PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF) [1]

PROJECT TYPE: Full-sized Project
TYPE OF TRUST FUND:GEF Trust Fund

PART I: PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Project Title:	A Landscape Approach to Wildlife Conservation in Northeastern China		
Country(ies):	People's Repulic of China	GEF Project ID:[2]	
GEF Agency(ies):	WB (select) (select)	GEF Agency Project ID:	P122383
Other Executing Partner(s):	State Forestry Administration of PRC, Forestry Administration of Jilin Province, Forestry Administration of Heilongjiang Province, Heilongjiang Forest Industry General Corporation, WCS, WWF	Submission Date:	2012-01-10
GEF Focal Area (s):	Biodiversity	Project Duration (Months)	48
Name of parent program (if applicable): ➢ For SFM/REDD+ ☐		Agency Fee ($):	300,000

A. FOCAL AREA STRATEGY FRAMEWORK[3]:

Focal Area Objectives	Expected FA Outcomes	Expected FA Outputs	Trust Fund	Indicative Grant Amount ($)	Indicative Co-financing ($)
(select) BD-1	Improved management effectiveness of existing and new protected areas	Over 1000 km2 of new protected areas and coverage of unprotected ecosystems, including ecological corridors	GEFTF	1,500,000	7,500,000
(select) BD-1		Over 1000 km2 of new protected areas and coverage of of unprotected threatened species like the Amur Tiger, the Amur Leopard and a number of endemic and highly threatened species found only in Northeastern China.	GEFTF		
(select) BD-2	Increase in sustainably managed landscapes that incorporate biodiversity	Policies and regulatory frameworks that would bring 2000-4000 km2 of production landscape under biodiversity friendly management	GEFTF	1,357,000	7,000,000
(select) BD-2	Measures to use and sustainably conserve biodiversity incorporated in policy and regulatory frameworks	Number of national and subnational land use plans that incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem valuation (tbd in preparation).	GEFTF		
(select) (select)			(select)		
(select) (select)			(select)		
(select) (select)			(select)		
(select) (select)			(select)		
(select) (select)			(select)		
(select) (select)			(select)		

[1] It is very important to consult the PIF preparation guidelines when completing this template.
[2] Project ID number will be assigned by GEFSEC.
[3] Refer to the reference attached on the Focal Area Results Framework when filling up the table in item A.

(select) (select)	Others		(select)		
		Sub-Total		2,857,000	14,500,000
		Project Management Cost[4]	GEFTF	**143,000**	500,000
		Total Project Cost		3,000,000	15,000,000

B. PROJECT FRAMEWORK

Project Objective: to create the ecological and policy conditions for recovery of threatened biodiversity in priority ecological landscapes in Northeastern China, using the Amur Tiger as an indicator species.

Project Component	Grant Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	Indicative Grant Amount ($)	Indicative Cofinancing ($)
1. Institutional coordination to mainstream wildlife conservation across sectors	TA	1. Incorporation of biodiversity and wildlife conservation priorities into government policies at provincial and local levels	1. Wildlife conservation strategies for Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces developed and harmonized with district level development plans, involving relevant stakeholders in economic planning and wildlife conservation. 2. (4) Training in and use of SMART green infrastructure guidelines in the EIA approval process at provincial levels, for all new or up upgraded civil works, especially roads, adjacent to existing or proposed priority protected areas in Jilin and Heilongjang biodiversity hotspots	SCCF	350,000	1,500,000
	(select)			(select)		
2. A Landscape Approach to conservation and restoration of priority ecosystems (i) expanding protected area networks (ii) connecting fragmented hotspots of biodiveristy (iii) and increasing wildlife carrying capacity in priority landscapes	TA	1. Forest ecosystem integrity in priority landscapes in Northeastern China enhanced: a. Expansion of Protected Area system in Changbaishan and Wandashan forest ecosystems b. Reduced fragmentation of forest ecosysems from poor land use/degraded forest cover and infrastructure 2. consolidation of	1. Timetable and implementation plans for legal designation at state provincial levels of 1000 km2 of new PAs in the Hunchun--Suiyang corridor of the Changbaishan Ecological Landscape and in selected sites within the Wandashan Priority Conservation Area; 2. 1000 km2 of previously production (logged) forest brought into protected area system as a result of new policies to reduce logging	GEFTF	1,250,000	7,000,000

[4] GEF will finance management cost that is solely linked to GEF financing of the project.

		prime wildlife habitat (mixed deciduous and evergreen forest) through establishment of ecological corridors and expansion of protected areas 3. Greater carrying capacity of forest ecosystems for threatened wildlfe, using the Amur Tiger as an indicators species	3. Mapping of priority sites and demonstration of ecological corridors to connect isolated biodiversity hotspots in priority landscapes [area under corridor designation to be confirmed in preparation] 4. Support to local forest bureaus in priority landscapes to bring an additional 2000-4000 km2 of production landscape under wildlife friendly management [to be confirmed in preparation] 5. Survey and monitoring of tiger and prey populations using standardized scientific techniques incorporated into PA management plans and carried out in at least 3 reserves as demonstrations			
	(select)			(select)		
3. Reducing Human Wildlife Conflict in Priority Forest Landscapes a. Capacity building and enforcement b. Environmental education c. Incentives to build community support for conservation	TA	1. Reduced incidence of human/wildlife conflict in priority landscscapes. 2. Increased buy-in from local communities to conserve wildlife and protect ecosystems.	1. Strengthened law enforcement through the implementaiton of SMART patrolling for wildlife conservation in priority sites in Jilin and Heilongjang provinces (with phased adoption throughout the PA network) -- engagement of the full suite of law enforcement agencies-- including forest police, border army, forest armed police, customs- to combat wildlife crime 2. Environmental education and outreach scaled up—with focus on iconic and keystone species, e.g. tiger 3. Good practices introduced such as: --stall feeding of cattle in villages in and around prime tiger habitat; reduced harvesting of preferred prey forage; ban on local harvesting of Korean pine nuts in Tiger Friendly	GEFTF	1,257,000	6,000,000

			management zones. 4. Elimination of wildlife snares in X percent of production landscape—hire locals to do this and give them a premium for snare-free landscape 5. Exploring opportunities in production landscapes for PES, including possible wildlife premiums for sale in Voluntary Markets, Conservation Agreements, etc.; and enhancing value added from AIGs through market promotion and certification			
3. Project Management	TA	Effective coordination between provinces and across international boundaries achieved	Provincial Project Management Units in Jilin and Heilongjang, with WB coordination unit at SFA	GEFTF		
	(select)			(select)		
	(select)			(select)		
	(select)			(select)		
	(select)			(select)		
			Sub-Total		2,857,000	14,500,000
			Project Management Cost[5]	(select)	143,000	500,000
			Total Project Costs		3,000,000	15,000,000

C. INDICATIVE CO-FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT BY SOURCE AND BY NAME IF AVAILABLE, ($)

Sources of Cofinancing	Name of Cofinancier	Type of Cofinancing	Amount ($)
National Government	Chinese government	Grant	3,000,000
Local Government	Jilin Province	Grant	1,000,000
Local Government	Jilin Province	In-kind	3,000,000
Local Government	Heilongjang Province	Grant	1,000,000
Local Government	Heilongjang Province	In-kind	4,000,000
CSO	WWF	In-kind	1,500,000
CSO	WCS	In-kind	1,500,000
(select)		(select)	
(select)		(select)	
(select)		(select)	
Total Cofinancing			15,000,000

D. GEF/LDCF/SCCF RESOURCES REQUESTED BY AGENCY, FOCAL AREA AND COUNTRY[1]

GEF Agency	Type of Trust Fund	Focal Area	Country Name/Global	Grant Amount (a)	Agency Fee (b)[2]	Total c=a+b
WB	GEF TF	Biodiversity	China	3,000,000	300,000	3,300,000

[5] Same as footnote #3.

(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
Total Grant Resources				3,000,000	300,000	3,300,000

[1] In case of a single focal area, single country, single GEF Agency project, and single trust fund project, no need to provide information for this table

[2] Please indicate fees related to this project.

PART II: PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE CONSISTENCY OF THE PROJECT WITH:

A.1.1 the GEF focal area/LDCF/SCCF strategies:

The overall goal of the project –to safeguard the ecological integrity of priority landscapes in Northeastern China and to increase their carrying capacity for biodiversity and ecosystem services tracks closely with the Biodiversity FA Goal under GEF 5, which is the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecosystem goods and services. The Project will take a landscape approach to prioritizing areas for action and piloting and demonstrating key interventions which can then be mainstreamed and taken to scale to enhance the sustainability of Protected Area Systems at provincial and national levels.

These objectives are closely aligned with those of the Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy for GEF 5: Objectives 1 (*Improving the sustainability of the protected area system*) and Objective 2 (*Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes and seascapes*). For Objective 1 the project aims to consolidate and expand the area of priority landscapes for wildlife conservation under protection by reducing habitat fragmentation and restoring habitat quality, connecting meta-populations of endangered wildlife via ecological corridors, and reducing threats to biodiversity through strengthening enforcement and incentives to minimize human wildlife conflict. The project will support Objective 2 of the Biodiversity Focal area (mainstreaming biodiversity into the production landscape) by increasing the area of habitat adjacent to priority conservation areas, which is (i) under biodiversity friendly use, and (ii) is managed in line with sectoral policies which incorporate wildlife carrying capacity and maintenance of ecosystems services in development plans for the area. The project is also designed to build community support for wildlife conservation through a combination of education and outreach, and alternative income generation linked to maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services in these priority landscapes.

A.1.2. For projects funded from LDCF/SCCF: the LDCF/SCCF eligibility criteria and priorities:

NA

A.2. national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions, if applicable, i.e. NAPAS, NAPs, NBSAPs, national communications, TNAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, etc.:

The proposed project is fully consistent with national and local government's policy on wildlife and environment protection. It will contribute to China's efforts to protect forests and wildlife, as stated in the Outline of the 12th Five-Year Plan of China for National Economic and Social Development. It will also contribute directly to implementation of China's National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan (2011). This aims to stop all biodiversity loss by 2020 and protect 90% of all China's species and ecosystems through establishment of nature reserves. Furthermore, the Strategy identifies the priority landscapes which will be a focus of this proposal as two of 32 priority conservation areas in the country.

2011: Green Growth Strategy for China. This is a major piece of analytical work done in partnership between the World Bank and the Government of China, meant to help guide economic growth over the next 20 years along a sustainable path that incorporates concerns about environmental quality, including Biodiversity, and internalizes the costs of environmental degradation in decisions about China's long-term investments in urban, transport and energy sectors.

2010: Global Tiger Recovery Plan – the project contributes to China's signing of the St. Petersburg Declaration on Tiger Conservation and the national and global tiger recovery plans. The national plan lists activities proposed here– monitoring, wildlife poaching reduction, and balancing conservation with local economies – as key area of focus.

B. PROJECT OVERVIEW:

B.1. Describe the baseline project and the problem that it seeks to address:

The old growth forests of northeastern China are among the priority landscapes for biodiversity and wildlife conservation in China. However, human activities have led to increasing fragmentation of remaining natural forests, and the wildlife they support. Protected areas have become isolated patches in a landscape increasingly under threat from road building and other infrastructure, conversion of natural forests to plantation forests of fast-growing monocultures, and overharvesting of wildlife. Systematic poaching of endangered species like the Amur Tiger and Amur Leopard, and their prey, have altered community structure, leading to severe losses in biodiversity and ecosystem function.

Although China is transitioning from forest management practices that focused on wood biomass and productivity of fast growing species in plantations, to a more multi-dimensional approach that recognizes the role of natural forest ecosystems in providing a multitude of goods and services including timber, water, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity, it has yet to mainstream principles of landscape ecology into land use planning and biodiversity at provincial and local levels. The result is that China's rich biodiversity, which includes over 6400 spp of vertebrates and over 30,000 species of vascular plants, over half of these endemic, is eroding under pressure from land use change, infrastructure development, and climate change. In addition to habitat fragmentation, poaching of wildlife--particularly major carnivores and their prey--is contributing to the loss of ecosystem structure and the diversity of natural communities, thus affecting the quality and flow of ecosystem services.

Northeastern China is home to the largest remaining tracts of natural temperate forest in China, with a diverse flora and significant amount of endemism. Within this forest relic, two ecological landscapes stand out. The greater **Changbaishan Landscape,** an undulating and hilly area, dominated in the south by the 2,744m high dormant volcano Changbaishan, sits on the border of China and North Korea. Is is primarily in Jilin, but includes parts of Heilongjiang province (Dongning and Suiying) in the Lao Yeling Forest. It consists of approximately 38,000 km^2 of undisturbed forests, dominated by a mixed Korean pine and deciduous forest. Yet there is great variability across this landscape, as it marks the meeting point between subtropical and boreal, and Himalayan species. The region has a temperate continental monsoon climate, and dry cold winters. Due to unique tectonic movements the vegetation of the region includes ancient European and Siberian species combined with sub tropical and Japanese species as well as endemic flora. The fauna is also diverse, with 379 species of vertebrates including the Amur Tiger and the Amur leopard, the most endangered cat in the world, with numbers now less than 50. The habitat for these top carnivores is fragmented into nine distinct habitat patches, with human development creating partial or complete barriers between these patches.

The second geography of interest, the "**Wandashan Landscape,"** consists of approximately 14,000 km^2 of forest habitat in northeast Heilongjang Province. Although small and remote, the region holds some of the best remaining habitat for large carnivores and their prey in China, as evidenced by the fact that it is the only place to report presence of a reproducing female tiger in the past 12- 15 years. .

The Changbaishan and Wandashan Landscapes have historically supported far greater densities of wildlife and species diversity than currently exist in these zones. Although the number of large predators and their prey are low in both these priority sites today, their potential carrying capacity is high, and therefore their importance for restoring biodiversity in the region is great. Both landscapes have added potential for eco-restoration and rehabilitation, given their proximity to wildlife populations in the Russian Far East, to which they maintain a tenuous but extant connection. However, only 10% of the area is currently protected as conservation land. Although there has been a significant decline in production forestry in line with new policy directives to maintain standing forests as carbon sinks to help China meet its CO_2 emission reduction targets, the transition from plantation forests of low biodiversity to mature mixed forest stands with higher biodiversity carrying capacity will require scaled up investments in forest and wildlife management and deconstruction of the shanty towns serving tree farming and logging operations. The State Forest Administration is working with provincial governments in Jilin and Heilongjang Provinces to resettle production forest laborers and provide them and their families with alternative livelihoods and access to services in urban centers. These baseline activities amounted to some $10M in 2011.

At the same time, though, agriculture in adjacent lands continues to encroach on plantation forests. Frog farming is also a significant activity in the region, which brings people and their dogs in close proximity with the remaining wildlife. Snares set for ungulates and smaller species are rife in these area, and can be equally lethal for tigers or other large predators The few tigers that continue to range into the Changbaishan and Wandashan Landscapes represent China's last hope for wild tigers, with the South China subspecies now considered to be extinct in the wild.

If properly managed, the area of good habitat remaining in the Changbaishan Landscape, should be able to support an increasingly complex biota that ultimately could sustain viable populations of higher order predators, like the Amur Tiger, and their prey. As an indicator of restoration potential, it is estimated that the Changbaishan Landcape could support a breeding population of up to 80 wild Amur Tigers along with the associated flora and fauna that contribute to the food webs which sustain this top predator and its prey. China has the potential to demonstrate dramatic successes in Northeast China. Just as China was able, through effective management of sub-tropical forests in Southwestern China, to bring endangered species like the Giant Panda back from the brink of extinction, so too can it realize tremendous gains for biodiversity in the temperate forests of the Northeast, by embracing a landscape approach to forest ecosystem management—restoring ecological integrity and biological community structure with clear benefits to productivity and species richness that extend to the production landscape.

Existing work in the Changbaishan and Wandashan Landscapes

In 2010 by a collaborative research project conducted by WCS, WWF and partners, analyzed ecosystem status and trend in the Changbaishan Conservation Landscape and identified priority areas for recovery of ecological community structure, including threatened and endangered species. The study employed scientific modeling to identify where priority conservation actions should be focused to consolidate high quality habitat and ensure its protection, create buffers and corridors of biodiversity friendly land use in the surrounding production landscape, and reduce further habitat fragmentation. The study concluded that there was approximately 31,000 sq.km of potentially high biodiversity habitat in the region, capable of supporting apex predators like the Amur Tiger. These best habitats are subdivided into four 'Priority Areas'. Of these the Hunchun-Wangquing Priority Area was deemed the top priority based on a range of factors including existing evidence of big cat species, low habitat fragmentation and connectivity to existing populations of these species in Southwest Primorye, Russia. The Hunchun-Wangquing Priority Area straddles the provinces of Jilin and

Heilongjiang in China and extends to some extent into Russia. Lying at an average elevation of 589m, 12.8% of the area is protected (predominantly the 1087 km^2 Hunchun Nature Reserve), the density of villages is 0.24/100 sq. km and the density of secondary roads is 6.2k/100 sq. km.

However, in the absence of GEF support, it is likely that these landscapes will ultimately succumb to development pressures and encroachment by local communities. Current investments in wildlife conservation at the provincial level are inadequate to address the combined pressures of poaching and habitat fragmentation across this vast area. Illegal hunting of wildlife continues to be a problem, and new roads and upgrades are being constructed at an alarming rate. If these last remaining landscapes of prime temperate forest and wildlife are to be saved, actions on the ground will need to be intensified and scaled up significantly. MOUs are in place between key stakeholders to work together in designing a landscape-based conservation plan for the Changbaishan region, and provincial forestry bureaus are working with state level authorities to reduce logging in production forests and allow these to eventually revert to natural forests. But financial support is sorely needed to implement/accelerate these plans. Additional government funding is contingent on support from the GEF. Although WWF and WCS have been instrumental in supplementing provincial Forestry Department budgets for patrolling and monitoring in these areas, such training needs to be scaled up and extended across the PA network in this region. GEF support would leverage political will and significant additional government resources (at both provincial and state levels), and in-kind support from the NGO community. Without this catalyst, ecosystem decline will continue in the Changbaishan and Wandashan landscapes and the last remaining wild populations of the Amur Tiger and Amur Leopard in China will face extinction.

B. 2. Incremental /Additional cost reasoning: describe the incremental (GEF Trust Fund) or additional (LDCF/SCCF) activities requested for GEF/LDCF/SCCF financing and the associated global environmental benefits (GEF Trust Fund) or associated adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF) to be delivered by the project:

Project objective

The project objective is to create the ecological and policy conditions for recovery of threatened biodiversity in priority ecological landscapes in Northeastern China, using the Amur Tiger as an indicator species. The project would achieve this objective by reducing habitat fragmentation and species loss in priority landscapes through a combination of biodiversity friendly policies, habitat restoration and connectivity of ecological hot spots, thereby increasing the overall carrying capacity of these areas for apex predators and the complex food webs which support them. Located adjacent to source populations across the border in Russia, both the Hunchun-Wangqing-Danying-Suiyang priority conservation area, and the Wandashan Landscape are likely to show measurable increases in predator and prey numbers in response to appropriate interventions.

To realize the potential for biodiversity recovery through ecosystem rehabilitation of priority landscapes, the project would focus on several major fronts: (i) coordinating economic development planning to support biodiversity friendly sectoral policies and planning frameworks in targeted landscapes; (ii) enhancing the effectiveness of protected area/network management by (a) increasing wildlife carrying capacity through restoration, expansion and connectivity of critical habitats, including the expansion of biodiversity-friendly landscapes adjacent to protected areas, (b) effective law enforcement and monitoring in both protected areas and the production landscape to reduce mortality of keystone species; and (iii) reducing human/wildlife conflict by increasing benefits to and buy- in from local communities for wildlife conservation. If successful, the results demonstrated in this modest project could be expanded and replicated in other sites across the region, thus creating the ecological conditions for successful recovery of China's iconic wildlife and temperate forest ecosystems.

Furthermore, the project's investments in human resources and skills development related to Smart Monitoring and Enforcement will help sustain wildlife conservation gains beyond the Project area and well beyond the Life of Project. The Project would also increase public awareness through environmental education on the value of wildlands and natural capital in terms of ecosystem goods and services and the importance of maintaining wildlife in the landscape as an integral part of the ecosystem. Using the Amur Tiger and its recovery as a barometer of the health of the ecosystem can tap into deep-seated cultural values associated with the Tiger, create a sense of national pride and build public support for conservation and elimination of the trade in wildlife.

The Project is divided into three main components:

1. **Institutional coordination across key sectors in support of wildlife conservation in development planning**

- Wildlife conservation strategies for Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces developed and harmonized with district level development plans, involving relevant stakeholders in economic planning and wildlife conservation.
- Training in and use of SMART green infrastructure guidelines in the EIA approval process at provincial levels, for all new or up upgraded civil works, especially roads, adjacent to existing or proposed priority protected areas in Jilin and Heilongjang biodiversity hotspots

2. A Landscape Approach to protected area management and increasing wildlife carrying capacity in production landscapes

(i) expanding protected area networks

(ii) connecting fragmented hotspots of biodiveristy

(iii) and increasing wildlife carrying capacity in priority landscapes

- *Improving the management effectiveness of existing protected areas.*

This will focus on PAs in the Hunchun and Wanquing Reserves as the most significant reserves in the focal area. Activities will include equipping and training reserve staff, and other police authorities in SMART monitoring techniques, and institutionalizing snare removal in all protected area networks in the project area.

- *Expanding the existing protected area network.*

This will require an extension of the landscape analysis conducted in 2010 to identify where the priority areas for new nature reserves should be located based on factors including habitat quality for keystone species, connectivity, existing human and economic activity, likely cost of implementation. Implementation plans for expanding the protected area system in Jilin and Heilonogjang Provinces come under the Provincial Wildlife Conservation Strategy.

- *Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation outside protected areas*

This would include public works departments responsible for infrastructure, ensuring that any projects that were conducted in priority conservation landscapes followed the World Bank SMART Infrastructure guidelines; with a plan to mainstream these guidelines eventually in conservation landscapes throughout China.

- *Demonstrating the feasibility of implementing "ecological corridors"* of wildlife friendly habitat/and land use to allow for population connectivity between isolated patches of prime habitat in priority landscapes.

3. Reducing Human Wildlife Conflict in Priority Forest Landscapes

- Strengthened law enforcement through the implementation of SMART patrolling for wildlife conservation in priority sites in Jilin and Heilongjang provinces (with phased adoption throughout the PA network).

- Introducing stall feeding of cattle in villages in and around prime tiger habitat and an insurance program to communities who adopt this technique to compensate them for any losses should they occur, will eliminate perverse incentives to graze cattle in PAs
- Scaling up environmental education and outreach to local communities—with focus on iconic species like the Amur Tiger, which have symbolic and traditional value in Chinese culture
- Increasing incentives for community buy-in through:

--creating incentives for communities to eliminate wildlife snares and maintain a snare-free environment

--expanding alternative income opportunities through market promotion, certification and PES for forest ecosystem services, including a possible wildlife premium on the voluntary market for tiger conservation

In summary the Global Environmental benefits the project would bring include:

(i) protection of globally important biodiversity, including the last remaining tracts of old growth temperate forests in northeastern China, which is home to a range of wildlife, including the highly endangered species like the Amur Tiger and the Amur Leopard in China; (ii) demonstration of the ecological corridor approach to landscape management and wildlife recovery by connecting isolated areas of critical habitat available to top predators with large territories and their prey; (iii) the enabling conditions for the recovery of the Amur Tiger in China—currently on the brink of extinction in the wild; (iv) a database documenting ecosystem interventions and recovery at the landscape scale which can be shared globally, and feed into the Global Tiger Recovery Program.

B.3. Describe the socioeconomic benefits to be delivered by the Project at the national and local levels, including consideration of gender dimensions, and how these will support the achievement of global environment benefits (GEF Trust Fund) or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF). As a background information, read Mainstreaming Gender at the GEF.":

The Project seeks to accelerate the recovery of wildlife across priority landscapes in Northeastern China whose biodiversity and ecology have been degraded through conversion of natural habitats into monocultures for production forestry and agriculture. These activities, along with development-related infrastructure, have further fragmented remaining wildlands and altered the ecological integrity of the landscape and the ecosystem services this area once provided. Apart from the global benefits identified above, at the local scale a more diverse and balanced ecosystem will restore lost ecosystem services (like groundwater recharge, reliable surface water flows, soil conservation and greater genetic diversity) and is likely to be more resilient to periodic disturbances (climate variability and change), disease and water stress, with associated benefits to humans. More direct benefits might include Payments for Ecosystem Services to participating communities adjacent to ecological forests and protected areas for changes in resource use which contribute, *inter alia*, to clean drinking water, carbon sequestration, and maintenance of genetic resources associated with wild varieties of agricultural crops. Alternative livelihood programs like beekeeping, fern farming and medicinal plant production, currently being promoted by provincial forestry authorities in areas where logging has been curtailed—are beginning to generate substantial household income. These revenue streams could be enhanced with project co-financing in support of value-added activities in line with (i) certification, eco-labeling and better marketing, and (ii) jobs tied to removal of illegal wildlife snares and monitoring by local populations in areas near human settlements, (iii) conservation agreements and wildlife premiums linked to the voluntary market. Since women are able to engage in some or all of these activities, they stand to benefit. Under the project, they will be targeted for training and skills development in these environmentally sustainable revenue generating activities and market development.

B.4 Indicate risks, including climate change risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design:

Major risks are that the management interventions are insufficient to result in significant positive change over the life of the project due to the time needed for a measurable ecological response. However, by leveraging change in forestry and other land use in priority landscapes for wildlife conservation through demonstrations of best practice in, for example, silvicultural practices, wildlife friendly infrastructure siting and design, smart development policy guidelines at the provincial and county level, better ecological monitoring of surveillance of human activities, and strategic establishment of ecological corridors, wildlife may recover over time. Climate change risks are unlikely to pose huge risks to the project. In fact, the restoration of ecosystem services across landscapes is likely to contribute to the resilience of ecological and human communities to potential climate change impacts, including changes in precipitation and temperature. Adjustments in the designation of ecological corridors and management of the protected area system in response to environmental change should be part of adaptive management and can be built into the design of PA networks and management plans as part of monitoring & evaluation.

B.5. Identify key stakeholders involved in the project including the private sector, civil society organizations, local and indigenous communities, and their respective roles, as applicable:

Key stakeholders include Department of Wild Life Conservation and Natural Reserve Management of SFA, Jilin Forestry Department , Heilongjiang Forestry Department and Heilongjiang Forest Industry Bureau, WWF, WCS, IUBS, ISZS, and various universities advising government. All have been consulted in the preparation of this PIF and are very supportive of the activities proposed. No indigenous communities will be involved, however, discussions with leaders from local communities living in former production forests, indicated their interest in alternative employment linked to conservation.

B.6. Outline the coordination with other related initiatives:

Both WCS and WWF are very active in the project area and consider the proposed project to be consistent and significantly additive to on-going efforts there. Specifically, the project will provide a clear framework for linking Government of China financial commitment to activities hitherto supported by CSOs. The Hunchun Nature Reserve is also a model for the testing of the SMART system which is intended to inform the adoption of SMART across other PA's in China.

Lessons learned from the experience of prioritizing landscapes for conservation and recovery of endangered wildlife, demonstrating the ecological corridor concept to connect high quality but fragmented habitat and effectively expanding the area available to top predators with large territories and home ranges, and of adopting the WB's Smart Infrastructure Guidelines for any new infrastructure activities in priority landscapes, will inform efforts to conserve wildlife and mainstream biodiversity friendly development in other biodiversity hotpots currently under threat from rapid development.

Regarding Project coordination, Project Management Units (PMUs) would be set up at the provincial level in Jilin and Heilongjiang Provinces to implement the project, with support from the NGO and research communities, including in particular WCS and WWF, for execution of various activities related to capacity building. The PMUs would also coordinate with other wildlife conservation programs in the region. A modest project coordination unit would be established within the State Forest Administration to ensure fiduciary and procurement standards are met in project implementation, to coordinate M&E across the two provinces and to facilitate reporting to the World Bank.

C. DESCRIBE THE GEF AGENCY'S COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE TO IMPLEMENT THIS PROJECT:

The World Bank's comparative advantage as an implementing agency of the GEF is as a leading

international financial institution with wide convening power and expertise in sectors that are related to the Biodiversity Focal Area. The World Bank has been involved in Forestry sector in China for more than 25 years by financing more the 10 forest resource management projects, which broadened from supporting reforestation for commercial purpose to supporting forest resources public services/goods management including biodiversity conservation that has strong innovative and demonstration impacts on tackling global and local environmental issues. The Bank has implemented three GEF co-financed biodiversity conservation project in China with excellent performance and largely replicated national-wide. The Bank Project Team, which consists of senior environmental staff in both the Beijing Office and the Regional Office in Washington, D.C., has a rich experience in managing many biodiversity conservation projects in other counties, which it will bring to the preparation and implementation of the proposed project.

Furthermore, the Bank is a major sponsor of the Global Tiger Initiative (GTI), championed by the WB President, and houses its secretariat. The GTI has garnered the international support of heads of state from all 13 Tiger Range Countries, including China, and the ongoing international dialogue on shared experiences and results of programs and policies aimed at Tiger recovery facilitated by the World Bank is of enormous value in leveraging the efforts of Tiger Range Countries to double the number of tigers in the wild by 2020.

C.1 Indicate the co-financing amount the GEF agency is bringing to the project:

The World Bank is not developing a Forestry related investment project in the area at this time, although it may in the future. The Bank will, however, ensure the necessary co-financing from State and Local Government, and the NGO conservation community, to ensure that the GEF funds are appropriately leveraged.

C.2 How does the project fit into the GEF agency's program (reflected in documents such as UNDAF, CAS, etc.) and staff capacity in the country to follow up project implementation:

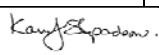
This project is fully consistent with the World Bank's ongoing Country Partnership Strategy, whose main pillars are environmentally sustainable growth and poverty reduction. Environmentally sustainable growth, or Green Growth, in addition to promoting low carbon growth, is very much focused on the quality of economic growth, ensuring that environmental externalities are reduced and accounted for and that natural resources, on which rural populations depend, are well managed. Since the majority of China's poor are located in the rural areas, they are highly dependent on the natural resource base. They will be major beneficiaries of a healthy, green and resilient environment, which this project promotes, by supporting the restoration of biodiverse ecological communities and their apex predators.

PART III: APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT BY GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT(S) AND GEF AGENCY(IES)

A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S): (Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter(s) with this template. For SGP, use this OFP endorsement letter).

NAME	POSITION	MINISTRY	DATE *(MM/dd/yyyy)*
Ms. Ye Jiandi	GEF Operational Focal Point	FINANCE	**09/07/2011**

B. GEF AGENCY(IES) CERTIFICATION

This request has been prepared in accordance with GEF/LDCF/SCCF policies and procedures and meets the GEF/LDCF/SCCF criteria for project identification and preparation.					
Agency Coordinator, Agency name	**Signature**	**DATE** *(MM/dd/yyyy)*	**Project Contact Person**	**Telephone**	**Email Address**
Ms. Karin Shepardson The World Bank		1/10/2012	Marea Hatziolos	+1 202 473 1061	Mhatziolos@ worldbank.org