

**PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENT (PID)
APPRAISAL STAGE**

Report No.: PIDA24435

Project Name	Landscape Approach to Wildlife Conservation in Northeast China (P122383)
Region	EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC
Country	China
Sector(s)	Forestry (100%)
Theme(s)	Biodiversity (100%)
Lending Instrument	Investment Project Financing
Project ID	P122383
GEF Focal Area	Biodiversity
Borrower(s)	People's Republic of China
Implementing Agency	State Forestry Administration
Environmental Category	B-Partial Assessment
Date PID Prepared/Updated	05-Feb-2016
Date PID Approved/Disclosed	23-Feb-2016
Estimated Date of Appraisal Completion	05-Feb-2016
Estimated Date of Board Approval	16-Feb-2016
Appraisal Review Decision (from Decision Note)	It is authorized to proceed signing stage.

I. Project Context

Country Context

China's rapid growth is now a driving force in the global economy and is achieving unprecedented rates of poverty reduction. However, ever increasing economic expansion and diversification is also seriously impacting the natural resource base and generating major environmental liabilities.

Human activities have led to increasing fragmentation of remaining natural forests, and the wildlife they support.

Systematic poaching of wildlife, and encroachment and degradation of habitat have led to severe losses in biodiversity, altering food webs and ecosystem functions. According to the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the endangered status of wild animals continues to worsen - 233 vertebrate species face extinction and 44 percent wildlife species are declining.

Up to the late 1990s logging and timber production was widespread throughout China based on State and provincial forestry farms. Following the national ban on logging declared in 2000, many of these forest farms were converted into provincial nature reserves and often included the retention

of former farm staff. In parallel, the State government established a number of programs designed to restore ecosystem services with a focus on soil and water conservation, of which the Natural Forest Protection Program (NFPP) and the Grain to Green Program (GTGP) were and remain the most significant. These programs also generate additional ecological benefits including the restoration of critical habitat and conservation of biodiversity. More recently as China has continued to make substantial progress in the reduction of poverty and reaching economic standards comparable to the West, but has also made a notable shift towards addressing other priorities including the improvement of environmental quality.

Sectoral and institutional Context

China, with its more than 9.5 million km², has a wide range of ecosystems ranging from tropical forests to pine forests, and from wetlands to deserts. Thus it has a vast biodiversity, including many species of global importance such as the Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*), the Amur leopard (*Panthera pardus orientalis*), the Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*), the panda (*Ailuropoda melanoleuca*), and the Nujiang golden monkey (*Rhinopithecus strykeri*).

China has been occupied by human populations for thousands of years, which through time have led to natural habitat fragmentation, and with a population of over 1.3 billion people it is not feasible to set aside large tracks of land for habitat restoration or natural areas for protection. Thus, in order to protect its biodiversity, China needs to use a landscape approach through the establishment of ecological corridors connecting nature reserves to provide habitat for the conservation of viable size populations of key biodiversity while decreasing human-wildlife conflict.

China is transitioning from forest management practices that previously focused on wood biomass and productivity of fast growing species in plantations, to a more multi-dimensional approach that recognizes the role of natural forest ecosystems in providing a multitude of goods and services including timber, water, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity. However, it has yet to mainstream a landscape approach into land use planning and biodiversity conservation at provincial and local levels.

The landscape approach for biodiversity conservation is the recommended alternative to creating a series of large and connected protected areas. It enables the co-existence of multiple land uses, from biodiversity conservation, to economic activities such as farming and forestry. Thus, this approach also focuses not only one land use (e.g. nature reserves) but also on the inter-relationship between land uses.

This is an innovative approach in China where the work in biodiversity conservation has been focusing on creation of nature reserves and actions to curb poaching. The few efforts to date in landscape planning and management for biodiversity conservation objectives have focused primarily on non-migratory species with relatively small home ranges such as the panda. It has not focused on species top of the food chain, such as tigers, which have far larger home ranges and more potential for human-wildlife conflict.

At present, the habitat for Amur tiger, leopard and many other species of wildlife in the Changbaishan Landscape is fragmented into a series of national and provincial nature reserves with little to no shared connectivity. The results from a recent study supported by China's Feline Research Center (FRC) identified habitat limiting factors affecting tiger populations (e.g., elevation,

habitat integrity, human settlements, road density etc.). The findings of the study were used to identify priorities that if addressed could lead to the restoration of wildlife habitat in the Changbaishan Landscape. These were first to consolidate the existing corridor with Russia along a north-south axis followed by interventions designed to facilitate wildlife migration further “inland” into China along an east-west axis as habitat is made more “wildlife-friendly” and becomes increasingly suitable to support growing populations. If properly managed, the area of forests remaining in the Changbaishan Landscape should be able to support an increasingly complex biota that ultimately could sustain viable populations of higher order predators, like the Amur Tiger and leopard, and their prey, as well as other species.

II. Proposed Development Objectives

The objective of the project is to help create the ecological conditions for recovery of threatened biodiversity in priority ecological landscapes in the far northeast territory of the Recipient (Heilongjiang and Jilin), using the Amur Tiger as a flagship species.

III. Project Description

Component Name

Institutional Coordination to Mainstream Wildlife Conservation across Sectors

Comments (optional)

This component will support a series of activities designed to contribute to the establishment of an enabling policy, institutional & planning framework to facilitate & sustain increased cooperation & collaboration among provincial, national & internat'l institutions in their respective efforts to conserve wildlife & habitat in Northeast CH. This component consists of the following two sub-components: Sub-Comp 1a- Policy & Planning; Sub-Comp 1b- Inst'l Arrangements.

The expected Intermediate Results are: (a) an update & new province-wide tiger conservation management plans submitted to the DRC for Jilin & Heilongjiang Provinces, respectively; (b) establishment of a NE CH Advisory Tiger Landscape Conservation Committee; (c) closer cross-provincial collaboration with Russian counterparts.

Component Name

Conservation of Priority Ecosystems and Increased Effectiveness of Habitat Protection in the Changbaishan Landscape

Comments (optional)

This component will support the strengthening of existing and creation of new Chinese nature reserves, improvement of wildlife habitat in the project's core zone and provision of support for an integrated wildlife-monitoring program. This will be achieved through the following four sub-components:

2a-Increased Management Effectiveness in 4 Existing NRs;

2b- Creation of 3 New NRs

2c- Habitat Restoration.

2d- Technical Monitoring.

The Intermediate Results are: (a) increased management effectiveness among project supported NRs measured by NR specific METT scorecards, (b) 3 new NRs established creating 866 km² of new protected area, (c) 296 NR staff trained, (d) decreased incidence of snares in project area and (e) an integrated cross-provincial ecological monitoring program established.

Component Name

Reducing Human Wildlife Conflict in Priority Forest Landscapes

Comments (optional)

This component will support a series of activities designed to reduce human-tiger conflicts in a buffer zone in proximity to the assemblage of existing and new nature reserves to be supported under component 2. This component consists of the following three sub-components:

Sub-Component 3a: Improved Patrolling and Enforcement.

Sub-Component 3b: Pilot Mitigation Measures.

Sub-Component 3c: Increased Public Awareness.

The expected Intermediate Results under this component are: (a) 26 Construction and equipping of new and upgrading and equipping of existing wildlife monitoring stations outside of project supported nature reserves; (b) 274 forestry staff trained and (c) 75,000 people participation in public awareness events and other related activities over LOP.

Component Name

Project Management and Monitoring and Evaluation

Comments (optional)

This component will support project management activities to be carried out by the implementing agency and coordination between provinces and across international boundaries. Three provincial project management units (PPMUs) will be set up at the provincial level in Jilin (1) and Heilongjiang Provinces (2) two in the latter province due to participation of two partners, the Provincial Forestry Bureau and the Forestry Corporation in the Project. Support from the NGO and research communities, including in particular the WWF and the Feline Management Center (FMC) located in China's Northeastern Forestry University will also be provided.

IV. Financing (in USD Million)

Total Project Cost:	20.58	Total Bank Financing:	0.00
Financing Gap:	0.00		
For Loans/Credits/Others			Amount
Borrower			17.58
Global Environment Facility (GEF)			3.00
Total			20.58

V. Implementation**A. INSTITUTIONAL AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

The management structure of the project has been set up. The project implementation arrangements, in particular the role and responsibilities of government agencies and project implementation entities have been clearly defined and assessed by the Bank.

At the national level, Department of Wildlife Conservation of State Forestry Administration (SFA) will provide the leadership for project implementation, coordinate the involved project agencies, and oversee the project management. It will hold meetings on a semi-annual basis or when requested by the provincial project agencies with relevant project agencies, review project working and budget plans, and monitor the overall project implementation. A National Project Management Office (NPMO) was set in the SFA's Planning and Design Institution of Forest Products Industry (PDIFPI) to be responsible for day-to-day project management at national level. The NPMO will be mainly responsible for: (a) coordinating project supported activities involving more than one province (e.g.,

integrated monitoring) and activities under the Sino-Russian cooperation agreement; (b) reviewing and integrating all needed inputs from the provinces to meet the reporting requirements of the Bank including providing English translations; and (c) monitoring and evaluating project implementation progress and quality to ensure they are in line with the project design.

At the provincial level, three project management units (PPMUs) have been established in the two participating provinces, Jilin and Heilongjiang. In Jilin Province the PPMU has been established in the Jilin Forestry Department (JFD). In Heilongjiang Province, PPMUs has been established in the Heilongjiang Forestry Department (HFD) and Forestry Corporation (HFC), respectively.

The PPMUs will be responsible for: (a) preparing provincial annual work and annual plans; (b) organizing procurement activities and project disbursement processes; (c) conducting quality check for the project activities that will be conducted by project entities to ensure that they are in compliance with the design and the Bank safeguard policies; (d) organizing professional institutions or expert team conducting project social, environmental; and (e) biodiversity monitoring. They will also coordinate with the expert team to provide technical assistance to the project entities through technical services, training and dissemination. The PPMUs are staffed with personnel with specialization in biodiversity conservation, project management including financial management and procurement as well as the project monitoring.

At the local level, ten Project Entities (PEs) exist that will be responsible for the execution of project activities at the field level. Specifically, the responsibilities of the PEs will be undertaking the project activities in the field including small-scale civil works, training to local staff, forest restoration and management, wildlife protection activities and other day-by-day field work.

As part of capacity building activities, the project will support the Advisory Tiger Landscape Committee in northeast of China created on June, 2014., including competent staff is composed of recognized national and provincial experts to provide the technical support to the project implementation, which include a series of activities (e.g., promoting joint anti-pouching activities, staff training, developing a standard monitoring protocol, and the consolidation of statistics), leading to increased cooperation between the project's three main stakeholders and their respective Russian counterparts under the existing Sino-Russian cooperative agreement.

The Committee will serve as a source of technical inputs reflecting the latest scientific data on tigers and other wildlife and their habitat, and it will provide a basis to determine how best the Project can adapt to the latest thinking in a cost-effective manner while achieving the GEO. The Committee would also be available for consultation on an ad hoc basis when necessary

The M&E system includes: (a) monitoring project implementation progress and quality; (b) evaluating the achievement of the PDO; and (c) assessing environmental and social impacts. The execution of most project-supported field activities will be the responsibility of the project entities. The responsibility for M&E however will be divided between the PPMUs and the NPMO. documented in a report and filed.

VI. Safeguard Policies (including public consultation)

Safeguard Policies Triggered by the Project	Yes	No
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01	x	
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04	x	
Forests OP/BP 4.36	x	
Pest Management OP 4.09	x	
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11		x
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10	x	

Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12	x	
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37		x
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50		x
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60		x

Comments (optional)

VII. Contact point

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