

Minutes for PAC Meeting on

“Climate-Smart Agriculture -- Straw Returning and Soil Health Promotion in North China Plain and Northeast China”

December 8, 2020

Proposal Project ID: 00121838

Awarded Project ID: 00127879

Project Title: Climate-Smart Agriculture -- Straw Returning and Soil Health Promotion in North China Plain and Northeast China

Time: 13:00-14:30, December 8th, 2020

Venue: LaoDeng Conference Room, UN Compound

Participants: see Annex I

I. Background

In recent years, agricultural green development has become national strategy, especially in the context of climate change. Research and promotion of climate-smart agriculture practices are important measures to achieve green development of agriculture. The straw returning technology is one of the key technologies of climate-smart agriculture practices and has been preliminarily applied in China due to its benefits for improving soil health, promoting carbon sequestration, and increasing crop yield. However, in the process of large-scale application, there are still many problems in technology, consciousness, capacity and policy. In this context, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) China together with Rural Energy & Environment Agency (REEA) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) and Syngenta Group China initiated a project of **Straw Returning and Soil Health Promotion in North China Plain and Northeast China**.

The project will establish core demonstration areas in the main grain producing areas of Northeast China and North China Plain. It focuses on 1) screen and optimize the straw returning technology; 2) integrate the soil tillage technology, nutrient management technology, disease, insect pest control technology and straw decay promoting technology under straw returning; 3) form a scientific straw returning model. The implementation of the project will strengthen technical guidance and promotion service, explore to establish promote straw counters-field socialized service system, improve the working quality of the regional straw returning and technology effect, promote the application of regional mainstream technology of straw returning, improve soil quality, strengthen the function of carbon emission reduction, and contribute to the mitigation of climate change and the development of climate-smart agriculture.

II. Opening and Overview

Opening Remarks

Dr. Ma Chaode, Programme Director, UNDP China, welcomed and thanked the participants' attendance, and introduced the objectives of the meeting which is to review the framework, budget, management arrangements and operational details of the project. He emphasized the importance of the project's conformity with China's development priorities for the next 5 years and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the evaluation of the use of project funds and social, ecological and economic impacts, to ensure the implementation of the project is in accordance with the SDGs.

Mr. Wu Xiaochun, Deputy Director General, Rural Energy & Environment Agency, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, highlighted the Belt and Road Initiative and emission reduction as two issues currently attracting much attention, especially for China to become carbon neutral by 2060. Mr. Wu believed that agriculture is an integral part of sustainable development. Through technologies like straw returning, the efficiency of the use of organic waste resources can be improved, and mitigate negative effects of climate change. He also addressed problems of current straw returning technology, such as lack of technical specifications, immature supporting technology and mismatched equipment, which could cause poor returning quality and low carbon sequestration, aggravate the occurrence of pests and diseases, affect subsequent crops, and restrict healthy development of agricultural production. He cordially invited experts and representatives to give their valuable opinions on the project document so as to form a practical and feasible project implementation plan and provide guidance for the later stages of the project.

Overview of the Project

Mr. Sun Zhanxiang, Vice President, Liaoning Academy of Agricultural Sciences, systematically summarized the project in seven parts.

- 1. Development Challenges:** although the UN has proposed the 2030 Agenda and MARA has introduced numerous policies to promote sustainable development, there are still difficulties in the implementation of policies, technologies and awareness.
- 2. Main Tasks:** based on the challenges, the project aims to provide policy advice, integrate and demonstrate climate-smart agriculture technology models, and facilitate knowledge management and capacity building.
- 3. Expected Outcomes:** propose policy recommendations, standards and mechanisms base on climate-smart agriculture; Complete the selection and demonstration of climate-smart agriculture technology models; Improve knowledge management and capacity building of sustainable straw returning and climate-smart agriculture.
- 4. Project Management:** based on the standard basic assistance agreement between UNDP and the Chinese government and the Country Programme Document of UNDP, the project will be implemented according to the National Implementation Model (NIM) of UNDP.
- 5. Project Outcome Framework:** the project will contribute to SDG, especially in poverty

reduction and food security.

6. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** track progress to assure project quality; review and make amendments timely; complete project reports.

7. **Legal Context** of the project.

Social and Environmental Screening Check

Ms. Teng Yue, Project Officer, UNDP China, stressed the importance of environmental impacts. Before the implementation of every project, UNDP will assess possible environmental and other impacts, including potential risks, and provide resolutions for risks. In the case of this project, UNDP assessed from the aspects of human rights, gender equality and the natural environment. After the preliminary assessment process, she concluded that the project would not have any adverse social and environmental impacts in targeted areas, but would instead contribute to environmental development.

III. Discussion

Mr. Xiong Hongli, Division Chief/Research Fellow, National Agro-Tech Extension and Service Center, acknowledged that the project is in line with the national policy of agricultural development and green development. The objectives and path of the project are clear, and the project will help to improve existing agriculture and climate models. He made 2 recommendations:

1. Establish a good working mechanism, especially in terms of policy, to better integrate the government, regulatory agencies, and research institutes, and to achieve a win-win situation with the power of social services.
2. The scope of the project should be extended beyond the four provinces and regions, and promote the model to different eco-regions.

Mr. Chen Fu, Professor, China Agricultural University, acknowledged that the project is conceptually very advanced and highlights the concept of soil health. He made 2 recommendations:

1. Organize on-site trainings selectively, because they have more impact than regular training sessions.
2. Refine the indicators for measuring soil health and think about the link between the return of straw to the fields and soil health.

Mr. Song Zhenwei, Research Fellow, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, made 3 recommendations:

1. Strengthen technology research and development. He emphasized the need to look to the future and stockpile technologies, such as fertilization technology.
2. Establish demonstration bases in the local area, or rely on existing bases when developing new technologies.

3. Strengthen the cooperation with local governments, combine with local industrial projects and needs, and promote the publicity and diffusion of projects.

Mr. Jiang Yekui, Sustainability & GA Head, Syngenta Group China, made 4 recommendations:

1. Broaden the geographic scope of the project and strengthen knowledge sharing
2. Promote technology development, such as seed cultivation, quality assurance, and agricultural machinery.
3. Enhance the impact of the project, mainly on the concept of taking a step forward to integrate straw to land with climate-smart agriculture, climate health, carbon sequestration and emission reduction.
4. Beyond the successful completion of the stated objectives, he hoped to mobilise more resources from the donor to further enlarge the impact of the project.

IV. Conclusion

Mr. Wu Xiaochun firstly acknowledged the work of the project team members and the project document. He expressed higher expectations for the results of the project beyond the intended goals. He stressed that China will enter the stage of comprehensive rural revitalization in the next 5 years, and MARA will implement the 5 actions for Green Agricultural Development. Thus China needs higher quality in development and leading projects. He believes that this project will play a prominent and leading role.

Dr. Ma Chaode concluded that the experts made good suggestions on management, technology, and operation mechanism. There are no comments on Ms. Teng Yue's presentation of social and environmental impacts of the project. He thanked Mr. Wu for his speech and summary, Mr. Jiang for his suggestions, and Ms. Teng for her evaluation. The project team will further polish the project document accordingly. As closing, Mr. Ma announced with pleasure the approval of the project document by the PAC members.

Drafted by

Wang Jingjing, Programme Assistant Wang Jingjing Date: 2020.12.14

Cleared by

Teng Yue, Project Coordination Officer Teng Yue Date: 14 Dec, 2020

Approved by

Ma Chaode, Programme Director Ma Chaode Date: Dec 14, 2020

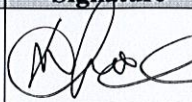
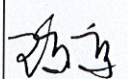
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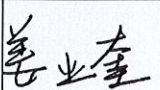
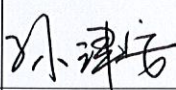
PAC Meeting

Climate-smart agriculture——

Straw returning and soil health promotion in North China Plain and Northeast China

8 December, 2020

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