

**Multi-agency Cooperation and Local
Participatory Biodiversity
Conservation in Yunnan Upland
Ecosystems (YUEP)**

**The report of
ex-post
evaluation**

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1. Abstract.....	1
2. Project Synopsis.....	3
3 Evaluation Process and Methods	4
3.1 Briefing from provincial project office.....	4
3.2 Collection and review of project documentation to date	4
3.3 Meeting with members of co-management organizations	5
3.4 Field observation.....	5
3.5 Interviewing the farmers	5
3.6 Feedback	5
3.7 Writing of the evaluating report.....	6
4. The Main findings of Evaluation.....	6
4.1 Community co-management organizations running well	6
4.2 CDCTF as the economic support of the co-management organization	9
4.3 Importance of microfinance for income generation of the farmers around the reserve areas.....	11
4.4 Public education in environment	13
4.5 Biodiversity monitoring systems	13
4.7 Policy advocacy, lessons sharing and social impacts	14
4.8 Problems and requirements of farmers	15
5 Recommendations for follow-up	16
5.1 Phase II of project should be implemented as soon as possible	16
5.2 A linkage between natura reserve, watershed and international river	17
5.3 Training for alternative livelihood	17

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1. Abstract

Yunnan provincial office of the GEF/UNDP Project on Multi-agency and Local Participatory Cooperation in Biodiversity Conservation in Yunnan's Upland Ecosystems (YUEP) invited Kanok Rerkasem of Chiang Mai University and Liang Luohui of United Nations University to undertake ex-post evaluation of the YUEP Project from 2 to 9 July, 2006.

The evaluation confirmed that the project fully completed activities according to the work plan. Firstly, the project maintained biodiversity by comparing the biodiversity baseline which was created through the biodiversity inventory in the beginning of the project implementation and the ongoing biodiversity monitoring. The biodiversity baseline was created through the biodiversity inventory in the beginning of the project implementation. The biodiversity monitoring system was established during the project implementation. For example, the populations of birds and snakes have increased. Secondly, the project alleviated poverty problems and some farm households have lifted out of poverty. As a result it stimulated participation of farm households.

Thirdly, the project established community based co-management organizations through democratic procedure, including joint election campaign and direct voting. The villagers are primary in the co-management organizations. Other stakeholders, such as government agencies and companies are partners of the co-management organizations. The co-management organizations have formulated community regulations for biodiversity conservation and nature resources management. The two watershed co-management councils on township level and 9 co-management groups on village level have registered at the Department of Civil Affairs and become legal, independent, and enjoy equality with government agency;

Fourthly, the project carried out diverse forms of education and awareness building on environmental conservation. The environmental awareness of villagers

and stakeholders was raised, while the conservation capacities of local government agencies were improved;

Fifthly, the project developed mechanism and promoted multi-agencies cooperation during the project implementation. The provincial project office as the core unit cooperated with government agencies such as financial department, forestry bureau, agricultural department, environmental bureau and poverty alleviation office in provincial level. Many universities and research units, including Yunnan University, Southwest forestry collage, Yunnan normal University, Yunnan academy of social science, institute of Kunming botany, institute of Kunming Zoology and academy of forestry science took part in the project implementation;

Sixthly, project experiences were disseminated widely through various channels. An international workshop was organized to exchange and share the project experiences with others in Beijing. The project experiences were submitted to central government through the institute of Communist Party of China policy research. They were also replicated in the neighboring region by local governments. The project was recognized and many delegations from more than 10 international organizations visited the project sites for learning the project lessons.

The project also undertook the following activities, which were additional to the project plan:

- (1) organized 10 villagers to visit a similar project in Chiang Mai, Thailand;
- (2) obtained 3 million Yuan (RMB) of co-financing from the government to support the project implementation;
- (3) established community development and conservation trust fund to help local villagers' income generation and support co-management organization;
- (4) adapted the micro credit model to operate the trust funds;
- (5) published 6 books to disseminate the project experiences and lessons;
- (6) developed community-based biodiversity monitoring systems;
- (7) built human capacity. 28 persons joined graduate program and three people studied for master degree (two of them studied in Chiang Mai University). Two master students of southwest forestry collage did their research under the project.

The evaluation team made the following recommendations:

As local people were actively participating in the project activities and have strongly asked for continuing the project implementation, we recommend that YUEP be continued and suggest the second phase of the project be developed to improve and replicate the project models. The new aspects of the second phase could focus on 1) identification of sustainable approaches to exchange and collaboration among villages at the watershed level. (2) improvement and consolidation of community based biodiversity monitoring system as a model for wider replication in other areas of southwest China; 3) examination of possibility to use loan from commercial banks to expansion trust funds; 4) development of alternative livelihoods, especially in the buffer zone where traditional use of natural resources is very much restricted; 5)

development of mechanisms for conflict resolution on access to natural resources in and around the nature reserves.

2. YUEP Project Synopsis

The Project on Multi-agency Cooperation and Local Participatory in Biodiversity Conservation in Yunnan Upland Ecosystems (YUEP) was approved by Yunnan Provincial Government and the Operational Focal Point at Ministry of Finance and funded by GEF and implemented by UNDP. It was submitted jointly by Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences (YASS), US-China Environmental Fund (USCEF), University of Wisconsin and Chiang Mai University. It is a multi-lateral international cooperation and multi-disciplines project.

The project objective were to protect the upland biodiversity of Wuliangshan (Yunnan), and effectively and efficiently manage it for sustainable use, with the full cooperation and collaboration of different stakeholders.

The expected project outcomes included: (1) replicable models of community-based natural resource management on a watershed basis are developed, tested and refined; (2) immediate threats and root causes of biodiversity loss are addressed by communities and government decision-makers; and (3) reserve management approaches assuring ecosystem integrity and preservation of biodiversity are developed, tested and refined.

Indicators for achievement of these objectives and outcomes were set as: (1) current level of biodiversity (especially the threatened species of plants and vertebrate animals) & extent of bio-habitat area are maintained, through effective management of reserve with local community participation; (2) quality of existing forest habitat improved; (3) effective community-based watershed management council model is established that identifies root causes of biodiversity loss, takes appropriate interventions; (4) government policy at all levels support community conservation activities; (5) appropriate scientific support to design & execution of biodiversity conservation activities; (6) public support increased through awareness of importance of biodiversity.

Due to constraints of time and resources, this evaluation was limited on identification of some useful lessons learned from the project implementation. The evaluation team combined this evaluation with their mission of United Nations University to Dehong, Yunnan, China, 5-9 July 2006.

3 Evaluation Process and Methods

3.1 Briefing from provincial office of YUEP

On 3 July, 2006, the staff of the provincial project office briefed the evaluation team about the project and its implementation, and discussed the programme of the field visit.

3.2 Collection and review of the project documentation to date

The evaluation team has collected the information that are related to YUEP project, as below:

- (1) Implementing plan which was sanctified by GEF/UNDP;
- (2) The reports of baseline socio-economic survey in the project sites;
- (3) The project newsletters (NO.1-6);
- (4) The project series of books which were published by Yunnan University Press in August of 2004:
 - “Who is the main body of natural reserve ——community of co-management of forest, natural reserve and biodiversity” edited by Zhao Junchen;
 - “Biodiversity investigation and study in YUEP project areas” edited by Yu Qingguo;
 - “Participatory land use planning--theory and method” edited by Xuan Yi;
 - “Environment and biodiversity conservation—public environmental education textbook at intermediate level” edited by Wang Jinliang, Wang Ping and He Yunyan;
 - “Primary textbook for biodiversity conservation” edited by Wang Lida and Li Yun;
 - “Who is the main stakeholder for biodiversity conservation” edited by Zhao Junchen;
- (5) Internal publication which is only for the leadership of center government and wrote by Institute of CPC Policy study;
- (6) The reporters of “People’s Daily”, “South Weekend”, etc have interviewed local people in project sites and published news about the project;
- (7) Published 8 reports of investigation and evaluation in the influential magazines, such as “Hongqi Manuscripts”, which is supplement of CPC’s theoretical journal of “Qiushi”, and in “Green China”, which is published by State Forestry Administration.

3.3 Meeting with members of co-management organizations

In the afternoon of July 3, 2006, the evaluation team accompanied by the provincial project officers went to Nanjian County.

In the morning of July 4, the evaluation team held the meeting in Shale township, Nanjian County. The members of project office in county and township level and 18 village co-management team leaders attended the meeting. There were three items on the agenda of the meeting: (1) briefing from project offices at county and township level; (2) briefing from village co-management groups; (3) discussing with village co-management groups about the project implementation.

All of the local participants expressed a desire to continue implementing the project as soon as possible.

3.4 Field observation

In the afternoon of 4, July the evaluation team went to the project sites as Shale village, Daxiechang village and Baomao village. The team observed the forest coverage in Natural Reserve and slope land, economic forest (especially, walnut tree and tea garden) in the agricultural fields to understand real situation of the project sites.

3.5 Interviewing the farmers

The evaluation team visited Bi Guangwen's family (Mr. Bi is head of Daxiechang village co-management group), checked his bio-gas, which was supported by YUEP project. They observed energy-saving stoves, and technique for feeding livestock with uncooked fodder introduced by YUEP. The traditional techniques would "cook" the fodder and consume a lot of firewood. They also discussed with family's members about the project implementation and participatory approach.

3.6 Feedback

In the evening of 4, July, 2006 the evaluation team discussed the project experience, existing problems and measures of improvement with the provincial project office staff in Nanjing Hotel.

July 9, the evaluation team further discussed the project experience; existing problems and measures of improvement with the provincial project office staff. An official from provincial finance department also attended the meeting.

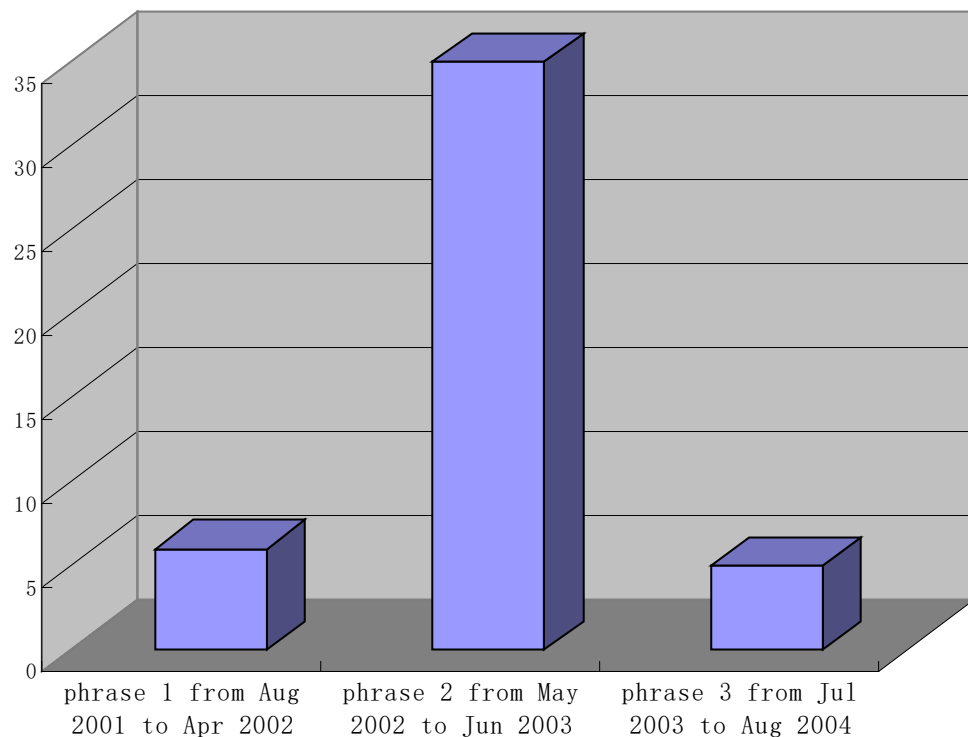
3.7 Writing of the evaluating report

4. The Main findings of Evaluation

4.1 community co-management organizations (CM) running well

The CM model was tested in the beginning of project implementation. YUEP ensured that local villagers were primary and other stakeholders were partnership of the CM organizations. 2 township watershed co-management councils and 46 village co-management groups had been set up by August 2004. Recently, co-management organizations in all level is still going well although the project was completed two years ago. Especially, village co-management groups has been operating smoothly.

graph1 the process of co-managment organization



Progress of co-management organization (number of CM organizations)

4.1.1 Direct Election of Villager's Representatives of CMCs by Villagers

Generally there are several steps to elect villager's representatives. First step was "Haixian" to nominate candidates. Every villager aged eighteen or over has right to nominate or to be nominated. Villagers could individually, jointly or by

self-recommendation nominate villager candidates, while local government can not designate candidates. The second step was “Zuhe” to formulate the hopeful group with 7 candidates. Each candidate should invite 6 members to join campaign. “Zuhe” means that 7 villager candidates should organize as a group to compete with other hopeful groups. Thirdly, members of each hopeful group will give a speech openly in villagers’ meeting to express their planning of operating the CM group. Fourthly, secret balloting is organized for election. During the election process, there are some cases well reflecting the grass-roots democracy, that many government officials at township and village levels were not elected, since they could not represent villagers’ interests in the CM group in practice.

The evaluation group concluded that the design of election procedure was comparatively fair, emphasizing the dependence of the villagers rather than exterior support to ensure the long-time existence of the CM group.

4.1.2 An Independent Cooperate Organization

As a trial, CM organizations of YUEP take two forms. One is Watershed or Township Community Co-Management Council (township CMC), and other is Natural Village Co-Management Group (NVCG). And now in the two project sites there are two township CMCs and 9 NVGGs registered as NGOs by local civil administration bureaus. As a result they can engage various civil activities.

4.1.3 Extensive Participation of Villagers

According to principles of Co-Management organizations, on the one hand, villagers directly participate in managing, using and conserving natural resources through village charters, rules and concrete programs. On the other hand, they play roles in decision making on important issues in the management of natural resources at local level, such as designing and implementing of resource management programs, monitoring natural resource and benefit-sharing, through democratically elected villager representatives in the CM group. Additionally, Co-Management organizations also pay attention to interests of the weak, including women, children, and other sick and disable people in order to ensure their equal participation in the project.

4.1.4 Overcoming Shortcomings of Existing Villager Committee

Along with the implementation of “The Law of Organization for Villager Committee of the People’s Republic of China” in 1987, grass-roots democracy in rural areas of China has been developed well to establish the Village Committee. However, considering many factors there is a long way to improve village democracy according to the interview with the YUEP project office. Particularly, there is a need to further develop and improve procedure and system for self determination and autonomic decision-making of villagers. For example, representatives of the villager committee are usually nominated by local government. In fact, some of them may not represent villagers’ own interests and they are not trusted by villagers. Situation of the villager committee is even worse in the poor mountain areas of the west, China. Credibility of villager committee is very low among villagers since it seldom cares about villagers’ concerns. It instead only cooperates with local government to collect agricultural taxes from villagers and implement Policy of Family Planning. After removal of agricultural taxes, the village committee would have less legitimate to

function. Salaries for director and secretary of the villager committee are directly covered by financial bureau at provincial level. There is little incentive for the village committee to serve interests of villagers in reality. Considering above shortcomings of the villager committee, Co-Management organizations of YUEP adopted direct election system to effectively select real representatives of villages in managing conservation & development trust funds in the interests of villagers.

4.1.5 Overcoming Shortcomings of Single Resource Management Model

Current resource management model in China regards the government as the main body to protect natural resources. In practice it has to set up departments such as forestry bureaus and protection bureaus with a large number of staffs and facilities. The management model embodies distrust in villager's will and capacity to manage community resources and disregards participation of villagers in the resource management. For example, designation of nature reserves basically involve no participation of villagers and does not reflect villagers' opinions. Once part of the village land is designated as nature reserve, villagers are prohibited from use of any vegetation in the designated nature reserve. Any human activities are prohibited in the core areas of nature reserve. The designation and restriction seriously affects villagers' life and production. Villagers receive no compensation even if their land is designated as nature reserve or buffer zone. As a result, farmers resent actions of the nature reserve agencies. Sometime, these agencies regarded farmers as the main body of resource destruction and punished badly farmers who do not follow the reserve regulations. Conflicts can be serious at local level. Sometimes, the reserve staffs are beaten by villagers during their patrolling. Farmer-led co-management implemented in the YUEP project ensured and encouraged participation of farmers in nature resource management. This model complements the state-led management model and helps overcome its defaults. The conflict in the project area has been substantively mitigated.

4.1.6 Provision of opportunity and place for the equal dialogue between farmers and officials

Generally, conflicts happened at local level are about access to resources by various stakeholders. The trial of CM model regards villagers as the main body in resource management and includes local government and other stakeholders. It is easier to solve problems together since the model provides a negotiable space for stakeholders to discuss and communicate with each other. For instance, in one of the two project sites---Bao Mao Natural Village, Shale Township, Nanjian County of Dale Prefecture, there was a successful case, in which Co-Management Council was able to solve local disagreement on boundary between local community and the nature reserve.

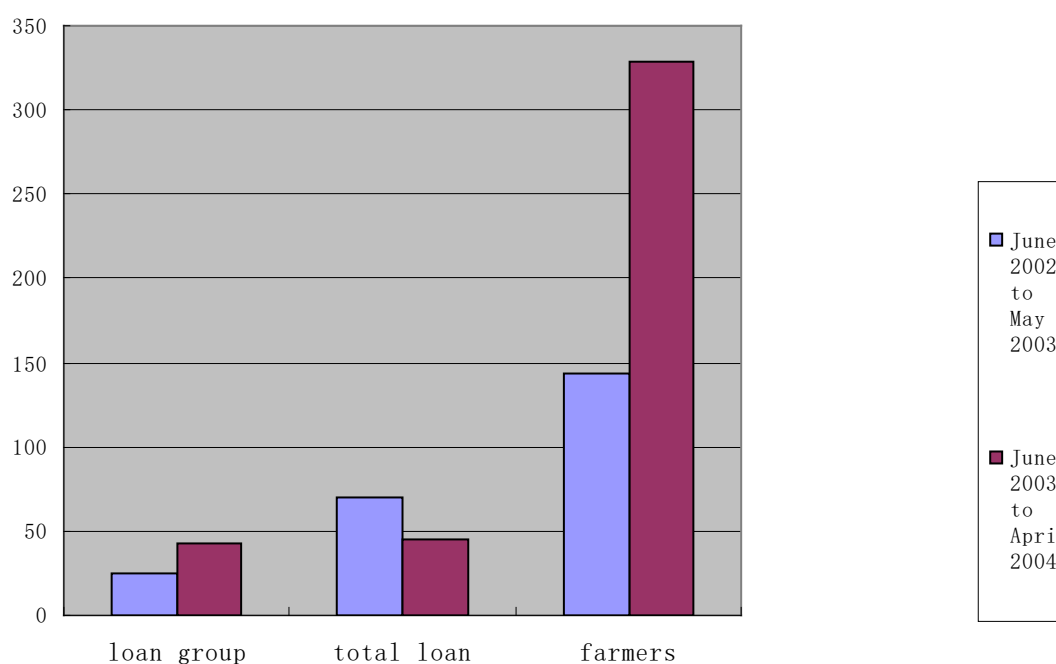
Additionally, the CM organizations carried out other activities, such as environmental awareness education, biodiversity monitoring, energy-saved project, and extension of scientific technologies in agriculture and forestry. At the same time, it also disseminates and implements relevant policies.

4.2 Community Development and Conservation Trust Fund (CDCTF) as economic support of co-management organization

4.2.1 Brief of CDCTF

Initiated formally in August of 2001, this project experimented CDCTF in Shale Township of Nanjian County, Dali Prefecture and Houqing Township of Yuxian County, Lincang Prefecture. By November of 2005 total amount of the trust fund in the two project sites had reached to 856,839 Yuan, and 176 credit groups had been established (Nanjian: 162, Yuxian: 14). 2211 households received loans with total amount of 1,686,250Yuan. At the same time, households using loans contributed their shares to the trust fund. Total amount of shares reached to 11432Yuan. The interests accrued to the trust fund were 92,506.2 Yuan. The trial of CDCTF has achieved valuable results in economic, social and environmental aspects. Repayment rate by villagers is 100% on time. Part of the interests is used for operation and sustainability of Community Co-Management group. According to investigation and comparison by the project office, numbers of households using loans and total amount of loans in the project are already exceeding local township credit cooperatives. CDCTF provide a successful case for rural financial innovation in China.

Graph2 Fund Developing



4.2.2 Emergence of CDCTF in poor areas in response to local farmer's strong demand for rural financial services

Usually, those rural development projects implemented by government and international organizations could not be sustainable after the project is completed and there is no more external fund. Different from these projects, CDCTF is owned, managed and used by villagers themselves. On the one hand, it solves the problem that in rural areas it is hard for villagers to apply for loans. On the other, part of interests from repayment is used for operation of Co-Management organizations. The economic guarantee for sustainability of CM is ensured.

Since Community Cooperative Fund in rural areas of China stopped many years ago, project office of YUEP particularly applied and obtained permission for the trial of CDCTF, based on consideration of villagers' true requirements. It provided a good case for government.

4.2.3 Nature of CDCTF: ownership and management by villagers

The Fund is owned and managed by villagers. Lending is not free and sustainable long-term revolving is ensured. Natural Village Community Co-Management Groups (NVCMGs) are directly elected by villagers to represent villagers' interests and operate the Fund under professional regulations and supervision system.

Like NVCMG, CDCTF is set up within a natural village of the two project sites. Basically each NVCMG has 7 members including 1 female representative. NVCMG organized villagers meetings to formulate fund regulations, including purchase of CDCTF share, interest rate, loan limit, repayment method and distribution of interests. One natural village could have one or more of CDCTF.

Villagers organize themselves into credit groups. Each group should have more than 5 members. Each member of the credit group will supervise internally, assist mutually, and guarantee the loan for each other. For the procedure, villagers of each credit group will firstly write applications and discuss their feasibility within the group. Then based on suggestions and signatures of all members, as a whole the credit group will represent all applicants to request loans from NVCMG, and repay the load according to the loan conditions. Loan and repayment should be carried out openly at villagers' meeting. Director of the NVCMG, cashier and accountant are responsible for the operation.

As a trial, the Fund sets up financial regulations at natural village level. Each NVCMG has one cashier and accountant, who are also villagers. In order to realize transparency, villagers follow the rules of recording each loan by themselves, opening the records, and auditing loans directly at villagers' meeting.

4.2.4 Why It Has Low Risk of Operating CDCTF

During three years' practice, about 98% of villagers could use the credit successfully, and repayment rate of them was 100%. Several factors contributed to the success and low risk of operating CDCTF: (1) no interventions from the Party and Government; (2) easy management at natural village level and a small scale; (3) open and transparent operation at villagers' meeting. By having this highly transparent system, risk of the credit is naturally minimized.

4.2.5 Low Cost of CDCTF

CDCTF is operated by Natural Village Community Co-Management Group (NVCMG) and credit groups. Requirements of time and labor investment on managing the credit are not high. Sometimes it is possible to realize free supervision by villagers themselves. Although procedures of application and approval of using the Fund are complex, villagers have the advantage of knowing each other's situations within their own villages. This knowledge greatly decreases the cost of supervising the credit. Finally expenditures for administrative costs for the NVCMG and allowances for members of the NVCMG are small and could be paid by part of interests from the Fund. Operation of CDCTF is low cost comparing to expensive operation of other conventional micro credit programs.

4.3 Importance of micro-finance for income generation of the farmers around the reserve areas

4.3.1 Poor farmers welcoming poverty alleviation to the households through the microfinance

The villagers in the two counties of the YUEP are extremely poor. Since the mid-1980s, these counties have received little financial support from the central government. The rural credit cooperative can only meet 10% of the villagers loan demand. Private lenders are very active but they charge high interest rates. Therefore, the YUEP provincial office decided to develop a micro credit system to support income generation of poor farm households and encourage and organize villager participation in forest, nature reserve and biodiversity protection.

Experience has shown that poor people in general applaud micro credit availability as it will help alleviate poverty. Micro credit for the poor began with the "Grameen bank" (GB model) in Bangladesh. It has been also introduced to China and tested in the project areas in the past. However, it was small-scale and benefited few farmers.

The question then arises as to why poor farm households have accepted the YUEP micro credit system while not liking conventional rural credit programs. Several factors of CDCTF discouraged loans to the rich and targeted the poor. Poor villagers said, "traditional rural credit from the government carries low interest rates and has limited quotas of available capital for loans. Mostly, the powerful with connection to government and other rich people quickly grab the low-interest rural credit. The poor and weak can not obtain these micro-credit loans. CDCTF micro credit are not attractive to the powerful and rich individuals as it has high interest rates. Regular repayment of CDCTF credit loans will take too much time. They are also concerned that they will be held responsible for repayment of loans to poor individuals if they join the credit group. As a result, poor people have had an opportunity to receive these loans.

4.3.2 Implementation of CDCTF: An Improvement of Micro Credit

Implementation of CDCTF has its own characteristics as follows:

- No need of collateral and guarantee for the credit, but need the internal supervision, mutual assistance and guarantees by members of the credit group.
- Small and short-term credit. The normal term of the credit is within one year. Villagers will decide specific term for each natural village through villagers' meeting.
- High interest rate. Interest rate of CDCTF is higher than those by agricultural banks and credit cooperatives, but not exceeding the state limit on interest rate. Currently there are two types of interest rate used by villagers, in terms of 9‰ or 10‰ per month, which are decided by villagers' meeting.
- Women as Main Acceptors of Loans. During the implementation of CDCTF, women are encouraged to take responsibility of borrowing money. In order to show women's roles in the project, during the process of applying for the credit, signatures from both men and women of a household are required to reflect equal rights and duties held by them.
- Division of Loan Rotation. Usually each credit group should be divided into two sub-groups to apply and use loans in rotation. In other words, only one sub-group could use the credit in one time, while the other one will supervise the repayment of it. All members of the credit group will bear responsibilities together for proper management of the credit.
- Self Amortizing Loan. Based on self amortizing system, loans could be repaid over a number of times.
- Both borrowing and repaying of money are carried openly through villagers' meeting.

4.3.3 Villagers from natural villages are capable of managing micro credit systems.

The micro-credit program experience of YUEP has proved that villagers are capable of operating the micro credit system at a low cost. The successful experience is worth replication in other areas.

4.3.4 Villagers, especially poor ones, are aware of credit needs and repayment responsibility.

Success of the YUEP micro credit system demonstrates that villagers are well aware of credit needs, the importance of credit and the responsibility of loan repayment. First, poor farmers have learned responsibility and risk management through independent farm operation. The YUEP micro credit system also prevents default on loans. For example, mutual guarantees mean that if one household cannot repay the loan, other households in that credit group share the responsibility for repayment.

4.4 Public education in environment

Since its start, YUEP project have emphasized the public education on forest, natural reserve and biodiversity for officials, farmers and stakeholders in the project areas.

The trainees included 3 groups: firstly, officials, young scholars and postgraduate students were trained by the international and domestic experts; secondly cadre of township and villages trained by officials and the young scholars; thirdly, the villagers trained by cadre of township and villages, and the expert farmers. Among these it is best for villagers to train other villagers.

Formats of training are varied according to targets. For the farmers, the story telling illustrates the importance of the biodiversity conservation. The topic of education is converted into discussion and sharing the experience in the environment of participation and exchanges. For the project officers lectures and reports were methods.

Participating in project meetings was proved a better way. 2 township watershed co-management councils held meetings every season. Intensive training, training workshops and quiz on environmental knowledge were organized to promote the public environment education on forest, natural reserve and biodiversity. Biodiversity conservation training was held for farmers and school students. Under the direction of co-management council, farmer co-management groups monitor forests, resolve conflict, and protect the ecosystem.

The public education has changed perception of government officials. In past they thought the government was the main body for conservation. The main approach was to punish illegal activities seriously. Now they recognize that it would be more effective for farmers to take a lead and the government to support in conservation.

The farmer believed that, through public education illegal cutting of forest was reduced, awareness of biodiversity conservation improved. Grazing and collection of non-timber forest products in the reserve areas are reduced. The forest fire prevention is also strengthened. There is no more conversion of forest to farmland. Farmers have also participated reforestation actively.

4.5 Biodiversity monitoring systems

YUEP developed a biodiversity monitoring system. They envisioned a biodiversity monitoring program with three main components:

- international experts facilitated and guided the construction of decision-rule process that would enable national and village stakeholders to develop an effective, locally relevant monitoring system;
- national experts are intended to work jointly with villagers for an effective and locally relevant monitoring system, to train designated local villagers in monitoring techniques and to supervise their monitoring activities, and to provide technical support to village co-management

councils and natural resource users in the organization, analysis and use of data collected from systematic monitoring.

- Actual use of systematic monitoring by village managers and natural resource users to inform adaptive management and to evaluate the impact of local resource use and production practices in order to improve the sustainable use of natural resources and maintenance health of local forest ecosystems and local watersheds, including the conservation of biodiversity and biological forest resources.

Once an initial monitoring system was designed, five villagers (3 at the Shale site and 2 at the Qinshan site) were selected and trained to carry out an initial monitoring system with a fee in the last year of the project. CM groups in village level worked together with village monitors to monitor the change of forest and biodiversity in the project sites. They monitor vegetation, fungi, wild mammals, birds, reptiles. The monitoring helped enhance villagers' awareness of environment conservation.

4.7 Policy advocacy, lesson sharing and social impacts

4.7.1 Entry to the policy journal for China central government

Prof Zhao Junchen's article, "A case to solve shortage of finance in poor areas", was published in the No. 223 of "Economic Dynamic" by institute of CPC policy research on Oct 15 of 2004. It could lend a lesson to developing rural finance policy in China.

4.7.2 Policy conference in Beijing

International conference was jointly held by YUEP provincial project office, UNDP Beijing office, American and China Environment Foundation, International Economy and technology Exchange Centre, China Forest and Society Networks on 9 Sept 2004 in Beijing. It was attended by about 85 persons from CPC and Center government agencies, academic institutions in Beijing, media reporters, and more than 10 international organizations. The main lessons shared at the conference included farmer-led co-management systems, community-based biodiversity monitoring systems, sustainable trust fund for community development and conservation, the creative microfinance models for poverty alleviation.

4.7.3 Publication

4.7.3.1 The project series of book by Yunnan University Press

The YUEP project series had published 6 books by Aug, 2004:

- "Who is the main body of biodiversity conservation", edited by Zhao Junchen;
- "Biodiversity investigation and research in YUEP project areas" edited by Yu Qingguo;
- "Participatory land use planning--theory and method" edited by Xuan Yi;
- "Environment and biodiversity conservation——intermediate readings" edited by Wang Jinliang, Wang Ping and He Yunyan;
- "15 do and 15 do not ——primary readings for biodiversity conservation" edited by Wang Lida and Li Yun;

4.7.3.2 The reports of baseline social and economic survey published by provincial project office

4.7.3.3 Project Newsletter (No 1 to 6) published by provincial project office

4.7.4 The news report of media

4.7.4.1 Newspaper and journal

- “Community practice of natural resources management---GEF project in Yunnan” by Huang Qing in People’s Daily on 9 Nov 2004.
- (2) “why poor people like micro credit” by Zhao Junchen and Xuanyi in “Hongqi manuscripts” on No. 23 of 2004, 10 Dec 10 2004.

4.7.4.2 Video and TV

- Western News of CCTV 12 channel showed the video “innovation models of ecosystem conservation in Yunnan on 10 Oct 2004, and “farmers are a primary force in biodiversity monitoring systems” 11 Oct 2004.
- First Finance Channel of Shanghai TV station showed “Microfinance of YUEP on 14 April 2005 for about 29 minutes.

4.7.4.3 Website and internet

Some important internet websites reported the experience of YUEP project or reports of YUEP. The websites included:

www.people.com.cn, www.greengrants.org.cn, www.gvbchina.org, rcc.zjnu.net.cn, www.yesout.com, china.org.cn, china.economic.net, voice of grassroots, www.ccrs.org.cn, www.cp.org.cn, www.chinareform.org.cn, www.gog.com.cn, www.yn.xinhuanet.com, www.cau.edu.cn, www.cass.net.cn, www.mfchina.net.cn, www.Chinaeol.net, www.xinhuanet.cn, etc.

4.7.4.4 Others

Many project officers visited and learned experiences of YUEP project. For example, people from participatory rural development and poverty alleviation project in Wulanchabu city of Inner Mongolia supported by UNDP, Social forest project of Ethiopia funded by EU, natural conservation project in Sichuan, Hunan and Hainan funded by EU, etc.

4.8 Problems and requirements of farmers

4.8.1 Insufficient capital sum of trust Fund

During consultation meeting farmers requested additional funding for development and conservation activities. Community co-management organizations also considered it would be necessary to increase sum of funds. The villagers explained that they would need environmental trust funds for 4-6 years in order to move out of poverty.

4.8.2 Needs of technical training for farmer’s alternative livelihoods

The evaluation group during the field interview found that skills in managing the bio gas system varied among farmers. One family used it well for cooking as well as

lighting. The other family could not produce enough bio-gas for cooking. While there was a lot of training on environment conservation, there were few training opportunities for farmers to develop alternative livelihoods especially in off-farm activities (such as cottage enterprises, construction, eco-tourism) and marketing. Thus, there is a need to adjust the content of the training program to better meet farmers' needs of farmers on new technologies as well as alternative livelihoods.

4.8.3 Enhancement of collaboration between villages at watershed level

One of project objective was to develop a model for community-based natural resource management on a watershed basis. While Natural Village Co-Management Group (NVCG) was active, the two Township Community Co-Management Council to coordinate NVCG among villages at the watershed level had not met for quite some time. The chair for one watershed council was left open as previous chair moved to other position. During the consultation meeting, some members of NVCG were asking when the council could be resumed to help solve inter-village problems.

As a result, there is a need to identify approaches to sustain and enhance exchange and collaboration among villages at the watershed level and between two project sites at inter-watershed level.

4.6.4 Neighborhood villagers willing to join the project

According to information from the county and township offices, neighborhood villages are willing to join the project, but the project can not cover all region due to lack of resources.

5 Recommendations for follow-up

5.1 Phase II of the project should be implemented as soon as possible

Building on the past experiences and strong will of local people, we recommend Phase II of YUEP be implemented in project area and replicated to neighborhood villages and other regions. Phase II of the project could further improve the project models and includes the following elements 1) identification of sustainable approaches to exchange and collaboration among villages at the watershed level. (2) improvement and consolidation of community based biodiversity monitoring system as a model for wider replication in other areas of southwest China; 3) examination of possibility to use loan from commercial banks to expansion trust funds; 4) development of alternative livelihoods, especially in the buffer zone where traditional use of natural resources is very much restricted; 5) development of mechanisms for conflict resolution on access to natural resources in and around the nature reserves.

5.2 A linkage between nature reserve, watershed and international river

YUEP project site is located in the Wuliangshan natural reserve. This region is not only important for biodiversity conservation, but also for watershed conservation in the upstream of Mekong River. Therefore, YUPE could integrate concerns in focal areas of biodiversity and international rivers in GEF. A large intervention would better support development and conservation in this ecologically critical and economically marginal region.

5.3 Training for alternative livelihood

A lot of training in the past was organized on environment conservation. There were few training opportunities for farmers to develop skills in alternative livelihoods especially in off-farm activities (such as cottage enterprises, construction, eco-tourism, etc) and marketing. Some farmers are also lacking skills in using new technologies and agricultural inputs. Thus, there is a need to adjust the content of the training program to better meet farmers' needs of farmers on alternative livelihoods as well as new appropriate technologies.