

Transformational wildlife conservation management in China

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10701

Countries

Global (China)

Project Name

Transformational wildlife conservation management in China

Agencies

UNDP

Date received by PM

12/10/2021

Review completed by PM

8/16/2022

Program Manager

Hannah Fairbank

Focal Area

Biodiversity

Project Type

PIF

CEO Endorsement

Part I ? Project Information

Focal area elements

1. Does the project remain aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements as presented in PIF (as indicated in table A)?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

December 16, 2021 HF:

Yes.

Agency Response

Project description summary

2. Is the project structure/design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs as in Table B and described in the project document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 24, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

May 4, 2022 HF:

All comments cleared though **please ensure that FECO/MEE is referenced rather than NFGA in all appropriate places in package and annexes**. For example the SESP annex still references: The National Forest and Grassland Administration (NFGA) shall be responsible for the implementation of the ESMF and overseen by the UNDP Project Manager and Project Officer.

December 16, 2021 HF:

Please see the comments regarding the alternative scenario and components below.

Further:

1.) Outcome 1.1 references (excluding the project intervention sites)-please clarify the parenthetical reference.

2.) Activity 1.1.1.2 states that the 'responsibilities, rules and mechanics under the management system with national parks as the main body". Please clarify this. It is unclear why national parks would be the main coordinating body for integrated landscape planning given landscapes may or may not include PAs and go far beyond them-thus the basis for a landscape approach. Please clarify in documentation.

3.) Activity 1.1.2.2: At what level will this SESA be performed and how will the results be used?

3.) Component 4: This was not included in the PIF. Please remove or restructure since: Output 4.1.1 should be categorized as PMC rather than included in the project components. Please see full comment below under the Components box.

Agency Response

March 8, 2022:

1.) The parenthetical reference "(excluding the project intervention sites)" has been deleted in the description of Indicator No. 6 (Outcome 1.1).

2.) The phrase "with national parks as the main body" has been deleted from the description of Activity 1.1.1.2. The coordinating entity of the national level multi-sectoral coordination mechanism is the NFGA. For the two demonstration areas, consistent with the Forest Chief Scheme, the coordinating entities of the multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms are the Provincial Forestry and Grassland Bureaus in Sichuan and Yunnan.

The "national parks as the main body" entry refers to the PA reform process that is underway in China. The Chinese government decided to set up national park (NP) system during the comprehensive protected area reform processes over the past five years. Establishment of the NP system is the cornerstone of the major PA reform in China, including development of a National Park Law that would consolidate, and essentially supersede, the current fragmented set of laws and regulations associated with protected areas, and establishing a new PA management agency, integrating the relevant management functions of protected areas so that a unified management responsibility can be exercised on NP system.

During the COP 15 Part I meeting, President Xi Jinping announced five NPs have been established in China by following the reform approach, more NPs will be established in the coming years, which became the main body of PAs in China.

3.) A Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) will be conducted under Activity 1.1.2.2, with the objective to provide guidance on incorporating social and environmental considerations into policy measures at national level. Specifically, into:

- ? The ecological compensation strategy.
- ? Policies to encourage reuse of biological resources.
- ? Integration of wildlife conservation and management into the ongoing working mechanisms and systems of the Forest Chief scheme.

- ? Maintenance of wild animal populations into the ecological protection red-line policy.
- ? With free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), document wildlife-friendly normative measures based on the traditional knowledge and practice, including but not limited to the Qiang, Tibetan and Yi ethnic groups

The outcomes of the SESA will also be incorporated at county level, specifically in the demonstration areas selected by the project. For instance, the outcomes will be included in the training to the cross-sectoral working group members and on UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (activity 1.2.1.2 for the Yunnan Province and 1.2.2.2 for the Sichuan province), and in conducting the baseline assessments for conservation and sustainable management across production and protected landscape of the selected habitats (1.2.1.3 for Yunnan province, and 1.2.2.3 for Sichuan).

Further details on the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment are available in the ESMF (See UNDP ProDoc Annex 9), where there is a description of how the SESA will address potential risks and impacts; and how related measures will be incorporated in the Environmental and Social Management Plan.

The SESA will be implemented by a Contractual services/Companies, with a budget of \$ 35,000, the indicative outline is available in Annex 1 of the ESMF.

4.) Component 4 has been restructured, focusing on the cross-cutting dimensions of safeguards management, sustainability planning, and monitoring & evaluation.

April 28, 2022:

1.) The parenthetical reference "(excluding the project intervention sites)" has been deleted in the description of Indicator No. 6 (Outcome 1.1).

2.) Since the former Executing Agency (NFGA) and the new one (FECO/MEE) have similar responsibilities, the name of the Executing Agency was revised throughout the package. As FECO/MEE will be directly responsible for the activities at the national level, namely under Outcome, 1, outputs 1.1.1 to 1.1.4 and some of the activities under these outputs were revised to better reflect the mandate of FECO/MEE while maintaining alignment with the original project strategy outlined in the PIF and the first draft of the Project Document.

Under the circumstance of changing Executing Agency, the title of Output 1.1.1 was revised to "Output 1.1.1. Intersectoral coordination mechanisms for biodiversity conservation strengthened, also facilitating collaborative actions related to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework" and the corresponding activity 1.1.1.2 was rephrased to the following: "Review and improve the existing terms of reference for the intersectoral coordination mechanism, including composition, responsibilities, rules and mechanisms under the management system."

With the change of the lead Implementing Partner (Executing Agency) from NFGA to FECO/MEE, the entity responsible for coordinating the national level intersectoral

coordination mechanism under Outcome 1 shifted accordingly. Considering that MEE is the responsible line ministry of convening the National Biodiversity Committee, it is appropriate that FECO/MEE would coordinate the intersectoral coordination mechanism strengthened under this project. When NFGA was the designated Executing Agency, they had requested that the project align with the Forest Chief Scheme, which is a nationwide programme aimed at strengthening local level responsibilities for protection and restoration of forest and grassland ecosystems. For the two demonstration areas on the project, the coordinating entities of the intersectoral coordination mechanisms are proposed to be the Provincial Forestry and Grassland Bureaus in Sichuan and Yunnan. This arrangement is consistent with the Forest Chief Scheme and remains in the project strategy.

3.) A Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) will be conducted under Activity 1.1.2.2, with the objective to provide guidance on incorporating social and environmental considerations into policy measures at national level. Specifically, into:

- ? The ecological compensation strategy.
- ? Policies to encourage reuse of biological resources.
- ? Integration of wildlife conservation and management into the ongoing working mechanisms and systems of the Forest Chief scheme under sub-national level.
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4.) Component 4 has been restructured, focusing on the cross-cutting dimensions of safeguards management, sustainability planning, and monitoring & evaluation.

June 6, 2022:

1.) The parenthetical reference "(excluding the project intervention sites)" has been deleted in the description of Indicator No. 6 (Outcome 1.1).

2.) Since the former Executing Agency (NFGA) and the new one (FECO/MEE) have similar responsibilities, the name of the Executing Agency was revised throughout the package. As FECO/MEE will be directly responsible for the activities at the national level, namely under Outcome, 1, outputs 1.1.1 to 1.1.4 and some of the activities under these outputs were revised to better reflect the mandate of FECO/MEE while

maintaining alignment with the original project strategy outlined in the PIF and the first draft of the Project Document.

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Further details on the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment are available in the ESMF (See UNDP ProDoc Annex 9), where there is a description of how the SESA will address potential risks and impacts; and how related measures will be incorporated in the Environmental and Social Management Plan.

The SESA will be implemented by a Contractual services/Companies, with a budget of \$ 35,000, the indicative outline is available in Annex 1 of the ESMF.

3. If this is a non-grant instrument, has a reflow calendar been presented in Annex D?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request December 16, 2021 HF:
NA

Agency Response
Co-financing

4. Are the confirmed expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented, with supporting evidence and a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized, and a description of any major changes from PIF, consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
May 4, 2022 HF:
Comment cleared.

December 16, 2021 HF:

1.) Please provide further explanation and detail about what makes up the anticipated \$20 million in investment mobilized from the Giant Panda NP Administration. The section on investment mobilized under the Co Finance table of the CER doesn't mention it. Please update the section on how 'investment mobilized was identified'.

Agency Response

March 8, 2022:

After consulting with the GPNP Sichuan Management Bureau, the breakdown of the USD 20 million of public investment (investment mobilized) co-financing is broken down across the following project outputs.

? Output 2.1.1 Improved capacity for PA managers to effectively engage and support participatory, multi-level, cross-sectoral landscape approaches to conserve globally-threatened and iconic wildlife. USD 1,000,000 from GPNP

? Output 2.2.2 Isolated panda habitats in Giant Panda National Park form one contiguous management zone by establishing a protection system of two ecological corridors with a total area of approximately 6,000 ha, supported by a cross-sectoral strategy and action plan covering 2.7 million ha of national parks, multiple use landscapes and surrounding communities across 3 provinces. USD 7,000,000 from GPNP.

? Output 2.3.2 At least 3 panda habitats covering 2,000 ha restored in Giant Panda National Park through biological/ecological engineering and other technical measures and incorporation traditional knowledge and practices of Jiang, Tibetan and Han ethnic communities. USD 6,000,000 from GPNP.

- ? Output 2.4.1 Ecological goods and services, including nature-based tourism, certification schemes and organic farming, in place to generate alternative income streams for local communities. USD 2,000,000 from GPNP.
- ? Output 2.4.2. Alternative livelihood social associations established and/or strengthened in the demonstration areas. Cofinancing: USD 500,000 from GPNP.
- ? Output 3.1.1: Enabling technologies identified and applied to support dynamic real-time wildlife monitoring, data collection, and data analysis for informed and timely management decision making. Cofinancing: USD 1,000,000 from GPNP.
- ? Output 3.1.2. A robust data management platform developed and enabling machine learning and artificial intelligence, towards effective decision support and comprehensive wildlife management (i.e., giant panda genetic diversity database). USD 1,000,000 from GPNP.
- ? Output 3.1.3. Advanced DNA techniques, including eDNA surveys and barcoding, introduced and applied to populate the genetic diversity panda database. USD 1,000,000 from GPNP.
- ? Output 3.2.1: National and global public awareness campaigns, workshops, collaborations and dissemination of project information to enhance awareness and knowledge of wildlife protection. USD 300,000 from GPNP.
- ? Output 3.2.2. University student Innovation competition held across China for public awareness on wildlife conservation knowledge. USD 200,000 from GPNP.

April 28, 2022:

Executing Agency was changed from NFGA to FECO, and FECO/MEE provided the latest co-finance letter with the same amount of co-finance and same working responsibilities.

June 6, 2022:

Please note that the Executing Agency was changed from NFGA to FECO, and FECO/MEE provided the latest co-finance letter with the same amount of co-finance and same working responsibilities.

GEF Resource Availability

5. Is the financing presented in Table D adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request December 16, 2021 HF:

Yes.

Agency Response

Project Preparation Grant

6. Is the status and utilization of the PPG reported in Annex C in the document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request January 10, 2021 HF:

Yes.

Agency Response

Core indicators

**7. Are there changes/adjustments made in the core indicator targets indicated in Table E?
Do they remain realistic?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 4, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

January 16, 2022 HF:

Yes, though please see the comments regarding the need to better clarify the linkages between Components 1 & 2 and the core indicators.

Agency Response

June 6, 2022:

A The narrative of the project strategy has been expanded with the following entry to better describe the linkages between Components 1 and 2.

The enabling environment at the national and landscape levels is the focus of the proposed activities and interventions under Outcome 1.1. Improved multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms and strengthened policies and incentive frameworks will support the implementation of the demonstrations planned under Component 2. For example:

? The landscape level cross-sectoral strategies and action plans developed under Outcome 1.2 will be implemented at a demonstration scale in Component 2. The integration of wildlife and biodiversity conservation considerations into planning and policy frameworks (Output 1.1.2) will be reflected in the cross-sectoral strategies and action plans, and the sector-specific guidelines produced in Output 1.1.3 will inform how wildlife and biodiversity conservation is mainstreamed in the cross-sectoral strategies.

? The proposed ecological corridors planned under Outcome 2.2 will demonstrate multi-sectoral coordination and planning on mainstreaming wildlife conservation, e.g., through engaging the transportation sector in planning and operation of linear infrastructure; engaging with the agricultural sector in improved livestock management; engaging with the tourism sector in strengthening ecotourism experiences, safeguarding against impacts to wildlife habitat and mobility. The ecological corridors will be designed using the guidelines developed under Output 1.1.3.

? Moreover, the alternative livelihood interventions under Outcome 2.4 are designed to reduce threats posed by unsustainable practices, increasing the flow of information to local communities, and promoting improved collaboration between communities and protected areas in the demonstration areas. Incentives for encouraging local

communities to engage in sustainable, alternative livelihood ventures will build upon the recommended measures formulated under Output 1.1.2.

Part II ? Project Justification

1. Is there a sufficient elaboration on how the global environmental/adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers, are going to be addressed?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 4, 2022 HF:

All comments cleared.

January 10, 2021 HF:

- 1.) Please correct reference and dates for COP-15.
- 2.) Please address climate change as a separate root cause (taking land degradation out). Also it isn't clear that land degradation is a root cause, but instead a resulting condition-recommend removing or working in elsewhere in the section on global environmental problems. Please address.
- 3.) Neither insufficient awareness nor poor cross-sectoral coordination are root causes. Further, a change in "awareness" is unlikely to ever change behavior which is well documented in the Social and Behavior Change Communication literature. Please revise categorization and framing of these.

Agency Response

March 8, 2022:

- 1.) The references of COP15 have been addressed. The virtual format of COP15 was held in October 2021, and an in-person event is planned in late September 2022 (will be released jointly by MEE of China and CBD Sec. soon).
- 2.) Climate change has been addressed as a separate root cause and land degradation is no longer framed as a root cause but rather as a resulting condition of some of the root causes identified.
- 3.) ?Insufficient awareness? has been removed as a root cause. The narrative of ?poor cross-sectoral coordination? has been reworked.

2. Is there an elaboration on how the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects were derived?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 4, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

January 16, 2022 HF:

1.) Please include the GEFID and include project titles for each GEF baseline projects.

Agency Response

March 8, 2022:

1.) GEF ID's have been added for each of the referenced GEF baseline projects.

3. Is the proposed alternative scenario as described in PIF/PFD sound and adequate? Is there sufficient clarity on the expected outcomes and components of the project and a description on the project is aiming to achieve them?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

July 18, 2022 HF:

Comments cleared.

June 24, 2022 HF:

4.) & 5.) Below are in relation to corridor infrastructure construction: It seems that now the project's SES documentation and project risks section contain references to corridor construction/related infrastructure, whereas previously it was made clear that the GEF project would not be supporting construction (see review sheet responses below).

Further, the CER and ProDoc don't seem to contain information about planned activities related to corridor construction (e.g. design support) which is inconsistent. If the project plans to provide technical assistance (e.g. design planning) to wildlife corridor infrastructure these activities must be included in the project components/activities.

Or if they are not going to be included, please redact these activities from the risks/safeguards documentation for consistency sake. Please revise all documentation accordingly for clarity and consistency.

9.) Comment cleared.

12.) Comment cleared.

15.) Please revise to include a statement about what safeguards/mitigation measures would be in place/developed if the ground-truthing finds that these populations would in fact be impacted by project activities/restoration actions.

May 4, 2022 HF:

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8.) Comments cleared.

9.) It is still unclear from the CER, ProDoc and project budget what exactly the global BD set-aside funds (\$250,000) will support that is truly global in nature with an emphasis on south-south engagement. Please directly address and include activities in the CER, ProDoc and project budget.

10.) Comment cleared, given this is now funded 3.5 to 1 co-finance.

11.) Comment cleared.

12.) Please integrate explanation/response into CER/ProDoc language as this remains unclear from the design.

13.-14.) Comments cleared.

15.) Noted. Please describe in the SESP and other safeguards/risk documents and sections what steps and measures would be taken if the ground-truthing finds that these populations would in fact be impacted by PA management actions and other project activities.

16.) Comment cleared.

January 10, 2021 HF:

1.) Although Component 1 and the alternative scenario of the project is focused on BD/wildlife multi-sectoral mainstreaming a 'landscape approach' whereas Component 2 seems to focus on a much more narrow and traditional protected areas and 'ecological corridors' approach. It seems that the demonstration sites should be demonstrating the mainstreamed/integrated landscape level approach to conservation rather than focusing on PA effectiveness and narrow corridor restoration (this could be an element)-this is a seemingly significant disconnect. It is very confusing to read the description of Component 2 with a tight focus on PAs, rather than an integrated landscape approach. This disconnect is carried throughout the CEO endorsement request document/ProDoc. Please address this in the project TOC, alternative scenario, Component 2 and Core Indicator targets as necessary.

2.) To build on point one above, please strengthen the clear linkages between Component 1, Component 2 and Component 3.

3.) Related, the sites identified for Component 2 are nearly all (?) nature reserves/protected areas and the Outcomes are focused on PA management effectiveness and connectivity via corridors (with corresponding core indicator targets), whereas the alternative scenario and Component 1 seem focused on mainstreaming and a landscape-level approach. The sites should be broader ecological landscapes-which may contain NR and PAs-but in order to actually operationalize biodiversity mainstreaming and a landscape approach the project needs to work at the landscape-level. The project design and activities should be consistent (C-1 is mainstreaming/landscape policy/coordination; C-2 is demonstration of mainstreaming/landscape scale) and they should be clearly linked with corresponding core indicator targets. Please revise project documents and explain.

4.) There is need for greater clarity regarding the use of the term and concept of "corridor" in this CER. Please address/clarify early on in the documentation and use the term consistently throughout.

5.) Also there seems to be "corridor construction" referenced in several places in the CER. What is this? What is planned and where? How does this fit into a broader landscape-level approach? Please clarify/confirm that any construction would be co-finance supported.

7.) Output 2.4.1: Please describe here and in project documentation how project will ensure that livelihood interventions are developed and supported based on the knowledge, interests, needs and aspirations of IPLCs-rather than pre-determined and delivered. This isn't clear given the current structure of support for livelihood activities.

8:) Please include further description of how livelihood activities will contribute-and linked-concretely to the conservation of biodiversity in project intervention sites.

9.) Component 3: It is unclear how the GEFSEC global resources (\$250,000) will be used to support project activities with a global reach/South-South engagement and what is planned. Please address.

10,) Please fund 3.2.2 with co-finance.

11.) Please include a brief discussion of the findings of the technology needs assessment in the CER and the targeted use of GEF funds for the soft-side of technology application, capacity-building and 'citizen science' with communities and south-south engagement etc-as opposed for hardware etc as stated in ProDoc.

12.) Output 3.2.1 references "public awareness campaigns" but it is not clear from the illustrative activities described (3.2.1.4) what the goal of these are, what specific behaviors these activities are aiming to change and how this approach will be effective. It is unclear what the intended result of "public awareness campaigns" would be and

given the significant body of work and experience in social and behavior change communication (SBCC) it is clear that a broad-brush communication to the masses is ineffective in changing behavior. There is a clear need for targeted, tailored approach with clear targets that are measured and sustained to change behavior, environmental or otherwise. Taking a much more targeted, tailored and evidence-based approach to behavior change is critical, with limited project resources. Please reference key related documents including: STAP's recent advisory document on behavior change: <https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/why-behavior-change-matters-gef-and-what-do-about-it-stap-advisory>; RARE & STAP set of case studies on conservation behavior change: https://stapgef.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/Final_Rare%20Behavior%20Change%20Interventions%20in%20Practice.pdf?null= USAID's SBCC Wildlife Demand Reduction Guidebook <https://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/resource-sbcc-guidebook.pdf> Please explain, address/revise.

13.) Please note that "project coordination" and other elements included in 4.1.1 should all fall-under and be budgeted for in PMC. Please reference GEF programming and policy guidelines for more information and examples of activities that should fall under PMC. We recommend removing, or restructuring Component 4 so that it does not contain costs associated with the project's execution (which include project coordination) as those have to be presented outside the project's components and costed as part of PMC. If Component 4 is restructured (rather than removed) please modify the Component's title as it creates confusion with PMCs. Please note that output 4.1.2 is okay as it is M&E but it should likely be absorbed into a reformulated or existing component.

14.) Table 8 Intervention Sites: Please include site selection criteria and a clear explanation of why the site was selected and its significance.

15.) Table 8: What is the basis of the statement/assumption that local populations-including indigenous people-would not be effected by project activities in the nature reserves (Wolong, Daxiangling, Caojian and others)-and therefore there would be zero people affected by project intervention? This is an issue to address regarding Table 8, but also within the SES reviews and risk assessments. Please address.

16.) Please explain the "Forest Chief" scheme early in the CER and ProDoc otherwise hard to understand the role and function and how the project will engage.

Agency Response

March 8, 2022:

1.) The Theory of Change narrative description has been updated to address this comment. Protected areas are important parts of most landscapes in China where wildlife conservation and sustainable management are addressed. Strengthening

management effectiveness of the protected areas in the demonstration areas and increasing the capacities of protected area staff for more inclusive engagement with local communities and other stakeholders is an integral part of the project strategy. The establishment of ecological corridors is a key mechanism for facilitating connectivity of fragmented wildlife habitat through multi-stakeholder coordination. For instance, coordination with local agriculture and animal husbandry departments will be required to formulate sustainable livestock management practices within the corridors; design and operation of roadways within the corridors will need to be coordinated with local transportation departments to better enable wildlife crossing and reduce fragmentation of wildlife populations; and local land use planning departments are expected to reflect critical wildlife habitats in the red-line process (i.e., areas where development is restricted). This is one of the ways in which the landscape level cross-sectoral strategies and action plans developed under Component 1, namely Outcome 1.2, will be demonstrated on the ground in Component 2.

2.) As mentioned in response to the earlier comment on linkages, the narrative of the project strategy has been expanded with the following entry to better describe the linkages between Components 1 and 2. The enabling environment at the national and landscape levels is the focus of the proposed activities and interventions under Outcome 1.1. Improved multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms and strengthened policies and incentive frameworks will support the implementation of the demonstrations planned under Component 2. The landscape level cross-sectoral strategies and action plans developed under Outcome 1.2 will be implemented at a demonstration scale in Component 2. The proposed ecological corridors planned under Outcome 2.2 will demonstrate multi-sectoral coordination and planning on mainstreaming wildlife conservation, e.g., through engaging the transportation sector in planning and operation of linear infrastructure; engaging with the agricultural sector in improved livestock management; engaging with the tourism sector in strengthening ecotourism experiences, safeguarding against impacts to wildlife habitat and mobility. Moreover, the alternative livelihood interventions under Outcome 2.4 are designed to reduce threats posed by unsustainable practices, increasing the flow of information to local communities, and promoting improved collaboration between communities and protected areas in the demonstration areas.

3.) Protected areas play an important role in landscape level work entailing mainstreaming of wildlife conservation and sustainable management in China. For instance, the Giant Panda National Park consists of more than 50 nature reserves. Linking these reserves into a consolidated network requires a multitude of interactions with sectors managing lands outside the protected areas. The ecological corridors are designed to demonstrate improved multi-sectoral coordination, e.g., involving the transportation infrastructure sector, responsible for widespread fragmentation of habitats; engaging with the livestock management sector, in finding mutually beneficial solutions to meet local livelihood priorities, reduce human-wildlife conflicts, and facilitate positive biodiversity outcomes; engaging with the rapidly expanding tourism sector in China, promoting and demonstrating sustainable ecotourism experiences that reduce threats posed by increasing numbers of tourists, etc.

4.) Consistent with IUCN definitions, the term "ecological corridor" is a geographical space that is governed and managed over the long term to maintain or restore ecological connectivity. The corridors are proposed to facilitate improved connectivity between fragmented wildlife habitats, engaging with key sectors in planning and implementing management measures, e.g., regarding transportation infrastructure, agriculture land use and livestock management, tourism development, and others. In some locations, this includes physical wildlife crossings (e.g., using ropes built over road for primates, avoiding accidents on the roadways). GEF resources are proposed for technical assistance, sharing international best practice for such crossings, as well as supporting

the monitoring of the effectiveness of the crossings. The physical construction works would be covered by co-financing.

5.) The documentation has been updated, consistently using the term corridor 'establishment'. Where corridor 'construction' was used, the entries were revised accordingly.

7.) The project engagement approach with pro-poor cooperatives and agro-businesses will be based on informed consultations to ensure that particular livelihood strategies of the different ethnic groups are taken into account. Even though an FPIC agreement will not be signed, since there are no traditional institutions and authorities to provide for a such signature at this stage, FPIC principles will as such be followed in the planning and formulation of project interventions.

Component 2 will embrace community-based co-management to provide socioeconomic benefits to IPLCs (see sub- activities 2.2.1.1 and 2.2.2.1: Set up two multi-stakeholder local working groups, with equitable representation of women, ethnic minorities, and other vulnerable groups, for guiding the process of establishing the proposed ecological corridors). The efforts will include ecological goods and services, including ecotourism, certification experiences and organic farming generating alternative income streams (e.g. Output 2.4.1) for the local communities. Moreover, alternative livelihood social associations will be established and/or strengthened (see: Output 2.4.2).

In order to avoid negatively impacting IPLC's, the project will develop relevant scoped assessments and adequate safeguards such as Business Plans for Nature-Based Livelihood Development (outline in annex 2 of the ESMF has been modified to reflect the above), the IPP including FPIC, and the Degraded Habitat Assessment including the ESIA considerations. These will be developed during project implementation to ensure their knowledge, interests, needs and aspirations guide the livelihood activities and a fair distribution benefits among all groups.

8.) While wildlife conservation friendly policy measures will be developed by the multi-sectoral platforms at the landscape and provincial level, alternative livelihoods opportunities will be explored at the community level. These include but are not limited to more ecological friendly farming and livestock grazing activities, and promotion of strengthened and or newly introduced income streams through ecotourism and certification schemes. These sustainable and alternative livelihoods will generate positive impacts to biodiversity conservation through reduced unsustainable practices, resulting in less pressure to the natural environment and mitigation of threats to habitats of endangered species.

9.) South-south engagement is planned among Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), sharing knowledge generated on innovative approaches, including frontier technologies. For instance, the black-crested gibbon distribution area extends into northwestern Laos and northern Vietnam. Interest in the conservation of the iconic giant panda extends globally, including among scientific institutions and international NGOs. The project will explore opportunities for meaningful participation in regional and global events, promoting innovative conservation approaches.

10.) Output 3.2.2 is unchanged from the approved PIF. The Giant Panda National Park has been confirmed USD 200,000 of co-financing for this output. The proposed allocation of GEF funds would contribute to the co-financing contributions, support the design of the innovation competition, and help finance production of knowledge products associated with the results of the competitions. Considering this, we kindly suggest that this request/comment is reconsidered or further justified as we would need

to explain GEF's position to project partners if the project cannot count with GEF funds for this output.

11.) A summary of the Technology needs assessment (Annex 18 to the Project Document) has been added to the narrative description of Component 3 in the CEO ER and Project Document. The project strategy includes a specific focus on demonstrating innovative frontier technologies. Whilst much of the added value of the GEF funds is oriented towards processing information, i.e., software related development, certain equipment is considered important to include in the project budget. For demonstration and learning purposes, the proposed budget includes some hardware for AI-based automatic data processing, GIS-based data management, environmental DNA, and blockchain technology based management systems. Moreover, setting up monitoring systems within the proposed wildlife corridors will require deployment of technology outside protected areas. Government co-financing will be invested on more traditional hardware (laptops, UPS, etc.) and GEF funds will be invested on demonstrating monitoring frontier technologies. Also, 12 villages are earmarked for engaging in participatory conservation and citizen science activities. The proposed budget includes development of patrolling applets for local rangers and citizen scientists. This will require procurement of basic hardware, e.g., tablet computers, digital cameras, possibly camera traps, etc.

12.) In the selected corridors of Giant Panda National Park, livestock grazing, horticulture cultivation, firewood collection are currently threats from local people. Similar threats are relevant in the Yunnan demonstration area, near the Tianchi Nature Reserve and Caojian Forest Farm. In fact, some of the local people may not know that key primate species are distributed near their communities and are unaware of how their practices may be affecting them. The planned KAP surveys will include local communities as one of the target stakeholder groups, along with subnational governmental stakeholders and the private sector. Based on the findings of the KAP surveys, more information will be available regarding knowledge, attitudes and practices. Based on the KAP baseline results, awareness and advocacy campaigns focusing on specific themes and defined target groups, a knowledge management strategy action plan will be developed and delivered. Meanwhile, under Output 2.4 the project will help facilitate more sustainable livelihoods for local people, leading to changes in practices and behavior over the long run. The livelihood interventions in Component 2 (namely Output 2.4) will be synchronized with the knowledge management and awareness raising activities in Component 3.

13.) Component 4 has been restructured, focusing on the cross-cutting dimensions of safeguards management, sustainability planning, and monitoring & evaluation.

14.) Table 8 on Intervention Sites has been updated with the addition of selection criteria.

15.) Based upon feedback from stakeholder consultations conducted during the project preparation phase and review of existing restoration concepts, the project interventions in Wolong, Daxiangling, Baishuihe are focused on degraded habitats in remote area with no villages around, resulting in no people being affected. The SESP and ESMF have been updated, indicating that ground-truthing will be carried out prior to commencing the restoration work to verify this information.

16.) A detailed description of the Forest Chief Scheme has been added to the Outcome 1.1 narrative ? in Box 1 of UNDP's ProDoc.

June, 6 2022:

9.) The set-aside allocation is connected with sharing and learning best practices among the global wildlife conservation community. Linkages to the GEF Global Wildlife Program (GWP) is one of the main vehicles for achieving this. Descriptions of the following activities have been updated to highlight linkages with the GEF GWP: 1.1.4.5, 2.1.1.3, 2.2.1.2, 2.2.1.8, 2.2.2.2, 3.1.1.4, 3.1.2.3, 3.1.3.1 and 3.2.1.6.

12.) The explanation provided in March on how the results of the KAP surveys will inform the formulation of the knowledge management strategy and feed into the planned awareness-raising activities, has been added to the Knowledge Management description in the CEO ER and ProDoc.

15.) The following has been added to the ESMF: ?The Degraded Habitat Site Assessments will also cover the three intervention sites that are not expected to affect local population as surrounding livelihoods may still depend on the natural resources in the targeted demonstration sites. This implies that available information will require ground-truthing during early implementation before any activity in the 3 sites takes place.?

UNDP July 4, 2022:

4.) & 5.) - The SESP and ESMF still include reference to the construction works as these will be implemented by the co-financing agency. According to UNDP guidance on co-financing, the SES package should also cover risks associated with co-financing partners. Risks stemming from and/or to co-financed activities ? as with risks from/to all other project activities ? will be included in the project risk register and monitored accordingly. We have however included a note in the SESP risk 3, 4 and 7 that GEF funds will not be used for construction activities.

Under Output 2.2.1, Activity 2.2.1.8 reads as follows: ?Sharing international best practices (including among GEF GWP projects), support the design of the proposed wildlife crossing structures over the roads transecting the proposed corridor between the nature reserve.? Also, technical advisory support for monitoring the effectiveness of the corridor in the Yunnan demonstration area is covered in Activity 2.2.1.7: ?Strengthen the capacities of the protected area management entities and support regular biodiversity monitoring in the corridor, including canopy, vegetation cover, wildlife populations.?

15.) Downstream risks for project sites will be further assessed in Outcome 2, and the Degraded Habitat Site Assessments will include ESIA considerations and will identify the exact areas and methods for the restoration activities. These assessments will also cover the three restoration sites that are not expected to affect local population as regardless of the distance, surrounding livelihoods may still depend on the targeted demonstration sites and available information will require ground-truthing before any activities take place. If local people are found to be residing in these remote areas, appropriate mitigation measures will be described in the Degraded Habitat Restoration Plans.

The information outlined above has been added to the ESMF (UNDP ProDoc Annex 9).

4. Is there further elaboration on how the project is aligned with focal area/impact program strategies?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Yes

Agency Response

5. Is the incremental reasoning, contribution from the baseline, and co-financing clearly elaborated?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 4, 2022 HF:

Comments cleared.

January 11, 2022 HF:

- 1.) Theory Of Change: Please clarify and revise the "intermediate impact".
- 2.) Incremental reasoning states: "The project will develop and demonstrate new approaches to managing and connecting PAs." Please explain, and revise documentation to clarify how this relates to component 1 and the framing of the overall project around integrated landscape approach which works at a landscape-scale, not PA.

Agency Response

March 8, 2022:

- 1.) The Theory of Change description has been revised, including the discussion on the intermediate impact.
- 2.) The subject sentence in the incremental reasoning section of the CEO ER and Project Document has been changed to the following: "The project will develop and demonstrate integrated approaches, facilitating multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder coordination across multiple use landscapes." In terms of conservation and sustainable management of wildlife, protected areas are important parts of multiple use landscapes in China. The integrated approaches will involve protected area administrations, as well as multiple stakeholders from key development sectors, as well as non-governmental stakeholders.

6. Is there further and better elaboration on the project's expected contribution to global environmental benefits or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Yes

Agency Response

7. Is there further and better elaboration to show that the project is innovative and sustainable including the potential for scaling up?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 24, 2022 HF:
Comment cleared.

May 4, 2022 HF:
1 & 2.) Please revise CER/ProDoc accordingly.

January 10, 2022 HF:
1.) Please further elaborate how the project is planning for scaling-up of the landscape-level approach beyond the site-based work in Component 2. Particularly when it seems Component 1 will work at the provincial level.

2.) Scaling-up references replication in "other PAs in China"-please see previous comments on the seeming disconnect between the landscape approach and PA work. Please explain why scaling-up would be limited to PAs given landscape scale is far beyond PAs and may or may-not include PAs in fact. Please revise.

Agency Response

March 8, 2022:

1.) The work under Component 1 focuses on strengthening the enabling environment for upscaling integrated approaches beyond the site-level work in Component 2. The cross-sectoral strategies and action plans proposed under Outcome 1.2 involve provincial and central level stakeholders, e.g., the Yunnan Forestry and Grassland Bureau and the Giant Panda National Park Administration. The site level interventions under Component 2 are designed to be demonstrations of these cross-sectoral strategies and action plans, providing practical models for upscaling across the landscapes in the demonstration areas as well as in other landscapes in China.

2.) With respect to wildlife conservation and sustainable management, protected areas are important parts of most landscapes in China. Protected areas have leading roles with respect to efforts aimed at improving connectivity of wildlife habitats and mainstreaming conservation in production sectors. The recent establishment of national parks in China has often entailed linking existing nature reserves into consolidated networks of protected areas. The Giant Panda National Park, consisting of more than 50 nature reserves, is a good example of this. The process of linking nature reserves is essentially an integrated landscape approach, requiring coordination and collaboration with multiple sectors and stakeholders.

June 6, 2022:

1 & 2.) The additional information provided in the March responses has been added to the "Potential for scaling up" section in the CEO ER and ProDoc.

Project Map and Coordinates

Is there an accurate and confirmed geo-referenced information where the project intervention will take place?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Yes

Agency Response

Child Project

If this is a child project, is there an adequate reflection of how it contributes to the overall program impact?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

NA

Agency Response

Stakeholders

**Does the project include detailed report on stakeholders engaged during the design phase?
Is there an adequate stakeholder engagement plan or equivalent documentation for the implementation phase, with information on Stakeholders who will be engaged, the means of engagement, and dissemination of information?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 4, 2022 HF:

All comments cleared.

January 11, 2021 HF:

1.) Why are NDRC and Min of Finance not members of the multi-sectoral coordination mechanism?

2. Several places in the CER/pro-doc there is a reference to the project promoting "local accountability and rule of law". Please describe and explain in the project documentation what this means in the context of the project.

3.) To what extent are community members going to have job opportunities from project activities. In particular there was a reference in the risk table that 'community

workers are planned for only one of the eight project intervention sites." What is the plan for the rest?

Agency Response

March 8, 2022:

1.) The multi-sectoral coordination mechanism is more of a technical group, whereas the NDRC and MoF have supervisory roles, both NDRC and MOF functions from macroscopic perspective rather than technical levels.

2.) The statement "The project will promote local accountability and rule of law" has been deleted and the following entry added to the Stakeholders section of the CEO ER and the Stakeholder Engagement description of the Project Document: "Governance systems in which all duty bearers, institutions and entities, public or private, will be accountable to laws and regulations that will be publicly promulgated, equally enforced, independently adjudicated, and consistent with international human rights norms and standards."

3.) The project strategy focuses (see Component 2, Outcome 2.4) primarily on strengthening livelihood capacities and opportunities for the local communities, and not necessarily job opportunities from project activities. With respect to the Caojian Forest Farm, there have been collaborations between the farm and local people in the past and that is why it may be possible that local people are engaged in some of the restoration activities, e.g., planting, maintaining nurseries, etc. Engagement with local people in other interventions is not excluded. Project activities will be procured through competitive processes.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Has the gender analysis been completed? Did the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities? If so, does the project/program include gender-responsive activities, gender-sensitive indicators and expected results?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Yes

Agency Response

Private Sector Engagement

If there is a private sector engagement, is there an elaboration of its role as a financier and/or as a stakeholder?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 4, 2022 HF:
Comment cleared.

January 16, 2022 HF:

Please elaborate how project will engage the private sector to support and work with the livelihood activities planned.

Agency Response

March 8, 2022:

Under Output 2.4.1, the private sector will be engaged in the market analyses and development and implementation of business plans for nature-based livelihoods. Moreover, two of the CSO co-financing partners, namely Shan Shui and YGF, are receiving financial support from Ant Forest and GAC Toyota, including for activities on delivering training to local communities on sustainable livelihood options. Private sector enterprises and/or associations will be invited to contribute to the development of sector-specific guidelines on mainstreaming wildlife conservation in production landscapes (Output 1.1.3), e.g., with respect to the agricultural and tourism sectors.

Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Has the project elaborated on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved? Were there proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 18, 2022 HF:
Comment cleared.

June 24, 2022 HF:

Although language is apparent in the narrative of Component 3 in the CER and ProDoc, this risk and corresponding mitigation measures are not included in the **SEST/P nor the ESMF** nor in the **Risks Section of the CER in the GEF Portal**. Please revise to clearly include as a project risk with appropriate mitigation measures in these documents.

May 9, 2022 HF:

As stated below, please ensure that potential risks of Component 3 are included in the project risk section (and safeguards documentation), including mitigation measures.

January 11, 2022 HF:

Yes, please see safeguards section below.

Agency Response

June 6, 2022:

Potential risks associated with activities under Component 3 have been addressed in the SESP, and also described in the narrative of the "Risks" section in the ProDoc and CER.

UNDP July 4, 2022:

Risks associated with privacy and personal data protection stemming from Component 3 activities have been described in a new risk added to the Risk Register (UNDP ProDoc Annex 5), as well as to the narrative in the Risks section of the GEF CER and UNDP ProDoc.

Coordination

Is the institutional arrangement for project implementation fully described? Is there an elaboration on possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 4, 2022 HF:

Comments cleared.

January 11, 2022, HF:

- 1.) Figure 6: Project Organizational Structure has the "National Wildlife Coordination Mechanism", whereas the rest of the document refers to the "Cross-sectoral wildlife conservation coordination mechanism." Are these the same or different entities? Please explain. If the same, please refer to them consistently.
- 2.) Please update dates referenced in regards to EAAF.
- 3.) Please include 10753, 10754 and how/to what extent the project will coordinate.
- 4.) Given the scope and aspirations to engage globally through this project please include the GEF Global Wildlife Program (GWP) as a core GEF investment/platform that this project will coordinate with. Further, it seems that Component 3 would also explicitly build-in this engagement-particularly given the tech focus of both GWP and this project and there are GEF global resources contributing to this project.

Agency Response

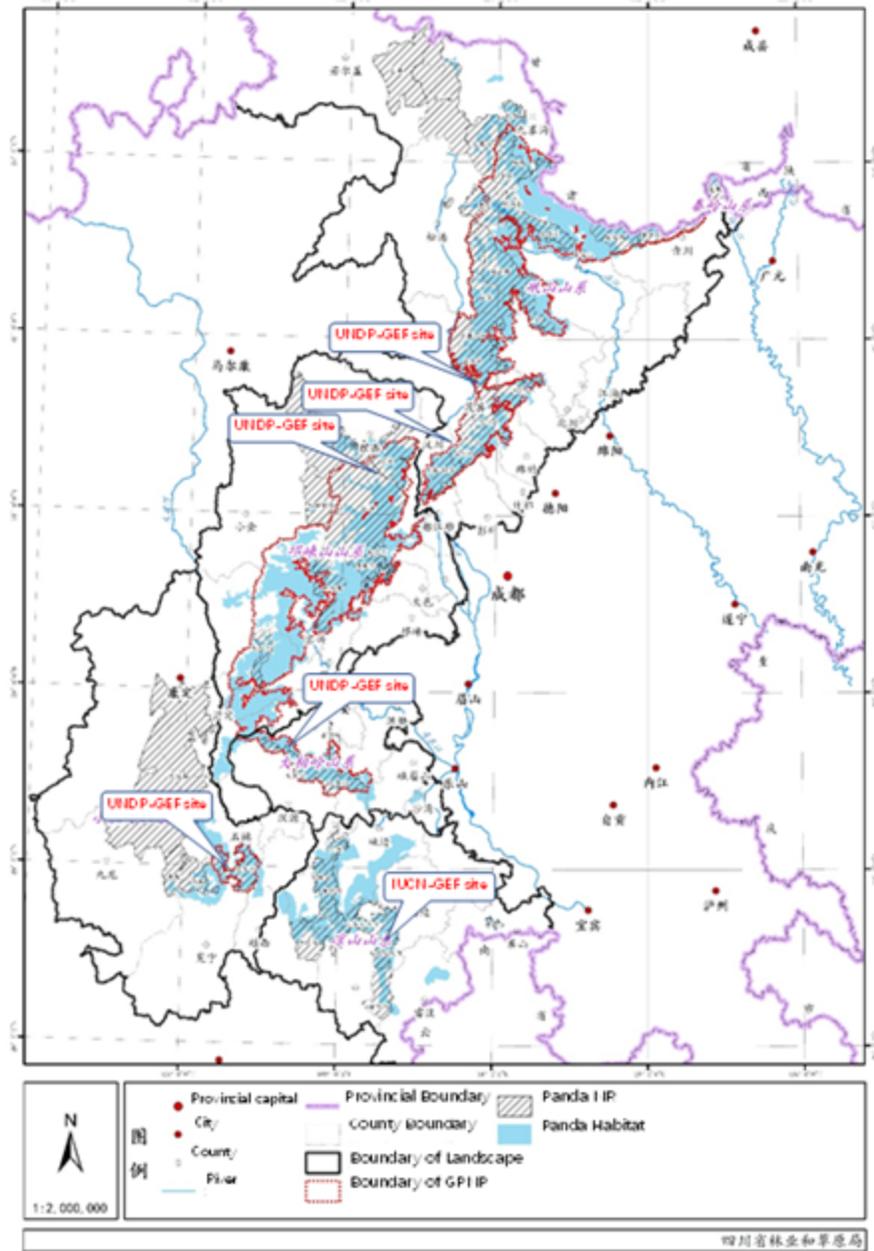
March 8, 2022:

1.) The project organizational structure in Figure 6 has been adjusted, with the National Multi-sectoral Coordination Mechanism, as well as the Sichuan and Yunnan Multi-sectoral Coordination Mechanisms.

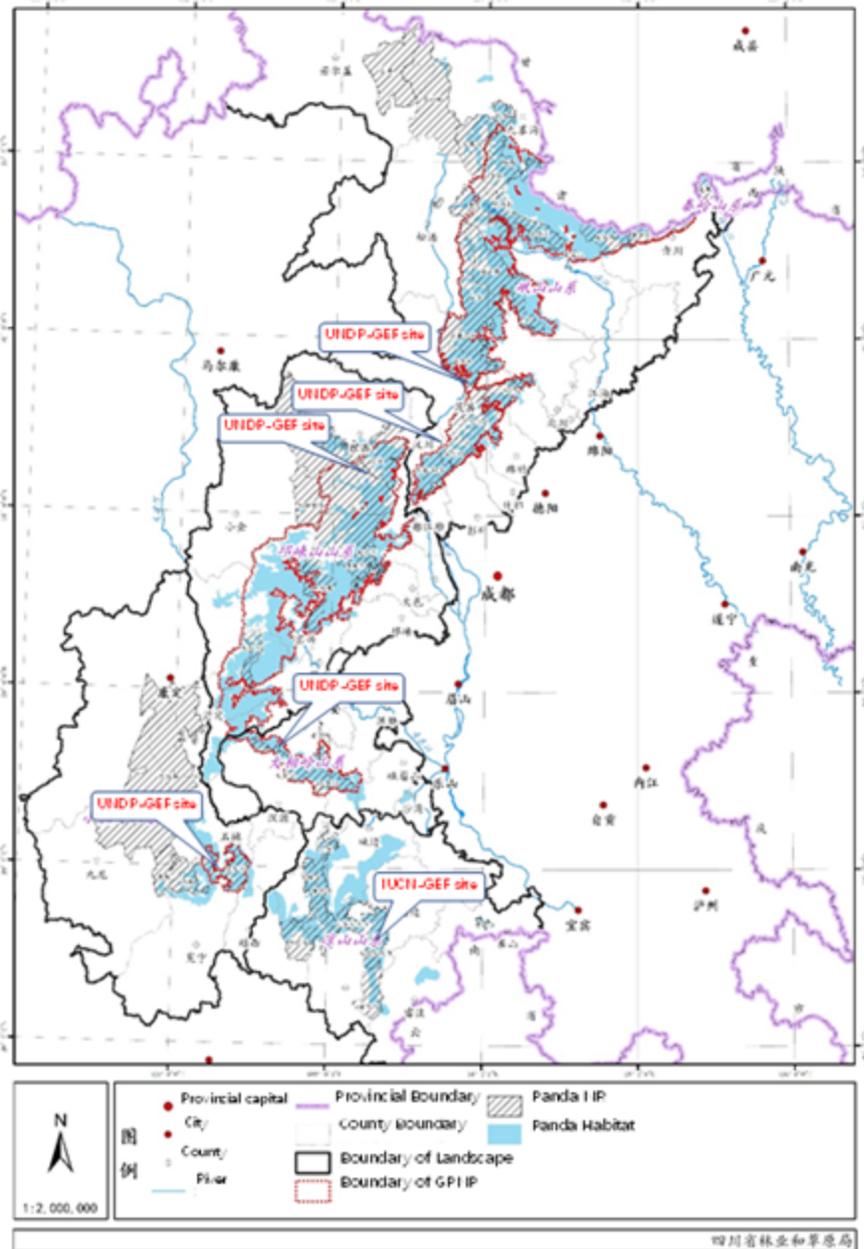
2.) The sentence referencing the date of launching the EAAF has been deleted. The main point of the subject paragraph is how the wildlife project will coordinate with the EAAF project.

3.) The UNDP and IUCN PPG teams have met to discuss coordination and synergies between the projects, particularly with respect to project 10754. The subject project and project 10754 include intervention sites in Sichuan Province; it has been confirmed that there is no overlap with respect to the specific intervention sites, as shown in the map below. The intervention sites of project 10754, including the Mabian Nature Reserve, Heizhugou Nature Reserve, and the Mamize Nature Reserve, are located within delineated Giant Panda Habitat. These areas may be included in the cross-sectoral conservation and sustainable management plan proposed in Output 1.2.2 of the subject project. This will be a point of coordination between the two projects, facilitated through regular technical working group meetings, convened based on specific thematic discussions. The technical working group meetings will also provide a mechanism for discussing technological aspects of the two projects. The UNDP-GEF project is primarily focusing on strengthening processing of imagery data collected. The IUCN-GEF project is proposing to improve acoustic monitoring, improving transmission across 4G and 5G networks, and enhancing the use of remote-sensing based methods. The two projects will coordinate on procurement of technological assistance, e.g., avoiding the purchase of the same equipment. The projects will also coordinate on capacity building and knowledge management.

Map for UNDP and IUCN pilot sites with GPNP and Panda NRs



Map for UNDP and IUCN pilot sites with GPNP and Panda NRs



4.) The following has been added under the 'Planned coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives' section of the CEO and Project Document: **'WB-GEF GEF-7 Global Wildlife Program (GWP), the GWP Global Coordination Project (WB ID P171016; GEF ID 10647)**. The objective of the GWP Global Coordination Project is to enhance knowledge and coordination services to promote wildlife-based economic development and combat illegal wildlife trade. The project will coordinate with the GWP Coordination Project on knowledge management, learning and sharing best practice on frontier technologies, etc.'

June 6, 2022:

There are several opportunities for collaborating with the GEF Global Wildlife Program (GWP). Descriptions of the following activities have been updated to highlight linkages with the GEF GWP: 1.1.4.5, 2.1.1.3, 2.2.1.2, 2.2.1.8, 2.2.2.2, 3.1.1.4, 3.1.2.3, 3.1.3.1 and 3.2.1.6

Consistency with National Priorities

Has the project described the alignment of the project with identified national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under the relevant conventions?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Yes

Agency Response

Knowledge Management

Is the proposed Knowledge Management Approach for the project adequately elaborated with a timeline and a set of deliverables?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Yes.

Agency Response

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS)

Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately documented at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 24, 2022 HF:

All comments cleared.

May 5, 2022 HF:

1.) Comment cleared.

2.) The Annex 4: Social and Environmental Screening template states: "Even though an FPIC agreement will not be signed, since there are no traditional institutions and authorities to provide for a such signature at this stage, FPIC principles will as such be

followed in the planning and formulation of project interventions", whereas the Draft ESMF states: "activities will not be commenced until suitable, agreed FPIC is in place." Please ensure that there is a consistent approach to framing how FPIC will be obtained throughout the CER, ProDoc and annexes. Regardless of the absence of a formal signed agreement FPIC includes consideration of: 1) the collective support of an affected Indigenous People for project or program activities, 2) reached through a process of Meaningful Consultation, 3) properly documented describing the mutually accepted process, and 4) outcome of such negotiations, including dissenting views.

3.) Comment cleared.

4.) Noting here that the requirements of UNDP standard 6 on Indigenous Peoples will be met. Given that, there seems to be a disconnect between the revised language characterizing the status of indigenous peoples and that the project will apply UNDP standard 6 "notwithstanding" the context. For the sake of clarity, justify in the context the application of UNDP Standard 6 given the status of IP in the target areas/provinces; Or revise to only include the final sentence: **"The requirements of UNDP Standard 6 on the engagement with Indigenous people will be applied to all project activities affecting ethnic groups (see section 6 in table 4 below and IPPF)."**

January 14, 2022 HF:

1.) Please clearly state in the ESS that project activities will NOT include physical displacement.

2.) Risk 1 in ESS: Please further describe the potential economic displacement that the project will mitigate.

3.) Risk 1 in ESS mentions that: **"Three of the intervention sites in the Giant Panda NP are situated in remote areas inside the borders of nature reserves (NR) and local people will not be affected there because inside of the NR, local people are not allowed to carry out production activities."** It seems that this critical assumption should be assessed and ground-truthed to ensure that just because local people aren't allowed to be carrying out production activities in these areas, they may still depend on them and therefore may be affected by project interventions. Please address this in the project documentation (ESS/ESMF) and CER.

4.) The ESMF states the following in relation to the multiple groups of indigenous people in the project areas: **"They have livelihood strategies similar to those of the other rural populations, are not excluded from existing economic opportunities, are not discriminated, and have no distinct needs from the rest of the population."** The GEF (and GEF Agencies) have minimum standards and safeguards in place to guide engagement of GEF project activities with indigenous peoples (including FPIC, among others). These exist due to the unique risks, needs and vulnerabilities of indigenous peoples. Please revise this statement accordingly, clarify or redact.

Agency Response **March 8, 2022:**

1.) Clarification to avoid physical displacement has been included in the SESP and in the ESMF. In order to ensure that no activity entailing the risk of physical displacement will be implemented, the Feasibility and Degraded Habitat Assessments with the ESIA consideration will be cleared by UNDP before any intervention taking place.

2.) There are risks for economic displacement associated with the proposed four intervention sites including ecological corridors and habitat restoration (two in Sichuan and two in Yunnan). The likelihood of this risk occurring is categorized as moderately likely L=3. The local people have been sensitized to land use restrictions in and near the protected areas, but some of the unsustainable activities have been persistent, including unauthorized livestock grazing. The number of households involved with such grazing is relatively small. Moreover, the emphasis of the ecological corridor strategies will be to increase awareness and demonstrate alternative livelihood options for sustainable use of natural resources, rather than imposing strict restrictions. To clarify key principles, organizational arrangements, and design criteria to be applied for the demonstration of alternative livelihood, the project will develop Business Plans for Nature-Based Livelihood Development. Once the individual project components or subprojects are defined and the necessary information becomes available, such a framework will be expanded into a specific action plan (i.e. Livelihood Action Plan) proportionate to potential risks and impacts.

3.) According to information available during PPG, interventions in three remote sites (Wolong NR, Daxiangling NR, Baishuihe NR) are not expected to affect local people as the closest villages are located several km away from the edge of the Natural Reserves. Nonetheless, since surrounding livelihoods may still depend on the natural resources in the targeted demonstration sites, the Degraded Habitat Site Assessments will also cover these three intervention sites. This implies that available information will require ground-truthing during early implementation, and before any activity in the three sites takes place. This has been addressed both in the SESP and in the ESMF.

4.) The paragraph has been rephrased to reflect compliance with Standard 6 as follow:
?They have livelihood strategies similar to those of the other rural populations. There is currently no evidence that they are excluded from existing economic opportunities, nor discriminated, and have no distinct needs from the rest of the population. Government policies targeting rural poor and vulnerable households in Yunnan and Sichuan province do not differentiate based on ethnicity, but target based on poverty indicators. Notwithstanding, the requirements of UNDP Standard 6 on the engagement with Indigenous people will be applied to all project activities affecting ethnic groups (see section 6 in table 4 below and IPPF).?

June 6, 2022

2.) The FPIC process is now consistent in all SESP related documents including the SESP itself (**Annex 4**), the Indigenous People Planning Framework (IPPF ? **Annex 11**) and the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF - **Annex 9**).

4.) As requested, the application of UNDP Standard 6 has been further clarified in the SESP (**Annex 4**), ESMF (**Annex 9**) and IPPF (**Annex 11**).

Monitoring and Evaluation

Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Yes

Agency Response

Benefits

Are the socioeconomic benefits at the national and local levels sufficiently described resulting from the project? Is there an elaboration on how these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of GEBs or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 5, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared. Please ensure that this description/language is included in the CER and ProDoc.

January 2022 HF:

Yes-though please clearly explain and incorporate in the CER/project document how project livelihood activities are/will be linked to conservation/sustainable use outcomes.

Agency Response

March 8, 2022:

While wildlife conservation friendly policy measures will be developed by the multi-sectoral platforms at the landscape and provincial level, alternative livelihoods opportunities will be explored at the community level. These include but are not limited to more ecological friendly farming and livestock grazing activities, and promotion of strengthened and or newly introduced income streams through ecotourism and certification schemes. These sustainable and alternative livelihoods will generate positive impacts to biodiversity conservation through reduced unsustainable practices, resulting in less pressure to the natural environment and mitigation of threats to habitats of endangered species.

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 18, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

June 24, 2022 HF:

As noted previously in the review sheet: Please respond to related comment below on need the need to include the potential risk of Component 3 and proposed risk mitigation measures, in both the UNDP SES screening and documentation as well as the GEF CER risk section.

May 5, 2022 HF:

1.) Comment cleared.

2.) Comment cleared. Please respond to related comment below on need the need to include the potential risk of Component 3 and proposed risk mitigation measures, in both the UNDP SES screening and documentation as well as the GEF CER risk section.

January 12, 2022 HF:

Budget:

1.) Some of the budget notes are red-is this intentional and if so what does it indicate? If not, please reformat to black.

2.) As previously noted regarding Component 3-and mentioned in the project documents- please ensure co-finance is used to cover the procurement of tech and tech hardware.

Agency Response

March 8, 2022:

1.) The red font of some of the budget note entries was unintentional. These have been reformatted to black.

2.) The project strategy includes a specific focus on demonstrating innovative frontier technologies. Whilst much of the added value of the GEF funds is oriented towards processing information, i.e., software related development, certain equipment is considered important to include in the project budget. For demonstration and learning purposes, the proposed budget includes some hardware for AI-based automatic data processing, GIS-based data management, environmental DNA, and blockchain technology based management systems. Moreover, setting up monitoring systems within the proposed wildlife corridors will require deployment of technology outside protected areas. Government co-financing will be invested on more traditional hardware (laptops, UPS, etc.) and GEF funds will be invested on demonstrating monitoring frontier technologies. Also, 12 villages are earmarked for engaging in participatory conservation and citizen science activities. The proposed budget includes development of patrolling

applets for local rangers and citizen scientists. This will require procurement of basic hardware, e.g., tablet computers, digital cameras, possibly camera traps, etc.

UNDP, July 4, 2022:

As described above, risks associated with privacy and personal data protection stemming from Component 3 activities have been described in a new risk added to the Risk Register (Annex 5 to the Project Document), as well as to the narrative in the Risks section of the GEF CER and UNDP ProDoc.

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes

Agency Response

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

June 24, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

May 5, 2022 HF:

1.) & 13.) comment cleared.

18.) If the project doesn't directly address enhanced surveillance of high zoonotic risk wildlife we recommend revising, for clarity, para 105 of the ProDoc that currently reads: "105. As recent events have also shown, the emergence of zoonoses must be viewed through a multi-disciplinary and intersectoral lens, as advocated through this project. The involvement of public health subject matter experts in the intersectoral coordination mechanisms and of academia, civil society, and the private sector in the definition of use cases **can help the project with the surveillance of 'high-risk' wildlife from a zoonotic perspective underscores that by its very nature Component 2 is also an investment in human health.** The health and social impacts associated with the global pandemic have made it clear we need a more sustainable bridge between human environmental and sectoral activity. Preparedness and mitigation efforts through the restoration of habitat and ecosystem services are expected to have a net positive effect on preventing future pathogens from spreading into human populations."

January 11, 2022 HF:

1.) Annex B follow up: 13.) Please respond directly to the question regarding how the project and activity design will increase the chance that livelihood activities supported under the project will take pressure off of the target biodiversity/ecosystems and actually be an 'alternative' or 'substitute' (see previous comment related to benefits and GEBs)

18.) In regards to zoonotic transmission and how the project will "enhance surveillance of high zoonotic risk wildlife"-will it? If so, how? Please also include in project/activity description.

2.) UNDP audit checklist completed.

Agency Response

March 8, 2022:

1.) As responded to the previous comment related to benefits and GEBs, while wildlife conservation friendly policy measures will be developed by the multi-sectoral platforms at the landscape and provincial level, alternative livelihoods opportunities will be explored at the community level. These include but are not limited to more ecological friendly farming and livestock grazing activities, and promotion of strengthened and or newly introduced income streams through ecotourism and certification schemes. These sustainable and alternative livelihoods will generate positive impacts to biodiversity conservation through reduced unsustainable practices, resulting in less pressure to the natural environment and mitigation of threats to habitats of endangered species.

18.) The project strategy does not directly address enhanced surveillance of high zoonotic risk wildlife. The establishment of the planned ecological corridors will include strengthened communication with local communities regarding management and avoidance of human-wildlife conflicts; highlighted under Outputs 2.2.1 and 2.2.2. Moreover, the knowledge management strategy and action plan under Output 3.2.1 will include human-wildlife conflict management considerations.

June 6, 2022:

18.) The subject paragraph has been replaced in the CEO ER and ProDoc with the following:

?Biodiversity mainstreaming, including through establishment of ecological corridors, also provides an opportunity to increase awareness among local communities and stakeholders in production sectors on the importance of sensibly managing human-wildlife conflicts, aimed at avoiding injury and damage, protection of endangered species, and minimizing the risk of zoonotic disease outbreaks.?

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 9, 2022 HF:

Comments cleared.

January 11, 2022 HF:

Please address US Council Comments and resubmit.

Agency Response

March 8, 2022:

Responses to the four comments made by the US Council member have been added to Annex B to the CEO ER and incorporated into the Project Document package.

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 5, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

January 16, 2022 HF:

1.) Annex B of the CER seems to address only a portion of STAP review comments, but given the STAP review was extensive (13 pages) has missed much. Please re-review STAP comments and address more fully, including those in the section titled "STAP overall assessment and rating" (CPAR overlap, IPLC engagement etc.).

Agency Response

March 8, 2022:

1.) The responses to the STAP comments focused on issues that were recommended to be addressed during the PPG phase. The comments were further reviewed and additional responses have been included in Annex B to the CEO ER and incorporated in the Project Document, including revisiting the assumptions in the Theory of Change, climate vulnerability assessment, and knowledge management.

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Does the termsheet in Annex F provide finalized financial terms and conditions? Does the termsheet and financial structure address concerns raised at PIF stage and that were pending to be resolved ahead of CEO endorsement? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

NA

Agency Response

Do the Reflow Table Annex G and the Trustee Excel Sheet for reflows provide accurate reflow expectations of the project submitted? Assumptions for Reflows can be submitted to explain expected reflows. (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Did the agency Annex H provided with information to assess the Agency Capacity to generate and manage reflows? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Response to comments below provided here.

Agency Response

UNDP August 10, 2022

1. Unfortunately, none of the protected areas included in this project have a WDPA ID. During project implementation, efforts will be made to have these PAs listed in the WDPA.

2. Executing partner type has been adjusted to GEF Agency in table C of the CEO ER and in the GEF portal.

3. As requested, detailed budget lines and activities are provided in Annex C of GEF CEO ER.

4. As requested, terms of reference have been revised to add clarity (Please see Annex 6 of the UNDP ProDoc for details).

5. Figures in Table B in the GEF CEO ER and GEF Portal entry, and in UNDP ProDoc Section IX "Total Budget and Work Plan" and Annex 1 "GEF Budget Template", now match.

6. See response to comment number 3 above.

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

Is CEO endorsement recommended? (applies only to projects and child projects)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

August 20, 2022:

Comments cleared.

August 18, 2022:

2. b): Though the review sheet said this was corrected in Portal, actually FECO still is categorized as Government instead of GEF Agency in Part 1: Project Information section of the CER. Please correct the designation of FECO to a **GEF Agency**.

5.) There are still differences between allocated funds per component in Table B and Budget Table in Portal (Annex E) that need correction, as follows:

- Component 1 in Budget table: \$1,055,496 - Component 1 in Table B: \$1,048,215
- Total in Budget table: \$5,793,354 - Total in Table B: \$5,786,073 (this is the correct figure per the PIF approved by Council)

August 4, 2022:

No, please address the following remaining issues:

1. On core-indicators: Please include the three WDPA IDs under core indicator 1.

2. Since FECO is a GEF agency, please change the executing partner type from Government to GEF Agency.
3. On utilization of PPG: Please request details on the activities funded with PPG resources.
4. On the budget: 3 positions are charged across components. Please provide clear terms of reference for these positions, or to charge these positions to both GEF and co-financing sources of PMC.
5. Table B: the total for component 1 and the overall total project budget does not match with the numbers provided in the Project budget table in Annex E. Please review the table provided and correct where necessary.
6. Utilization of PPG: the way the table is presented it looks like a lump sum provided for preparatory of technical studies & reviews?. Please provide more detail on the activities that were funded with PPG resources.

July 18, 2022 HF:

Yes, all comments are cleared and PM recommends this project for CEO endorsement. The project requires a 4-week GEF Council Review period prior to endorsement.

June 24, 2022 HF:

No, not at this time. Please address comments highlighted in yellow and ensure noted changes are made to corresponding project documentation.

May 5, 2022 HF:

No, not at this time. Please address comments in review sheet.

April 6, 2022 HF:

UNDP RTA requests to make further changes to CER package and review sheet based on new government input, prior to subsequent GEFSEC review. PM returned project to Agency.

January 16, 2022 HF:

No, please address comments in review sheet.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	1/12/2022	

**Secretariat Comment at
CEO Endorsement**

**Response to
Secretariat
comments**

Additional Review (as necessary)	5/5/2022
Additional Review (as necessary)	6/24/2022
Additional Review (as necessary)	7/18/2022
Additional Review (as necessary)	8/4/2022

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations