

# Transformational wildlife conservation management in China

Review PIF 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**

9/28/2020

**Review completed by PM**

10/22/2020

**Program Manager**

Hannah Fairbank

**Focal Area**

Biodiversity

**Project Type**

FSP

## **PIF**

### **Part I – Project Information**

#### **Focal area elements**

**1. Is the project/program aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements in Table A, as defined by the GEF 7 Programming Directions?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Sept 29, 2020, HF: Yes.

Agency Response

**Indicative project/program description summary**

**2. Are the components in Table B and as described in the PIF sound, appropriate, and sufficiently clear to achieve the project/program objectives and the core indicators?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 21, 2020 HF:

Comment cleared. To the extent possible please simplify language and use descriptions to increase understanding and clarity through the CEO endorsement request and ProDoc.

October 17, 2020 HF:

1.) Comment cleared.

2.) Comment cleared.

3.) The increased clarity in the Components/Outputs and relationship between them is appreciated. Please revise this sentence under Component 1 as the meaning is totally unclear " [Develop incentive policies to encourage reuse of biological resources and provide policy support for the development of technologies producing alternatives to usage of biological resource inputs in the production of goods and services.](#)"

4.) Comment cleared.

5.) Comment cleared.

6.) Comment cleared.

Sept 29, 2020, HF:

- 1.) Component 1: Please reword Component 1 to communicate a overarching theme/area of work rather than a short list of activities which Component 1 is currently. If the focus of C-1 is mainstreaming wildlife conservation into development planning (?) sectors etc through policies, standards, strategies etc the Component language should clearly communicate that very simply: e.g. "Mainstream wildlife conservation into integrated planning through creation of a supportive policy environment." Please revise accordingly.
- 2.) The project outputs seem to be a pretty disparate/varied and it isn't clear how they come together to achieve the project outcomes. 1.1.1 Is very vague-what type of coordination mechanism? Is there a legal/policy basis for such a body? And what is their role/entry point for influence? And what "key policies in place"? How is 1.1.2 contributing to Outcome 1.1? And what about 1.1.3? About what? To whom? To what end? Some of this may be explained in project justification- but it should be easy to understand the project components, outcomes and outputs, and how they fit together, from Table B.
- 3.) Please clarify how Component 1 and Component 2 are related? Is it that the policies, standards etc that are developed in C-1 will be applied in C-2? If so, this is not obvious. Is C-2 the implementation of an integrated landscape approach?
- 4.) What does community-based co-management mean in this context? Co-management of the national parks? Or ecosystems within the landscapes? Has the legal basis for this been previously established?
- 5.) 3.3.2: What is this and how does it relate to the mainstreaming and landscape agenda of the project (particularly regarding 'synergies in implementation of BD-related MEAs.')
- 6.) Component 3 should include KM explicitly.

Agency Response  
UNDP Oct 15, 2020

- 1) In alignment with the recommendation, the wording of Component 1 - in both Table B and in the narrative section of the PIF - has been amended to place greater emphasis on mainstreaming of wildlife in development planning as facilitated through policies, standards, strategies and underscore the special needs of threatened species in production landscapes. (See Table B, pages 1, and in the proposed alternative scenario Component 1 on pages 25 and 26 for details)
- 2) In China it is difficult to establish net new coordination mechanisms as these are subject to approval by the State Council. Therefore, the overarching strategy for the project and most pragmatic entry point to deliver results is to dovetail on existing structures by creating an explicit 'special wildlife coordination group' under the existing National Biodiversity Commission (SWCG) on with representation from the ministries of agriculture and rural affairs, natural resources, forestry and grassland, ecology and environment, transportation and culture and tourism.

The SWCG will be tasked with nurturing the specific needs of and injecting a landscape dimension across sectors and policies associated with China's Wildlife Protection Law including those related to development planning, enforcement and consumption, as well as supporting technical standards and environmental impact assessment guidelines. There is currently a gap within the focus of the National Biodiversity Commission since it does not necessarily take an integrated landscape approach nor has it fully internalized the special needs of iconic and threatened species across these landscapes in its decision making. To close this gap, the proposed scope of this SWCG will be to:

1. Oversee and coordinate actions and projects on wildlife conservation;
2. Resolve conflicts between the sectors pertaining to wildlife conservation in production landscapes;
3. Provide a mechanism for consultation on and harmonization of appropriate policies and planning on wildlife conservation and sustainable utilization to happen, including those pertaining to specific guidelines on green infrastructure, agriculture and other key sectors and ecological corridor establishment in multiple-use landscapes that will be developed through the project as examples to be scaled up at the national level.

The SWCG will also facilitate efforts at the provincial level towards a Yunnan Primate Conservation Strategy and Action Plan, and to help create the necessary enabling conditions to link landscapes across Giant Panda National Park and surrounding prefectures.

The above will be a significant value added to existing PA coordination mechanisms being proposed through parallel projects in China (i.e. C-PAR), but will be complimentary given its wildlife and landscape focus in the context of cross-sectoral planning and which continues to be a gap that has not been addressed to date.

The description of Outcome 1.1 along with its corresponding Outputs have been tightened to highlight greater connectivity between them, specifically around the SWCG, entry points and what capacities are being strengthened (see Part II 1a (3), pages 25 to 32 for details).

3) There are strong dependencies between Components 1 and 2 of the project, which are also meant to be mutually reinforcing:

Through the SWCG, created under the National Biodiversity Commission, Component 1 will tailor an existing framework of and develop new incentives and policies aligned to Priority Action 1 in China's NBSAP, calling for improved policy and legal systems of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use and ensure these are more relevant wildlife in the context of landscapes that will be applied, tested and refined at site level as part of Component 2:

- o Establish, improve and enhance pricing, taxation, credit, trade, land use and government procurement policies related to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, and prioritize projects that support wildlife conservation and sustainable use to inform price, credit and taxation terms;
- o Improve ecological compensation policies, expand their coverage and increase investment(s);
- o Develop incentive policies to encourage reuse of biological resources and provide policy support for the development of technologies producing alternatives to usage of biological resource inputs in the production of goods and services.

Component 1 will create a comprehensive set of guidelines for ecological corridor establishment which considers wildlife needs. At this juncture the technical guidelines are expected to cover the design and management of participatory connectivity conservation and restoration in multi-use landscapes, prioritization guidelines/gap analysis, community engagement/livelihoods/co-management, intersectoral dialogue, use of data management technology for decision making (output 3.1.1), and sector specific guidelines (i.e. agriculture and rural affairs, transportation and infrastructure, and tourism). As part of the guidelines, the national Environmental Impact Assessment system will be augmented to include a Wildlife Impact Assessment chapter, which will be applied as part of Component 2 in the context of sectoral activities in sensitive habitats across the selected landscapes. Taken together, the set of guidelines will be leveraged and inform how and where conservation and remediation work is undertaken as part of Component 2 as well as inform the strategy and actions plan(s) also envisioned (outputs 1.2.1 and 1.2.2).

The strategies and action plans for Giant Panda and Yunnan envisaged under Component 1 (outputs 1.2.1 and 1.2.2) will be implemented at site level (outputs 2.2.1 and 2.2.2), also with specific activities to be undertaken by each targeted sector informed by the comprehensive set of guidelines developed (output 1.1.2).

And because one cannot just expect a new set of policies to solve the underlying problem, there also needs to be sustained public awareness and a deeper understanding of issues and therefore, Component 3 is also relevant here having both an amplification and enhanced awareness effect (outputs 3.2.1 and 3.3.2). Effective wildlife conservation hinges on and requires a rapid understanding of how the elements of biodiversity and species' needs are changing over time. At the same time, some new technologies have been developed, such as low-altitude remote sensing by unmanned aerial vehicle and the Mobile Supervising System apps, which have greatly improved the ability to monitor biodiversity, especially in remote and inhospitable areas. Additionally, advances in knowledge management and data solutions can connect disparate data sets to for more informed decision making and will feed into further refining thresholds for the policies and guidelines in Component 1 (outputs 3.1.1, 3.1.2 and 3.1.3).

4) In China, almost all national nature reserves have formal co-management agreements in place with the surrounding villages (or townships). In the context of this project, co-management will occur in the buffer areas outside PAs. This model of co-management will be exploratory in the Yunnan landscape to understand whether or not it is feasible and if there is palpability to sign similar sorts of agreements in landscapes outside PAs to benefit wildlife in threatened habitats and across landscapes to encourage patrols by farmers and to support ecological monitoring by communities. For Giant Panda National Park, it is anticipated that co-management agreements will be signed between nature reserves and surrounding villages or townships, as the Park includes more than 82 nature reserves.

5) Upon further discussion to simplify the Strategic Results Framework and improve coherence between outputs to their corresponding Outcomes, output 3.3.2 has been removed altogether.

Please note that Outcome 3.2 is centered around Knowledge Management and will be anchored to a robust Knowledge Management and Communications plan. Please also note that wording of Component 3 has been slightly amended to heighten this connection (see Table B, pages 5 and 6).

Ten priority areas and thirty priority actions have been identified in accordance with the above strategic goals and strategic tasks.

**Priority Area 1: To improve the policy and legal system of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use**

*Action 1 Develop policies to enhance biodiversity conservation and sustainable use*

22

- Establish, improve and enhance pricing, taxation, credit and loan, trade, land use and government procurement policies related to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, and give preferential treatment to those projects for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in terms of price, credit and loan and taxation.
- Improve the ecological compensation policies and expand their coverage and increase investments.
- Develop incentive policies to encourage reuse of biological resources and provide policy support for development of technologies producing alternatives of biological resources.

*Action 2 Improve the legal system of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use*

- Fully review and examine the provisions related to biodiversity conservation in existing laws and regulations and adjust those where there are conflicts and inconsistencies between these laws and regulations to improve the legal system and their mutual consistency.
- Study and develop laws and regulations on nature reserve management

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*Action 2 Improve the legal system of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use*

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- Study and develop laws and regulations on nature reserve management

## UNDP Responses Oct 21, 2020

The wording for the three policies and incentives that will be improved under Component 1 as part of Work Package 1 is verbatim from China's NBSAP with respect to Priority Action 1 policies (Reference is made to page 23 of China's NBSAP and also the screenshot below). Please also note the national Subject Matter Expert advising on the Project also co-authored China's NBSAP and is intimately familiar with the key policies to be worked on through the project and how they ought to be enhanced to support a landscape approach towards the conservation of threatened wildlife. Government prefers to make no changes at this juncture but will be considered during the PPG stage.

## Co-financing

**3. Are the indicative expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines, with a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 27, 2020 HF:

Comment cleared.

October 23, 2020 HF:

There is not proportionality in the co-financing contribution to PMC – please revise. The GEF percent contribution to PMC needs to be the same as the GEF contribution to overall project financing. For instance, if co-financing is 10X the GEF amount, then co-financing contribution to PMC should be 10 X more than GEF PMC contribution. Please see relevant GEF policy

here: [https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF\\_Guidelines\\_Project\\_Program\\_Cycle\\_Policy\\_20200731.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF_Guidelines_Project_Program_Cycle_Policy_20200731.pdf)

October 17, 2020 HF:

All comments cleared.

Sept 29, 2020, HF:

1.) Project #5 with Dr. Plant (\$710,000) is not included in co-financing as the private sector (it is under UNDP now in Table C), and here it is indicated that Dr. Plant is the Donor. Please revise.

2.) PMC: Please ensure the 'proportionality' of PMC between the GEFTF resources versus co-finance. Currently the GEFTF share is within limits, but the co-finance proportion should be more commensurate. Please refer to the the updated GEF policy and guidelines document here:

[https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF\\_Guidelines\\_Project\\_Program\\_Cycle\\_Policy\\_20200731.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF_Guidelines_Project_Program_Cycle_Policy_20200731.pdf)

Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

- 1) The reference to Dr. Plant has been removed. UNDP will be providing this grant co-financing directly as per the implementation modality and grant terms agreed with the bilateral donor.
- 2) While the 'proportionality' of PMC between the GEFTF resources and co-financing is consistent and within GEF guidelines, after further consultations with the IP, the PMC co-financing has been increased to \$1,100,000.00. (see table B, page 6)

In addition to the above, please note that the portion of PMC funded with GEF TF resources was reduced in line with the STAR allocation adjustment requested by the GEF OFP.

UNDP 27 Oct 2020

Table B of the PIF has been adjusted to reflect PMC co-financing proportionality. Note co-financing for component 1 was reduced to address this request. Also, Figure 1 has been updated to reflect changes in table B.

#### **GEF Resource Availability**

**4. Is the proposed GEF financing in Table D (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines? Are they within the resources available from (mark all that apply):**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 21, 2020 HF:

Comment cleared.

October 17, 2020 HF:

Please note that in Table D the \$250,000 is tagged as Biodiversity STAR whereas it should be BD Set Aside. Please fix if indeed the set-aside is intended to be used to support this project.

Sept 29, 2020, HF:

If project will include BD set-aside this needs to be included in Table D and in the project design/outcomes.

Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

The total GEF biodiversity set-aside funding being earmarked to the project is \$250,000.00. Please see amendments reflected in Table D (see page 7).

UNDP Responses, Oct 21, 2020

The total GEF biodiversity set-aside funding being earmarked to the project is \$250,000.00. Please see Table D (see page 7). As per the screenshot below the \$250,000.00 have already been earmarked as BD Global Regional Set- Aside Funds and not Biodiversity STAR.

**D. INDICATIVE TRUST FUND RESOURCES REQUESTED BY AGENCY(IES), COUNTRY(IES), FOCAL AREA AND THE PROGRAMMING OF FUNDS**

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country / Regional / Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	(in \$)		
					GEF Project Financing (a)	Agency Fee (b)	Total (c) = a+b
UNDP	GEF TF	China	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	5,557,762	527,987	6,085,750
UNDP	GEF TF	China	Biodiversity	BD Global Regional Set- Aside	228,311	21,689	250,000
<b>Total GEF Resources</b>					<b>5,786,073</b>	<b>549,677</b>	<b>6,335,750</b>

**D. INDICATIVE TRUST FUND RESOURCES REQUESTED BY AGENCY(IES), COUNTRY(IES), FOCAL AREA AND THE PROGRAMMING OF FUNDS**

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<b>Total GEF Resources</b>					<b>5,786,073</b>	<b>549,677</b>	<b>6,335,750</b>

**The STAR allocation?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion Sept 29, 2020, HF: Yes.

Agency Response

**The focal area allocation?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion Sept 29, 2020, HF: Yes.

Agency Response

**The LDCF under the principle of equitable access**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion NA

Agency Response

**The SCCF (Adaptation or Technology Transfer)?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion NA

Agency Response

**Focal area set-aside?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 21, 2020 HF:

Comment cleared.

October 17, 2020 HF:

Please revise set-aside tag in Table D as indicated above.

September 29, 2020 HF:

If BD set-aside fund are going to be allocated to this project for S-S or global engagement/KM this needs to be indicated in Table D and be included in project design.

Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

The GEF biodiversity set-aside funding being earmarked to the project will be allocated towards South-South cooperation and Knowledge Management. (see knowledge management section 8, page 55-56 for details)

UNDP Responses, Oct. 21, 2020

Please see note above and accompanying screenshot regarding set-aside tag in Table D.

**Impact Program Incentive?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion NA

Agency Response

**Project Preparation Grant**

**5. Is PPG requested in Table E within the allowable cap? Has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated? (not applicable to PFD)**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion Sept 29, 2020, HF: Yes.

Agency Response

**Core indicators**

**6. Are the identified core indicators in Table F calculated using the methodology included in the correspondent Guidelines? (GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01)**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 17, 2020 HF:

Comment cleared.

Sept 29, 2020, HF: Yes.

1.) Do the hectare targets include the full area that will be effected by the plans produced under Outcome 1.2? These targets should be inclusive and aim to take into account the full, direct impact of management improvements via mainstreaming/planning.

Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

The project is considering the whole landscape and has articulated the hectare targets under improved management *outside* protected areas as well as within PAs and having differentiated between different types of restoration activities. Therefore, the whole Giant Panda National Park is part of the current figures articulated. Notwithstanding, after further consultations with government, it is possible to increase the area under improved practices outside PAs by an additional 3,000 ha in Yunnan, considering buffer areas of selected PAs and thereby bringing the total to 10,100 ha for core indicator 4, representing a 42.25% increase in the original core indicator of 7,100 ha. (See Table B, page 3, Project's target contributions to GEF-7 core indicators, pages 7-8 and Annex B, page 60 for details)

**Project/Program taxonomy**

**7. Is the project/ program properly tagged with the appropriate keywords as requested in Table G?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion Sept 29, 2020, HF: Yes.

Agency Response

**Part II – Project Justification**

**1. Has the project/program described the global environmental / adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers that need to be addressed?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 21, 2020 HF:

Comment cleared. Thank you. Please note the component language shows up in the PIF and one-page PDF attachment, but not in the Portal entry. No matter.

October 17, 2020 HF:

1.) Comment cleared.

2.) Comment cleared.

3.) Figure 1 nicely depicts the basics of the project. Thank you. If not too much trouble, it might be clearer to include simplified text on the project components somewhere (e.g. mainstreaming policy; landscape-level demonstration; technology and KM or the like).

Sept 29, 2020, HF:

1.) Please kindly upload (or email) referenced NDRC/MNR "master plan for major national projects for the conservation and restoration of major ecosystems."

2.) How/why were the demonstration sites selected/prioritized for this project? Please include language in PIF so it is clear.

3.) The para just before Table 1 refers to COP15 and the position paper etc. -please indicate how this project fits in/what role does it play?

4.) Under Root Causes: First para, final sentence should include 'drivers'.

5.) Under Root Causes: The section on "Over exploitation and utilization, trade and livelihood demand": Are TCM and local hunting the only pressures driving over exploitation of wildlife? Even if the project is not going to address all the drivers of overexploitation this section should be inclusive/comprehensive.

6.) Barrier 1: The final few sentences talk about the Ministry of Natural Resources and their role in restoration, what about conservation? Are they also responsible for this? And what role does the redlining process and implementation plan in a more integrated approach to development planning?

5.) Under Root Causes: "Insufficient awareness and poor cross-sectoral coordination" should be separated into two different sections, particularly given the mainstreaming theme of the project. Cross-sectoral coordination and planning needs separate treatment.

#### Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

1) The NDRC/MNR document "master plan for major national projects for the conservation and restoration of major ecosystems." Can be found in the following link [https://www.ndrc.gov.cn/xxgk/zcfb/tz/202006/t20200611\\_1231112\\_ext.html](https://www.ndrc.gov.cn/xxgk/zcfb/tz/202006/t20200611_1231112_ext.html), note this document is only available in Chinese.

2) Put simply, Yunnan Province is the richest in China for biodiversity, with Sichuan Province a close second. Both Yunnan and the mountains of Southwest China which include Sichuan, are among the world's 36 biodiversity hotspots as defined by areas with exceptional concentrations of endemic species (containing at least 0.5% of the Earth's plant species as endemics) and are experiencing increasing, large-scale habitat loss, at least 70% of which is caused by human disturbance.

The high variability in climatic and geographic conditions within Yunnan makes its biodiversity very fragile since habitats are consequently quite small and often endangered by growing human populations, habitat fragmentation, expanding of agricultural plantations and increasing pollution.

In Sichuan, the Giant Panda National Park not only includes more than 30% of the world's population of giant Panda and constitutes the largest and most significant remaining contiguous area of panda habitat in the world, the area is also one of the botanically richest sites of any temperate region in the world or indeed anywhere outside of the tropical rain forests. Sichuan has exceptional value for biodiversity conservation and can demonstrate how ecosystem management systems can work across the borders of national and provincial protected areas (See page numbers 14, 17 and 18 for details).

3) COP15 and China's incoming Presidency of the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is an entry point and unique opportunity for the prioritization of the problems articulated in the root cause / barrier analysis, as well as to start actioning a number of themes covered under this project on a preliminary basis. It also an enabler for the PPG and design phase to start on the right footing. The heightened awareness around biodiversity post-COP will also offer opportunities to capture the baseline and play into the types of KM products that would be most beneficial and offers opportunities for enhanced consultation. Given China's remarkable ingenuity and being at the forefront of technology innovation, there is also an entry point to enable China to showcase, test and scale the frontier technologies proposed under Component 3 through its role at the helm of the COP Presidency. Both COP15 and China's COP Presidency are opportunities for engagement and consultation with the private sector and academia in these efforts and to generate productive partnerships and synergies with Research & Development being spearheaded by companies and across academic institutions in this

domain.

The position paper "*Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth: China in Action*" is the long term blueprint and the themes of adopting strong policy measures, accelerated mainstreaming, improving policy and legal frameworks, improving livelihoods through co-management and ecological restoration with emphasis on the protection of rare and endangered species which all appear in the PIF have been gleaned from the document to frame its priorities. Therefore, it provides the necessary anchor for the business case in the PIF and supports the business architecture going forward. (See pages 13, 20, 26 and 55)

- 4) Under Root Causes the final sentence in the first paragraph has been amended to include "drivers". (See page 15)
- 5) This section has been augmented to be more fulsome and other forms of exploitation, including pressures from unchecked sectoral development and extractive industry, have been added to make this paragraph more comprehensive. (See pages 14 and 15, for details)
- 6) The Ministry of Natural Resources is a recent entity that was established in 2018 through the consolidation of functions of national natural resources administration previously split among several agencies of the now-defunct Ministry of Land and Resources, State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping and State Oceanic Administration, with additional responsibilities coming from other departments and ministries. Its major functions also include the conservation file as it is responsible for supervising the development, utilization, and protection of China's natural resources, establishing and implementing a spatial planning system, unifying investigations and rights registration, establishing a system for the paid use of natural resources and managing surveying, mapping and geological exploration industries.

China's ecological red line process is critical in maintaining its ecological security, ecosystem function, and sustainable socioeconomic development. About a quarter of land is scheduled to be covered by the red line by the end of 2020. An ecological red line has been drawn at each level down the chain of government spatial planning and therefore, it is an integral tool in the levers that can be deployed for a more integrated approach to development planning and specifically to this project covering wildlife in landscapes. China does not allow its ecological protection red lines to be trampled upon as it strives to protect biodiversity, adjust its economic structure, draw blueprints for industrial development and promote a new type of resource utilization, development and urbanization. The Ministry of Natural Resources took over the role of redlining from Ministry of Ecology and Environment, and therefore, its conservation function and mandate has been strengthened. Still, the main vehicle for conservation sector remains the Forestry and Grassland Administration. (See pages 12, 16 and 21 for details)

- 7) Given the mainstreaming theme of the project "Insufficient awareness and poor cross-sectoral coordination" has been split into two different sections as recommended. (See page 15, for details)

UNDP Response, Oct.21, 2020

3. Great suggestion. Figure 1 on page 9 of the PIF has been updated accordingly to reflect the high-level scope of each Component in line with the succinct wording provided. A standalone PDF has also been created as collateral that can be used if needed.

2. Is the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects appropriately described?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 21, 2020 HF:

All comments cleared. Please note that collaboration with GWP global coordination project is encouraged and welcomed.

October 18, 2020 HF:

1.) Comment cleared.

2.) Comment cleared.

3.) Table 11 please correct column heading to IUCN "program" (as it is a PFD with child projects). Also recommend making Table 11 an annex, rather than embedded in the PIF text.

4.) Noting the inclusion of C-PAR. Please clarify the final baseline project included. Does this refer to the World Bank Global Wildlife Program (GWP) global coordination project GEFID: 10647? If so, please update the middle and far right column with the period of performance and the corrected GEF Implementing Agency for that project. The current text is confusing and seems to imply this would be a new project yet to be designed rather than coordination with the current GWP-II global project.

GEF-financed Global Wildlife Program (exchange of lessons on managing wildlife conservation)	TBD	NFGA
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5.) Comment cleared.

Sept 29, 2020, HF:

1.) There is mention of the amendment of 'the Law on Wild Animal Protection'. What role will this project play in supporting the amendment of this law? Or the implementation of the law in the pilot sites? Also, at the end of that sentence there is a confusing typo, the word 'biosafety' comes after the period.

- 2.) Final para of the "alternatives" heading under baseline should also include numerical markings for the three components that are articulated. This would clarify things greatly.
- 3.) Need to better explain in baseline why all the investment in GPNP has not included the activities proposed in this project for the park (corridor identification and restoration, mainstreamed landscape management etc). There are several GEF projects, (and many other international donor projects) financing activities in GPNP need to be very explicit about how this project is incremental rather than duplicative/overlapping/redundant.
- 4.) Table 3: Baseline Related Project Information: Are these the co-financing projects? Looks like the table is missing CPAR and likely others that are part of the baseline. Needs to be addressed.
- 5.) There is reference in this section to **"build back better by ensuring that going forward, our economic models not only take biodiversity into account but prioritize it"** This is indeed the case, but there doesn't seem to be any continuity or reference in the actual project itself to how this project will be contributing to a transformed economic model in any way. Without some direct project linkage(s) this declarative statement seems a bit out of place-and raises expectations that this project is going to actually work towards that, but it isn't obvious that this is the case. Please address.

## Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

- 1) The Wildlife Protection Law, which first came into effect in 1988, is the legislative basis for management and protection of wildlife in China. It has been revised four times: in 2004, 2008, 2016 and 2018, as well as amendments made this year in the context of public health concerns. Recent events and the global pandemic have thrust China's Wildlife Protection Law up the legislative agenda. Taken together, the narrow legal definition of "wild animals" and fragmented oversight mechanisms means that many animals are not adequately protected which opens up substantial opportunities for mainstreaming through this project.

There has been a marked change of public attitudes and government policies in regards to wildlife protection over recent years and since the global pandemic, there has been an outpouring of public attention, heightened attention and discussion around the consumption of wildlife, both in China and around the world. Within China there has been tremendous changes in the public attitude towards the environment and wildlife consumption, also reflected in policy and regulations, and generally more discussion around the core issues. While the project is not expected to adopt specific policies in this regard, there is a clear understanding that the project will support attitudinal changes towards revising our understanding of and relationship with nature, including that of wildlife consumption. The latter are entry points for the project in terms of awareness and knowledge management and therefore, the Law on Wild Animal Protection is an important anchor for this. (See page number 18 and footnote no. 12)

Typo has also been removed.

2) As recommended, numerical markings have been added to the final paragraph of the section entitled "*alternatives*" in the baseline section to improve readability. (See page 21, for details)

3) Whereas several past and ongoing projects also propose activities related to enhanced connectivity within Giant Panda National Park, including a national level gap and connectivity analysis, these are largely focused on ensuring that the protection of globally significant biodiversity is optimized within the National Park system in China, whereas the focus on the present project involves a landscape approach that goes beyond the PA system (i.e. ecological corridor establishment and intersectoral landscape planning) to conserve threatened wildlife, and supporting technical guidelines and sectoral policies would be different but complimentary (See Tables 4 "Baseline Related Project Information" and table 11 "Differentiation of projects currently in the identification (PIF) stage" on pages 22 and 52 respectively, as well as narrative on pages 23 and 24 for details).

The baseline section has been augmented therefore, to articulate this and how GEF projects and other investments in GPNP is incremental rather than duplicative/overlapping/redundant. (See page 2, and Table 7 "Incremental Reasoning" on pages 36 and 37 for details)

4) In line with the recommendation, Table 4 has been augmented to include C-PAR and other initiatives that are part of the baseline and to clarify which of these projects are considered co-financing, or not.

(See Table 4 on pages 22 - 23, for details)

Point well taken, this ambitious statement has been brought more in line with the scope of the project, its focus on biodiversity mainstreaming across sectors and a supportive policy environment. Now reads as follows in the PIF: "*build back better by ensuring that going forward, inter-sectoral landscape planning not only takes wildlife needs and their habitats into account, but prioritizes it*".

(See page 25 and 32)

Table 11 has now been moved to Annex E on page 81 and the LOE to a new Annex F on page 82. The reference to Table 5 in error has also been corrected, now referencing Annex E. Subsequent tables have been renumbered accordingly but may now be out of synch with the first set of comments submitted on 15 October and to references to tables 11 to 12 therein.

The middle and far left columns of the last row of Table 4 on page 23 have been updated to reflect the project titled “A Landscape Approach to Wildlife Conservation in Northeastern China” - GEF ID 4651, which was approved for implementation in 2015 and the GEF Agency is the World Bank ( See <https://www.thegef.org/project/landscape-approach-wildlife-conservation-northeastern-china>).

**3. Does the proposed alternative scenario describe the expected outcomes and components of the project/program?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 21, 2020 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 18, 2020 HF:

1.)-6.) Comments cleared.

7.) Given the importance of MOF in development and financing, will MOF play any role in this project from a technical perspective? For instance eventual participation in the NCBC or otherwise? It should be an advantage the GEF OFPs office is housed within MOF and responsible for the portfolio.

8.)-10.) Comments cleared.

11.) The column on the broader Landscape in Table 5 that was referred to in the Agency response below does not seem to be present. Please revise. Also, there is an erroneous reference to Table 5 (pasted in below) that needs to be fixed as I think it is referring to Table 11 (that was previously recommended to be annexed).

In addition to the above, there are currently two biodiversity focused projects being developed in China with the support of the ADB and IUCN. Table 5 below aims to show basic similarities and differences between these projects. Furthermore, it aims to acknowledge the existence of these projects and the need to coordinate and generate synergies between these initiatives during PPG.

12.)-13.) Comments cleared.

14.) Comment cleared. Please ensure that there are clear linkages between these overarching, visionary statements and what is proposed in this project, otherwise it seems like these types of statements in the PIF are a bit disconnected.

15.)-18.) Comments cleared.

Sept 29, 2020, HF:

1.) The project refers repeatedly to a "cross sectoral coordination mechanism" but nowhere is it actually explained. It would be helpful to include in the component descriptions a reference to what this mechanism is? Is there a policy and institutional framework or basis for its establishment and functioning? Are there previous/other examples of where this is operating? Are the other ministries and sectors who should be taking leadership roles in this type of mechanism on board with it?

2.) How do each of the components relate and link to each other? There should be a clear an obvious relationship between them. Currently it seems that C-1 is focused on mainstreaming of wildlife considerations across sectors; C-2 is site level actions on ecological corridor definition and conservation, livelihoods; and C-3 is on advanced technology for wildlife management and monitoring. These don't seem iterative or directly relate and contribute to each other. Also, while clarifying these relationships, please also simplify/clarify the language for each of the project Components to they clearly communicate the objective of that component.

3.) Component 1: use of the term "readiness" is unclear-what is meant by that in this case? Please revise?

4.) C-1: Again, what is this "biodiversity protection coordination mechanism"?

5.) C-1: Please rework/revise the description of "Develop and ecological corridor classification evaluation index system and technical standards" unclear what is planned here, likely most of this should be funded through co-finance, this is the type of work that should happen pre-project, not funded by GEF. Maybe it can be completed during PPG and then the project can actually use or apply these systems/standards in pilot sites?

6.) C-1: Nature friendly sustainable infrastructure: Don't such guidelines already exist? What is meant by a "reference model" in this context? Have the government entities in China that are responsible for infrastructure development committed to collaborating on the development of such guidelines? And the application and adherence to such guidelines infrastructure development? What instructions are these? MOF? Others? We wouldn't want to invest in the development of guidelines without a specific entry point for them to be applied by those who have jurisdiction/power over infrastructure development. Please explain and clarify.

- 7.) C-1: Strategy formulation and cross sectoral prioritization of actions: How will other sectors be involved in formulating this strategy and prioritization of actions and in implementing it? What is the "protection strategy" mentioned? Please explain the CNCBC?
- 8.) Why is the focus in Yunnan primates? Rather than wildlife more generally? Or landscape (with primates as a key focal species)? And please include further information in PIF regarding populations of primates in target areas/patches.
- 9.) Please simplify the language in the final sentence of this section on C-1 that starts with "The intermediate state associated with this component is enhanced..." so it can be more easily understood.
- 10.) C-2: What does co-management mean in this context? Is it true co-management with the government of the national park? Or something else?
- 11.) Please clarify whether the project is putting forth a model for landscape-level conservation? Or something else that combines ecological corridors, cross-sectoral/mainstreamed development planning and PAs? Table 4 is titled "Summary of demonstration PAs"-but if the project is working beyond PAs in the two demonstration areas, there should be a broader description of these landscapes.
- 12.) Table 4 includes the "Caojian plantations" as a protected area. Is this a intact, natural forest area? Or a plantation? Or a "forest farm"? Please explain and how it sits within the broader strategy/landscape in Yunnan demonstration site.
- 13.) During PPG please ensure that any livelihood activities that fall under this project are developed based on sound market analysis and using best practice in conservation enterprise development using lessons learned from decades of failure by the biodiversity conservation community to successfully develop "alternative" sources of income or "substitute" extractive or damaging activities with other livelihood options.
- 14.) The final sentence of Component 2 text (after Table 4) references how the project is "an investment in human health, preparedness and mitigation efforts" and will have impact on "preventing future pathogens etc..." but unfortunately it is not clear how this is the case from the project concept and design thus far. This reference seems like more of an add-on than a full integrated approach, or outcome for the project. Please explain/develop/integrate or remove if not the case.
- 15.) How will C-3 relate and support the other project components? Does the capacity and finances exist at the demonstration site-level to actually use and maintain the advanced technology?
- 16.) Please simplify the explanation of the desired end/intermediate-state to be achieved by C-3.

17.) A clear, and simple statement (and graphic if helpful from a design perspective) of the project's Theory Of Change is needed, rather than a re-statement of the project components. Namely:

a.) The ToC diagram is simply a presentation of the results framework. A ToC diagram should show a coherent and logical causal model that includes explicit mention of the assumptions that underpin the causal pathways as this is an essential element to understanding the project hypothesis. Please refer to the STAP publication as a reference for different approaches to the visual presentation of a ToC: <https://www.stapgef.org/theory-change-primer>.

b.) Please strengthen the written description of the incremental scenario and TOC by paying special attention to describing the causal pathways of the expected outcomes and the underlying assumptions of the causal pathways. This should also address the question about the relationship between the Components. These relationships, and causal linkages should be evident once this is done.

c.) Once the causal pathways/linkages are identified please provide a more robust justification that these pathways are sufficient to achieve the project objectives, given the assumptions upon which they are based.

d.) This then could be better reflected in your graphic presentation of the theory of change. Most importantly, though, is the clear articulation of the project's causal pathways and underlying assumptions.

18.) Under the proposed alternative scenario, there is a sentence mentioning COVID-19 and the project will use recovery as an opportunity to build back better, but there is no mention of how. Please revise Considering Yunnan Province to have the most abundant biological diversity and resources in China and evidence that COVID-19 has emerged from human contact close to the wildlife, it will be indeed interesting to see COVID-19 not only as a risk but as an opportunity in this project (e.g. use of new monitoring tools for surveillance of 'high-risk' wildlife from a zoonotics perspective, inclusion of public health officials in cross-sectoral landscape management mechanism etc).

## Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

- 1) There are three coordination mechanisms relevant for biodiversity in China, all of which have been approved by the State Council:
  - i. CBD Implementation Coordination Group established in 1993, originally comprising 10 ministries (and increased to 20 ministries in 2005) and which has now ceased all operations;
  - ii. Joint ministry Conference on Genetic Resources established in 2004, comprised of 17 ministries, with the scope of addressing “bio-piracy” and international negotiations on access to and benefit sharing of genetic resources under the Nagoya Protocol. This mechanism was active between 2004-2010 and has gradually weakened since; and,

iii. National Commission of Biodiversity Conservation (NCBC) established in 2010 in parallel with the United Nations Decade on Biological Diversity (2011-2020). Since 2011 it has become a fixed coordination mechanism related to all biodiversity issues and was originally comprised of 25 ministries (now 23 following recent ministry restructurings) and headed by the first vice premier (one of the top 7 leaders in China). Therefore, it is the most influential mechanism which functions as:

- A coordination body for strategy and action planning on biodiversity conservation issues;
- A decision-making body on policies for biodiversity conservation;
- A vehicle for strategy formulation and for taking positions on international activities related to biodiversity issues including national implementation of the CBD and its Protocols)
- A conduit for resolving conflicts between sectors and between central and provincial government.

Preliminary consultations have been undertaken with government with encouraging results on the viability of establishing a specialized wildlife coordination group under NCBC to ensure the project is primed and ready to hit the ground running once it is operational. This group would take a leadership role on advancing the supportive policy and regulatory environment to facilitate a landscape approach to wildlife mainstreaming and have the following scope:

- To coordinate actions and projects on wildlife conservation across the 6 or more participating ministries;
- To resolve conflicts between the sectors in the context of wildlife conservation across production landscapes;
- A consultation body for the improvement and harmonization of existing and new policies and planning efforts on wildlife conservation and sustainable utilization, including those pertaining to specific guidelines on green infrastructure and multi-use-sector ecological corridor establishment that will be developed through the project as examples.
- Other duties to be defined during the PPG stage. (See baseline section in the PIF on page 17, for details)

2) The Component statements have been simplified as follows to clearly communicate the objective of each:

- **Component 1:** Mainstreaming wildlife conservation into integrated landscape planning through enhanced intersectoral coordination and supportive policy environment
- **Component 2:** Demonstrating integrated landscape management approaches and innovative tools in key endangered globally important wildlife habitats
- **Component 3:** Deploying frontier technologies and innovative knowledge management solutions for wildlife conservation and landscape planning

As noted above, there are clear dependencies both within and between Components, outcomes and outputs. The PIF now uses a “work package” approach to clarify these interlinkages and dependencies. It is important to note that the work packages will be implemented in a dynamic and iterative manner and therefore the sequential listing below should not be interpreted as being a linear process (See page numbers 25 to 32, for details).

3) The term “readiness” has been deleted from the narrative description of Component 1.

4) As noted above the coordination mechanism will be a special wildlife group under the National Biodiversity Commission.

5) The description of output 1.1.3 has been revised as follows:

*“Develop a comprehensive set of guidelines based on international experiences for ecological corridor establishment incorporating wildlife considerations.”*

Preliminary consultation with the government has revealed several important gaps. Currently, there are no sustainable infrastructure guidelines and the national EIA regulatory system aims to introduce only basic environmental and human health considerations for any and all infrastructure development in the country. The government is cognizant that the national EIA system has a clear a gap in terms of mainstreaming biodiversity considerations, let alone specific wildlife considerations and those related to a landscape approach. As noted above, the SWCG will include 6 sectors, all of which have preliminarily agreed to take part in this process, as well as appreciate the importance of closing this gap through the suggested tools and thematic areas the comprehensive technical guidelines are expected to cover.

As the project wishes to inject international experiences to output 1.1.3, GEF funding will be used for developing technical inputs, including the drafting of guidelines, investigation work and scientific research / surveys. Co-financing will be leveraged for convening government officials and to support discussions and consultations. (See Table B for details of the allocation of GEF vis a vis Co-Financing for Component 1 and description of the proposed alternative scenario on pages 24 to 26, for details)

6) As noted above there is currently a gap with respect to nature-friendly infrastructure guidelines in China. Notwithstanding, these have been absorbed as part of the comprehensive set of guidelines for wildlife/biodiversity mainstreaming in output 1.1.3 for the 6 prioritized sectors that will constitute the SWCG, which will also include a special wildlife chapter in the National Environmental Impact Assessment regulatory system and which currently does not exist.

7) As mentioned above, the SWCG will take a leadership role on advancing the supportive policy and regulatory environment to facilitate a landscape approach to wildlife mainstreaming. Initially, it will be comprised of 6 ministries and corresponding sectors i) agriculture and rural affairs ii) natural resources iii) forestry and grassland iv) ecology and environment v) transportation vi) culture and tourism but efforts will be made to expand representation.

The China National Committee for Biodiversity Conservation (CNCBC), composed of 23 departments under the State Council and headed by a Vice Premier, was established to promote communication and collaboration among departments and coordinate biodiversity actions at the national level. China has developed inter-agency government coordination mechanisms for biodiversity. There is a Secretariat for the CNCBC embedded within the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE). It usually meets annually or bi-annually at the request of the MEE (or by another ministry), and reports to the State Council and the Chairman of CNCBC for approval.

Since this governance body operates at the highest level in China, the outcomes of these meetings are usually strategy documents including policies or priority actions and special initiatives to be implemented by sectors. This body is the most effective lever to ensure sectors prioritize and internalize decisions to promote a landscape approach to wildlife conservation. (See pages 17, 20, 25, 26 and 27 for details)

- 8) As noted in Part II section 1a (1) on page 12, primates are essential in a healthy forest ecosystem and landscapes; they are prey, predator, and a synergistic species in food webs and thereby influence ecosystem structure, function, and resilience. They are also connectors of habitats and most likely to adapt to modified environments. Different forms of land-use change pushes biodiversity into human-modified landscapes, where native habitats are surrounded by modified land covers. Recent research suggests that the ability of species to use these emerging changed landscapes remains poorly understood and that primates are good indicators of how species adapt and the risks posed by widespread landscape change.[1]<sup>1</sup> This research is also surfacing connections between the ongoing loss and alteration of primates' natural habitats[2]<sup>2</sup> with knowledge about how and why other species are able to use different types of landscapes and that this knowledge is essential to proposing effective conservation measures across landscapes. While the project takes a landscape approach, primates are being tapped as a key focal species because of their reliable proxy value.

- 9) This has been modified in line with the recommendation.

- 10) Please refer to response above on the meaning and context of co-management in the scope of the project, comment 4 of the questions in Section 2, on 'whether the components in Table B and, as described in the PIF sound, appropriate, and sufficiently clear to achieve the project/program objectives and the core indicators'.

11) The project is indeed putting forward a landscape-level model that will take a holistic approach to landscape management, aiming to reconcile the competing objectives of wildlife conservation and economic activities across landscapes through supportive policies and guidelines (which have been tested and refined), with special attention to ecological corridors, co-management opportunities, threatened / fragmented habitats in and around PAs, and intersectoral coordination. The model will be informed by both international experiences and internalize the unique characteristics of the Chinese context, and will be accelerated by advances in technologies and knowledge management and further amplified by offerings of both academia and private sector R&D.

In line with the recommendation, the title of Table 5 (formerly Table 6) has been modified to highlight the fact that these are PAs within the targeted landscapes in the proposed demonstration areas and give it broader relevance, and an additional row has been added to describe the landscape of each PA. (See pages 29 and 30, for details)

12) The Caojian plantations is a forest farm in Caojian Town of Yunlong County in Dali. In the Chinese context the Caojian Plantation of Yunlong County does not formally belong to the PA network, however, it could be classified as IUCN category 6, and is particularly adapted to the application of a landscape approach. (See Table 5 on page 29, for details)

13) The project has taken note and during the PPG phase, any livelihood activities that fall under this project will be underpinned by sound market analysis and using best practice in conservation enterprise development together with tools that UNDP is already leveraging for this type of approach, including stakeholder consultation and development of participatory livelihood action plans as needed and in full alignment with UNDP's SES procedures

14) Governments around the world are actively preparing stimulus packages expected to pour trillions of dollars into initiatives to help revive their economies and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. These efforts offer a once-in-a-lifetime chance to scale up support for critically needed solutions to help forests, landscapes and the most threatened habitats to remain intact and to continue providing benefits in a responsible and sustainable way. And there has never been a point in time that the interplay between the intactness of ecosystems, unchecked economic growth and impacts on human health have been so apparent. The risk is however, that in governments' haste to reverse the worst global downturn in recent memory, they will turn to quick fixes. Without new -and traditional-nature based approaches such as the one proposed by this project, we risk a business as usual scenario that will only accelerate environmental degradation just when we can least afford it. Failure to internalize the needs of biodiversity in general and wildlife in particular, as well as ecosystems, their values in regulating services and deep connections to human health into decision-making risks worsening an already precarious situation for our planet, for humans and their health. The unprecedented cooperation for a vaccine and the effective leveraging of technology and data innovation has shown that society is capable of radical change when the stakes are high; and the stakes could not be high-enough for the planet in terms of the changes we've made to its biodiversity and

ecological functioning. The project is proposing a new model through enhanced cooperation and harmonized policies and guidelines, deep community involvement, and a concerted effort to change what is acceptable development across threatened landscapes which also benefits the environment too. This model has the potential to reframe our understanding of what responsible economic growth looks like when viewed through the lens of risk mitigation through nature conservation. The project is also actively exploring incrementally calling upon Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from other sectors such as public health in the SWCG.

15) Reference is made to the response of Question 2 in this section, specifically the descriptions of Work Package 6, as well as the pillars of capacity building referenced in Work Package 4. Reference is also made to engagement with both the private sector and academia who will be key at defining some of the use cases and helping to deploy and finance the use of these advanced technologies at the demonstration sites and data platform to assist in decision making. This will be explored further during the PPG phase through a vigorous stakeholder analysis and role definition, and to be reflected in the project's integrated plan and sustainability strategy.

16) This description of the desired end state of Component 3 has been addressed as per the recommendation and in line with Work Package 6 in the response to Question 2 above. (See page 31 in the alternative scenario, for details)

17) The visual presentation of the Theory of Change on page 34, has been gleaned from another recently approved GEF project and is consistent with STAP guidelines. Both the narrative on pages 32 to 35 and supporting figure of the project's Theory of Change have been modified as per below:

- a. Re-alignment of approach based on new wording of the intervention logic articulated throughout the responses to the questions herein and based on discussions with the project design team;
- b. Wording on the preconditions and assumptions have been articulated upfront;
- c. Causal pathways have been described and also referenced in the supporting figure through "strength in evidence" illustrated by the color and thickness of the corresponding arrows;
- d. Justification of achieving these causal pathways as a result of key principles and actions being adopted by the project.

The response to Question 14 above is also relevant here. Given the amount of money expected to flow into recovery efforts and to stimulate economies, a business as usual scenario and propping up sectors which operate using the same types of economic models will be detrimental to the already precarious situation for

biodiversity, both in China and around the world. And because of the increased focus on the human-animal environment disease interface, there are clearly entry points for a more multi-disciplinary approach to landscapes. Also note that public health sector officials will be called upon to act as SMEs to provide technical inputs to the SWCG intermittently as needed in the formulation of supporting policies in outputs 1.1.2 and the comprehensive guidelines in output 1.1.3, perhaps also by taking a “one health” concept approach. The involvement of academia and the private sector (together with public health SMEs) in the definition of use cases can help the project with the surveillance of 'high-risk' wildlife from a zoonotics perspective. The emergence of infectious diseases and antimicrobial resistance in wildlife must be viewed through a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral lens, as advocated in this project, that captures issues and threats not only in people and animals but also the wider environment. This is a good point that will be explored further during the PPG stage as part of deeper consultations and role definition. (See page 29 in the alternate scenario, for details)

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[1] Galán-Acedo, C., Arroyo-Rodríguez, V., Andresen, E. et al. The conservation value of human-modified landscapes for the world's primates. *Nat Commun* 10, 152 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-018-08139-0>

[2] The study also examined the following in detail to expose connections (i) human settlements (i.e., any kind of urban environment such as cities, towns, or villages), (ii) open areas (i.e., annual crops and cattle pastures), (iii) tree plantations (including all types of agroforestry systems), (iv) connectors (i.e., isolated trees and linear landscape elements, such as vegetation corridors, live fences and hedgerows), and (v) secondary forests (i.e., regenerating forests following regrowth after an acute disturbance event, such as logging and deforestation).

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7) At the moment, only the six ministries noted in the PIF (agriculture and rural affairs; natural resources; forestry and grassland; ecology and environment; transportation, and; culture and tourism) are being considered as part of the SWCG following preliminary internal discussion and consultation. Other sectors are likely to be added during the PPG stage and additional Subject Matter Expertise such as public health will be called upon on an intermittent basis as noted on page 29 of the PIF. It is reasonable to expect the MOF be involved as well and this will be explored during the PPG stage.

11) Indeed, this was an oversight on our part. The reference to Tables 5 and 11 above has now been corrected and the table has been Annexed as suggested in line with the comment above.

14) The project will certainly consider linkages between the overarching statements for clarity and continuity during the PPG.

**4. Is the project/program aligned with focal area and/or Impact Program strategies?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Sept 29, 2020, HF: Yes

Agency Response

**5. Is the incremental / additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 18, 2020 HF:

All comments cleared.

Sept 29, 2020, HF:

- 1.) Please include which ministries (and other decision makers) and how will they be involved in 'harmonizing policies' impacting BD/wildlife?
- 2.) Table 5: #1 what is this cross sectoral coordination mechanism?
- 3.) Please see comments regarding baseline which should then provide a foundation for better articulation of the GEF increment of this project.

Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

- 1) Reference is made to the proposed SWCG under the existing National Biodiversity Commission with representation from the ministries of agriculture and rural affairs, natural resources, forestry and grassland, ecology and environment, transportation and culture and tourism.
- 2) Same as above. In Table 6 (formerly table 5) the alternative to be put in place has been referenced explicitly.

Part II Section 1a (5) has been aligned to the changes made throughout the PIF, including the incremental reasoning in Table 6. (See pages 35 and 36 for details)

**6. Are the project's/program's indicative targeted contributions to global environmental benefits (measured through core indicators) reasonable and achievable? Or for adaptation benefits?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 18, 2020 HF:

Comment cleared.

October 1, 2020 HF:

Please consider that this project seems to be working on planning/mainstreaming activities at the provincial level, to have direct impacts on landscapes of global biodiversity significance-given this can targets be set to capture some of these broader direct impacts of the mainstreaming components of the project?

Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

1) Reference is made to the response provided to Question 1 in the Core Indicators section above. An additional 3,000 ha has been added to core indicator 4 by considering buffer areas in Yunnan. This is a 42.25% increase in the original core indicator of 7,100 ha. (See Table B on page 3, Project's target contributions to GEF-7 core indicators, pages 7/8 and Annex B, page 60 for details)

**7. Is there potential for innovation, sustainability and scaling up in this project?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 18, 2020 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 1, 2020 HF:

- 1.) The innovation section mentions "a biodiversity financing mechanism for wildlife and biodiversity to leverage more resources"-this doesn't seem to be included or explained anywhere else in the concept. Please keep in mind that this concept is currently overflowing with ideas and potential activities, and while conservation finance is a critical area of focus, in order for it to have scaled-up sustainable impacts that the GEF is seeking in GEF-7 it should be taken at a systemic level, rather than only an add-on activity at the site or park level. Please better integrate, explain and justify this activity, or remove.
- 2.) "Innovative mechanisms will be....in pilot sites"-what does this sentence refer to? How? To what end?
- 3.) Has an 'integrated approach' engaging different ministries and authorities being adopted in China for Protected Area management or landscape scale conservation? If not, please describe it here too.
- 4.) The sustainability refers to institutionalization of planning processes as "inherently sustainable." Please explain how, what and why.
- 5.) Scaling-up: Please describe how, by whom and the mechanisms by which: "this concept will be disseminated across other PAs in china"-at this stage at least a general idea of this is needed (could refer to GEFID 9223 on the TOD National Platform for knowledge dissemination).

#### Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

- 1) Reference to the proposed financial mechanism has been removed altogether.
- 2) The view is that the project is putting forward an innovative model for an integrated landscape approach by proposing a number of "firsts" for China with the aim of reconciling competing objectives and prioritization of wildlife conservation and economic activities across landscapes through supportive policies and guidelines (which will have been tested and refined at the site level). There has never been a dedicated SWCG formed under the National Biodiversity Commission with the mission to work collaboratively with special attention to ecological corridors, co-management opportunities, threatened / fragmented habitats in and around PAs, and intersectoral coordination. The proposal of a designated wildlife chapter in the national EIA system is again a novel concept together with green infrastructure guidelines and the proposition that wildlife impact assessments also extend to culture and tourism. The model is also expected to be honed by both international experiences and will be accelerated by advances in technologies and knowledge management and further amplified by offerings of both academia and private sector R&D. Please see Section 1a (7) innovation, sustainability, and potential for scaling up on pages 38 to 40, for details.
- 3) Integrated approaches at landscape scale have been commonly used for aquatic ecosystems in China. Some of these areas are protected by law due to their ecological value and/or their strategic/security value. For example, the GEF funded program titled 'CBPF-Main Streams of Life (MSL) – Wetland PA System Strengthening for Biodiversity Conservation' (GEF ID 4646) achieved the integration of wetland PA system considerations into national and provincial level

development planning process (i.e. 13th 5-year plan [2016-2020], and a dedicated 13th 5-year plan was developed for wetland protection) which, by definition, requires the participation of, and validation by, different government levels and sectors.

This project will fully consider lessons learned and best practices from the above program, as well as from other relevant projects, programs and initiatives that consider an integrated landscape approach beyond the PA system.

- 4) A SWCG is purposely being formed under the National Biodiversity Commission to ensure sustainability and no new mechanism is being considered because of potential pitfalls in this regard and with securing a mandate to operate at the national level. By dovetailing on existing governance structures the coordination can avoid delays, growing pains and overhead which come with establishing new entities, since there are established protocols and processes. With the dissolution of the CBD Implementation Coordination Group, and the Joint ministry Conference on Genetic Resources not having the clout it once had, there is no other body with State support to address the core issues of the project, also a nod to it being able to operate at the highest level of government.
- 5) Considering that the project is directly relevant and complementary to landscapes and buffer areas adjacent to PAs, there is a strong replication dimension. Once the comprehensive guidelines are completed under this project (which will include among other things direction on the design and management of participatory connectivity conservation and restoration efforts in multi-use landscapes prioritization guidelines/gap analyses, sector specific guidelines for agriculture and rural affairs, transportation and infrastructure, and tourism, as well as enhanced EIA assessments focusing on wildlife), there will be no shortage of entry points; these will certainly be applicable to other areas of the country. The supportive policies and guidelines developed under Component 1 and demonstrated in landscapes together with remediation work at the proposed sites in Component 2 will provide scalable models in other areas with similar parameters. The Giant Panda National Park is part of China's blueprint to construct additional 10 large-scale concept national parks across other landscapes such as in the Qilian Mountains where sectoral harmonization and a landscape approach is also needed as a result of decades of logging, mining, the building of factories, and unsustainable tourism. This project and the landscape model could be considered for those initiatives as well. Who will decide and make the decisions to scale the model being proposed to other locations will surely be a consultative effort with a wide range of stakeholders including academia and the private sector, but with the SWCG, the necessary business architecture and government apparatus will be in place to formalize these decisions and importantly, Component 3 through the data management platform will help underpin those decisions with robust data and decision support. Please see Section 1a (7) innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up on Page 37 and 38.

#### **Project/Program Map and Coordinates**

**Is there a preliminary geo-reference to the project's/program's intended location?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 1, 2020 HF:

Yes.

Agency Response

**Stakeholders**

**Does the PIF/PFD include indicative information on Stakeholders engagement to date? If not, is the justification provided appropriate? Does the PIF/PFD include information about the proposed means of future engagement?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 21, 2020 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 18, 2020 HF:

1.) Comment cleared. The assumption is also that stakeholder consultations will continue during PPG per stakeholder consultation plan.

2.) Comment cleared. Please cross check each reference to tables in the PIF with the actual Table numbers as titled as there seems to be quite a few discrepancies due to revisions of the PIF/table numbers etc. For example the private sector engagement PIF is now Table 8 but is referred to at least once as Table 9-there are other comparable examples.

3.) Comment cleared.

October 1, 2020 HF:

- 1.) Please provide further description/**explanation of the engagement that has been held with stakeholders to date**, at all levels (from national down to local). The expectation is consultations have been held, but if stakeholder engagement hasn't been undertaken for a particular group or area please provide a robust justification for this.
- 2.) Table 6 needs to include: **the ways/how stakeholders will be engaged in project preparation**. Please provide further detail (another column with description of this?)
- 3.) There is not much mention still about each institution's role in the project. Future or expected roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in each project component and activities needs to be addressed.

#### Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

- 1) Those local stakeholders not properly consulted prior to submission are actively being engaged in parallel to the review process and an update will be provided before December 2020.
- 2) Please see additional details provided in Table 7 (formerly table 8) on page 39-40 indicating how stakeholders will be engaged in project preparation.
- 3) Please see amendments provided in Table 7 on page 39-40 articulating each entity's role in the project. This will be expanded on and confirmed during PPG.

#### UNDP Response, Oct.21, 2020

- 2) Both the actual table numbering / titles and any references to them in the narrative have been validated and aligned. Two discrepancies were noted and have been corrected

#### Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

**Is the articulation of gender context and indicative information on the importance and need to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, adequate?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 18, 2020 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 1, 2020 HF:

- 1.) The description of gender dimensions should also include description of these dimensions in a way that is more specific to the site context, and project approaches. The general text is okay, but should also give a bit more of a sense of the specifics give this project scope and geographies.
- 2.) Why is 40% the target?
- 3.) It isn't clear whether the project will budget for gender experts and specific gender activities. Please describe.

#### Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

1) Reference is made to gender considerations in the risk matrix (see risks 2 and 3 in Table 9 [formerly table 10] on page 45) as well as in the SESP how the Project is likely to improve gender equality and women's empowerment on page 72. A comprehensive gender analysis and action plan taking stock of site-specific gender dimensions will be developed during PPG phase.

2) This target was suggested in consultation with government agencies based on past experiences of other projects and demographics and what would be pragmatic here. The project can consider revising this target during PPG based on additional consultation and examination against a solid baseline. However, GoC insists that 40% is already a substantial increase on the anticipated baseline.

3) A detailed budget will be developed during the PPG stage based on the explicit needs of the project. As per standard procedure, the gender analysis and action plan are expected to be advanced by a social and environmental safeguard and gender expert during PPG. During implementation, the TOR for gender-responsive support will be assigned to the Project Management Office and actioned against the budget developed during PPG for this role.

#### Private Sector Engagement

**Is the case made for private sector engagement consistent with the proposed approach?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 18, 2020 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 1, 2020 HF:

- 1.) Given the project focus on cross-sectoral engagement and mainstreaming we would expect that the private sector be integrally involved in the integrated planning efforts and mechanism that this project will be initiating under Component 1.
- 2.) Further, the project refers to the need for the economic system to take into account nature/biodiversity on several occasions-but with little description of how this project will contribute to that, and the role of the private sector in this. Please address.

#### Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

- 1) Any governance structure or group under the National Biodiversity Commission operates exclusively with participation of government ministry entities and therefore, given the highest level of government at which it operates, the project must be pragmatic and suggest logical entry points for the private sector and other important stakeholders such as academia. At the provincial level, the committees responsible for the primate strategy and action plan, as well as that for Giant Panda National Park, can be done in full consultation with the private sector which would be new and innovative in its own right. This also makes sense from an execution point of view given the heavy technology-focused and data driven knowledge management that will support the implementation of the action plan.
- 2) Reference to economic models and systems have been removed altogether so as not to muddle the intervention logic and threads of the project.

#### Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

**Does the project/program consider potential major risks, including the consequences of climate change, that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved or may be resulting from project/program implementation, and propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 21, 2020 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 19, 2020 HF:

1.) Would recommend revising first sentence of Risk 1 (in risk table and pre-screening 'comments' column) to read: "During the development of this concept stakeholders were consulted at the national and provincial level" if that is indeed the case. Local-level consultations are currently being held and will be further carried out during PPG." Further, please add a reference to stakeholder engagement during PPG to the list of "mitigation measures" and corresponding safeguards screen.

2.)-5.) All comments cleared.

October 1, 2020 HF:

1.) Risk 1: Please see comment on stakeholders and need for robust justification if key stakeholder groups have not yet been engaged.

2.) Risk 1: How will FPIC be secured and maintained?

3.) Risk 3: How will any issues raised by local stakeholders during PPG be handled? Including if there is pushback on project sites, activities? What role will local stakeholders play in helping to shape the design and implementation of the project? How will disputes be handled?

4.) Risk 4: Please see STAP guidance on climate risk screening (link below) and provide at least a basic climate risk screening at PIF stage. At a minimum, at PIF stage, the climate risks should be identified, listed and described. This can include:

a.) Outlining the key aspects of the climate change projections/scenarios at the project location (or as close to it with data available), which are relevant for the type of intervention being financed (e.g. changes in temperatures, rainfalls, increased flooding, sea level rise, saltwater acquirer contamination, increased soil erosion, etc).

b.) Time horizon if feasible/data available (e.g. up to 2050). Please refer to list of examples from STAP guidance.

c.) Listing key potential hazards for the project that are related to the aspects of the climate scenarios listed above (describe how the climate scenarios identified above are likely to affect the project, during 2020-2050).

d.) Describing plans for climate change risk assessment and mitigation measures during PPG.

(<https://stapgef.org/sites/default/files/publications/Climate%20Risk%20Screening%20web%20posting.pdf>)

5.) Risk 6 in the pre-screening doesn't include an "assessment" or "management" sections-please provide.

## Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

- 1) Those local stakeholders not properly consulted prior to submission are actively being engaged in parallel to the review process and an update will be provided before December 2020.
- 2) China is a founding member of the ILO, and has ratified most ILO conventions and instruments, including the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) which lays the foundations for Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). During project development and implementation, FPIC will be secured by following National rules and regulations. As the review process of this PIF is being conducted, appropriate consultation with ethnic minorities and communities present in the project landscape are being carried out, these will be extended and deepened during PPG. FPIC consultations with ethnic minorities will be carried out as required, to consult on potential impacts and management measures and ensure community participation in planning, implementation, and monitoring. Such stakeholder consultation will identify which users/user groups might be affected, the magnitude and severity of any associated impacts, and measures to avoid, minimize, mitigate, or manage such impacts will be developed and implemented. In addition to the above, UNDP's SES recognize that even with strong planning and stakeholder engagement, unanticipated issues can still arise. Therefore, the SES are underpinned by an Accountability Mechanism with two key components:
  1. A Social and Environmental Compliance Review Unit (SECU) to respond to claims that UNDP is not in compliance with applicable environmental and social policies; and
  2. A Stakeholder Response Mechanism (SRM) that ensures individuals, peoples, and communities affected by projects have access to appropriate grievance resolution procedures for hearing and addressing project-related complaints and disputes.

UNDP's Accountability Mechanism is available to all of UNDP's project stakeholders. The Social and Environmental Compliance Unit (SECU) investigates concerns about non-compliance with UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards and Screening Procedure raised by project-affected stakeholders and recommends measures to address findings of non-compliance. The Stakeholder Response Mechanism helps project-affected stakeholders, UNDP's partners (governments, NGOs, businesses) and others jointly address grievances or disputes related to the social and/or environmental impacts of UNDP-supported projects.

Further information, including how to submit a request to SECU or SRM, is found on the UNDP website at:  
<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/operations/accountability/secu-srm/>

- 3) Please refer to the response above. Additionally, the project will follow UNDP's stakeholder engagement guidelines that will help project-affected stakeholders, UNDP's partners (governments, NGOs, businesses) and others to jointly address grievances or disputes related to the social and/or environmental impacts of UNDP-supported project activities. Various national, sector and traditional forums in China will be consulted as well and may provide important opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback on project implementation. Utilization of existing structures and processes to engage stakeholders is to be encouraged, as this may provide opportunities for issues to be raised before they develop into more significant grievances. Accessibility will be a core principle during the PPG and any accountability mechanism. Accessibility starts with awareness raising. Therefore, the project from the outset of the PPG will ensure that project-affected people and communities are informed of UNDP's Accountability Mechanism, the project level GRM and any national/local modalities in this regard.

4) A basic climate risk screening has been provided (See Risk section pages 44-51 for details). Please note that sourcing site level climate data was a challenge, thus the risk screening was developed based on national level data. As mentioned in the risk section, and the SESP pre-screening, during PPG a more detailed climate risk screening will be carried out to assess the vulnerability of sites and people to climate change impacts using the tools recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

5) Assessment and management sections have been included for SESP pre-screening risk 6.

UNDP Response, Oct. 21, 2020

1) The first risk on page 43 has been amended in line with the recommendation provided both in terms of the assessment itself and mitigation measures. Risk 1 on page 72 also implies that consultation will continue occur during PPG.

#### Coordination

**Is the institutional arrangement for project/program coordination including management, monitoring and evaluation outlined? Is there a description of possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project/program area?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 21, 2020 HF:

Comments cleared.

During PPG please develop a clear set of institutional arrangements and lines of coordination for effective project execution, to include details of NFGA-MEE engagement via the CNCBC and other engagement in the CEO endorsement request.

October 18, 2020 HF:

1.) Comment cleared.

2.) Given the Secretariat for the CNCBC is embedded within the MEE and the CNCBC is a critical focus for the success of this project, please describe how NFGA (executing agency for this project) will work together with MEE on all related activities and outputs. Further, please include a description of execution arrangements for this project that addresses the question of coordination with MME.

October 1, 2020 HF:

1.) M&E budget is not indicatively provided in the Table B. M&E budget is recommended to be within the levels and eligible expenditure types as specified in the Guidelines on the Project Cycle Policy (3% in this case). Please provide.

#### Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

1) The project will consider the 3% limit in accordance with the existing guidelines on Project Cycle Policy and a corresponding budget will be developed during the PPG phase.

UNDP Responses, Oct. 21,2020

The NFGA will work together and coordinate efforts with the MEE on all related activities and outputs of this project by existing cross-sector coordination mechanism, specifically through the China National Committee for Biodiversity Conservation, and wildlife coordination system to be set up by the project.

#### Consistency with National Priorities

**Has the project/program cited alignment with any of the recipient country's national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 18, 2020 HF:

Comment cleared.

October 1, 2020 HF:

It would be helpful to better describe how this project fits into the Chinese vision for 'ecological civilization' and the vision for COP-15 etc.

## Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

1) The concept of ecological civilization was written into the Chinese constitution in 2018 as the basis for articulating its vision of sustainable development across three dimensions – environmental, economic and social, as well as with specific features of Chinese political civilization, aspects of Chinese governance, and core elements of the Chinese sustainable economic development agenda. The concept has been adopted by the highest levels of political leadership and has gradually gained traction. It is regarded as the major ideological reference framework for Chinese environmental and actions at different levels of government. The position paper "*Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth: China in Action*" is the long term blueprint and the themes of adopting strong policy measures, accelerated mainstreaming, improving policy and legal frameworks, improving livelihoods through co-management and ecological restoration with emphasis on the protection of rare and endangered species which all appear in the PIF have been gleaned from the document to frame its priorities. Therefore, ecological civilization provides the necessary anchor for the business case in the PIF and supports the linkages to the core business architecture through the National Biodiversity Commission going forward.

COP15 and China's incoming Presidency of the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity is also an important entry point and unique opportunity for China on the international stage to show that it is taking the lead on the prioritization of the problems articulated in the root cause / barrier analysis, as well as to start actioning a number of themes covered under this project on a preliminary basis. It also an enabler for the PPG and design phase to start on the right footing. The heightened awareness around biodiversity post-COP will also offer opportunities to capture the baseline and play into the types of KM products that would be most beneficial and offers opportunities for enhanced consultation. Given China's remarkable ingenuity and being at the forefront of technology innovation, there is also an entry point to enable China to showcase, test and scale the frontier technologies proposed under Component 3 through its role at the helm of the COP Presidency. Both COP15 as an event and China's COP Presidency over the next several years are opportunities for engagement and consultation with the private sector and academia in these efforts and to generate productive partnerships and synergies with Research & Development being spearheaded by companies and across academic institutions in this domain.

## Knowledge Management

**Is the proposed “knowledge management (KM) approach” in line with GEF requirements to foster learning and sharing from relevant projects/programs, initiatives and evaluations; and contribute to the project's/program's overall impact and sustainability?**

## Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 21, 2020 HF:

Comments cleared.

October 18, 2020 HF:

1.) Comment cleared.

2.) a.) Please remove reference to ""greening"" of south-south cooperation along economic corridors."

b.) Also, recommend rewording for clarity, this sentence "the world can benefit from China's ingenuity, problem solving, technology and conservation approaches" to: "China will actively share conservation and technological approaches, experiences and knowledge through and generated by this project."

September 30, 2020 HF:

Please further develop the project's approach to KM, including a brief reference to:

1. An overview of existing lessons and best practice that inform the project concept
2. Plans to learn from relevant projects, programs, initiatives & evaluations
3. Proposed processes to capture, assess and document info, lessons, best practice & expertise generated during implementation
4. Proposed tools and methods for knowledge exchange, learning & collaboration
5. Proposed knowledge outputs to be produced and shared with stakeholders
6. A discussion on how knowledge and learning will contribute to overall project/program impact and sustainability
7. Plans for strategic communications

## Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

1) The project will certainly consider and consult existing lessons and best practices from previous projects, project evaluations, tools and methodologies, knowledge outputs and plans for strategic communication in the PPG stage. It will also take stock of the learnings from the review of Knowledge Management in the GEF, prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office.

Knowledge management for the project is at the core of Component 3 and results from the project will be disseminated within and beyond the project intervention area through existing information sharing networks and forums. The project will identify and participate, as relevant and appropriate, in scientific, policy-based and/or any other networks, which may be of benefit to the project. The project will identify, analyze and share lessons learned that might be beneficial to the design and implementation of similar projects and disseminate these lessons widely and within its sphere of influence. The project is expected to work with all stakeholders to develop a proper communication strategy and through it share lessons, experience and impacts inside the countries and wider across the region. Such strategy will be developed during the PPG and will be implemented as part of Component 3. The project's approach to knowledge management will focus on knowledge exchange and transfer at multiple levels:

- Cross-sectorally: between relevant national ministries that have a mandate related to ensuring sectors provide biodiversity and community benefits, and between government, private sector and communities;
- Spatially: between individual project sites/communities to ensure exchange of lessons and best practices between sites and support upscaling to other local landscapes where threatened wildlife and habitats are pervasive and in other Provinces, as well as in other countries (e.g. ASEAN, Global Wildlife Program countries);
- Institutionally: between governments at different levels, from the Prefecture level and local administrations to national ministries, as well as at the regional and global levels though enhanced opportunities for South-South cooperation and enriching knowledge platforms.

UNDP Responses, Oct. 21, 2020

The reference to "greening" of south-south cooperation along economic corridors." has been removed altogether from the narrative and no longer appears on page 54. The sentence referencing China's ingenuity on page 54 has been changed to the proposed text.

#### **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 PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 18, 2020 HF:

Comment cleared.

October 1, 2020 HF:

UNDP pre-screening has been performed and submitted. Please see "risks box" for follow-up comment/questions.

Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

1) Reference is made to responses provided in the Risk section above.

### Part III – Country Endorsements

**Has the project/program been endorsed by the country’s GEF Operational Focal Point and has the name and position been checked against the GEF data base?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 18, 2020 HF:

Yes, LOE submitted via Portal and checked against database.

October 1, 2020 HF:

Submit a signed LOE as soon as possible to enable further project review and consideration.

Agency Response

UNDP Oct 15, 2020

The LOE has been uploaded to the portal and annexed to the PIF (See Annex E).

### Termsheet, reflow table and agency capacity in NGI Projects

**Does the project provide sufficient detail in Annex A (indicative termsheet) to take a decision on the following selection criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments. Does the project provide a detailed reflow table in Annex B to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. After reading the questionnaire in Annex C, is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

NA

Agency Response

October 18, 2020 HF:

- 1.) As referenced in this review, full stakeholder consultations will be undertaken at the local, provincial and national level.
- 2.) Please develop a complete knowledge management plan including special consideration for south-south and global engagement per previous conversations with GEFSEC regarding the use of BD set-aside funds.
- 3.) Please include an estimate of GHG emissions mitigated based on Exact calculation per hectares under improved management from this project.

UNDP responses October 21, 2020

- 1) As mentioned above, stakeholder consultations will continue throughout the PPG phase in line with UNDP's SESP.
- 2) A complete knowledge management plan will be developed during PPG.
- 3) GHG emission reductions will be estimated during PPG and the corresponding Core Indicator will reflect this estimation.

**GEFSEC DECISION**

**RECOMMENDATION**

Is the PIF/PFD recommended for technical clearance? Is the PPG (if requested) being recommended for clearance?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 23, 2020 HF:

No, please address issue on PMC proportionality per new GEF policy.

October 18, 2020 HF:

No, not yet. Please see highlights in the review sheet. Also, when resubmitting documentation next time, please: 1.) Remove highlights as I hope this will be the version I am able to technically clear; and 2.) Please include reference to the PIF sections (as well as page numbers) when indicating revisions made as the version of the PIF in the Portal doesn't have page numbers-only the word version, which is not the official submission. Thanks!

October 1, 2020 HF:

No, not yet. Please respond to questions in the review sheet.

#### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

**Additional recommendations to be considered by Agency at the time of CEO endorsement/approval.**

#### Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 21, 2020 HF. To be addressed during PPG for CEO endorsement:

- 1.) As referenced in this review, full stakeholder consultations will be undertaken at the local, provincial and national level.
- 2.) Please develop a complete knowledge management plan including special consideration for south-south and global engagement per previous conversations with GEFSEC regarding the use of BD set-aside funds.
- 3.) Please include an estimate of GHG emissions mitigated based on Exact calculation per hectares under improved management from this project.
- 4.) During PPG please develop a clear set of institutional arrangements and lines of coordination for effective project execution, to include details of NFGA-MEE engagement via the CNCBC and other engagement in the CEO endorsement request.

**Review Dates**

	<b>PIF Review</b>	<b>Agency Response</b>
<b>First Review</b>	<b>10/1/2020</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>10/19/2020</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>10/21/2020</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>10/23/2020</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>10/27/2020</b>	

**PIF Recommendation to CEO**

**Brief reasoning for recommendations to CEO for PIF Approval**

The objective of this project is to safeguard key threatened and iconic wildlife in China through cross-sectoral engagement, community participation and innovative management technologies across key landscapes. This will be made possible through supportive cross-sectoral policies and comprehensive guidelines approved by a Special Wildlife Coordination Group (SWCG) created under the National Biodiversity Commission, the prioritization of restoration and ecological corridors at key sites and by incorporating frontier technologies and knowledge management innovations in partnership with the private sector, academia and local communities. The alternative scenario involves a substantively more integrated and participatory approach to wildlife planning and management at the national, provincial and local level.

Despite China's tremendous resource endowments and conservation achievements, there are still contradictions between economic development and biodiversity conservation. The general trend of biodiversity decline has not yet been fully and effectively arrested and wildlife conservation has produced mixed results in some cases. The practices of China's conservation efforts to date suggest that cross-sectoral coordination, policy changes, enhanced guidelines where gaps exist and technological innovations are needed to prevent the extinction of known threatened species under the guidance of ecological civilization and community of life in mountains, rivers, forests, fields, lakes and grasses, while ensuring greater inclusivity of, and benefits flowing, to local communities.

Although the COVID-19 situation in China is quite stable and well controlled at this time, the project fits into efforts for a greener recovery from the pandemic. With a focus on the integration of wildlife conservation and considerations into broader landscape and cross-sectoral planning and development the project could also decrease risk of future zoonotic disease transmission and prevention of future outbreaks.

Active knowledge management will be an important element of this project resulting in a range of national and global public awareness campaigns and workshops in the context of COP15 Presidency, the post 2020 global biodiversity agenda, as well as the consolidation of best practices in mainstreaming through lessons learned disseminated through project specific websites and platforms, together with cooperation with academia (such as Beijing Education Academy) and the private sector to enhance global awareness of wildlife protection.

The global benefits that will be delivered from this project are significantly improved legal and systemic framework for, and management of, China's threatened wildlife habitats. A total of 2,749,408 ha of terrestrial area will be directly benefited through targeted activities delivered under the program. There will be 9,300 ha under improved management through enhanced connectivity measures (7,100 ha) and nature-based restoration (2,200 ha) outside the protected area network targeting 10,000 beneficiaries including 4,000 women.