

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Project ID:	4175
Project Name:	CBPF: Demonstration of Estuarine Biodiversity Conservation, Restoration, and Protected Area Networking
Countr(ies):	China
Implementing Agency:	FAO

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name

CBPF: Demonstration of Estuarine Biodiversity Conservation, Restoration, and Protected Area Networking

Country

China

GEF ID

4175

Implementing Agency

FAO

Executing Entity

State Oceanic Administration of China: Guandong Provincial Bureau of Ocean and Fisheries; Shendong Provincial Bureau of Ocean and Fisheries

Trust Fund

GET

Project Type

FSP

PIR Submission

9/5/2025

Fiscal Year , PIR Number

FY 2025 , 6th PIR

Objective

The goal of the Project is to improve existing efforts to conserve biodiversity in China’s major estuarine ecosystems. The Project’s specific objective is to mainstream the conservation of estuarine biodiversity in economic sector development plans and develop a series of “best practices” based on experiences derived from project supported field activities focusing on the creation of protected area networks and wetland conservation and restoration in the Yellow and Pearl River Estuaries. This would be achieved through: (i) addressing policy gaps and/or institutional failures to reinforce government efforts to create and conserve estuarine ecosystems; (ii) strengthening of individual marine protected areas (MPAs) to better achieve their conservation objectives; (iii) creation of new MPAs where gap analysis indicates that examples of critical habitats and species remain outside of conservation protection; (iv) establishment of MPA networks composed of existing and / or the inclusion of new protected areas; (v) restoration of degraded wetland habitats; (vi) facilitating closer collaboration and improved data collection and interpretation among agencies responsible for monitoring ecological conditions in the two Estuaries; (vii) building institutional capacity for mainstreaming the conservation of estuarine biodiversity and ecosystems into policies and development planning of economic sectors; (viii) promotion of increased public awareness of the long-term significance of biodiversity resources in these two deltaic ecosystems and the role MPAs and networks play in their conservation and management; and (ix) the development and dissemination of a series of “best practices.”

B. Ratings and Disbursements

Implementation Progress Satisfactory	Development Objective Satisfactory
Overall risk Low Risk	
Project Financing 4,000,000.00	Cumulative Disbursement 1,949,099.31

C. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval 2/22/2013	Agency Approval 11/28/2013
Implementation Start 6/12/2017	First Disbursement 5/7/2018
Expected MTR	Actual MTR 11/22/2022
Expected Completion 6/3/2025	Actual Completion

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Progress: Information on progress and outcomes of project implementation activities

The project was initially managed by the former State Oceanic Administration. Following the institutional reform in 2018, the Ministry of Natural Resources transferred the Project from the former State Oceanic Administration to NFGA. On 12 April 2021, NFGA signed the Amendment No.3 to the Execution Agreement with FAO, thereby formally assuming the role as the Execution Partner. In order to maintain the continuity of project management, with the consent of the Ministry of Finance and FAO, the Project Management Office (PMO) continued to be located at the First Institute of Oceanography (FIO) at that time.

The project has made substantial contributions to protected area coordination, estuarine ecosystem protection and restoration, biodiversity conservation in the Pearl River Estuary, and technical support for the Yellow River Delta National Park and ecological restoration efforts. The overall rating of the Mid-term Review (MTR) in 2022 was “Satisfactory”.

On December 30, 2024, the NFGA signed the OPA with FAO and restarted the project. At the same time, the project office and the project account were transferred from FIO to the Academy of Forestry Inventory and Planning (AFIP), NFGA. On 12 March 2025, FAO allocated the project’s 2025 budget of USD 897,974 (equivalent to RMB 6,493,429.59) to the bank account of AFIP.

The closing date of the project has been officially approved to extended to 3rd February 2027. Currently, AFIP is undertaking activities including PMO staff recruitment, procedures of subcontract tendering and preparation for the Project Steering Committee meeting, etc.

B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities

The original implementation period of the project was five years (from 12 June 2017 to 11 June 2022). In 2021, with the consent of all parties, it was extended to 3 February 2023. Due to the impact of COVID-19, the project activities failed to be completed on schedule. The Ministry of Finance agreed to extend the project again. However, a formal extension approval had not been obtained before the financial closing date, and the account of the project was closed in FAO's management system due to the EA expiration, leading to project suspension.

The COVID-19, institutional reforms, project management and other factors have all exerted varying degrees of influence on project implementation at an early stage. As a direct result, the delivery of the funds was only about 30%, far below the expected target. Furthermore, the re-establishment of AFIP as the new PMO involves complex procedures, the bidding processes for subcontracts are cumbersome, and the Terminal Evaluation of the project needs to be conducted six months before its closure, etc.

The 2025 PSC has been held in Dongying on July 22, 1. The PSC meeting deliberated and approved the 2025 annual work plan of the project. It was resolved that the PSC shall enhance its coordinating role to ensure effective collaboration among all implementing units, accelerate project implementation, and improve the fund utilization rate to achieve expected outcomes. Meanwhile, cross-project exchanges with other international cooperation initiatives shall be strengthened to foster mutual learning and knowledge sharing.

C. Stakeholder Engagement

Profile	Stakeholder name	Type of partnership	Progress, results & Challenges on Stakeholder's Engagement
Government Institutions	Ministry of Finance	OPF	Leading the restructure and financial control of the project management.
Government Institutions	National Forestry and Grassland Administration	Operational Partner	Restructuring the project management following the guidance of MoF
Government Institutions	Academy of Forestry Inventory and Planning	PMO and project account	Accepted the project as the new management entity following the guidance of MoF and NFGA. A new PMO has been built and project account was set in AFIP.
IGOs	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	GEF agency	Manage and disburse funds from GEF in accordance with the rules and procedures of FAO; Oversee project implementation in accordance with the project document; Provide technical guidance; Report to the GEF Secretariat and Evaluation Office through the annual Project Implementation Review on project progress and provide financial reports to the GEF Trustee.
Others	First Institute of Oceanography	Consultants/Consulting institutes	Provide trainer/experts for the training organized by Project on MPA management nationwide
Others	Chinese Academy of Sciences	Consultants/Consulting institutes	Responsible for certain project activities and contribute to project outcomes
IGOs	Wetlands International	Consultants/Consulting institutes	Responsible for certain project activities and contribute to project outcomes
Others	The Ocean University of China	Consultants/Consulting institutes	Provide trainer/experts for the training organized by Project on MPA management nationwide
Others	Institute of Marine Development Strategy, Ministry of Natural Resources	Consultants/Consulting institutes	Provide trainer/experts for the training organized by Project on MPA management nationwide
Others	South China Sea Monitoring Centre	Consultants/Consulting institutes	Ecosystem monitoring and data sharing in the PRE
Others	Yat-sen University	Consultants/Consulting institutes	Landscape analysis and ecotourism research of the Pearl River Estuary, Coordination meetings among 5 MPAs in Guangdong and volunteer training
Government Institutions	Natural Resources and Planning Bureau of Dongying City	Local partners	County level (in Guangdong) and District level (in Dongying) governments play a crucial role in implementing the on-the-ground pilot activities along the two pilot estuaries.
Government Institutions	Dongying Bureau of Ocean and Fisheries in Shandong and the Bureau of Ocean and Fisheries in Guangdong	Local partners	They are the lead actors in implementing the project activities in the field.
Government Institutions	County/District level government	Local partners	County level (in Guangdong) and District level (in Dongying) governments play a crucial role in implementing the on-the-ground pilot activities along the two pilot estuaries.
Government Institutions	Shandong Prov. Government/ Natural Resources Department	Local partners	They are the lead actors in implementing the project activities in the field.
Government Institutions	Guangdong Prov. Government/ Natural Resources Department	Local partners	They are the lead actors in implementing the project activities in the field.
Government Institutions	Management Bureau of Zhuhai Qi'ao Provincial Nature Reserve	Local partners	Responsible for the coordination of marine environmental protection affairs, development of the marine environmental monitoring and assessment sub-component, design of the marine ecological compensation policy activity, oversight for the marine biodiversity and marine ecological environmental conservation, management of the marine nature reserves and Special MPAs, and organizing marine monitoring network.
Government Institutions	Zhujiangkou Chinese White Dolphin Reserve	Local partners	Responsible for the coordination of marine environmental protection affairs, development of the marine environmental monitoring and assessment sub-component, design of the marine ecological compensation policy activity, oversight for the marine biodiversity and marine ecological environmental conservation, management of the marine nature reserves and Special MPAs, and organizing marine monitoring network.
Government Institutions	Jiangmen Chinese White Dolphin Provincial National Reserve	Local partners	Responsible for the coordination of marine environmental protection affairs, development of the marine environmental monitoring and assessment sub-component, design of the marine ecological compensation policy activity, oversight for the marine biodiversity and marine ecological environmental

D. Gender Equality

Category	Yes/No	Briefly describe progress and results achieved during this reporting period.
a. Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources	Yes	Successfully held a national training on MPA to management staff from 11 provinces at in Yantai, Shandong, 100 members been trained, among them, 31 women, accounting for 31% .
b. Improving women's participation and decision making		Increased female staff from 1 to 3/4 total; set 25% minimum women's attendance in substantial meetings.
c. generating socio-economic benefits or services for women		We plan to establish a women's professional support group in selected demonstration MPA to address career challenges through solution-oriented workshops, enhancing workplace competencies.
Any other good practices on gender		/

E. Knowledge Management

<p>Knowledge management and Learning (KML): Does the project have a KML strategy?</p>	Yes
<p>If YES, what is the implementation progress? In your answer, please describe how the project is fostering knowledge sharing and learning among stakeholders at national and sub-national level.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. training 2. meeting 3. environmental education materials 4. site-visit
<p>If NO, how does the project identify, collect and document good practices?</p>	
<p>Please list good practices, including key-technical and/or institutional innovations, from the project thus far.</p>	
<p>Communication strategy: Does the project have a communication strategy?</p>	Yes
<p>Please provide a brief overview of the communications successes and challenges <i>this fiscal year</i>.</p>	After the national MPA training was held, the Guangming Daily, Green Times, the website of the NFGA, and the official WeChat account of the AFIP all made relevant reports.
<p>Human-interest story: Please share a <i>human-interest story</i> from your project, focusing on how the project has helped to improve people's livelihoods while contributing to achieving the expected Global Environmental Benefits. Please indicate any <i>Socio-economic Co-benefits</i> that were generated by the project. Include at least <i>one beneficiary quote and perspective</i>, and please also <i>include related photos and photo credits</i>.</p>	
<p>Please provide links to related website, social media account</p>	<p>https://www.forestry.gov.cn/lyj/1/lcdt/20250626/631836.html</p> <p>https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/EwZgPxixKEEjiShX7iuZtA</p> <p>https://app.gmdaily.cn/as/opened/n/70ebc759923a43bc9637e9df84ece97b</p> <p>https://api.jinantimes.com.cn/h5/xhh-app/#/content?catid=38&id=5112179&fx=1</p> <p>https://app.gmdaily.cn/as/opened/n/fec25c0ba2e74f79b50897e0a3b40d6e</p>
<p>Please provide a list of publications, leaflets, video materials, newsletters, or other communications assets published on the web, if any.</p>	
<p>Please indicate the Communication and/or knowledge management focal point's name and contact details.</p>	

III: Minor Amendments

CONTEXT	
Result Framework	
Components and Cost	The components remained unchanged. The specific activities of each component and the corresponding cost arrangements were adjusted accordingly during the signing of the OPA amendment No. 1.
Institutional And Implementation Arrangements	The national government changed the PMO settings. The PMO in FIO has been dismissed and the new PMO is going to build in AFIP
Financial Management	The national government has changed the project account from FIO to AFIP.
Implementation Schedule	The project is extended to February 2027
Executing Entity	National Forestry and Grassland Administration of PRC
Executing Entity Category	National Government
Minor Project Objective Change	
Safeguards	
Risk Analysis	
Increase of GEF Financing up to 5%	
Co-Financing	
Location of Project Activity	
others	

IV: Geographic Coordinates of Project Activities

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
GUANGDONG NEILINGDING FUTIAN NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE	22.52916	114.00762	

Location Description:

Nature reserve

Activity Description:

Conducting METT (Monitoring Evaluation Tracking Tool) assessment for the reserve, Co-ordinating meeting and Stakeholders' annual consultations

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
The Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve	37.8317	119.04447	

Location Description:

Nature reserve

Activity Description:

Information sharing and co-enforcement, METT (Monitoring Evaluation Tracking Tool) assessment for the reserve, Co-ordinating meeting and workshops on ecological conservation.

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Shallow Sea Shellfish State-level SMPA	38.08181	118.07324	

Location Description:

Nature reserve

Activity Description:

Establishment of conservation volunteer group

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Lijin Benthic Fish State-level SMPA	38.12545	118.32437	

Location Description:

Nature reserve

Activity Description:

Establishment of conservation volunteer group

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Laizhou Bay Razor Clam State-level SMPA	37.60166	121.38249	

Location Description:

Nature reserve

Activity Description:

Establishment of conservation volunteer group

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Dongying the Yellow River Estuary Ecological State-level SMPA	37.79752	119.06428	

Location Description:

Nature reserve

Activity Description:

Establishment of conservation volunteer group

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Guangrao Polychaete State-level SMPA	37.20044	118.95567	

Location Description:

Nature reserve

Activity Description:

Establishment of conservation volunteer group

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Zhuhai Miaowan Coral Reef Municipal Reserve	21.86655	114.01521	

Location Description:

Nature reserve

Activity Description:

Workshop on MPA management

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Qi'ao-dangan Island Mangrove Provincial Nature Reserve	22.41782	113.63737	

Location Description:

Nature reserve

Activity Description:

Establishment of conservation volunteering group, training for public awareness and eco-turism study

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Zhuhai Miaowan Civic Coral Reserve	21.86	114.01	

Location Description:

Zhuhai Miaowan Civic Coral Reserve

Activity Description:

V. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Title
M and E Document	GEFID4175_2025PIR_FAO_China