

Mainstreaming biodiversity in the development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10753

Countries

China

Project Name

Mainstreaming biodiversity in the development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt

Agencies

IUCN

Date received by PM

12/8/2021

Review completed by PM

11/14/2022

Program Manager

Hannah Fairbank

Focal Area

Biodiversity

Project Type

FSP

PIF
CEO Endorsement

Part I ? Project Information

Focal area elements

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 12, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

April 18, 2022 HF:

Unfortunately the "Project Duration" in the portal entry still reads 12 months. Please correct or request GEF ITS Portal team helpdesk for assistance.

January 21, 2022 HF:

1.) The duration of the project is 12 months in CER, please revise to 60 months.

Agency Response

September 13, 2022

This is now revised in the portal

This is now revised in Part I of the CEO Endorsement request

Project description summary

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 9, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

November 7, 2022 HF:

The expected project completion date reads 12/31/2022. Please correct.

October 28, 2022 HF:

Expected Implementation Start date has already past ? please amend to a future date

April 18, 2022 HF:

1.) Table B in the GEF CEO endorsement request does not seem to reflect any of the changes made to the components. Please ensure that consistent changes are made throughout the GEF CEO endorsement document, the ProDoc and any associated Annexes.

2.) CERs should contain a table that specifically notes and justifies any changes to Table B from the concept stage. Please include.

January 21, 2022 HF:

Please see comments below on project justification and project incremental reasoning that address issues with expected outcomes and outputs.

Agency Response

November 8, 2022 IUCN

This is now corrected as per your advice in the CER with the completion date reading December 31, 2027

November 2, 2022 IUCN

This is now revised as per your advice in the CER

September 13, 2022

1) This is now revised in the CER, ProDoc and any associated Annexes.

2) The justification has been added under the Table B of the CER.

The comments have been addressed

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Co-financing

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 15, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

April 18, 2022 HF:

1.) & 2.) Cleared.

3.) Please address.

January 21, 2022 HF:

1.) Co-financing amount from MEE is different from the co-financing letter and the Table C.

2.) Co-financing letter from IUCN is missing in the portal. Please upload.

3.) Given the scope of the project it is surprising to see no co-finance from any of the target provinces nor private sector actors. Please revise/revisit.

Agency Response

September 13, 2022

3? Along with the project development, possible resources will be mobilising from private sectors and suggested sectors by the province finance offices.

1) Co-financing amount in table C has been updated to reflect the same amount as in the co-financing letter.

2) Provided as Annex 17 and uploaded as well

GEF Resource Availability

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 21, 2022 HF:

Yes.

Agency Response

Project Preparation Grant

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 9, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

November 7, 2022 HF:

Comment on PPG: Although a greater level of detail was provided, some of the listed activities are ineligible, including: fianc? charges (?); Global Corporate Costs (looks like overhead); GEF Grant to implementing partner (who?s this partner? What is the purpose of the grant?); Regional Corporate Costs (looks like overhead but at regional level); Seed funding (totally incomprehensible). Please review the list of eligible items in Tables 1 and 2 ? pages 10 and 11 of the GEF Guidelines (accessible here: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF_C.59_Inf.03_Guidelines%20on%20the%20Project%20and%20Program%20Cycle%20Policy.pdf).

October 28, 2022 HF:

PPG report doesn?t give sufficient details about expenditure categories as it is requested. Please ask the Agency to list the eligible activities/expenditures (i.e. meetings, consultants, etc.) per the content included in Guidelines and provide the figures in each column (budgeted amount ? amount spent ? amount committed).

January 21, 2022 HF:

1.) Yes, please note that the PPG should be utilized in the first year of the project implementation.

Agency Response

November 8, 2022, IUCN

This is now revised to reflect accurate amounts. The agency fee which had been erroneously added has now been removed from the CER Annex on PPG budget utilisation

November 2, 2022 IUCN

This is now revised in the CER as per your advice in the relevant Annex

This is duly noted

Core indicators

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 15, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

November 14, 2022 HF:

- Comment not fully addressed: Please reflect the target of 4000 beneficiaries, 2500 of whom women, in the project results framework

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November 11, 2022 HF:

Core Indicators: Original comment was not addressed. The agency has provided final targets for each selected Core Indicator with justification. However, core Indicators targets need to be aligned with Results Framework (Annex A). GEF Core Indicators should be explicitly mentioned in the Results Framework in Annex A. Please include them.

November 7, 2022 HF:

1.) Comment cleared. Please see comment 2. and redact GHG targets and calculations.

2.) Please redact the target for Core Indicator 6 and all associated reference and documentation (including ExAct) regarding GHG emission reductions. If, during the course of the project, the GHG emission reduction can be accurately measured and reported we encourage The Agency to do so.

October 28, 2022 HF:

1.) Core Indicators: Please include the core indicators in the results framework (annex A). Core Indicators targets need to be aligned with Results Framework (Annex A). GEF Core Indicators should be explicitly mentioned in the Results Framework in Annex A.

3a.) GHG: Please clarify in more detail how the mitigation benefit from the forest area was computed. Namely, the forest area identified in the EXACT sheet corresponds to a high estimate of emission reductions which is not justified based on the currently available data. Please explain how the project would lead to the effects computed in the EXACT sheet (reduction of degradation level, frequency of fires, impact of burning). This can be put in connection with the details outlined in the GEB section of the CEO ER.

3b.) Please revise/update with a more conservative and justified GHG emission reduction target.

October 24, 2022 HF:

1. & 2.) Comments cleared.

3.) Under review.

October 15, 2022 HF:

1.) Please reconcile the CI 4.1 targets for this project. The child project concept at PFD stage contained a target for 4.1 of **1,250,000 hectares** and this target is included in the project results framework and ProDoc. The target in the current CER draft has been revised to **200 hectares**, whereas the GEBs for the project include: "In the pilot cities and counties, the project is expected to directly mitigate the adverse impacts of **3.1 million hectares** of productive landscapes and urban areas on biodiversity, directly improve the quality of water environment and ecological functions of 460,000 hectares of rivers and lakes, and directly mitigate the threats of local production and related illegal activities on endemic, rare and endangered species in the YRB." Please note that a 200-hectare target for a \$57.7 million project calls into question the ROI of the investment and seems to only capture the expected results of activity 2.2. Please be sure to include the expected results across target landscapes under CI 4.1 from the significant policy and planning improvements which make up the majority of activities 1.1, 1.2 and 2.1 over a 5-year time period.

2.) Again, the PIF targets are still not showing up in the GEF CEO endorsement Core Indicators section in the Portal. Please be sure to include those in the CI table. The

inclusion of these is meant to show changes from PIF (child project concepts in PFD in this case) to CEO endorsement. If ITS support is needed to do so, please initiate.

4.) With an adjustment in target for CI 4.1 please update GHG calculation accordingly.

April 18, 2022 HF:

1.) Please revise the core indicator hectarage targets for indicator 4.1 accordingly to reflect change to Component 2 and to only include direct results (versus indirect-see GEF-7 results architecture). Please provide a complete explanation for how the core indicator 4.1 target was set for hectares of globally significant biodiversity benefiting from improved management.

2.) The PIF targets are still not showing up in the GEF CEO endorsement Core Indicators section in the Portal. Please revise. The inclusion of these is meant to show changes from PIF (child project concepts in PFD in this case) to CEO endorsement.

3.) Comment cleared.

4.) It is unclear whether or where the documentation and explanation of the GHG emission calculations was included. Please include and indicate an annex number for such documentation for review.

January 21, 2022

1.) Please note that targets have been set for sub indicator 4.3 (Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems), but given this is a BD STAR-financed project targets should be set of sub-indicator Indicator 4.1 (Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity). These sub-indicators have substantively different characteristics give 4.3 is focused on Sustainable Land Management (SLM) whereas 4.1 is focused on landscape management for biodiversity. Please reference the GEF-7 results architecture, consider changes made to design of 2.2 and revise targets accordingly.

2.) Please populate targets expected at PIF (child project concept) and refine targets as needed per changes to activity 2.2.2.

3.) Please incorporate the GEF core indicators in the results framework.

4.) Please include a GHG reduction estimate based on hectares under improved management.

Agency Response
November 15, 2022 IUCN

Kindly be informed that the correction has been made as the core indicator is now integrated by splitting into Outcomes 2 & 3 of the results framework in the ProDoc. Outcome 2: 1, 800 women beneficiaries and 1, 200 men beneficiaries; Outcome 3: 700 women and 300 men beneficiaries. This is also updated in Annex A of the CER online template.

November 13, 2022 IUCN

Kindly be informed that the correction has been made as the indicator is now shown as an outcome indicator corresponding to Outcome 2 of the results framework. The results framework has been updated in the ProDoc as well as Annex A of the CER online template.

November 8, 2022, IUCN

As advised, due to the impending cancellation deadline, we have redacted the target for Core Indicator 6

November 2, 2022 IUCN

- 1)The core indicators are now integrated into the ProDoc Results Framework
- 3)This is now revised in Appendix 10, Appendix 19, and the CER.

October 24, 2022 IUCN

- 1)This is now revised as per your advice in Appendix 10 and CER
- 2) As GEF IT colleagues have clarified, it is not possible to include PIF targets in the template
- 4) The GHG calculations have been updated in Appendix 19 and reflected in Appendix 10 and the CER

September 13, 2022

- 1) The core indicators are revised as 200 ha of the tea garden to reflect the direct results of the project.
- 2) This is now revised in the portal.

4) The GHG calculation is uploaded as Appendix 19, sheet 'calculation' summarized the result, the project will reduce the trophic in Anning River and Poyang Lake indirectly and will have direct impact in Yuexi County through nature friendly tea garden.

- 1) This is now corrected in the core indicators section of the CEO Endorsement request
- 2) The PIF targets are now included under Core Indicator 4.1
- 3) The following indicators are incorporated into the outcomes indicators of results framework:

Outcome 1: - 1.25 million ha landscapes under improved practices - Yangtze River protection legislation in place

Outcome 2: -Biodiversity considerations integrated in the municipal development planning and production practices of 1.25 million ha landscapes

The GHG reduction estimate is now provided using FAO EX-Ante Carbon-balance Tool v9.3.1

Part II ? Project Justification

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 20, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

January 21, 2022 HF:

Please further develop/elaborate this section-(per the ProDoc text and taking into account the revisions requested to the alternative scenario/project components etc below)-as it is currently incomplete in the CER.

Agency Response

Revised in the text. Elaboration in global environmental problems added as follows:

The global environmental and/or adaptation problems, Threats, Root Causes and Barriers to the YRB

1. *The global environmental and/or adaptation problems*
 - a. *Wetland habitat loss, fragmentation, and/or degradation*
 - b. *Severe population decline and/or extinction of aquatic and riparian species in rivers and lakes*

- c. *The decline in water quality of rivers and lakes and degradation of their ecological functions*
- d. *Serious land degradation problems such as soil erosion, soil sanding, and stony desertification*

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 20, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

January 21, 2022 HF:

This section should include and describe baseline projects that are relevant to the scope of this project/program. The current section includes reference to the entire GEF portfolio without an analysis and description of projects that contribute directly the baseline for this project. Please revise.

Agency Response

In January 2015, the Chinese State Council approved the Implementation of the Programme for Biodiversity Conservation (2015-2020).

The following three GEF-funded projects which can make direct contribution to baseline information of the child project, have been briefly described and analyzed in the Section 3.5.2 with respect to their objectives, components, main achievements and linkages with this project.

Project 8- China's Protected Area Reform (C-PAR) for Conserving Globally Significant Biodiversity.

Project 14- A New Green Line: Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation Objectives and Practices into China Water Resources Management Policy and Planning Practice.

Project 16- Payment for Watershed Services in the Chishui River Basin for the Conservation of Globally Significant Biodiversity

The following contents has been revised in section 3.5.2 and also incorporated into the relevant baseline scenarios in Section 4.7 Incremental cost reasoning:

Among these GEF projects, the project 8, 14 and 16 can make direct contribution to this child project.

The project 8, started in Feb, 2019 and executed by the MEE, is the national coordination project of the six child projects under the GEF-financed China's Protected Area System Reform (C-PAR) Program, which aims to transform China's national protected area system through systematic legal and institutional reform and innovation for conservation of globally significant biodiversity. The project 8 includes three components: Component 1 - National Park System Establishment; Component 2 - Provincial level National Park System Strengthening; Component 3 - Program

Coordination and Knowledge Management. Some results (for example, the national park legal framework and unified management responsibility in new protected area management agencies) from the project 8 will contribute to the need analysis and experience summary with reference to the monitoring of nature conservation and supervision of human impacts in the our child project.

The project 14, which started in March 2016 and will be completed soon, is executed by Ministry of Water Resources. It aims to mainstream biodiversity conservation objectives and practices into China's water resources management planning, which consists of three components: Component I: "Changing the framework" - Institutional and planning framework for mainstreaming biodiversity into water resources management at national, provincial and local levels. resources management at national, provincial and local levels; Component II: "Enhancing Implementation" - Demonstrate on-the-ground activities for mainstreaming biodiversity in pilot rivers in Chongqing and Yunnan Provinces; Component III: "Improving Information" - Creation of improved information systems and capability to use these systems to The creation of improved information systems and capability to use these systems to inform better and continuously improving water management practices serving enhanced conservation of river biodiversity. Through the project 14, aquatic biodiversity conservation has been integrated into comprehensive water plan, water conservation plan and dam construction plan at the national level and key river restoration schemes in Yangtze River. The principles, methods and technical indicators for determining the ecological flow of rivers in China have played a guiding role in the operation of the cascade hydropower stations in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River (Jinsha River) and the Three Gorges Reservoir. It will contribute to baseline information that can be drawn upon for this child project's discussions on monitoring and coordination mechanisms for sustainable water resources use in the Yangtze River.

The project 16 is executed by MEE and finalized in September 2019. Its objective is to operationalize a replicable Payment for Watershed Services (PWS) scheme in the Chishui River Basin to stimulate land and natural resource use systems that conserve biodiversity and sustain ecosystem processes. It is composed of the two components: Component 1 will address the weak adequacy of the enabling framework and institutional capacity for PWS implementation and upscaling within Guizhou province; Component 2 aims to address the barrier concerning the relative absence of successful working PWS models that secure ecosystem services and biodiversity in China. It has delivered a established eco-compensation agreement between the downstream water users and upstream communities, and 6 policies, regulations, or plans for eco-compensation/PWS as a tool to protect the watershed. These reports and documents formed by the project 16 will provide useful baseline inputs for the supervision and management of ecological environment and biodiversity in transboundary waters in Yangtze River basin.

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

October 24, 2022 HF:

All comments cleared.

October 15, 2022 HF:

Please correct the project objective in the CER Table B that still reads: "**Safeguarding biodiversity through sustainable protected areas networks in the development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt of China.**" That is not the objective of this child project according to the results framework and ProDoc.

Comments 1-8 cleared.

April 18, 2022 HF:

Table B in the GEF CEO endorsement request does not seem to reflect any of the changes made. Please ensure that any changes are made to the GEF CEO endorsement document, the ProDoc and any associated Annexes. Please also directly indicate the page number of the document where the change was made/comment addressed, and highlight the change for easy re-review.

- 1.) Comment cleared. Alternative scenario is clearer, though please see remaining issues with Outcomes/activities below.
- 2.) Component 1: Please ensure that changes to Component 1 and all corresponding activities are reflected in Table B of the GEF CER document (they are not currently).
- 3.) Comment cleared.
- 4.) Output 2.2: GEFSEC notes the revisions that were made to demonstration activities under 2.2. To fully address previous comment, please limit the demonstration activities under 2.2 to: the **current Activity 2.2.3 & 2.2.4** (redacting 2.2.1 and 2.2.2) given: the scale and characteristics of the issues with the mining and chemicals sector; our continued concerns regarding a low/unclear return on investment for GEF GEBs for biodiversity; the need to focus on upstream solutions; and the relatively modest level of GEF financing for this project. Please update the CER, ProDoc and project budget accordingly. Please also revise the core indicator hectare targets for indicator 4.1 accordingly to reflect only direct results (versus indirect).
- 6.) Comment cleared. Please revise the CER and ProDoc accordingly.
- 7.) These activities have not yet been removed from the project components in the CER Table B and they are also still under Component 3 in the table under the Alternative scenario. Please revise the CER and ProDoc accordingly.

8.) This is not a matter of GEF policy, but rather the effective and sound use of GEF funds. The incremental reasoning and GEBs for globally significant biodiversity that would result from the significant cost of the study tour is unclear. There seems to be misalignment between the scope of the project and proposed study tour. Further, GEF considers targeted, focused, south-south engagement a priority for capacity building and exchange.

The response and revisions to Activity 3.1.1 that were provided do not sufficiently address the GEFSEC's original comment. In fact, the language provided in the ProDoc under Activity 3.1.3 creates further questions about the purpose and focus of the study and how it relates to the scope of the current child project, including: a.) The visit to RWE in Germany: According to the IUCN-RWE website provided the engagement with IUCN-RWE has ended and will not be followed-up due to request by the IUCN German membership. Further does not clearly align with the scope of the mainstreaming activities in Components 1 nor 2; and b.) EDF France: Does not clearly align with the scope of the mainstreaming activities in Components 1 nor 2. Given this, please choose to either:

A.) Redesign the study tour to closely target the scope of the revised scope of the project (components 1 & 2), with clear GEBs resulting, sound incremental reasoning provided, a focus on South-South engagement and limited number of participants directly relevant to project outcomes with strong justification; or

B.) Redact this activity from the project; or

C.) Support with co-finance.

9.) Comment cleared.

January 21, 2022 HF:

1.) Please revise the CER to include a clear articulation of the alternative scenario of the project-(including a narrative of the project TOC), a description of each of the project components, expected outcomes, outputs and activities and a description of how the project aims to achieve them. Section 4.2 of the ProDoc contains more of this content.

Component 1:

2.) Output 1.1: Is very broad touching everything from climate change to chemical effluents. Given this is a BD mainstreaming project, please revise/clarify at the Output and activity level how this will focus on *biodiversity mainstreaming/conservation*.

3.) Outputs 1.3, 2.1 are clearly focused on protected area regulations and management and seem much more closely aligned and would very clearly would fit within the other NFGA-executed Child Project under this programmatic approach since it focused on In-

Situ Biodiversity Conservation in the Yangtze, or within one of the six GEF C-PAR child projects currently under implementation. Further, Outputs 1.3 and 2.1 are seemingly identical in both Child Projects-making them redundant and overlapping. Please remove or re-work these protected area management and legislation activities as they are not closely linked to the BD mainstreaming TOC, objective, scope or activities of this Child Project on mainstreaming and consolidate them into the other project on PAs.

Component 2:

Component 2 includes a very wide array of activities which risks diluting possible impact of this investment. Many of the activities are corporate responsibilities and environmental compliance rather than investments that have a clear role for GEF resources with strong additionality. The use of GEF resources *should be focused on a few leverage points* that would be impossible to affect without GEF funding and that will generate global significant biodiversity benefits. Further, many of the proposed activities under Outcome 2.2 are **not eligible for GEF support under the BD mainstreaming entry-point (e.g. 2.2.1; 2.2.2; 2.2.3; 2.2.4).**

GEF-7 BD resources intend to create opportunities to mainstream biodiversity into development and spatial planning; innovative mechanisms and incentives for proactive contributions across sectors to conservation; and policy and regulatory frameworks; (different from covering the cost for implementation of EIA mitigation measures, environmental safeguards, remediation, rehabilitation due to industrial damage etc). GEF resources should support a pro-active/upstream and innovative approach to biodiversity mainstreaming that benefits BD conservation.

4.) Given this, please: Limit the focus and concentrate project activities to those that clearly link Components 1 & 2; are GEF eligible; and are focused on one or two key leverage points with clear *impact/results* within the project period and sustainable biodiversity mainstreaming over the longer term. Currently **2.2.5** may be a strong candidate for further development and focus of this Output if it is well linked to the work of Component 1 and addressing key drivers of biodiversity loss in the YRB. Please revise 2.2 accordingly making commensurate shifts in activities, budget and targets (please note when reworking 2.2, please do not include species reintroduction for GEF financing.)

Component 3:

6.) Relevant training and capacity building activities related to the implementation of activities under Component 2 should fall within Component 2. Component 3 should be Knowledge Management, scaling-up of project outcomes/results/approaches.

7.) Please remove activities focused on project management or coordination given they fall under PMC and shouldn't come out of budget for components.

8.) Component 3 includes a European overseas study tour without clear scope, justification or need identified. Please remove or cover with co-finance.

9.) Output 3.1 references awareness raising activities without much specificity as to the goal our desired outcome/change in behavior that is sought. If changing behavior is an important element of Component 3 and to the achievement of the overall project objective and will support the other two Components, then please explain this and develop a targeted, tailored and evidence-based approach- which is particularly important given the limited project time and finances. Please reference key related documents including: STAP's recent advisory document on behavior change: <https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/why-behavior-change-matters-gef-and-what-do-about-it-stap-advisory>.

Agency Response

October 24, 2022 IUCN

This is now corrected to "Safeguarding biodiversity in Yangtze River Economic Belt by integrating biodiversity considerations in the productive sectors and municipal development" in the Annex 15 CER document and the CER template

September 13, 2022

2) All changes are reflected in the table B of the CER

4) Activity 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 are all removed from CER and ProDoc, respectively, and the budget are also adjusted accordingly.

6) All changes are reflected in all the documents

7) This is now removed in both CER and ProDoc.

8) This is now revised both in the activities and budget. Study tours has been removed from the activities, and 68,000 USD travel budget has been reallocated.

Revised the articulation of the alternative scenario in the text according to the modifications made as per the GEF Sec's suggestions, including description of the TOC and each of the project components, expected outcomes, outputs and activities and a description of how the project aims to achieve them.

Feedback regarding comment (1&2) & Component 1

This is now revised to address your comment. We agree with your viewpoint on the breadth of Output 1.1, which has been earlier confirmed in the PFD of the child project. So we have to focus on the careful selection of the activities as a few leverage points under the output 1.1, which align with national needs of environmental management/governance, especially with the functions and responsibility of the MEE of the project executing agency.

Firstly, the activity 1.1.1- Development of technical guidelines for water ecology evaluation in the Yangtze River Basin will be conducted to not only draw attention to water quality from the central and local authorities/ departments (such as agriculture, water resources, environment, land resource, fishery etc.), but also guide and mobilize them to participate in the affairs of aquatic biodiversity conservation in the Yangtze River Basin. In fact, the central and local departments of agriculture and fisheries are responsible for the management of the Yangtze river aquatic biodiversity, the land and forestry departments are responsible for the management of wetland ecosystems and the species of the Yangtze river, the water resource departments are mainly responsible for the regulation of the water flow of the rivers and lakes in the Yangtze River basin, and the environment departments are responsible for the comprehensive supervision of the adverse impacts on the biodiversity in the Yangtze River. If the technical guideline can be issued in official form, it will be adopted by relevant departments to effectively manage biodiversity conservation in the Yangtze River as part of their daily work on the basis of the ecological approach which combines the globally important species and their survival conditions, rather than only separate elements (e.g. water flow, water quality, water size, species number, wetland area, production size) often focused on by relevant departments.

Secondly, the activity 1.1.2- Development of coordination mechanism Framework for shared water bodies in the Yangtze River Basin will be implemented to eliminate/reduce/mitigate the threats from habitat destruction and environmental pollution and biodiversity degradation in the waters shared by different local administrative regions. This framework will strongly push all provinces and municipalities along the Yangtze River to work together to conserve and protect biodiversity in transboundary waters and incorporate it into the biodiversity management practice of the relevant supervision authorities of the Yangtze River.

Thirdly, the activity 1.1.3- Development of Biodiversity monitoring indicators and assessment methods for Biodiversity will be designed to integrate them into biodiversity monitoring systems established by different sectors which manage and/or supervise biodiversity conservation in the YRB. In particular, they will be further mainstreamed

into the process of the national ecological environment monitoring network to strengthen the capacity to monitor the effectiveness of local biodiversity conservation.

Fourthly, the Forum on ecological environment monitoring and coordination mechanism will be open to all the key stakeholders who pay attention to biodiversity conservation in the YRB. It will provide an opportunity to explore the mechanism which is very complex and needs to meet the key stakeholder's benefits at central and local level for biodiversity mainstreaming in the YRB. In consideration of the very wide topics covered by output 1.1, a Forum held at central level may be good selection.

We will also accept the viewer's suggestion to delete Outputs 1.3 and the following activity under it - Summarize the Experience of Supervision and Enforcement of Nature Reserves in the Yangtze River Basin and give policy recommendations for the need to New Protected Areas Legislation.

Feedback regarding comment (3)

We will also accept the viewer's suggestion to delete Outputs 1.3 and the following activity under it - Summarize the Experience of Supervision and Enforcement of Nature Reserves in the Yangtze River Basin and give policy recommendations for the need to New Protected Areas Legislation.

Feedback regarding comment (4) and Component 2

On the basis of your suggestions, we have re-examined the activities under Outcome 2.2 in the original project document and discussed with the local authorities of this project, the following two project activities will be removed:

The Activity 2.2.3: Jointly carry out conservation, monitoring and assessment of endangered indigenous fish with national hydropower enterprises in Panzhihua City; and The Activity 2.2.4: Develop environmental pollution control for aquaculture in rivers and lakes of Taihu county.

Meanwhile, we highly suggested to keep the activities 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 which are eligible for the GEF support under the BD mainstreaming entry-point as taking into account of the following points:

(1) According to Chinese relevant laws and regulations, before starting their operations all enterprises which have a potential of adverse impacts on local environment are required to carry out environmental impact assessment (EIA) and during their operations, to ensure the full implementation of the environmental protection measures confirmed and approved by local environmental authority to meet national related environmental standards. These actions will show their minimum environmental compliance and contribute to the environmental responsibility. However, enterprises are not required to include local biodiversity conservation objectives (such as key habitats and species in the YRB) as an environment compliance into their environmental performance and they do not monitor, assess and perform performance assessment against the local biodiversity conservation plans during production. . As a result, the environmental compliance of enterprises has not a direct linkage with their contribution to the local biodiversity conservation outcomes.

(2) In particular, according to China's environmental standards, the allowable discharge concentration of environmental pollutants from industrial wastewater is much higher than its concentration in open surface waters (e.g. rivers and lakes etc.) which is very necessary to conserve and sustain many key species in the YRB. Also?mining enterprises have met their environmental compliance and responsibility after they completed land reclamation of mining legacy for green or agricultural development in accordance with the national standards, regardless of the original habitats which are essential for survival and reproduction of many wild animals, are severely damaged, even lost. Hence, Integration/mainstreaming biodiversity consideration into the environmental compliance and responsibility of enterprises will a new, challenging, but very important topic to them.

(3) Demonstration of the IUCN Guidelines

(https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/draft_guidelines_planning_and_monitoring_biodiversity_corporate_performance_30july.pdf) in the local mining and chemical enterprises will initiated and stimulate their focus on conservation of the key species (of endangered fishes and Yangtze finless porpoise), habitats (for endangered birds and mammals?and ecosystem services (from carbon sinks by surface vegetations) based on global/national/local biodiversity conservation lists and in collaboration with local governments, rather than their minimum environmental compliance and responsibility. Most is important is to mainstream the biodiversity data from the demonstration the activities (2.2.1 and 2.2.2) into their adaptive environmental management and reporting systems. This is just key role played by the incremental resources from GEF, not other national projects. Therefore, the activities (2.2.1 and 2.2.2) will be eligible for GEF support under the BD mainstreaming entry point.

In addition, though the IUCN Guidelines in itself is not a new product from the GEF, the best practices obtained by through its demonstrative process in Chinese contexts are innovative. The demonstration will certainly promote and realize the mainstreaming of biodiversity from the desk government planning toward the enterprise production practice/action level, which is a challenge facing local biodiversity mainstreaming in the YRB.

Feedback regarding comment (6)

Thank you for your suggestion. The local training activities under original Component 3 have been moved into the section titled as "Local training and capacity building related to the implementation of activities under Component 2 (Activity 2.2.4-2.2.7, shown in Tables 4-9 to 4-11, respectively)" and some narratives have be changed to be consistent with the output 2.2.

Feedback regarding comment (7)

We accept your suggestions for removing the activities focused on project management or coordination under PMC and adjust the relevant budget accordingly.

Feedback regarding comment (8)

European overseas study tour to RWE Company, Germany and "Electricit" de France , France is to learn the new concepts, advanced technologies and good practices in management, mitigation hierarchy and engagement of biodiversity at the enterprise level. MEE indicated that, Chinese co-financing cannot be used for international , and GEF grants to support international exchange is the practice/tradition by nearly all GEF projects. If the policy has been updated, it would be great that GEF could share the new policy with MEE.

Feedbacks regarding comment (9)

Remove the activity under output 3.1-"Forum for Ecological Environment Supervision and Coordination Mechanism Forum in the YREB", which is designed under the output 1.1.

We have removed the activity under 3.1-"Workshop on Protected Areas Legislation" as a result of the corresponding output 1.3 being deleted.

We have deleted the description of the project implementation coordination meetings and seminars

We have revised the 1 Box4-3 (namely Activity 2.2.4-task1 at present version)-?Training on conservation, restoration and monitoring techniques of rare and endangered fish in Panzhihua city?.

We have inserted additional description for the approaches to raise awareness of biodiversity conservation in the output 3.1. We have also made minor changes to the content in the original Box 4-5 (namely Activity 2.2.5 at present version), original Box 4-6 (namely Activity 2.2.6 at present version) and original Box 4-7 (namely Activity 2.2.7 at present version)

We have also added reference to the approaches (via internet website and Chinese wechat) to further access and also for dissemination of the videos on ecosystem and biodiversity in the module 2 of the original box 4-6 for awareness raising of local general public.

In the last paragraph under output 3.1 , we supplemented the approaches to the awareness raising on biodiversity conservation in the relevant stakeholders in the YRB, its narratives as follows:

The main approaches to raise awareness include the following steps: the first step is to make videos of the on-site training process and contents; the second step is to publish this video and its training materials on the portal website of sectoral and local municipal government for the general public to browse, learn and access; the third step is to incorporate the learning of this video and its training materials into the environmental education plans of local stakeholders, and organize the their staff to share, study and discuss this video and its training materials. In addition, based on the relevant GEF-STAP's advisory documents of behavior change, the questionnaire surveys and on-site interviews before and several years after the training and knowledge sharing will be conducted to analyze changes in attitudes and behaviors related to biodiversity conservation.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 20, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared. Please revise accordingly once Component Activities have been revised per above comments.

January 21, 2022 HF:

1.) Once components and activities are revised, please further elaborate the project alignment with the BD focal area and GEF-7 strategy.

Agency Response

September 13, 2022

This is now all revised and highlighted under the session

Overall, the project is aligned with Biodiversity Mainstreaming in Priority Sectors? under BD focal area and GEF-7 strategy, the first one of 9 entry points. Further key elaboration is as follows:

(1) 7 activities/outputs (1.1.1-1.1.4 and 1.2.1-1.2.3) under Component 1 will support and contribute to the policy and regulatory frameworks that provide incentives for biodiversity-positive land and resource use that remains productive but that does not degrade biodiversity. The technical guideline for water ecology evaluation will push land and water sectors in the YRB to consider biodiversity as a whole; The framework of coordination and mechanisms for the management of shared water bodies in the YRB will incentivize all the sectors and local authorities/agencies related to water resources to effectively manage the biodiversity of transboundary waters; The monitoring indicators for biodiversity will fill the gaps in biodiversity management of all the sectors; The Forum achievements and policy recommendations will catalyze and facilitate the further development and improvement of the policy and regulatory frameworks on biodiversity in the YRB.

(2) 3 activities/outputs (2.1.1-2.1.3) under Component 2 are alignment with Spatial and land-use planning to ensure that land and resource use is appropriately situated to maximize production without undermining or degrading biodiversity. The ecological environmental protection and control initiative developed in Anning river in Panzhihua City, incorporated into the Comprehensive Development Master Plan of Anning river Basin, will strongly support and enhance the consideration of biodiversity in local spatial development; The Jiujiang City Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan will force local Spatial and land-use planning to consider and coordinate local biodiversity; The Biodiversity conservation mechanism of the Taihu county will safeguard the consideration of all development sectors into biodiversity through routine work arrangement.

(3) 3 activities/outputs (2.2.1-2.2.3) and 4 local training (2.2.4-2.2.7) under Component 2 are alignment with Improving and changing production practices to be more biodiversity-positive with a focus on sectors that have significant biodiversity impacts (extractive industries (mining) through technical capacity building. The IUCN guidelines applications and demonstrations in mining industry of Panzhihua city and in chemical industry of Jiujiang city has been elaborated in above section- Feedback regarding comment (3)&(4) in terms of biodiversity conservation outcomes.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 15, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

April 20, 2022 HF:

Please update the incremental reasoning/contribution from the baseline section to match the current project activities (particularly for Component 20). At least #s 11 and 12 are inconsistent with the current scope of the project-please update all.

January 21, 2022 HF:

Please revise this section once the focus of Component 2 has been refined to articulate a strong incremental reasoning for the use GEF BD resources that are meant to proactively produce GEBs for globally significant biodiversity.

Agency Response

September 13, 2022

The incremental reasoning is revised in the relevant section of the CER and the ProDoc.

Incremental reasoning 9 in the Section 4.7 of the new version has been refined in terms of the IUCN guidelines demonstration.

In addition, three GEF-5/6 projects have been briefly included in the baseline information of incremental reasoning 9 in the Section 4.7.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 20, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

January 21, 2022 HF:

Given the financing and scope of the project, including a more focused-concentrated set of activities under Component 2-please revise this section to be more specific and targeted regarding GEBs to be achieved through this project.

Agency Response The activities are revised accordingly.

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 15, 2022 HF:

All comments cleared.

April 20, 2022 HF:

- 1.) Comment cleared.
- 2.) Comment cleared-but please revise references to scaling up of the demonstration activities that are no longer contained in Component 2- current scaling-up section/table is not consistent with the scope of the project.

January 21, 2022 HF:

- 1.) Sustainability: Please further develop the project's approach to financial sustainability beyond co-finance.
- 2.) Scaling-up: Once revisions to 2.2.2 have been made, please further develop the project's approach to scaling-up including how to engage KM in supporting scaling-up.

Agency Response

September 13, 2022

2) This is now revised in section 4.9 of the ProDoc on and section 7 of the CER

Feedback regarding comment (1)

Financial sustainability beyond co-finance can be guaranteed in the following ways:

(1) In October 2021, China issued on further strengthening the guidance views of the biodiversity conservation, which made clear that it will further improve biodiversity funds safeguard system, increase the scale of funds year by year and coordinate financial resources between the central and local governments to support biodiversity work through the existing channels of funds (e.g. regular fiscal resources for ecological protection in the YRB per year and special funds for implementation of the plans and programmes focused on biodiversity in the YRB);

(2) The green finance measures and related tools being implemented by the central government. Two of China's most important standards for green finance -- the Green Industry Guidance Directory (2019 edition) and the Green Bond Support Project Directory (2021 edition) -- have included biodiversity conservation in their support categories. For instance, in response to the national green finance strategy, In September 2021, China Three Gorges Group and South Fund jointly developed the Yangtze River Protection-themed ETF product to provide financial products for investors to participate in the Yangtze River conservation;

(3) By the way of transfer payments (including ecological compensation mechanisms), the central government will provide a strong support for the local biodiversity projects in the YRB where local financial resources are relatively tight;

(4) Through market-based mechanisms (e.g., Public and Private Partnership), Some large and medium-sized state-owned and private companies have invested in the biodiversity conservation in the YRB to share its benefits.

Feedback regarding comment (2)

Revised in the CER. The scaling-up approaches to the 8 key outputs delivered by the project have been elaborated in the Table 4-11 of the Section 4.9-Replication, in terms of the following items: Who organize/coordinate scaling-up, How to conduct scaling-up and Sites/ authorities/ agencies related to the scaling-up.

In addition, the project team will work closely with the local authorities?relevant agencies and key leaders to collect, store, review and share innovative knowledge, experience and effective practices on the promotion and replication of the project outputs through work meetings, local interviews, on-site visit, recoding and reporting systems. and the Internet.

Project Map and Coordinates

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 15, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared

April 20, 2022 HF:

Please include a map of China with provinces/sites within the YRB located for context.

January 21, 2022 HF:

1.) Please revise figure 3.

Agency Response

September 13, 2022

The map has been added to the section 1b in the CER on as figure 4.

Figure 3 is revised in CER.

Child Project

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 15, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared-much better.

April 20, 2022 HF:

The first sentence of this section is a fragment and too general given the stated goal of the PFD. Please revise to include a clear statement of the contribution of this child project overall, to the goal of the program. Then details regarding contribution of the three components will logically flow from there.

January 21, 2022 HF:

1.) As this is a child project of a program, please provide a clear description of how this project is contributing to the programmatic impact and relates to the other Child Project. Please revise out the PA elements per previous comments.

Agency Response

September 13, 2022

This is now revised in the CER

This section is now revised

Stakeholders

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 24, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

October 15, 2022 HF:

Table 6.1 and others in the stakeholder engagement section seem to be duplicated. Please review and ensure each is only there once.

1.) Despite the development of the ESMP, the tables in the CER that we understand constitute the 'stakeholder engagement plan' don't seem to include the engagement of IPLCs in project areas. Please include explicitly for all site-based work.

2.) Comment cleared.

April 20, 2022 HF:

1.) The tables in the CER that we understand constitute the 'stakeholder engagement plan' don't seem to include the engagement of IPLCs in project areas. Please include explicitly for all site-based work.

2.) MEE is identified as the "implementing agency" for this project. Please correct. The stakeholder section of the CER still contains stakeholders for activities that are no longer included in the project. Please revise.

3.) & 4.) Comments cleared.

January 21, 2022 HF:

1.) Please upload Stakeholder Engagement plan-Annex seems to be missing.

2.) Stakeholder section of the CER should include "means of engagement" in the stakeholder tables. Please revise.

3.) The table titled "Stakeholder engagement plan" is very skeletal that needs to be further developed into an actual plan for stakeholder development per the specifications in the CER template.

4.) Please further elaborate in the stakeholder plan the engagement between the executing agencies for each of the Child Projects.

Agency Response

October 24, 2022 IUCN

The duplicated section has been removed as per your advice in Table 6-1 of the CER

1) This is now revised as per your advice in table 4-6 and annex 4-1 in Appendix 4, table 3-9 in the ProDoc and the stakeholder section of the CER. Kindly note that the updated ESMP has also been uploaded as Appendix 20

Based on your comments, we added two stakeholders (Table 6.1 in the CER): Ethnic Religious Affairs Commission and Village Committees at local levels, which are closely related with affairs of local indigenous people (i.e. often called ethnic minorities in China) and villager/farmers, respectively. They will provide assistance in mobilization of local indigenous peoples and local villagers in four pilot sites to participate in the

relevant activities of the project under the unified leadership of the local bureaus of ecology and environment. We also made minor changes in Table 6.2 in the CER, such as changing the original subtitle in the Table 6.2 in the CER -?indigenous communities into ?Indigenous peoples and local communities? and in the column of Table 6.2, adding the description for mobilizing roles of local Ethnic Religious Affairs Commission and Village Committees.

According to our field visits to the four pilot sites, there are a certain number of indigenous peoples in Panzhihua site. However, there are very few IPs in other sites. Despite this fact, we will also take into full consideration of the local IPs in the period of the project implementation.

September 13, 2022

- 1) ESMP has been developed accordingly as Appendix 20
- 2) This is now revised on this section of CER and Appendix 4

- 1) The stakeholder engagement plan in CER & ProDoc (including the executing agencies) is now revised.
- 2) Description for means of engagement of each stakeholder is now inserted in Table 6-1: Project Implementing Partners and Key Stakeholders
- 3) The revised detailed stakeholder engagement plan is provided in the relevant section of the CER
- 4) This is now elaborated in the stakeholder engagement plan.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 15, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared

April 20, 2022 HF:

- 1.) Previous comment regarding complete and clear **gender analysis** and **gender action plan** has not been sufficiently addressed. Please provide: A gender analysis for the project; and A gender action plan for the project. Complete requirements and contents of each of these are included in the following GEF document available

online: [GEF/C.54/Inf.05 Guidance to Advance Gender Equality in GEF Projects and Programs | GEF \(thegef.org\)](#). Key findings and approaches should then be included in the CER and ProDoc.

January 21, 2022 HF:

1.) Please include a complete gender Analysis that addresses the required elements in the questions in the section above and in GEF's gender guidance and is customized to the specific needs for gender equality and women's empowerment in the project's target sectors and geographies. Please summarize results in the CER document and the project's approach to gender. Currently the gender action plan provided contains male to female ratio and percentage participation targets. This is only a partial view of what is needed.

Agency Response
September 13, 2022

1) This is now revised in Appendix 5

Added a general analysis for the social status of Chinese women in the Section 3.4., inserting the following information: The All-China Women's Federation and the National Bureau of Statistics conducted a survey on the social status of Chinese women (aged 18-64) in 31 Chinese provinces (including the 11 provinces in the YREB) in July 2020. The findings indicate that:

(1) The proportion of women in employment remains high. Women account for 43.5 percent of the employees. The proportion of working women in urban and rural areas was 66.3% and 73.2%, respectively.

(2) Women's participation in democratic political improvement has been enhanced. Women accounted for 87.5% and 83.3% of the voters, respectively in the elections of the village committee leaders and local people's congress representatives.

(3) Women can actively express their views and interest demands on public affairs. The proportion of women participating in at least one kind of democratic management, democratic supervision or social welfare activities was 39.8%, among which 44.4% were urban women and 31.9% were rural women.

(4) Women generally pay attention to important affairs at home and abroad, and the Internet is the main channel. 65.8% of women and 67.9% of men used the Internet as the main way to learn about important affairs at home and abroad.

(5) Education is one of the areas where women have made the most significant progress in the past decade. Women had an average of 9.41 years of schooling compared with 9.66 years for men. The percentage of women enrolled in higher education was 1.6 percentage points higher than that of men.

(6) Women's health services have been significantly improved. 66.4 percent of women and 62.8 percent of men had a health check-up; there are 71.7% of urban women and 56.9% of rural women.

(7) Women's abilities and roles have been widely recognized by the society. 94.1% of the respondents agreed with the statement that "women are no less capable than men", and 94.8% agreed that "women play half the role in economic and social development".

(8) The concept of gender equality is more popular, and young women are more aware of equality. 95.4% of the respondents agreed that "it is important for women to have a

gainful job". Men and women disagreed that men should focus on society and women should focus on family, with 50.9 percent and 58.3 percent respectively.

During the local stakeholder survey and local group visits, in respond to the needs from local women who expect to participate in the local specific activities of the project. Their roless/safeguard mechanisms in the specific activity of the project have been inflected in the revised Gender Engagement Action Plan (Appendix 5) .

Private Sector Engagement

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 15, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared

April 20, 2022 HF:

1.) Please revise entire private sector approach in the CER and ProDoc to reflect the narrowed scope of activities under Component 2. Please address comment below regarding need "proactive/upstream" approach to BD mainstreaming and include in PS section of CER/ProDoc.

January 21, 2022 HF:

1.) Please revise per revisions to the approach to 2.2. GEF BD resources should be used to create opportunities to mainstream biodiversity into development and spatial planning; innovative mechanisms and incentives for proactive contributions across sectors to conservation; and policy and regulatory frameworks. GEF resources should support a pro-active/upstream and innovative approach to biodiversity mainstreaming that benefits BD conservation, rather than compensate for the negative impacts of industry or needed mitigation measures. Please revise private sector engagement approach accordingly.

Agency Response

September 13, 2022

This is now revised on the section 4 of the CER, and chapter 6 of the ProDoc.

Sichuan Anning Iron and Titanium Co. Ltd Sichuan with mixed ownership ?including private investment ?will be directly participate in the implementation of Activity 2.2.1 of this project - Demonstration of the application of the IUCN Guideline for Planning and Monitoring Corporate Biodiversity Performance in mining and processing industry.

Jisha Chemical Industry Park with 30 private enterprises will be directly participate in the implementation of Activity 2.2.2 of this project - Demonstration of the application of the IUCN Guideline for Planning and Monitoring Corporate Biodiversity Performance in chemical industry .

In addition, some private companies, such as Panzhuhua Oriental Titanium Industry Co., Ltd, Taihu County Huating Lake Aquatic Products Development Co. LTD and Yuexi County Baojia Township Shifo village Organic Tea Garden Cooperative will also participate in relevant the training sessions for the the project.

Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 20, 2022 HF:

Comments cleared.

January 21, 2022 HF:

- 1.) Please provide adequate mitigation measures for the risk of low willingness to participate from the private sector.
- 2.) Please provide concrete plan for communication and conflict prevention/mitigation between ministries and authorities to mitigate the risk as identified.

Agency Response

1) As with the risk of low willingness to participation, add up the following contents:
Hazard: M, Probability: L, Risk: L

Mitigation measures for the risk include: China's government-led systems will be used to mobilise the local private enterprises/companies to participate in relevant the activities related to their business, knowledge and skill, and awareness raising about biodiversity conservation. Local industry associations will invite/ask the local relevant enterprises/companies to participate in the project as a routine yearly action in environmental protection. In addition, local co-finance from local government also safeguard their effective participation.

2) Revised in CER.

Coordination

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 21, 2022 HF:

Comments cleared.

January 21, 2022 HF:

- 1.) Please include plans for coordinating with other closely related GEF-support projects (GEF-7: ADB Eco compensation in the Yangtze, GEF-6 C-PAR, GEF-7 ECM & TWC etc). In addition Please include the TACC (referenced in 10754) in the institutional arrangement and coordination.
- 2.) Close coordination between executing agencies should be clearly developed and explained in this section including the approach and mechanisms for coordination. Please revise.
- 3.) Please write-out (maybe in a key?) all of the abbreviations in Fig 5-1.

Agency Response

1) There is now description provided on coordination with other GEF GEF projects in Section 5.2.6 -Programme coordination and planning of the project document: ADB Eco compensation in the Yangtze; GEF-6 C-PAR, GEF-7 ECM, and TWC.

The coordination between executing agencies has be described in the Section 5.2.6.

2) The Programme coordination and the Technical Advisory and Coordination Committee (TACC) are also included in the Section 5.2.6.

3) Indicated all the abbreviations in Fig 5-1.

Consistency with National Priorities

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 20, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

January 21, 2022 HF:

Please describe how the project relates to, contributes to, works toward each of the national priorities presented in the table. Currently the table includes the name of the plan or agreement, and a description of it, without detail of how this project relates or contributes.

Agency Response This is now revised
Knowledge Management

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 20, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

January 21, 2022 HF:

Please submit a KM approach for the project that describes the approach, links to the other child project/program's approach to KM; is aligned with activities planned in 3.1.

Agency Response This is now revised in the CER
Monitoring and Evaluation

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 7, 2022 HF:

Totals in M&E budget table noted.

October 28, 2022 HF:

Please include totals in M&E budget table

Agency Response

November 2, 2022 IUCN

The aggregate total included in Appendix 9 as well as in the CER

Benefits

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 21, 2022 HF:

Yes

Agency Response

Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 15, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

Please note that GEF funds should not be used for study tours (this also aligns with the PRC-MOF' policy). Rather that this is a generic line-item for the budget, but not included in the project budget.

November 14, 2022 HF:

- While now the Budget table is presented with the correct template, the project staff (Project Manager, Project Officer and Finance Officer) are being charged across components and PMC. Per guidelines, project's staff should be charged to the GEF and co-financing portions allocated to PMC. Co-financing allocated to PMC is nearly 2.45 million, and 37 million of co-financing is represented in investment mobilized (by the way: the Agency missed to specify the type of co-financing for the 13.2 million coming from the subnational Governments, reason why this comment is also raised). Please ask the agency to explore the possibility to cover the project's staff with some co-financing

-

November 11, 2022 HF:

Budget: As previously mentioned, there are no details on all budget lines such as professional/contractual services, staff costs, etc. Please provide. Also, per Guidelines, project's staff costs should be charged to the GEF portion and the co-financing portion allocated to PMC. Co-financing allocated to PMC is nearly 2.4 million, and 11 million of co-financing is investment mobilized. Please cover some of the project's staff costs with co-financing.

November 7, 2022 HF:

Pending further review.

October 28, 2022 HF:

The current budget table does not allow to assess the reasonability of how the different activities / expenditures are adequately charged to the three sources (project components ? M&E ? PMC). Please use as an example the table included in Guidelines. We will review the resubmission and provide comments as appropriate.

October 15, 2022 HF:

1.) Comment cleared.

2.) It seems the project budget contains \$945,997 in staff costs charged to project components (vs PMC), please include Terms Of Reference (TOR) for those staff describing unique outputs linked to the respective components per GEF policy annex 7 here: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF_C.59_Inf.03_Guidelines%20on%20the%20Project%20and%20Program%20Cycle%20Policy.pdf Also, please revise the budget line item 11 to redact "study tours" from the description given the updates to the project activities in this regard.

April 21, 2022 HF:

1.) Please upload the ESS documentation to the Portal for review.

2.) Please revise budget per changes to 2.2 and other revisions with budget implications given further revisions herein.

January 21, 2022 HF:

1.) Please upload the ESS document to the Portal for review.

2.) Please revise budget per changes to 2.2 and other revisions with budget implications.

Agency Response

November 15, 2022 IUCN

Kindly note that the following changes have been made to the detailed budget in Appendix 9 of the ProDoc which is uploaded as well as the Annex E of the CER:

a) Staff cost are now removed from components, budget for other items are also adjusted accordingly.

- b) USD 79,268 cost of the finance officer is now shown against PMC
- c) The remaining staff costs including project manager and project officer will be covered as cofinancing from MEE and other government agencies including provincial agencies.
- d) The subnational co-financing has now been confirmed in the CER portal entry as 'public investment' in-line with the CER word document, updated and uploaded in the previous submission.

November 13, 2022 IUCN

We apologise there was an error in the upload of the revised budget. The details for budget lines are clearly provided now. Kindly note that the following changes have been made to the detailed budget in Appendix 12 well as the CER uploaded summary:

- a) Staff cost of provincial management office is removed from the GEF funded budget
- b) USD 25,000 staff cost is now shown against PMC
- c) The remaining staff costs will be covered as cofinancing from MEE and other government agencies including provincial agencies. This is also adjusted in Part B of the CER

November 9, 2022 IUCN

The updated budget file has been uploaded and reflects the changes requested by GEF Sec including showing the three sources of funding

November 2, 2022 IUCN

The budget table has been modified in Appendix 9 as well as the CER using the example of the table included in the guidelines

October 24, 2022 IUCN

2) We have now included a new Appendix 21. With the Terms of References for the Staff at Central and Local PMO to justify the relevant staff costs budgeted

September 13, 2022

1) ESMS is updated as Appendix 6

2) The budget has been revised accordingly

1) ESS document will be uploaded soon

Budget is now revised accordingly

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 7, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

October 28, 2022 HF:

Project Results Framework and Responses to Project Reviews Tables are out of margins. Please amend so the table is within the margins ? otherwise the autogenerated form will not be readable when circulated / posted for Council.

April 20, 2022 HF:

1.) Please revise per comments on Components and resubmit for review.

2.) Comment cleared.

January 21, 2022 HF:

1.) Please revise per comments on Components and resubmit for review.

2.) All the Indicators in the project results framework seem to be outputs (# of plans, reports, PAs etc). How will outcomes and impacts of this project and the program overall be measured? And please integrate the GEF Core Indicators into the project results framework to make clear the relationship between these levels/sets of indicators.

Agency Response

November 2, 2022 IUCN

Please note that as per guidance from GEF IT the results framework has been reformatted and attached image files to conform to the portal standards

September 13, 2022

1) The results framework has been revised

1) Revised

2) Outcome indicators are added in the results framework

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 15, 2022:

Comment cleared.

April 20, 2022 HF:

The "measures" included in Annex 16 aren't clearly tailored to child project activities, particularly measure #3 on protected areas planning. Please revise climate risk analysis to directly relate to the scope of this child project.

January 25, 2022 HF:

A climate risk analysis has been submitted but it lacks a description of how the project will take into account risks as identified given the scope of the activities. Please update analysis accordingly and include relevant points in the risk table.

Agency Response

September 13, 2022

This is now revised on the page 2&3 of Annex 16.

The climate risk analysis is revised and uploaded as Annex 16

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 15, 2022 HF:

Comment cleared.

April 20, 2022 HF:

1.) Please include responses to GEF council comments in Annex B of the CER portal submission. Currently it only contains responses to two GEFSEC comments.

January 21, 2022 HF:

- 1.) Please respond to the GEF Council comments and include in Portal submission.

Agency Response

September 13, 2022

These are included in Annex B of the CEO Endorsement Request Template

Revised and responded

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

October 24, 2022 HF:

Comments cleared.

October 15, 2022 HF:

- 1.) Responses to STAP comments noted. For several of the comment the response: "now elaborated at PPG phase" is included. It is unclear though how the STAP comment was addressed during PPG phase. For each STAP comment (relevant to this child project), please describe how the comment was addressed (if it was addressed).
- 2.) Presumably the STAP comment on the METT is only relevant to the other Child Project for this program focused on PAs. If correct, please redact response and note that in table.

April 20, 2022 HF:

- 1.) Please respond to STAP's review of this program overall and in particular comments on this Child Project and include in Portal submission. We have reviewed the CER in the Portal (Annex B and throughout); the ProDoc; and all Annexes and couldn't locate.

January 21, 2022 HF:

- 1.) Please respond to STAP's review of this program overall and in particular comments on this Child Project and include in Portal submission.

Agency Response

October 24, 2022, IUCN

- 1) This is now revised as per your advice in appendix 18 as well as in the relevant section of the online CER template

2) We confirm your understand that the STAP comment on the METT is only relevant to the GEFID 10754

September 13, 2022

These are included in Annex B of the CEO Endorsement Request Template as well as uploaded as Annex 18

The STAP's review has been responded to

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes

Agency Response

Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request Yes

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

NA

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

November 15, 2022 HF:

Yes. All comments cleared.

November 14, 2022 HF:

No, not at this time. Please fully address the remaining issues regarding Core Indicators and Budget.

November 11, 2022 HF:

No, not at this time. Please fully address the remaining issues regarding Core Indicators and Budget.

November 7, 2022 HF:

No, please address remaining issues highlighted.

October 28, 2022 HF:

No, please address remaining issues highlighted.

October 15, 2022 HF:

Not at this time. Please see comments in review sheet and address/revise accordingly for re-review. Please note that this project's 2nd cancellation deadline is December 31, 2022 and it must undergo GEF policy review and a 4-week Council review period. Please expedite revisions and resubmit. Thank you.

April 20, 2022 HF:

Not at this time. Please see comments in review sheet and address/revise accordingly for re-review.

January 21, 2022 HF:

Not at this time. Please see comments in review sheet and address/revise accordingly for re-review.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	1/21/2022	
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/20/2022	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/15/2022	
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/28/2022	
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/7/2022	

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations