

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: EAER

TA No., Country and Name: TA 8269-PRC: Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Yunnan Province			Amount Approved: \$600,000	
			Revised Amount: N/A	
Executing Agency: Yunnan Environment Protection Department		Source of Funding: TASF-Others: \$400,000 Multi-Donor Trust Fund ¹ under the Water Financing Partnership Facility: \$200,000	Amount Undisbursed: \$148,511.46 ²	Amount Utilized: \$451,488.54
TA Approval Date: 10 December 2012	TA Signing Date: 8 January 2013	Fielding of First Consultant: 12 September 2013	TA Completion Date Original: 30 September 2014 Account Closing Date Original: 30 September 2014	Actual: 31 December 2014 Actual: 19 March 2015
Description <p>Biodiversity conservation in the People's Republic of China (PRC) is conducted under the framework of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP), 2011–2030. The NBSAP sets targets for national conservation and commits provinces to prepare provincial biodiversity strategy and action plans (BSAPs). Yunnan Province is a global biodiversity hotspot. Its BSAP, approved in 2013 by the Yunnan Environment Protection Department (YEPD), was among the first in the nation. Despite this positive step, reviews by domestic agencies and civil society organizations (CSOs) identified technical limitations with the BSAP, including (i) limited ranking of priorities, (ii) the lack of an action plan to implement the BSAP, and (iii) lack of training and awareness about the BSAP for stakeholders. YEPD concluded that international best-practice and further technical support was required to address these issues. These measures were accorded a national priority as few analyses of conservation priorities have been undertaken for Yunnan, yet intensive economic development is resulting in the loss and degradation of natural resources throughout the province.</p>				
Expected Impact, Outcome, and Outputs <p>The expected impact of the technical assistance (TA) was improved management of natural resources, particularly biodiversity, in Yunnan Province. The expected outcome was an established provincial framework for biodiversity conservation in Yunnan Province. The TA outputs were: (i) analysis of biological conservation priorities listed within the BSAP completed, (ii) Five-Year Action Plan for the BSAP prepared, and (iii) government capacity in conservation planning strengthened.</p>				
Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities <p>The TA provided 36.75 person-months (pm) of consulting services (4.5 pm of international and 32.25 pm of national consultants). The terms of reference were adequate as the consultants successfully responded to the technical complexity of the TA, which required a range of interdisciplinary skills in biodiversity, climate change, water resources management, conservation financing, and specialized software. As Yunnan's BSAP was approved ahead of the TA (footnote 2), the TA focused on comprehensive analysis of conservation priorities, preparing the Five-Year Action Plan, and building the government's capacity in planning and conservation. CSOs play a large role in biodiversity conservation in Yunnan, and the importance of their involvement was recognized early in TA planning. A review of project stakeholders was conducted in the reconnaissance stage of the TA and identified key agencies to work with. Equipment needs for YEPD to implement the TA were procured. YEPD provided support to the TA consultants and facilities for workshops as agreed in the TA Report. The consultant team worked closely with YEPD and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the consulting firm provided overall quality control. ADB provided support throughout the TA and fielded three review missions. The performance of YEPD, consultant team, and ADB was respectively assessed as satisfactory.</p>				
Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome <p>Under output 1: (i) a technical review of the BSAP, and identification of additional species and sites for inclusion in the Five-Year Action Plan, was completed; (ii) a comprehensive technical and mapping analysis to rank the BSAP Priority Sub-Regions, incorporating biological, socio-economic and financing variables, was completed; (iii) a total of 348 flora and 241 fauna species, and 36 ecosystems, were ranked for conservation priority; and (iv) results were supplemented by expert review from national experts and the CSOs. The results of output 1 formed the basis for output 2. This was the</p>				

¹ Financing partners: the governments of Australia, Austria, Norway, Spain, and Switzerland. Administered by the Asian Development Bank.

² The TA was originally intended to help finalize the draft BSAP; instead, the BSAP was approved ahead of the TA due to revision of internal domestic schedule. This resulted in unused budget allocation for surveys, miscellaneous administration, and contingency.

first provincial-level ranking of conservation priorities for Yunnan Province. The design and monitoring framework (DMF) targets (ranking of 120 species and 18 regions, and threat analyses conducted for 10 areas) were well exceeded.

Under output 2: (i) Yunnan's first Five-Year Action Plan to implement the BSAP was prepared; (ii) the first provincial-scale analysis of climate change impacts to biodiversity in Yunnan was undertaken; and (iii) three information brochures were prepared. The action plan was prepared through a multi-stakeholder review process. Results of the climate change analysis and output 1 contributed to the action plan. The climate change analysis comprised modeling of climate scenarios for landscapes and habitats. The brochures were on three themes: the BSAP, climate change and biodiversity, and community action to reduce climate change. They were tailored to two target audiences, the public and local government agencies. All materials were prepared in Chinese and English languages. The DMF targets for output 2 (three recommendations from output 1 ranking incorporated and two knowledge products prepared) were achieved.

Under output 3: (i) a training program and materials were prepared for a target audience of provincial and county departments and nature reserves; (ii) pre- and post-training evaluation was conducted; (iii) 229 personnel (including 52 women) from 21 departments participated in the training, well exceeding the DMF target (50 personnel from four departments); and (iv) the BSAP and TA were publicized in local media. Positive feedback was received from training participants and included suggestions on how to integrate the action plan in sector work plans.

The TA partly achieved the outcome against its two targets: BSAP approved by 2014 [achieved ahead of the TA (footnote 2)]; and annual budget of YEPD increased by about 10% by 2015. For the latter, YEPD is currently applying to the provincial finance department for increased conservation budget to implement the action plan.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The overall rating for the TA is successful. All expected tasks and most targets were completed, and some targets were exceeded. The participatory approach implemented for the TA improved the quality of the TA materials and generated wider awareness and ownership for the TA findings and outputs. Over 16 CSOs attended ADB review missions and workshops and eight CSOs gave detailed inputs to drafts of the action plan. The training strengthened YEPD skills in conservation practice and raised inter-departmental awareness of the BSAP. The TA also collaborated closely with the ADB Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Core Environment Program (CEP), which includes Yunnan.³ This collaboration resulted in information exchange, joint review of documents, CEP participation in the TA review missions, dissemination of TA results to the six GMS countries,⁴ and follow-up opportunities after the TA.

Major Lessons

A multi-stakeholder approach was critical to achieving inter-departmental support for the action plan. A key risk identified at the outset of the TA was differing priorities or interests between agencies for conservation activities, which might result in reduced acceptance of the action plan. Such differences arose during the TA but inter-departmental consensus was reached through the transparent ranking process and rounds of discussion. The climate change analysis was an added value of the TA (not part of the original YEPD proposal) and illustrated to local agencies the importance of including climate change in natural resource planning. The CSOs noted that the action plan would help focus their conservation and research programs. CEP involvement promoted regional collaboration, improved the technical quality of the TA materials, and strengthened the sustainability of the TA by supporting some of the follow-up actions.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

Actions to continue building on the TA were identified in the review missions and are now being implemented. Since completion of the TA, YEPD has: (i) uploaded the TA materials to the YEPD website (which includes a link to the Ministry of Environment website); (ii) distributed the action plan to provincial government agencies for integration in their five-year sector plans, as well as to adjoining provinces (especially Guangxi and Sichuan) and GMS countries, to promote trans-boundary collaboration; (iii) distributed the information brochures to 40 agencies; and (iv) applied for domestic funds to increase YEPD's budget for BSAP implementation. A review of the action plan is being undertaken by an internal government panel, which will establish the plan as an official provincial document (this process may take several months). CEP is working with YEPD to build upon at least four of the 26 priority actions listed in the plan. The GMS Environment Operations Center has established a dedicated page on its website to the TA, which includes public access to the TA knowledge products.⁵

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³ YEPD is also the executing agency for CEP activities in Yunnan Province.

⁴ Cambodia, People's Republic of China (specifically Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region), Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

⁵ <http://www.gms-eoc.org/resources/biodiversity-strategy-and-action-plan-for-yunnan-province-ta-46089>