

Building Climate Resilient Green Infrastructure: enhancing ecosystem services of planted forests in China through forest landscape restoration and governance innovation project (PRC-GEF State Forest Farms Project)

Mid-Term Review Report

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Acknowledgement

The following units and individuals are especially grateful for their help in the formation of the evaluation work and report in the project.

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Abbreviation

GEF- Global Environmental Facility IUCN- International Union for Conservation of Nature and Nature resources NFGA - National Forestry and Grassland Administration FLR- Forest Landscape Restoration ROAM- Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology FMR Plan-Forest Management and Restoration Plan TRI- The Restoration Initiative ES-Ecosystem Service SFM-Sustainable Forest Management SFFs- State Forest Farms

Report abstract

1. Project introduction

"Building Climate Resilient Green Infrastructure: enhancing ES of planted forests in China through forest landscape restoration (FLR) and governance innovation project (PRC-GEF state forest farms project)" (GEF ID 9518; IUCN Project ID P01663) is a child project of "The Restoration Initiative (TRI)", a Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded programme helping 10 Asian and African countries achieved shared restoration goals. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is serving as implementing agency for this project and the China National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA) is serving as the executing agency. The total grant is \$6.42 million, with matching funding of \$54 million. The project has a four-year planned implementation period (2019-2022).

The overall objective of the project is "to strengthen the policies, practices and evidence base of FLR in China as an approach to reducing land degradation, conserving biodiversity, and adapting to climate change." Through a series of project activities, the project will promote the mainstreaming and localization of the concepts of FLR, forest sustainable management, and ecological service in China, and comprehensively support the construction of ecological civilization and the comprehensive management of mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes and grasslands in China.

The outcomes of the project design include:

Outcome 1.1 Forests in selected landscapes provide relevant ES (water, soil, and carbon sequestration), maintain and improve biodiversity, increase climate resilience, reduce land degradation, and generate local benefits;

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Outcome 1.2 ES valuation and monitoring methodologies in place and measuring the results; Monitoring of planted and restored forests and SFFs in China is adequate;

Outcome 1.3 Clear and quantified environmental improvements sustained by local institutional, policy and financing mechanisms;

Outcome 2.1 New policies, legal and regulatory frameworks which facilitate and promote, with strong evidence, the implementation and enforcement of FLR and SFM;

Outcome 2.2 The SFFs reform fully considers the roles of SFFs in providing ES and develops appropriate supporting legal, regulatory and financial instruments and policies;

Outcome 2.3 Increased area of landscapes and afforested lands protected by new policies;

Outcome 3.1 Stakeholders in China (national stakeholders and stakeholders of 3 pilot landscapes) have improved knowledge of new financial mechanisms, accounting system and best practices on SFM;

Outcome 3.2 Knowledge-sharing and international cooperation mechanisms further promote the transfer and promotion of project results, especially cooperation with international projects/initiatives.

Outcome 3.3 Information and knowledge gaps identified and addressed to better inform the policy and practical endeavors;

Outcome 3.4 Improved awareness and understanding of key decisionmakers and stakeholders in forest ecosystem services and SFM.

Outcome 4.1 A Project M&E framework is designed and implemented throughout the project life.

Outcome 4.2 Project outcomes are communicated in an efficient manner.

2. Objectives and methods of the mid-term review

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The objective of the project mid-term review is to evaluate the progress of the project since its inception according to the requirements of the project text and results framework, so as to ensure the expected output. Pay particular attention to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact, network/links, experience and lessons learned, etc., to form a mid-term review report of the project.

The project evaluation activities included holding the project mid-term review launch meeting, meeting with the project implementation unit; consulting the project task assignment, project annual report, mid-term progress report and related technical reports, project progress report and exchange meeting; inspection of project sites and other methods and procedures.

3. Results of the mid-term review

By June 30, 2021, focusing on the three core tasks of "preparation and implementation of innovative FMR plans", "preparation of Forest Landscape Restoration Plans " and "policy suggestions for integrating the concept of FLR into China's forestry", the project has made remarkable progress in various outputs designed in the four components (including progress assessed through the 9 core indicators of TRI project). Except for ecological service monitoring and overseas exchanges, the indicators specified in the mid-term of the project have been almost met mid-term targets as planned. In particular, based on the concept of landscape restoration, a guidelines for the preparation of innovative FMR plans have been formulated, and innovative FMR plans (2021-2030) have been prepared and implemented in 7 pilot forest farms; The monitoring outline of key ecosystem services was formulated, and 237 fixed monitoring sample plots were established; using the forest landscape restoration opportunities assessment methodology (ROAM), three FLR plans (forest-oriented mountain-water-forest-farmland-lakegrass plan) were completed. Through bulletins, international conferences, papers, training courses, official WeChat account and other publicity projects activities, the

application of FLR/SFM concept and ecosystem service (ES) concept in China has been promoted and has produced positive impact on supporting the construction of ecological civilization and comprehensive management of forest-oriented mountain-water-forest-farmland-lake-grass in China. Affected by the global Covid19 pandemic, the monitoring report of key ecosystem services and overseas exchanges are relatively lagging behind.

Relevance: The innovative FMR plans developed by the project are recognized as an effective tool for the high-quality development of China's state forest farms and the improvement of forest quality; the Forest Landscape Restoration Plans developed by the project are considered a good way for China's ecological protection and restoration strategy. The implementation of the project has promoted the process of integrating the concept of FLR and ecosystem services to the state forest farm reform and ecological restoration related forestry policies.

Effectiveness and efficiency: institutional setting and project management of the project are strong and functioning well; the implementation has made significant progress, and the mid-term goals have been completed as planned; the use of funds conforms to the project plan and correct procedures. The project can complete the project objectives in accordance with the work plan and funds. However the COVID-19 epidemic has an impact on the project activities, with most of scheduled discussions and seminars postponed due to social-distance regulation, and many site activities delayed since staffs of forest farms were assigned to local communities with epidemic prevention duties. A number of field work activities were canceled because of the restriction on control of transport mobility and crowd gathering. In general, COVID19 has caused delay in some forest management measures of the FMR plan, monitoring of key ecosystem services, overseas visits and exchanges, and demonstration and promotion of project results at home and abroad, thereby affecting the financial implementation rate. Among which, the monitoring of key ecosystem services needs to be further improved.

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Sustainability and impact: The new concept of FLR will have a long-term positive impact on China's ecological restoration; through communication and capacity building, the concept of FLR is deeply rooted among project associates; the project has achieved participation of multiple stakeholders; the implementation and monitoring of ecosystem services are a long-term process.

Lessons learned:

Good organization and management is key to efficient project operations. The project has established an integrated and efficient coordination and supporting mechanism including different level administration offices from the country, province, city to county, and pilot forest farms, experts working groups for technical service and knowledge share, and a number of temporary cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms.

The implementation of the new FLR concept attracted additional national and local policy-related projects such as such as the National Forest Tending Financial Subsidy Project, the Forest Quality Improvement Project. On the one hand, the project provided technical silvicultural design for these additional project activities through new forest management planning; on the other hand, more funds from these additional projects were input into the project implementation.

After reform of SFFs in 2019, state forest farms converted to public welfare unit, and all forest management expenses are fully covered by national/local public finance. There are no relevant policies and mechanisms to encourage forest farms exploring bankable projects and achieving financial sustainability anymore, therefore, forest farms themselves are not enthusiastic about developing bankable project. Given this background, it is suggested that developing 7 bankable project proposals for pilot farms is a more appropriate target to project, instead of signing contracts of 7 bankable projects.

The purpose of setting up monitoring sample plots is to better understand the impact of different forest management measures on improving key ecosystem services, and to evaluate good practices in forest restoration. Strict scientific experiment design, professional investigation and monitoring are required.

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The "formulating sustainable development plan for SFF" promoted by the project is a good inspiration and opportunity for SFFs. It is helpful for SFFs to position themselves in the forestry "Fourteenth Five-Year Plan" (2021-2025), to set up streamlined and efficient governance structure, to fulfill the obligation of forest management and protection, and resource supervision of the SFF after the reform.

Overall recommendations:

1) **Implement and promote the innovative FMR plans**. "The project developed "Guidelines for Development of Innovative Forest Management and Restoration Plan (FMR plan) in State Forest Farms", and it is expected to be published and applied beyond the project area. It is essential to create favorable conditions from the aspects of policy, capital and management, and to ensure that the annual operation and management of SFFs is implemented according to the annual workplan of the FMR plan, which is particularly important for the realization and application of the concept of FLR.

2) Improve the ecological service monitoring system and continuous monitoring. There are still problems such as inconsistent sample plot benchmark, lack of replications, unclear description of silvicultural measures and monitoring period. It is recommended that the project check each pilot forest farms and try best to avoid the above problems. In addition, how to apply remote sensing and other technical means are worthy exploring in ecological service monitoring, and in impact assessment, not only of small-scale management unit but also of landscape scale.

3) **Complete the Forest Landscape Restoration Plans.** At present, the 3 pilot landscapes (1 city and 2 counties) have completed the first draft of the FLR. Final script should be accomplished with feedback/ suggestion from local authorities. The participation of multiple stakeholders is very important.

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4) **Put forward policy recommendations to promote FLR in China**. The scope of policy suggestions may include: improving current forest resource inventory system to meet the data requirements of innovative FMR plan, providing solutions and tools for the national strategy of FLR restoration and carbon neutralization, designing of finance, technology, management instrument from national perspective to ensure the implementation of FMR plans for SFFs.

5) Strengthen domestic/ international-communication and demonstrate a successful China case. The PRC-GEF State Forest Farm Project introduces and localizes international concepts (FLR/SFM/ES), presenting Chinese practices and stories. The project is a very good communication platform domesticly and internationally. It is an opportunity to demonstrate China's understanding of ecological protection and sustainable development through the successful cases from project implementation. Especially the successful stories about participation of females, ethnic minorities, vulnerable groups and social organizations, which taping the multiple benefits of SFFs in biodiversity protection, coping with climate change, poverty alleviation and rural revitalization, and promoting the sustainable development goals of the UN.

6) **Project extension.** Considering the impact of all aspects including the COVID-19 epidemic, some project activities were postponed and may not be finished on time, such as ecological service monitoring and international exchange. Only 60% of total budget is expected to be spended by the end of 2021. It is recommended to extend at least 18 months which will better achieve the project objectives and reach following goals:

- replicate the innovative FMR plans to additional SFFs, formulate in-depth case-report and produce diverse knowledge products;
- obtain continuous data of key ecosystem services monitoring, carry out assessment as planed;

- promote FLR localization and mainstreaming in China; further explore the synergy of FLR and ecological civilization, develop creative roadmaps of promoting FLR in China;
- expand the public's recognition and acceptance of FLR and ES concepts;
- allow for full utilization of project funds.

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1. Project Introduction

1.1 Basic Information

"Building Climate Resilient Green Infrastructure: enhancing ecosystem services of planted forests in China through forest landscape restoration and governance innovation project " (PRC-GEF state forest farms project, here after "the project") is a China Child Project of "The Restoration Initiative (TRI)", which is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is implementing agency, the China National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA) is executing agency. The implementation areas are Chengde City in Hebei Province, Ganzhou City in Jiangxi Province and Bijie City in Guizhou Province. The project is mainly based on the selected 7 pilot state forest farms, take advantage of the historical opportunities of state forest farm reform, draw on international advanced concepts such as FLR, formulate innovative FMR plans, explore and formulate a set of effective improvement of the governance capacity of state forest farms, and precisely improve China's plantation ecosystem service function mechanism system; with the selected 2 counties and 1 city, develop FLR plans (Forest Landscape Restoration Plans) for the 3 landscapes; carry out ecosystem service monitoring and evaluate ecosystem service value of state forest farms; strengthen publicity and communication, capacity building and experience sharing. The project mainly cops with three thermatic topics of biodiversity protection, land degradation and SFM, with a total grant of \$6.42 million, and \$54 million matching funding. The project will be implemented over a four-year period from 2019 to 2022.

1.2 Project Implementation Area

The implementation areas are Chengde City in Hebei Province, Ganzhou City in Jiangxi Province and Bijie City in Guizhou Province (Figure 1), The seven pilot state forest farms are selected as the main body (Table 1), which belong to the warm temperate zone, middle subtropical zone, and the northern subtropical zone. The critical ES cover four categories: provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting, including biodiversity, water conservation, soil conservation, wind prevention and sand fixation, timber reserves, carbon fixation and oxygen release, landscape-based recreation, and forest-based health rehabilitation.



Figure 1: Project implementation areas.

Climate	Provinces	State forest	Operating area	Main forest/	Кеу
zone	and cities	farm	(hm²)	landscape types	ecosystem
					services
	Chengde City, Hebei Province	Mulan Weichang	106071.2	Forests of Pinus tabulaeformis, Larix gmelinii, Betula platyphylla, Picea asperata, Quercus mongolica, Populus davidiana and	Timber reserve, water conservation and seedling production
				Betula platyphylla	production
Warm temperate zone		Huangtuliangzi	14268.34	Forests of <i>Robinia</i> pseudoacacia, Pinus tabulaeformis, Larix gmelinii, and broad-leaved mixed forest, broad-leaved mixed forest and shrub forest	Water and soil conservation, seedling production
		Caoyuan	8686.67	Forests of Larix gmelinii, Betula platyphylla, Ulmus pumila sparse	Water and soil conservation, wind

Table 1: List of state	forest farms for	project im	plementation.
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				forest, grassland and sand dune	prevention and sand fixation, landscape- based recreation
Middle subtropical zone	Ganzhou City, Jiangxi	Anzidong	11280.47	Forests of Cunninghamia Ianceolata, Pinus massoniana, Pinus elliottii, Cinnamomum camphora, Eucalyptus robusta, and broad-leaved mixed forest, broad- leaved mixed forest, bamboo forest and shrub forest	Water conservation, carbon fixation and oxygen release, rehabilitation and recreation
	Province	Jinpenshan	10449.9	Forests of Cunninghamia Ianceolata, Pinus massoniana, Pinus elliottii, coniferous mixed forest, coniferous broad- leaved mixed forest, broad-leaved mixed forest, bamboo forest and shrub forest	Biodiversity protection, water conservation, timber reserve
North subtropical zone	Bijie City, Guizhou Province	Gonglongping	3366.65	Forests of Pinus armandii, Pinus yunnanensis, Cunninghamia lanceolata, Cyclobalanopsis glauca, Birch, broad-leaved mixed forest and shrub forest	Water and soil conservation, forest-based rehabilitation
		Guihua	2966.81	Forests of Pinus armandii, Pinus massoniana,	Water and soil conservation,

		Cunninghamia	forest-based
		lanceolata,	rehabilitation
		Cryptomeria fortune,	
		Pinus yunnanensis,	
		Cupressus funebris,	
		Birch, Sassafras	
		tzumu,	
		Cyclobalanopsis	
		glauca, and	
		evergreen broad-	
		leaved forest	

1.3 Project Objectives and Core Tasks

1.3.1 Project Objectives

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the policies, practices and cases of FLR in China to reduce land degradation, protect biodiversity and adapt to climate change. Through a series of project activities, achieving mainstreaming and localization of FLR concepts, SFM concepts, and ecological service concepts in China, and fully support the comprehensive management of mountains-rivers-forests-farmlands-lakes- grasslands, which is the core of constructing of China's ecological civilization. Specific objectives include:

(1) Implement FLR projects and supplementary actions to enhance the ecosystem service functions of state forest farms;

(2) Incorporate the concept of ES into the priority agenda of relevant forestry policies, and carry out policy formulation and integration;

(3) Capacity building and knowledge and experience sharing: system, financing and promotion;

(4) Monitoring and evaluation, information management and publicity: knowledge, partnerships, project monitoring and evaluation.

1.3.2 Core Tasks

(1) **Preparation and implementation of innovative FMR plans**

Apply landscape restoration concepts and methodology in the preparation of FMR plans. Develop and implement FMR plans in 7 pilot forest farms in Hebei Province, Guizhou Province, and Jiangxi Province as the first batch, monitor implementation results and summarize valuable experience; replicate FMR plans to other nine pilot forest farms in the three provinces to further upscaling the impacts of innovative FMR plans.

(2) Develop Forest Landscape Restoration Plans

Develop Forest Landscape Restoration Plans for Bijie City of Guizhou Province, Fengning Manchu Autonomous County of Hebei Province, and Xinfeng County of Jiangxi Province, apply landscape restoration concepts and methodology for the comprehensive management of mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes and grasslands of the 3 landscapes, and to integrate FLR into the construction of China's ecological civilization.

(3) Propose policy recommendations for integrating the concept of FLR into China's forestry

Propose policy recommendations for the green development of state forest farms; cooperate with the new position of" protecting and cultivating forest resources and safeguarding national ecological security" of state forest farms after institutional reform during 2015-2019, and propose innovative institutional suggestions; as an international projects, the project will also present China case study for the global promotion and application of FLR concepts.

1.4 Project Governmence

The project established a multi-stakeholder governance structure, with supervision of a national project steering committee (PSC), as shown in Figure 2.

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Figure 2: Project operation organization

2. Objectives, Tasks and Methods of the mid-term review

2.1 Mid-term review Objectives

The mid-term review objective of the project is to evaluate the progress of the project since its inception according to the requirements of the project document and results framework, so as to ensure the expected output. Particular attention were paid to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact, network/links, experience and lessons learned, etc., to form a mid-term review report of the project.

2.2 Mid-term review Tasks

(1) Review the progress of project implementation in accordance with project modules. Based on the achievements of the annual work plan and budget review, assess the overall progress of the project since its inception and the completion of the recommendations made in the first annual review.

(2) Evaluate the realization of project objectives and impacts, the utilization

of financial funds, and propose relevant opinions and suggestions.

(3) Evaluate the effectiveness of project activities in terms of timeliness, quality, quantity, and cost-effectiveness, including the effectiveness of relevant procurement.

(4) Compliance check.

(5) Evaluate the capacity and efficiency of the executive agency and executive office, record the difficulties and challenges related to organizational resources and human resources, and make relevant recommendations.

(6) Analyze and evaluate the roles and responsibilities of project stakeholders.

(7) Confirm the role of the project monitoring and evaluation system, especially the analysis of information and data combined with the requirements of the project logic framework, and make suggestions on the timeliness, quality and content of the annual and semi-annual reports submitted by the project executive office.

(8) Assess project risks and reach a consensus on necessary risk response and mitigation measures.

(9) Collect the opinions of project stakeholders and partners on the implementation status and implementation results.

(10) Evaluate the status and progress of the project's environmental and social management plan and gender plan.

(11) Evaluate the status and effectiveness of procurement activities so far.

(12) Reach a consensus on the required adjustments, including the logical framework, project activities and outputs, the adjustment of the total budget and budget categories, procurement, etc.

2.3 Evaluation Methods

(1) Holding mid-term review launch meeting, meeting with the project implementation unit, and establishing contact with key project associates.

On August 13, 2021, the project evaluation launch meeting was held online.

Liu Jing, manager of the national project management office, introduced the overall progress of the project. Lei Xiangdong and Zhang Cheng, evaluation experts, introduced the evaluation plan, and representatives of IUCN China Director Zhang Yan and Manager Sun Yiyun, introduced the project mid-term review requirements.



Figure 3: Project mid-term review launch meeting

(2) Consulting the project task assignment, project annual report, midterm progress report and related technical reports

Before holding meetings with local PMO of the three pilot provinces, experts consulted the relevant project reports in detail, especially the Forest Landscape Restoration Plans and project implementation monitoring report. Partial of materials reviewed are showed here.



Figure 4: Partial of materials reviewed

(3) Project progress report and exchange meeting

Affected by the epidemic, the project progress exchange meeting with 3 local PMO was held online. After listening to reports from the three provincial PMOs, the two evaluation experts discussed with the coordinators of provincial project management office and the managers of pilot forest farms about the preparation of FMR plans, Forest Landscape Restoration Plans, monitoring of key ecosystem services, capacity building, financial implementation, and project problems and suggestions.

On August 27, 2021, the exchange meeting on the mid-term progress report of project implementation in Guizhou Province was held. People from National project management office, provincial project management office, Forestry Bureau of Bijie city, two state forestry farms and provincial experts attended the meeting, totally 19 participants.



Figure 5: Online exchange meeting on project progress of Guizhou Province

On September 2, 2021, the exchange meeting on the mid-term progress report of project implementation in Hebei Province was held. People from National project management office, provincial project management office, Forestry Farm and Seedling Division of Hebei Provincial Forestry and Grassland Bureau, Forestry Bureau of Fengning County, three state forest farms, and provincial experts attended the meeting. In total 23 participants.



Figure 6: Online exchange meeting on project progress of Hebei Province

On September 3, 2021, the exchange meeting on the mid-term progress report of project implementation in Jiangxi Province was held. People from National project management office, provincial project management office, Forestry Farm and Seedling Division of Jiangxi Provincial Forestry and Grassland Bureau, Forestry Bureau of Fengning County, two state forest farms, and provincial experts attended the meeting. In total 20 participants.



Figure 7: Online exchange meeting on project progress of Jiangxi Province

(4) Inspection of project sites

During September 11-14, 2021, mid-term review experts Dr. Lei Xiangdong, together with the project chief technical adviser Dr. Zhang Songdan, and communications officer Ms. Niu Jiayi from national project management office visited the Mulan State Forest Farm and Caoyuan Forest Farm in Hebei Province, inspected the forest stand and monitoring sampling plots. A seminar on the participation of the "FLR plan of Fengning County" was held, discussions were conducted with local stakeholders.



Figure 8: Tending and thinning sample plot of larch plantation



Figure 9: symposium on the preparation of the "FLR plan of Fengning County"

3. Results

3.1 Project Activities and Outputs by June 30th 2021

The project has a comprehensive governance structure, and achieved active participation of project stakeholders. From the inception of the project to June 30, 2021, focusing on the three core tasks of "preparation and implementation of innovative FMR plans", "preparation of FLR plans " and "policy suggestions for integrating the concept of FLR into China's forestry", the project has made remarkable progress in various activities designed in the four modules (including 9 new core indicators of TRI project). Except for ecological service monitoring and overseas exchanges, the indicators specified in the mid-term of the project have been basically met as planned. In particular, based on the concept of landscape restoration, A guidelines for the preparation of innovative FMR plans have been formulated, and the innovative FMR plans (2021-2030) have been prepared and implemented in 7 pilot forest farms; The monitoring outline of key ecosystem

services was formulated, and 237 fixed monitoring sample plots were established; using the forest landscape restoration opportunities assessment methodology (ROAM), three FLR plans (forest-oriented mountain-water-forest-farmland-lakegrass plan) were completed. Through bulletins, international conferences, papers, training courses, official WeChat account and other publicity projects activities, the application of FLR concept, SFM concept and ecosystem service concept in China has been promoted, and produced positive impact on supporting the construction of ecological civilization and comprehensive management of forest-oriented mountain-water-forest-farmland-lake-grass in China. Affected by the epidemic, the monitoring report of key ecosystem services in SFFs and overseas exchanges are relatively lagging behind.

Component, outcome, objective, output		Indicator	Sub-objective	Completion	% Complete		
Component 1	Improving ecosystems serv	rices in China's State Forests Farms	s (SFFs): Implementation of Restora	tion Programs and Complementary Initiatives			
Outcome 1.1	Forests in selected landsc	apes provide relevant ecosystem	services (water, soil and carbon se	equestration), maintain and improve biodiversity, in	crease climate		
	resilience, reduce land degradation, and generate local benefits						
Objective 1.1A	China's state forest farms in	China's state forest farms integrate FLR forest farm management plans, aim to safeguard specific ecosystem service functions (including biodiversity conservation).					
Output 1.1.A.1		Number of FMR plans; the plans	7 FMR plans, include FLR and the	7 SFFs have developed the innovative FMR plans	100%		
	Improved capacity of the	not only include FLR, but also set	corresponding short, medium and	(2021-2030), all using landscape restoration			
	pilot SFFs that can	corresponding short, medium and	long-term objectives.	concepts, including landscape spatial optimization			
	formulate SFM plans, so as	long-term objectives.		and multiple ecological service objectives.			
	to achieve the objectives of						
	FLR in the short, medium						
	and long term						
Output 1.1.A.2	Improved forest landscapes	Number of annual FMR plans	Seven 3-year FMR plans, carry out	The management plans for the first 5 years of the 7			
	of pilot SFFs and ecosystem	developed by SFFs.	activities related to sustainable FMR	SFFs will be implemented in sub-compartments.			
	service functions through		plans oriented towards FLR				
	the implementation of						
	annual FMR plans.						
Output 1.1.A.3	Promote the FLR principle-	Number of FMR plans; the plans	Nine FMR plans of other SFFs in the	Other nine SFFs in project pilot areas have been	60%		
	based FMR plans to	not only include FLR, but also set	project pilot areas	selected as pilot forest farms, and a total of six SFFs			
	municipal level	corresponding short, medium and		in Guizhou and Jiangxi have completed the first draft			
		long-term objectives (outside the		of the innovative FMR plans. The other three forest			
		pilot SFFs)		farms have started to formulate the innovative FMR			
				plans			
Objective 1.1.B	FLR plans implemented in t	he project pilot areas, covering the	SFFs and their surrounding landsca	apes.			

Component, o	utcome, objective, output	Indicator	Sub-objective	Completion	% Complete
Output 1.1.B.1	Cross-departmental	Number of FLR plans at the	3-4 municipal and/or county-level	Using ROAM method, completed the three FLR draft	80%
	(forestry, environmental	municipal and county levels	FLR plans (Bijie, Chengde and	plans of Bijie City, Fengning County and Xinfeng	
	protection, water resources,		Ganzhou or two counties of	County, and the opinions and suggestions of experts,	
	land and resources		Ganzhou), including strategies for	relevant provincial departments and other	
	departments, etc.)		sharing benefits with local	stakeholders are being solicited.	
	collaborative planning, and		communities		
	improved ability to				
	implement FLR				
New indicator	Area of land undergoing	Area	208,919 ha	2.1 Area of degraded agricultural lands restored 442	74%
<mark>2.1</mark>	restoration (hectares).			ha;	
	2.1. Area of degraded			2.2 Area of forest and forest land restored 151,969 ha;	
	agricultural lands restored			2.3 Area of natural grass and shrublands restored	
	2.2. Area of forest and			2668 ha;	
	forest land restored			2.4 Area of wetlands (including estuaries and	
	2.3. Area of natural grass			mangroves) restored 244 ha;	
	and shrublands restored			2.5 Area of desert and other landuse restored: 1772	
	2.4. Area of wetlands			ha;	
	(including estuaries and				
	mangroves) restored				
<mark>New indicator</mark>	Area of landscapes under	Area	208,919.00ha	Complete 213,215 ha, of which	100%
<mark>2.</mark> 2	improved practices			3.1 Area of landscapes under improved	
	(hectares; excluding			management to benefit biodiversity (qualitative	
	protected areas),			assessment, non- certified): 35,080 ha	
	disaggregated into the 4			3.2 Area of landscapes that meet national or	
	categories (indirect			international third-party certification and that	
	impacted area):			incorporates biodiversity considerations: 2,772 ha	

Component, o	utcome, objective, output	Indicator	Sub-objective	Completion	% Complete
	3.1 Area of landscapes			3.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land	
	under improved			management in production systems: 85,266 ha	
	management to benefit			3.4 Area of high conservation value forest loss	
	biodiversity (qualitative			avoided: 90,097 ha	
	assessment, non- certified)				
	3.2 Area of landscapes				
	that meet national or				
	international third-party				
	certification and that				
	incorporates biodiversity				
	considerations				
	3.3 Area of landscapes				
	under sustainable land				
	management in production				
	systems				
	3.4 Area of high				
	conservation value forest				
	loss avoided				
Outcome 1.2	Ecosystem services valuat	ion and monitoring methodologies	in place and measuring the results	; Monitoring of planted and restored forests and SI	Fs in China is
	adequate				
Objective 1.2	Establish methods, indicato	ors, facilities, and data collection an	d analysis systems for ecosystem s	ervices and biodiversity monitoring.	
Output 1.2.1	There are local standard	Number of monitoring programs for	Monitoring plan for each priority	The monitoring outline of key ES of SFFs has been	100%
	processes for monitoring	ES and data storage stations that	ecosystem service (and its related	formed; 237 fixed monitoring sample plots were	
	forest conditions and each	have been established and are in	data storage)	established, and 7 monitoring schemes were	
	ecosystem service	use		completed according to the specific conditions of 7	
	(including types, service			pilot forest farms.	

Component, outcome, objective, output		Indicator	Sub-objective	Completion	% Complete
	flows and trends) prioritized in the planning of SFFs				
Output 1.2.2	Obtain baseline survey data related to specific objectives of each pilot SFF and	Number of baseline surveys completed	Complete 7 baseline surveys	Completed 7 baseline surveys (one for each forest farm), consisting of the 2020 ecological service baseline and the 2019 socio-economic baseline.	100%
	landscape, including forest status and various ecosystem services	Monitoring data and quantity of ES	There are 7 sets of ecosystem service monitoring data sets every year in the three years	Affected by the COVID-19 epidemic, ecological service monitoring will start from the baseline in 2020, and 14 sets of monitoring data sets are expected to be completed in 2021 and 2022.	20%
Output 1.2.3	Collect monitoring data reflecting forest conditions, changes in ES (including biodiversity) and local socio-	Number of comprehensive reports reflecting changes in forest conditions and ES and socio- economic conditions	21 reports reflecting changes in forest conditions, ES, and socio- economic conditions	Due to COV19, the end of 2019 ecological monitoring was interrupted, so only 2020-2022 ES report can be finished. so final output will be 14-21 reports.	20%
	economic conditions, and guide the implementation of SFMs and FLR plans	Number and remuneration of male and female members of the community from different backgrounds joining the monitoring team	Two reports per year (8 reports) by the coordinator of the project pilot areas.	Hebei PMO was established in April 2019, five reports were completed by the provincial coordinator up to date. Since the establishment of Jiangxi and Guizhou PMOs in January 2020, the provincial coordinators have been completed three reports respectively. Monitoring teams have been established in the seven pilot forest farms, with a total of 310 monitoring personnel, including 101 women.	50%

Component, outcome, objective, output		Indicator	Sub-objective	Completion	% Complete
New indicator 4	Reduced greenhouse gas	Emission reduction	11,260,000 (tCO2eq) carbon sink or	8,346,924 (tCO ₂ eq) carbon sink or carbon emission	74%
	emissions: carbon sinks or		carbon emission reduction,	reduction, including 7,482,798 (tCO2eq) direct	
	emissions reductions		including 3,640,000 (tCO2eq) direct	emission reduction and 864,126 (tCO2eq) indirect	
	achieved in agriculture,		emission reduction and 7,620,000	emission reduction.	
	forestry, and other types of		(tCO2eq) indirect emission reduction		
	land use.				
Outcome 1.3	Clear and quantified enviro	nmental improvements sustained b	y local institutional, policy and finan	cing mechanisms	
Objective 1.3	Using the data obtained the	rough monitoring to improve the m	ethod of evaluating the value of eco	osystem services, in order to establish an ecological	l compensation
	system (from the central to	the local level)			
Output 1.3.1	Accounting for the value of	The monitoring data of seven SFFs	A system that combines monitoring	Completed one copy of the "Accounting Method for	70%
	ES and biodiversity, used to	are loaded into the system to	data with value assessment	Forest Ecological Service Value of State Forest Farms	
	grasp and report national	integrate the monitoring data with	methods and paid use plans for	Based on GEP Theory".	
	processes, and to establish	evaluation methods and paid use	ecosystem services		
	an ecological compensation	of ecosystem services.			
	system (subsidies and paid	Number of reports on the value of	2 reports on the value of ES	One resource liability sheet of the pilot forest farm is	20%
	use of ecosystem services)	ES		expected to be completed by the end of 2021, and the	
				ecosystem service value report will be completed in	
				the future based on the value evaluation method.	
		The average incremental value of	Baseline survey and annual PANEL	The relevant data has been included in the 2019	30%
		the target ES, and the related	report of 20 randomly sampled	socio-economic baseline survey report, and the	
		compensation flowing to	households in 7 pilot SFFs (144	relevant report will be completed by project experts by	
		representative households near	households) classified by gender	the end of 2021.	
		the pilot SFFs			

Component, outcome, objective, output		Indicator	Sub-objective	Completion	% Complete			
Component 2	Mainstreaming ecosystem serv	ices in China's forest policies: Policy Deve	elopment and Integration					
Outcome 2.1	New policies, legal and regulate	ory frameworks which facilitate and promo	te FLR and SFM					
Objective 2.1								
Outcome 2.1.1	National and regional forestry	Number of revised FLR	The principles of FLR are included	The project cooperated with the	30%			
<mark>(new indicator</mark>	policy makers obtain relevant	policies/regulations/plans, and progress	in the national forestry policy,	Department of State Forest Farm and				
1)	information and suggestions,	towards final adoption (level 1-4)	including the reform of SFFs, the	Seeds and Seedlings Management of				
	formulate new policies, and use		national forestry survey and the	the SFGA to complete the "Guidelines				
	SFFs as the cornerstone of local		14th Five-Year Forestry	for Development of Innovative Forest				
	FLR		Development Plan, etc.	Management Plan in State Forest				
				Farms" and passed expert certification.				
				It will be printed and distributed to SFMs				
				across the country after soliciting				
				opinions. Other policy-related work is				
				being launched. The policy analysis				
				report has been completed, and the				
				policy window has been initially sorted				
				out to establish a foundation for the				
				follow-up work on FLR promotion in				
				China.				
Outcome 2.2	The SFFs reform fully considers the roles of SFFs in providing ecosystem services and develops appropriate supporting legal, regulatory and financial instruments and policies							
Objective 2.2	Planning tools and governance	structure for FLR adopted by the general	station of state forest farm and fores	st seedling, SFGA				
Output 2.2.1	The management structure of	Seven SFFs change	Seven SFFs have made changes in	The seven SFFs have all completed	50%			

Table 3: Mid-term progress of objectives and outcomes of component 2

	the SFM supports the goal of the	management/institutional structure	management/institutional structure,	institutional changes during the reform	
	SFM reform: FLR and public		supporting the principles and	and become public welfare units;	
	welfare transformation of the		practices of FLR	suggestions on the innovative	
	SFFs			governance structure of SFFs to support	
				FLR will be put forward in the policy	
				recommendations	
Output 2.2.2	The SFFs has a series of	Planning tools such as the FMR plan and	SFFs incorporate planning tools	"Guidelines for Development of	50%
	technical tools to improve the	the sustainable development plan of the	such as FMR plan and sustainable	Innovative Forest Management Plan in	
	FMR plans of the SFFs and	SFFs have been incorporated into the	development plan into their policies.	State Forest Farms" are being	
	implement FLR	policies of the SFFs.		improved, and will be issued by the	
				Department of State Forest Farm and	
				Seeds and Seedlings Management of	
				SFGA, and will be included in the policy.	
		Performance of state-owned forest farms	Nine SFFs other than the seven	Same as 1.1.A.3, six drafts of	60%
		in forest ecosystem service flow	pilot SFFs formulate FMR plans	innovative FMR plans have been	
				completed, and the remaining three are	
				under preparation and approval, and	
				will be completed by the end of the	
				year.	
Outcome 2.3	Increased area of landscapes a	nd afforested lands protected by new polic	cies		
Objective 2.3	The central policy shall be revis	sed within the relevant scope to promote F	LR and the implementation of SFM.		
Output 2.3.1	At the central level, policy	Central government policies (such as the	At least one information briefing	The Outline of "Fourteenth Five-Year"	50%
	makers have information about	14th Five-Year Forestry Development	explaining the way and extent of the	Forestry and Grassland Conservation	
	the potential contribution of	Plan) reflect the new role of SFFs in	SFFS in line with the national	and Development Planning clearly	
	SFMs to relevant national goals;	realizing FLR related benefits	environmental goals	proposes to improve the management	
	these goals include FLR,			mechanism of SFFs, stimulate	
	biodiversity conservation, and			development vitality, and promote	

ecosystem service provision.		green transformation.	

Table 4: Mid-term progress of objectives and outcomes of component 3

Component, outo	come, objective, output	Indicator	Sub-objective	Completion	% Complete
Component 3	Capacity building and knowledg	e dissemination: Institutions, Finar	nce and Upscaling		
Outcome 3.1	Stakeholders in China (national	stakeholders and stakeholders of 3	B pilot landscapes) have i	mproved knowledge of new financial mechanisms, acco	unting system
	and best practices on SFM				
Objective 3.1	SFFs implement sustainable dev	velopment (SD) plans incorporating	1-3 strategic targets to s	upport FLR	
Output 3.1.1	Improved capacity and resources	Number of formulated SDPs	Prepare 7 development	Completed seven sustainable development plans (draft)	80%
	of SFFs to adapt to the new role		plans for the SFFs in the	of 7 SFFs, and the opinions of the forest farms and	
	of public welfare units, and		project pilot areas	relevant authorities are being consulted.	
	continue to support FLR				
Output 3.1.2	SFFs use better market and	Number of SFFs using the	Seven SFF sustainable		80%
	business knowledge to improve	sustainable development plans	development plans that	Same as above, will be put into use.	
	the sustainability of public	among SFFs.	can be used in the pilot		
	benefits generated through		areas		
	management (from FLR)				
New indicator 6	Cross-sectoral government-led	Number of cross-sectoral	3个	Three cross-sectoral collaboration mechanisms based	100%
	coordination mechanisms and/or	collaboration mechanisms or	Three	on this project have been established to support the	
	frameworks incorporating and	framework actions		implementation of FLR across the country and regions:	
	supporting restoration			1. Established 7 government-led cross-sectoral	
	established/strengthened at			collaboration mechanisms at different levels including	
	national and sub-national levels.			the country, province, city, and county.	

Component, outo	ome, objective, output	Indicator	Sub-objective	Completion	% Complete							
				2. Established 4 temporary cross-sectoral collaboration								
				mechanisms initiated by the project, which greatly								
				helped the stakeholder consultation and data collection								
				work required in the FLR planning.								
				3. The technical coordination mechanism initiated by the								
				project, such as expert group, can efficiently carry out								
				training, knowledge sharing, and technical exchanges.								
New indicator 7	Integrate resources to support	Resources invested to support the	\$ 13.5 million	Close to \$ 42 million (excluding matching funds)	100%							
	restoration work in TRI countries	pilot forest farms/landscapes										
	(including government, enterprise											
	and other resources)											
Outcome 3.2	Knowledge-sharing and international cooperation mechanisms further promote transfer and scaling up of project results, especially the collaboration with											
	international initiatives such as Bonn Challenge/GPFLR, CBD, UNCCD, and the South-South cooperation between China, Brazil and African countries											
Objective 3.2	Policy engagement from China	in global processes related to FLR	and the role of forests a	nd trees in mitigating/adapting to global environmental	challenges is							
	increased											
Output 3.2.1	Improved capabilities of SFF	Number of activities that the	2-4 project briefings and	In 2019, participated in 2 international exchanges, held	50%							
	managers can contribute to the	Chinese representatives	presentations per year	1 international training, and organized 1 international								
	development and promotion of	contribute to the global process		training course to introduce China's FLR and forest								
	international policies for FLR	related to FLR		management related experience to representatives of								
				Myanmar and Pakistan. Failed to participate in								
				international conferences after the COVID-19 outbreak.								
				Provided IUCN China 6 copies Project Newsletter								
				(annual in 2019 Annual, 4 copies of Newsletter								
				Quarterly in 2020, and Newsletter Quarterly-Spring								
				2021), submitted the WCC conference project report to								
				the Ministry of Natural Resources of China.								

Component, outo	ome, objective, output	Indicator	Sub-objective	Completion	% Complete						
				Published two project briefings in TRI Annual and IUCN							
				website; at the TRI Annual Conference, held a							
				discussion with FAO-OFFICE of South-South and							
				Tripartite Cooperation to present the project progress							
				and jointly completed a project proposal to promote FLR							
				work in South-South countries.							
Objective 3.3	Information and knowledge gaps	s identified and addressed to better	inform the policy and pr	actical endeavors							
Objective 3.3	Public and/or private financing mechanisms support FLR initiatives										
Output 3.3.1	SFF and County Forestry	Number of bankable initiatives	7-14 Specific packages	4 forest farms have formed financing project proposals,	50%						
(New indicator 8)	Bureaus in 3 pilot areas have	financed	of "Bankable" initiatives	2 of which two have already received financial support.							
	marketable investment products										
	to increase sustainability of										
	operations supporting FLR										
Objective 3.4	Improved awareness and unders	standing among key decision- make	ers and stakeholders of fo	prest services and SFM							
Objective 3.4A	SFM, FLR and supporting planning	ing processes are up-scaled to pro	vincial/national levels								
Output 3.4.A.1	General station of state forest	An online platform featuring	1 online platform put	Established a WeChat public platform to support the	100%						
	farm and forest seedling, SFGA	planning tools and monitoring and	into operation	dissemination of project output, and will continue to be							
	has the latest technology to share	evaluation tools suitable for China		promoted and applied during the project period in the							
	information and knowledge	put into operation		future.							
Output 3.4.A.2	Improved internal and external	Number of SFF social network	500 SFF managers and	The WeChat network platform has got 524 follows with	100%						
	communication capabilities of	members	500 staff from the	more than 11,400 person-times readings; more than 500							
	SFF managers		central to provincial,	people have been covered by the social groups							
			municipal and county-	established by the project around various project tasks.							
			level forestry								
			departments join the								

Component, outo	ome, objective, output	Indicator	Sub-objective	Completion	% Complete
			SFF social network		
Output 3.4.A3	Generally increased awareness	Compile and issue guidance	Guiding documents are	The project guidance documents and related outcome	50%
	of General station of state forest	documents	distributed to heads of	documents (including various introductions, guides, and	
	farm and forest seedling, SFGA,		SFFs	progress reports) were distributed to SFF managers	
	especially with regard to the tools			across the country through training and other forms, with	
	that have been developed to			a total of more than 500 managers.	
	promote the conversion and			A project address book has been established, including a	
	operation of public welfare units			total of 155 contacts at all levels of the country, province,	
				city, county or district, and forest farm.	
Objective 3.4B	The practice of FLR & FMR plan	ning is adopted and implemented b	beyond the pilot areas of t	he project	
Output 3.4.B.1	Provincial forestry departments	ROAMs/FLR manuals in use	Adapted ROAMs/ FLR	Compiled "FLR Theory and Practice Training Textbook"	80%
	have relevant tools to improve the		manuals to be	and "FLR Basic Course", completed a research paper	
	ability of all regional forestry		applicable to China	"Exploration of Basic Features and Application Principles	
	departments to organize and			of Forest Landscape Restoration", and used it in capacity	
	participate in cross-sectoral			building activities. The translated "A Guide to the	
	planning for FLR			Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology	
				(ROAM)" have been shared with project personnel and	
				will be officially published in September 2021. The basics	
				of forest landscape restoration (FLR), the theory and	
				practice of FLR have been mastered through trainings.	
Objective 3.4C	Policy and decision makers from	local to national levels are equipped	ed with knowledge of how	to facilitate SFM, FLR, and ecosystem service delivery	
Output 3.4.C.1	The best practices and lessons	Number of project presentations	Four project	Project information has been shared in various national	50%
	learned in related fields are	made at national conferences	presentations at	training courses and partner meetings more than 4 times	

Component, outo	ome, objective, output	Indicator	Sub-objective	Completion	% Complete
	learned by project communities		relevant national	a year (5 national training courses were held in 2019, and	
	through the implementation of the		conferences a year	7 national training courses were held in 2020 (including 5	
	project.			online training courses), 3 national training courses have	
				been held in the first half of 2021.	
		Evaluate the benefits of best	One evaluation	Work has already begun and is scheduled to be	10%
		management practices for FLR		completed in 2022.	
		through the accounting and value			
		evaluation of ES			
		The project webpage is put into	The project webpage is	The project has established a project column on the	100%
		use and updated regularly	put into use	official website of the SFGA and a WeChat public	
				platform. In total 76 articles have been published by	
				June 30, 2021, which 18 were published on the NFGA	
				website and 15 were reprinted by IUCN.	
		Number of male and female	400 project personnel	More than 1,500 people have participated in various	50%
		representatives participating in	participated in 8	trainings of the project, of which women accounted for	
		relevant national, regional and	national and regional	about 30%; 54 people have participated in international	
		international capacity building	learning exchanges;	learning exchanges organized by the project; since the	
		activities	120 project personnel	epidemic, have participated more than ten online	
			participated in	international capacity building activities have been	
			international learning	organized by TRI.	
			exchanges		
New indicator 5	The number of people directly	Number of people	The number of people	The number of direct beneficiaries of the project is	90%
	benefited by the impact of the		affected by the project	3,064, including 2,303 males and 761 females; the	
	GEF project, counted by gender		is 35000 (direct and	number of indirect impacts is 269,419.	
			indirect), including		
			17500 men and 17500		

Component, outo	come, objective, output	Indicator	Sub-objective	Completion	% Complete
			women.		

Table 5: Mid-term progress of objectives and outcomes of component 4

Component	, outcome, objective, output	Indicator	Sub-objective	Completion	% Complete
Component 4	M&E and information manageme	ent and communication: Knowledge,	Partnerships, Project M	onitoring and Assessment	
Outcome 4.1	A Project M&E framework is des	igned and implemented throughout t	he project life		
Objective 4.1	TRI China project monitoring sy	stem provides relevant, accurate and	l timely information for p	project implementation and the global TRI project.	
Output 4.1.1	Project team, international TRI	Effective monitoring system put into	An effective	One project monitoring and evaluation report completed	30%
	monitoring and evaluation team,	use	monitoring system	in 2020. A total of three sets of semi-annual reports have	
	project evaluators and GEF can		established, including	been completed. According to the project agreement, the	
	obtain effective information about		mid-term and final	financial reports have also been submitted on time. The	
	project implementation in time		project evaluation	mid-term review of the project is in progress.	
Output 4.1.2	The impact of the FLR plan in	Impact data from monitoring of	Three annual reports	According to the ecological and social baseline survey	30%
	China can be shared in domestic	forest conditions and ES integrated	on the impact of the	report, an annual report (2019-2020) was completed.	
	and international conferences	into annual reports	project on forest		
	and events		conditions, ES, and		
			local benefit sharing		
		Evaluate the impact of the project	3 annual reports on	One annual report (2019-2020) of project knowledge	30%
		on policy, planning, knowledge	the impact of the	sharing has been completed.	
		sharing and expansion activities	project on policy,		
			planning, knowledge		
			sharing and		

Component	, outcome, objective, output	Indicator	Sub-objective	Completion	% Complete
			expansion activities		
Outcome 4.2	Project outcomes are communic	ated in an efficient manner			
Objective 4.2A	Awareness of the relationship be	etween restored forests and ecosyste	em service benefits is in	creased among stakeholders of the 3 pilot landscapes	
Output 4.2.A.1	Information and knowledge	Project materials can be seen	350 villages and multi-	At present, the project has produced 1 brochure, 6	50%
	generated by the project received	everywhere in all village, county and	departmental	project newsletter quarterlies, and 1 set of publicity	
	by stakeholders from the village	municipal government offices	government offices in	videos, which have been distributed and broadcasted to	
	to the municipal level		7 counties and 3 cities	agriculture, forestry, environmental protection	
			received project	departments and pilot forest farms in 3 cities and 7	
			materials	counties, and invited them to distribute to surrounding	
				villages. In addition, the project also supported 7 pilot	
				forest farms to make 7 brochures and publicity panels for	
				display to the surrounding communities and other	
				stakeholders.	
Objective 4.2.B					
Output 4.2.B.1	The forest and landscape	Number of international project	2-4 international	2019: one PES international training course, 2 TRI	50%
	restoration-related institutions	presentations per year	project presentations	conferences (Kenya and Italy)	
	and practitioners from Bonn		per year	2020: one online TRI Advisory Committee meeting, two	
	Challenge participating countries			TRI project monthly journals to update the project	
	gain insights and ideas that help			progress, and one article on the IUCN official website.	
	improve project implementation			2021: none for now	
	through knowledge sharing				

Component	outcome, objective, output	Indicator	Sub-objective	Completion	% Complete
New indicator 9	Number of knowledge products	Number of knowledge products	*This is a new	More than 20 knowledge products were developed and	70%
	summarized and released by the		indicator, and its goal	disseminated to the 3 project landscapes. (Newsletters	
	project through various channels		is not stated in the	excluded)	
			project text. The		
			National PMO office		
			proposes 30		
			knowledge products		
			as the target		

3.2 Relevance

3.2.1 The innovative FMR plans developed by the project are recognized as an effective tool for the high-quality development of China's SFFs and the improvement of forest quality

The preparation and implementation of forest management plans have been incorporated into the "Forest Law of China", article 53 clearly stipulates that "State forestry enterprises and institutions shall formulate forest management plans, clarify management measures for forest cultivation, management and protection, and submit to the forestry authorities of the governments at or above the county level for approval before implementation". The project integreted the new concept of FLR and developed the "Guidelines for Development of Innovative Forest Management Plan in State Forest Farms", which are compiled and implemented in seven SFFs. Compared with the traditional forest management plans, the innovative FMR plan is guided by the concept of FLR, follows the basic principles and requirements of FLR, and aims at improving ES, striking a balance between "restoring the ecological function of forest landscape" and "enhancing human well-being". Therefore, forest landscape and ecological service analysis, landscape pattern and structure optimization are all took into consideration. The new FMR plan will consider forest management from landscape scale and multiple ecosystem services. The guidelines of FMR plan developed by the project has a potential of being issued nationwide by the Department of State Forest Farm and Seeds and Seedlings Management of NFGA, which will be a huge success of the project, and also of great significance in promoting the compilation and standardize of FLR-based FMR plans for SFFs in China, and in facilitating the systematic development of forest management in China, and in promoting forest quality and ecosystem services of SFFs in China.

3.2.2 The FLR plans designed and developed by the project are considered as a good way for China's ecological protection and restoration strategy

The Chinese Top Leader Xi Jinping proposed that "the country's mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands and lakes is one life community", and "integrating multiple-ecosystem governance" and "integrating ecological protection and restoration of mountain-water-forest-farmland-lake-grass" have become a core in national strategy "ecological civillization". In accordance with this national strategy, the project applied IUCN's advanced Restoration Opportunity Assessment Method (ROAM) to the FLR ecological restoration planning in the three pilot cities. These tools can help governments and operators assess forest restoration strategies, analyse costs-benefits to identify the high-priority, most important landscapes for restoration, while meet the needs of different stakeholders. Developing FLR plan for the 3 landscapes not only plays an important role in enhancing local ecosystem stability, promoting the overall improvement of natural ecosystem quality and services; moreover, it provides a new paths of landscapelevel ecological restoration management and technical mechanisim, which could be developed into a innovative systematic approch of multi-participatory ecological protection and restoration management

3.2.3 The implementation of the project promote the process of incorporating the concept of FLR and ES into the SFF reform and ecological restoration related forestry policies

"Forest landscape restoration" as an effective ecological restoration method is developing rapidly around the world. Although there are relevant studies in China, it is the first time in China to widly promote the localization and mainstreaming of the FLR concept.

The innovative FMR plans and the pilot FLR plans have accelerated the procedure of formulating policies conducive to FLR, ES and the application of the

concept of SFM in NFGA and in provincial forest and grass departments. FLR concept now has a tendency of rising up to be a tool of SFFs green development and comprehensive ecosystem management. even contributing to global forest restoration by establishing a Chinese roadmap.

3.3 Effectiveness and Efficiency

3.3.1 The project institutional settings and management are strong and functioning well

The project successfully established a multi-level project management organization from the national-level/ provincial level to the pilot forest farms, ensuring the smooth and efficient operation of the project. At the national level, the SFF GEF Project Steering Committee (PSC), Steering Committee Office and national PMO have been established. The Project Steering Committee is responsible for the research and decision-making, guidance, supervision and inspection of major issues of the project, with Mr. Liu Dongsheng, Deputy Director of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA) as PSC director; the director of the Department of State Forest Farm and Seeds and Seedlings Management, Mr. Cheng Hong is the director PSC office; the National PMO is responsible for the daily implementation of the project, Ms. Liu Jing served as the project manager, and Dr. Zhang Songdan served as the chief technical adviser. At the local level, Hebei, Jiangxi and Guizhou have established provincial PMO, and project leading groups of municipal-level and county-level. Through public recruitment, a high-level expert team covering professional fields such as FLR planning, forest management, ecosystem service monitoring and value evaluation, project socio-economic impact monitoring, environmental and social management and knowledge management has been formed at the national and provincial levels, which provides an effective scientific guarantee for the output of the project.

3.3.2 Remarkable progress has been made in the implementation of the project, and the medium-term objectives have been basically completed as planned

Significant progress has been made in the four components, and all the indicators specified in the mid-term of the project have been completed as planned; under the guidance of the concept of FLR, the project has developed the guidelines for the preparation of innovative FMR plans (2021-2030), which has been implemented in the seven pilot SFFs, and promoted in additional six forest farms so far. A monitoring program for key ecosystem services has been developed, and 237 fixed monitoring plots have been established. Using the Forest Landscape Restoration Opportunities Assessment Method (ROAM), three FLR plan for Bijie city, Fengning County and XInfeng County have been drafted.

However, due to unaviodable conditions, such as COVID-19, some of project work were postponed. For instantce ES monitoring in 7 pilots farms can only start after full implementation of the innovative FMR plan in the year 2021, so baseline year of ES monitoring can only be the year of 2020, resulting in the lag of ES monitoring in outputs 1.2.2 and 1.2.3, and the resulting lag of work related to output 1.3.1, 3.4.C.1 and 4.1. In addition, international exchanges were greatly delayed in past years, and policy suggestions have also been affected accordingly. PMO has taken active measures. The relevant output, such as 2.1.1, is slightly lagging behind, but due to the natural lag of policy impacts, the progress is acceptable.



Figure 10: Replanting *Acer truncatum* in the *Pinus armandii* forest of Gonglongping SFF in Guizhou Province



Figure 11: Degraded Forest restoration of Caoyuan SFF in Hebei

Province



Figure 12: Tending operation designing of Mulan SFF in Hebei Province



Figure 13: Monitoring runoff field of water and soil conservation in Gonglongping SFF in Guizhou



Figure 14: Monitoring runoff field of Caoyuan SFF in Hebei

3.3.3 Use of funds

In general, the use of funds is in line with the project plan and correct procedures. Affected by factors such as the COVID-19 epidemic, international exchanges, domestic training and travels that have been directly affected cannot be carried out or reduced (for example, international travel expenditure is 0), and the implementation rate of project fund is low. As of June 30, 2021, the total expenditure of the project is US \$2,348,516.63, with an implementation rate of 36.57%.

It could be seen from the table of the financial progress that provincial PMOs had quite different performances in terms of implementation rate in different years.

A very important reason for that is, in the process of fund use, since the application and payment of funds were done in at least four levels and three times through IUCN - National PMO - Provincial PMO - SFF, the process is long. According to IUCN's requirement, the national PMO could only apply for a new stipend when meeting the criteria of a certain implementation rate of the last payment from IUCN. Thus when an SFF ask for payment from a provincial PMO, or even a provincial PMO asks for payment from the national PMO, if the upper-level PMO is just in the situation of basically using up the last payment and waiting for the next payment from IUCN, the provincial PMO or the SFF have to wait for a considerable long time. Given that fact, if a provincial PMO takes a long time to summarize the expenditure of its SFFs and slightly delays in requesting payment from the national PMO, and then encounters the waiting period of the national PMO, it will directly amplify the delays and affect the project implementation at all levels, especially the implementation of some fieldwork at the SFF level which can hardly be made up once the time window is missed.

After a period of implementation, the process of fund allocation, expenditure, and application between the national PMO and the IA, between the national PMO and provincial PMO and pilot forest farms has become more and more smooth, and the process can be further straightened out to improve efficiency and avoid the delay of fieldwork caused by the process. There were significant differences in the fund implementation rate of each province, however, the efficiency of fund implementation can be improved by strengthening communication, coordination, and running in, and accelerating the reimbursement speed thus avoiding delays caused by payment.

In the current situation, the use of project funds should be able to ensure the completion of the original project objectives; the project is also being implemented at a faster pace and financial execution rates are being improved. However, if the execution of funds to complete as scheduled, it is necessary to require the adjustment of the corresponding budget costs, such as the expenditure of travel expenses has appeared a lot of lagging, and it is difficult to catch up with the

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implementation rate. If the project plan can be extended appropriately, the overall project funding situation should be able to cope, and the budget category adjustment will be better able to support the project to achieve greater results and impact.

	资金排	に行情が	ric s	.表(考	期类) (截止2	则 - 相 021 5	莫块表) 〒6 月 30	Fund E As	exec of Ju	ution ((ne 30, 2	Catego 2021)	ory-C	ompor	ient Ta	able)			
																	筆位: 首	ÉTT Unit USO
	極決	- Componen	t1	種族	Componer	n 2	種物	E Componen	13	橫快	四 Componen	#4	種語	E Componer	nt 5		Bit Total	
集用类别 Catagory	就日 Budget	实际支出 Actual Expenditure	步行室 Esecutio n Rate	预问 Budget	实际支出 Actual Expenditure	执行室 Execution Rate	和日 Budget	供版支出 Actual Expenditure	执行室 Executio n Rate	50日 Budget	交际支出 Actual Exponditure	执行室 Elecution Rate	预用 Budget	交际支出 Actual Expenditur e	执行主 Execution n Raco]社内 Budget	安原支出 Actual Expenditure	执行牢 Esecution Rate
1 回问和公包合同Consultancies & Sub- Contracts	1 130,000,00	\$22,247,48	42.46%	30,000,00	3,000,00	30,00%	143,000.00		0.00%	194,652.00	14,634.00	7.62%				1.697.662.00	\$39,891.48	33.79N
2 采购Proclamment	476,147.00	278,251.06	58.4.6%	29,655.00	14,508.69	48.91%	249,958.00	115,799.55	36 32%	255,994.00	103,117.19	40.12%	150,000.00	56,589.83	37.736	1,162,794.00	568,266.32	48.876
21设备Equipment	251.000.00	145,908.72	58.13%	8,650.00	8,650.00	100.00N	51.900.00	43,772.28	84.34%	25,950,00	21,991 49	84.75%				337,500.00	220.322.49	G5.29%
2.2⑦公运营Office Operation	21,900.00	16.900.00	77.17%	2,190.00	1.100.00	50.236	73.140.00	54,970.00	75.02%	145,570.00	61,125,70	55.35N	150.000.00	56,589,83	37.73%	392,800.00	210,595,53	53.49%
2.9程车费Car Rental	15,000.0p	6,230,51	41 54%	2,750.00		0.00%	29,000.00	11,723,81	40.43%	8,250.00	-	0.00%				55,000.00	17,95432	32.60%
2 - EFFE Translation Costs	attootte	1236235	20.525	6.000.00		0.00%	36,020.00		0.005	18,000:00		0.005				120,000 (0)	17.862.25	10,294
2.5直接材料Promotion Materials	128,247.00	96,859.62	76,63%	10.075.00	4.768.60	47.236	59,948.00	5,433.46	9.06X	58,224.00		0.00%				256,494.00	107,051.77	41.74%
3 员丁丁贷Staff Salaries	450,717.00	209,242.05	46.426	272,806.00	103,148.11	52.47%	269,941.00	137,193.32	50.82%	260,796.00	132,531 50	50.82%	58,000.00	31,747 30	50.7 <i>m</i>	1,812,250.00	653,862.31	49.83N
4. 签依费Travel Costs	10,000,00	39,696.12	56718	12.000.00		0.00%	285,200.00	64,780.53	22.738	393,368.00	-	D.00%	60,160,00		0.00%	820,728.00	101,476.65	12.75%
4.1国内在的Comestic Travel	70,000,00	30,696.12	56.726	12,000.00		0.00%	285,200.00	64,780.53	22.73%	22,958.00	a.	0.00%				390,368.00	104,476.65	26.78%
4 2000 Enternational Travel										370,400.00		0.00%	60,160.00		0.00%	430,560.00		0.00%
王項日清効Program Activities	695,681.00	180,778.35	26.276	90,000,00		0.00%				20,000.00		0.00%				745,584.00	187,778.85	24.514
s 増初研究会会议Traknings Workshops & Meetings	397,400.00	186,398.03	46.90%	77,006.00	41,383.93	53.75%	196,000.00	60,459,56	30.85%	75,000.00	11,000.00	14.676	37,500,00		0.00%	782,900.00	299,251.52	38.22%
Hantli (Barti (B	3 319,948.00	1,418,613,12	42.73%	451,471.00	202,040,73	44.78%	1.144,129.00	378,242.96	33.06%	1.200.810.00	261,282,60	21.76%	305,560.00	88,337.13	92.48%	6,422,038,00	2,348,636,63	36.57%

	Sı	国有 Immary of PRC·	林场GEF项目 -GEF State For	资金执行进度) rest Farm Proj	E总表 ject Fund Execution	n
			(截止到2021年6月30日	As of 30 June, 2021	1)	
						单位: 美元 Unit: USD
		总预算 Total Budget	2019	2020	2021 (截止到2021年6月30日) (As of 30 June, 2021)	总支出 (截止到2021年6月30日) (As of 30 June, 2021)
国家层面 National Level	预算 Budget	3, 458, 094. 00	744, 684. 00	987, 285. 00	1, 174, 969. 00	
	实际支出Actual Expenditure		293, 267, 53	504, 810, 31	439, 082, 37	1, 237, 160, 21
	执行车 Execution Rate		39%	51%	37%	36%
河北省 Hebei Province	预算 Budget	1, 140, 304. 00	371, 030, 00	683, 261. 00	732, 796. 00	
	实际支出Actual Expenditure		25, 297, 69	152.054.07	233, 866, 66	421, 218, 42
	执行率 Execution Rate		7%	24%	32%	37%
江西省 Jiangxi Province	预算 Budget	889, 510, 00	277, 069.00	485, 566, 00	447, 300.00	
	实际支出Actual Expenditure		D. 00	97, 943, 88	147, 403, 16	245, 347, 04
	执行车 Execution Rate		0%	20%	33%	28%
贵州省 Guizhou Province	预算 Budget	934, 110.00	281, 669, 00	478, 169, 00	624, 935. 00	
	实际支出Actual Expenditure		8, 595, 37	90, 971, 83	345, 223. 76	444, 790, 96
	执行率 Execution Rate		3%	19%	55%	48%
合计 Total	预算 Budget	6, 422, 018, 00	1,674,452.00	2,634,281.00	2, 980, 000. 00	
	实际支出Actual Expenditure		327, 160, 59	855, 780, 09	L, 165, 575.95	2, 348, 516, 63
	执行室 Execution Rate		20%	32%	39%	37%

3.3.4 The impact of COVID-19 epidemic

The COVID-19 epidemic has had an impact on project activities, including the implementation of some measures of the FMR plan, monitoring of key ecosystem services, overseas visits and exchanges, and demonstration and promotion of project results at home and abroad, thereby affecting project progress and budget implementation. Most of scheduled discussions and seminars were postponed due to social-distance regulation, and many site activities were delayed since forest farms were assigned to local communities with epidemic prevention duties. Field works are also cancelled because of the restriction on control of transport mobility and crowd gathering.

Considering the future activities of the project, it is suggested that: firstly, extend the project implementation period to enable to complete the long-time ecosystem service monitoring, which will help to expand the implementation areas and impact of forest management measures under the guidance of the innovative landscape restoration concept, as well as the continuous monitoring of post implementation effects and the follow-up of policy impact; secondly, adjust the project budget of international travel expense in component 4 and 5 to ecosystem services monitoring, management plans implementation and capacity building; thirdly, actively explore more flexible, convenient and popular online communication methods to attract project personnel to participate in international exchanges, and resume offline international exchanges when condition allowed.

3.3.5 The monitoring of key ecosystem services needs further improvement

Although the monitoring outline of key ecosystem services has been designed, the quality of monitoring sample plots established in each pilot forest farm is uneven, the main problems are as follow: the background of control and treatment sample plots for monitoring forest management effect is inconsistent, such as tree species composition, age group and density of stand; the sample plots are lack of duplication, and there should be at least three replicates; the

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description of forest management measures is not clear, which should include time, cutting intensity, replanting tree species and density; the monitoring cycle is not clear; the sample plot marking is not standardized, etc. It should be adjusted and improved in the later project implementation.

3.4 Sustainability and Impact

3.4.1 The innovative FLR concept will have a long-term positive impact on China's ecological restoration

As mentioned above, as a new concept, FLR emphasizes the combination of ecosystem restoration and ecosystem services, so as to cultivate a healthy and stable forest ecosystem and satisfy the requirement of human well-being. Facing the new opportunities of China's SFF reform, national startegy of ecological civilization, carbon peak and neutrality goals in 2030/2050, "Guidelines for Development of Innovative Forest Management Plan in State Forest Farms " and "FLR plan" developed in the project, and experiences of implementation in 7 pilot forest farms and 3 landscapes provide good cases and tools for the implementation of the FLR concept in China. The forest restoration area under the guidance of the innovative FMR management plan reaches 157,095 hectares. For example, the basic viewpoints of FLR also have been absorbed in the "Forest Management Plan of Saihanba Mechanical Forest Farm of Hebei Province (2021-2030)". There are good chance that these guidelines and tools will be upscalled to the whole country through NFGA, in order to guide the restoration and sustainable management of state forest farms nationwide, and will have a longterm positive impact on the improvement of forest quality, ecological management and systematic restoration in China.

3.4.2 The concept of FLR is deeply rooted in people's minds through diverse communication and capacity building

The project attaches great importance to the communication of internal and

external stakeholders in the forestry system. The project has produced 1 brochure, 6 project newsletter quarterlies, and 1 set of introduction videos, which have been distributed and broadcast to agriculture, forestry, environmental protection departments and pilot forest farms in 3 cities and 7 counties, and distributed to surrounding villages; 7 pilot forest farms were supported to finish 7 brochures and several billboards showing project information to the surrounding communities and other stakeholders. The concept of FLR is deeply rooted in the hearts of the people.

In terms of capacity building, a total of 12 national training courses and online training were organized, and about 800 people were trained (including about 260 women); about 20 webinars and on-site seminars were held; held 10 provincial level training courses with about 670 trainees (including 150 women approximately). The training content covers project management, theories and methods of FLR, principles and methods of baseline surveys, monitoring of ecosystem services and socio-economic impacts, preparation of FMR plans, and ecological compensation. Through training, project associates at all levels have strengthened their understanding of the concept of FLR and comprehensive ecological management.

3.4.3 Achievement of participation of multiple stakeholders

Within the framework of FLR, stakeholders including international organizations, NFGA, pilot provincial forestry and grassland bureaus, provincial (municipal, county-level) government departments, pilot SFFs, surrounding communities, SFF visitors, consultants, and civil society organizations, enterprises, etc., these stakeholders were invlovedatvt and benefited differently in project.

More than 3,000 people directly benefited from the project. For example, in the formulation of the FLR plans, various departments from finance, development and reform, natural resources, forestry, environmental protection, agriculture,

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water affairs, transportation, meteorology and other departments jointly participated in not only providing basic data, but also jointly discuss plan contents. There are a total of 175 locals in the forest farm community monitoring team, including 78 women, accounting for 44% of the community monitoring team. The number of people indirectly affected by the project has reached nearly 270,000, which has produced effective public influence.

3.4.4 The implementation of planning and monitoring of ecosystem services is a long-term process

The implementation period of the FMR plan formulated by the project is 10 years. After the project is completed, all management activities of the forest farm will still be implemented in accordance with the FMR plan. The FLR will also be elevated to government actions, which will have an impact for a long time. In addition, due to the long cycle of forest growth, changes in forest landscape patterns and ecosystem services also take a certain amount of time, the monitoring of forest ecosystem services will also be a long-term process.

3.5 Network/Linkage

The project focuses on the needs of the implementation process and the long-term goal of promoting SFM and FLR methods. Through the development of project activities, capacity building, knowledge and experience sharing, etc., the project implementation personnel, SFFs, and more extensive networks have been established, connecting various stakeholders, and striving to expand the circle of friends of the project.

The cross-sectoral coordination mechanism and framework action have been established by the project at the national or local level to coordinate and support the implementation of the project. 7 government-led cross-sectoral coordination organizations and 4 project-led coordination organizations have been established at different levels. Extensive cooperation with government departments, scientific research institutes, universities, social organizations and enterprises have been established by the project.

The project has established a project webpage on the official website of the SFGA and published 18 articles; the WeChat public platform "PRC-GEF State Forest Farm Project" has got 524 follows, 76 articles have been published with more than 11,400 person-times readings, and 15 out of them were reprinted by IUCN. To promote SFM/ FLR and to support planning processes to provincial and national levels, an online "Forest Farm Data Platform" featuring the distribution and nature resources of China state forest farm has been launched and will be completed by the end of 2021.

The project has established a number of WeChat-based social networks. Staff, experts, and SFF managers from the national to provincial, municipal and county forestry departments have participated extensively. 500 SFF managers and 500 forestry staff have joined the project information groups, work groups, and coordination groups. The networks have enhanced communication, facilitated information transmission and mutual learning. The above statistics do not include project-related social networks at various local levels.

Actively expand the impact of the project, the number of beneficiaries is 3064 (of which 761 females and 2303 males), and the number of indirect beneficiaries is 269,419. The direct beneficiaries included 1,310 employees (946 males and 364 females) from various forest farms; a total of 175 local residents from different backgrounds from the forest farm community monitoring teams (97 males and 78 females); and 1579 participants (1260 males and 319 females) from managers of forestry departments, forestry farms and other institutions at the national, provincial and municipal levels participated in several training courses held by the project at the national and provincial levels.

It is worth pointing out that the project adheres to the principle of gender equality and attaches great importance to the participation of women. For example, the proportion of female staff in the National PMO has reached 50%; 75 women have joined the community monitoring teams, representing 44% of the team members.

3.6 Lessons Leaned

3.6.1 Good institutional set-up and management is the key to efficient project operation

The project has established a complete management coordination mechanism at different levels from the country, province, city to county, and pilot forest farms, which is an important guarantee for the smooth and efficient operation of the project. A total of 7 government-led cross-sectoral coordination organizations and 4 project-led technical cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms have been established.

At the national level, led by NFGA, "PRC-GEF State Forest Farm Project Steering Committee" was established in May 17, 2019, to hold annual project meeting each year, summary and review the project progress and results, and make decisions on major issues. Its members come from the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Finance, the State Forestry and Grassland Administration, IUCN, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Chinese Academy of Forestry, the forestry and grassland bureaus of each pilot province, and the state project management office; the project steering committee office is hosted by the Department of State Forest Farm and Seeds and Seedlings Management of SFGA to guide the work of the National PMO.

In the pilot province level, the provincial project leading group were also set: the project leading group of Guizhou Province was established on August 12, 2016; the project leading group of Hebei Province was established on August 15, 2016; the project leading group of Jiangxi Province was established on September 1, 2016; each leading group adjust its personnel according to the actual situation. Guizhou Province has also established a project expert committee to provide technical support to the project leading group. Its members include scientific research institutions, universities and industry authorities. In addition, People's Government of Qixingguan District, Bijie City also set up a leading group on July 3, 2019. FLR planning working groups have also been established in Bijie City in Guizhou Province and Fengning Manchu Autonomous County in Hebei Province, with members from more than ten departments including forestry, grassland, ecological environment, and transportation.

The project has also established a number of experts working groups and other technical coordination mechanisms, including national and provincial experts, such as expert groups of FMR plan, planning, and monitoring, to facilitate expert exchanges and provide training for relevant personnel of the project and knowledge sharing.

The project also initiated a number of temporary cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms, with the main purpose of promoting project implementation. The project initiated more than 10 temporary cross-sectoral coordination meetings with representatives of experts, forestry personnel, etc., from various departments of the city and county governments. These coordination mechanisms have greatly helped stakeholder consultation and data collection work required in FLR planning.

The above organization and management coordination mechanisms are all established for the smooth and efficient operation of the project, and they are constantly adjusted in practice, playing a core role in the implementation of the project.

3.6.2 Combination of project implementation and other policy-related projects

The implementation of the project attracted additional national financial projects owing to the new FLR concept, such as the National Forest Tending Financial Subsidy Project, the National Reserve Forest Project, the Forest Quality Improvement Project, the Beijing Winter Olympics Bashang Area Afforestation Project, and the Yangtze River Shelterbelt Phase III Project. The activities of additional projects were implemented with the framework of the FMR plans;

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moreover, these projects increased project implementation funds, and ensures the scientific implementation of the FMR plans and FLR.

3.6.3 Policy and budget risk

Due to SFFs reform in 2015-2019, SFFs became non-for profit organization after the reform, all their forest management expenses are cover by national/local finance. There is no relevant policies and mechanisms to support the forest farms to develop bankable project, and the forest farm itself is not enthusiastic about developing bankable projects, too. It is suggested to change "signing 7 contracts for bankable project" to finish 7 bankable project proposals instead. Then it is up to SFFs to decide how and when turn the proposal into actual project according to the policy situation.

In addition, overseas exchanges and some domestic exchanges have been restricted due to the global Covid epidemic, and activities in this area have been greatly affected. The project has approximately \$900,000 reserved in international and domestic travel and training, which is difficult to implement due to the impact of the epidemic (for example, international travel expenses have been 0 so far).

3.6.4 Scientific monitoring design

The purpose of setting up monitoring sample plots is to obtain the impact of different forest management measures on key ecosystem services and to evaluate good practices in forest restoration. Strict scientific experiment design and professional investigation and monitoring are recomended.

3.6.5 Sustainable development plans of SFFs

According to the project requirements, 7 pilot forest farms have formulated the first draft of the sustainable development plans for the next 10 years, and the forest farm and relevant authorities are being consulted. "Sustainable development plan" is a new thing for most SFFs. It takes the forest farm as a market entity rather than a geographical area to formulate development plans, focusing on the sustainability of people, finances, and materials. It is obviously different from the innovative FMR plans of the forest farms. This is very much in line with the further requirements of the reform goal, such as expanding the effectiveness of ecological protection and supporting people's livelihood. It is helpful for the SFFs to set up clear functional positioning, to build streamlined and efficient personnel, to provide forest management/protection and resource supervision service.

The reform of SFFs further clarified the role of SFFs in protecting and cultivating forest resources and maintaining national ecological security. There is a lack of sufficient motivation and ability to develop special industries such as forest tourism, forestry carbon sinks, and under-forest economy to increase employment and improve overall ecological and social service levels. The "formulating sustainable development plan" proposed by this project is a good inspiration and attempt for SFFs. We believe that through the first batch of pilot projects, the development of sustainable development plans suitable for different forest farms can be a demonstration for SFFs.

4. Overall Recommendations

4.1 Implement and Promote innovative FMR plans

The project has absorbed the advanced concept of FLR, formulated the " Guidelines for Development of Innovative Forest Management Plan in State Forest Farms", which has been compiled in 7 pilot forest farms and will be radiated to additional 9 pilot forest farms. In the implementation of future projects, it will be important to further improve the "Guidelines for Development of Innovative Forest Management Plan in State Forest Farms", pay attention to the convergence with traditional FMR plans, especially how to carry out landscape restoration and ecological service-oriented forest management type design; the second is to promote the guide nation-wide, and develop some tools such as a software for landscape analysis and planning, to facilitate the application of the guide; the third is to complete the preparation of the innovative FMR plans for different pilot forest farms; forth, pay attention to the implementation of the plan, create conditions from the policy, capital and management respects, and ensure that the annual operation in production practice is implemented according to the annual workplan of the management plan, which is particularly important for the realization and application of the concept of FLR.

4.2 Improve Ecological Service Monitoring System and Continuous Monitor

The innovative FMR plans designed by the project covers the supply, regulation, supporting and culture service of the forest ecosystem. Although the "Outline of Key Ecological Service Function Monitoring" has been formulated, in the setting of monitoring sample plots aimed at monitoring the effect of forest restoration measures, there are still somethings that need to be improved, such as inconsistent sample plot benchmark, lack of replications, unclear description of silvicultural measures, and so on. It is recommended that the project sort out each experimental forest farm to avoid the above problems. In addition, how to use remote sensing and other technical means in ecological service monitoring and evaluation, not only on the individule management unit but also on the landscape scale

4.3 Complete the Forest Landscape Restoration Plans

At present, three pilot units have completed the first draft of the FLR. Since the planning involves multiple departments and stakeholders, the participation of multiple departments is very important. besides, it should consider the needs of other multisectoral programs, relevant restoration programs, and stakeholders. In addition to providing reference for government bureau of ecological restoration, the project could further promote and publicize the content and significance of the plan in the three landscapes.

4.4 Provide Policy Suggestions to Promote FLR

It mainly includes: first, how to improve the current forest resources inventory, including factors of forest landscape and ecosystem services into inventory, and to meet the data demand of innovative FMR plan compilation; the second is to provide solutions and tools for the national FLR system restoration and carbon neutralization strategy by formulating the planning and implementation of FLR; third, from the perspective of ensuring the implementation of FMR plans, how to design policies in finance, technology, management and other aspects from the top, promote the innovation FMR plan of SFFs, ensure that forest landscape restoration is really implemented on site.

4.5 Strengthen international and domestic communication, and demonstrate a successful China case

The project should strengthen international and domestic communication, be a plat form that high-level experts and make their voices could be heard through major international conferences and forums and foreign media. The project should extensively summarize vivid and moving examples to show the successful cases of FLR in China, which is also a contribution to the world.

The Project introduces international concepts, combines Chinese practices, and produces Chinese stories. There is great potential that the project could incorporate China's ecological protection and sustainable development concepts and practices in the story of SFF projects, showing a localized and successful story to the world.

Communication is based on people, and various vivid and moving examples can come from everyone. Therefore, it is very necessary to do a good job in public publicity and participation and connect the project with the public. While the project has attached great importance to the publicity and training of relevant professionals, it can increase some activities that the public can participate in, including public publicity and public awareness raising, so that the SFFs and their great functions, the concept of FLR and forest sustainable management can be spread in China. In the process of public participation and publicity, special attention should be paid to the participation of females, ethnic minorities, vulnerable groups and social organizations, so as to tap the multiple benefits of SFFs in biodiversity protection, coping with climate change, poverty alleviation and rural revitalization, and promoting the sustainable development goals of the UN. And make vivid Chinese stories of FLR in SFFs.

4.6 To Better Achieve Project Objectives and Expand Project Impact Through Project Extention

Although PMO overcomed lots of difficulties, and have achieved significant progress in the four components, it is clear that the COVID-19 epidemic had an passive impact on the project, particularly in the field implementation of FLR measures, monitoring of key ecosystem services, overseas exchanges. In view of the normalization and uncertainty of the epidemic, based on the analysis of the current situation, it is recommended that the project be postponed for at least 18 months, so as to better achieve the project goals, including the following key workstreams:

(1) Promote the innovative FMR plans, deepen the practice summary of that, and form specific knowledge results. On the basis of the current 16 forest farms in 3 provinces, it can be promoted in other 1-3 forest farms in other provinces to increase the forest restoration area under the influence of the innovative FLR concept; at the same time, it helps to support summarizing experience of the practice of innovative FMR plans and form specific knowledge products. There are chances that during project extension, the "Guidelines for Development of Innovative Forest Management Plan in State Forest Farms"

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should be officially adoptly by government authorities, so that the concepts of FLR, ecosystem services, and SFM that promoted by the innovative FMR plans can be further applied in 4,297 SFFs in China.

(2) **Obtain continuous data for monitoring key ecosystem services.** At present, only background data has been obtained. By the end of the project, only two yearly-data set on the change was obtained. It is difficult to reflect the effect and impact of FLR. Through the extension, at least three data sets on the change can be obtained as requested by project document, which can be more objectively reflect the effects of landscape restoration measures.

(3) Further develop the FLR concept, in-depth promote FLR localization and mainstreaming. Especially analyze FLR consistency and synergy with China's concept of ecological civilization. For example, summarize and sort out the application case set of FLR in China. Through the extension of the project, the proposed policy recommendations may be approved and adopted, further discovering the effect and impact of the project.

(4) **Expand the public's acceptance and recognition of FLR and ES concepts.** Extend the current publicity and exchange activities to the public level, so that the public can broadly understand the role of forestry and forest farms in providing high-quality ecosystem services.

(5) Allow for full utilization of project funds. The current project fund expenditure rate is only 37%. After the project is postponed, through budget adjustments, the project budget can be better implemented, the project funds can be fully utilized, and the maximum benefit of the funds can be achieved.

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<u>项目名称(中英文)</u>

中期评估专家职责任务大纲

Terms of Reference For Mid Term Review

背景 Background

"通过森林景观规划和国有林场改革,增强中国人工林的生态系统服务功能"(简称"国有林场 GEF 项目") 是由全球环境基金资助的赠款项目,国家林业和草原局为国内执行机构,世界自然保护联盟(IUCN)为国 际执行机构,实施区域包括河北省承德市、江西省赣州市、贵州省毕节市。项目主要以选定的 7 个试点国 有林场为主体,利用国有林场改革的历史机遇,借鉴森林景观恢复等国际先进理念,编制新型森林经营方 案,探索形成一套有效提高国有林场治理能力、精准提升中国人工林生态系统服务功能的机制体制;以选 定的 2 县 1 市为单位,探索编制森林景观恢复规划(即以林为主的山水林田湖草综合规划);开展生态系统 服务监测,评估国有林场生态系统服务价值;加强宣传交流、能力建设和经验分享。PRC-GEF State Forest Farms Project (hereafter "the project") is granted by GEF, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) plays the role of international executive agency of the project. National Forestry and Grassland Administration is the National Executing Agency of the project. Chengde in Hebei province, Ganzhou in Jiangxi province and Bijie in Guizhou province are pilots of the project. The project aims to enhance sustainable management for the State Forest Farms (SFFs) in China based on the Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) and Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). The project will strengthen key ecosystem services of SFFs at geological landscape scale, and evaluate these services by way of ecological as well as economic and social benefits.

项目中期评估(MTR)时间为2021年7-8月。MTR目标是根据项目文本、结果框架的要求,评估项目启动 至今的进展,明确加强项目执行力度、保证预期产出的必要措施,包括但不限于项目整体设计、工作计划、 管理机制等方面。MTR 也需要提出可能影响项目有效实施的问题和挑战,说明这些问题可能产生的影响, 并就项目整体设计和时间提出建议。

The Mid Term Review for the project will be conducted in July-August 2021. The review is being undertaken at the midpoint of project implementation to assess progress and identify corrective measures if required to enhance project delivery for the remaining project duration. The corrective measures could include changes if required to some aspects of the project design, implementation arrangements and/or institutional structure. The Mid-Term Review (MTR) will assess the progress of the project against the approved Project proposal document including the logframe. It will also highlight issues and challenges affecting effective and efficient implementation of outputs and their contribution to project outcomes and impact and recommend whether results obtained thus far warrant any changes in project design and period.

MTR 的原则是:

The principal purposes of the MTR are to:

- 检验迄今为止的工作结果,以改善项目设计、工作计划,保证顺利实现预期产出; examine how the experiences of the Project, at approximately its mid-point, can be used to improve project strategy and workplan to ensure delivery of the outputs.
- 结合预期目标和成果,通过系统、深入评估项目进展,明确需要调整的项目任务,由国家执行办公 室提交项目指导委员会、项目管理办公室批准; based on a systematic and in-depth review of progress in relation to original objectives and expected results, identify and make provisions for mid-course adjustments in the key elements of the project design, in order that the Project Management Unit will be able to submit relevant proposals to the Project Steering Committee;
- 评估是否需要对项目结果、战略、活动之间资金分配进行修改 assess whether modification in the project results, strategies, distribution of funds between activities, the project are warranted as a result of the changing context of country's structure
- 总结梳理经验教训,提高项目执行质量,说明如何将这些经验教训应用于本项目的后续工作。 derive major lessons learned so as to improve the quality of programme implementation; indicate how these lessons may be applied to the subsequent development of ABS mechanism in Nepal

MTR将采用认可性的调查过程而非传统的评价过程,将有助于推进共同思考和相互学习。MTR包括以下组成部分:The mid-term review will be undertaking through an appreciative enquiry process rather than using a traditional evaluative process, which will facilitate collaborative reflection and learning. The mid-term review process involves the following components:

- 1. 对照计划的活动和产出,评估项目的执行情况; A stock taking of how the project is performing against the planned activities and outputs;
- 与项目组和其他利益相关者就项目、活动和成就、经验教训(包括项目设计、技术和社会产出)进行反思; Reflections with the project team and other stakeholders on the project, its activities and achievements to date, the lessons learned so far (including on project design, technical and social outputs);
- 3. 考虑在剩余的项目期内,能够实现的最重要目标; Consideration of what is most important to achieve within the remaining project time frame with the available resources;
- 提出项目设计(包括活动、产出、里程碑日期、预算分配等)需要改进的内容(如有)
 Consideration of what (if anything) needs to change in relation to project design (including activities, outputs, milestone dates, budget allocations etc)

中期评估将包括以下工作 The review will involve the following processes:

- 1. 对项目文件进行案头审查,包括工作计划、执行情况和任何相关产出报告 Desk based review of project documents, including preparing an updated table of progress against the planned activities, and any relevant output reports
 - 年度工作计划和预算Annual workplans and budgets
 - 进展报告Progress Reports
 - 技术报告Technical reports

- 中期评估启动会和汇报会,邀请关键利益方参加,并分别就 MTR 的范围和要求、最终结果达成一 致。Mid-Term Review Launch meeting and summary workshop. involving all implementing partners and major stakeholders, and reach agreements on scope and requirements, final recommendation of MTR, respectively.
- 3. 如有必要开展实地调研, 了解项目现场试点活动的实施情况, 以及各省的利益相关者; Field visit to project sites as needed to gain understanding of the implementation of project field pilot activities, and District stakeholders;
- 4. 撰写完成中期评估报告 Preparation of a draft Mid-Term Review report;

重点关注 Key Focus Areas

中期评估将重点关注 IUCN/GEF 的要求,重点关注如下方面 The MTR Mission will assess the the Project in line with IUC/GEF Evaluation criteria, as elaborated below.

相关性 Relevance

1. 该项目对国际和国内执行机构的战略政策和方案的贡献To what extent is the project contributing to the strategic policies and programmes to both international and national implementation agency?

2. 需要改进的方面 What needs to be done to make thing work better?

- 分析项目工作是否满足利益相关者的需要和需求 Analyse whether the project's approach addresses the needs and demands of the stakeholders.
- 评估项目工作是否与主要目标紧密相关 Assess the relevance of project activities to the project goals

有效性 Effectiveness

- 1. 哪些工作做得好,哪些需要改进?What has worked well and not worked well as expected?
- 2. 活动是否按照项目计划执行?如果没有,为什么? Are the activities implemented in accordance with the project plans? If not, why?
- 3. 取得了哪些成果?它们在多大程度上有助于实现项目目标?What outputs have been achieved? To what extent do they contribute to the objectives?
- 4. 实现预期产出的方法和结构是否有效?如何改进?How effective are the approaches and structures in delivering the desired outputs? How can they be improved?
- 5. 相关方是否有效地协同工作?管理机制是否有效地推动了预期产出的实现?Do the collaborative organizations work together effectively? Is the structure effective in achieving the desired outputs?
 - 审查项目是否完成了其产出; Review whether the project has accomplished its outputs;
 - 评估项目迄今为止的业绩,特别是参照项目文件和工作计划中所规定的质量指标和数量指标; Assess the performance of the project so far with particular reference to qualitative and quantitative achievements of outputs and targets as defined in the project documents and work-plans and with reference to the project baseline
 - 评估配资的有效性; Assess the effectiveness of the co-funding arrangements:

• 根据目前的进展和实地活动的开展情况,提出相关的改进建议 Based on the progress so far and ground situations, suggest / recommend any changes to the above criteria

效率 Efficiency

- 现有的技术和资金是否足以完成项目计划?评估项目是否按照工作计划利用项目资金来实现预期目标 Are the available technical and financial resources adequate to fulfill the project plans? Assess whether the project has utilized project funding as per the agreed work plan to achieve the projected targets.
- 2. 资金的使用是否符合项目计划和正确的程序 Are the funds being spent in accordance with project plans and using the right procedures?
- 3. 是否有任何不可预见的问题?处理得如何? Have there been any unforeseen problems? How well were they dealt with?
- 4. 管理结构中是否有一个有效的流程,用于自我监督和评估、报告和反思? Is there an effective process, built into the management structure for self-monitoring and assessment, reporting and reflection?
 - 分析项目指导委员会(PSC)的作用,以及该机制是否被最佳地用于决策。Analyse the role of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and whether this forum is optimally being used for decision making.
 - 评估项目后续报告的时间表和质量要求 Assess the timeline and quality of the reporting followed by the project
 - 从数量和质量方面评估项目提供的管理和其他投入(如设备、技术援助和预算投入)的情况 Assess the qualitative and quantitative aspects of management and other inputs (such as equipment, technical assistance and budgetary inputs) provided by the project.
 - 确定影响项目执行的因素,包括与政策、技术、管理、机制体制和社会经济有关的问题, 以及项目设计期没有能够提前预见的其他外部因素。Identify factors and constraints which have affected project implementation including policy related, technical, managerial, organizational, institutional and socio-economic issues in addition to other external factors unforeseen during the project design.

可持续性和影响 Sustainability and Impact

- 1. 项目路径是否有可能确保项目结束后的持续效益? Is the approach used likely to ensure a continued benefit after the end of the project?
- 2. 所有关键利益相关者是否充分有效地参与?他们的期望是否得到满足,参与程度是否满意? Are all key stakeholders sufficiently and effectively involved? Are their expectations met and are they satisfied with their level of participation?
- 3. 是否需要其他或额外的措施,如果需要,需要什么来确保持续的可持续性和积极的影响Are alternative or additional measures needed and, if so, what is required to ensure continued sustainability and a positive impact?

- 形成在项目结束后项目成果发挥可持续作用(在基层和政府层面)的初步判断 Assess preliminary indications of the degree to which the project results are likely to be sustainable beyond the project's lifetime (both at the community and government level), and provide recommendations for strengthening sustainability.
- 评估项目干预措施对政策、能力和意识的影响的可持续性 Assess the sustainability of the project interventions in terms of its effect on policy, capacities and awareness

网络/链接 Network /linkages

- 评估利益相关者(政府和民间社会、少数民族、当地社区、学术和研究机构等)在项目执行中的水平、程度和代表性 Evaluate the level, degree and representation by the stakeholders, (government and civil societies, indigenous groups and local communities, academic and research institutions etc.) in the execution of the project
- 评估项目与其他项目的一致性,确定实现目标/指标的联系和机会; Assess the alignment of the project with the other projects and identifying linkages and opportunities for achievement of objectives/targets;

经验教训/结论 Lessons learnt/ Conclusions

- 分析需要改进的项目方案,特别是在目标、决策等方面,以及后续工作所需的时间方面 (关于是否延期、延期时长的相关建议) Analyze areas for improved programme planning, especially with respect to setting targets, decision making, whether project extension is necessary and how long it should be.
- 确定从项目的有效性、效率、可持续性和网络方面可以得出的重要经验教训或结论 Identify significant lessons or conclusions which can be drawn from the project in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and networking

评估专家 Reviewers

MTR 将由一个由两名专家组成的联合小组开展评估。The review will be conducted jointly by a two member team of consultants.

评估专家 A 将负责以下任务 The reviewer A will be responsible for the following tasks:

- 领导 MTR, Lead MTR and be responsible for MTR arrangements and final report;
- 分析从启动到 2021 年 6 月 30 日为止的项目进展 Analysis of project context and progress from project launch to Jun 30, 2021;
- 确定关键经验教训; Identification of key lessons learned;
- 确定本项目中可能具有未来影响的方法和机制 Identification of approaches and systems used in this project that might have future implications
- 中期评估的总体结果; Overall findings from the Mid-Term Review;
- 中期评估建议的阐述。Articulation of the recommendations from the Mid-Term Review.

评估专家 B 将负责以下任务 The Reviewer B will be responsible for the following tasks:

- 审查和分析迄今为止完成的项目报告和文件 Review and analysis of project reports and papers completed to date;
- 对原项目设计和方法适宜性的思考 Reflections on the appropriateness of the original project design and approaches;
- 审议项目方法 Consideration of the project methodologies;
- 合作伙伴和关键利益相关者参与项目活动 Engagement of partners and key stakeholders in project activities;
- 对项目活动预期影响途径的思考 Reflection on the expected impact pathway for project activities;

预期产出 Outputs

最终产出为完成中期评估报告(中文版,需提交纸质和电子版)The mission will complete and submit a final report in both hard and soft copy at the end of the mission.

- 报告结构模板(可参考附件) Draft Report Template: Submission of a draft report format containing Table of Contents
- 中期评估的初稿和最终报告,报告的结构应合乎逻辑,应载有循证调查结果、结论、经验教训和建议,不应提供与总体分析无关的资料。报告应详细回应上述关键重点领域。它应包括为项目制定的一套具体建议,并确定需要采取的必要行动、谁应采取这些行动以及可能的时间表(如有)。在初稿基础上,由国际和国内执行机构在中期评估汇报会中提出相关反馈,会后一周内形成最终报告。报告为中文,由国家执行办公室组织翻译成英文版。The MTR Draft and Final Report: The report should be logically structured, contain evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations, and should be free of information that is not relevant to the overall analysis. The report should respond in detail to the key focus areas described above. It should include a set of specific recommendations formulated for the project, and identify the necessary actions required to be undertaken, who should undertake those and possible time-lines (if any). Both national and international implementation agency will provide feedback to draft report on MTR workshop, and a final report (Chinese version) should be accomplished within a week. Project management office will translate final report into English.

附件 Annex.

中期报告结构模板 (供参考)

Tentative Format: Mid Term Review Report

- 1. 总述 Executive Summary
- 2. 项目简介 Project Brief Introduction
 - 总体情况 Project overview
 - 项目实施区域 Project sites
- 3. 关于中期评估 About MTR Plan

4. 项目结构概述和评估 Description and assessment of Project Design

- 结构 Framework conditions
- 方法 Project strategic approach
- 5. 评估方法和数据情况 Presentation of review method used including data sources and quality

6. 对项目结果的评估 Assessment of the project results

- 总体情况 Summary of the assessment
- 产出指标的质量 Assessment of SMARTness of Output Indicators
- 相关性 Assessment of Relevance
- 有效性 Assessment of Effectiveness
- 影响 Assessment of Impact
- 效益 Assessment of Efficiency
- 可持续性 Assessment of Sustainability
- 7. 总体建议 Key Recommendations