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The Global Support Initiative to Indigenous Peoples and Community-Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCA-GSI)

Title of Workshop: International workshop for Indigenous Peoples and Community-Conserved Areas (ICCA) in China
Level: International
Place: Nanning, CHINA
Date: 18-20 October 2016



Background:

China has a long history in demonstrating the importance of Indigenous and Community-Conserved Areas (ICCAs) to biodiversity conservation. Many provinces and local governments have issued policies to recognize its ICCAs and support the role of indigenous peoples and local communities on the ecosystem protection, sustainable livelihoods and poverty reduction. In 2012, for example, the Guangxi Provincial Forestry Bureau issued the *Regulations on the Forest and Wildlife Small Reserved Areas in Guangxi* which enabled local communities to establish community-conserved areas. By the end of 2013, a total of 115 ICCAs existed in Guangxi. While the Guangxi Province and many other of China's provinces prove to be towering examples in recognizing ICCAs, the value of indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge, culture and customary laws in ecosystem protection and biodiversity conservation are not efficiently shared amongst the country's conservation practitioners, the public and the government. Thus, awareness in the country is low. As such, **ICCA-GSI expanded its support to countries outside of its core program, such as China, through an international workshop aimed at increasing the momentum and support for the recognition of ICCAs.**

Workshop Participation and Activities:

The 3-day workshop served as a platform to generate discussions and share experiences from over 100 multilevel stakeholders from 6 countries (Bhutan, China, Iran, Taiwan, USA and Viet Nam) including academia, civil society organizations, community villages, media, governments, international organizations and UN agencies. ICCA-GSI's partners in China, namely, the Guangxi Wildlife Conservation Society (GWCS), the Fauna and Flora International (FFI) and the Guangxi Biodiversity Research and Conservation Association (BRC), co-organized the workshop.



Additionally, site visits to two (2) community-conserved areas (CCAs) in the Qu Nan and Xin Tuan villages provided the participants with hands-on experience and amplified their understanding on the local history, the current situation and future development of CCAs through participatory in-depth discussions.



The **workshop's discussion points** covered ICCA topics at various scales including: (i.) the global development situations on ICCAs; (ii.) international policies related to ICCA; (iii.) case studies from the 6 participating countries illustrating best practices and challenges on implementing ICCA projects as well as future development plans; and (iv.) site-specific analysis of ICCAs in four of China's regions: Guangxi, Guizhou, Qinghai Sichuan and Yunnan, including the demonstrated value of ICCAs, best practices with proven positive results in ecology, politics, economy, culture, amongst others, and the impacts of country's current ecological civilization policy.

Outcomes:

The workshop concluded with the adoption of *Initiative on Promoting ICCA Development and Attaching Importance on Its Values in Biodiversity Conservation* – a proposal signed by the relevant representatives. “*The workshop has deepened the understanding among communities, government and NGOs from a multi-dimensional perspective,*” said Ms. Liu Yi, the National Coordinator of UNDP-GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) in China. “*It also gave each side deeper understanding of community- conserved areas’ value*”. She noted in her speech that SGP will further strengthen communication and cooperation with both sides to promote development of community- conserved areas in China. Moreover, a social network platform was established by the participants during the workshop. This platform will be used to share information about ICCAs and other relevant aspects after the workshop.

The [ICCA-GSI](#) is a multi-partnership initiative that is delivered by the UNDP-implemented Small Grants Programme ([SGP](#)) and funded by the Government of Germany, through its Federal Ministry for the Environment, nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety ([BMUB](#)). Key partners include the United Nations Environment Programme’s World Conservation Monitoring Centre ([UNEP WCMC](#)), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature’s Global Programme on Protected Areas ([IUCN GPAP](#)), the [ICCA Consortium](#) and the Secretariat of the Convention of Biological Diversity ([CBD](#)).



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