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Strengthening Marine Protected Areas in SE China to conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity

GEF Secretariat Review for Full Sized Project

Basic Information

GEF ID
 9463

Countries
 China

Project Title
 Strengthening Marine Protected Areas in SE China to conserve globally significant coastal biodiversity

GEF Agency(ies)
 UNDP

Agency ID
 UNDP: 5379

GEF Focal Area(s)
 Biodiversity

Program Manager

PIF 0

CEO Endorsement
 0

Project Design and Financing

1. If there are any changes from that presented in the PIF, have justifications been provided?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

April 24, 2018 (LKarrer): Yes. The additional co-financing and addition of a third pilot site are most welcome.

Response to Secretariat comments

2. Is the project structure/ design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

March 23 (HFairbank) & April 24, 2018 (LKarrer): No. Although no KBA analysis has been conducted for coastal and marine areas of SE China (the project area), the globally significant species recorded in these areas-including the flagship species, the Chinese White Dolphin (CWD)-means the project sites would all meet the GEF-6 Criteria for Defining Globally Significant Sites for Biodiversity Conservation. Overall the project is well thought out; however, there are a few concerns: 1) The discussion of threats highlights both sea and land-based threats; yet the planned activities are focused on marine-based activities. Land-based threats include (as noted) pollution from industrial, municipal and agricultural sources as well as habitat destruction from coastal development; however, the activities are focused on activities in the water (e.g. regulations and policies on fisheries, marine spatial planning, marine protected areas). There is mention in Output 2.3 that it will not be possible to address "vast terrestrial hinterlands"; however, even nearby terrestrial activities are not addressed in terms of policies, regulations or incentives to address these threats. That said, there is mention of relevant government agencies being engaged, such as Departments of Agriculture and Forestry, which suggests some consideration is being given to terrestrial-based threats. Please reconsider the project activities to ensure the suite of threats are addressed by working on land-based as well as sea-based measures either directly, through partnerships or other ongoing activities. 2) The scale at which Component 1 relative to Component 2 activities will take place is unclear. The description of Component 1 in PART II indicates activities will be at a seascape scale, presumably throughout southeast China. However, the description of Component 1, Outcome 1 text in Table B mentions conducting CBA Plans across 3 pilot areas plans and at least 2 improved/new provincial and 2 new local rules. These site-specific plans, particularly for pilot areas, seem more in line with Component 2, which is focused in 3 specific pilot areas. It would seem more appropriate for the site specific plans to move to Component 2 and keep the Component 1 activities at a regional scale. Please address this concern. 3) Relatedly, it is unclear why there is only one MPA noted for Component 1 – the proposed new Sanniang Bay MPA and not mention of other MPAs. Please clarify. 4) For Component 1, the eco-compensation and financial sustainability activities are unclear yet an important and progressive part of the project, especially given risk concerns regarding displacement. Please provide more information on where these funds will go – are these national or provincial funds? For what activities? Who will be the recipients? How will these be decided? Again these also seem more site specific, which would be more in line with Component 2. 5) In the Annex A: Project Results Framework: a) Output 2.2 notes enhanced livelihoods; however, there is no indicator for this output. b) The indicators for specific threats in Output 2.3 only address fisheries; there are no measures related to water pollution (e.g. nutrient levels, marine plastic) or habitat degradation. Please revise accordingly.

July 19, 2018 (LKarrer): Yes, these points have been addressed.

Response to Secretariat comments

3. Is the financing adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objective?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

April 24, 2018 (LKarrer): Yes.

Response to Secretariat comments

4. Does the project take into account potential major risks, including the consequences of climate change, and describes sufficient risk response measures? (e.g., measures to enhance climate resilience)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

April 24, 2018 (LKarrer): Yes. In reading through the Risk table and the related Annex E: Social and Environmental Screening Template, there is moderate concern regarding displacement due to the possible activities, particularly new and more effective MPAs, limiting access to marine resources, particularly for fishing, which could lead to economic displacement. To address this risk, there will be a thorough assessment during inception and measures taken, including as necessary a Livelihoods Action Plan developed and implemented. Eco-compensation and livelihood alternative plans are already planned in the activities under Component 1.

Response to Secretariat comments

5. Is co-financing confirmed and evidence provided?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

April 24, 2018 (LKarrer): No. Table C indicates the Chinese government co-financing through SOA Oceanic Bureaus is a series of grants; however, the co-financing letter does not confirm these are grants. Please provide documentation that these are grants in the form of a co-financing letter from the government or other written documentation from the government such as email.

July 13, 2018 (LKarrer): Yes, these points have been addressed with sufficient detail and with the request email clarifying the grants.

Response to Secretariat comments

6. Are relevant tracking tools completed?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

April 24, 2018 (LKarrer/HFairbank): Yes. Question #17 refers to sufficiency of management budget and for all protected areas was marked as a "3"-strong budget/resourcing for management for all of the Protected Areas. The text was highlighted in red in the TT spreadsheet but there was no comment accompanying it. This is likely good news that management budget is sufficient at the outset-but please comment/clarify.

Response to Secretariat comments

7. Only for Non-Grant Instrument: Has a reflow calendar been presented?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

April 24, 2018 (LKarrer): NA.

Response to Secretariat comments**8. Is the project coordinated with other related initiatives and national/regional plans in the country or in the region?****Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

April 24, 2018 (LKarrer): No. The project is planning coordination with a suite of national and regional projects. This includes the Yellow Sea LME project. However, this proposed MPA project is geographically overlapping with the South China Sea LME and, therefore, needs to be coordinated with the South China Sea LME projects funded by the GEF, which are addressing regional level ocean governance focusing particularly on fisheries, pollution and habitat degradation all of which are relevant to this project. Project Document Table 2 shows how this child project contributes to the program at the indicator level of the project. Please add a column showing the actual outcomes of this project that are relevant to the Program Outcomes for a clearer comparison. Please see comments in #11 regarding improved coordination with other program projects.

July 19, 2018 (LKarrer): Yes, these points have been addressed and the project is sufficiently planning to engage with other projects, including South China Sea LME Project.

Response to Secretariat comments**9. Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?****Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

April 24, 2018 (LKarrer): Yes.

Response to Secretariat comments**10. Does the project have descriptions of a knowledge management plan?****Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

April 24, 2018 (LKarrer): No. Knowledge management plans internal to the project's stakeholders are discussed in section A.8 and are well considered, including an emphasis on south-south; however, there are limited plans for learning from and sharing experiences external to the project. In particular it is unclear how the project will engage with other projects in the CPAR program (see next comment in #11). Please address this point. While this project is funded through Biodiversity, the substance of the project is highly relevant to

International Waters projects as exemplified by the ties to the Yellow Sea and South China Sea LME projects. IW has a strong knowledge sharing platform that is designed to share lessons and experiences among IW projects. In the last cycle of funding for IW marine projects, the IWLEARN project was expanded to encourage sharing with non-IW marine projects, particularly MPA projects. IWLEARN hosts a website (IWLEARN.net) and organizes conferences (IW Learn biannual, LME annual), trainings, workshops, webinars, listserve discussions, results and experience notes, twinnings and cross-project synthesis products. IWLEARN provides a great opportunity to learn from, and share this project's experiences, with experts around the world. It is, therefore, highly recommended that this project coordinate with IWLEARN by discussing plans with IWLEARN staff and based on those discussions determining how best to engage. At a minimum this project should be part of the listserve and should plan to contribute to such activities as the annual IWLEARN global conference and regional events. Please address this concern.

July 19, 2018 (LKarrer): Yes, these points have been addressed and the project has expanded its scope on knowledge sharing, clarified ties among the child projects and indicated plans to work with IWLEARN.

Response to Secretariat comments

Agency Responses

11. Has the Agency adequately responded to comments at the PIF stage from:

GEFSEC

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

April 24, 2018 (LKarrer): No. While most of the comments have been addressed from the PFD review, there are two areas that need addressing. First in the discussion of project activities, please state plans to interact with the other child projects. Currently there is brief mention of gaining from other experiences and sharing experiences in section 6) Innovativeness, sustainability and potential for scaling up and then more information in section A.2 Child Project?. The latter section mentions the opportunity for learning and coordinating between marine and terrestrial approaches, which is an important point to note. This concern is particularly relevant to discuss in Component 3 WRT knowledge sharing. Second, while Component 1 discusses resourcing of MPAs and coastal biodiversity conservation, it does not address the broader issue of determining long-term sustainable financing mechanisms, which was a point noted in the PFD review. Perhaps some of the text noted in the Financial sustainability section within the 6) Innovativeness, sustainability and potential for scaling up section could be incorporated into the Component 1 description. Please address financial sustainability of these activities and in particular the interaction between this project and CPAR 6 that is focused on financial sustainability of the PA system.

July 19, 2018 (LKarrer): Yes, these points have been addressed.

Response to Secretariat comments

STAP

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

April 24, 2018 (LKarrer): Yes. The project is well designed to address the concerns identified by STAP, including the need for an ecosystem-based approach and for data sharing and coordination to improve analysis of priority geographies.

Response to Secretariat comments

GEF Council**Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

April 24, 2018 (LKarrer): Yes. The concerns highlighted by the USA to ensure sufficient political support and enforcement are addressed in the project activities, including emphasis on compliance and enforcement and also by the national level commitment to the National Park System. The concern by Germany for the entire Program to prepare sufficient governance plans is addressed by the emphasis on policies, legislation, incentives as well as capacity building.

Response to Secretariat comments**Convention Secretariat****Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement****Response to Secretariat comments****Recommendation****12. Is CEO endorsement recommended?****Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

April 24, 2018 (LKarrer): No. Please address the comments provided.
 July 19, 2018 (LKarrer): Yes, this child project is recommended for CEO Endorsement.

Response to Secretariat comments**Review Dates**

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	4/24/2018	
Additional Review (as necessary)	7/19/2018	

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
Additional Review (as necessary)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Additional Review (as necessary)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Additional Review (as necessary)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

CEO Recommendation

Brief Reasoning for CEO Recommendations

Southeast China is host to a wealth of globally significant biodiversity, including the entire remaining distribution range of the Vulnerable Chinese white dolphin and the habitat for at least 13 other globally significant threatened species, including four Critically Endangered species. Yet, the coastal ecosystems and their biodiversity in southeast China are under extreme pressure from dense human populations, intensive natural resource exploitation and disturbance, conversion of natural habitats and pollution. Although there has been rapid growth in the number and area of MPAs in China, the current network remains inadequate compared to international targets and the heavy development pressures facing coastal ecosystems. The existing MPAs are fragmented and isolated in the wider seascapes.

Recognizing the urgency of these threats and the inadequacies of the current governance systems, this project was created to conserve this globally significant coastal biodiversity through integrated seascape planning and threat management, MPA network expansion and strengthened MPA operations. The project focuses on coastal ecosystems using the iconic Chinese white dolphin as an indicator and flagship species to engage multiple stakeholders in novel ecosystem-based approaches. By pursuing a coordinated, national system of MPAs with strong provincial engagement, the project will establish a functioning MPA Network linking MPAs across southeast China, including a GIS-based information platform for knowledge and information sharing, enhance the coordination of research and monitoring for globally significant biodiversity, and ensure that the project is implemented effectively and knowledge and lessons learned are widely shared with project stakeholders, including the wider public in coastal southeast China and nationally through the GEF-financed, C-PAR Program, of which this is a child project.

This project is innovative in pursuing a coordinated, national system of MPAs with strong provincial engagement. Although there has been rapid growth in the number and area of MPAs in China, the current network remains inadequate compared to international targets and the heavy development pressures facing coastal ecosystems. The existing MPAs are fragmented and isolated in the wider seascapes. This project will address these fundamental concerns.

C-PAR aims to transform China's national protected area system through systematic legal and institutional reform and innovation for conservation of globally significant biodiversity. It therefore forms part of a national suite of connected actions that cumulatively aim to reform the effectiveness of China's protected area system.

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