

Yangtze River Basin Biodiversity Conservation Programme

GEF Secretariat Review for Program Framework Document (PFD) entry – GEF - 7

Basic Information

GEF ID

10710

Countries

China

Project Title

Yangtze River Basin Biodiversity Conservation Programme

GEF Agency(ies)

IUCN

Agency ID

GEF Focal Area(s)

Biodiversity

Program Manager

Hannah Fairbank

PIF

Part I – Project Informatic

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

October 22, 2020 HF:

Comment cleared.

October 19, 2020 HF:

1.) It looks like the commitment deadline is still set at 12/31/2022. Please revise to 06/11/22 and let us know if there seems to be an IT/Portal systems issue if not.

2.) Comment cleared.

3.) Comment cleared.

October 2, 2020 HF:

Yes.

1.) Program Commitment deadline – the max period for a Program Commitment Deadline is 18 months. Hence, please modify this to 06/11/2022.

2.) Please consolidate the two Child Projects into one file and then upload it in the section “Documents” in Portal. When done, please remove the individual file for each child project from the Portal.

3.) Please consider re-wording or defining some of the jargon, such as eco-redlining, industry admittance etc. They are confusing to non-Chinese speakers.

Agency Response

October 19 IUCN:

- #1 - Program commitment deadline has been revised to 06/11/2022 as suggested
- #2 - One single document including two revised CP concepts created and uploaded.
- #3 - Re-wording and definition has been done.

Industry admittance has been reworded as suggested. This term means certain industries can be admitted while others not, considering their resource use and emissions.

Definition to eco-redlining has been provided as footnote, as below:

Ecological Redlining initiative (Eco-Redline) delineation defines areas that have special and important ecological functions and must be compulsorily strictly protected. It serves as both a “bottom line” and a “lifeline” in safeguarding national ecological security. The delineation of the Eco-Redline is to help with the implementation of the National Ecological Function Zone that functions such as water conservation, maintenance of biodiversity conservation, soil and water conservation, protection against wind and sand fixation, and stabilization of coastal ecology, as well as ecologically sensitive and vulnerable areas suffering from soil erosion, land desertification, rocky desertification and salinization.

October 22, 2020 IUCN:

- #1 - The commitment deadline has been revised on Portal.

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 22, 2020 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 19, 2020 HF:

1.) Comment cleared.

2.) Helpful revisions.

A.) One last suggestion on this, for clarity's sake and if it is still accurate given the scope of the Component, it would make sense to redact "biodiversity conservation and" from the title of Component 2 of the NFGA CP so it just reads "Supporting policy development for protected areas in Yangtze" (if indeed that is still accurate). Otherwise just leave it as, is.

B.) Component 1 of the MEE Child Project does not seem to capture the focus of this component and differentiate it from the work of the NFGA Child Project on protected areas. Suggest revising. Also it isn't clear how M1.2 and M1.3 are differentiated from each other based on the output language. Suggest revising.

3.) & 4.) Comments cleared.

October 2, 2020 HF:

1.) Currently it looks as if the Components for the PFD and for each of the Child Projects is exactly the same. It isn't clear why this is the case-it is not required as such. Please consider revising so that the PFD has overarching components, that track and contribute to a robust Theory of Change, and then each of the Child Project Components contribute to the PFD components given their comparative advantage and focus in the key geography. Please reconcile and clarify.

2.) Component 1: The component title "Biodiversity Conservation in the Yangtze River Basin" does not provided sufficient understanding of the intended objective of this Component (isn't this what the whole program is about?). Please revise Component 1 language to be more descriptive about what Component 1 is about. Is this Component focused on PAs (vs Component 2 that is mainstreaming, vis Component 3 that is KM)? If so please make that clear in the Component 1 title.

3.) Please note that Table B Component 2 target language sounds like it is contributing to Core Indicator 4.3 versus 4.1. Please remember since this is a BD single focal area there needs to be focus on the conservation of globally significant biodiversity (understanding that this Component is focused on mainstreaming biodiversity) which is reflected in 4.1.

4.) Component 2 of the PFD program outcome language should be a bit more descriptive beyond "threat management"-isn't this about integrated planning and policy? Also I would think that given the mainstreaming focus of this Component it might make sense to tone down the threat language given the need to work across sectors that this Component would entail. Could consider: "Mitigated impacts on biodiversity in the YRB from industry and unsustainable development through biodiversity mainstreaming." Or something like that. I appreciate simplicity, but would like to have a better idea upfront about what outcome is expected from each component.

Agency Response

October 19 IUCN:

#1 & 2 - Components of the programme and child projects have been revised and reconciled.

Programme components:

- 1: Protecting globally important habitats in the Yangtze River Basin
- 2: Mainstreaming biodiversity in the Yangtze River Economic Belt
- 3: Knowledge and information management

NFGA CP components:

- 1: Strengthening protected areas networks in Yangtze
- 2: Supporting policy development for biodiversity conservation and protected areas in Yangtze"
- 3: Knowledge, information and programme coordination

MEE CP components:

- 1: Coordination and policy development for biodiversity conservation in Yangtze
- 2: Integration of biodiversity in development and economic sectors in Yangtze
- 3: Knowledge, capacity and information

#3 & 4 - Language for Outcome 2 and its targets have been revised as suggested.

Outcome 2: Impacts on biodiversity in the Yangtze River Economic Belt from industry and unsustainable development mitigated through biodiversity mainstreaming:

- biodiversity considerations integrated in the municipal development planning and production practices of 1.25 million ha landscapes
- Yangtze River protection legislation in place

October 22, 2020 IUCN:

2 -

A): The component title of NFGA CP has been revised as suggested as below.

2: Supporting policy development for protected areas and biodiversity management in Yangtze

The NFGA CP will also influence on the Yangtze River Protection Law, and in this endeavour, the perspectives will be more than PA, but biodiversity in general.

B) The component title of MEE CP has been revised as suggested.

1: Coordination and policy development for ecological and environmental protection in Yangtze

The mentioned outputs of MEE CP, M1.2 and M1.3, have been revised as suggested as below.

These two outputs are referring to the policy influencing on two national legislations, the Yangtze River Protection Law and the new national PA legislation respectively. They have been made as two outputs, because within MEE, different departments are dealing with them. Making them as separate outputs will help clarify responsibilities and leadership.

M1.2 Needs and experience with reference to monitoring of nature conservation and supervision of human impacts summarized and provided for the formulation and implementation of the Yangtze River Protection Law

M1.3 Lessons from supervising the enforcement of existing protected areas regulations in the Yangtze River Basin consolidated and provided for the development and implementation of the new national protected areas legislation

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 25, 2020 HF:

Co-financing in table C has been revised and some of the government co-financing has now been identified as “investment mobilized”. However, they are still classified as “in-kind”, which typically does not imply “investment mobilized”. Since this is from the recipient country government, they could use “public investment” instead. Please consider revising.

October 19, 2020 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 2, 2020 HF:

- 1.) Please confirm that all the co-finance (over US\$50M) is considered “in-kind and recurrent expenditure” or if some of it can be considered other type of co-financing and as such also “investment mobilized”? Based on the Tables A/B, GEF finance is mostly reserved for TA and co-finance seems to cover the investments (and as such results) on the ground.
- 2.) Given the private sector engagement, and other investments it is a bit surprising not to see further co-finance expected. Is this really the case?
- 3.) Is there a reasonable estimate for co-finance from IUCN? If so, please include here.

Agency Response

October 19 IUCN:

#1 - Co-finance revised and investment mobilized included.

#2 - Private sector co-financing is not expected at this stage, but may be explored in the PPG phase.

#3 - IUCN co-finance has been added.

C. SOURCES OF CO-FINANCING FOR THE PROGRAM BY SOURCE, BY NAME AND BY TYPE

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount (\$)
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Ecology and Environment	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	8,000,000
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Ecology and Environment	In-kind	Investment mobilized	16,665,000
Recipient Country Government	National Forestry and Grassland Administration	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	10,000,000
Recipient Country Government	National Forestry and Grassland Administration	In-kind	Investment mobilized	16,390,000
GEF Agency	IUCN	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	250,000
Total Co-financing				51,305,000

DESCRIBE HOW ANY “INVESTMENT MOBILIZED” WAS IDENTIFIED. Recipient Government: Investments have been mobilized through the National Forest and Grassland Administration’s conservation and protected areas development programmes, including but not limited to, the Compensation of Public Welfare Forest initiative and the Wildlife Conservation and Nature Reserve program, and through the Ministry of Ecology and Environment’s programs including “Critical Battle for the Conservation and Restoration of the Yangtze River”

October 25, 2020 IUCN

Addressed.

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 2, 2020 HF:

Yes

Agency Response

The STAR allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 2, 2020 HF:

Yes

Agency Response

The focal area allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 2, 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 NA

Agency Response

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

October 19, 2020 HF:

Comment cleared.

October 2, 2020 HF:

The PPG amounts are found in the Child Project concepts attached and are within allowable caps but PPG fund in concept note should be exactly the same indicated in LOE.

Agency Response

Oct 19 IUCN:

The PPG numbers, excluding the agency fees, have been revised and are now consistent.

PPG	Amount (excluding fees)
NFGA	137,615
MEE	137,615
sum	275,230
LOE	275,230

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 22, 2020 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 19, 2020 HF:

Comment cleared.

Will the MEE CP contribute to indicator 1 on protected areas given the focus of the first component of that child project?

During CER stage please provide targets for GHG emissions avoided based on hectares under improved management.

October 2, 2020 HF:

Do the targets for indicator 4.1 currently include hectarage that will be directly impacted by the policy work under this program/CPs? Please ensure that the full area that is expected to be directly impacted by improved biodiversity management via mainstreaming under this program is included in the targets. This includes implementation of policy that is supported directly by GEF funds, project co-finance or government expenditures within the period of the project to implement.

Agency Response

Oct 19 IUCN:

The indicator would be 4.1. The currently estimated hectare target includes the area likely to be covered by implementation of the new policies at municipal and provincial levels. The likely impacts resulting from the new national legislations are not yet included, as uncertainty about their timelines still exist.

October 22, 2020 IUCN:

The MEE CP will contribute to Indicator 1, but in an indirect way and through policy influencing on the national PA legislation. Therefore same as the NFGA CP, the area likely impacted by this new legislation is not included in the target, as timeline of the legislation process remains uncertain at this stage.

The GHG targets will be provided, using EX-ACT.

October 23, 2020 IUCN:

#2 – Apologies. Now the needed explanation on Portal regarding targets of the PFD has been entered, as below:

The area targets for indicator 1 and 4 are developed based on Core Indicator Worksheets, which consider improved protected areas management that results from the programme, as well as the lands and waters outside protected areas but with improved practices implemented by municipalities and sectors supported by the programme. The gender-disaggregated target for beneficiaries is developed based on estimate of likely coverage and scope of beneficiaries of the programme, through its field, capacity building, awareness raising as well as participation-related activities and approaches.

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

October 2, 2020 HF:

Yes

Agency Response

art 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 19, 2020 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 2, 2020 HF:

- 1.) Please provide clear reason for project site selection for two child projects in project justification.
- 2.) Please better differentiate Drivers 1 and 2 since resource 'overuse' leads to 'ecosystem degradation' so it is a bit confusing trying to differentiate between these two.
- 3.) I would imagine that ecosystem degradation from economic development ('driver 2') is resulting in issues beyond water pollution and contamination in the Yangtze river basin-seems as though terrestrial ecosystems have been left out of this. Please revise.

Agency Response

Oct 19 IUCN:

1 Site selection added to the concept.

The site selection included selections of provinces, landscapes, and municipalities, which have been incorporated into the PFD and CP connect wherever relevant, as below:

Three provinces have been identified as the target provinces for the project, namely, Jiangxi, Anhui and Sichuan Provinces. The provinces were identified through a screening of several aspects, including 1) the biodiversity values and protected area estate, as they all have large number of PAs; 2) the social context of among all the provinces located in the YREB, among which, all three provinces have the lowest GDP per capita, 3) the existence of pressure from climate change and human impacts; and, 4) the willingness for participation and cooperation in the project, as well as 5) potential co-financing and financial leverage from the selected provinces.

The municipalities will be selected during the preparation phase and together with the critical landscapes to be identified for Component 1. Criteria for consideration includes: 1) inclusion of or strong ecological linkages, e.g. upstream vs downstream, with the selected landscapes, 2) progress in undertakings related to biodiversity conservation and mainstreaming, as well as implementation of national initiatives, 3) willingness for participation and cooperation in the project, as well as 4) the potential co-financing and financial leverage potential. The information and data used by the NFGA Child Project's work under component 1 will be referred to here.

Target landscape will be identified based on critical information about Species and Ecosystem Redlist, Key Biodiversity Areas, tenure situation, scale and coverage of representative habitats, stakeholder interests etc, to be collected and consolidated during the preparation.

#2 & #3 – Drivers 1 and 2 reorganized. Pollution integrated in Driver 1, as below:

- 1: High pressure from economic and urban development
- 2: High pressure from unsustainable use and management of natural and biological resources

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 19, 2020 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 2, 2020 HF:

- 1.) In order to make this program approach meaningful, this part should elaborate how biodiversity conservation and biodiversity mainstreaming policy, legislation and projects have been done in silo, with two different institution, what was the shortfall from this siloed approach. Then justify the program from the perspective of it taking an integrated approach to tackle the silos to tackle those shortfall and make systemic change in Yangtze River Basin management. Should really focus on the baseline and transformation from it.
- 2.) Please explain further the "Multiplan Integration" policy initiative and how this project will be building on and working within this initiative. Also, the PDF says planning under this plan should occur at "various levels"-what levels?
- 3.) Please provide a more robust treatment of how this project will build on, complement and coordinate with the considerable investment in the new National Park System through the GEF-6 CPAR program and avoid redundancy and overlap. As it stands there seem to be areas of potential overlap between these projects and the CPAR investments, including, but not limited to:
 - a.) Component 1 and C-PAR's project activities including "Effective governance and legal framework for the national protected area system, PA system financing plans and eco-compensation system and etc".
 - b.) Both this program and C-PAR are targeting engagement in Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan.
- 4.) How is this project complementary and not redundant/overlapping with GEF-7 Transformational wildlife conservation management in China (GEFID 10701) considering both projects are contributing to national protected area network legislation (technology for conservation elements etc) in the Yangtze River Basin?

Agency Response

Oct 19 IUCN:

#1 – Justifications added to tackle silos and shortfall. Examples are as below:

As an example, a PA in Jiangxi Province in the Yangtze River Basin may still have residential settlements and agricultural activities today in its core area, this is probably due to the unscientific zoning without consultation with the residents when the PA was established in the past decades. MEE must report the violation according to current Regulation on Nature Reserves and charging the PA for correction. However,

the PA, and even the forestry department, may have no solution under current situation without a PA law which can adapt supports this type of action and also enables enforcement of the regulation this and provides power. There is a clear need for coordinated and integrated efforts to tackle this issue and to advance the legislation process forward.

And

In the Yangtze River Basin, MEE has reorganized the Yangtze River Basin Ecology and Environment Supervision Administration to oversee all the violations in the basin. However, NFGA doesn't have a basin-level branch other than the provincial departments dealing with PAs and biodiversity conservation, no special arrangement is in place for the YRB.

And

As aforementioned, cross-sectoral coordination may strengthen the content of the law and facilitate the legislative process.

#2 – a footnote to explain Multiplan integration has been added, also copied below:

In 2017, the Chinese central government added ecological and environmental planning into the original "three Plans in one" framework (i.e., the National Economic and Social Development Plan, the General Urban Development Plan and the General Land Use Plan), and formed the Multi-plan initiative. It aims to solve the "fights" in existing plans, and integrates the national economic and social development planning, urban and rural planning, land use planning, ecological environmental protection planning and other multiple planning into one planning, so that one city and county will have one plan and one blueprint. In other words, currently, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) exercises all land and spatial use control responsibilities in a unified manner, and the MNR integrates the planning functions of several ministries into one.

#3 – Justifications added to explain the coordination and likely cooperation with C-PAR. The following references have been included in the PFD:

The GEF-6 China's Protected Area System Reform program (C-PAR) being implemented by UNDP as the lead IA, with CI and Foreign Economic Cooperation Office of MEE, aims to transform China's national protected area system through systematic legal and institutional reform and innovation for conservation of globally significant biodiversity, through improving legal and institutional framework at national and provincial level, systematic PA planning and mainstreaming at national, provincial, county spatial planning and sectors, and raising site level management and supervision standards for different PA types. Sichuan is the common geography of this program and C-PAR, and MEE is the common EA. Close coordination will be established taking advantage of these common elements.

C-PAR and PA financing related texts have been incorporated in the Alternative Scenario section as follows:

Considering the fact that sustainable PA financing is also now addressed by the C-PAR, focusing on public financing, the programme will consult with the C-PAR in the preparation phase to identify complementary actions and to avoid redundancies. The consultation and collaboration during implementation will be undertaken between the IAs, and will be facilitated by the MEE, who are executing a few CPs under the C-PAR.

And the C-PAR related texts from the coordination section as follows:

The coordination with TWC and C-PAR will also be elaborated during the programme preparation. Clear demarcation of focal geographies

including landscapes and protected areas will be a fundamental principle and the programme will avoid working in the already identified sites of TWC and C-PAR, while undertake close coordination with TWC and C-PAR on technical topics and approaches to complement each other. In addition to the coordination on specific activities described under component 1, a coordination mechanism similar to TACC among IUCN, UNDP, MEE and NFGA and their associated central and provincial departments would be one of the possibilities.

#4 - Consultation and coordination with UNDP has been undertaken and reference to GEF-7 Transformational wildlife conservation management in China (GEFID 10701) has been included. As far as we understand, this project will focus on wildlife legislations, not the protected area one. Anyway, the following references have been included in the PFD.

- the GEF-7 Transformational wildlife conservation management in China (TWC), being formulated by UNDP and NFGA, aiming to mainstream globally important threatened wildlife conservation across sectors, by harnessing innovative frontier technologies supporting improved management practices. This project will focus on Sichuan and Yunnan, and will include activities on policy influencing and PA management improvement through new technologies. Close coordination will also be established..

Coordination with the GEF 7 Transformation Wildlife Conservation Management in China project will be actively sought, in order to reduce redundancies while achieve synergies, especially in terms of application of new technologies.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 22, 2020 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 19, 2020 HF:

1.)-4.) Comments cleared.

5.) Please include global biodiversity significance prior to threats of loss/destruction in the site/sector selection criteria.

6.) Comment cleared.

October 2, 2020 HF:

1.) The ToC diagram in both Table 6 (the graphic titled "Theory Of Change of the program") and especially Table 1 "Programmatic TOC and Child Project contributions")-are both simply presentations of the results framework. (NB: Albeit Table 1 is useful for understanding the contributions of the CPs). A TOC diagram should show a coherent and logical causal model. 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>.

2.) The most important thing here (beyond any graphic) is a clear written statement of the desired "end state" this program intends to bring about, and the strategies the program will take to get there given assumptions about causal relationships between the drivers, proposed activities and desired end state. Please strengthen the description of the alternative scenario (and the GEF increment) by having special

activities and desired end state. I have strengthened the description of the alternative scenarios (and the GEF intervention) by paying special attention to describing the causal chains/logic of the expected outcomes (or desired end state) given the drivers, causal linkages and underlying assumptions. Given that this is an innovative and incredibly ambitious program that is dependent on elements outside of the

project domain, documenting these assumptions now will enable a better PPG design process and eventual evaluation of the project. Once you have more clearly identified these causal pathways please provide a more robust explanation and justification that these pathways are sufficient to achieve the project objectives, given the assumptions upon which they are based.

3.) Table 1 project objective is different than project objective in Table B. Please revise.

4.) Component 1 includes efforts to improve sustainable PA financing. Please note that the GEF-7 biodiversity strategy emphasizes that PA financing activities supported by GEF funds should be focused on system-level efforts and change rather than taking a park-by-park approach. Further, under the GEF-6 CPAR program a couple of the Child Projects have a sustainable PA finance focus. Please address these issues.

5.) The MEE project will focus on the integration of BD consideration into industries and municipal planning, please briefly explain the criteria you will use to select targeted sectors and municipalities in Sichuan, Jiangxi and Anhui.

6.) Please include the GEF Agency (both the IA and EA) in Annex A for each Child Project.

Agency Response

Oct 19 IUCN:

#1 - The TOC has been re-developed following the STAP guideline and is included in the PFD.

#2 - The end state has been strengthened wherever relevant. The alternative scenario has been strengthened as Table 2.

Table 2: Scenario analysis and programme incremental contributions

Baseline scenario	Business as usual scenario in next 5-7 years	Alternative scenario with added value from GEF's incremental contribution following the programmatic approach
Siloed and sector-divided approach to biodiversity conservation and environment protection in the YRB	Certain coordination is in place, and coherent policy making is gradually undertaken. However, sector divisions in enforcement, investments, projects and actions is still prominent.	The programme itself and all its components, provides an opportunity to leverage the Governments' initiatives and promote cross-sectoral coordination aimed at addressing sustainable management of shared, common-pool resources in the YRB for sustainable development and biodiversity conservation. In addition to the related results such as the coordination mechanism, the programme's broad strategies, specifically integrated demonstration of solutions, joint policy influencing and coordinated knowledge management and information exchange, are expected to demonstrate to the stakeholders, sectoral authorities and local governments the improved effectiveness and transformational impacts that the integrated and coordinated approaches can achieve.
Establishing a new protected areas system in China	PA system reformed, of yet - not based on systematic planning and information - usual governance and financing model - no or too many standards on PA management	Through the component 1, the programme will contribute to a streamlined PA system in the YRB, which integrates systematic planning of protected area networks based on key biodiversity information to ensure needed coverage of representative and viable biodiversity, diversifies governance and financial models, and applies tested standard to guide PA management. The programme will demonstrate and develop needed experience from selected landscapes in the YRB about improving PA networks, enhancing governance and management, and diversifying financing, in order to achieve the expected results. Tenure issues and stakeholder rights will be fully considered in the programme preparation and implementation. International good practices and new approaches will be applied.
Developing new protected area legislations for all PA types	PA law is not enacted on time or enacted with considerable compromises due to diverse and conflicting interests	Through the joint strategy under component 1, the programme will contribute to the new PA law enacted and implemented with less compromises due to the balanced interest and agreements between the likely supervisor (MEE) and enforcer (NFGA) of the new PA legislation, stronger provisions on PA legal status, financing, management measures, and support to diverse governance types and private sector and civil society participation.
		The programme will provided consolidated and coordinated inputs to the legislation process from both CPs with different yet complementary perspectives. The coordinated inputs will help ensure and strengthen the representativeness of balanced needs and interests of the major stakeholders of the legislation and lead to greater practicality and operability of it. The programme will ensure needed planning and coordinated implementation of the two CPs, and the close engagement with the legislators in order to achieve expected results on this.
Managing pollutions and other human impacts in the Yangtze River Basin	Impacts from industries and development to biodiversity gradually reduced or remain stable, but with considerable resistance from other stakeholders, considering the YREB as a national priority for economic growth	Through the component 2, the programme will contribute to mainstreaming of biodiversity in the further development of YREB, so as to mitigate the impacts from development and production. The establishment of an adaptive ecological and environmental management system, with an effective river basin authority is likely to lead to improved coordination, better conservation of biodiversity areas while ensuring municipal development, improved tested standards, better regulatory systems for pollution management based on stakeholder's feedback. These approaches will be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of managing human impacts while supporting sustainable development through improved coordination and the integrated, participatory approach. The programme will identify needed willingness of local governments and business sector stakeholders during the programme preparation to inform the site and partner selections, and will actively engage them during implementation by providing needed participation opportunities.
Formulating the Yangtze River Protection Law	Yangtze River Protection Law is enacted with compromises and lacking biodiversity related articles, and is implemented with difficulty.	Through a joint strategy under the component 2, the programme will contribute to the Yangtze River Protection Law in place and implemented, which includes emphasis on both nature/biodiversity and environment, recognition of protected areas and other area-based measures, diverse instruments for pollution management, and supports biodiversity mainstreaming across Yangtze. The programme will provided consolidated and coordinated inputs from both CPs having complementary perspectives, ensuring representativeness of interests and also making stronger voice for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. The programme will ensure needed planning and coordinated implementation of the two CPs, and the close engagement with the legislators in order to achieve the expected outputs.

Table 1: Programme TOC and Child Project contributions

Summary of Programme Theory of Change			Child Project Contribution	
Objective	Outcome	Strategies	Owner	Explanation
Enhanced and mainstreamed biodiversity conservation in the development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt of China	1: In-situ conservation of important biodiversity in the Yangtze River Basin Improved through strengthened protected area networks, financing and policies	1.1 Strengthening protected area networks for key landscapes in Sichuan, Jiangxi and Anhui	NFGA	As the PA manager for PAs nationwide, the NFGA's CP will own this strategy and deliver expected results through its CP outputs. However, the data and information used by this strategy will also contribute to the relevant strategy on municipal planning under 2.2, owned by MEE CP. Also, the site selection of landscapes and PAs will be coordinated with that of 2.2, owned by MEE CP. Provide common landscapes/municipalities selected, greater synergies and cross-support will be explored and pursued.
		1.2 Providing joint inputs to the legislation and implementation of the new national protected areas law	Joint	Since NFGA is the enforcer of existing PA regulations and MEE is the supervisor for the enforcement, both CPs will undertake this strategy as per their own mandates, yet in a coordinated manner. It is tentatively planned that NFGA CP will take the coordination role on the joint efforts.
	2: Impacts on biodiversity in the Yangtze River Economic Belt from industry and unsustainable development Mitigated through biodiversity mainstreaming	2.1 Establishing an ecological and environmental supervision mechanism at the Yangtze basin level	MEE	As supervisor of human's positive and negative impact on environment, as well as the focal agency for Convention on Biological Diversity, MEE's CP will own this strategy and deliver expected results through its CP output, taking advantage of its newly established institution for Yangtze
		2.2 Reducing human impacts from development and production in selected municipalities in Sichuan, Jiangxi and Anhui	MEE	The MEE CP will own this strategy and deliver expected results through its CP outputs. However, the data and information base consolidated from 1.1 will be referred, and the selection of municipalities will coordinate with that of 1.1, both owned by NFGA CP.
		2.3 Contributing to the formulation and implementation of the Yangtze River Protection Law	Joint	Both as key stakeholders of this new law, NFGA and MEE's CPs will undertake this strategy as per their own mandates, yet in a coordinated manner. It is tentatively planned that MEE CP will take the coordination role on the joint efforts.
	3: Knowledge and capacity base improved to support biodiversity conservation in the Yangtze	3.1 Developing and delivering knowledge products and events	Joint	Both CPs will undertake this, yet in a coordinated and mutually supporting manner.
		3.2 Conducting programme and project coordination and M&E	Joint	Both CPs will undertake project level coordination and M&E. The programme level coordination and M&E

	River Basin		will be led by NFGA CP.
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#4 - Needed clarifications and reference to CPAR regarding PA financing have been included.

Considering the fact that sustainable PA financing is also now addressed by the CPAR, focusing on public financing, the programme will consult with the CPAR in the preparation phase to identify complementary actions and to avoid redundancies. The consultation and collaboration during implementation will be undertaken between the IAs, and will be facilitated by the MEE, who are executing a few CPs under the CPAR.

#5 - Needed clarifications on the criteria for municipality and sector selection have been included, as:

The criteria that will be prioritized, provisionally include:

- *existing impacts or potential risks to both habitat destruction and degradation*
- *reasonable scale for the programme to make impacts*
- *possibility for identifying and developing champions and agents of change*
- *ability for the programme to reach, with CPs' EAs as "boundary partner"*

The means of engagement with the identified will take various forms that will be further elaborated during the programme preparation. The existing relations of the EAs, e.g. NFGA with the tourism sector, the MEE with mining and aquaculture sector etc., local government with infrastructure sector will provide the basis to establish initial contacts with the key players, associations and major companies, of these sectors. During the programme preparation, visits, interviews and consultation meetings will be undertaken to help decide the scope, identify key business sector partners as well as develop practical, effective activities to improve their production practices. During the implementation, the programme will collaborate with the identified partners to explore, test and scale up good and more biodiversity friendly and even positive practices. The programme provide opportunities for the business sector partners to provide inputs to the standard and policy making processes, and will help them prepare for the likely raised and stricter requirements as per the Yangtze River Protection Law. Programme knowledge and communications products will also include the experiences and success of the business sector partners as case studies or feature stories. They will also be invited to present and share their work at appropriate events the programme will organize.

#6 EA information has been added in Annex A.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 19, 2020 HF:

1.) Comment cleared.

2.) Comment cleared.

October 2 2020 HF:

1.) Please describe how this programmatic approach fits the definition of a program as “a longer-term and strategic arrangement of individual yet interlinked projects that aim at achieving large-scale impacts on the global environment.” This can be submitted as both an Agency Response below, and revised Project Justification that provides a better understanding of this.

2.) In NFGA project, there should be clear project objective with allocated budget for coordination of two child projects in this case and M&E should be done for PCC meetings and activities. Currently it looks as if joint project activities only include legislation, but as program approach, two EAs should consult each other and come up with joint initiative which can make clear synergy. For instance, diversifying PA financing can be linked with second strategy in component 2, crowding-in polluters to fund PES.

Agency Response

Oct 19 IUCN:

#1 - Justification has been added in the Alignment section of the PFD, as below

As described above, the programme is in line with GEF's definition of the programmatic approach. The programme itself presents a strategic collaboration between the EAs that have not cooperated as closely as in this manner previously, and it will also build long term coordination among multiple stakeholder groups. The CPs of the programme are also well interlinked and collectively contribute to large scale impacts from their own yet complementary perspectives and based on comparative advantages of the EAs.

#2 - Budget has been allocated at output level of the NFGA CP to enable programme coordination and M&E. We have broken down the budget details to output level under its component 3 in CP Concept.

NFGA Output	GEF	Co-financing
N3.2 Programme level coordination and M&E effectively conducted.	195,500	220,000

Also other joint or cross-supporting activities have been identified and included in the PFD and CP Concept. For example:

payment for ecosystem services with PAs as ecosystem service providers and therefore receiving greater investments from downstream municipalities and industries, including those participating in the practice of improving activities of component 2 of the programme.

Assessment of the linkage between pollution and resource use/overuse, and distinction and threatening of species and key freshwater habitats will be undertaken to inform the development and implementation of management and regulatory instruments, including the PES mechanism that Component 1 plans to explore.

October 22, 2020 IUCN:

#5 – Globally important biodiversity has been added as the first criterial for municipality and sector selection, as:

For municipalities:

- 1) inclusion of or strong ecological linkages, e.g. upstream vs downstream, with the selected landscapes having globally important biodiversity*
- 2) progress in undertakings related to biodiversity conservation and mainstreaming, as well as implementation of national initiatives*
- 3) willingness for participation and cooperation in the project*
- 4) the potential co-financing and financial leverage potential*

For sectors:

- 1) linkages with globally important biodiversity*
- 2) existing impacts and/or potential risks of habitat destruction and degradation*
- 3) reasonable scale for the project to make impacts at large scales for sectors with reasonable GDP share*
- 4) possibility for identifying and developing champions and/or agents of change*
- 5) ability for the project to reach, with EA as "boundary partner"*

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 22, 2020 HF

All comments cleared.

October 19, 2020 HF:

- 1.) a.) Thank you. Is only NFGA budgeting for coordination? Seems as if both participating EAs should do so. Please explain.
- b.) Also, please include an **overall statement of the incremental reasoning for each child project**, in the corresponding section of each child project concept template. Currently it is only explained by component and the summary statement at the top of the MEE CP just sounds like GEF would be financing the Agency mandate and from the NFGA CP concept the incremental reasoning is not clear-why are GEF resources justified here? What is the additionality?. An overall statement of the incremental cost reasoning of **each project** is needed.
- 2.)-4.) All comments cleared.

October 2, 2020 HF:

- 1.) The clearest incremental reasoning for this programmatic approach is that of "unified planning and effective coordination" across various projects, sectors and Agencies in the YRB. In order to do this coordination and management it must be carefully planned for and budgeted. Currently it is unclear where this falls within Table B budget-please include.

- 2.) Please clarify what is meant by "the breeding difficulties" of endangered species such as the Chinese pangolins.
- 3.) It is unclear how the livelihood elements that were referenced in the incremental reasoning section actually fit into the GEF increment of this project.
- 4.) The final paragraph describing incentives and cross-sectoral/jurisdictional coordination is an important one, but please remove the jargon and simplify the language so it can be easily understood.

Agency Response

Oct 19 IUCN:

#1 - Budget for coordination has been allocated at output level of the NFGA CP to enable programme coordination and M&E, as above.

#2 – The texts have been revised, as:

the technical difficulties in artificial breeding couldn't provide sufficient support to endangered species such as the Chinese pangolin that are at risk of extinction

#3 - Livelihood won't be a focus on the programme and the references to it have been adjusted in the Incremental reasoning section to reflect the indirect contributions from the program, as:

Besides, the field activities of the programme will focus on the three provinces along the Yangtze River Basin, i.e. Sichuan, Jiangxi, and Anhui, from upstream to downstream, which are relatively less developed with many rural communities and population. Through programme implementation, local communities may also indirectly benefit from the programme, in terms of job opportunities provided by protected areas, and improved provision, regulating, and cultural and recreational services that biodiversity provide.

#4 - The paragraph has been reorganized and integrated into the table 2 of scenario analysis and programme incremental contributions, as

The programme itself and all its components, provides an opportunity to leverage the Governments' initiatives and promote cross-sectoral coordination aimed at addressing sustainable management of shared, common-pool resources in the YRB for sustainable development and biodiversity conservation. In addition to the related results such as the coordination mechanism, the programme's broad strategies, specifically integrated demonstration of solutions, joint policy influencing and coordinated knowledge management and information exchange, are expected to demonstrate to the stakeholders, sectoral authorities and local governments the improved effectiveness and transformational impacts that the integrated and coordinated approaches can achieve.

October 22, 2020 IUCN:

#1 –

a) MEE has also budgeted as below and this has been articulated in the revised MEE CP Concept, by breaking down the component 3 budget to outputs.

MEE CP Output	GEF	Co-financing
M3.2 Child project M&E and support to Program level coordination conducted	70,730	300,000

b) Overall statement has been added to both CPs:

MEE:

The incremental financing from the GEF will bring additional benefits to the usual practices, by introducing international experiences, promoting multi-stakeholder participation, fostering multi-agency coordination as well building stronger evidence and knowledge base. It will help provide consolidated and coordinated inputs to the legislation process for this CP and with complementary perspectives of NFGA CP to ensure and strengthen the representativeness of balanced needs and interests of the major stakeholders of the legislation and lead to greater practicality and operability of it. The additional investment will also maintain and ensure the needed willingness, interest and motivation of local governments and business sector stakeholders identified during the project preparation, through actively engaging them during implementation by providing needed participation opportunities.

NFGA:

The incremental investment from the GEF will provide additional benefits to baseline initiatives and usual practices, by introducing international good practices and approaches into the project. Also, the additional investment will enable multi-stakeholder and cross-agency cooperation, and will fully consider the tenure issues and stakeholder rights and participation in the preparation and implementation

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 23, 2020 HF:

Comment cleared.

October 22, 2020 HF:

2.) Unfortunately it does not look like the core indicator target justification was included in the PFD in the Portal (see screenshot below). Please include.

Provide additional explanation on targets, other methodologies used, and other focal area specifics (i.e., Aichi targets in BD) including justification where core indicator targets are not provided

October 19, 2020 HF:

1.) Comment cleared.

2.) Thank you for this. In the Portal PFD entry, please complete the section below the Core Indicator table: **"Provide additional explanation on targets, other methodologies used, and other focal area specifics (i.e., Aichi targets in BD) including justification where core indicator targets are not provided"**

October 2, 2020 HF:

1.) There is a discrepancy between the target for the NFGA target in the child project concept text and in the indicator tables. Is the target 2 million hectares or 1.4 million hectares? Please rectify.

2.) Please provide an explanation of how the targets were derived and provide an explanation/justification for the hectare cost/return on investment of this project.

Agency Response

Oct 19 IUCN:

#1 - The target 2 million hectares has been revised and made consistent to 1.2 million due to withdrawal of Guizhou Province

#2 - The explanation has been provided in the CP concepts respectively. Basically the targets were developed from the Core Indicator Worksheet. Cost/return has been added as below:

MEE – The project has a high return ratio with regard to the investment, due to 1) the project working at the policy level that shall bring a broader impact than working at the site level. 2) the contribution to the Yangtze River Law will also benefits other provinces within YRB, thus the return ratio is even higher

NFGA - The project has a high return ratio with regard to the investment, due to 1) the project is focused on the improvement of the policies, standards and legislation for better conservation outcomes, which will bring a broader impact than working site by site with equal cost. 2) the target summarized above includes the sites within the focal provinces. However, as the Yangtze River Protection Law and Protected Area Law will also have a great impact at other provinces even outside of the YRB, the return ratio is even higher

October 22, 2020 IUCN:

#2 – The needed explanation on Portal regarding targets of the PFD has been entered.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 20, 2020 HF:

1.)-5.) All comments cleared.

October 2, 2020 HF:

- 1.) **Innovation:** Please include some of what is included in the innovation section of the PFD in early sections in the PFD, including the incremental reasoning and project justification. Much of the value added of this project became clear in the Innovation section, but it should be made more clear from the beginning.
- 2.) **Sustainability:** The final sentence of this section refers to elements which "could be easily institutionalized into the governments' priorities"-but the section doesn't actually describe how this project plans to do that. Please revise.
- 3.) To the same point, please describe how cross-institutional support will continue after GEF project is going to be finished, with clear budget plan and responsibility from each authorities. At least a general idea/plan for this should be included at this stage, and further developed in PPG prior to CER submission.
- 4.) **Scaling-up:** Refers to "two national laws that will have profound impacts on China's biodiversity" which are these?
- 5.) This section contains lots of ideas about how scaling-up could happen without indication of the role of this project or Agencies in doing so. Please revise to include indication of how this project plans to set the ground-work for scaling-up.

Agency Response

Oct 19 IUCN:

#1 – Added value of the programme as per those in the Innovation section has been included in earlier sections wherever relevant.

#2 & #3 – The final sentence has been revised as:

Thus, the programme will directly provide experiences, technology, coordination, good cases, as well as international support to the YRB's

...the programme will directly promote experience, technology, documentation, good cases, as well as international expertise and the protection and sustainable development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt. Those could be adopted by the government through knowledge products, demonstrated solutions, communication materials, etc. During the programme period, the cross-sectoral institutional

coordination mechanism will be strengthened, studied, and modelled in purpose for future integration into the governments' priorities in YREB biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, which will be incentivized and provided the effectiveness and ability to achieve impacts that the programme aims to demonstrate for integrated and coordinated approaches and efforts.

#4 – Names of the two national laws added as:

the PA law and the Yangtze River Protection Law

#5 – Section revised to include indication of how the program plans to scale up, such as:

This programme could collaborate with relevant authorities including MEE, NFGA, MNR, MWR to mobilize the attention from all provinces in the YRB.

Moreover, IUCN's Green List of Protected Areas programme can also help to share the experiences and lesson learned at international level.

And

through relevant Chinese authorities, as well as through IUCN's thematic programme as knowledge products and demonstrations.

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 20, 2020 HF:

1.) Comment cleared.

2.) Comment cleared. Please provide coordinates/geo-referenced information on project sites at CER stage.

October 2, 2020 HF:

1.) Are more detailed maps available of proposed project sites (including PAs/landscapes) within provinces? Please provide (this should also assist in closer coordination with ADB, CPAR, UNDP in this region).

2.) Are coordinates/geo-referenced info available?

Agency Response

Oct 19 IUCN:

#1 – The more detailed maps have been added to the Annex.

#2 – The geo-referenced maps would not be possible.

October 22, 2020 IUCN:

#2 – Noted. Geo-referenced maps will be developed and provided during the PPG.

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 20, 2020 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 2, 2020 HF:

1.) Please describe the stakeholder engagement that has occurred to date, at all levels. Please note, if necessary stakeholder engagement/consultations hasn't happened for a particular group or level, please indicate this, provide justification and what the plan is to do so during PPG.

2.) Please include "means of [stakeholder] engagement" in Table 3.

Agency Response

Oct 19 IUCN:

#1 - The already undertaken engagement, justifications and plan has been clarified.

During the programme identification phase, NFGA, MEE, provincial governments in the three provinces, as well as due to resource limits, a small sample of protected areas agencies, academic institutions, civil society organizations and private sector entities have been consulted through interviews and formal and informal exchanges undertaken by both the IA and EAs. Their opinions, interests and suggestions have helped design the programme's TOC as well as activities. They also provided insights based on their experience of some other stakeholder groups, especially communities and businesses. They will continue to be consulted during the programme preparation and engaged to participate in the programme activities. Consultation with full range of stakeholders will be undertaken during the programme preparation.

#2 - Means of engagement has been included in Table 3 at the end of this file.

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 22, 2020 HF:

2.) Comment cleared. In general though, a fleshed-out treatment of gender per the technical focus of the program is expected at the PFD/PIF stage. In PPG please develop a strong gender analysis and integration of considerations/recommendations into Child Projects.

October 20, 2020 HF:

1.) Comment cleared.

2.) Please revise the PIF to include specific information about the gender dimensions of the technical focus of the program, and if possible the target sites (including, but not limited to the text response below).

October 2, 2020 HF:

1.) Please include identified gender sensitive indicators in the results framework. There is no gender disaggregated indicators in the results framework now.

2.) Is there any further information that can be provided regarding gender dimensions of the region? Or any specifics on gender dimensions of the technical areas the project will focus?

Agency Response

Oct 19 IUCN:

#1 - Gender sensitive indicators were added, as:

MEE: F: 2500 M:1500
NFGA: F:3000 M:2000

#2 - Further information regarding gender has been added, as:

A first screening of the gender situation at the proposed PAs has been conducted. It shows that women accounts for 10% to 50% of the total 100 – 200 staffs of the sites, with 20% - 30% as the most common proportion. It is expected that, the introduction of Green List shall lead to a systematic governance improvement at the target PAs to improve the gender equity both in the number of women staff, as well as the percentage of women in the leading role. Also, voices of women in the related communities will also be improved through increased participation in the stakeholder consultation of PA management, with a special focus on the participation of women..

October 22, 2020 IUCN:

#2 – Further information has been added as:

In general, in all the three target provinces, the demographic surveys suggest a 1:1 ration between male and female. However, as economy and urbanization develop, a big part of rural population have left communities for migrant work in cities. According to the 2018 Monitoring and Investigation of Migrant Rural Workers National Report by National Bureau of Statistics, the population of migrant rural workers from Jiangxi, Anhui and Sichuan provinces are approximately 10 million, 20 million, and 20 million respectively, account for roughly 50% of total population of all three provinces. About 65% of the migrant rural workers are male, implying female accounting for a bigger part of remaining population in rural areas and communities.

Private Sector Engagement

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 20, 2020 HF:

- 1.) Comment cleared.
- 2.) Comment cleared. Please further explore during PPG.

October 2, 2020 HF:

- 1.) How will the sectors identified (aquaculture, mining, tourism etc) be participating in the project consultation? Is there specific associations or interest group already identified in each sector? Why they would have interest in participating in this project? What will be the project's strategy to attract them into the discussion?
- 2.) Is there any indicative co-finance from the private sector for this project?

Agency Response

Oct 19 IUCN:

#1 – Explanations have been added to the PFD for these questions, and also as below.

The programme will encourage business sector participation in biodiversity conservation and production improvement in various ways in the YRB. Several considerations regarding how the sectors will be prioritized tentatively include:

- *existing impacts or potential risks to both habitat destruction and degradation*
- *reasonable scale for the programme to make impacts*
- *possibility for identifying and developing champions and agents of change*
- *ability for the programme to reach, with CPs' EAs as "boundary partner"*

The means of engagement with the identified will take various forms that will be further elaborated during the programme preparation. The existing relations of the EAs, e.g. NFGA with the tourism sector, the MEE with mining and aquaculture sector etc., local government with infrastructure sector will provide the basis to establish initial contacts with the key players, associations and major companies, of these sectors. During the programme preparation, visits, interviews and consultation meetings will be undertaken to help decide the scope, identify key business sector partners as well as develop practical, effective activities to improve their production practices. During the implementation, the programme will collaborate with the identified partners to explore, test and scale up good and more biodiversity friendly and even positive practices. The programme provide opportunities for the business sector partners to provide inputs to the standard and policy making processes, and will help them prepare for the likely raised and stricter requirements as per the Yangtze River Protection Law. Programme knowledge and communications products will also include the experiences and success of the business sector partners as case studies or feature stories. They will also be invited to present and share their work at appropriate events the programme will organize.

#2 - No co-financing from private sector is planned at the moment.

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 23, 2020 HF:

Comment cleared.

October 22, 2020 HF:

Comment cleared re: COVID incorporation.

3.) Safeguards comment: The ESS documentation states that "The programme does not involve any activities that would cause any form of resettlement" whereas output 1.1 of the PFD references potential protected areas establishment. Given the sensitivity of PA establishment/gazettement regarding potential resettlement, please include the following language in the ESS documentation: "no GEF resources shall be used for activities that will directly or indirectly result in voluntary or involuntary resettlement." Please also ensure this is included in safeguard documentation at PPG phase.

4.) Comment cleared.

October 20, 2020 HF:

1.) Comment cleared.

2.) Comment cleared.

3.) Comment cleared. GEFSEC expects IUCN to make risk ratings available as soon as completed based on current project design and information. This will also clarify the overall project risk rating which is difficult to understand/attribute.

4.) Although the response below states FPIC has been incorporated, it is not currently included in the PFD text nor in the ESS document. Please revise.

October 2, 2020 HF:

1.) Please refer to the informal GEF COVID considerations for project design and review document and include COVID as a project risk given the context of the pandemic, further, please identify any opportunities for the project in the context of the pandemic (e.g. contributions to pandemic recovery or in decreasing risk of zoonotic transmission via habitat conservation etc).

2.) Good to see the program will undertake a climate change risk assessment during PPG. At the PDF stage though, please provide at least a **basic climate risk screening**. At a minimum, at PDF 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>)

3.) Noting that most of the risk ratings for the environmental and social risks are marked TBD, how was the overall project risk rating determined? And why were these all TBD at this stage given ample opportunity for stakeholder engagement in program design period? Please explain.

4.) Please incorporate FPIC into approach to engaging indigenous peoples.

Agency Response

Oct 19 IUCN:

#1 - More considerations of COVID have been added

<p>Delays in launching and implementation of the programme due to the COVID-19 pandemic</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>As the situation of COVID-19 in China has been under control since mid-2020 (with only a handful new foreign cases per day and non-domestic cases), the capacity of implementing the programme is expected to be not significantly impacted by COVID-19 with the current situation continuing, and also the capacity will be gradually improved along with the recovery of all the sectors.</p> <p>But nonetheless, with close engagement and communication with the GEF Secretariat, IUCN, NFGA and MEE will adaptively identify potential risks related to COVID-19 at the PPG stage and during the implementation of the programme. Also, World Health Organization guidance, especially in terms of travel and social distancing, will be followed throughout the programme cycle.</p> <p>In addition, IUCN is actively promoting management strategies for COVID-19 response and as such programme team members will have needed knowledge and experience with the needed procedures required for travel, events and project management, as well as the alternatives when they are not possible. The alternatives will include remote interaction with stakeholders, on line consultations, workshops, trainings and capacity-building events. Engagement with communities and on-the-ground undertaking will be conducted by team members experienced and trained to operate in potentially hazardous environments and involve digital contact tracing and outbreak monitoring, as promoted and available in China. Vaccine will be taken for needed programme members as long as it is approved and available in China.</p> <p>Meanwhile, broader impact of COVID-19 on stakeholders especially communities will be assessed and monitored by the programme if the pandemic remains. The programme will aim to create opportunities for people negatively impacted.</p> <p>It is expected that during the implementation of the programme, due to improvement of the implementation of eco-redlining and better legislation and management of PA and YRB, the relationship with human and wildlife shall be significantly improved in terms of decreasing risk of zoonotic transmission.</p>
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#2 - A primary climate risk screening has been added

Climate change may add uncertainty to the programme	Medium	<p>It is identified that the future climate of the Yangtze River Basin has a continuous warming and drying trend, while the trend of precipitation is insignificant and there is a large spatial heterogeneity, which is related to the future greenhouse gas emission scenario; the frequency of extreme climate events shows an increasing trend, but the uncertainty of the future is large. Under the dual pressures of climate change and human activities, the wetlands in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River have shrunk dramatically over the past few decades, and wetland fragmentation has intensified; rising water temperatures and declining water levels have threatened wetland biodiversity, leading to declines in fish and migratory bird species and populations, and altering the species composition and productivity of wetland plant communities. Vulnerability of ecosystems and reduction of ecosystem service functions has also occurred. Also, Climate change has significantly reduced the yield of major crops in the Yangtze River Basin, but the fertilization effect brought about by the increase in atmospheric CO₂ concentration will effectively offset this negative factor, greatly reducing the yield reduction and even increasing the yield in some areas. In addition, future climate change will increase the sensitivity and vulnerability of forests in YRB, especially in the middle and lower reaches.</p> <p>Yangtze River Basin is affected by a number of climatic hazards and extreme events, and these are projected to worsen with climate change. The most common are floods, both river (fluvial) floods and flash floods, and drought. Landslides occur in the basin triggered by heavy rainfall. The programme will follow the GEF STAP guidance on climate risk screening to identified the risks of climate change and related measures, and develop during the preparation an adaptive management approach for 1) timely assessment/ adjustment of conservation boundaries to accommodate change; 2) highlighted monitoring- adjust priorities based on feedback; 3) result-oriented, revise management rules following changes. And also, the project will demonstrate an improved resilience within the target sites.</p>
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#3 – The risks evaluated as TBD are mostly those subject to greater details about the concrete activities and their local contexts that are to be developed during the programme preparation. Also the programme preparation will be informed of the potential environmental and social safeguard risks and lead to activities with minimized risks if they cannot be avoided. In general the programme as designed so far does not seem to have a high overall risk, and we evaluated it as moderate risk with an intention to alert the programme preparation.

#4 - FPIC has been incorporated

Low participation and recognition of Indigenous people	Low	<p>for smooth and efficient implementation of the programme.</p> <p>More than 98% population in YRB is Han nationality, the most populated minorities are Tujia, Miao and Yi. About 3 million Yi minority are living in Sichuan Province. As the programme will only work at the areas that is owned by the government that is unlikely to have a direct negative impact on indigenous people. The indigenous people engagement shall be improved and ensured</p>
		<p>through the following measures: 1) during the implementation of the programme, the participation of indigenous people especially in decision making process at PA and local level will be monitored and documented. 2) the experiences and lessons learned from the programme shall be provided for the legislation of PA and YR Law. 3) There will be preference given to indigenous people during staff hiring process of the programme shall be provided.</p>

October 22, 2020 IUCN:

#1 – COVID considerations have been incorporated to the PFD and CP Concepts, as below

PFD:

Alternative scenario section:

During the programme preparation, opportunities to integrate considerations and activities related to COVID-19 and other diseases to PA management will be explored, taking advantage of the evolving knowledge of IUCN on wildlife and health.

And

Providing joint, solid inputs to the legislation and implementation of the Yangtze River Protection Law by summarizing needs, lessons, and experiences regarding protected areas, sustainable and safe wildlife use, bio-safety, ecological redlines, resource uses, emissions and pollution etc.

Risk section:

Needed considerations have been made to integrate COVID-19 and future pandemic into the programme activities and will be further explored during the PPG.

MEE CP Concept:

Under policy influencing component:

Particular consideration may be included on bio-safety, given the COVID-19 and future pandemics, in order to address nature and human health from policy perspectives.

NFGA CP Concept:

Under PA component:

Opportunities will also be explored during the project preparation for integrating sustainable wildlife management in the selected PAs, with the aim to enable PAs to play a buffer role between wildlife and human contact for health considerations, considering the diseases including the COVID-19. The evolving knowledge from IUCN and its Species Survival Commission will provide critical reference.

Under policy influencing component:

The sustainable and safe use of wildlife could potentially be considered in this process, given COVID-19 and future pandemics.

#4 – FPIC has been added to PFD, Stakeholder section, and the ESS Doc, as below:

PFD:



ESS:

Culturally appropriate consultations in accordance with Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) principles with representatives of the identified indigenous

groups (as selected by them) will be ensured as well as their involvement in the development of an Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP). The IPP will need to be available prior to CEO endorsement.

The IPP will ensure that culturally appropriate consultations in accordance with FPIC principles with the respective groups and their representative will be continued during project implementation, and that negative impacts on these groups are avoided or measures are in place to minimize, mitigate, or compensate for adverse effects, as agreed by them.

October 23, 2020 IUCN:

#3 – Resettlement related statement has been added to the ESS document, under the IVR risk as:

No GEF resources shall be used for activities that will directly or indirectly result in voluntary or involuntary resettlement.

Also the information related to Guizhou Province has been removed, as the programme is not covering it.

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 22, 2020 HF:
All comments cleared.

October 19, 2020 HF:

1.) Comment cleared.

2.) Although section b.) of the NFGA child project concept lays out the baseline projects, please also include a clear statement of how this

project, given its scope, is complementary, rather than duplicative, with CPAR (in Coordination and baseline). It is still unclear and this cannot wait until PPG.

3.) Comment cleared.

October 2, 2020 HF:

- 1.) Please include the Executing Agencies in the Portal entry for this PFD. They are missing.
- 2.) See previous points on coordination regarding NFGA-MEE engagement, planning to institutionalize mainstreamed planning/coordination etc. as well as specific questions/issues on coordination with CPAR.
- 3.) Coordination with ADB on activities in the YRB (particularly GEF funded) must be retained and further developed to avoid overlap and improve synergies/value added.

Agency Response

Oct 19 IUCN:

#1 - EA information has been entered in the Portal

#2 & 3 – The coordination section has been revised to reflect the progress and plans for coordination. New or revised narratives include:

Needed budgets for programme level coordination and M&E have been allocated from the NFGA CP.

Regarding coordination with other GEF initiatives working on biodiversity and in the YRB, three of them will be of particular relevance:

- *GEF-7 Demonstrating Eco-Compensation Mechanisms in Yangtze River Basin (ECM) – being formulated by ADB and NRDC*
- *GEF-7 Transformational wildlife conservation management in China (TWC), being formulated by UNDP and NFGA*
- *GEF-6 China's Protected Area System Reform (C-PAR), being implemented by UNDP as the lead IA, CI and Foreign Economic Cooperation Office of MEE*

All the IAs have had consultations and shared project documentation, with a view to achieving complementarity, leveraging the comparative advantage of each, avoiding duplication of resources / geographies and maximizing impact and global environmental benefits in the Yangtze River Basin. A "coordination framework" is being developed which will outline areas of cooperation and coordination – and will be included in greater detail during programme and project preparation.

Early consultations indicate that ADB and IUCN regarding coordination and cooperation between this programme and the ECM would ensure: i) Clear demarcation of geographies, where IUCN will not engage in PA in Guizhou province as initially envisioned, ii) Coordinated capacity development and data/information management across local governments, where relevant, iii) Joint monitoring activities, particularly through use of digital platforms, iv) Sharing of good practice on protected area management and threat mitigation, v) Sharing of good practices on integrated river basin management; and eco-compensation mechanisms or PES as relevant, and v) creation of a Technical Advisory and Coordination Committee (TACC), which would include representatives of IAs and EAs of both initiatives. Further, ECM would be invited to participate in activities related to policy influencing of this programme, and this programme will participate in appropriate ways in the Natural Capital Lab work to be undertaken by the ECM.

The coordination with TWC and C-PAR will also be elaborated during the programme preparation. Clear demarcation of focal geographies including landscapes and protected areas will be a fundamental principle and the programme will avoid working in the already identified

including landscapes and protected areas will be a fundamental principle and the programme will avoid working in the already identified sites of TWC and C-PAR, while undertake close coordination with TWC and C-PAR on technical topics and approaches to complement each other. In addition to the coordination on specific activities described under component 1, a coordination mechanism similar to TACC among IUCN, UNDP, MEE and NFGA and their associated central and provincial departments would be one of the possibilities.

October 22, 2020 IUCN:

2 – Coordination with C-PAR has been incorporated in the NFGA CP Concept, as

Section B:

Overlapping sites in Sichuan will be avoided by clearly noting the two wetland parks as C-PAR's site in Sichuan. Coordination on technical activities to avoid duplications yet achieve complementary and larger impacts will be conducted among the involved agencies.

Section D:

Particular coordination will be actively pursued with the C-PAR, to achieve that 1) data and information base established by C-PAR could be used by this project, 2) selected sites won't not duplicate those of C-PAR, and 3) coordinated approach can be practiced for technical activities and subjects on, e.g. PA management effectiveness, PA financing and policies etc.

Coordination with C-PAR and ECM will also be pursued, in order to achieve concerted approach toward successful and impactful policy influence, while reducing duplications and redundancies.

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 20, 2020 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 2, 2020:

1.) MEE CP: Since 2013 many ministries, including Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Housing, Urban and Rural Development, and Ministry of Water Resources, have respectively proposed red lines of farmland, urban land, and water and soil conservation. In this context, please clarify the relationships between the ecological red line as defined by this PIF and the red lines proposed by the above three ministries and how they will be integrated.

2.) MEE CP: Please briefly explain if the ecological red line areas cover the National Ecological Function Zones. What are their relationships?

3.) Please briefly explain if the NFGA will be the enforcer of the proposed “nature protection legal system with the coordinated national parks law and protected area law”.

Agency Response

Oct 19 IUCN:

#1 – The explanation has been added in the MEE CP Concept, as below:

China has started to implement the most stringent of Three Red Lines water policy since 2012 as the guideline released by the State Council, which sets targets for total water use, water use efficiency, and water quality for a number of benchmark years to 2030 by province and prefecture.

Now, China is speeding up efforts to establish the national territory spatial planning system by 2020, with ecological protection being the priority among the three "red lines" that guide the construction. In 2019, the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council released guidelines on the spatial planning and management system and the supervision of its implementation. The three red lines are:

- The ecological red line is to guarantee the safety of areas that are crucial, and must be protected for the protection of water sources, biodiversity, water and land maintenance and coastal safety, as well as wind control and sand fixation.

- The red line for permanent farmland designation aims to ensure farmland safety, improve farmland quality and prevent farmland from being used for other purposes

- The red line for urban and rural development will have an overall consideration for the local population and economic distribution, giving a long-term picture and boundary of development in both rural and urban areas.

#2 – The explanation has been added, as below:

The delineation of the Eco-Redline is to help with the implementation of the National Ecological Function Zone.

NFGA will likely be the enforcer of the PA law, and MEE will likely be the supervisor and inspector of enforcement as practiced for the existing legislations, e.g. the Nature Reserve Regulation.

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 22, 2020 HF:
Comment cleared.

October 20, 2020 HF:

1.) Please reference the knowledge management section in the Component 3 write-up in the PFD as it provides further detail which is important to consider alongside the outputs in the Component.

October 2, 2020 HF:

1.) GEF Agencies are required to outline a proposed Knowledge Management (KM) Approach for every project/program at this stage including plans to learn from relevant projects, initiatives, evaluations and best practice during project/program preparation as well as proposed knowledge and learning outputs/deliverables, and to explain how the KM Approach will contribute to the project/program's overall impact. The proposed KM Approach should include processes to capture, assess and document and share, in a user-friendly manner, information, lessons, best practices, and expertise generated during implementation; plans for strategic communications; and an overview of existing lessons and best practice that inform the project concept. Indicators should be included in Table B too. Please revise accordingly. Here are some "key ingredients" of a Knowledge Management Approach, including:

- a.) An overview of existing lessons and best practice that inform the project concept?
 - b.) plans to learn from relevant projects, programs, initiatives & evaluations?
 - c.) proposed processes to capture, assess and document info, lessons, best practice & expertise generated during implementation?
 - d.) proposed tools and methods for knowledge exchange, learning & collaboration (at both program and project levels if a PFD)?
 - e.) proposed knowledge outputs to be produced and shared with stakeholders (at both program and project levels if a PFD)?
- a discussion on how knowledge and learning will contribute to overall project/program impact and sustainability
- plans for strategic communications?

Agency Response

Oct 19 IUCN:

#1 – The whole Knowledge management approach section revised with description of a communication and knowledge management strategy, including an overview of existing lessons and best practices, plan to learn from relevant projects, processes to capture and

document info, proposed methods for knowledge exchange, learning, and proposed outputs, etc. Please see the revised text.

A communication and knowledge management strategy will be developed and elaborated in detail in the next programme preparation phase to achieve the overall goal of creating linkages between the stakeholders from local to national and global level. The communication and knowledge management strategy will help to bridge the policy makers, media, researchers, private sector, NGOs, and the public through a comprehensive platform including consultation, awareness raising, brand building, and environmental education, etc. The strategy will involve interactive process-oriented engagement with key groups including the local project partners, in terms of policy and practice at local, provincial, and national levels and the wider civil society in the Yangtze River Basin.

These information and knowledge will be collected and documented for programme reference.

The ecosystem and PA monitoring systems and information on programme project inputs will provide the key information to promote transparency, accountability, and equity during and after the project.

Periodic newsletters and updates will be developed at programme level and distributed widely to facilitate exchange to demonstrate different experiences and expertise to benefit stakeholders who are not directly connected with project activities. Online and on field exchange and study will also be planned during the whole programme period.

And

Finally, the programme will embed information in the coordination mechanism, which will involve the government, private sector, research institutes, local government, and communities in coordination.

October 22, 2020 IUCN:

#1 – the approaches and activities described in KM section have been incorporated and referred to, in the Component 3 description of the PFD as well as the CP Concept Component 3.

PFD:

Component 3: Knowledge, capacity and information management

Programme Outcome 3: Knowledge and capacity base improved to support biodiversity conservation in the Yangtze River Basin:

- knowledge products and events developed and delivered
- programme and project coordination and M&E conducted

The planned strategies to deliver the outcomes include:

3.1 Developing and delivering knowledge products and events to disseminate experience and raise awareness and capacity. An integrated communication and knowledge management strategy will be developed during the programme preparation to guide the development and delivery of coordinated knowledge, communications, and awareness raising products and activities of the programme, as well as the learning, sharing and exchange activities between the programme and other relevant initiatives, so as to improve the knowledge base for biodiversity conservation not only in Yangtze, but also in China and even elsewhere in the world.

3.2 Conducting information management, M&E and coordination at programme and child project level. NFGA CP will lead on the M&E and coordination for the programme in general, while meeting the needs for its own. MEE CP will contribute to the programme level coordination and M&E. A coordination and aggregated reporting mechanism will be established and practiced. Through coordinated M&E and information management, data sharing and exchange between the two EAs can be improved.

MEE CP:

Component 3: Knowledge, capacity and information management

Following the communication and knowledge management strategy that will be developed during the preparation for the programme, the incremental GEF funding will help this CP document, disseminate and up-scale project results, experiences and lessons learnt, and develop case studies, guidelines, handbooks, policy briefs etc. to inform stakeholders especially decision-makers, as well as provide a global scale opportunity for learning and sharing the project, while contributing to the information and data sharing and joint knowledge management and communications at programme level. Project level coordination and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) will be conducted and the needed support to the coordination and M&E at programme level will be provided.

NFGA CP:

Component 3: Knowledge, information and program coordination ↵



Following the communication and knowledge management strategy that will be developed during the preparation for the programme, the incremental GEF funding will help document, disseminate and up-scale project results, experiences and lessons learnt, and develop case studies, guidelines, handbooks, policy briefs etc. to inform stakeholders especially decision-makers. It will also help the knowledge exchange and dissemination within the programme and with others, including the peer projects in the Yangtze Basin, China and internationally, as well as other organizations, countries and conventions. Among the two Child Projects, this one will take a leading role in terms of Program coordination and program-level Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) that includes reporting. Therefore the incremental GEF fund will also help ensure not only the M&E of this Child Project, but also the coordination and M&E at program level and in an adaptive manner. The project will coordinate with other GEF initiatives wherever possible and relevant. ↵

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 20, 2020 HF:

Comment cleared.

October 2, 2020 HF:

1.) Noting here that the ESMS include a number of commitments including gender/social analyses and additional screening of important standards that are currently marked "TBD" and that the secretariat is expecting IUCN to make these available to the GEF SEC as soon as completed (presumably by CER submission). This also includes the completed risk screening and ESMF.

Agency Response

Oct 19 2020:

Well noted. These will be conducted and submitted to GEF SEC.

art 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 20, 2020 HF:

Comment cleared.

October 2, 2020 HF:

Project Financing in the LOE, PDF and child project concept note is slightly different see table below). Amounts allocated to PPG and GEF Financing and related fees in LoEs are to be strictly respected (PPG funds cannot be merged into GEF Financing or vice-versa) – total amounts in the LOE text should match total amounts in the table in PFD and Concept note.

	PPG	Project Financing	Fee	Total
LOE	275,230	6,422,018	602,752	7,300,000
PFD	(N/A)	6,422,018	577,982	7,300,000 (consider PPG=0.3M)
Concept	300,000	6,370,000	630,000	7,300,000

Agency Response

Oct 19 IUCN:

The project financing in the LOE, PFD and project concept are now consistent as follows below

	PPG	Project financing	Fee (Project+PPG)	Total
LOE	275,230	6,422,018	602,752	7,300,000
PFD	275,230	6,422,018	602,752	7,300,000

PIF	275,230	6,422,018	602,752	7,300,000
Concept	275,230	6,422,018	602,752	7,300,000

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

EFSEC 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 25, 2020 HF:

No, please see remaining comment on investment mobilized.

October 23, 2020 HF:

Yes, all comments cleared for technical recommendation.

October 22, 2020 HF:

No, please address remaining GEFSEC comments which are highlighted in yellow in review sheet.

October 20, 2020 HF:

No, please address remaining GEFSEC comments which are highlighted in yellow in review sheet.

October 4, 2020 HF:

No, please address GEFSEC comments.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 20, 2020 HF:

- 1.) Please ensure that sites for any site-base protected areas work-including PA establishment are identified and stakeholder consultation and environmental and social safeguard assessment takes place.
- 2.) The State Council's Guiding Recommendation for the Establishment of Nature Conservation Areas System Pivoting on National Parks calls for registration and certification of natural resource assets. It recommends that each PA serves as an independent registration unit to clearly define the property rights of all the assets in the PA, and delineate the boundaries of ownership and user rights. Establishing such clarity is the foundation of any financing approaches. In this context, please briefly explain if Project Output N1.3 (Mechanisms to diversify PA financing) will include a component of natural resource assets certification and property right definition.
- 3.) Include any potential private sector co-finance during PPG.
- 4.) To the extent clarified during PPG, please include targets that capture hectares impacted by the policy work under this program/CPs. Please ensure that the full area that is expected to be directly impacted by improved biodiversity management via mainstreaming under this program is included in the targets. This includes implementation of policy that is supported directly by GEF funds, project co-finance or government expenditures within the period of the project to implement.
- 5.) Please undertake close coordination and collaborative planning with CPAR during PPG to ensure there is no overlap and maximized impact and complementarity in Sichuan and regarding the issue of PA financing, among others areas. Please ensure any engagement in PA financing efforts should be aimed at system-wide solutions, rather than park-level financing, but given the purview of CPAR this is likely best addressed at the national level which CPAR is already doing.

- 6.) GEFSEC expects IUCN to make risk ratings available as soon as completed Based on current project design and information. This will also clarify the overall project risk rating which is difficult to understand/attribute otherwise.
- 7.) During CER stage please provide targets for GHG emissions avoided based on hectares under improved management.
- 8.) In PPG please develop a strong gender analysis and integration of considerations/recommendations into Child Projects.

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review	10/2/2020	10/19/2020
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/20/2020	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/22/2020	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/23/2020	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/25/2020	

PIF Recommendation to CEO

Brief reasoning for recommendations to CEO for PIF Approval

This program aims to enhance and mainstream biodiversity conservation in the development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt of China. Yangtze River Basin (YRB) is the largest and most populated river basin in China and is also the economic engine of China's GDP growth, as the YRB generates about 40 percent of the country's GDP. The urbanization ratio has been increasing at more than 1% each year in the 21st century and surpassing 60% in 2020. The YRB is also one of the most biodiverse river basins in the world, with several important biodiversity hotspots and ecoregions.

Economic development and urbanization is exerting significant pressure on the river system, as the economy grows and urbanization and industrialization expands, human settlements, mining, infrastructure, commercial agriculture including fisheries and aquaculture, as well as tourism widely in the Yangtze River Basin have resulted in drastic land-use change and led to immense pressure in natural habitat loss and fragmentation, which then drastically affects the species and ecosystems. The significant threats to biodiverse ecosystems of the Yangtze River Basin (YRB) are compounded by the lack of a holistic and coordinated plan; lack of cross-functional coordination mechanism and

River Basin (YRB) are compounded by the lack of a holistic and coordinated plan, lack of cross-functional coordination mechanism and relative laws and regulations on basin protection; the impact of multi-channel management; inadequate investment in ecological protection; and weak awareness of stakeholders.

The program will achieve impact at basin and national levels through joint policy influence; demonstrate integrated solutions in common geographies; and undertake coordinated knowledge and information management. The program will take advantage of the unprecedented partnership between the Ministry of Ecology and Environment and the National Forestry and Grasslands Administration who are critical sectoral agencies for biodiversity conservation in China. In key sites of global biodiversity significance in the YRB in Sichuan, Jiangxi and Anhui provinces child projects will safeguard biodiversity by integrating biodiversity considerations in the productive sectors and municipal development; and through sustainable protected areas networks in the development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt.

The program is expected to directly improve the coverage, management and financing of 1.2 million hectares of protected areas as well as mitigate the impacts to biodiversity from 1.25 million hectares of productive landscapes and municipal areas in the Yangtze River Basin. The project will reach over 9,000 beneficiaries. The project is supported by \$7 million in BD STAR and \$51.3 million in co-finance.