

NBS Good Practices from Chinese government

May 2019

Conserving Biodiversity for a Beautiful China

1. Background

China is one of the countries with richest biodiversity in the world, being endowed with various ecosystems such as forests, shrubs, meadows, grasslands, deserts, wetlands and seas. The number of higher plant species in China is over 34,500, ranking the third in the world, and that of vertebrate species is over 6,400, accounting for 13.7% of world's total. China has rich genetic resources, as one of the eight centers of origin of crops and place of origin of important crops such as rice and soybeans. China has rich varieties of domesticated animals, and ranks the first in varieties of fruit trees in the world.

However, China is also one of the countries facing serious threats to biodiversity. In the past decades, due to fast economic development and population growth, resource overexploitation, project construction, habitat damages, invasion of alien species, and pollution, biodiversity loss in China has become intensified. Although in recent years, proactive measures have been carried out by governments and departments at all levels, the overall trend of biodiversity loss has not been effectively halted. At the same time, problems, such as unclear background and subsequent changes of biodiversity, insufficient conservation networks, lack of protection infrastructure, imperfect law and regulation system, and deficiency of supervision, constrain the protection and sustainable utilization of biodiversity. Therefore, investment needs to be increased and joint efforts need to be gathered to solve these problems, improve biodiversity protection level comprehensively and achieve the objectives set up in the *China National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan (2011-2030)*.

2. Project Period

From 2014 to 2020.

3. Project Implementation

The Ministry of Ecological Environment took the lead and local ecological environment authorities participated in the implementation.

4. Beneficiary

Whole society.

5. Total Investment and Composition

Up to now, a total of 400 million yuan has been invested by China's central government.

6. Supporting Funds and Composition

None.

7. Project Level

National.

8. Mitigation and Adaptation on Climate Change

Carrying out biodiversity conservation, basically controlling the biodiversity loss, and effectively protecting ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity can improve the health and integrity of ecosystems. Integrate, healthy and diverse ecosystems are of crucial importance for human beings to reduce the adverse impacts and adapt to climate change, and to have higher viability and resilience when facing climate change. Besides, the implementation of this project can effectively safeguard and expand the areas of forests, grasslands, and wetlands in China, which brings positive results to mitigate adverse impacts of climate change through absorbing CO₂ and rebuilding carbon balance.

9. Social, Economic, and Environmental Impact

9.1 Social Benefit

This project has promoted public awareness on biodiversity, making biodiversity conservation a self-motivated action of the whole society. The balanced and sustainable development of society, economy, and ecological environment has been enhanced in regions with rich and sensitive biodiversity. The capabilities of biodiversity conservation and management have been improved.

9.2 Economic Benefit

Researches on the conservation, recovery and sustainable use of biodiversity as well as poverty reduction, have been carried out and corresponding fruits have been promoted in order to fully realizing the value of biological resources, guiding local residents to alleviate poverty and improve their well-being. According to statistics, the annual economic loss caused by alien species accounted for 1.36% of China's GDP, which is approximately 120 billion yuan. Therefore, the economic benefits, brought by effective biodiversity supervision and conservation, are far more than the actual investment.

9.3 Environmental Benefit

Through project implementation, ecological environment in many regions of China can be further improved, and ecosystems can provide better ecological functions such as carbon fixation and oxygen release, air purification, pollution reduction, and wind prevention and sand fixation.