

Project News: A New Green Line

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Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation Objectives and Practices into China's Water Resources Management

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Summary

From May to September 2019, the New Green Line (NGL) project has been going smoothly. The 2019 project steering committee meeting approved the annual work plan and agreed on key measures for the next steps. The relation between the project "Green-line Scorecard" concept and the River and Lake Health Assessment promoted by the MWR was clarified. Two training workshops were held in Chongqing and Yunnan respectively, and nearly 110 local representatives received training on River Health Assessment and River Ecology Restoration. To move forward the work in the pilot rivers, Chongqing and Yunnan PMOs organized a number of meetings and field visits, conducted in-depth discussions and acquired preliminary solutions on key technical issues such as ecological monitoring, habitat restoration, and small & medium-sized hydropower e-flow release.

Project Steering Committee Annual Meeting 2019

On May 29, the 2019 annual meeting of the Project Steering Committee was held in Beijing. The meeting was chaired by Shi Qiuchi, National Project Director (NPD) and Director-General of the International Economic and Technical Cooperation and Exchange Center (INTCE). Around 30 representatives from Ministry of Water

Resources (MWR), Water Resources Departments of Yunnan Province and Chongqing Municipality, FAO, The

Nature Conservancy (TNC), as well as project implementation teams participated in the meeting.

The MWR Project Management Office (PMO) briefed the overall project progress, the 2019 annual work plan and budget and project implementation management manual. Yunnan PMO and Chongqing PMO respectively briefed the pilot projects progress. Major issues regarding the project implementation were discussed.



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Project Steering Committee Annual Meeting in 2019

Li He, the project's Lead Technical Officer based in the FAO Asia-Pacific Regional Office, commented that positive progress has been made through joint efforts by PMOs and FAO China Office, with the support from MWR, Water Resources Departments of Yunnan Province and Chongqing Municipality, and TNC. The PMOs are expected to seize the current policy opportunities, focus on the key

issues, speed up the project implementation and prepare for the mid-term review (MTR).

The meeting put forward the following suggestions: accelerate the implementation progress; select technical service providers as soon as possible; conduct thematic research; develop pilot projects; organize training activities, seminars and workshops in China and abroad; cooperate with MWR on key tasks and apply the project outcomes to the work of river and lake management, water ecology conservation and restoration; speed up the project funds allocation; and strengthen financial risk management.

The meeting approved the 2019 work plan and reached consensus on the followings:

First, propose to extend the project implementation period by 2 years. Second, hire a Chief Technical Adviser (CTA). Third, prepare for the MTR. The MWR PMO shall hire a short-term consultant to guide the preparation for the MTR.

Selection and Contrating of Technical Service Providers

From June to July 2019, MWR PMO launched and completed the selection of national-level technical service providers and signed contracts. The Development Research Center of MWR will be responsible for the “National-level Biodiversity Conservation Water Resources Management Policy Analysis (2019)”; China Institute of Water Resources and Hydropower Research (IWHR) will be in charge of the “National-level Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation Water Resources Management Technology and Support (2019)”; and the Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Center will carry out the “Development of the Project Monitoring System”.

At the same time, with the assistance from Yunnan and Chongqing PMOs, provincial-level technical service providers have also been confirmed. Yunnan Institute of Water & Hydropower Engineering Investigation, Design and Research will undertake the “Research and Pilot Work of Water Ecology Policies and Regulations in Yunnan Province (2019)”; Yunnan University will implement the “Investigation and Pilot Work of Water Ecology in Yunnan Province (2019)”; Chongqing Institute of Water & Hydropower Engineering Investigation, Design and Research will be responsible for the “Chongqing Biodiversity Conservation Water Management Policy Analysis (2019)”; Southwest University will undertake the “Chongqing Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation Water Resources Management Technology and Support (2019)”.

“Green-line Scorecard”

On July 16th, MWR PMO organized a meeting to discuss the concept of “Green-line Scorecard” and its connection

with the “Technical Guidelines for River and Lake Health Assessment” (to be released by MWR). Representatives from technical service providers such as IWHR and TNC participated in the meeting.



“Green-line Scorecard” Discussion Meeting

The participants agreed that the “Green-line Scorecard” is consistent with the concept, purpose and method of the River and Lake Health Assessment, and it is necessary to further study the indicators and methods of the “Technical Guidelines for River and Lake Health Assessment” in the pilot areas, in the following 5 aspects: hydrological integrity, physical structure integrity, chemical integrity, biological integrity and social service function integrity.

River Health Assessment and River Ecology Restoration Training

On August 15-16 and August 21-22, the River Health Assessment (“Green-Line Scorecard”) and the River Ecology Restoration Trainings were held in Chongqing City and Lincang City respectively. More than 50 people participated in the training in Chongqing, and over 60 took part in the one in Lincang.



River Health Assessment & River Ecology Restoration Training

At the workshops, Shi Qiuchi, as the chairperson, required that: (1) staff of all relevant departments need to study and master the knowledge and technologies of river and lake health assessment and protection as well as river ecology restoration; (2) PMOs at all levels must strengthen

coordination and cooperation with local technical service providers, promote innovative measures for local biodiversity conservation, and share relevant experience; and (3) project teams should improve the communication with relevant authorities and better promote the project outcomes.



River Health Assessment & River Ecology Restoration Training

INTCE, IWHR, Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Center, TNC, and Chongqing Institute of Water & Hydropower Engineering Investigation, Design and Research respectively introduced the overall situation and implementation requirements of the project, the project implementation monitoring system, the river health assessment method and relevant application, national and international measures and cases of river ecology restoration, practical experience of river health assessment in Chongqing, etc. Participants had in-depth discussion and further clarified the project tasks and arrangements.



Field visit to a pilot river in Chongqing

After the meeting, Shi Qiuchi and some participants visited the pilot rivers, including Wubu River and Tang River, in Chongqing. Shi emphasized that the supervision and management of e-flow should be further strengthened on the hydropower dams operation, and ecological restoration solutions should be selected with the consideration of historical and cultural factors, current ecological balance, potential environmental impact, and others.

Yunnan PMO's meeting and field visit

On August 23-25, Li Bogen, Director General of Yunnan Provincial Bureau of Hydrology and Water Resources and Director of Yunnan PMO, led a team to Zhenyuan and Jingdong Counties of Pu'er City to visit the pilot rivers. The team inspected the restoration of the ecological wetland along Buma River, Enle River and Chuanhe River, the operation of the upstream reservoirs and river dams, and the monitoring of the related hydrological stations and water level stations.



Field visit to the pilot river in Yunnan Province

According to the comprehensive investigation of aquatic organisms in Chuan River and discussions by officials and experts, it is believed that the fish in Chuan River was mainly native species, rather than migratory species. Since the overflow dam has been established for a long time, the native fish have been adapted to the new habitats, with the ecosystem becoming stable gradually. The original plan of constructing fishway needs to be adjusted.



Field visit to Buma River in Yunnan Province

On July 12, Li Bogen chaired the second meeting of Yunnan Provincial PMO in Pu'er City. The meeting discussed the overall objective of the pilot project and the implementation progress in Yunnan Province and relevant cities, and specified the project output requirements for 2019. Water ecology policies and regulations as well as the requirements for water ecology survey were also

discussed. The participants have reached a consensus that it is not necessary to invest heavily in the construction of fishway for migratory fish dominated by native species.

Chongqing PMO: Move Work forward in Pilot Areas

On September 4, Chongqing Municipal Department of Water Resources held a meeting to move work forward in the pilot areas. More than 20 officials and experts from relevant units of Chongqing Municipal Department of Water Resources, Banan District Bureau of Water Resources, and Jiangjin District Bureau of Water Resources, as well as the project personnels from Chongqing Institute of Water & Hydropower Engineering Investigation, Design and Research and Southwest University, participated in the meeting.

The participants discussed the overall project progress in Chongqing, the work plan for 2019, and the implementation of the pilot projects in Banan and Jiangjin Districts. In addition, the technical service providers introduced the recent work progress. It was confirmed at the meeting that: (1) great importance shall be attached to the organization and implementation of the project; (2) responsibilities should be clarified and cooperation should be strengthened; and (3) preparations are to be made for MTR.

MWR PMO Submitted 2nd PIR and 4th PPR to FAO

In August and September 2019, MWR PMO submitted the 2nd Project Implementation Review (PIR, July 2018-June 2019) and the 4th Project Progress Report (PPR, January-June 2019) to the FAO Representative Office in China, with the project implementation progress and financial reports in accordance with FAO-GEF project management requirements.

Project Overview

The New Green Line (NGL) Project aims at catalyzing a profound change in China's approach to river biodiversity conservation. NGL will demonstrate how to implement innovative planning and management practices for improved biodiversity conservation in China's river ecosystems. It will show, how trade-offs between development objectives and biodiversity protection can be systematically assessed and an environmentally sustainable balance can be achieved. The project will combine these demonstration activities with a strong effort to mainstream corresponding stipulations into the policy, legal and regulatory frameworks governing water resource management in China at national, provincial, prefecture and county/district level. The project consists of three major components:

Component 1: "Changing the framework" - Institutional and planning framework for mainstreaming biodiversity into water resources management at national, provincial and local levels.

Component 2: "Enhancing Implementation" - Demonstrate on-the-ground activities for mainstreaming biodiversity in pilot rivers in Chongqing and Yunnan Provinces.

Component 3: "Improving Information" - Creation of improved information systems and capability to use these systems to inform better and continuously improving water management practices serving enhanced conservation of river biodiversity.

For more information of the project, please visit:
<http://intce.mwr.cn/swdyxbhgzslxd/>

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