

Natural Conservation Association Pianbian (NCAP)
Capacity-building of local communities and promotion of community forestry Daweishan, Yunnan
Process Framework/Social Assessment

Project background

Daweishan Natural Reserve, located in southeast Yunnan Province, China, is a biodiversity hotspot with many rare and protected species. There are several communities (including Malongdi Village - the main project site, found within the core zone of the Reserve) living in the reserve, and their activities have considerable impacts on the reserve. With the support of GEF/SGP, we established an indigenous peoples and community conserved territories and area (ICCA) in Malongdi Village. However, this project was focused on ICCA registration and community patrolling which did not involve legislation training and sustainable use of community forest. Although the ICCA is found within the reserve, the land is owned by the community, and therefore farming is allowed. However, at present, some land-use (particularly logging) has a significant negative impact on the reserve, and is not sustainable.

Malongdi Village is made up of 42 households (306 people), most of which are of Yi and Miao ethnicity. It is typical of small, poor villages in this remote mountainous area. The average annual income per capita is about 2000 RMB (US\$ 320) and mostly from agriculture and forestry. With the increasing population and the social-economic development, the pressure of the human activities on the reserve is increasing. One major threat is that there is no land (including forest) zoning and plans for land use; human activities may therefore cause negative impacts on threatened species and their habitats. In addition, the education level of the community is not high and they have limited awareness and knowledge of relevant laws and regulations.

Expected project impacts

The project is expected to have the following positive impacts on the community:

- 1) raised awareness and understanding of relevant laws and regulations
- 2) increased capacity for protection and monitoring, as a result of support to patrolling and biodiversity image monitoring
- 3) increased capacity for sustainable management and use of the community forest, through zoning and demonstration of non-timber forest products
- 4) improved livelihoods
- 5) improved access to information on conservation (books and exhibition)

The project is not expected to have any serious negative impacts on the community. Forest zoning may identify some areas which should be protected, and not used. From the results of our previous survey work, we have found that most households here are supportive of zoning certain areas for strict protection. Only 3 households (about 8% of the community) did not support this, as they thought it was inconvenient for them. This project will not force any people to stop cultivating their land. Most private land here has already been developed as agricultural land or fruit gardens. The natural forest which belongs to the community, and that may be zoned as under strict protection, will only be so if the community decides that it should.

Free, prior and informed consent

During the implementation of the previous project, we had extensive consultations with the community. Some activities of this project are continuing the work of the previous project, such as the patrolling and biodiversity image monitoring. Some activities are new, and were proposed by the community itself, such as the exhibition and non-timber forest product demonstration. Thus, the community participated heavily in project design and is fully aware of the work that will be done.

Participatory implementation

In this project, the community is the major party and will participate in all activities, including training, patrolling, biodiversity image monitoring, and non-timber forest product demonstration. In addition, the community will also make important decisions itself, such as the forest zoning and who will be selected for demonstration and exhibition.

How will groups eligible for assistance and vulnerable groups be identified?

Malongdi Village is a small, isolated village. Most households are related to one another and few people work outside the village area. Education levels, economic conditions, and livelihoods are very similar among all households. Thus, all households are vulnerable and are eligible for assistance. In this project, all households will participate in some activities, such as training and the development of regulations. However, for non-timber forest products demonstration and exhibition activities, a smaller group of volunteers from the village will be identified. This group of volunteers will be community members who identify themselves as being particularly interested in participating in project activities (including publicity activities, forest patrolling, recording species, and preparing exhibition materials). The management committee could be elected from the volunteer group.

Measures to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits

The project will organize a village conference with all households in the village, to ensure that forest zoning is agreed by the whole community. In addition, the project will raise awareness of the importance of protected areas (eg, for the protection of biodiversity and the conservation of water and soil) by organizing training and discussion sessions.

The project is not expected to have significant negative impacts on the community. Some households may be unhappy about restricted access to natural resources in areas designated for strict protection following the forest zoning. Previously, some villagers used the forest for logging, hunting, and collecting firewood, for personal use and for sale. However, in recent years, increased protection of the forest (patrolling and training) and the introduction of bio-gas and other energy sources has raised villagers' awareness about the importance of protection. Logging and hunting has significantly decreased, and is no-longer a significant income source for any household. Therefore, the forest zoning will only have a minor economic effect on the community.

Rather than providing direct compensation such as giving money, we will conduct training in order to help them understand the long-term benefits of sustainable land and natural resource management (ensuring access to fresh water, etc.), and the costs of inappropriate natural resource use. In addition, we will further promote the use of bio-gas and develop non-timber forest products to decrease the demands of firewood and compensate the loss of access to natural resources.

How will safeguard measures be monitored?

Issues relating to social safeguards will be monitored directly by the community members carrying out the project activities. This will allow any negative impacts to be detected at an early stage, discussed by the community and project team, and dealt with in an appropriate manner. In addition, the project leader will visit the village every month, and will collect feedback from the community about project progress, and particularly any issues relating to safeguards.

Grievance mechanism

The project will include a coordinator who is based in the village. S/he will collect feedback and comments from the community. The project team will also distribute the contact details (including mobile phone number) of CEPF RIT members at Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden to the community, so that they can directly contact KFBG if they have any concerns

about the project. In addition, the training events and village conference will provide opportunities for people to share their ideas and opinions.