TCR Validation Report
July 2021

People's Republic of China: Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Land Management in the Western Regions

Reference Number: TCRV-2021-003
Project Number: 48116-001
TA Number: 8872

Independent Evaluation ADB

Raising development impact through evaluation

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
CPMO	–	central project management office
DMF	–	design and monitoring framework
GEF	–	Global Environment Facility
ha	–	hectares
IED	–	Independent Evaluation Department
PPMO	–	provincial project management office
PRC	–	People's Republic of China
SAP	–	strategy and action plan
SFA	–	State Forestry Administration
SLM	–	sustainable land management
TA	–	technical assistance
TCR	–	technical assistance completion report
TCRV	–	TCR validation report

NOTE

In this report, "$" refers to United States dollars.

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT VALIDATION REPORT[1]

1. PROJECT DATA TA No. 8872

TA Name	Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Land Management in the Western Regions	**Approval Date**	9 Jan 2015	**Approved** ($)	5,250,776.00
		Signing Date	18 Feb 2015	**Revised** ($)	Not applicable
Country	People's Republic of China	**Planned Completion Date**	31 Jan 2018	**Disbursed** ($)	4,605,917.82
		Actual Completion Date	31 Jan 2019	**Undisbursed** ($)	644,858.18
Department	East Asia Department	**TA Type**	TRTA ( ) KSTA ( ) PATA ( )	**Sources of Funding**	Global Environment Facility
Sector and Subsector	Agriculture and Natural Resources		CDTA (✓) RDTA ( ) PPTA ( ) RETA ( )	**Executing Agency**	State Forestry Administration

CDTA = capacity development technical assistance, KSTA = knowledge and support technical assistance, PATA = policy and advisory technical assistance, PPTA = project preparation technical assistance, RETA = regional technical assistance, TA = technical assistance, TRTA = transaction technical assistance.

2. DESIGN AND MONITORING FRAMEWORK AND RESULTS

Objective	The technical assistance (TA) project aimed to support the State Forestry Administration (SFA) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) with its increased responsibilities to coordinate the implementation of the new 10-year sustainable land management (SLM) strategy for regional expansion and upscaling of investment programs under the PRC–Global Environment Facility (GEF) partnership on land degradation.[2] The partnership sought to combat land degradation, reduce poverty, and rehabilitate dryland ecosystems in the western region of the PRC using an integrated ecosystem management approach. The first phase of the partnership was implemented in 2002–2012 in six dryland provinces or autonomous regions. The second phase of the partnership proposed expansion to 11 western provinces in addition to the 6 provinces included in the first phase.
TA Rationale	Through its continued engagement in and support for the partnership, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) aimed to support the PRC's sustainable development agenda, as presented during the Third Plenum of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. This specific TA project intended to support the SFA in strengthening its capacity for effective implementation of the new strategy, as prepared under ADB's TA for the Integrated Strategy for Sustainable Land Management in Dryland Ecosystems. Climate change and environmental sustainability were key considerations, including greater preparedness for extreme weather events and conservation of natural resources. The TA was in line with ADB's Midterm Review of Strategy 2020, which called for expanding efforts in the agriculture and natural resources sector to support inclusive growth. It was also in line with ADB's country partnership strategy 2011–2015 for the PRC in supporting inclusive and environmentally sustainable growth.

[1] Team members: C. Ramos-Galacgac (initial reviewer), D. Lucks (evaluator consultant) D. Kapoor (validator consultant).

[2] ADB. 2012. *Technical Assistance to the People's Republic of China for Integrated Strategy for Sustainable Land Management in Dryland Ecosystems*. Manila.

Results Levels	Indicators	IED Comment on Evaluability of Indicators
Outcome Strengthened capacity of the PRC government to introduce innovations in sustainable and climate-resilient land management	By 2019[a] a. At least two additional investments leveraged to implement three provincial and one autonomous region strategy and action plans (SAP) for SLM (Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region; and Gansu, Qinghai, and Shaanxi provinces) (baseline 2014: 0 additional investment) b. Implementation of two new SAPs started for strengthening institutional and technical capacity to support SLM in Guizhou and Sichuan provinces (baseline 2014: 0)	Evaluable. Indicators are specific and measurable assuming that investment and implementation of SAPs are considered leading indicators for strengthened capacity. Both indicator components are achievable, time-bound, and relevant, with the assumptions that (i) the national and provincial governments can mobilize sufficient human and financial resources; and (ii) they remain committed to implementing the provincial SLM SAPs.
Output 1 Resilience of landscape ecosystems to climate change improved (Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region; and Gansu, Qinghai, and Shaanxi provinces)	By 2019 [a] 1a. Land productivity improvements promoted on 1,803,321 ha of land in four provinces and/or autonomous regions (baseline 2014: 0 ha) 1b. Sustainable forest management and forested area management in Qinghai strengthened on about 442,200 ha (baseline 2014: 0 ha)	Evaluable. On the whole, indicators are relevant, actionable, and time-bound. Some more specific measures of climate change impacts would be useful, especially if prior work has been done in these provinces (Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region; and Gansu, Qinghai, and Shaanxi provinces). For example, increase of carbon stock noted as an achievement for indicator 1b. In addition, greater clarity regarding 'promoting' land productivity improvements would have been helpful.
Output 2 Management of degraded lands to support rural livelihoods and green development improved (Guizhou and Sichuan provinces)	By 2019 [a] 2a. 16 new SLM innovation sites established covering 25,000 ha and supporting sustainable livelihood systems for more than 2,000 people in six provinces and/or autonomous regions (baseline 2014: 0 site) 2b. Enhanced community awareness and reduced vulnerability to climate change for 3,000 residents in the 16 SLM innovation sites (baseline 2014: 0 resident)	Evaluable. The indicators are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

Results Levels	Indicators	IED Comment on Evaluability of Indicators
	2c. Demonstration of green development on about 30,000 ha in Guizhou and Sichuan provinces (baseline 2014: 0 ha)	Rationale for focus of 2c on two specific provinces of Guizhou and Sichuan is not stated.
Output 3 Enabling environment and capacity for scaling up of SLM in Guizhou and Sichuan provinces enhanced	By 2019 [a] 3a. Two new SAPs for SLM in Guizhou and Sichuan provinces approved (baseline 2014: none) 3b. Technical SLM capacity enhanced for 2,000 local beneficiaries in Guizhou and Sichuan provinces (baseline 2014: none)	Evaluable. The indicators are specific, measurable, achievable, time-bound, and relevant.
Output 4 Project management supported	By 2019 [a] 4a. Project consultants engaged on time 4b. Project reports submitted on time 4c. ADB audit requirements complied with	Evaluable. The indicators are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. However, these are project management activities, which, per the design and monitoring framework (DMF) guidelines, do not produce outputs and are not to be included as outputs.[3] Nonetheless they are indicative of efficiency.

[a] The TA report DMF indicated "by 2018." The TCR indicated "by 2019." The East Asia Department (EARD), through a memorandum dated 13 December 2016, requested for the approval of the TA completion date extension from 31 January 2018 to 31 January 2019.

3. PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Relevance

Item	Highly Relevant	Relevant	Less than Relevant	Irrelevant
TCR Rating		✓		
TCRV Rating		✓		
IED Rationale	In terms of strategic alignment, the TA project was in line with ADB's strategic priorities, specifically as specified under ADB's Midterm Review of Strategy 2020, which called for expanding efforts in the agriculture and natural resources sector to support inclusive growth. It was also aligned with ADB's country partnership strategy, 2011–2015 for the PRC, which supported inclusive and environmentally sustainable growth. The TA project's focus on SLM and climate-resilient management is likewise consistent with the government's thirteenth Five-Year Plan, 2015–2020. As designed, 16 innovation pilot sites were included as the priority locations for ecological restoration and SLM programs at the provincial level. From a TA design perspective, the results chain was challenging to analyze in detail, given			

[3] ADB. 2020. *Guidelines for Preparing and Using a Design and Monitoring Framework: Sovereign Operations and Technical Assistance.* Manila.

	that this TA project is only a small part of the whole partnership strategy. The rationale for expansion to Guizhou and Sichuan provinces named in the TA, and not the others in the expanded partnership, is unclear. Most of the capacity building TA efforts were around trainings and workshops, and demonstration sites. The choice of TA type as a capacity development TA was sound. On the whole, this validation assesses the TA relevant.

Effectiveness

Item	Highly Effective	Effective	Less than Effective	Ineffective
TCR Rating	✓			
TCRV Rating		✓		
Evidence of Outputs Achieved	Based on the TCR, the following were the TA achievements: 1a. Implemented restoration of degraded grassland and farmland on 1,810,000 hectares (ha) of land in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and the Shaanxi, Gansu, and Qinghai provinces, resulting in 10% increase in land productivity. 1b. Implemented sustainable forest management on 442,214 ha of land in Qinghai, increasing the forested area by 1.2% by 2017. 2a. Established 16 innovation pilot sites with a total area of 25,149 ha for SLM and supported sustainable livelihoods for more than 2,000 people in six provinces/autonomous regions by 2017 (4 pilot sites in Gansu, 3 in Inner Mongolia, 3 in Qinghai, 3 in Shaanxi, 2 in Sichuan, and 1 in Guizhou). 2b. Conducted awareness programs for over 3,000 villagers at the 16 SLM innovation pilot sites, covering topics such as climate change impacts, alternative fuel and energy supplies, and adaptive measures in agriculture farming. 2c. Demonstrated green development at a total of three SLM innovation sites with a total area over 30,000 ha in Sichuan (two sites) and Guizhou (one site), through agroforestry and higher-value crops such as tea trees, decorative plants, and Chinese medicine herbs. 3a. Developed a strategy and action plan (approved in 2018) for land degradation control each for Guizhou and Sichuan provinces, which also included a comprehensive assessment of the provincial legal and policy regime for land degradation, and a framework of SLM monitoring indicators and approaches. 3b. Conducted 39 training workshops and 9 national study tours for more than 2,400 local officials and farmers in Guizhou (22 workshops) and Sichuan (17 workshops) provinces. 4a. Recruited 11 individual consultants (5 for the central project management office [CPMO] and 6 for the provincial project management offices [PPMOs]) and started working in July 2016. The consulting firm mobilized consultants effectively in July 2017. 4b. Three annual workplans and three annual reports submitted by the CPMO during the TA implementation and one completion report 3 months after the TA completion. Three project implementation reports were prepared by ADB and submitted to the ADB–GEF Focal. At the beginning of the project, a tracking tool for land degradation was established and was subsequently updated after the TA completion. The GEF terminal evaluation report was prepared and circulated with this TA completion report. 4c. The CPMO and PPMOs have fully complied with ADB audit requirements. The CPMO submitted three audit reports.			
Evidence of Outcomes Achieved	Based on the TCR, two loans were processed. One loan was approved, which is the Yangtze River Green Ecological Corridor Comprehensive Agriculture Development Project that supports six provinces (including Guizhou and Sichuan) in the Yangtze River Basin on soil improvement and water conservation			

	and agricultural environment following SLM principles. Another loan is being prepared supporting ecological rehabilitation and ecosystem management in Gansu, Qinghai, and Shaanxi provinces. Also, per the TCR, SAPs for SLM have been implemented in Gansu, Qinghai, and Shaanxi provinces and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. SAPs for Guizhou and Sichuan provinces have been likewise developed and have been implemented since 2018 to support SLM in the provinces.
IED Rationale	Despite the self-rating of highly effective, the documentation of achievements in the TCR does not clearly present data to demonstrate results in excess of expected performance. Outputs are provided in nominal terms without comparison to targets to provide evidence as to whether targets are achieved (effective) or exceeded (highly effective). Also, given that this TA project is supporting a broader partnership, attribution of results to the project, rather than other activities undertaken as part of the partnership, is unclear. Clearer evidence of adoption of the training provided or the adoption of standards or policies, with associated on-ground results at the national or provincial levels would be beneficial to demonstrate achievement of outcomes. The effectiveness section in the TCR stated "Institutional capacity for SLM at the local level was strengthened effectively through extensive technical training (11,230 people) and awareness improvement (1,850 people)." It is unclear how these numbers were aggregated. Reporting of results lacked specificity, e.g., "over 3,000 villagers' or "for more than 2,400 local officials and farmers," and did not provide specific numbers that would have demonstrated an overachievement of targets (required for a highly effective rating). Consequently, this validation assesses the TA effective.

Efficiency

Item	Highly Efficient	Efficient	Less than Efficient	Inefficient
TCR Rating		✓		
TCRV Rating		✓		
IED Rationale	In terms of process efficiency, the TA project utilized 87.7% of its budget to deliver the envisaged outputs. This disbursement includes the granting of loans to the national or central government, but it is unclear how or if this is distributed further to the provincial government level. Also, the TA report outlined expected in-kind support and co-financing. However, the TCR did not discuss any details about this support. The TA was implemented for 4 years, inclusive of the 1-year extension in the TA completion date. The extension was requested to cover the startup delay due to the late signing of the grant agreement and subsequent slow consultant recruitment. As per the TCR, about $644,858 of the grant was undisbursed or saved due to lower expenses for pilot sites and consulting services. In terms of socioeconomic value, the TCR indicated that the SLM pilots benefited the local communities by increasing their income per capita by 35% from 2015 to 2018, (although this number appears to be too big an increase to be attributable to a 4-year TA) while promoting SLM approaches in domestic ecological restoration programs. On the whole, this validation assesses the TA efficient.			

Criterion	Weight	Rating Value	Weighted Rating
Relevance	0.35	2	0.70
Effectiveness	0.35	2	0.70
Efficiency	0.30	2	0.60
Overall Assessment			**2.00**

Criterion	Weight	Rating Value	Weighted Rating
(weighted average of above criteria)[4]			

Overall Rating

Item	Highly Successful	Successful	Less than Successful	Unsuccessful
TCR Rating	✓ (based on the computation of the TCR's individual ratings)	✓ (TCR's overall assessment)		
TCRV Rating		✓		
IED Rationale	Overall, this validation assesses the TA project successful. The TA project was relevant given its strategic alignment and appropriate choice of TA type, though the rationale for targeting specific provinces as part of the TA coverage was unclear. The TA project was effective in achieving its envisaged outcomes and outputs although insufficient evidence of overachievement that would result in a highly effective rating as per the TCR. For this reason, the TA is rated effective. The TA was efficient in terms of processes and cost and provides evidence to demonstrate socioeconomic value.			

4. SUSTAINABILITY

Item	Highly Likely	Likely	Less Likely	Unlikely	NA
TCR Rating		✓			
TCRV Rating		✓			
IED Rationale	As per the TCR, local governments in the 16 pilot sites have scaled up the SLM and climate-resilient management measures in their own programs or projects for ecological restoration. The TCR likewise indicated that the SLM strategy and action plans developed for Guizhou and Sichuan provinces newly added in the TA project provided a process and framework to the government for systematically and sustainably planning the ecological restoration programs. In terms of financial sustainability, it is assumed that the two loan programs would provide resources at the central or national level. The TCR did not comment on the financial situation and resource adequacy at the provincial government level, and if any mechanisms are in place for the provinces to access loans granted to the central or national government. Based on the Report and Recommendation of the President, the Yangtze River Green Ecological Corridor Comprehensive Agriculture Development Project "will be implemented in five provinces and one municipality in the upper and middle reaches of the Yangtze River Basin, notably the provinces of Guizhou, Hubei, Hunan, Sichuan, and Yunnan; and Chongqing Municipality.[5] Thus, with this future resource availability, this validation assesses the TA likely sustainable.				

[4] Each sub-rating is assigned a numerical value: e.g., highly relevant = 3, relevant = 2, less than relevant = 1, and irrelevant = 0. The compound criterion for performance rating is: highly successful (overall weighted average greater than 2.30), successful (overall weighted average greater than or equal to 1.65 and less than or equal to 2.30), less than successful (overall weighted average greater than or equal to 0.75 and less than 1.65), and unsuccessful (overall weighted average is less than 0.75).

[5] ADB. 2018. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Loan to the People's Republic of China for the Yangtze River Green Ecological Corridor Comprehensive Agriculture Development Project.* Manila.

Lessons Learned
(1–3 implementation, 4–7 development results, 8 others)

Criteria	TCR Self-Assessment	IED Comment
1. Design and/or planning		There is no lesson indicated in the TCR. This validation offers this lesson: A TA project such as this, when part of a larger and longer-term TA partnership, would benefit from specifying clearly how the design and planning fit together with the whole to allow for attribution analysis of results at completion. This would make the overall design and results chain easier to analyze for progress and ensure previous learnings are incorporated in subsequent interventions. It is also important that the DMF developed for this purpose is reflective of intended project activities and outcomes of these specific activities in the context of the larger intervention.
2. Implementation and/or delivery	The TA implementation followed the same institutional arrangements which was adopted in the previous series of TA projects under the Partnership and proved functional and effective in coordinating the inter-sectoral government agencies. Sufficient government counterpart funds were provided both by the central and provincial governments and ensured successful implementation of the TA activities and delivery of the expected outputs. The planned consultant for SLM project investment was not recruited as per the government request, as the government had secured two loan projects for SLM or watershed management with ADB, one through SFA and the other one involving Guizhou and Sichuan through Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. At the beginning of the TA implementation, PPMOs had difficulties in conducting procurement due to insufficient knowledge and experiences in ADB's procurement policies and practices. Meanwhile, no procurement agent was engaged to help PPMOs because of the small procurement amount. ADB's project team gave	The TCR text is a conclusion rather than a lesson. This could be rephrased as "Even if no specific procurement expertise is available, internal project training can provide an avenue to guide implementation to maintain effectiveness and timeliness and should include better orientation on procurement processes." This validation offers another lesson: Maintaining implementation arrangements from a previous phase allowed the TA project to build upon pre-existing relationships and take advantage of learnings from the previous phase.

Criteria	TCR Self-Assessment	IED Comment
	several rounds of training for provincial staff and made sure the project activities could be carried out effectively and on schedule.	
3. Management (staffing, including consultants)	The government's ownership was the key to ensuring the effective TA implementation and the achievements of capacity building particularly at the provincial level. As a delegated TA, the individual consultants supported directly the operational functions of the CPMO and PPMOs. The PPMOs allocated sufficient staff resources and counterpart funds to undertake the planned TA activities effectively.	The TCR text is a description and conclusion rather than a lesson. This could be rephrased as "Government ownership, both at the national and provincial levels, is critical to ensure successful TA project outcomes." (This lesson could include further details about what specific actions were taken to foster ownership and which approaches were most effective).
4. Knowledge building	Knowledge generation and sharing has been a great success under the TA. Two case studies were included and published in a United Nations volume for sustainable development goals: A Better World (2018). The other 46 papers which were prepared by either consultants or provincial project staff have been peer-reviewed and published in national or international science or technical journals. The TA was presented at 16 international conferences or events, including United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification conference of parties (2017), international ecological forum (2017), and meetings organized by international development agencies such as International Fund for Agriculture Development, Global Environment Facility, and Food and Agriculture Organization, etc. SLM and climate resilient measures were documented following the format of World Overview for Conservation Approaches and Technologies, a data sharing platform established under FAO. The CPMO prepared 25 and PPMOs developed 70 technical research reports related to the TA activities, some of which were taken by the provincial government as a local technical codes or standards for cropping or land management.	The TCR text provided further detail on results rather than a lesson. The large number of useful and broadly distributed knowledge products produced through the TA is impressive. For lessons learned, there needs to be better articulation of the success factors driving the positive results as these would form an important lesson. There was no indicator for generation of knowledge products in the DMF, yet the documents appear to be linked with the achievement of outcomes. A lesson to be learned here is that aligning the DMF with anticipated project activities and respective outcomes is important to demonstrate successful performance.

Criteria	TCR Self-Assessment	IED Comment
	( ) Awareness ( ) Technical product ( ) Adoption or uptake ( ) Building institutional or system capacity ( ) National or sector practice (guidelines) ( ) Policy, legal standards ( ) Academic literature	
5. Stakeholder participation	The TA promoted stakeholder participation extensively. In addition to communities involved in the pilots, public awareness programs were also extended to local schools. Non-government organizations were also engaged in some pilots, such as, The Nature Conservancy for pilots conducted in Inner Mongolia. During implementation, an expert panel was also established at the central level to provide overall technical guidance.	For this TA, it is not quite clear how the broader involvement of stakeholders, beyond the expert panel, was helpful or important for the project's implementation or the mechanisms that were successful in promoting participation. However, a lesson here is the importance of involving a broad range of stakeholders—such as local communities, public schools, and nongovernment organizations—during project implementation and identifying opportunities for expanding participation where possible.
6. Partnership (and cofinancing)	( ) Internal to ADB ( ) External to ADB (may also include ADB)	There is no lesson mentioned in the TCR. A lesson here would be to use the TA project as an opportunity to design ADB loan programs as needed to sustain benefits. A further lesson could reflect the TA experience with cofinancing mechanisms to ensure sustainability.
7. Replication and scaling up	The SLM has been included as a major element in many government-funded programs for ecological restoration. The pilots undertaken under the TA have also been replicated to a larger coverage in the province through government programs or plans. Follow-up consultation would be useful to track the coverage and effectiveness of the SLM measures. ( ) Replication ( ) Scaling up	The first two sentences of this recommendation provide project results and should be included in earlier sections of the TCR. The recommendation is valid and could be expanded to identify suggested stakeholder groups for the consultation based on project experience.

Criteria	TCR Self-Assessment	IED Comment
8. Post-TA financial resources	( ) ADB ( ) Government ( ) Private Sector ( ) Other	There is no lesson mentioned in the TCR. An important lesson is to ensure financial resource adequacy to sustain the results and impact of the TA project and any follow-up actions such as the consultation.
9. Others		

TCR Quality Assessment (Reviewer's Assessment)

TCR Quality	TCRV				IED Comment
	HS	S	LS	US	
Coherence of TCR (25%)		✓			The TCR did not clearly articulate the relationship of the impact, outcomes, outputs, and activities, as it appeared to be a small part of the larger and longer-term partnership. This is a TA design issue; however, some context could have been provided in the TCR.
Quality of Data (25%)			✓		There is some data inconsistency in the TCR, i.e., there were differences in the TCR from the number reported in the TCR DMF. This was clarified to be a typing error. Moreover, greater specificity and analysis of data could have been provided to avoid vague qualifiers such as "over" or "more than" and increase robustness of analysis.
Quality of Lessons Learned (50%)			✓		The lessons offered by the TCR were limited and consisted largely of a summary of the TA project findings. The TCR self-assessment lessons were often not formulated as a lesson statement or are common lessons.
Overall TCR Quality (weighted as per performance) [6]			✓		Based on the sub-ratings and findings above, the summative TCR quality assessment is computed to be less than satisfactory. The TCR coherence was satisfactory. However, the quality of data, and quality of lessons were found to be less than satisfactory. Hence the overall TCR quality score weighted as per performance is 1.25, which leads to a less than satisfactory classification.
Further IED Action (e.g., in-depth evaluation)	Y	**N**	Reason:		
Other Remarks					

[6] Each sub-rating is assigned a numerical value: e.g., highly satisfactory = 3, satisfactory = 2, less than satisfactory = 1, and unsatisfactory = 0. The compound criterion for the TCR quality rating is: highly satisfactory (overall weighted average greater than 2.30), satisfactory (overall weighted average greater than or equal to 1.65 and less than or equal to 2.30), less than satisfactory (overall weighted average greater than or equal to 0.75 and less than 1.65), and unsatisfactory (overall weighted average is less than 0.75).

Attachment 1: Description of the Technical Assistance

The technical assistance is described in the technical assistance completion report.[1]

Attachment 2: Design and Monitoring Framework

The design and monitoring framework is in the technical assistance report.[2]

Planned and Actual Achievements of the Technical Assistance

Performance Indicators	Planned	Actual	Reason for Variance
Outcome Strengthened capacity of the PRC government to introduce innovations in sustainable and climate-resilient land management	By 2018 [a] a. At least two additional investments leveraged to implement three provincial and one autonomous region SAPs for SLM (Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region; and Gansu, Qinghai, and Shaanxi provinces) (baseline 2014: 0 additional investment) b. Implementation of two new SAPs started for strengthening institutional and technical capacity to support SLM in Guizhou and Sichuan	a1. A loan for Yangtze River Green Ecological Corridor Comprehensive Agriculture Development Project was approved by ADB in November 2018 and is under implementation. The loan supports six provinces (including Guizhou and Sichuan) in the Yangtze River Basin to improve soil and water conservation and agricultural environment following SLM principles. SAPs for SLM have been implemented in Gansu, Qinghai, and Shaanxi provinces and Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. a2. A new loan project is being prepared to support ecological rehabilitation and ecosystem management in Gansu, Qinghai, and Shaanxi provinces. b. Guizhou and Sichuan provinces have developed their respective SAPs, which have been implemented since 2018 to support SLM in the province.	NA

[1] ADB. 2021. *Technical Assistance Completion Report: Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Land Management in the Western Regions in the People's Republic of China.* Manila. https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-documents/48116/48116-001-tcr-en.pdf.

[2] ADB. 2014. *Technical Assistance to the People's Republic of China for Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Land Management in the Western Regions.* Manila. https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-document/152842/48116-001-tar.pdf.

	provinces (baseline 2014: 0)		
Outputs 1. Resilience of Landscape ecosystems to climate change improved (Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region; and Gansu, Qinghai, and Shaanxi provinces)	By 2018 [a] 1a. Land productivity improvements promoted on 1,803,321 ha of land in four provinces and/or autonomous regions (baseline 2014: 0 ha) 1b. Sustainable forest management and forested area management in Qinghai strengthened on about 442,200 ha (baseline 2014: 0 ha)	1a. Restoration of degraded grassland and farmland were implemented on 1,810,000 ha of land in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Shaanxi, Gansu, and Qinghai provinces, resulting in an increase of 10% in land productivity. 1b. Sustainable forest management was implemented on 442,214 ha of land in Qinghai, increasing the forested area by 1.2% by 2017. The improved forestry management and the increased forested area are estimated to increase the carbon stock by 83,782-ton CO2 equivalent by 2023 in Qinghai.	NA
2. Management of degraded lands to support rural livelihoods and green development improved (Guizhou and Sichuan provinces)	By 2018 [a] 2a. 16 new SLM innovation sites established covering 25,000 ha and supporting sustainable livelihood systems for more than 2,000 people in six provinces and/or autonomous regions (baseline 2014: 0 site) 2b. Enhanced community awareness and reduced vulnerability to climate change for 3,000 residents in the 16 SLM innovation sites (baseline 2014: 0 resident) 2c. Demonstration of green development on about 30,000 ha in Guizhou and Sichuan provinces (baseline 2014: 0 ha)	2a. 16 innovation pilot sites were established with a total area of 25,149 ha for SLM and supporting sustainable livelihoods for more than 2,000 people in six provinces/ autonomous regions by 2017 (4 in Gansu, 3 in Inner Mongolia, 3 in Qinghai, 3 in Shaanxi, 2 in Sichuan, and 1 in Guizhou) 2b. Awareness programs were delivered to over 3,000 villagers at the 16 SLM innovation pilot sites, which covered aspects of climate change impacts, alternative fuel and energy supplies, and adaptive measures in agriculture farming 2c. Green development was demonstrated at three SLM innovation sites with a total area over 30,000 ha in Sichuan (2) and Guizhou (1), through agroforestry and higher-value crops such	NA

		as tea trees, decorative plants, and Chinese medicine herbs.	
3. Enabling environment and capacity for scaling up of SLM in Guizhou and Sichuan provinces enhanced	By 2018[a] 3a. Two new SAPs for SLM in Guizhou and Sichuan provinces approved (baseline 2014: none) 3b. Technical SLM capacity enhanced for 2,000 local beneficiaries in Guizhou and Sichuan provinces (baseline 2014: none)	3a. A strategy and action plan for land degradation control was developed each for Guizhou and Sichuan provinces, which also included a comprehensive assessment of the provincial legal and policy regime for land degradation, and a framework of SLM monitoring indicators and approaches. The SAPs were approved in 2018. 3b. 39 training workshops and nine national study tours were conducted for more than 2,400 local officials and farmers in Guizhou (22) and Sichuan (17) provinces.	NA
4. Project management supported	4a. Project consultants engaged on time 4b. Project reports submitted on time 4c. ADB audit requirements	4a. 11 individual consultants (5 for CPMO and 6 for PPMOs) were recruited on time and started working in July 2016. The consulting firm mobilized consultants effectively in July 2017. 4b. CPMO submitted 3 annual workplans and 3 annual reports during the TA implementation and 1 completion report three months after the TA completion. ADB prepared 3 project implementation reports and submitted to the ADB GEF Focal as per requirements. A tracking tool for land degradation was established at the beginning of the project and was updated after TA completion. The GEF terminal evaluation report was prepared and circulated with this TA completion report. 4c. CPMO and PPMOs have fully complied with	Here, “on time” recruitment could be clarified. It is noted that the entire TA project was extended or delayed by 1 year due to an initial delay in grant signing. Consequently, consultant recruitments also took place a year later than originally planned.

	complied with	ADB audit requirements. Three audit reports were submitted by CPMO.	

ADB = Asian Development Bank, CPMO = central project management office, CO2 = carbon dioxide, GEF = Global Environment Facility, NA = not applicable, PPMO = provincial project management office, PRC = People's Republic of China, SAP = strategy and action plans, SLM = sustainable land management, TA = technical assistance

[a] The TA Report design and monitoring framework (DMF) stated "By 2018" for all outputs, while the TCR DMF stated "By 2019" due to the extension but with no change in targets.

Sources: ADB. 2014. *Technical Assistance to the People's Republic of China for Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Land Management in the Western Regions*. Manila; ADB. 2021. *Technical Assistance Completion Report: Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Land Management in the Western Regions in the People's Republic of China.* Manila.