projects to quality review the METT including the Financial Sustainability Scorecard and score summary and the METT scores for the involved 38 PAs (excluding 4 PAs in Jiangxi Province, as FAO-GEF Jiangxi Project is still in the implementation phase) will be updated and the inconsistencies in the Financial Sustainability Scorecard also will be solved. |
|  | **Prepare and disseminated a knowledge product summarizing the results of overseas learning exchanges.** The international best practices and approaches shared during the overseas learning exchanges have not been documented. A knowledge product should be prepared and disseminated among national and provincial PA agencies and shared with project development and implementation teams of other GEF-financed projects and programs in China. | **PMO,CTA** | Before project closure | Agreed. All the international best practices and approaches shared during the overseas learning exchanges have been documented in one report, but these best practices have not been fully refined and shared with provincial projects. Before our project closure, PMO will work together with CTA and service providers to refine those best practices and approaches to prepare a knowledge product and disseminate among the involved stakeholders of overall CBPF-MSL Programme and other GEF-financed projects and programs in China as well. |
| **Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project** | | | |  |
|  | **Apply the METT (or similar tool) to wetland parks.** Wetland parks make up a large proportion of the newly established wetland PA’s; however, METT assessments were not carried out for these types of PA’s under the project. | **DWM** | Within 1-2 years | Agreed. The TE report have been submitted to Department of Wetland Management(DWM) of NFGA timely after receipt, Mr. Bao Daming, Deputy Director General said DWM will make full use of the valuable experiences and best practices gained from the implementation of the project over five years and combine with the current situation of wetland PAs, Including the nature reserves and wetland parks, the part of METT adapt to be used for wetland PAs in China will be refined and Integrated into the M&E tool to extend nationwide through the trainings and workshops. Furthermore, the Ramsar-METT which was facilitated by Ramsar Convention Secretariat will be applied to all Ramsar Sites in China. |
|  | **Finalize a standard procedure for assessing wetlands coverage.** Building upon the pilot demonstration of dynamic monitoring implemented on the project, it is important to finalize a standard procedure for assessing wetlands coverage in each province. | DWM/**NFGA**, MNR | Within 1-2 years | Agreed. The successful pilot demonstration of dynamic monitoring implemented on the project have been extended to other provinces by DWM, and also has been used for the third national land survey organized by Ministry of Natural Resources (“wetland” type in updated land use category), this is very important reference for DWM to use to make a standard procedure for assessing wetlands coverage. |
| **Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives** | | | |  |
|  | **Carry out a national level assessment of the wetland PA sub-system and develop an expansion strategy**. Much of the expansion of the wetland PA sub-system has been through establishment of wetland parks, and it is uncertain how these parks are contributing towards objectives associated with biodiversity conservation and protection of ecological functions and services. The national level assessment should be used in the development of a national wetland PA sub-system expansion strategy. | **NFGA** | Within 5 years | Agreed. The National Forestry and Grassland Administration formally established in 2018 during the national institutional reform and the main responsibility is earnestly intensify the protection of the ecosystem, carry out important ecosystem protection and restoration projects, strengthen the overall coordination of the supervision and management of forest, grassland and wetlands, vigorously promote land greening and safeguard the national ecological security. The establishment of a protected area system with a focus on national parks will be accelerated. All kinds of protected areas will be conscientiously sorted out, standardized and integrated in a united way, and a consistent, standardized and efficient national park system will be set up with Chinese characteristics.  And responsible for the supervision and management of all kinds of protected areas. To draw up plans and related national standards for different protected areas. To be in charge of the establishment, plan and construction and concession of national parks. To be responsible for the asset management of the natural resource of protected areas such as national parks where the central government directly exercises their ownership, and for the national land use. To put forth review and proposal and submit for approval according to stipulated procedure for new establishment or adjustment of national-level protected areas. To organize and appraise the applications for the World Natural Heritage, and appraise, jointly with other organizations concerned, the applications for both the World Natural Heritage and World Cultural Heritage. To be responsible for the related work of biodiversity conservation.  Currently, China has about 11,800 PAs of various types, accounting for 18% of the country's land area. In the coming years, NFGA will focus on analyzing conservation gaps and integrating various protected areas to develop an expansion strategy and the ecological functions and services of different types PAs will be assessed, including wetland PA sub-system. The national level assessment will also contribute to the development of a national wetland PA sub-system expansion strategy. |