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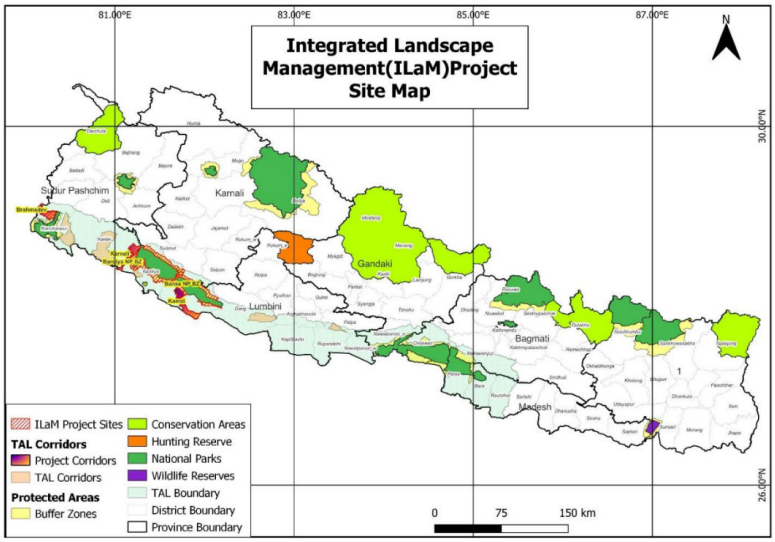
Midterm Review (MTR) for the WWF-supported, GEF-financed Full Size "Integrated Landscape Management to Secure Nepal's Protected Areas and Critical Corridors" Project

GEF Project ID: 9437
Midterm Review Report
FINAL



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Prepared for: World Wildlife Fund for Nature

Prepared by: SETIN srl Servizi Tecnici Infrastrutture

Team: Giacomo Cozzolino, Camillo Ponziani,
Daniel Bazzucchi, Sushila Nepali

Revision History

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2.0	5 November 2023	Final MTR Report	Daniel Bazzucchi
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SETIN would like to thank the staff of the WWF-US offices, and the Project Management Unit (PMU) in Nepal for their logistical, organizational and information delivery support provided during this Midterm Review. Special acknowledgement goes to Amelia Kissick for her professionalism and for keeping tabs on the process as it moved throughout its successive phases to fruition, as well as both Bharat Gotame and Suman Subedi for welcoming SETIN to Nepal during the fact-finding mission. We are tremendously grateful for their time to help us track down answers to or point us in the right direction for every question we asked and to discuss the points we took every opportunity to raise.

We could not fail to mention the excellent willingness of the various authorities - both national and local - and local communities and project beneficiaries for their good cooperation in the face of the consultations carried out. Undoubtedly, the present work and its conclusions and recommendations would not have been possible without the collaboration provided by the different actors involved in the project.

One of the delights of this sort of work remains that of learning about new and extremely welcoming countries, having made new friends, and witnessing with great admiration the dedication and enthusiasm that so many people bring to their work in conserving the important places of the world. We would like to thank them and wish them every success in their continuing endeavors . .

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General Project Information

POSITION DETAILS	
Location:	Home-based, with one mission to Nepal
Reporting to:	Amelia Kissick, WWF-US
Timeframe:	August - October 2023
Visited Sites:	Kamdi corridor/Banke, Banke National Park and buffer zone, Bardia National Park and buffer zone, Karnali corridor/Kailali (*for more detail see Annex 5*)
PROJECT DATA	
Project/Program Title:	Integrated Landscape Management to secure Nepal's Protected Areas and Critical Corridors
GEF Project ID:	9347
WWF (Agency) Project ID:	G0012
Implementing Agency:	WWF GEF Agency
Executing Agency:	Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE)
Executing Partners:	Department of Forests and Soil Conservation (DoFSC), Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), State Governments (Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forests and Environment), Local Governments (Rural Municipality, Municipality, Sub Metropolitan City), Division Forest Offices (DFO) and National Park Offices, Buffer Zone User Committees (BZUCs), Buffer Zone Community Forest User Groups BZCFUGs), Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs), Federation of Community Forest User Groups of Nepal (FECOFUN) and Indigenous People Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN)
Countries:	Nepal
Focal Areas:	BD 4, LD 2, LD 3,
GEF Operational Program:	SFM 2 Program 5: Capacity development for SFM within local communities
Total GEF Approved Budget:	US $ 6,697,248
Total Co-financing Approved:	US $42, 622,653
RELEVANT DATES	
CEO Endorsement/Approval	6/Aug/2019
Agency Approval Date	6/Nov/2019
Start of Activity Implementation	22/Dec/2020
Project Completion Date (proposed or actual)	30/Jun/2025
Period to Be Evaluated	August 6, 2019 – through time of evaluation

Executive Summary

A. Project Description, Scope and Methodology

The five-year US$ 49.9M WWF-supported, GEF-financed full-size project "*Integrated Landscape Management to Secure Nepal's Protected Areas and Critical Corridors*" (herein after the "WWF-GEF ILaM project" or simply, the "Project") aims to promote integrated landscape management to conserve globally significant forests and wildlife in Nepal. It focuses on strengthening stakeholder engagement, enhancing coordination between sectors, boosting technical capacity for integrated landscape management, and reducing threats to the environment. Through its four interrelated components, the project addresses sustainable forest management, habitat restoration, policy reinforcement, and the enhancement of local community resilience and benefits.

The present Midterm Review (MTR) of the WWF-GEF ILaM project was organized at the request of the GEF Agency, WWF-US. It is part of normal contractual procedures to commission an MTR for WWF and GEF projects. The MTR covers the period from CEO Endorsement on 6 August 2019 until 19 September 2023 upon completion of the field verification mission to the Banke-Bardia complex in Nepal. The objective of the MTR was to gain an independent analysis of the progress midway through the project. This MTR was conducted by a team of four independent consultants and focused on identifying potential project design problems and to gauge the progress towards the realization of its objective, outcomes and delivery of outputs, so that the midcourse corrections can be made as appropriate. The Project's performance was measured based on the indicators of the Project Results Framework and GEF Core Indicator worksheets. The MTR - and findings herein – is based on a participatory mixed-methods approach, mostly with a lead of qualitative methods, strongly backed up with quantitative methods. Data collection includes the review of key documentation, focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews with selected key stakeholders, and the issuance of an online survey. The MTR methodology and approach followed requirements in the Terms of Reference, WWF Evaluation Guidelines and GEF Evaluation Policy.

B. Key Findings

Relevance*:* The project is considered to be highly relevant: **Highly Satisfactorily** (rating: 6).

- The design is appropriately ambitious and complex, its scope covers the major barriers to endangered wildlife conservation. The Project involves a vast geographical area, multiple stakeholders, and priority landscape corridors in different stages of consolidation.
- The project's intervention logic correctly identifies and prioritizes the challenges to be solved. It describes the relevant elements in the national context and considerations regarding the complexity of international multi-stakeholder cooperation within an evolving government system. Its risk assessment is reasonable.
- The project creates enabling conditions for a subset of the wider TAL Program, ensuring clarity in the links between overarching objectives, outcomes, expected results, and activities. Changes made during the design process have resulted in laser-focused interventions that are informed by 20+ years of lessons from national and regional landscape initiatives in similar contexts.
- The expected outcomes of the Project remain valid to the local and national development priorities, and perhaps more so with respect to Component 3.
- The Theory of Change is concise and logical and consistent with the project design. Impact pathways are plausible, feasible and testable and are framed as IF-AND-THEN statements.

However, the graphic depiction is missing recommended elements such as assumptions and drivers. Furthermore, the Theory of Change has not been revisited during implementation, post-design.

- Contextually, the situation on the ground is representative and still consistent with the robust root threat and barrier analysis undertaken at design, with the exception of poaching which is acute in some corridors and an area of growing concern.

Coherence: (Per Terms of Reference, criteria is not rated).

- The Project is aligned to and contributes to the GEF biodiversity, land degradation and SFM focal area objectives under which it was designed, with a notable focus on capacity development within local communities, offering training and equipment to promote good forest management practices.
- The ILaM project aligns with national biodiversity and forest priorities, supporting Nepal's adherence to international conventions, particularly the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the review of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).
- With respect to the Aichi Targets (now the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework 2030 targets), the Project is contributing towards: Aichi Target 5, loss of natural habitat, including forests; Aichi Target 7 concerning sustainable management of agriculture and forests to ensure conservation of biodiversity; Aichi Target 12, on preventing loss of known threatened species; and Aichi Target 14 related to maintaining ecosystem services to contribute to livelihoods.
- The WWF-ILaM project aids in achieving objectives under other Multilateral Environmental Agreements, including the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) goals, focusing on preventing land degradation, desertification, and supporting poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.
- There's a deep interconnection between the WWF-ILaM project and the TAL Program, as they are in the same sector, share common targets and execute Nepal's TAL strategic plan. The Project supports strategies from the new TAL Strategy, focusing on strengthening protected areas, promoting sustainable forest management, mitigating human-wildlife conflict, providing sustainable economic incentives to local communities, and other conservation initiatives.
- The Project contributes to the Nepal National Tiger Recovery Plan, Tiger Conservation Action Plan, and recognizes the Terai Arc Landscape as a priority for tiger conservation.
- With respect to the Project's anticipated intersection of related initiatives with project outputs as foreseen in Table 1-9 of the Project Document, a number of initiatives are no longer operational. Nothwithstanding, the Project is coordinating with ZSL initiatives in the Banke-Bardia complex, the National Trust for Nature Conservation, TAL Program and myriad WWF Nepal projects through appropriate field coordination and governance mechanisms. Some interventions are at risk of overlap and duplication of effort.
- The project is in tandem with various other WWF Nepal initiatives, including a GEF-financed project on Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC), strengthening collaborative efforts with governmental agencies.
- While a National Gender Strategy from 2003/2004 needs revisiting, the ILaM project has integrated Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) guidelines into its forestry planning and is set to develop a Gender and Inclusion Responsive guideline (GIRD) for corridor management plans.

Effectiveness: the project effectiveness is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory** (rating: 4).

The main achievements so far include:

- The Project experienced extended delays in preparing and approving key activation and operational documents during the inception phase, largely exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Lockdowns, restricted office access for government staff, there was limited online connectivity, and meetings and travel were halted, further exacerbated these initial challenges, impacting the project's start-up until the last quarter of 2021, and further delays registered in 2022 due to elections and challenging conditions at field sites due to floods and landslides.
- Average level of achievement of 61% against the last workplan and 62% against the Y2 Project Results Framework targets, both of which are consistent with the ascribed rating.
- There have been difficulties incurred in nurturing and establishing inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms and committees to support integrated land management envisaged under Outcome 1.1; a cornerstone of the Project's intervention logic. These have been attributed to the delays of CBD COP15 and the release of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Training under Outcome 1.2 occurred on myriad topics, but not at the ambition nor to the target audience identified in the Project Document and therefore, the 100% achievement against the target was reported in error in the FY23 PIR.
- Despite having established a highly impressive biodiversity baseline and thematic mapping of the target landscapes, the core component of landscape management planning is delayed, and it is not ensured whether it will account for the cross-sectoral landscape approach.
- The project has faced considerable challenges deploying subsidy grants and revolving funds to communities, mainly due to constraints with the project operational manual and public procurement Act not mentioning fund flows mechanism . Nonetheless, there has been considerable success with rolling out individual grants to university students to warrant scaling this mechanism.
- Under Component 2, the Project is doing its best to address the dearth in national data, through the provision of biodiversity assessments and socio-economic surveys within the Kamdi, Karnali and Brahmadev corridors in TAL aiming for improved community-based natural resource governance.
- Notable successes registered under Component 3 where efforts to strengthen livelihoods and conservation through sustainable forest management practices and training have progressed moderately well.
- Private forest registration has proved challenging in Parks buffer zones, because Parks don't have the mandate to register private forest enterprises, and therefore there are suggested shifts in scope to target agroforestry.
- Study commissioned on wildlife traffic accident issues in Banke-Bardia Complex and in the East-West Highway, and other infrastructure intersecting the National Park and wildlife corridors to overcome the issue of wildlife vehicle collision.
- Impressive results with respect to knowledge management under Component 4, with the Project having registered 100% achievement of 4 out of the 5 indicators therein. Best practices of SFM are expected to be synthesized and disseminated in the second half of the Project.
- Management arrangements are well-suited and standard for the Project, but well-intentioned checks and balances and transparency are leading to compounding bureaucratic hurdles resulting in delays (Reference made to Section(s) 3.1.9 and 3.2.5 for details).
- Work planning is ambitious, but delivery is low. The annual work plan and budget approval process and fund flow mechanism adopted for the Project is a bottleneck to technical and financial delivery and ought to be streamlined, where possible.

- Core project management arrangements are optimal, in spite of turnover and several empty posts at both the PMU and Field Office.
- The PMU is perceived as supportive and experienced; it combines specific technical profiles with managerial and coordination capacities. The PMU and Field Office personnel are strong, devoted and have a positive attitude towards course correction and delivery. They should be commended for stepping into multiple roles and working beyond their individual ToR. It is evident the project is firing on all cylinders at this juncture. Project ratings and results on the ground neither align nor reflect the very high level of effort and professionalism.
- Operational maturity of the GEF Agency and executing partners is very high with clear business processes and a high-level of capacity to design and oversee projects.
- The implementation partners proved to be an adequate strategy in terms of maximizing synergies, ensuring a differentiated approach and involving other local actors in the process.
- Monitoring is very strong at the process level and applies modern techniques. However, the monitoring system does not yield all the necessary information. Several indicators have missing baselines or are inadequately monitored. Reporting is timely and PIRs are sharp. The documentation and monitoring of risks and assumptions, as well as adaptive management responses may be improved upon.
- Internal communication is excellent and instant. External communication through both traditional printed brochures and briefs, as well as innovative tools such as radio shows and project diary among others is creating the requisite visibility, but not aligned to the 2022 communications strategy. Knowledge management benefits from being a standalone Component and is successfully converting data into information that can be used for decision-making, but can be improved on as technical reports difficult to locate or non-existent on the project website.
- Overall, major challenges holding back progress to date include the COVID-19 pandemic, disbursement of funds (including lengthy legislative processes and LMBIS), government restructuring and slow government response on foundational activities.

Efficiency: the project's efficiency is rated **Moderately Satisfactory** (rating 4)

- Overall financial disbursement and burn rate is low. USD 2,511,439 should have been spent in the first two years of operations, whereas only USD 1,197,642 were spent. Put another way, 48% of the GEF project expected costs for the first two years was disbursed, resulting in only a 62% achievement against Year 2 targets.
- Most planned deliverables met within budget, but in the case of the PMU and Field Office it is utilizing all the allocated budget but with fewer staff than it should per design.
- There is evidence of the Project looking for cost savings by pursuing synergies with other organizations like TAL program, NTNC and ZSL towards the realization of physical works, but must be cognizant of not duplicating efforts.
- PMU and Field Office staff are efficient by taking on additional tasks and stepping into vacant roles seamlessly, but this is not sustainable long-term and nor should they be expected to shoulder these responsibilities.
- The COVID-19 pandemic also implied that fewer face-to-face meetings, trainings and workshops could be organized, resulting in lower travel cost. Investments in virtual technologies are resulting in a more hybrid working and operating environment; this may result in cheaper operational costs in the long-term.
- The investments made in the training of staff are strengthening the institution and are resulting in improved management. Relatively cost-effective strategies in Component 3 expected to pay dividends in community resilience.

- A silver lining of the Project's rigid fund flow mechanism is that it has resulted in careful and detailed activity and budget planning; this has reduced waste.
- In the first years the PMU has had (understandably so) more focused on quality assurance than project efficiency, with the added challenge of aligning the government and donors' processes and requirements. The PMU is addressing this well, and it is anticipated that efficiencies will increase, without loss of quality assurance, with the PMU team well established in its work.
- Different layers of oversight, including yearly field monitoring missions by the GEF Agency leading to remediation measures being taken, are leading to a more incrementally efficient delivery model.

Impact: the impact of the project is rated as **Satisfactory** (rating 5).

- From the GEF's perspective, Core Indicators is the conduit to achieving impact. Only 3 of the 8 Core Indicator achievements were not within ≥ 75% of the YR2 target.
- Progress is observed in the implementation of training processes.
- Anecdotal evidence from communities and beneficiaries themselves that the strategies to improve livelihood and reducing HWC are bearing fruit; so much so that they are requesting additional investment.
- Overall, it is not (yet) feasible to measure the impact generated to date due to delays in foundational components of the Project, but it is nonetheless laying the groundwork for impact to accrue in the second half of the project.

Sustainability: the overall sustainability of the project across the 4 sub-measures is rated as **Likely** (rating 4 against a four-point scale).

- The TAL Program's diversified funding sources increase overall long-term financial sustainability likelihood and continuity.
- Community formalization under legal entities ensures access to various financing mechanisms.
- WWF's holistic approach across the Asia-Pacific aims to leverage multiple financial sources, promoting landscape conservation.
- The project is expected to support the local communities for the technical and financial management of their updated forest operational management plans.
- The project's design emphasizes country ownership, mitigating socio-political shifts.
- The establishment of governance bodies like Project Advisory Committee (PAC) and Project Execution Committee (PEC) augments socio-political resilience.
- In terms of sustainability, perspectives appear to be positive as implementing partners confirmed their commitment to maintain cooperation at the site level.
- The Project should concentrate on offering a diversified set of financial mechanisms, funding sources and enablingenvironment towards overcoming the existing barriers of the Procurement Act.
- The project has prepared the procedural guideline on resource investment for implementation of green enterprise promotion activities, which will be the basis for beneficiaries' selection after approval from the Ministry of Finance . The guideline might be one of the reference documents for the following projects.
- The updated forest management operational plans will be applied even after the end of the project and might lead to an overall updating process of other plans.
- The project is rooted in more than 15-years' experience in conservation across the Terai Arc Landscape, feeds into successive strategic landscape planningand supports regional conservation strategies, emphasizing Nepal's national landscape priorities.

- Project investments focus on adaptation strategies to address environmental challenges, promote resilience of communities and ecosystems.
- WWF-Nepal's upcoming project on human-tiger conflict ensures continuation of the WWF-IL aM project's objectives.

Adaptive capacity: the project adaptive capacity is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory** (rating 4)

- At the very start of the WWF-GEF ILaM project during its inception phase in October 2020, a systematic review of the conceptual model, strategies, targets and indicators led to several changes. Later, they did not adjust its goals, but did change activities and outputs to reach these, under changing external conditions through careful planning.
- Annual adaptive management meetings are not being held as standalone sessions as dictated in the Project Document but are integrated with regular Project meetings and Annual Work Planning. These have progressively contributed to clarifying the scope of work for the Project, but have omitted reviews of the Theory of Change, assumptions and risks.

C. Recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Time Horizon	Frequency	Responsible
1	It should not be assumed that all stakeholders share the same level of understanding and awareness about the Project, especially because of the turnover of staff and government authorities. Project stakeholders (especially government entities who are involved in a multitude of initiatives) may not be able to differentiate the WWF-GEF IlaM Project with others being implemented at landscape level. Data collected from key informant interviews have surfaced a request for the regular democratization of knowledge on the Project. Therefore, the Project Manager should proactively seek opportunities for more communication with executing partners and federal government staff on a regular basis. It is recommended to hold an ongoing quarterly call to communicate outward more often.	Immediately following MTR	Quarterly	PMU, Field Office
2	a) Recruit a legal expert / sustainable financing specialist to conduct a legal review to identify all financing mechanisms and tools that can still be implemented under Output 3.1.3, and 3.3.1 while still keeping within the boundaries of the Procurement Act. b) Organize and hold a brainstorm exercise with representatives from the Public Procurement Office (PPMO) of the Ministry of Finance using the findings from the legal review, to determine if there is a pathway to achieving the original scope of sub-grants for	Immediately following MTR	Once	PMU, MoFE

No.	Recommendation	Time Horizon	Frequency	Responsible
	SFM; c) If no path is viable, redeploy a portion of the funds earmarked for Output 3.1.3 to develop cattle sheds / goat pens / mesh-wire fence construction / skill based training for CBAPU members and forest-watchers/plantation and restoration embankments and income generating activities. d) Based on learnings from the past 2 years of implementation and reflecting on successes that have been realized in the field / with communities, leverage one or more of the following opportunities for the reallocation of funds, which have been discussed and vetted with the PMU: • Activities under Output 1.2.3 could be relocated in different activities in same output for innovation grant to government entities and student thesis research grants. • If activities under Output 2.2.2 cannot be implemented within the current fiscal year, consider reallocating funds to Output 3.2.3 HWC management as this has become a pervasive issue. • If FMIS establishment and fire reporting system establishment is assessed to not be feasible by the PMU, there are opportunities to scale up the intervention on forest fire control in corridor and buffer zone. • Activities under Output 3.1.2, such as private forest promotion could be reallocated to Outcome 3.1.3 and 3.2.3 to support agroforestry promotion, restoration and plantation in public land and community forest, alternative crop promotion and predator proof pens. • Select activities from Output 3.1.3, such as green enterprise promotion ought to be reallocated to Output 3.2.3 on HWC management. • Reallocation of revolving fund from Output 3.3.1 to capacity building and field gears support to CBAPU members and community forest watchers. • A portion of the funds from Output 4.1.1 like Jaibik Chautari and website construction could be considered for reallocation to eco-club promotion under Output 4.1.2.			

No.	Recommendation	Time Horizon	Frequency	Responsible
	• Any surplus portion of the funds from Output 4.2.1 (audit cost and MTR sharing meeting) could be reallocated to Output 3.1.3 for the development and implementation of a safeguard plan along with output 3.1.3 and ILaM project staff capacity development activity.			
3	Initiate and facilitate an annual review exercise preceding the Annual Workplan phase, where changes to the context are catalogued and prioritized as an input to a thorough review of the Project's Theory of Change. The results chains therein, high-impact pathways assumptions and risks should be discussed and validated consultatively, and activities and budgets developed on the basis of this exercise for consideration in the annual work planning cycle. Finally, risks should be defined for each pathway and mitigations explicitly included as part or work planning.	Immediately following MTR	Annually	PMU
4	Gender mainstreaming should be actively encouraged and pursued at site and systemic level. Gender action plan has been prepared and must be effectively applied by both PMU and implementing partners, to address gender gaps and mainstream them in the project components through the outputs' achievement process.	Immediately following MTR	Annually	PMU, Field Office
5	For the remaining period, the Project must concentrate on charting out an exit strategy prioritizing the transition of products and services to different stakeholders along with a description of how these will be maintained, updated when needed and funded going forward.	Immediately following MTR	Ongoing until Terminal Evaluation	PMU, Field Office in close coordination with MoFE
6	Conduct a rigorous stakeholder needs analysis and to also document the levers (carrots and sticks) by targeted stakeholder and likely members of the committees under Output 1.1.1, that can be deployed to encourage acceleration of cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms.	Immediately following MTR	Once	PMU, Field Office, MoFE
7	Given the PMU's maturity, it should push its comfort level and adopt more industry-	Immediately following MTR	Ongoing	PMU, Field Office

No.	Recommendation	Time Horizon	Frequency	Responsible
	standard[1] Project Management approaches tools as follows: ● As an alternative to managing schedules in a spreadsheet, it is recommended that the PMU procures and leverages some project management software and utilizes it as part of the Annual Work Planning cycle to connect project activities through dependencies to identify predecessors, successors and constraints and to use work effort as opposed to elapsed time duration estimates; ● Leverage a standard "Risk, actions, issues and decisions (RAID) log to record project-level risks, actions, issues and decisions, as per project management best practice; ● Any risk mitigations should be included as activities under the annual work plan cycle and integrated into the risk register. These include those mitigations in the Project Document, which may not have been actioned yet (i.e., disaster recovery / business continuity plan).			
8	A number of opportunities are noted for reallocating to support HWC activities (see recommendation no. 2. Furthermore, as HWC is a growing problem, different branches of government are expected to invest more in this going forward. The justification and benefits in doing so should be documented. There is a need to develop and highlight a business case for governement to address HWC, assessing the cost-benefit of these investments as interesting opportunities for sound federal, state and local investments. This should be used to justify any reallocation of funds, should sub-grants not be viable going forward.	Immediately following MTR	Once	PMU, WWF Nepal
9	MTRs are much too important to rush through. It is recommended to have at least a one-month buffer between the end of the fact-finding stage and the delivery of the draft report to allow for triangulation of data, codification of information against evaluation criteria, cross-referencing of information and room for	Future Evaluations	Ongoing	WWF-US

[1] Industry-standard approaches / methodologies would include PMBOK or PRINCE2. Industry-standard tools and software could consider Microsoft Project, although the MTR consultant team does not promote any specific company software.

No.	Recommendation	Time Horizon	Frequency	Responsible
	additional clarification consultations where needed.			
10	Explore and study the possibility and work effort required to institutionalize the training modules delivered at one of the forest / government training centers so they can be developed into an accredited course and certificate available to future government staff and future generations of foresters and conservationists in Nepal. Furthermore, training sessions ought to be recorded and included online to enable self-directed training and capacity building among different audiences.	Immediately following MTR	Ongoing	PMU, Field Office, MoFE
11	Update the Project Results Framework with the following indicator changes and ensure that it is approved by PEC and PAC to establish a new baseline: i. Remove or stop reporting against indicator "c" under Outcome 3.1 if no solution is found to deploy sub-grants. ii. Remove 1 of the existing 5 indicators under Outcome 3.2 (perhaps "b" related to damage to houses), and replace it with "area of cropland protected (hectares)" to enable better integration and traceability to GEF Core Indicator 4, sub-indicator 4.3. iii. Change the nomenclature of Outcome 4.1 from "number of stakeholders" to "number of people" since it is not possible to disaggregate a stakeholder by gender. Include another indicator under Output 4.1 "changes in attitudes on integrated landscape management, as measured by a X% increase in Knowledge, Attitudes, Perception scores" (the % target increase should be set only upon completion of the first capacity on Knoweledge, Attitude, Practices (KAP) survey. Given the time remaining in the Project, the KAP survey should only be undertaken twice, with the second just before the terminal evaluation.	Immediately following MTR	Once	PMU, WWF-US, PEC, PAC
12	a) Recruitment of a replacement M&E officer should ensure a solid understanding of GIS principles and industry standards within this domain, specifically how to measure changes in forest cover using Area Weighted Patch Area;	Immediately following MTR	Yearly	PMU, Field Office

No.	Recommendation	Time Horizon	Frequency	Responsible
	b) Recruitment of a replacement communications officer should focus on augmenting the 2022 Communications Strategy to include (i) a stakeholder assessment and the communication tools that will be used to target specific target segments; (ii) develop and deploy a KAP survey and measure the results at least twice during the remainder of the project. There will be a need to set a realistic end-of-project target following the deployment of the first KAP survey; (iii) include a solid knowledge management strategy articulating how data and information will be converted into knowledge for enhanced decision-making; (iv) be accountable for populating the website with key products developed by the Project and disseminating information and technical reports on a quarterly basis; (v) revisit the communications and knowledge management strategy on a yearly basis; and (vi) develop an transition / exit strategy on how the products and services will be institutionalized, updated and funded post-project.			
13	It is recommended that the project apply for the maximum 18-month extension for GEF-6 projects, provided that it can cover increases to GEF Agency fees and PMU / Field Office costs.	Following next PEC / PAC meetings	Once	WWF-US
14	Double down on efforts to truly institutionalize cross-sectoral landscape management Refine approach of Output(s) 2.1 and 2.2 to give due recognition to the principles of landscape level management planning (landscape approach) and its participatory nature, by: i. Engaging all stakeholders of the concerned landscapes and forming a singular multi-sectoral standing landscape management committee for the Banke-Bardia complex, which include representatives of ALL land-based departments, local communities, local NGOs and entities currently working in the landscape (ZSL and NTNC, private sector / land holders, etc., ii. During the planning process present a clear spatial analysis of the biophysical and socio-	Immediately following MTR	Ongoing	PMU, Field Office, MoFE

No.	Recommendation	Time Horizon	Frequency	Responsible
	economic baseline data, containing proposals to how to best ensure the flow of multiple ecosystem benefits from the landscape, incl. biodiversity conservation, provision of water, agricultural production, use of community forests, natural resources incl. timber, rocks and minerals, allocation of land for settlement and infrastructure development, etc. Ideally, the lead of the planning should not be outsourced to maximize ownership, however a facilitator and spatial data analyst may be engaged. iii. Engage the multi-sectoral landscape management committee into negotiating and owning the landscape management plans under Outputs 2.1 and 2.2. The plans should contain the objectives of landscape management, strategies to achieve them, which are operationalized through an action plan with a timeframe of ten years. The action plan should spell out activities, associated budget and resource requirements, responsible implementers and monitoring procedures. The plans should identify rules of land management, incl. on the allocation of land for various uses. The plan should also define the zonation of the landscape for various uses for ten years and represents a binding agreement between stakeholders. iv. Implement landscape management plans as defined above governed by the standing committee using multiple budget sources, ensuring long-term support for them from the Government of Nepal and other sources of funding, leveraging WWF's whole landscape approach.			
15	In parallel, to the augmentation of the communications strategy highlighted in recommendation 12(b), it is recommended that the PMU design and implement a communication monitoring system with specific indicators (to be added to the results framework indicators, in addition to the KAP survey noted in recommendation 11, where appropriate) to be calculated each year, aiming at assessing the performance of the communication activities, identifying critical	Immediately following MTR	Yearly	PMU, Field Office

No.	Recommendation	Time Horizon	Frequency	Responsible
	issues and challenges to be faced and actions to be implemented to achieve the communication strategy objectives. A brief communication report could be drafted with the monitoring results and the proposed actions to be implemented the next year, specifying responsibilities and targets.			
16	It is recommended to empower the Project Manager to be the single point of contact and source of truth regarding all co-financing. It is imperative the Project Manager has visibility of the co-financing picture at any given point in time. Currently, information regarding co-financing from WWF-Nepal and WWF-US does not flow to or from the PMU.	Immediately following MTR	Yearly	PMU, WWF-Nepal, WWF-US and MoFE
17	Leadership training and public speaking training should be offered for most marginalized groups (especially women Muslims), that exhibit less confidence in speaking in groups/meetings groups, so as they may be more inclined to actively participate in meetings/workshops, etc. This should be the responsibility of the GESI specialist and the field staff to ensure implementation and proper monitoring	Immediately following MTR	Ongoing	PMU, Field Office

Acronyms and abbreviations

AMR	WWF-GEF Annual Monitoring Review
AWP&B	Annual Work Plan and Budget
BaNP	Banke National Park
BNP	Bardia National Park
BZ	Buffer Zone
BZCFUG	Buffer Zone Community Forest User Group
BZMC	Buffer Zone Management Committee
BZCFUGs	Buffer Zone Community Forest User Groups
BZUCs	Buffer Zone User Committees
CBAPUs	Community-Based Anti-Poaching Units
CBNRM	Community-Based natural Resources Management
CBOs	Community-Based Organizations
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFCC	Community Forest Coordination Committee
CFUGs	Community Forest User Groups
CNP	Chitwan National Park
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DANAR	Dalit Alliance for Natural Resources
DNPWC	Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation
DoF	Department of Forest
EA	Executing Agency
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ERP	Emission Reduction Program
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
FCC	Field Coordination Committee
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forest User Groups of Nepal
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FRTC	Forest Research and Training Centre
FSU	Field Support Unit
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GoN	Government of Nepal
GRB	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
HiMAWANTI	Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association of Nepal
HWC	Human Wildlife Conflict

IA	Implementing Agency
ILaM project	"Integrated Landscape Management to Secure Nepal's Protected Areas and Critical Corridors" Project
ILM	Integrated Land Management
IP	Indigenous People
IPPF	Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice
LC	Local Communities
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoEWRI	Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation
MoFE	Ministry of Forests and Environment
MoITFE	Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forests and Environment (State Government)
MoPIT	Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport
MTR	Mid Terminal Review
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NEFIN	Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NP	National Park
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NTNC	National Trust for Nature Conservation
PA	Protected Area
PAC	Project Advisory Committee
PEC	Project Executive Committee
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	WWF-GEF Project Implementation Report
PFO	Project Field Office
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
PNP	Parsa National Park
PPG	Project Preparation Grant (for GEF)
PPR	Project Progress Report
ProDoc	Project Document
QR	Quarterly Report
RAID	Risks, assumptions, issues, and dependencies
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RF	Results Framework
SEP	Stakeholders' Engagement Plan
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management

SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (indicators)
SuNP	Shuklaphanta National Park
TAL	Terai Arc Landscape
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Term of Reference
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
USA	United States of America
USD ($)	United States Dollars
WB	World Bank
WCCBs	Wildlife Crime Control Bureau
WWF	World Wildlife Fund
WWF-US	World Wildlife Fund -United States
ZSL	Zoological Society of London

1 Introduction to evaluation

1.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation

1 As part of the GEF and WWF contractual arrangements, projects that reach their midterm implementation status, are subject to a stock-taking exercise to assess the preliminary results achieved and emerging lessons to be learned during the course of the project. This is intended to hasten any course-correction that might be warranted to either put the project back on track and/or realize its full potential towards the achievement of its stated objective(s). The Terms of Reference (ToR) for this Midterm Review (MTR) presents a comprehensive description of the assignment requirements, setting out the scope and overall objectives of the engagement, as well as the expected deliverables (Ref. Annex 1).

2 The present MTR of the WWF-supported, GEF-financed Full-sized project "*Integrated Landscape Management to Secure Nepal's Protected Areas and Critical Corridors*" (herein after referred to interchangeably as the "WWF-GEF IlaM project" or the "Project"), was organized on the request of the GEF funding agency WWF-US.

3 The scope of the MTR includes the WWF-GEF financed components of the Project and covered the period between CEO Endorsement on 6 August 2019[2,3,4], to 19 September when the MTR consultant team delivered a post-mission debrief.

1.2 Evaluation objectives

4 Following the guidelines in the ToR, the main objective of the MTR was to critically assess the stages of the Project and its products through participatory approaches, measuring to what extent the objective/outcomes/outputs/activities have been achieved against the results and resources framework, and identifying factors that have hindered or facilitated the success of the project. The lessons learned section is aimed at capturing key lessons to assess what capacity building approaches/measures were effective. This part is therefore forward-looking and is aimed at promoting learning lessons so that the legacies of the project will be replicated and sustained beyond the project lifetime.

5 More particularly, the MTR examined the extent, magnitude, sustainability and potential for project impacts to date; identified any project design problems (Theory of Change – ToC); assessed progress towards project outcomes and outputs; and drew lessons learned geared towards both improving the project effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of project benefits.

6 At a more granular level, the MTR only considered the components of the project financed with GEF funds, and served the following purposes:

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[2] Notwithstanding, the MTR will also examine elements of project conception, ideation and design **prior** to the CEO Endorsement date of 6 August 2019, including the PIF development and the PPG phases, in accordance with the relevant evaluation criteria.

[3] While the start date per the Grant Agreement between the GEF Agency (WWF Nepal Country Office) and the Project Executing Partner (Ministry of Forests and Environment) is 22 December 2020, the MTR Team recognizes the anchor date of the CEO Endorsement to be material for the GEF Secretariat and for the MTR to hone in on developments between when the project was approved and when it commenced operations.

[4] Reference is made to the FY21 PIR with an implementation start date of 1 January 2021, and the FY22 PIR noting an implementation start date of 22 December 2020. For the purposes of the MTR, the MTR Team has selected the earlier date in question, which is aligned to the Grant Agreement between the GEF Agency (WWF Nepal Country Office) and the Project Executing Partner (Ministry of Forests and Environment).

- Assessing the performance of the project, with particular attention to its emerging results measured against its expected objectives; and the reasons underpinning such results;
- Assessing the Project's implementation strategy[5];
- Assessing the extent to which planned activities and outputs have been achieved;
- Assessing the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact and adaptive capacity of the interventions, per minimum evaluation criteria in the ToR;
- Assessing the Project's processes, including budgetary efficiency (including the extent to which co-financing has or has not materialized in a timely manner);
- Identifying the main achievements and impacts of the Project activities;
- Identifying the underlying causes and issues of non-achievement of some targets;
- Documenting lessons learnt;
- Establishing a constructive feedback process to the GEF Agency (WWF-US), the GEF, the Project Executing Partner (MoFE) Executing Agency Project Management Unit (PMU), and key stakeholders to support strategic learning;
- Identification of key lessons learned, conclusions and related actionable recommendations that are "right-sized" for the Project in order to improve current and possible future interventions in this sector.

7 The GEF's updated evaluation policy also sets out minimum requirements for an MTR to which the MTR consultant team adhered, including:

- The GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP) should be informed of midterm reviews (and terminal evaluations) and will, where applicable and feasible, be briefed and debriefed at the start and at the end of evaluation missions. They will receive a draft report for comment, will be invited to contribute to the management response (where applicable), and will receive the final evaluation report within 12 months of project or program completion;
- As per the updated GEF Policy on Co-financing, Agencies provide information on the actual amounts, sources, and types of co-financing and investment mobilized in their midterm reviews and terminal evaluations;
- The evaluation should assess at a minimum:
    - Achievement of outputs and outcomes, and provide ratings for targeted objectives and outcomes, for projects. For programs, aggregated results will be reported;
    - Likelihood of sustainability of outcomes at termination for projects and the overall program;
    - Whether Minimum Requirements 1 and 2 noted above were met;
    - An assessment of GEF additionality;
    - An assessment of whether and how men and women are affected differently by changes to natural resource use and decision making resulting from GEF outcomes.

1.3 Methodological approach

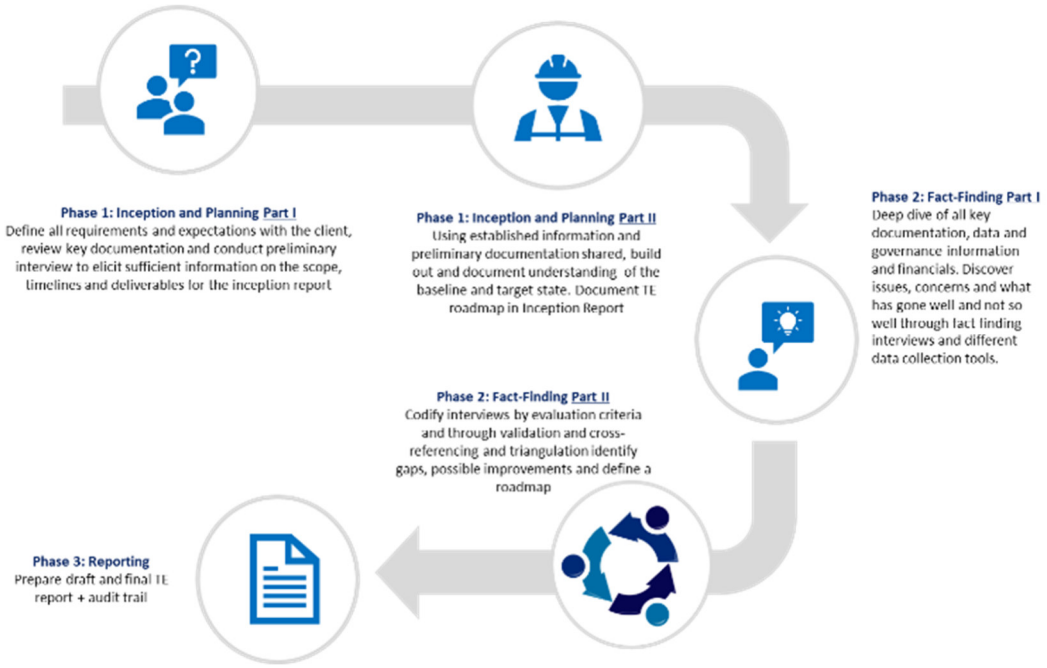
8 The Midterm Review was led by a team of four consultants (3 international, 1 national); it was developed during the period between August and October 2023. The methodology used for this document is aimed

[5] A project's implementation strategy refers to the detailed plan and approach for how a project will be executed, monitored, and managed from start to finish. It serves as a roadmap that helps project stakeholders understand how the project's objectives will be achieved and how resources (financial and human resources) will be utilized.

at achieving the objectives defined in the ToR. During the process, there was an active relationship and frequent interaction between the MTR consultant team, the M&E focal point at WWF-US and the Project Management Unit and other interested parties, in order to streamline review and enable timely feedback of the findings at different junctures in the process.

9 The MTR was essentially conducted in four stages, with the MTR consultant team largely spearheading the inception and planning phase, fact-finding phase and reporting phase, and WWF-US responsible for post-evaluation stages, as follows:

Figure 1.1 Stages of the Midterm Review



10 The success of the Midterm Review relies on the quality of the qualitative and quantitative data collected, their completeness and reliability, as well as analytical results from the evaluation and ability to triangulate common threads, themes and key gaps requiring attention in the form or recommendations. The interviews and surveys for selected stakeholders have been designed to gather data from different sources to crosscheck the design and coordinate the activities with their achievements. Aligned with the Key Evaluation Questions, the interview and survey questions cover those issues to be assessed and cross-checked / completed based on the project's indicators as linked with the Theory of Change and intervention logic.

11 In general, the MTR was guided by the requirements of the GEF Evaluation Policy (June 2019)[6] and those defined in the WWF Evaluation Guidelines (June 2020)[7]. The methods and methodological instruments that were developed and used in the evaluation process were:

- Evaluation framework matrix (Annex 9)
- Documentary analysis

[6] https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/gef-evaluation-policy

[7] https://wwfeu.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/evaluation_guidelines_and_tor.docx

- In-depth interviews with key informants, focus group sessions and meetings-workshop
- Online questionnaire
- Direct observation / visits to the implementation sites

12 At all times, the consultancy used a participatory and inclusive approach, based on data derived from programmatic, financial and monitoring documents, and a reasonable level of direct participation of interested parties through interviews, meetings – workshop and review of the documents generated in this evaluation.

13 Initially, on August 1st, a first introductory virtual meeting was held, with the objective of presenting the consultant team and initiating an introduction to the Project and establishing a shared understanding of the consultants' needs and documentation to complete the inception phase. This was followed by an introductory call with the Project Management Unit on August 9th to clarify nuances of the project based on preliminary documentation digested and to start compiling a mission schedule for the forthcoming field visits. Finally, an MTR inception workshop was held on August 17th to (i) give the Project Management Unit an opportunity to deliver a presentation on the project, including governance arrangements, theory of change, and results framework; and (ii) allow the MTR consultant team to present and solicit input on the proposed methodology, approach (including proposed site visits, key questions for key informant interviews and focus groups) for the inception report. The inception workshop also served as a communication tool to reconfirm delivery times and coordination mechanisms between the consultants and the designated counterparts, communication channels, direct supervision of the consultancy and coordination of information delivery, product delivery and organization of the mission were defined. In this meeting the MTR consultant team requested the necessary information to start the consultancy and noted gaps in documentation to be posted to the Google Drive.

1.3.1 Setting of documents and inception report

14 The documentation provided were reviewed, which includes a series of documents provided by WWF-US and the Project team, among which are listed:

- Project Document and CEO Endorsement Letter;
- Project agreements, Government of Nepal endorsement letters, project operational manual(s), program implementation guidelines;
- Relevant safeguards documents, including WWF GEF Agency Categorization and Compliance memo, Process Framework, Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework, Grievance Redress Mechanism, etc.;
- Gender Action Plan and supporting gender documents;
- Annual Work Plans (AWP) and Budgets, Line Ministry Budget Information System (LMBIS);
- Project Progress Reports (PPR) including Results Framework and AWP Tracking;
- GEF Agency reports, including Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) and Project Support Mission Reports (PrISM);
- Relevant financial documents, including financial progress reports; co-financing monitoring tables and co-financing letters;
- Meeting minutes (Project Advisory Committee (PAC), Project Executive Committee (PEC), Field Coordination Committee (FCC) and relevant virtual meetings with the WWF- GEF Agency and extended team).

15 A total of 118 documents were collectively reviewed by the MTR consultant team, of which 38 were in Nepali and digested by the national consultant. On the basis of the review, a detailed description of the Project was made, covering the identified problem, the established objectives, Outcomes and their respective activities. Subsequently, an evaluation framework was established that combines the orientation questions for the five key evaluation criteria and the performance evaluation categories of the Project (Project formulation and design, Project execution, results, monitoring and evaluation).

1.3.2 Mission to Nepal – Information gathering, interviews and field visits

16 The evaluation mission organized between 4-19 September, allowed the consultant team to have a better view of the context of the Project and its operating environment. In addition, through the field visits to some of the key landscapes, the MTR consultant team was able to validate the activities carried out so far, in addition, the MTR consultant made direct contact with the most representative actors in the implementation of the Project and received first-hand testimonies about the advances and barriers encountered so far.

17 During the mission, four methods of gathering information were applied. On the one hand, semi-structured interviews were carried out based on the guided questions presented in Annex 12. Secondly, visits to the project's execution sites (Nationals Parks: Banke and Bardiya; Corridors: Kamdi and Karnali) were made, which involved long travel periods in which in-depth interviews and focus groups were held (Annex 5).

18 More than 30 interviews, including both individual and focus groups were conducted. Fifteen interviews with individuals were conducted with authorities, organizations linked to the management of protected areas, implementing partners, project team and field personnel, other related projects and relevant actors participating in the project intervention framework. Each interview had an estimated duration of an hour and a half, and were carried out individually whenever possible, thus ensuring the confidentiality of the responses provided by the interviewees. The field mission also included 17 focus group discussions with local communities, covering gender equality and women's empowerment. These discussions were led by the designated Gender and Safeguards subject-matter expert and undertaken separately, recognizing that women may not be inclined to speak freely and to share their unique perspectives and opinions regarding the Project in a mixed discussion where men are in a position of authority within a community. For all interviews, adjustments and accommodations were made in the field, as needed, to ensure participants felt comfortable to speaking their mind freely.

19 The MTR consultant team also took the opportunity for direct observation of restoration works and sensitization activities in the field, including key grassland and wetland management sites in Banke National Park, as well as rescue operations, habitat management work and human-wildlife conflict interventions in Bardiya National Park. The direct observations made during these visits not only helped to assess efficacy of the physical interventions toward sustainable management of forest resources and biodiversity conservation, but also helped to determine the current status of the restoration activities and physical works—completed, incomplete and yet to be undertaken. The direct observations and inspections also helped to gain a better sense of context/dynamics/complexities in undertaking physical works, including gauging the requirements of feasibility studies, operational plans, governance mechanisms, and sustainability of the interventions.

1.3.3 End of mission – presentation of preliminary findings

20 The information gathered and preliminary findings and observations made during the field mission were presented to the WWF-US team and Project Management Unit in the form of an end-of-mission debrief on September 19th. At the end, feedback was obtained, which facilitated the formulation and justification of conclusions and lessons learned, which in turn will feed into the recommendations for the remaining project period and beyond.

1.3.4 Online questionnaire

21 The MTR consultant team developed an online questionnaire circulated to a total 71 individuals, of which 30 were women. The online survey, using the SurveyMonkey platform, consisted of 18 questions and was designed to gauge overall perceptions and thoughts about the results and impact of the WWF-IlaM project across four categories including: (i) Project Strategy, Design and Value; (ii) Project Planning and Reporting; (iii) Project Inception and Activation; and (iv) Project Execution and Delivery. It was felt that the anonymity of an online questionnaire might surface issues that stakeholders might not necessarily want to share during interviews. The survey questionnaire was sent by e-mail to the designated contact persons on 25th and 28th September. At the time of writing 18 respondents submitted the questionnaire; response rate was 25% with an 82% completion rate. A summary of the analysis of each of the surveys and a congregation of the responses received on each of the surveys is presented in Annex 10.

1.3.5 Consultation follow-up

22 Based on observations made in the field visits and gaps identified during the desk study of various project documents and technical reports, the MTR consultant team met with additional stakeholders following the mission and approached some key informants previously interviewed early in the process to cross-reference, gather additional information, and triangulate data, as well as for understanding functional responsibilities and turnover of PMU staff. These also included follow-up consultations and deep-dives with specific stakeholders for the verification of the current status of project activities; to bring the team members who were not present during the field missions up to speed. The evidence gathered during the fact-finding phase of the evaluation was cross-checked across as many sources as possible, to validate the findings.

1.3.6 Evaluation report

23 The information gathered from the different sources of information was organized and codified by topic. To ensure the credibility and validity of the findings, judgments and conclusions that will be presented, the consultants used triangulation techniques, which consist of crossing the information obtained. Each Outcome and phase of the Project was evaluated according to the categories established in the Terms of Reference. Based on the results obtained, the consultant team formulated several recommendations of a technical and practical nature, which reflect a realistic understanding of the Project's achievements and lessons learned.

1.4 Evaluation criteria

24 Following the ToR, the Midterm Review assesses the performance of the project against seven core criteria, considering the WWF and GEF evaluation guidelines[8], in line with best practices and OECD-DAC evaluation methodology (Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, Results/Impact), as well as an additional criterion (Adaptive Management). The table below provides definitions of each criterion.

Table 1.1 MTR Evaluation Criteria

Relevance
● The extent to which the project design, outcomes, indicators and targets remain valid and consistent with local and national development priorities and organizational policies, including the context of the changing circumstances of the country (e.g., political context). In addition, it would also be pertinent to check to what degree the project design is consistent with the Theory of Change pathway towards development objectives, including assumptions and mitigated risks, and SMART indicators. Also, per GEF guidelines: ● The extent to which the project contributes to gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and No-One Left Behind.
Coherence
● The compatibility of a project intervention with other interventions (particularly policies) in a country, sector or institution. This can include internal coherence and external coherence. Internal coherence addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the project interventions and those carried about by the same sector or institution in country. External coherence measures consistency and compatibility of the interventions among different sectors, but in the same context. Also, per GEF guidelines: ● Requirement that program evaluations should assess the coherence between program and child project theories of change, indicators, and expected/achieved results, if applicable.
Effectiveness

● The extent to which the outputs, outcomes and project objective have been or are likely to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. Identify the major factors which have facilitated or impeded this achievement. Review the management structure of the project and determine whether the organizational structure of the project, the resources, the distribution of responsibilities and coordination mechanisms are appropriate for achieving progress towards project outcomes;
 	
Also, per GEF guidelines:
● Effectiveness of project strategy/approach including RBM, partnership and cross cutting approach, as it relates to:
  o Project management;
  o Potentiality of project to effectively expand achievements, learning from failures;
  o Factors contributing to effectiveness / failures.
● The extent to which progress has been made towards the programme goals, including gender equality, women's empowerment and other cross-cutting issues such as community development.

Efficiency
● The extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible. This includes efficiency of: funding availability, project management and human resources, coordination and information flow among the project partners.

[8] Like in GEF Terminal Evaluations, the following scoring per criterion is applied:

- Effectiveness, Efficiency, Relevance, Results/Impact are rated on a 6-point scale: 6=Highly Satisfactory (HS); 5=Satisfactory (S); 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS); 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); 2=Unsatisfactory (U); 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).
- Sustainability is rated on a 4-point scale: 4=Likely (L); 3=Moderately Likely (ML); 2=Moderately Unlikely (MU); 1=Unlikely (U).

Also, per GEF guidelines: ● The extent to which efficiency of project management resulted in outputs/results towards outcomes coming together in a timely manner. ● The extent to which resources (financial, technical and gender expertise) are adequate to address gender inequalities and root causes.
Results/Impact
● A preliminary assessment of project impact and the extent of intended or unforeseen effects that project interventions or strategies will have on the project objective. The extent of intended or unforeseen effects that project interventions or strategies will have on the project objective, conservation targets and GEF global environmental benefits, whether positive or negative. Whereas effectiveness focuses on intended outcomes, impact is a measure of the broader consequences of the intervention at different levels. Assess the project's logic or theory of change and the potential to scale up or replicate the project outcomes and impact. Also, per GEF guidelines: ● Results in the GEF are measured by global environmental benefit indicators, according to the results frameworks approved in each replenishment phase. Social and economic co-benefits achieved while contributing to global environmental benefits are also measured. As per the GEF Policy on Gender Equality, the collection of sex-disaggregated data and information on gender, and the use of gender-sensitive indicators, sex-disaggregated targets and results, as relevant, are to be regularly incorporated in monitoring and evaluation.
Sustainability
● The likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits, progress and impact after external support has ended. Determine the degree of support and buy-in given to the project at the national and local level. Also, per GEF guidelines: ● The extent to which the project established mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of the programme benefits for women, men and other vulnerable groups. ● How and to what extent risk management, documentation of lessons learned and work on exit strategies contribute to sustainability
Adaptive Capacity
● Assessment of the extent to which the project has regularly assessed and adapted its work (including updating the Theory of Change), thereby ensuring continued relevance in changing contexts, strong performance, and learning. Also, the extent to which the use of M&E, lessons learned and adaptive management are used to meet indicator targets and mitigate project issues (such as design flaws or any adverse impacts of the project).

25 For each criterion a set of evaluation questions has been developed (see Annex 12) that forms the basis of the Midterm Review, and the basis for overall assessment of the performance of the project in terms of a rating / judgment and supporting justifications (see Annex 11).

26 The analysis of these criteria is organized through judgment criteria and indicators following the WWF and GEF guidance for evaluations (as included in the Terms of Reference). The evaluation questions are based on the above evaluation criteria and were used in developing interview and online survey questions.

1.5 Composition of the evaluation team, including specific roles

27 The Midterm Review was undertaken by a four-person team (three international specialists and one national specialist) consisting of a Team Lead (Giacomo Cozzolino), a Senior Evaluator (Camillo Ponziani), a Technical Subject-Matter Expert (Daniel Bazzucchi) and a Gender and Safeguards Specialist

(Sushila C. Nepali). The table in Annex X highlights their respective subject-matter expertise, their roles and responsibilities in the MTR (see Annex 2 for details).

1.4 Limitations of the evaluation

28 The MTR was developed between 17th August and 6th October 2023; the itinerary is presented in Annex 2. In the implementation of the assignment the MTR consultant team encountered the following limitations:

- The aggressive timelines of the engagement forced the MTR consultant team to undertake fact finding and report writing in parallel, as opposed to a more suited waterfall approach that would have allowed the MTR consultant team to converge on a shared understanding of what was observed in the field. The tight turnaround between the end of the field mission on 19th September and the deadline of the draft report on 6th October, did not allow for sufficient knowledge transfer. It is recommended to have at least a one-month buffer between the end of the fact-finding stage and the delivery of the draft report to allow for triangulation of data, codification of information against evaluation criteria, cross-referencing of information and room for additional clarification consultations where needed;
- Delivery of the FY2023 PIR, even in draft form, in advance of the field mission would have made meetings and consultations more effective. Efficiency of the MTR was compromised by having to level set on status prior to questioning;
- Delivery of the FY2023 PIR, even in draft form, in advance of the field mission would have made meetings and consultations more effective. The overall efficiency of the MTR was compromised as a result of the MTR consultant team having to level set on the current status of the project prior to engaging in deeper and more meaningful lines of questioning;
- A bulk load of documents was provided to the MTR consultant team through Google Drive. However, this was not accompanied by any guidance or crosswalk. The latter would have enabled the MTR consultant team to shift between documents of more or lesser importance. During the development of the MTR it turned out that several key documents had originally been overlooked; these were delivered late after the field mission;
- The contact list provided to the MTR consultant team in the Google Drive only had 19 contacts. Multiple requests were made during the inception phase and during the mission for a more comprehensive contact list and corresponding emails. As a result the online questionnaire was sent out late on 25th and 28th September;
- The MTR consultant team counted with slow and limited response and availability of some stakeholders and key Project staff for online interviews. In several cases stakeholders did not reply at all to the request, even after several reminders and even though the WWF-GEF IlaM project had sent an email announcing the MTR.
- There has been limited response on the online surveys sent to the different stakeholder groups, despite the fact that several reminders were sent. Response rate was 24%, somewhat impacting the validity of results and utility of their findings.
- The limit of 40 pages for the MTR report was not aligned to the level of analysis required across the 30 indicators. As such, trade-offs had to be made by the MTR consultant team in the level of detail documented in the report to keep things succinct and where possible, information was annexed.

1.5 Structure of the evaluation report

29 The structure of the report aligns with and has been defined on the basis of the evaluation report outline proposed in the ToR of the MTR (see Annex 1). This first chapter presents the purpose of this evaluation report, its main objectives and the methodological approach that was followed to build this assignment. Chapter two articulates the project description and development context, focusing on core project tombstone data, a summary of the project's evolution and gestation and strategies to achieve conservation results and its main stakeholders and beneficiaries, as well as a description of the baseline and associated targets. Chapter three presents the main findings by evaluation category, with emphasis on project design, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, gender equality and mainstreaming, stakeholder engagement, safeguards and financial considerations. Chapter four identifies the main conclusions from the MTR and charts out lessons learned and recommendations for the remainder of the project, the latter specified per stakeholder group for which they are meant.

2 Project description and development context

2.1 Project start and duration

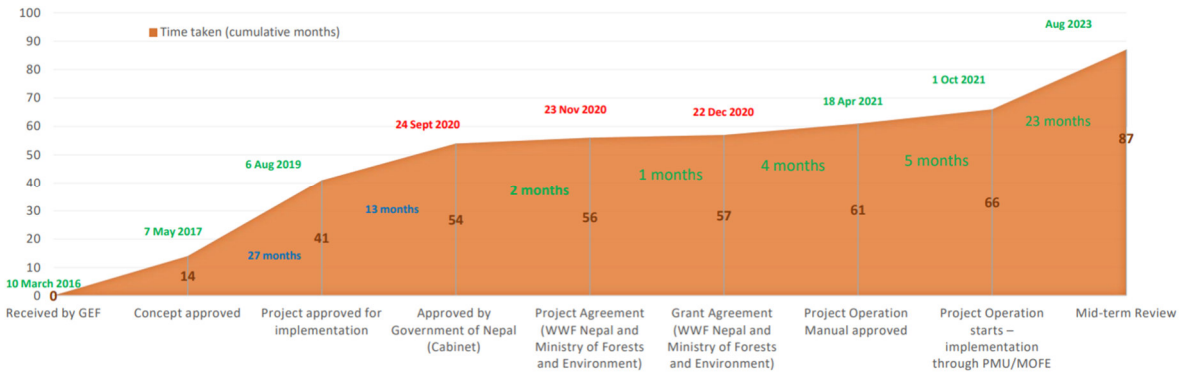
30 The "*Integrated Landscape Management to Secure Nepal's Protected Areas and Critical Corridors*" Project is a 5-year project, endorsed by the GEF CEO on August 6th, 2019 and approved by the GoN on September 24th, 2020.

31 The Project Agreement was signed by the MoFE and WWF Nepal on November 23rd, 2020, while the Grant Agreement was signed on December 22nd, 2020.

32 The completion date is currently slated for June 30th, 2025.

33 Due to challenges faced in the first year (see Section 3.2.2), t effective implementation started on October 1st, 2021, after the approval of the Project Operation Manual (April 18th, 2021).

Figure 2.1 Project timeline from concept note to MTR (Source: PMU)



2.2 Concise summary of project evolution, underlying rationale and strategies to achieve conservation results

34 The Project's ideation is rooted in the recognition that the Terai Arc Landscape's system of protected areas, buffer zones, and habitat corridors support extensive forest systems, grasslands, riverine environments, and large mammal populations. At its core, the Project's underlying rationale is grounded in imagining novel solutions in finding new ways to ensure the contiguity of landscapes and for people and wildlife to coexist, by proving models which promote a symbiotic relationship and win-win outcomes for people, wildlife and landscapes.

35 The approval of the concept – nearly two years in the making – culminated with the approval of the Project Identification Form in May 2017. The project supports the government of Nepal's efforts to promote integrated landscape management to conserve globally significant forests and wildlife. The project was positioned as being led by the Ministry of Forests and Environment (formerly, the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) at the time of design) in collaboration with the Ministry of Population and Environment (MoPE), WWF Nepal, and the WWF GEF Agency as GEF Partner Agency (Implementing

Agency). The priorities were conceived as a holistic approach to a sub-set of the conservation objectives of the long-standing Terai Arc Landscape Project[9], which aims to help establish the conditions required to secure the ecological, financial, organizational, political, and social sustainability of globally important places that provide key habitat for globally significant wildlife, corridors among protected areas, and high carbon storage potential, as well as support meta-populations of important mega fauna, including Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*), Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*), and Great one-horned rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), as well as endangered species of vulture and gharial.

36 The following problems and weaknesses, which act as barriers for reaching the long-term solution, were identified in the original concept:

i. A lack of inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder coordination to enable landscape planning and management, from the national to local level;
ii. A lack of protection status, planning and management efforts and resources in the buffer zones and corridors that assist to provide to conservation of biodiversity in protected areas and in the wider landscape; and
iii. A lack of capacity and application of best practices for forest management in TAL.

37 Another two weaknesses underly many of these barriers and, in turn, acts as a barrier to the sustainability of the TAL system:

iv. Insufficient or inadequate technical and institutional capacities for the restoration, effective management and financing priorities in community forests, buffer areas and corridors in the TAL system; and
v. Inadequate systems, institutional capacity and resources for human-wildlife conflict and wildlife crime prevention, management and response.

38 The underlying rationale of the Project – agreed through consensus during a series of three consultative meetings at the outset of the Project Preparation Phase -, was that the prevailing concept of landscape conservation ought to change based on an appreciation that approaches of national parks and wildlife reserves were insufficient for holistic environmental protection and sustainability. Recognizing these limitations led to the exploration of broader and more inclusive conservation strategies. In addition to traditional management through national forests, community forests, and collaborative forests, the landscape conservation concept emerged to establish a cohesive network among national parks, buffer zones, and corridors. This integrated approach suggests unified management and conservation efforts spanning multiple sectors including the forest sector, agricultural sector, and conservation sector. By fostering collaboration and coordination among these diverse areas, the landscape conservation concept aims to ensure comprehensive environmental protection, sustainable land use, and the preservation of biodiversity across various ecosystems and land use types.

39 Within this context the WWF-GEF IL aM project is active by: contributing to the operationalization of (i) the TAL Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025, representing the Government of Nepal's blueprint for promoting a landscape level approach to conserve key species, sustain environmental flows, and maintain ecosystem services to support people and development in the Terai and Churia region. PdP Initiative; and (ii) honing in on specific buffer areas and corridors within the Government of Nepal / WWF TAL Project to maximize impact.

[9] The project connects 11 protected areas of Nepal and India as well as large non-protected areas between them, to plan for the region as a whole and bring the benefits for both people and wildlife.

40 During the design phase, the main strategies foreseen in the Project Document and agreed to by the PPG development committee included:

- **Component 1.** ***National capacity and enabling environment for cross sectoral co-ordination to promote forest and landscape conservation*****:** This relates with enabling condition for national level and capacity development activities. Talking about the barriers and issues, integrated landscape itself is a complex topic as it is multi sectoral subject and requires multi stake holders for its better implementation. Following are two major outcome of the component: Improving inter-sectoral co-ordination and increasing capacity.
- **Component 2.** ***Integrated planning, protection area, buffer zone and critical corridor*****:** This relates with the protection of corridors. In this outcome one deals with the needs for protection while outcome two is related to community i.e. improved participatory in planning and integration to meet the community needs.
- **Component 3.** ***Forest and species management*****:** It mainly relates with SFM and includes topic such as increasing forest management practices, capacity building, human wildlife conflict management, resource management for conflict, and organizing trainings and anti-poaching activities.
- **Component 4:** ***Knowledge management*****:** It relates to knowledge management which includes sharing results and good practices at inter-sectoral level and project lessons at different levels.

41 The project team (PMU) initially consisted of a (i) project manager; (ii) project coordinator; (iii) a finance & administration manager; and (iv) a part-time communications officer. Field units initially consisted of a (i) field manager; (ii) a monitoring, evaluation & learning officer; (iii) a safeguards and gender officer; (iv) a field project officer; (v) field finance & compliance officer; (vi) field finance and compliance officer; (vii) a field finance and administration associate; (viii) a field program assistant; (ix) a front office assistant; and (x) messenger. There have been a number of vacant posts since inception in both the PMU and field units and operations have been plagued with turnover of key staff.

42 During the inception workshop the Project's conceptual model was thoroughly reviewed, but not the Theory of Change. While the Project Results Framework was reviewed, no substantive adjustments were made to factor in contextual changes, intermediary products and any of the indicators, which became increasingly problematic over the course of implementation.

43 The project started off quite slowly with a grant agreement taking roughly sixteen months to formalize following the CEO endorsement as a result of delays in the government/lead EA to endorse the Project Document, significant government changes, COVID-19 impacts, and a number of sticking points related to safeguards. From the outset the Project has been confronted with impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic that has had significant effects on its implementation, especially affecting the activities under Components 2 and 3. Although the project has looked for ways to keep things going as much as possible, certain activities had to be postponed or were approached in a different, possibly less effective, way.

2.3 Main stakeholders and beneficiaries

44 The table presented in Annex 13 to the MTR report presents the project's stakeholders and their role in the implementation of the project, as identified in Table 4-1 and supporting narrative within Section 4 of the ProDoc.

2.4 Discussion of baseline (of indicators)

45 The project Results Framework (RF) defines targets to be achieved during the implementation phase on the basis of baseline values.

46 The RF indicators have been aligned with the relevant GEF 6 Focal Area objectives as far as possible and include the relevant GEF Core Indicators at Objective level. The frequency and schedule of data collection is defined for the project, as well as the roles and responsibilities of project team members (see ProDoc, Appendix 10).

47 The GEF Core Indicators 3 and 4 capture areas that are expected to undergo ecological restoration (3), managed to benefit biodiversity (4.1) and with improved practices that benefit physical improvements in the environment (4.3) as well as GEF Core Indicator 6 registers the reduced emissions due to avoided deforestation or forest degradation, sustainable forest management, and improved practices on other land uses such as in agriculture (eg reduced grazing, perennial crops, agro-pastoral-silvicultural approaches) through project intervention in TAL. The baseline value for those Indicators is "zero", meaning that target values equate to new areas submitted to improved management.

48 For the GEF Core Indicator 11 (number of direct beneficiaries) a target female percentage has been defined both at government (30%) and community (50%) level. However, ensuring participation of women in formal coordination mechanisms (e.g., Biodiversity Coordination Committee) and training /workshop is challenging. The existing number of staff members among Government grantee partners namely- DFO Pahalmanpur, DFO Banke, BaNP Banke, BNP, Bardia, is estimated to be a total of 515 among which only 51 are female (9.91%) which indicates it is a challenge to meet the target of 30% female participation among government staff. Thus, an adaptive management measure was taken in the first year to make this target more grounded in reality; the 50% target was maintained for community-related activities, while 10% target has to be considered for engagement of female gender in govt-related activities..

49 The Outcome Indicators target values have been defined considering baseline values calculated on the basis of available data while writing the ProDoc. Some baseline values have been updated on the basis of more recent data provided by concerned authorities and/or the results of the baseline studies carried out in the implementation phase (e.g. No. of forest fire incidents in targeted corridor / BZ per year: baseline updated from ICIMOD fire database 2021, as per recent biodiversity assessment report in 2023; No. of livestock taken / year, No. of damages to houses / year, Human fatalities and injuries / year, updated: baseline updated on the basis of data reported by concerned authorities). The baseline data updating should be assessed in a positive light and an opportunity to capture the changing context, considering the long time elapsed between the ProDoc drafting and project implementation.

50 For some indicators a "0" baseline value was recorded. The value is coherent with the indicators' definition, but the MTR consultant team points out that in some cases (Outcome 3.1: sub-indicators related to women and vulnerable groups' participation; Outcome 4.1) this led to the identification of target values not clearly referred to the project specific context. In other words, it is not possible to understand how ambitious the identified (not / partially / fully achieved) target values are, because the value appears weakly referred to the project context.

3 Findings

3.1 Project design

3.1.1 Theory of change (project logic /strategies) together with assumptions and risks

51 The MTR consultant team has reviewed the Project's Theory of Change, along with the supporting narrative, as presented in Appendix 2 of the Project Document and determined that while being concise, but otherwise clear and logical, it is missing several recommended elements which make up a strong Theory of Change, including clearly defined impact pathways, assumptions and drivers.

52 Its depiction, is a realization of the project outcomes within the four critical components is anticipated to markedly enhance capacity, streamline planning and implementation processes, and bolster both inter-sectoral and vertical coordination in alignment with Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) and the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) Strategy 2015-2025. There is recognition that this comprehensive advancement will play a pivotal role in mitigating an array of threats presently affecting the corridors and protected area buffer zones of the TAL. Direct and tangible benefits to participating communities are also forecasted in the Theory of Change, emanating from augmented returns from Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and sustainable livelihood activities, thus reinforcing the incentive for ongoing and future involvement in conservation and community-based Natural Resource Management.

53 The Theory of Change posits that the enabling conditions arising from a network of stakeholder involvement, inter-sector coordination, and enhanced technical capacity for ILM and SFM converges as a conduit for the reduction of environmental threats, via heightened awareness, availability and new tools to address landscape contiguity. The underlying hypothesis is that these enabling conditions will hasten the revitalization of the integrity of the TAL's corridors, buffer zones, and additional natural habitats. The resultant impact permeates various levels, positively influencing the globally significant ecosystems of the Terai and Churia Range and offering robust protection for key wildlife species, enhanced forest carbon sequestration and forest protection, and most importantly, brings forth direct benefits to a diverse array of local populations, including women, indigenous communities, and other vulnerable groups, underscoring a comprehensive and inclusive impact footprint.

54 The MTR consultant team takes note that the Theory of Change took shape through a long and consultative review process across five PPG consultation meetings between May 2018 to January 2019 where the Theory of Change was built out incrementally, adjusted to ensure it aligned with the barriers noted in the Project Document and jointly reviewed.

55 Several gaps identified by the MTR consultant team include:

- An overly linear logic model, which downplays the complexity of the intended impact(s) between the Project strategies and the contributions across Components and Outputs to the desired Outcomes. This is not too much of a concern, seeing the Theory of Change is accompanied by a conceptual model which delves into the relationships between elements of the Project at a much more granular level;
- The MTR consultant team notes that the Theory of Change has remained consistent since the Project Document and was not revalidated or adjusted during the Inception Workshop; only the conceptual model was revisited. The MTR consultant team reviewed the conceptual model during

the desk review stage and revalidated its content with the PMU and no updates were deemed necessary at this juncture of the project.;

- While the Theory of Change captures the prevailing direct threats, root causes and barriers, there are no supporting assumptions or drivers. Again, this is not too much of a concern given the existence of a detailed conceptual model, and the maturity of GEF guidelines on Theories of Change was still converging during GEF-6 when the project was being designed;
- The accompanying narrative includes a series of IF-AND-THEN statements as opposed to clearly defined impact pathways suggested in the GEF's Theory of Change primer approved by the GEF Council in December 2019. Per the GEF's Theory of Change primer, the essential and distinctive elements of the Theory of Change are to (i) identify specific causal links among outputs and outcomes, with evidence; (ii) clearly describe the causal pathways by which interventions are expected to have effect, and identify indicators to test their validity over time; and (iii) to be explicit about assumptions about these causal pathways, which includes an analysis of barriers and enablers as well as indicators of success. While the MTR consultant team had no issues understanding the logic of the IF-AND-THEN statements, this may not be the case for all stakeholders. While the Project had already been endorsed at that point, an annual Theory of Change exercise, as part of the annual adaptive management meetings, would have been useful to layer in updated guidance and best practice. Notwithstanding, the MTR consultant team appreciates and is cognizant of different approaches to TOCs, including those which WWF promotes. The MTR consultant team has distilled both impact pathways and associated assumptions for each of the IF-AND-THEN statements in the Project Document in Annex 3.
- Consultants with the PMU during the fact-finding stage and during feedback review of the draft report surfaced an apprehension to update core documentation in the Project Document such as the Theory of Change and Project Results Framework, as it was understood these could not be updated. The MTR consultant team stresses the importance of empowering the Project Manager to steer the project and enabling them to propose changes to the project results hierarchy and intervention logic, based on contextual changes on the ground during implementation. These should be reviewed by the Project's governance before any re-baselining occurs.

56 The MTR considers that the Project and PMU did a good and systematic job in capturing most of the key elements of a Theory of Change in the absence of formal, transparent and standardized guidelines from the GEF, since these tools were introduced more systematically in GEF-6[10]. It is clear that a robust consultative approach was followed in its creation and that it is anchored to significant due diligence in the form of a conceptual model. The MTR consultant team attributes this consultative and incremental approach to the reason why it was not adjusted during the inception workshop. Going forward, however, an annual review exercise during the Annual Workplan phase would be useful as part of the annual adaptive management meeting to ensure alignment with any changes to the project context, updated result chains and ensuring funds are allocated appropriately to high impact pathways. Indeed, while annual reflection or adaptive management was envisaged and budgeted, it is not being executed as intended.

[10] WWF-GEF has been promoting theories of change, based on the WWF Project and Programme Management Standards PPMS, which is based on the Conservation Standards of the Conservation Measures Partnership. The WWF Network has Conservation Coaches to facilitate and support teams with this process and WWF Nepal has several coaches with this capacity.

3.1.2 Assumptions and Risks

57 Assumptions formulated in the Project Document accompany most, but not all, indicators in the Results Framework in Appendix 10. All assumptions remain valid in principle, yet these are at a relatively high level. A number of assumptions have long-term time horizons and closer aligned towards the realization of the end-of-project targets rather than achievement of transitional / transformational states required to deliver the impacts within the Outcomes. No assumptions are presented for either the identified barriers and incremental reasoning for the project alternative scenarios with and without the project, or do they accompany the Theory of Change as noted in the section above.

58 Risk analysis in the Project Document is robust with table 2-3 on pages 84-86 highlighting the key risks that could threaten the achievement of results though the chosen intervention strategy. Regarding the risk matrix presented in the Project Document, the MTR consultant team notes the following:

- Given the disruption caused by new government requirements under its decentralization restructuring, the probability (P = 3 / I = 4) associated with risk no. 1 "*The administrative restructuring of the government system results in lingering uncertainties, lack of clarity on institutional roles and conflicts over jurisdiction that adversely affect natural resource governance, creating impasses and challenges for project implementation*", should have been estimated as "High" as opposed to "Substantial". The assumption that the restructuring would be a smooth transition that would not impede international cooperation funds turned out to be incorrect. Had the overall probability and impact profile been "High", it could have increased its visibility, and monitored more closely and perhaps, appropriate mitigations included in the annual work plan;
- Seeing the project is the main conduit for operationalizing the TAL Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025, both the probability and impact of risk no. 2 "*Regional development priorities for settlements, agricultural and irrigation schemes, transportation infrastructure and industry take precedence over conservation and NRM plans supported by the project*", were probably given too high a profile;
- The Project incurred delays during its inception phase due to floods and landslides at the field sites, and therefore, the probability of risk no. 5 regarding "*major natural disasters such as earthquakes or floods*" was not contemplated and both the probability and impact were estimated in error. The mitigation however, are correct to point out that there must be a certain acceptance of this risk since the impact will vary substantially with the nature and scale of such a disaster and its location;
- Interestingly, and given the limitations of national procurement legislation governing fund flows to non-government entities, there are no risks documented with respect to low capacity to disburse project funds and bottlenecks to the disbursement of grants, the revolving fund or innovative financing mechanisms. Early identification of this problem could have mitigated delays and lead to workable solutions prior to the MTR. An important lesson from this is perhaps to undertake proofs of concept during the PPG phase or during the early stage of implementation and scale once the assumptions hold true and there is a supporting regulatory environment to expand the scope of the activity.;
- Given the Project was designed and approved in the pre-pandemic era, it is justifiable that it did not document or have the foresight regarding risks around zoonoses and pandemics, given its landscape and species emphasis.

3.1.3 Analysis of M&E Design

Monitoring & Evaluation at design rating: **(5): SATISFACTORY**

59 The M&E plan was based on the WWF-GEF Results Based Management approach and includes a description of M&E activities, frequencies through a calendar of monitoring activities and reporting requirements in table 7-1 of the Project Document, and indicators with respect to outcome and objective levels. With two minor exceptions and several tabulation errors, the end-of-project targets in MS Word Results Framework in Appendix 10 of the Project Document are consistent with the working copies of the Microsoft Excel spreadsheets accompanying each PIR, suggesting that no substantive adjustments were made at the outset during the Project's inception phase. Gauging the evolution of the indicators and Results Framework from the PIF stage and throughout the PPG, it becomes clear that quite a lot of thinking has gone into the indicators and targets. The Project Results Framework was built in a consultation with the PPG committee drawing from longstanding landscape work and investments in Nepal (WTLCP, GEF-5 Land Degradation project among others), and tapping into WWF's experiences within the region. The MTR consultant team notes there was a calculated intent to get this aspect of the Project right and the due diligence that went into its development supports this finding. It capitalizes more than 20 years of continuous support from WWF (and other local partner CSOs) in Nepal, strengthening connectivity to NPs, and promoting the community-wildlife conservation nexus.

60 The Results Framework does not, in all cases, specify an owner for each indicator and responsibility for data collection is disproportionally allocated to the PMU across the Results Framework, as opposed to a broader executing government and field partners, as is normally best practice.

61 Another shortcoming observed by the MTR consultant team includes the identification for some indicators (Outcome 3.1: sub-indicators related to women and vulnerable groups' participation; Outcome 4.1) of target values not clearly referred to the project specific context. Thus, it is not possible to understand how ambitious the identified (not / partially / fully achieved) target values are. Moreover, inadequate integration of community or stakeholder feedback into the M&E process may limit the framework's ability to effectively adapt and respond to emerging issues, risks, or changing project contexts, impacting the overall effectiveness and relevance of the M&E system within the project's implementation.

62 From a design perspective, the MTE consultant team has noted a total of 8 GEF Core Indicators being leveraged as Objective-level indicators in the Results Framework. More problematic, the GEF Core Indicators are poorly aligned with and do not intuitively roll up from the Outcome-level indicators, nor do they reflect the work happening at the Output and Activity levels. With a total of **30** indicators across the Project to measure progress (**8** indicators at the Objective Level; **2** Outcome-level indicators under Component 1; **3** Outcome-level indicators under Component 2; **12** Outcome-level indicators under Component 3; and **5** Outcome-level indicators under Component 4), the result is a results hierarchy with a considerable monitoring overhead. In the quest for perfectly designed projects and increasingly aggressive targets requested by the GEF Secretariat, it is easy to forget the operational realities, bandwidth issues and turnover of key staff often faced by Project Management Units having to implement and continually monitor targets, in addition to move activities forward on a day-to-day basis. During the fact-finding stage consultations highlighted that there during the design phase, GEF Core Indicators were just being introduced and therefore, there was little experience in right-sizing the appropriate number of Core Indicators to use to measure Global Environmental Benefits.

63 M&E component has been appropriately budgeted with USD 311,320 for five years, which includes staff time, office running costs, and project planning, review, monitoring & evaluations and annual audit costs. The total budgeted cost for Monitoring & Evaluation component represents 4.6% of the total project cost, which is on the high end of projects typical of this size and budget[11]. The MTR consultant team considers that the present M&E plan and available budget appear to be adequate for monitoring and reporting.

64 A series of tables have been included in Annex 4, outlining a critical analysis of the Project's results framework, assessing how SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-bound) the indicators and targets are. The analysis in this table addresses only the Outcome-level indicators as the Project Objective only draws from the GEF Core Indicator list.

3.1.4 Lessons from other relevant projects incorporated into the project design

65 The WWF-GEF ILaM project integrates vital lessons from prior initiatives, enhancing its design and approach to ensure robust and sustainable outcomes. From the UNDP-GEF Landscape Level Biodiversity Conservation in Nepal's Western Terai Complex project (WTLCP), the Project has adapted the successful model of District Forest Sector Coordination Committees (DFSCC). Acknowledging the governmental administrative restructuring, the WWF-GEF ILaM project intends to assess and reinforce the program and budgeting role of Municipal Forestry Sector Coordination Committees (MFSCC) and the monitoring and coordination role of the DCCs. The experience from WTLCP also steers the management strategies for unprotected corridors in TAL, emphasizing extensive assessments, consultations, and networking, in line with the Forest Policy 2015, to reinforce corridor management.

66 Further enhancing its design, the Project incorporates insights from the WWF-GEF project, Sustainable Land Management in the Churia Range, and the UNDP-GEF Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands in Nepal Project. From understanding the limitations of the Churia Range project, the WWF-GEF ILaM project actively works to intertwine biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management with degraded land management, addressing a prior oversight. Additionally, the successful integration of wetland biodiversity values into national policy from the wetlands project informs ILaM's approach, borrowing the successful multi-stakeholder forum model for enhanced wetland management in the TAL area, ensuring a comprehensive and informed approach to diverse landscape management challenges.

67 There have been a number of additional insights from interventions on landscape sustainability in Nepal, the lessons from which are documented clearly in Annex 2 of the PIF.

68 Consultations during the MTR have also interestingly uncovered lessons that are be applied to other projects. For example, the PPG design committee and governance model established early on during the formulation phase paid dividends in ensuring shared ownership and understanding of the Project strategy among a complex coterie of partners and is already being leveraged elsewhere.

69 Therefore, the MTR consultant team has gleaned that significant effort has gone into aligning the project with lessons from other GEF and non-GEF initiatives starting from the early 2000s, as well as leveraging best practices from being engaged in them. It is also consciously documenting lessons as they emerge and has started applying these to other projects in an effort to strengthen the overall likelihood of success of its portfolio.

[11] Reference is made to budget notes in the PPG budget template that 3% should be afforded to projects from USD 5 - 10 million

3.1.5 Additionality

70 The Project forms part of the wider and longstanding WWF TAL Program. Yet, it is additional in the sense that given its narrow 60-month time-horizon and specific geographic and thematic focus, it helped to prepare the enabling conditions for specific models of landscape and corridor conservation. For this reason, it plays the role of initiator and innovator for elements of the broader TAL Program and even broader activities and priorities of the TAL Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025. Implicitly, it is also helping drive decision making on intangible knowledge of these types of multi-stakeholder initiatives by informing optimal staffing levels at both national level and field sites, financial needs to be effective at scale, by strengthening of government and beneficiary staff through training on certain topics; through contributing to knowledge products; through channeling support to a subset of the 11 PAs and corridors being targeted by the TAL Program and through piloting the development of selected financial mechanisms. It is interesting to note that over 30% of respondents noted that the achievements and results of the WWF-GEF ILaM project would have happened anyways, even without the GEF catalytic investment. This is perhaps attributed to the strong presence of the TAL Program and commitment of the Government of Nepal to see through the Strategy and Action plan for the TAL.

3.1.6 WWF comparative advantage

71 WWF holds a significant comparative advantage in landscape conservation in Nepal due to its extensive local, regional, and global expertise and networks. With a rich history of successful conservation initiatives worldwide, WWF brings a wealth of knowledge and best practices to the table. In the specific context of Nepal, WWF has an intricate understanding of the diverse ecological zones, conservation challenges, and opportunities within the country. This localized knowledge enhances the effectiveness and relevancy of their conservation strategies and interventions. Moreover, WWF's longstanding collaboration with local communities, governmental bodies, and other stakeholders in Nepal positions it uniquely to foster multi-dimensional partnerships essential for impactful landscape conservation. This collaborative approach ensures the incorporation of diverse perspectives and priorities, fostering broad-based support and sustainability for conservation initiatives. The organization's commitment to innovation, science-based solutions, and global sustainability goals further reinforces its comparative advantage, making it a leader in holistic and enduring landscape conservation in Nepal.

72 WWF's comparative advantage manifests prominently through its focused and multifaceted approach to landscape management in Nepal. The organization's dedication to enhancing protected area management, promoting sustainable land use practices, and fortifying policy and regulatory frameworks resonates strongly with the project's objectives. WWF's comprehensive understanding of the ecological and socio-political terrain in Nepal enables it to navigate complex landscapes, ensuring that project implementation is both relevant and effective in securing protected areas and critical corridors. Their in-depth experience and proven methodologies in landscape management position them as a leading force in the realm of conservation, significantly amplifying the potential for the successful realization of the WWF-GEF ILaM project's goals.

73 As a GEF Agency with several high-profile initiatives under implementation, WWF's organizational maturity, coupled with deep GEF experience and adherence to GEF's structured project cycle, further underscores its competitive advantage in implementing the Project. This commitment guarantees that all phases of the project, from identification and design to implementation and evaluation, are executed with rigor, transparency, and accountability. By aligning with GEF's requirements for monitoring, reporting,

and evaluation, WWF ensures that the WWF-GEF ILaM project not only achieves its immediate objectives but also contributes meaningfully to long-term landscape conservation and sustainable development goals in Nepal. This systematic business-driven and disciplined approach enhances the project's resilience, adaptability, and overall impact, affirming WWF's eminent position in global conservation efforts.

3.1.7 Replication approach and potential

74 The MTR consultant team has observed that the WWF-GEF ILaM project possesses substantial replication potential by design, as the investment is poised to extend its impact beyond the designated target areas to other regions within the Terai Arc Landscape and other conservation landscapes in Nepal. The national scope of the policies and mandate of the NBCC, which this project supports, facilitates the adoption of analogous strategies across various areas and landscapes in Nepal. By piloting a planning approach that involves the collaboration of State governments, Division Forest Offices, and Municipal governments, the project aspires to establish a robust governmental and policy framework. This framework, centered on integrated landscape management, will serve as a replicable model for other landscapes in Nepal, enhancing nationwide conservation and sustainable management efforts.

75 Moreover, focusing on the Banke-Bardia Complex for Component 3, the project encourages exchange visits to and from other parts of the TAL, promoting the sharing and adoption of successful approaches and technologies among diverse communities and local government staff. This peer-to-peer learning strategy augments the project's replication potential by fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment for innovation and progress. Through direct involvement and observation, beneficiary communities and other landscape inhabitants will have the opportunity to engage in community-based learning and lesson exchange on a myriad of interventions. This shared learning environment, coupled with the project's commitment to providing robust platforms for meeting and sharing experiences and lessons learned, ensures the continuous expansion and adaptation of effective conservation and sustainable management practices within and beyond the Terai Arc Landscape.

76 As noted in Section 3.1.4 there has been a cross pollination of best practices and successful approaches from other countries and projects from within the Asia-Pacific region on landscape conservation, connectivity, SFM, ILM and HWC making their way into the project design. The ILaM offers opportunities within the region in this regard where there is similar context .

77 With respect to its catalytic effects, the WWF-GEF ILaM project also catalyzes and hones in on specific strands and approaches of the wider TAL Program and by design, significantly influences the creation of enabling conditions for it, which is very relevant for long-term sustainability.

3.1.8 Coherence/ Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector

78 ILaM project is fully aligned with, and contributes to, national priorities for biodiversity and forests, and contributes directly towards Nepal's implementation of international conventions, especially the Convention on Biological Diversity. The project is expected to contribute to the review and implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) during its lifecycle.

79 The ILaM project and the TAL Program are deeply interconnected. They share common targets and both implement the TAL strategic plan adopted by the Government of Nepal.

80 This project will specifically support the following strategies outlined in the new TAL Strategy: strengthen protected areas, buffer zones and corridors; manage rare and endangered mammals; protect, restore and manage critical habitats; create and revise policies, regulations and action plans; strengthen coordination among law enforcement agencies; mitigate human-wildlife conflict; strengthen and promote sustainable forest management; reduce loss and degradation of forests; and provide local communities with innovative, sustainable economic incentives linked to forest conservation.

81 The project will help to achieve the goals of the Nepal National Tiger Recovery Plan to 2020 (2010) and the Tiger Conservation Action Plan for Nepal (2016-2020). The Terai Arc Landscape is the NTRP identified priority landscape for tigers in Nepal.

82 The project will contribute to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) goals and framework and key land degradation related priorities for Nepal. Through integrated landscape management, the project will help to reverse and prevent desertification and land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought to support poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.

83 The project is supporting the effective field implementation of forestry guidelines, as well as the implementation of other policies recently approved, such as the wildlife friendly linear infrastructure policy.

84 WWF Nepal is implementing another 5/6 projects that align closely and another GEF-financed project in the project sites focused on Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC), which is going to be implemented in collaboration with the Department of National Park, with the Ministry as executing agency.

85 A National Gender Strategy was developed in 2003 / 2004, which was adopted by all the MoFE departnments, but this has been under review process for a new GESI Forestry Strategy. Therefore, as the new one has not been released yet, the old version of the strategy is still in use. If programmes and projects are to foster sustainable, effective and equitable management of natural resources, they must address the concerns and needs of both men and women – and the ways they, individually and collectively, relate to the resource base. Programmes that don't recognise gender differences can often have negative outcomes. Meanwhile, ILaM project has incorporated many Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) indications to orient forestry planning and management and, in general, implement integrated land management based on social equality principle and a Gender and Inclusion Responsive guideline (GIRD) to prepare management plans of corridors is expected to be drafted

86 The project has prepared the procedural guideline on Resource investment for implementation of green enterprise promotion activities, which will be the basis for beneficiaries' selection after approval from Ministry of Finance (see section 3.2.2, Output 3.1.3).

3.1.9 Governance and management arrangements at design

87 The prescribed governance structures and management arrangements for the WWF-ILaM project are described in detail in Section 3 and Appendix 6 of the Project Document. This is accompanied by an outline and composition of both the Project Advisory and Project Executive Committees, along with a description of other bodies such as the Field Coordination Committee, Project Management Unit and Field Office in Kohalpur, Banke. Also included are roles and responsibilities of proposed staff within both the PMU and Project Field Office (PFO) in the form of a responsibility matrix in Table 3-1. Detailed Terms of Reference to facilitate hiring of staff are normally included as an appendix but are not part of the submission package.

88 Per its design, the WWF-GEF ILaM project is spearheaded by Nepal's Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE). At the federal level, two principal departments under MOFE, namely the DOFSC and the DNPWC, take on the responsibility for rolling out the project's interventions. On the local and state fronts, a collaboration was to be formed with local community groups, such as the Community Forest User Groups and Buffer Zone User Committees, alongside municipalities and state government agencies, including the Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forests and Environment, and Division Forest Offices. MOFE holds the mandate to liaise with the national GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP), keeping them updated on the project's progress, while the WWF, acting as the GEF implementing agency, will maintain coordination with the GEF secretariat.

89 The governance structure for the project is detailed and multifaceted, albeit typical of GEF-6 projects, and captures all the necessary governance and management overhead for a successful project. At the helm are the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), Project Executive Committee (PEC), and Project Management Unit (PMU). These entities form the core governing bodies that oversee the project's administration and progress. The PAC's primary role is to offer strategic direction, ensuring smooth implementation across various government levels. Meanwhile, the PEC's responsibilities encompass endorsing the project's annual work plans, progress reports, and financial statements. It also plays a crucial role in fostering coordination throughout the federal, state, and local layers of the government. Comprehensive illustrations detailing the intricate governance structures, including reporting lines, the roles and representations within the PAC and PEC, are provided in accompanying figures below. It is interesting to note this dual governance structure which is somewhat unique in the context of GEF projects. Notably, the PEC's role in approving annual work plans is traditionally done by a Project Steering Committee, or in this case, the PAC.

Figure 3.1 Overall Organizational Structure

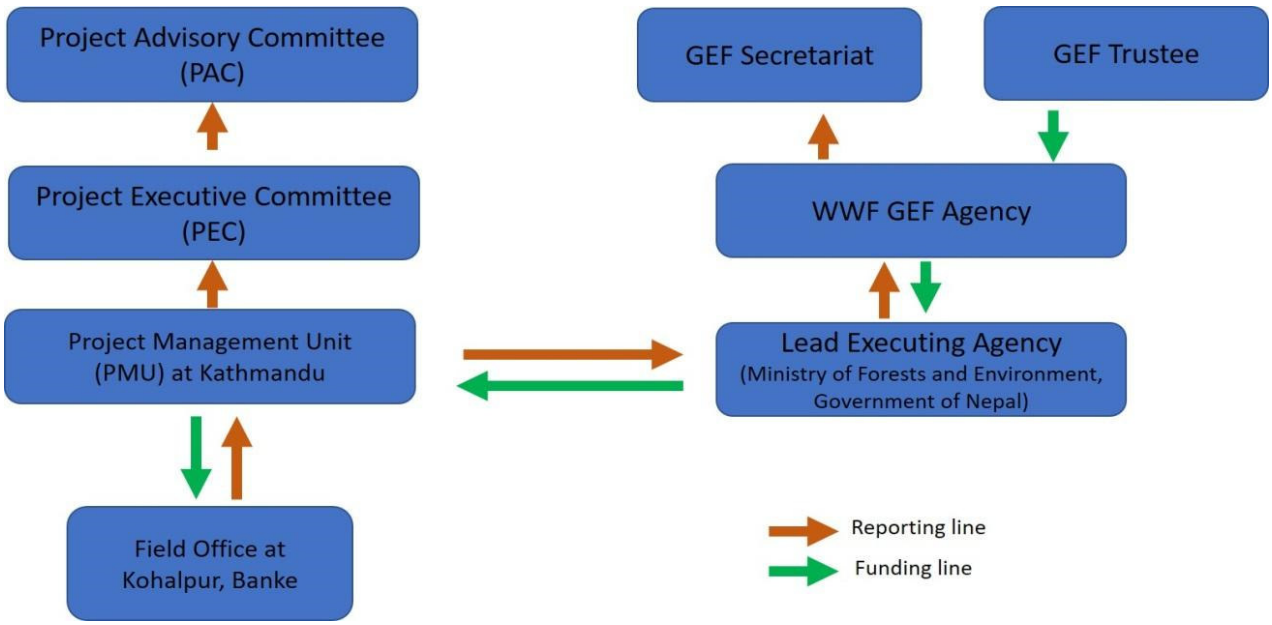
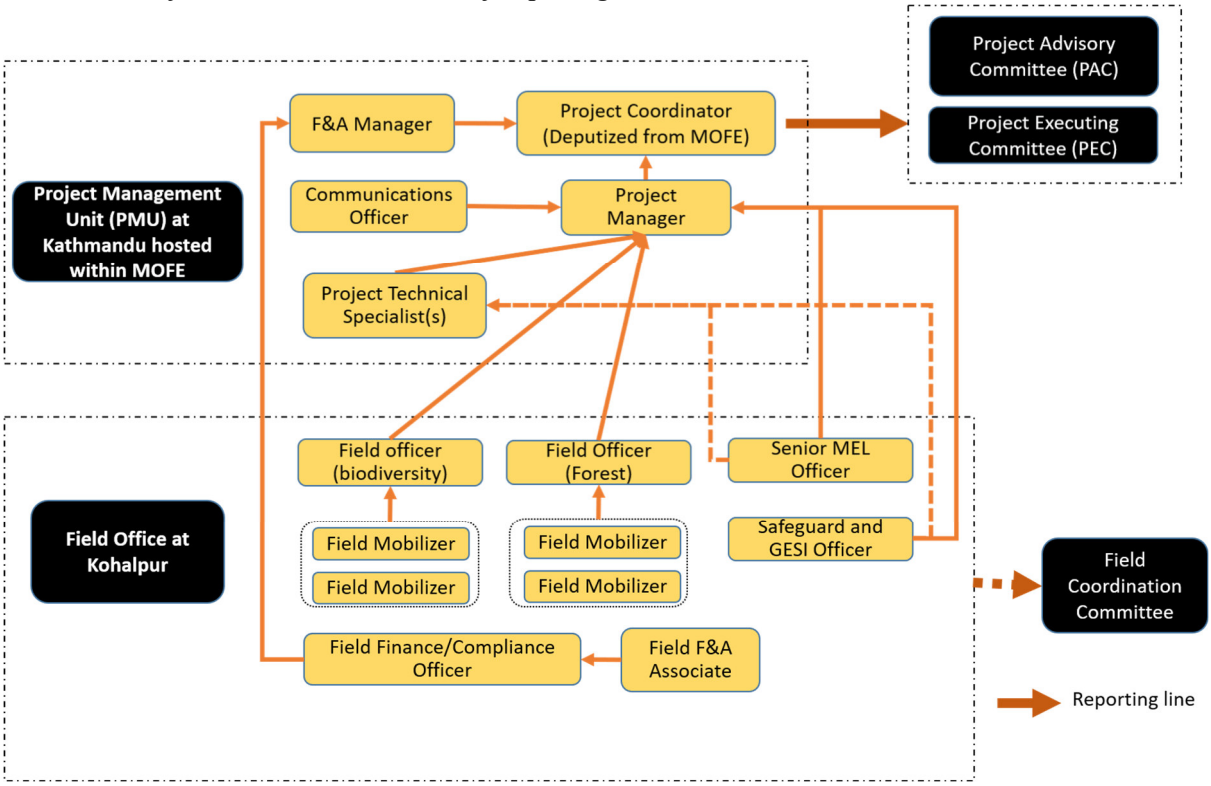


Figure 3.2 Overall Project Governance and Lines of Reporting



3.1.10 Country ownership at design

90 The WWF-GEF ILaM project boasts an exceptional degree of country ownership, and its design has ensured that the project is deeply aligned with Nepal's conservation and development priorities. Entrusted for execution to the Ministry of Forest and Environment (MoFE), a principal governmental entity, the project ensures that core national institutions are at the forefront of its implementation. Further highlighting this commitment, local and state-level entities, including community groups like the Community Forest User Groups and state government agencies, play integral roles in realizing the project's interventions. The clear and strategic involvement of local, state, and federal government structures, combined with the establishment of dedicated governance bodies like the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) and the Project Executive Committee (PEC), not only ensures streamlined implementation but also underscores the project's deep roots within the nation's institutional and governance fabric. Such integration highlights Nepal's vested interest, commitment, and ownership of the WWF-GEF ILaM project from its very design.

91 Furthermore, as the WWF-GEF ILaM project is part and parcel of the wider TAL Program and its institutional strategic development, it is considered that the level of institutional ownership is very high. This is reflected among others by the facts that a) the themes of landscape contiguity and connectivity between critical corridors was declared to be a national priority embodied in the TAL Strategy and Action Plan; b) by mandating the Project follow the government's line ministry budgetary system; and c) by leveraging the Project as a vehicle, by design, to lead consultations towards the development, approval and implementation of Nepal's next NBSAP.

3.2 Project implementation

3.2.1 Relevance

Relevance rating: **(6): HIGHLY SATISFACTORY**

92 There is convincing evidence the Project's intervention logic as presented in the Project Document identifies the problems to be solved. It describes the relevant elements and barriers in the national context and includes assumptions and a risk assessment that is reasonable, although some risks' overall profile (determined by their probability and impact) appears to have been overestimated and underestimated, or not contemplated at all. The latter did not fully fathom the implications of embedding an international multi-stakeholder cooperation project, which are already inherently complex, within a transitioning and an evolving government administrative system.

93 The links between the overall objective of the wider TAL Program, the project objective, outcomes, expected results and activities are clear, nest well together, are well-defined and logical. The results chain, as defined by the incremental reasoning, is easy to follow and intuitive. Consistency between intervention logic of the PIR and Project Document are testament to the high degree of consultation and robust design process that was selected.. There are some notable changes between the PIF and intervention strategy outlined in Project Document, largely the removal of several intermediate results and adjusting some targets and indicators, such as guidelines for smart green infrastructure and the dissemination of energy efficient stoves, as well as the addition of small grants for innovation in ILM in TAL corridors. The adjusted intervention logic was approved mid-2019 and the result is a laser-focused package of

interventions that all add value to the central objective of promoting different facets and strategies of integrated landscape management to conserve globally significant forests and wildlife.

94 By working in the community forest and agriculture lands in protected area buffer zones and corridors in the priority landscape of Nepal, the project is consistent with (BD-4) and specifically supports Program 9: Managing the human-biodiversity interface. The project recognizes that protected areas in Nepal are embedded in a landscape of mixed uses, including forest-use areas, rural settlements, and agricultural lands. The project recognizes that sustainable management in the landscape contributes to protected area security, biodiversity conservation outside of protected areas, and sustainable local livelihood provisionThe project also contributes to the goals of generating sustainable flows of ecosystem services from forests (LD-2), specifically through landscape management and restoration (Program 3), and reducing pressures on natural resources by managing competing land uses in broader landscapes (LD-3) by implementing sustainable land management through the Landscape Approach (Program 4). Finally, The project delivers benefits across the GEF SFM objectives, including integrated land use planning, cross-sector planning, and integrating SFM in landscape restoration; but contributes mostly to the goal of capacity development for SFM within local communities (Program 5) under SFM-2. The project is designed to provide support to communities, government staff and others, in the form of training and equipment for application of good forest management practices in demonstration projects, to deliver SFM with LD and BD co-benefits.

95 The Project will also directly contribute to the implementation of the CBD's Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) and although now replaced by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, it was designed to advance the achievement of the Aichi Targets, in particular under the strategic goal C: Aichi Target 5, loss of natural habitat, including forests; Aichi Target 7 concerning sustainable management of agriculture and forests to ensure conservation of biodiversity; Aichi Target 12, on preventing loss of known threatened species; and Aichi Target 14 related to maintaining ecosystem services to contribute to livelihoods.

96 The Project is highly relevant for Nepal, it is aligned with national policies and supports the Nepal National Tiger Recovery Plan and the Tiger Conservation Action Plan for Nepal. The WWF-GEF ILaM project also stands out as notably relevant in the context of Nepal's commitment to sustainable development and conservation, aligning with both local and national objectives. It contributes explicitly to national policies centered on biodiversity conservation, sustainable forest management, and community-based natural resource management, resonating with Nepal's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020 (NBSAP) and the 2015-2025 Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) Strategy. This strategic alignment ensures that the project's interventions and goals support and enhance the country's broader policy framework and developmental trajectory, even amidst evolving political contexts. Beyond national alignment, the project also echoes the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to life on land (SDG 15), climate action (SDG 13), and partnerships for the goals (SDG 17), showcasing its integration into wider global sustainability efforts.

97 Examining the project's design reveals a robust alignment with the Theory of Change pathway, further underscoring its relevance. The WWF-GEF ILaM project is crafted to navigate the complexities of integrated landscape and forest management, considering the crucial assumptions and risks that could impact its success, and employing SMART indicators to ensure the transparent and measurable achievement of its goals. This thoughtful and structured design, centered on enhancing inter-sectoral coordination, building capacity, and ensuring sustainable, community-focused interventions, signifies a consistent and coherent path towards the project's developmental objectives. It further reinforces the

project's ongoing relevance and potential for positive, lasting impact within the context of Nepal's development and conservation priorities.

98 A national landscape-level system for sustainable financing, a related roadmap and operational mechanisms are lacking, as was identified in the Project Document as one of the barriers to overcome insufficient incentives and options for community-based sustainable forest and land management in the TAL. Although this is still the case, owing to current legislative and policy bottlenecks, the project has developed very relevant enterprise program implementation guidelines that are under review in Ministry of Finance, which could be the catalyst for solving issues preventing the flow of resources to non-government entities.

99 Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) principles, social safeguards, GESI integration and community participation strategy were sufficiently considered in the design of the project, but are only gradually and slowly being incorporated into implementation in a meaningful manner.

3.2.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness rating: **(4): MODERATELY SATISFACTORY**

3.2.2.1 Progress towards results

100 The project has faced challenges in the timely preparation and approval process of operational documents (e.g., project document endorsement, project and grant agreement, project operation manual, finalization of fund flow mechanism). Due to the severe COVID-19 implications such as lock downs that made it impossible for government staff to go to their offices, manual processing and signing of documents, limited or non-existing internet connections, no meetings, no travel, etc., the already existing challenges were magnified, and the project start-up negatively affected. The project implementation effectively started in the last quarter of 2021 (the 1st FY 2022 QR points out that most of the activities hadn't started in that quarter). The year 2022 have registered other delays because of political elections and challenges due to floods and landslides in the project's sites.

101 Notwithstanding, the evaluation of the Project effectiveness is **moderately satisfactory (MS)** (IP/DO rating scale: Moderately Satisfactory (MS) 60% – 79%)[12], as the project, from a delivery perspective, has

[12] Reference to the WWF GEF rating scales (see Annex 1 – Section C):

- **Highly satisfactory (HS)** (100%) – Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were not shortcomings.
- **Satisfactory (S)** (80 – 99%) – Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor shortcomings.
- **Moderately satisfactory (MS)** (60 – 79%) – Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings.
- **Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)** (40 – 59%) – Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings.
- **Unsatisfactory (U)** (20 – 39 %) – Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major shortcomings.
- **Highly unsatisfactory (HU)** (Below 20%) – Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe shortcomings.

activated the majority of outputs, with delays in some activities that are mostly not dependent from the project management (mainly due to bottlenecks to the disbursement of grants, dependency on the global biodiversity framework approval process, inoperability of some of the involved government institutions)

102 The average level of achievement of the last workplan was 61%, resulting in a **Moderately satisfactory** rating for Implementation Progress (IP). Average level of achievement of the Results Framework Y2 against targets (Development Objective (DO) rating) was 62% (and not 67%, as per the FY2023 PIR – see Annex 11), which equates to a Moderately Satisfactory rating.

103 The following table shows the IP and DO ratings for each component for the first and second year of implementation.

		FY22 *(%)*	**FY23** *(%)*
Component 1	IP	33	27
	DO	83	100
Component 2	IP	20	46
	DO	-	80
Component 3	IP	50	70
	DO	0	45
Component 4	IP	59	83
	DO	52	80
OVERAL PROJECT	**IP**	**43**	**61**
	DO	**60**	**62**

It is worth noting that IP rating of each component and of the project have significantly improved from the first to the second implementation year.

104 Capitalizing on existing achievements at the grassroot level, willingness of stakeholders to collaborate with project and support from WWF-GEF Agency, project plans to achieve targeted results in the next years.

GEF CORE INDICATORS

105 In terms of progress against project objective indicators in the results framework, after completing year 2 of implementation, altogether 336.8 ha of land has been restored, (9.6 ha of restored degraded agricultural lands, 191 ha of restored forest and forest land and 136.2 ha of natural grass and shrublands) through private forest promotion, seedling production and grassland management support with project fund (**GEF core indicator 3**) (72% against the year 2 target value, that is 350 ha).

106 In total, 39.52 ha of land in landscapes brought under sustainable land management in production systems (**GEF core indicator 4**) (8% against the year 2 target value, that is 500 ha).

107 In addition, 9,609 (49.95% female) Community members/users in targeted CFUGS/BZUGs (target is 5790, 50% female) in project intervention area received capacity development training. Altogether 304 (10.85% female) government staff (target is 388, 30% female) received capacity development training with project support (**GEF core indicator 11**). The target of women's participation at government level (30%) is unreachable, because only 10% of the government officials are female; thus, this target was revised down to 10% in 2023 as an act of adaptive management(see section 2.4).

OUTCOMES

108 Hereafter, progress towards results of each outcome is presented. See Annex 11 for more details (analysis carried out for each output). Outcome overall rating refers to the WWF GEF rating scale (see Annex 1 – Section C), considering the average between the IP and DO ratings (except for Outcome 1.1 and Outcome 1.2 – see clarifications below provided for those Outcomes).

COMPONENT 1 "National capacity and enabling environment for cross-sectoral coordination to promote forest and landscape conservation"

109 **Component 1** aims at developing institutional and coordination capacity at all levels (federal, state and local), to benefit planning and conservation of the overall TAL. Two outcomes and 4 outputs were identified in the ProDoc.

110 **Outcome 1.1** "Improved inter-sectoral coordination from Federal, State to Local level for sustainable forest management and integrated landscape management"

		Year 1		Year 2	
		Achievement (%)	**Rating**	**Achievement (%)**	**Rating**
Outcome 1.1	**IP**	32	U	26	U
	DO	50	MU	-	N/A

The progress made is **moderately unsatisfactory** (instead of unsatisfactory – IP and DO average rating) considering that: a) the Outcome indicator is not expected to be evaluated in the 2nd year, but its value would have been "0": b) IP is low (unsatisfactory), even though this is mostly not dependent on the project management. Most of the targets planned could not be achieved, depending on the final review of NBSAP, which is expected to be carried out by the end of 2024, after the global biodiversity framework approval. However, some meetings were organized.

111 **Outcome 1.2** "Capacity increased for multi-stakeholder and cross-sector landscape and forest planning and management"

		Year 1		Year 2	
		Achievement (%)	**Rating**	**Achievement (%)**	**Rating**
Outcome 1.2	**IP**	33	U	31	U
	DO	100	HS	100	HS

The progress made is **moderately unsatisfactory** (instead of moderately satisfactory – IP and DO average rating), considering that the project objective has been achieved by changing the indicator definition, while IP rating is unsatisfactory, with most of the activities registering delays. even though the low level of progress is mostly not dependent on the project management. Training activities have been partially rolled out, while the project has been facing challenges regarding grants and revolving funds, due to constraints related to institutional funding flow mechanism.

COMPONENT 2 "Integrated Planning for Protected Area Buffer Zones and Critical Corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape"

112 **Component 2** supports biodiversity and socio-economic surveys and stakeholder consultations for Brahmadev, Karnali and Kamdi corridors to identify priority sites for interventions within a targeted sub-set of the landscape, the Banke-Bardia complex, including Kamdi and Karnali corridors, and improve planning. Two outcomes and 4 outputs were identified in the ProDoc.

113 **Outcome 2.1** "Improved corridor planning for TAL corridors (Brahmadev, Karnali and Kamdi)"

		Year 1		Year 2	
		Achievement (%)	**Rating**	**Achievement (%)**	**Rating**
Outcome 2.1	**IP**	0	HU	33	U
	DO	-	N/A	100	HS

The progress made is **moderately satisfactory**. The surveys have been conducted, while the assessment reports have been partially drafted, due to implementation delays.

114 **Outcome 2.2** "Improved participatory planning for sustainable management in Banke-Bardia complex"

		Year 1		Year 2	
		Achievement (%)	**Rating**	**Achievement (%)**	**Rating**
Outcome 2.2	**IP**	25	U	54	MU
	DO	-	N/A	70	MS

The progress made is **moderately satisfactory**. The participatory assessment in the targeted PA buffer zones and corridors has been undertaken, while resource mapping of CFUGs at corridor level and BZUCs hasn't started yet. Consultations have registered a delay, with a significant effort in the second year which led to the organization of several meetings. The strategic framework for corridor management and the review of management plans should be carried out the next year.

COMPONENT 3 "Forest and human-wildlife conflict management for improved conservation of targeted protected area buffer zones and corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape"

115 **Component 3** supports training and on-ground implementation of sustainable habitat and wildlife management activities in the targeted Banke-Bardia complex, including support for community based natural resource management, mitigation of human wildlife conflict, reducing the negative impacts of large linear infrastructure on wildlife, and wildlife crime prevention and response. Three outcomes and 8 outputs were identified in the ProDoc.

116 **Outcome 3.1** "Strengthen livelihoods and biodiversity conservation through sustainable forest management practices"

		Year 1		Year 2	
		Achievement (%)	**Rating**	**Achievement (%)**	**Rating**
Outcome 3.1	**IP**	45	MU	66	MS
	DO	0	HU	44	MU

The progress made is **moderately unsatisfactory**. The DO targets have been partially achieved. Training to local government on SFM are expected to be rolled out next year, while training activities targeting local communities have been partially carried out. SFM tools at state level haven't been implemented as expected, while forest fire management tools have been provided to CFUGs. Multi-year support for nursery to DFO is going ahead as expected. Financial and technical support to communities have been

provided as planned, while private forest registration and revolving funds implementation have been facing challenges, thus there might be the need for a realignment of activities and budget reallocation.

117 **Outcome 3.2** "Improved management of the human-wildlife conflict"

		Year 1		Year 2	
		Achievement (%)	**Rating**	**Achievement (%)**	**Rating**
Outcome 3.2	**IP**	50	MU	75	MS
	DO	-	N/A	50	MU

The progress made is **moderately satisfactory**. The DO targets have been partially achieved. Technical reports and guidelines have been partially drafted, while support packages for technology and capacity development and direct mitigation and prevention interventions have been carried out as planned.

118 **Outcome 3.3** "Enhanced capacities of government agencies and community in curbing illegal wildlife crime"

		Year 1		Year 2	
		Achievement (%)	**Rating**	**Achievement (%)**	**Rating**
Outcome 3.3	**IP**	62	MS	70	MS
	DO	-	N/A	50	MU

The progress made is **moderately satisfactory**. The DO targets have been partially achieved. The support provided to CBAPU members has registered delays, while revolving funds implementation has been facing challenges, thus there might be the need for a realignment of activities and budget reallocation. Training and operation support to Park staff, rangers on wildlife crime management have been partially rolled out.

COMPONENT 4 "Knowledge Management and Monitoring and Evaluation"

119 **Component 4** aims at bringing practitioners together from across the landscape, helping develop a coherent vision of integrated landscape management, sharing resources and lessons learned across all levels of intervention, and facilitating the replication and upscaling of project results. Three outcomes and 4 outputs were identified in the ProDoc.

120 **Outcome 4.1** "Improved coordination and dialogue on integrated landscape management from the local to national level"

		Year 1		Year 2	
		Achievement (%)	**Rating**	**Achievement (%)**	**Rating**
Outcome 4.1	**IP**	70	MS	86	S
	DO	100	HS	100	HS

The progress made is **satisfactory**. The expect number of stakeholders (persons) participating in annual forums (DO target) has been achieved. The implementation progress is high. Technical and financial support provided to capacitate eco-clubs through the implementation of eco-projects and awareness campaign represents a successful case study.

121 **Outcome 4.2** "Project monitoring system operates, systematically provides information on progress, and informs adaptive management to ensure results"

		Year 1		Year 2	
		Achievement (%)	**Rating**	**Achievement (%)**	**Rating**
Outcome 4.2	**IP**	50	MU	74	MS
	DO	?	?	100	HS

The progress made is **satisfactory.** Annual reflection workshops have been organized as expected (DO target). Activities have been carried out with some delays that are expected to be catched up with higher targets the next year.

122 **Outcome 4.3** "Project lessons shared"

		Year 1		Year 2	
		Achievement (%)	**Rating**	**Achievement (%)**	**Rating**
Outcome 4.1	**IP**	62	MS	70	MS
	DO	-	N/A	50	MU

The progress made is **moderately satisfactory**. Most of the activities will start the next year, except for two activities, one started last year, as planned, the other being delayed and to be realized the 4th year. DO targets (number of forums, articles, radio programs) have been achieved except for one (radio programs hosted by the project), partially achieved.

3.2.2.2 Execution delay and challenges

123 The implementation process registers a 1-year delay after the Grant Agreement was signed (22nd December 2020), due to challenges faced in the preparation and approval process of operational documents The development of the Project Operational Manual (POM) took too much time.

124 Another challenge was the slow hiring process of the PMU and slow approval process by the government whose clearance is necessary for sub-granting partners or procurement to implement activities.

125 The prolonged period to receive No Objection Letters (NoL) from the WWF GEF Agency for sub-contracting and hiring resulted in delayed implementation.

126 PMU and field office had also to face challenges with staff turnover (see Annex 6), as it happens in the most of multi-year projects, being not possible to guarantee that the hired technicians keep on working till the end of the project. Notwithstanding, the management has proved to be responsive, ensuring the regular progress of the project. To date some officers, among which the M&E Officer, are vacant (see Annex 6).

127 Furthermore, as highlighted in the previous section, in section 3.2.8 and in Annex 11, the project progress has been hampered by low financial disbursements due to constraints in the institutional fund flow mechanisms.

3.2.3 Assessment of knowledge management

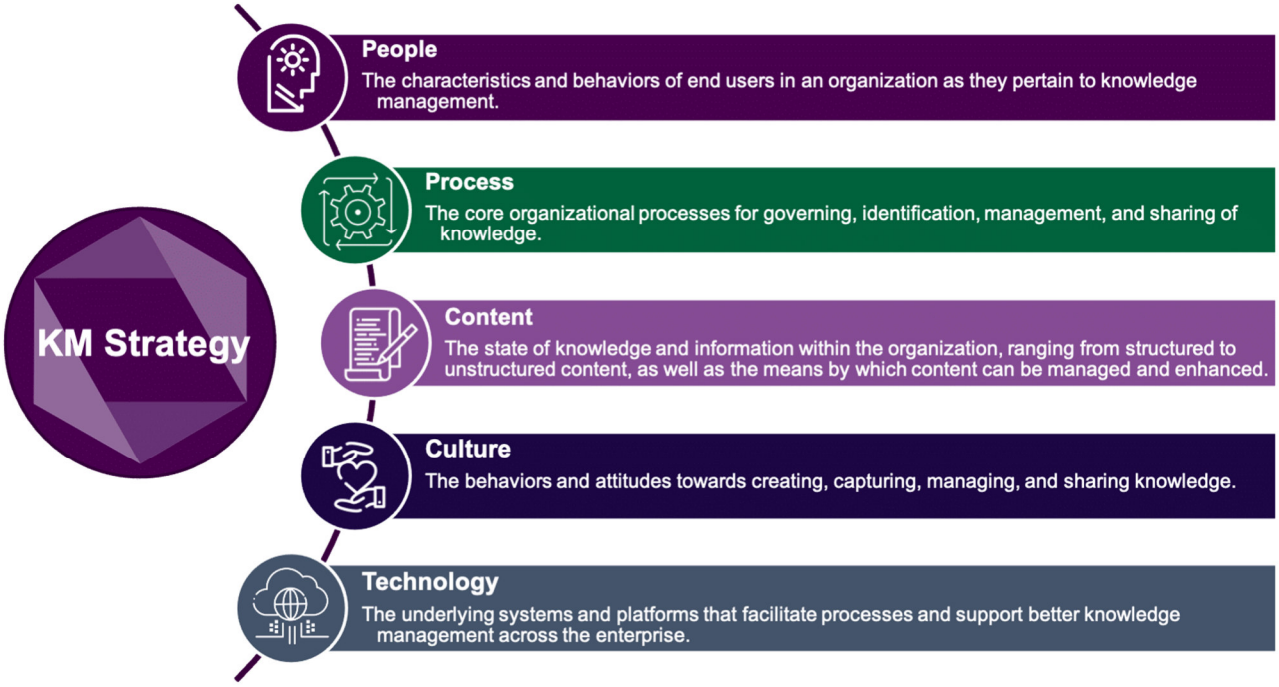
128 While Knowledge Management is embedded in the Project's strategy by design, the MTR consultant team believes that it is getting conflated with communications and without clear delineation of what it is (and isn't), risks missing an opportunity to capitalize on the good work that is going on under Component 4.

129 The WWF-GEF ILaM project was purposely designed to emphasize a structured knowledge management approach to aid the development of future replication and scaling-up plans. Key steps in this approach include (i) identifying valuable and relevant knowledge; (ii) capturing and retaining this knowledge; (iii) sharing the acquired knowledge with essential audiences; (iv) applying transferred knowledge during the project's duration or formulating guidelines for future replication and up-scaling; and (v) evaluating the worth and benefits of the knowledge produced as a result of project interventions.

130 The annual Adaptive Management Review therefore, plays a pivotal role in this regard, by taking stock of the Project's interim / intermediate successes.. Lessons derived from this review ought to be organized into pertinent categories such as capacity, coordination among stakeholders, technical issues, gender equity, and communications and the significance of these lessons should be evaluated to discern how they can be addressed or disseminated. To bolster the application and distribution of these insights, the project team must enumerate specific subjects for future replication/scaling-up, recognize key audiences and their information needs, and most importantly, design and employ specific tools to facilitate knowledge sharing, replication, and upscaling, which might include policy proposals, best practice manuals, workshops, case studies, technical reports, and multimedia tools like videos or tutorials.

131 While the Project has been quite prolific in terms of communications and external awareness raising, and getting key messages across both at the national and local level there is less of a conscious effort to convert data and information into knowledge, and charting out a roadmap on how to go about doing this. The main problem is that despite knowledge management being a pillar of the Project's design, there is no explicit knowledge management strategy or standalone roadmap of how to realize the outcomes or how the activities are intended to roll up to achieve the desired outcomes. For consideration, the building blocks of a knowledge management strategy encompass a description of **People**, who generate and utilize knowledge; **Process**, which defines how knowledge is captured, shared, and applied; **Content**, the actual knowledge and information being managed; **Culture**, which influences attitudes towards knowledge sharing and utilization; and **Technology**, the tools and platforms facilitating the entire knowledge lifecycle.

Figure 3.3: Building Blocks of a Knowledge Management Strategy



3.2.4 Results / Potential for impact

Results rating: **(5): SATISFACTORY**

132 While it is often premature at midterm to gauge hard results and impact, the WWF-GEF ILaM project, has clearly demonstrated a substantial potential for impact in addressing wildlife conservation and integrated landscape management challenges. The project's interventions span a wide range of activities, from direct initiatives like reducing wildlife traffic accidents and providing technology support packages, to capacity-building activities such as training and facilities for managing human-wildlife conflicts. Notably, the project has successfully allocated saved budget from certain activities for further interventions, an indication of efficient resource management which enhances the potential for greater impact. For instance, the budget saved from the Sikta irrigation canal fencing was reallocated to fund a third intervention, surpassing the initial project targets. This adaptability and efficiency, especially in resource allocation, points towards a project with a robust potential to produce intended, and even additional, positive outcomes.

133 Additionally, the project's logic or theory of change is grounded in a combination of on-the-ground interventions, capacity development, and knowledge management. The establishment of eco-clubs, the focus on community-based anti-poaching units, and the emphasis on training and awareness campaigns point towards a holistic approach. The successes in certain activities, such as the eco-club establishment, which saw the Project Management Unit (PMU) investing more due to its success, indicate a potential for scalability and replication.

134 The project is firmly rooted in over 15 years of conservation planning in the Terai Arc Landscape, highlighting its ability to leverage long-term strategies for sustainable biodiversity conservation and land management.

135 Furthermore, the project's design, which fosters deep integration with national and local governance structures, provides a robust buffer against abrupt sociopolitical shifts, ensuring the continuation of its conservation efforts. The investments made in fostering adaptation strategies, such as integrated livestock management, and the emphasis on community engagement underscore the project's vision to create lasting environmental benefits, both at the local and global levels.

136 From the GEF's perspective, Core Indicators is the conduit to achieving impact. Only 3 of the 8 Core Indicator achievements were not within ≥ 75% of the YR2 target.

137 Anecdotal evidence from communities and beneficiaries themselves that the strategies to improve livelihood and reducing HWC are bearing fruit; so much so that they are requesting additional investment.

3.2.5 Governance and management arrangements in implementation

138 **Project Advisory Committee (PAC)**, **Project Executive Committee (PEC)** and **Project Management Unit (PMU)** constitute the overall governing bodies for the project (see section 3.1.9 for more details). The PMU is hosted by the MoFE in Kathmandu, with a **field office** located at Kohalpur, Banke District. A **Field Coordination Committee (FCC)** support the PMU in coordinating institutions at various levels.

139 **PAC** function is to provide strategic guidance and enable and facilitate effective implementation across all levels of the government structure, but its members have not likely played the expected role. Indeed, only one PAC meeting was organized, while members were expected to meet at least once a year. The number of members is likely too big, with some members not so concerned by the most of the 96 activities of the project. This may warrant revalidation of its scope, composition and value-added in the project. First PAC meeting held on 2021 had recommended for the approval of project operational manual and also provided principle consent to realign activities from recurrent spending to capital spending.

140 **PEC** function is to endorse the annual workplan/progress/financial report and facilitate coordination at all levels of Government (federal, state and local), but its members have not likely fully played the expected role. Members should have met each three months, while only 3 meetings were organized for the approval of the workplans. The PEC has also endorsed the the guidelines on Eligibility and selection criteria for providing thesis grant and selection of innovative proposals output 1.2.3

141 **PMU** and **Field Office** have ensured the regular progress of the project.

142 **FCC** meetings have not been so frequent, but its members are actively engaged and at least two meetings a year are organized with PMU.

143 **Federal (Parks) and Provincial (DFOs) including local implementing partners (CBOs-CFUGs, BZUCs)** have been actively engaged in the development of the project, as well as Municipalities have played a relevant role in supporting local communities for the implementation of the interventions.

3.2.6 WWF and Implementing Agency implementation and execution coordination

4

Implementation and execution rating:	**(5): SATISFACTORY**

3.2.6.1 Implementation / supervision

Implementation / supervision rating: **(6): HIGHLY SATISFACTORY**

144 The ILaM project was approved by the GEF CEO on 6 August 2019 while implementation did not commence until after 22 December 2020. WWF and MoFE both had their standards and followed through the process prior to formalizing the agreement. WWF Nepal invested a substantial amount of time during review and endorsement of the agreement through various Ministries (MoFE, MoF and MoLJPA), getting through drafting and submitting the Project Operation Manual to Government approval and opening a separate project bank account before setting out for the implementation. The major sticking points for the negotiation was on the terms, conditions and provisions set out by the WWF GEF Agency in the agreement. Some of the Government ministries had strong impression that GEF funds were allocated for the government, so it took a considerable amount of time to make them agree to the WWF GEF Agency's terms and conditions to be incorporated in the agreement.

145 Despite initial challenges with the Project, the MTR consultant team has observed with great admiration the maturity of WWF-US operations in project management. Over the course of the Project's incubation, design and execution, WWF-US has consistently demonstrated its capacity to not only conceptualize but also efficiently execute complex conservation projects. Their adeptness in navigating logistical, bureaucratic, and on-ground challenges reflects a rich repository of experience and a deep institutional knowledge. Moreover, their ability to foster collaborations, integrate community perspectives, and adapt to changing environmental and socio-political contexts underscores their position as a leading entity in conservation project management globally. It is readily apparent that WWF-US has staffed itself with seasoned professionals and conservation practitioners, takes its role as a recent GEF Agency seriously and a source of pride.

146 WWF Nepal, as Country Office of WWF-US, has efficiently provided compliance oversight and support, progress reporting and facilitated the project management communications with GEF Secreteriat and Trustee, as delegated by WWF GEF Agency. Furthermore, it has supported the PMU staff for procurement of goods and services, adhering to its policy and procedures.

3.2.6.2 Execution

Execution rating: **(5): SATISFACTORY**

147 The project is executed by the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MOFE) and the PMU, hosted by the Ministry in Kathmandu, with a field office located at Kohalpur, constitutes the main project management body.

148 The PMU has done a good job, following an adaptive approach, aiming at achieving outcomes and activities' end of project targets, taking into account the results obtained.

149 The project management implemented the monitoring, reporting and verification tools required by the GEF respecting the frequency of release set up by the ProDoc (for more details on monitoring and evaluation tools and reports see Section 3.3).

150 Reporting appears to be results-based referring to both GEF core and project-specific indicators. References to outputs and expected activities have not been always clearly specified, but the quality of the last PIR has improved, based on the MTR team suggestions provided in the inception report.

151 Despite PMU and PFU had to face challenges with staff turnover (see Annex 6), being actually understaffed (in relation with the ProDoc expected management structure), the management has proved to be responsive, ensuring the regular progress of the project, but this is not sustainable long-term.

152 The PMU and Field Office are operating with fewer staff members than designed, but they are utilizing their entire budget.

153 The PMU has set up some quality management procedures. The terms of reference for the hiring of external consultants to carried out specific activities are submitted to the review of the Finance and Administration Manager and the Project Manager and the final approval of the Project Coordinator. Contract agreements are submitted to WWF-GEf Agency for no-objection approval. The deliverables are also submitted to a review (Project manager) / approval (Project Coordinator) process. Notwithstanding, MTR team has noted that the percentage of female participation at workshops and focus group discussions organized by the consultants' group for the socio-economic baseline assessment is significantly lower than the percentage registered for workshop and meetings directly organized by the field office, proofing that the consultants didn't likely followed the project guidelines.

154 A Communication Strategy and Guideline was recently carried out and adopted (end of 2022) to identify and address priority communication needs and challenges for lLaM project and to improve the knowledge-based communication production and dissemination system guidelines. Notwithstanding, there is near consensus that communication activities between the implementation partners, targeted communities and project stakeholders should be enhanced. There are stakeholders that complain not having been duly informed about the project progress or that affirm having been "somehow" informed, which means that communication activities haven't been carried out according to specific communication procedures.

3.2.7 Sustainability: financial, sociopolitical, institutional framework and governance, and environmental

Overall Likelihood of Sustainability rating: **(4): LIKELY**

155 Balancing the four measures of sustainability on the ToR, the overall risks to sustainability is quite low to negligible and therefore, the overall sustainability rating is "Likely" using a four-point scale.

Financial risks to sustainability

156 Since the Project is nested within the TAL Program that operates with parallel and diversified sources of funding, there is a reasonable likelihood that new projects, donors and funding sources will come into the fold to take the lead to ensure continuity through mid- to long-term financial support. It is fully expected the TAL Program will continue target similar NPs and landscapes offering further opportunities for scaling, synergies and sustainability opportunities.

157 There are also readily available opportunities and commitment from state-level, local and community-level to reasonably assure financial sustainability. One of the sustainability mechanisms built into the design of the Project was the careful selection of communities to be engaged in the WWF-ILaM project

and ensuring these were formalized legal entities, regulated under legislation and therefore, having direct access to local, state and national financing mechanisms. The most important strategies towards alleviating HWC, including operational and maintenance costs of physical works such as fencing, embankments, grazing pens and cattle sheds, have a high likelihood of financial sustainability as local governments are more likely to contribute to legally-formed local community entities. Consultations have uncovered there are rules and regulations governing access to funds for these communities and that operational and maintenance costs could also be derived from tourism and forest income.

158 In spite of efforts made towards the realization of Outcome 3.1 to strengthen livelihoods, mobilization of sub-grants for community SFM under Output 3.1.3 is at a standstill due to legislative issues preventing the flow of funds to non-government entities. It is important to note this was not anticipated during the design due to WWF's previous experiences with these financial mechanisms in other initiatives in Nepal, before government restructuring. While the Project has developed guidelines for grants which are under review, it is clear that the expectations of improved delivery of SFM, biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, and community livelihood development in the targeted areas will have to be tempered.

159 The MTR consultant team also notes that the continued operations and maintenance of the animal rescue centre will also be sustained by the national budget since it is a priority and duty of the Government of Nepal. This safeguards a significant legacy capital investment made by the Project.

160 It is worth pointing out that State government has recently increased the financial resources to support CBAPU activities, recognizing their strategic role in biodiversity conservation and HWC management. This might ensure the continuity of some actions implemented by ILaM project.

161 The project is expected to provide coaching on "Governance and Financial management" for CFUGs of corridors and PA Buffer zones (Activity 3.1.3.7) that will help households in the financial management of their updated forest management operational plans.

162 Encouragingly, WWF is nurturing and ground-truthing an approach via other initiatives and GEF-financed projects in the Asia-Pacific region, embracing a multi-stakeholder, long-term vision for the landscapes, and bringing in public and private sector funding for improved management across the landscape to deliver this vision and generate triple wins for nature, climate, and people. It is taking a holistic approach that recognizes the criticality of working with a wide range of national and provincial stakeholders towards shared landscape goals under a single umbrella, ensuring integration with ongoing master and provincial planning, injecting complementarity with ongoing conservation efforts and deep inclusion of the private sector and local community ownership, to achieve lasting and transformational change. By incentivizing, leveraging, and unlocking greater financial flows to financing a common landscape conservation vision, this bodes well for financial sustainability in the TAL. Furthermore, WWF is exploring and maturing its capabilities in establish robust legal, policy, and financial frameworks, with the primary goal of promoting jurisdictional carbon financing.

Socio-political risks to sustainability

163 With respect to the staying power of the Project´s interventions across the Banke-Bardia Complex, the overall sustainability outlook appears to be positive in both the short and midterm, as all implementing partners confirmed their commitment to maintain cooperation and site level support once the projects ends. From a sociopolitical perspective, the WWF-GEF IlaM project faces certain challenges that could potentially influence its long-term sustainability. Projects of this nature, especially those involving integrated landscape management, often navigate intricate relationships with various stakeholders ranging

from local communities to state and federal entities. The dynamics of these relationships can be susceptible to changing socio-political landscapes. For instance, shifting government priorities, potential administrative restructuring, or changes in community leadership can influence the continued commitment to and execution of project objectives. Furthermore, there might be differences in the perception of project outcomes (especially regarding some of the aggressive Core Indicator targets under Core Indicator 4) among diverse community groups, which, if not addressed, could be misconstrued as potentially leading to displacement, and therefore, could lead to reduced buy-in or even resistance from particular segments of the community..

164 However, the project's design inherently promotes country ownership, with primary execution responsibilities lying with the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE) and active involvement of various local and state-level entities. This deep integration within the national and local governance structures provides a degree of insulation against abrupt socio-political shifts. Additionally, the establishment of governance bodies such as the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) and the Project Executive Committee (PEC) ensures a multi-tiered, representative approach to project oversight, further enhancing its sociopolitical resilience. While no project is completely immune to socio-political risks, the WWF-GEF IlaM project's foundational design and country-centric approach position it well to mitigate potential challenges and bolster its likelihood of sustainability.

Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability

165 The WWF-GEF IlaM project is founded on a strong foundation of more than 15 years of conservation planning and management across the Terai Arc Landscape and builds on key structures put in place during the UNDP-GEF WTLCP. Policies and institutional mechanisms are in place for protected area and buffer zone management, and community engagement in forestry is a model for community based natural resource management. The project also supports the Terai Arc Landscape Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025, which will guide conservation in the region going forward. This is reinforced by the WWF's competitive advantage – as noted in an earlier section above – of having a strong presence and country program in Nepal.

166 The cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms and committees established under Component 1, Output 1.1.1 ensures longer term work on national landscape priorities, as well as the implementation of Nepal's updated NBSAP and provisions pertaining to landscapes and connectivity in both the NBSAP itself, but also advancing targets within the Kunming Global Biodiversity Framework related to 30x30 objectives and advancing OECMs.

167 The extensive training of government representatives, coordination and collaboration among key technical ministries in integrated landscape management, and support for the National Biodiversity Coordination Committee (NBCC) will help to sustain project interventions in the Terai Arc Landscape and across other conservation landscapes. The participatory mechanisms employed by the project will engage local communities, with priority for women and indigenous peoples, and this capacity will be maintained after the project ends. The advances in national and regional natural resource policy will contribute to national expertise in landscape level conservation initiatives and regional green infrastructure planning and development, and will remain in place after the project ends.

168 The project must start developing an exit strategy as soon as possible, involving all relevant stakeholders at site and national level, and articulating how these different institutions and governance mechanisms will co-exist for the betterment of core landscape priorities, as well as the governance mechanisms that will enable the fund flows to address whole landscape priorities. It is assumed that the institutional funding

mechanism that has been a persistent bottleneck for the project achieve all activities under Component 3, will not impact post-project interventions.

169 In order for the project not to be wholly dependent on international cooperation and development assistance funds, it will be essential for the project and its governance structures to start including the private sector as a strategy for reducing both financial and governance risks.

Environmental risks to sustainability

170 There are recurring environmental themes such as drought, climate change, forest fires, HWC in both the Project Document and in the MTR consultations. The Project has invested heavily in fostering adaptation and coping strategies to bring harmony with the Banke-Bardia Complex. The Project has been implementing approaches and technology to reduce dependency on natural resources that communities will adopt and which will last beyond the end of the project, including integrated livestock management to improve productivity.

171 WWF-Nepal is incubating a new GEF-8 project under the wildlife conservation development integrated program for the TAL that focuses on human-tiger conflict management. Therefore, this project would ensure the continuity of work and be a natural extension of the early successes and approaches of the WWF-IlaM project, but honing in on the growing problem of tiger fatalities in the Project landscape that has been observed in the field.

172 The Project has been working to maintain ecosystem resilience under differing climate change conditions so as to secure a continued sustainable flow of ecosystem services.

173 The WWF NbS Origination Platform is an initiative that aims to facilitate the development of nature-based solutions (NbS) projects to address environmental challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and sustainable development. The platform provides a range of services to support the development of NbS projects, including project identification, design, financing, and monitoring. It also provides access to a network of experts, investors, and other stakeholders to help NbS project developers connect with the resources they need to succeed. It seeks to mainstream the use of nature-based solutions as a key approach to address global environmental challenges and accelerate the transition to a more sustainable future.

174 The project has prepared the procedural guideline on Resource investment for implementation of green enterprise promotion activities, which will be the basis for beneficiaries' selection after approval from the Ministry of Finance (Activity 3.1.3.6). The approval of this guideline is expected very soon. After the end of the project, the guideline might be one of the reference documents for the following projects.

175 Community forestry guidelines already exist. What the project does is to support their effective implementation on the field. Local communities have been supported and capacitated in applying guidelines during the project implementation phase and they'll go ahead after the end of the project. The reviewed forest operational plans will be applied even after the end of the project.

176 Some tools such as the Forest Management Information System (FMIS) (including forest fire management) (Activity 3.1.1.3), the (updated) State Forest Directorate fire reporting system (Activity 3.1.1.4), the community-based reporting systems of HWC incidents (Activity 3.2.3.4) will be designed to support Parks, DFOs and local communities even after the end of the projects.

3.2.8 Efficiency

Efficiency rating: **(4): MODERATELY SATISFACTORY**

177 The 5-year GEF project funding is USD 6,697,248 with an additional co-financing from the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE), WWF Nepal and WWF US offices. The following table presents the amount committed at CEO endorsement by each co-financer as well as investments mobilized at MTR

Source of co-finance	Name of co-financier	Type (grant, loan, guarantee, equity , in-kind, other)	Amount committed at CEO endorsement (USD)	Investment mobilized (USD)	% materialized at MTR
Govt	MoFE	In-kind	36,961,653	4,308,669	11.6
NGO	WWF-US	In-kind	789,077	153.955	19.5
NGO	WWF-Nepal	In-kind	4,950,000	N / A	N / A

MoFE yearly declares the investment mobilization and type of co-financing (in-kind) using the co-financers letter template annexed to the Grant Agreement. Thus, the PMU actively records government co-finance as part of the annual PPR. WWF-US and WWF Nepal don't provide same information; thus, the PMU isn't aware of the total co-financing mobilization.

178 The project budget and co-finance is highest for Component 3, which includes more budget-heavy, on-ground activities with numerous partners, while Component 1 and 2 are more focused on institutional capacity building and planning activities, and Component 4 on M&E and knowledge sharing and management. The Project Management Costs (PMC) have been capped at 5% of the GEF project budget.

179 At the end of the FY2023 (June 2023) only 18% of the GEF project funding was spent (see table 3.1), that is the 48% of the GEF project expected costs for the first two years (see table 3.2).

180 Component 1 is the component with the lowest percentage of expenditures. The personnel expenditures are aligned with the project personnel expected costs for the first two years, that is 38% of the project personnel costs, even though some officers have never been hired and others have been temporarily vacant (see Annex 5)

181 Most of the equipment expenditures was spent last year (69%).

Table 3.1 Expenditures vs Project total budget

	Project budget (USD)	FY2021 (%)	FY2022 (%)	FY2023 (%)
	22nd December, 2020 - 31st June, 2025	*22nd December, 2020 - 31st June, 2021*	*1st July, 2021 - 31st June, 2022*	*1st July, 2022 - 31st June, 2023*
Personnel costs	1,459,595	17%	27%	38%

	Project budget (USD)	**FY2021 (%)**	**FY2022 (%)**	**FY2023 (%)**
	22nd December, 2020 - 31st June, 2025	*22nd December, 2020 - 31st June, 2021*	*1st July, 2021 - 31st June, 2022*	*1st July, 2022 - 31st June, 2023*
Third Party Fees and Expenses	514,867	0%	3%	4%
Transition Fund (grants & agreements)	3,731,196	0%	3%	13%
Travel, Meetings and Workshops	446,322	1%	4%	12%
Other Direct Costs	489,517	6%	15%	19%
Equipment	19,500	0%	0%	69%
Administrative Costs	**36,250**	0%	0%	0%
TOTAL	**6,697,248**	**4%**	**9%**	**18%**
Component 1	1,014,710	4%	8%	13%
Component 2	505,620	6%	13%	26%
Component 3	3,668,521	3%	8%	18%
Component 4	**1,189,976**	5%	11%	17%
Project Management Costs	318,421	14%	23%	29%
TOTAL	**6,697,248**	**4%**	**9%**	**18%**

Table 3.2 Expenditures vs Expected costs for the first 2 years

	Total Expenditures at the end of FY2023	**Project budget for the first 2 years (from ProDoc)**	**Balance**	**% Spent (against the ProDoc expected costs for the first 2 years)**
Personnel costs	548,007	541,508	6,499	101%
Third Party Fees and Expenses	22,447	122,290	-99,843	18%
Transition Fund (grants & agreements)	470,621	1,396,682	-926,061	34%
Travel, Meetings and Workshops	51,954	179,002	-127,048	29%

	Total Expenditures at the end of FY2023	Project budget for the first 2 years (from ProDoc)	Balance	% Spent (against the ProDoc expected costs for the first 2 years)
Other Direct Costs	91,130	237,957	-146,827	38%
Equipment	13,483	19,500	-6,017	69%
Administrative Costs	0	14,500	-14,500	0%
TOTAL	**1,197,642**	**2,511,439**	**-1,313,797**	**48%**
Component 1	132,650	389,591	-256,941	34%
Component 2	129,278	210,198	-80,920	62%
Component 3	644,347	1,357,159	-712,812	47%
Component 4	200,229	410,767	-210,538	49%
Project Management Costs	91,138	143,725	-52,587	63%
TOTAL	**1,197,642**	**2,511,439**	**-1,313,797**	**48%**

182 The third-party fees and expenses are significantly lower than expected (4% of the project total budget for this cost category, 18% of the budget that should have been spent in the first two years as per the ProDoc). According to the last approved Procurement Plan (updated 10/04/2023), many consultancies are expected to be carried out the next year, aiming at achieving at least the 26% of the project third-party fees and expenses by the end of FY2024.

183 A total of USD 3,731,196 was budgeted under grants and agreements (see ProDoc), that is 55.71 % of the total project budget.

Table 3.3 Transition fund per partner (from ProDoc)

Partner Name	Budget in USD
MoFE and MITFE / DNPWC / DOFSC and District Division Office: Sub-grants: @ USD 32,250/sub-grants x 50 sub-grants in 5 years	1,612,490
University student	24,000
University, Institutions & Academia	105,000
Various BZUCs/CFUG/CBOs/NGOs	1,989,706
Total Sub Grants	**3,731,196**

Table 3.4 Transition fund per component (from ProDoc)

Partner Name	**Budget in USD**
Knowledge Management, Monitoring & Evaluation	314,587
Component 1	549,837
Component 2	84,335
Component 3	2,782,437
Component 4	-
Total Sub Grants	**3,731,196**

184 As per the ProDoc, USD 1,396,682 should have been spent in the first two years, while only USD 470,621 were spent, mainly to support Component 3 activities (see Table 3.2**)**. Most of the budget was spent in the 3rd quarter of FY2023 (USD 316,985), which bodes well for the future development of the Project. Anyway, the project has been facing troubles and challenges for the implementation of the activities funded through grants and revolving funds, due to the institutional fund flow mechanism (the GoN Procurement Act doesn't mention grants and revolving funds), especially for the grants targeting the local communities (BZUCs/CFUG/CBOs/NGOs) for the Component 3. There might be the need for activities realignment and budget reallocation. For examples, revolving funds allocated for community forest operation plans' implementation might be reallocated to support the activities that directly benefit local communities in the same target areas such as improved cattle sheds and predator proof pen constructions, responding to the demand of interventions of the households that haven't been benefitted to date.

185 The low progress and financial disbursement that characterize the implementation of the activities related to the Component 1 depend on the delayed NBSAP review and implementation, waiting for the global biodiversity framework approval (see Section 3.2.2 and Annex 11), and on the aforementioned financial issues.

186 Notwithstanding, the PMU has gotten through implementing most of the project activities and especially those targeting the local communities (Component 3), which have been sensitized on environmental and social issues and have a clear perception of the project benefits. Local implementing partners (Parks, DFOs) have been strongly engaged, ensuring their higher ownership.

187 The total budgeted cost for Monitoring & Evaluation component is 4.6% of the total project cost, which is far greater than the average 3% normally afforded to M&E activities in other GEF project[13]. The MTR consultant believes the amount budgeted by the WWF-GEF ILaM project to be wholly appropriate with its complexity and the sheer number of indicators within the RF, and those additional indicator(s) proposed by the MTR.

188 Because of inflation and rise in market price of construction materials, differences between approved estimates and actual market rates posed initial challenges for smooth implementation however these are

[13] Reference is made to budget notes in the PPG budget template that 3% should be afforded to projects from USD 5 - 10 million

managed by enhancing community participation. Indeed, communities recognized the project intervention added value, being willing to provide in-kind support or contribute to costs.

189 The budget category "field program implementation support and coordination activities" has been introduced in the project budget for many outputs (Output 1.1.1, 2.2.3, 3.3.2, 4.3.1 – see Annex 11) to take into account expenditures for staff and their field mission. Those costs are continuously afforded during the project implementation, but if they are not associated to an effective project progress (regarding the concerned outputs), they put in evidence a critical issue in terms of project cost efficiency. That's the case of the activity 1.1.1.9 supporting Output 1.1 activities (see Annex 11), considering that a few meetings have been organized.

190 The budgets saved through the bidding processes have been allocated to further enhance the project footprint (interventions on the field, awareness raising), ensuring communities' higher awareness and better livelihood conditions.

191 Work plans and budget are yearly submitted to a long approval process, that make it difficult to introduce changes to respond emerging needs.

192 PMU and Field Office staff are efficient by taking on additional tasks and stepping into vacant roles seamlessly, but this is not sustainable long-term and nor should they be expected to shoulder these responsibilities. An observation to note is that the PMU and Field Office are consuming the available PMC budget, but are not staffed with the number and types of roles identified in the Project Document.

193 In the first years the PMU has had (understandably) more focus on careful quality assurance than project efficiency, with the added challenge of aligning the government and donors' processes and requirements. The PMU is addressing this well, and efficiencies will likely increase, without loss of quality assurance, with the PMU team well established in its work.

3.2.9 Country ownership

194 The PMU decided to provide financial support to institutional partners to design and implement governance tools and make them directly manage interventions to increase their level of engagement and ensure a higher ownership (see Section 3.2.2).

195 Federal (Parks) and Provincial (DFOs) and other local implementing partners (CFUGs, BZUCs) have been actively engaged in the development of the project, as well as Municipalities have played a relevant role in supporting local communities for the implementation of the interventions and are willing to cooperate with the communities to guarantee the good maintenance of the works.

Local government officer interview: "*The Municipality is encouraging local leaders to take leadership for the monitoring and management of the structures realized through the ILaM project. Local leaders who are available to do that will be periodically invited to participate to meetings with other leaders and the Municipality and to report on conditions and functionality of the structures*".

196 DFOs officers have been sensitized about the importance of the integrated landscape management and now ask for technical assistance in the transition from forest production to integrated landscape management approach, contributing to both biodiversity conservation and HWC reduction.

197 The project has gotten through implementing a capacity building process and interventions that have positively impacted the local communities. Communities living in proximity of the targeted sites are demanding the extension of the interventions / benefits.

198 Eco-clubs' engagement represents a successful case study (see Section 3.2.2, Output 4.1).

199 The project has prepared the procedural guideline on Resource investment for implementation of green enterprise promotion activities, which will be the basis for beneficiaries' selection after approval from the Ministry of Finance t (see section 3.2.2, Output 3.1.3).

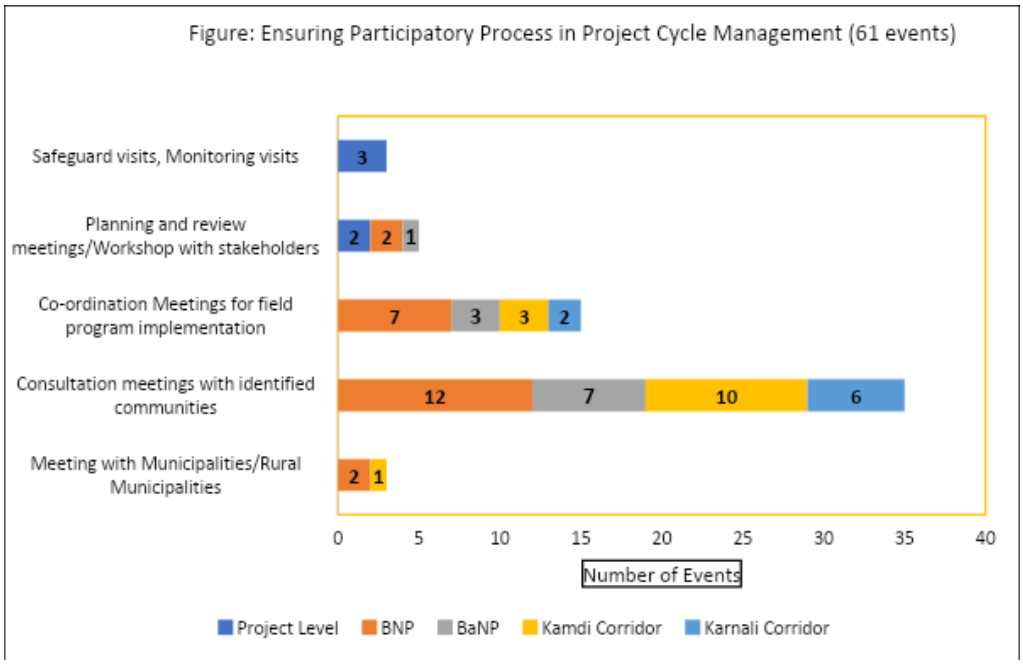
3.3 Monitoring and Evaluation / Adaptive Capacity

3.3.1 Implementation of M&E plan and use for adaptive management

Monitoring & Evaluation during implementation rating: **(5): SATISFACTORY**

200 Throughout the project implementation process, project has conducted consultation meetings, visits, stakeholder workshop to ensure participatory planning, Implementation and Monitoring of Project Activities as depicted in the figure below.

Figure 3.4 Graphic Depicting the Participatory M&E Process (Source: FY2023 PIR)



201 In spite of not having a designated M&E Officer in place for ten months since January and October 2022 and for the past four months in 2023 (see Annex 6), the Project - and specifically the PMU and Project Field Staff - have done a commendable job in holding the fort on the M&E front while driving the Project and activities forward.

202 The M&E systems of the Project were prepared with standard WWF-GEF components following the calendar of monitoring activities and reporting requirements in Table 7-1 of the Project Document, consisting of the inception report, PAC and PEC meetings, technical monitoring, PIRs, quarterly and

semi-annual Project Progress Reports (QRs and PPRs), annual adaptive management reviews and the MTR. Additionally, progress towards GEF corporate results is monitored using the Core Indicator worksheet which is included as its own tab in the Results Framework during the elaboration of the annual PIR.

203 Despite lean human resources, a solid monitoring system exists, physically maintained in the form of MS Excel workbooks at the PMU. As evidenced by document analysis and the views of more than three key informants, the M&E Officer and concerned PMU staff conduct joint field monitoring visits on a quarterly to bi-annual basis that leads to the physical verification of the Project's physical activities. WWF-US staff also conduct annual verification missions - with the next one planned in the coming month following the MTR – that will also include reviews of gender and environmental and social safeguard elements.

204 Detailed monitoring reports contain information on the background of activities, the quantitative and qualitative progress towards Work Plan targets, technical suggestions of the project team and conclusions. Activities are also documented through photos, though these do not always form part of the field monitoring reports. It is important to note the monitoring of progress towards spatial targets of forest restoration and changes in connectivity has yet to happen as this is dependent on a yet to be recruited GIS specialist.

205 The MTR team reported in the inception report: "Reporting appears to be results-based referring to both GEF core and project-specific indicators, but references to outputs and expected activities are not always clearly specified, hampering MTR and making it more time-consuming". It is worth pointing out that in the FY2023 PIR, drafted after the delivery of the inception report, references to outputs and expected activities are clearly identified. Therefore, the observation made in the inception report to this effect, does not reflect the situation upon deeper analysis and assessment.

206 A further point of concern is that yearly adaptive management reviews are not occurring as separate standalone meetings as envisaged in the Project Document: "*At the end of every year of the project, the PMU and other relevant partners will convene in an exercise that is intended to improve the strategic direction of the project. At each exercise, a review of the M&E data, project progress and challenges will occur, and the project theory of change will be assessed to decide whether or not any assumptions or strategies need modification. This will provide opportunities for adaptive management that will lead to changes in the project design, management or operation. The changes will be largely reflected and incorporated into the new Annual Work Plans. All modifications will be reviewed for no objection by the Project Steering Committee and the WWF GEF Agency.*" While they are happening intuitively, part and parcel of the Annual Work Planning process, these discussions ought to have included a revisiting of the Project's risk register, assumptions and the Theory of Change. This is not happening on a consistent basis. In fact, the MTR consultant team cannot find a comprehensive risk register and only three risks documented in the FY21 PIR, with none appearing thereafter. Furthermore, there is no risk section in the 2021 PPR and the 2023 PPR was not posted in the document repository.

207 It is unclear whether or not the PMU or Field Office are actively implementing the mitigation measures outlined in the Project Document. An example would be for risk no. 5 the mitigation called for the PMU to develop a natural disaster response strategy, in line with guidance and strategies of MoFE and WWF Nepal. The MTR consultant team has not seen such a document, but in light of the flooding and landslides that derailed the inception phase, as well as the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, a document of sort articulating how the Project will achieve business continuity would be of value.

208 Finally, the Project routinely collects gender and community disaggregated data, not just for training but for most other indicators as well where appropriate.

3.3.2 Adaptive capacity

Overall Adaptive Capacity rating: **(4): MODERATELY SATISFACTORY**

209 At the very start of the WWF-GEF ILaM project during its inception phase in October 2020, a systematic review of the conceptual model, strategies, targets and indicators led to several changes. Later, the did not adjust its goals, but did change activities and outputs to reach these, under changing external conditions through careful planning.

210 Annual adaptive management meetings are not being held as standalone sessions as dictated in the Project Document but are integrated with regular Project meetings and Annual Work Planning. These have progressively contributed to clarifying the scope of work for the Project, but have omitted reviews of the Theory of Change, assumptions and risks.

211 The Section on Adaptive Management in each successive PIR is not completed, perhaps a function of the rigidity of the work planning and budget process. While adaptive management is included in the PPR reports, it is difficult to follow whether proposed changes in the 2021 PPR for example were actually implemented because there is no continuity. Therefore, continuity between PPR reports could be improved on. Notwithstanding, the biggest opportunity for adaptive capacity is that the PMU has followed an adaptive approach taking into account the results obtained in the previous years, aiming at achieving more realistic outcomes and activities' end of project targets. An example is that certain activities, like the drafting of species-specific guidelines for HWC management and the pictorial manual on wildlife identification, were not completed in the initial two years. However, these activities were rescheduled to be carried out in the following year as per the approved Procurement Plan and FY2024 work plan.

212 Furthermore, The PMU identified the activity related to capacitating eco-clubs (e.g., massive awareness on plastic pollution control) as a successful case study. They decided to invest more in this activity to further its impact.

3.4 Gender Equality and Mainstreaming

213 The ProDoc for the ILaM project strongly emphasizes the commitment of the MoFE and the WWF to mainstream Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI). This commitment aims to ensure that women and men have equal access to and control over resources for development, benefits, and decision-making at all stages of development processes, projects, programs, or policies, as guided by the GEF gender policy. A gender action plan was developed to implement this commitment, aligning with the GEF 6 project's requirement to develop a gender equality mainstreaming strategy and action plan, as per the GEF/C.53/04, Policy on Gender Equality. OECD criteria uses the Gender Marker to measure if the gender equality, women empowerment and do no harm approaches have been considered during the project design as the main objective or not. Normally GESI objectives are not the primary objective of any institution and for this ILaM project clearly mentions in the ProDoc that restoration of the landscape is the principle objective and GESI has been mainstreamed addressing the gender equality with leave no

one behind as an important aspect of the project. During the MTR review it was noted that GESI has been incorporated only to some extent and the change effect on the interventions based on GESI interventions were yet to be measured in term of level of changes in social cultural norms, values, attitudes and behaviours..

214 The overall ProDoc is adequate to address the GESI context and the implementation of the GESI issues is satisfactory, even though more efforts are needed in sections of 3.1 and other capacity building initiatives in other components to ensure that changes are being observed in the institutional setup; indeed, the Results' Framework foresees that 60% of women and other groups would participate and have leadership roles. Gender awareness trainings have been carried out and might have increased individual capacity, despite existing social and cultural barriers. Skills that have been developed to change behaviors and attitudes have not been measured; this needs to be done in future, documenting change effects and lessons learnt.

215 To address Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the ILaM project, a gender analysis was conducted by a team of consultants hired by WWF. Field data collection took place from July 3 to 8, 2018, and the analysis was completed in August 2018. The importance of conducting this analysis was highlighted in the ProDoc, aiming to develop and implement an integrated action plan for equitable management of benefits, as outlined in the Constitution of Nepal. The analysis focused on five major domains: i) access to resources; ii) roles, responsibilities, and utilization of time; iii) norms, beliefs, and perceptions; iv) laws, policies, institutional practices; and v) decision-making processes. The findings revealed a gender gap and the need for addressing intersectionality to make the project implementation more gender-responsive across these domains.

216 Based on the GESI action plan, for each project component GESI issues and safeguards should be reviewed, based on the current available policies and procedures, ensuring that at least 33% female will be encouraged for participation in all the activities, capacity will be developed in leadership addressing exclusion factors and coordination mechanism strengthened by empowering women, IP's and marginalized groups. Identification of vulnerable groups has been done, but recommended actions are yet to be carried out and targets to be reported in the PIRs. Training packages, based on GESI and empowerment assessment report, need to be more focused on GESI and safeguard issues.

217 The Gender Result Effectiveness Scale was utilized by the MTE team to assess the extent to which gender and power relationships, including structural causes of inequities, discrimination, and unfair power relations, changed due to the Project. While the ILaM project demonstrated awareness and efforts to address gender, disability, and social differences, the field interactions in Karnali and Kamdi corridor communities indicated that decision-making capacities and power dynamics had not significantly changed. The project needs to focus on achieving gender transformative change in line with the GESI assessment's five domains, above mentioned.

218 Gender mainstreaming has been a cross-cutting theme, ensuring that women's, men's, and marginalized groups' concerns are integral to the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs. The initial findings based on the Gender @ Work quadrant of change suggested increased awareness but indicated a need for further measurement of behavioral changes, especially in leadership development, economic empowerment, and decision-making. Despite policies and frameworks in place, there is a gap in formal and systemic changes, hindering access and addressing challenges outlined in these frameworks.

219 Participation and equity in resource management were more evident in corridor management than in the buffer zone user committee management system. Policy hindrances for 50/50% participation, especially in leadership and decision-making, were less observed in buffer zone area management. Policy reviews in the buffer zone sector are necessary to enhance gender targeting and ensure gender-responsive budgets, as outlined in the gender action plan.

220 Not all components are directly gender-responsive, and the impact of the gender action plan is yet to be measured in terms of capacity enhancement, IPP framework, and social safeguard issues increasing participation in decision-making, resource control, and direct benefits from project interventions.

221 GESI policy documents and action plans further need to be disseminated to address the legal policies, rules and regulations being prepared by MoFE 2014 Gender Strategy and especially 2020 Gender Integration in Climate Change along with IPP and FPIC material produced by the project . The main question is: has the project gotten through changing power dynamics, roles and leadership positions in the CFUGS and BZUC/BZCFUG? Only 2 CFUGs were led by women and men helped and supported them doing business outside CFUG. GESI awareness has played a key role, but GESI action plans and related activities need to be implemented to see significant change in power dynamics.

222 Similarly, for economic growth, Activity 3.1.3.6 has supported green enterprise initiatives, that in future will help the farmers to get benefits directly. . Fencing and support in wildlife proof pens and cages and improvement of cattle sheds have somehow helped in raising income. With improved pens or cages at least, the goats are safer and farmers are not losing goats to predators, ensuring income generation. Similarly, without the project interventions cattle would live in a dirty place, making it challenging to extract milk regularly and obliging households to clean the cattle regularly. Women charged to clean the sheds said that it was difficult to clean the cow and when milking all the dirts get into the milk. Now, with shed cleaning tools provided through the project, they can clean the sheds with no hassels, get milk easily and sell it in the local market. It is yet to be assessed to what extent fences and check dams constructed along the highly vulnerable areas, affected by flood events and HWC issues, have effectively secured livelihood, food security and reduced HWC.

223 Social system change means that women are allowed to have equal wages as men, their voices are being heard, the time saved by women are being used for any other income generation activities, men contribute in strategic needs by helping in the household chores as well, discrimination are being reduced and so on. So far, reviewing the social assessment report, it seems the social cultural barriers of equal participation, decision making capacity and taking up leadership roles are still present and very few women were found to be active; and more awareness needs to be raised and the social norms and behaviours that restrict women should be assessed using intersectionality assessment tools to better address these issues.

224 In 2008 the Ministry of Finance introduced Gender Responsive Budget criteria, that is "50% should be direct responsive, 20-50% indirect responsive and below 20% gender neutral responsive". The adoption of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) that aimed to <u>mainstream gender into macro-economic policy</u> and the national budgeting system has played a crucial role in making the government accountable for its commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. Thus, all the projects need to comply with this guideline, but the ProDoc and its financial budget don't provide elements to assess to what extent and how the budget is gender responsive. PMU and FSU should work to assess the GRB and relate with benefits received by women and marginalized groups.

225 Awareness has been raised among marginalized groups, women and IPs, with individual capacity improved to some extent. However, formal changes, such as access to resources and services, are more prominent in CFUGs than BZUC or BZCFUG. Awareness of systematic changes based on laws, policies, and guidelines is yet to be communicated comprehensively. Informal changes are observed in the corridors in women's and IP participation, where cultural norms and values are slowly transforming, but the mobility and confidence of women is still lacking and their ability to voice their rights and take advantage of opportunities are yet to be fully realized.

226 People have learned to file complaints through the GRM, though traditional mechanisms remain in use. Increased confidence to speak up is noted, but some ethnic groups, such as Muslims, and particularly women within these groups, exhibit less confidence.

3.5 Stakeholder Engagement

227 The chapter 4 of the project document section indicates the stakeholders' engagement at 2 different levels, one during the project preparation phase and one during the project implementation phase. The stakeholders' engagement plan was prepared with the WWF guidance, considering also the results of the consultations, held from January to April 2018. Along these consultations, various activities were carried out in the preparatory phases, such as Project Planning Committee meetings, stakeholder meetings on Project preparation, workshops, field level consultations, individual consultations and specific consultation activities on GESI perspective.

228 Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) has been prepared for effective implementation and monitoring of the IlaM project, to ensure that all the stakeholders/affected people and communities in the project area are informed, consulted, and mobilized to participate in and benefit from the project.

229 Stakeholder analysis was conducted among the civil society, government and private sector organizations during the design phases but it did not prioritize primary stakeholders, who are likely to be affected by the project interventions, and those who have an interest in and influence over project interventions as well as vulnerable people and communities in the SEP developed.

230 In the initial phase of the stakeholder consultation, the role of the project implementing partners and their impact was analyzed to ensure that the Project will operate in a smoothly, efficient and effective way, to achieve the desired outcomes. When the project was being designed the considered stakeholders were based on the state government level as most of the work was done centrally. At that time the federal, provincial and local level governance systems were not still in place. Therefore, the central level stakeholders identified were Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE), Department of Forest and Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, other state government agencies for example Ministry of Industries, Tourism, Forest and Environment, Ministry of Irrigation and water supplies etc. Besides that local level governments such as Rural Municipality, Municipality, Sub-Metropolitan city along with Division Forest Offices, National Parks, Buffer zone user committees, Buffer Zone Community forestry user groups, Community Forest User Groups, and several networking groups and communities were identified having different roles and responsibilities in the project.

231 Other NGO's, donor agencies, GEF agencies and Private sectors have been involved in the overall Terai Arc Landscape with their interventions and some components of the ILaM project have been addressed by these stakeholders. So, they have been consulted during the preparatory phase to clarify their roles and responsibilities and identify the potential synergies and cooperation actions.

232 During the preparatory phase, WWF specialists were consulted by the SEP consultants in order to address the GESI and safeguard issues and so to ensure that gender and social inclusion questions were mainstreamed in the project activities.

233

234 The workplan in Appendix 3 of the project document highlights the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder and Table 4-2 in the page 106 of the project document mentions their role in each component, regarding the Stakeholder engagement during the implementation phases. MoFE (executing agency), the PMU and the PFO guarantee that all the stakeholders were properly involved in the decision making process . The effectiveness of these stakeholders' participation was not directly assessed in this MTR but, based on the interview, it was found that the role of civil society organizations was important in implementing and facilitating the ILaM project activities.

235 One joint monitoring was organized by PMU along with Division Forest Office Banke, National Park Offices, where multi stakeholders were engaged during the process and project report was prepared. One of the key stakeholders, NEFIN, was involved, but it has not been consulted to implement the IPP Framework and in any FPIC process. As NEFIN District office plays a key role in addressing IPLC issues, the awareness and sharing of IPP Framework and policy needs to be done as soon as possible for smooth interventions of project activities as there are more than 70% IP's in the working areas.

236 Field Level Coordination Committee in the Provincial Level has been effective to have all the stakeholders and implementing partners ready and prepared to discuss the project intervention approaches, site selection and avoid the duplication of activities. The role of Province and Local Level were only clarified when the project started and now it is crucial to involved them in all the levels of policy planning, design, implementation and monitoring of project interventions.

237 TAL office in Banke, National Trust of Nature Conservation (NTNC), FECOFUN and Zoological Society of London (ZSL) are the main key players in the Project area, as they have been implementing their own projects with activities on conservation, restoration, mitigation of HWC and livelihood initiatives. They are being consulted by ILaM project to avoid duplication of activities. For example, supports have been provided in coping with Human Wildlife Conflicts by improving the cages or pens for goats, fencing, restoration of agricultural lands by plantation and supporting livelihood initiatives.

238 No doubt PMU has been very effective in engaging stakeholder in every step of the implementation from the Federal to local level. The stakeholer engagement involving local level government is fairly new and with CFUG, BZUC and women groups, This MTR suggest measuring the effectiveness of Stakeholder Engagement by ranking the efforts, based on how long the stakeholders have been involved in the project and what roles they played to support the interventions in policy change, implementation and design of the projects. It can be done using Likert Scale measuring, based on their time given, interventions and achieving outcomes. So far, the implementation of the project interventions and coordination was found to be very effective among PMU and PFO.

3.6 Safeguards Review

239 The project document addresses the compliance of environmental and safeguard policy of GEF 2018 and 2019. That is under the GEF policy it needs to ensure that this project will comply with "The Council

approved an updated Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards[14] at its 55th meeting in December 2018 which has been amended in 2019". As per the policy it sets out minimum standards on environmental and social risks and safeguards that GEF financed Agencies are required to meet using their own policies, procedures and systems. The GEF's approach has been outlined on how to anticipate, and then avoid, prevent, minimize, mitigate, manage, offset or compensate any adverse impacts that will be financed by GEF based on projects and programs that may have impacts on people or the environment throughout the project or program cycle. For this mitigation measures need to be applied by enhancing the environmental and social outcomes of such projects and programs.

240 Review of Pro Doc and WWF safeguard standards, it ensures to comply the environmental and social safeguards standards not only complying with GEF but has to comply with GCF funded programs as well. The table below elaborates the triggering standards complying with GEF and WWF for this project as categorized as "B", but the standard accountability and grievance redress mechanism was not identified as a triggering factor considering social impacts and it has been dealt under a separate section in the project document. As an example, the compliances of the minimum standards done by this project has been identified as below:

GEF standards	**WWF Standards**	**IlaM project Standards**
(a) Environmental and Social Assessment, Management and Monitoring;	Policy on Environment and Social Risk Management	Environmental and Social Risk Management
(c) Biodiversity Conservation and the Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources;	Policy on Protection of Natural Habitats	Policy on Natural Habitats
(e) Indigenous Peoples;	Policy on Indigenous Peoples	Policy on Indigenous People
	Policy on Involuntary Resettlement	Policy on involuntary resettlement
	Standard on Pest Management	Policy on Pest Management

241 Reviewing the GEF policy on Environment and Social Safeguard it sets out the nine Minimum Standards for Agency policies, procedures, systems and capabilities related to identifying and addressing Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts in projects and programs. Ilam project has to address the risk factors (mostly of "B" category) as outlined in the workplans and decide which area needs more focus.

A WWF Environmental and Social Safeguards Categorization Memorandum was prepared for project implementation in 2018, approved by the safeguard specialist and compliance officer in September 2019 and disclosed through the website.

The environmental and social impacts of the project and its activities depend not just on the nature and scale of the activities, but also on the local geography of the area, climate conditions, soil and forest types, as well as the socio-economic condition of the people living in and around the discrete project sites, which

[14] GEF/C.55/07/Rev.01, Updated Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards (http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-eetingdocuments/EN_GEF.C.55.07.Rev_.01_ES_Safeguards.pdf)

needs to assessed by further implementing the safeguard policies developed. The Ilam project needs to show the relevancy of these safeguard issues by measuring them as well as by implementing adequate mitigation measures, already outlined in the policy. .

242 The project document has identified potential risk factors that could introduce environmental and social risk factors, but it has not been screened against the standards of risks based on environmental and social risk during the design phases. Mitigation approaches has again been mentioned in the section of Environmental and Social issues, but it does not prioritize which standards and who will be affected positively or negatively by these standards (for example how the beneficiaries will be impacted positively or negatively ensuring the mentioned standards of environmental and social safeguard issues.

243 Both the PMU and FSU staff along with beneficiary groups have been provided the general awareness on the environmental and social safeguard issues, but the mitigation parts to be discussed and implemented and preparing sector wise environmental and social safeguard plans are yet to be materialized. Mitigation measures for each activity need to be strongly addressed.. The safeguard plan especially focuses on component 3 and 4, but other components can trigger social impact and they were not fully discussed here.

244 .

245 The safeguard policy does highlight the IPPF and PF to be addressed as the safeguard issues and framework was developed. But the framework has not been widely shared among all the implementing and beneficiary groups to ensure to address the safeguard issues and even engaging them as key stakeholders, though it has been disclosed and have made access in the website of IlaM project, this does not ensure that the beneficiaries will have access to it as they may not have access or knowledge to download the information from the websites.

246 In the design phase stakeholders' consultations were done involving most of the direct beneficiaries and indirect beneficiaries, PMU clearly mentioned that during the implementation phase IPPF and PF will be addressed and based on that process, it has worked with the stakeholders and implementing partners especially Division forest offices, national park offices t and community-based organizations to identify the Project Affected Parties (PAPs) before any investments started. PMU has committed to prepare the site-specific safeguards documents and ensured to be disclosed in a culturally appropriate manner accessible to the beneficiaries and this needs to be materialized.

247 From the field observation and interaction, it was clear that the priority groups to get the beneficiaries were identified based on their well-being status but not based on the issues of safeguard indicating who could be more impacted by this project interventions especially component number 2 where policy reformation is talked about and 3 where most of the components were positively affecting people's livelihoods and build resilience towards Human Wildlife Conflict.

248 Component 1 of this project mainly focuses to support on the national capacity and enabling environment for cross sectoral coordination to promote forest and landscape conservation, which addresses the key coordination among the key Federal and local stakeholders to prepare the national Biodiversity Coordination Committee and indicates to be gender friendly but does not highlight any social safeguard issues. It is strongly suggested during the meetings of this coordination committee what safeguard issues for example how the committee can avoid exclusion factors based on IPPF and PF and GESI perspectives etc.

249 While developing the National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan environmental and social safeguard issues needs to be highlighted with triggering factors and activities to mitigate the negative environmental and social impacts and upscale positive impacts after implementing this document.

250 One of the key factor in social safeguard is how to ensure that any activities and interventions carried out by IlaM project safeguards IPLC, Dalit, marginalized and women targeted beneficiaries and ensure the concept of "Leave No One Behind". FPIC needs to be done while initiating each activity to get the consent and ensures that "do no harm" approach is adopted successfully. FPIC process outlines which interventions should be carefully addressed so as not to increase social or environmental risks. For example, this process can be done for activities such as capacity building of component 1 and supporting grants, operational plan developments of CFUGS and integrating GESI and safeguard integration in component 2, forest restoration and human wildlife conflict management reach the vulnerable groups as mentioned in the social analysis study and ensure inclusion in all the trainings and livelihood support.

251 MTR could not assess project activities for any additional adverse or unforeseen environmental or social impacts and include potential measures to address them based on the safeguard policy outlined because the safeguard policy and compliances has not been screened to measure which issues of safeguards so far has been addressed or impacts that have made among the beneficiaries. That is, Ilam project should start measuring environmental and social impacts that could lead to unforeseen impacts. A generalized information mentions that if interventions are done, it is likely to reduce the negative impacts but to what extent it is yet to be known when more activities are implemented in future. For example, it is important to address how can the IPs social issues be mitigated or, if displacement happens involuntarily, what are the social cost, how and to what extent they can be mitigated.

252 Accountability and Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) may not be the triggering factor having impact on the project intervention, but IPPF and PF identified this as a social safeguard issue. Both GEF and WWF indicated them to be an important factor and project document do not address GRM, but this has been done under the IPPF-IlaM project document. ILaM Project has set up a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) based on the IPPF-ILaM[15]. The objective of the GRM is to resolve complaints as quickly as possible and at the most local level possible through a process of conciliation; and, if that is not possible, to provide clear and transparent procedures for appeal. Though not a project document, based on the IPPF-IlaM, a brochure in English and Nepali has been prepared to share the process on how to make complaints. In each project intervention sites, a complaint box has been installed and awareness on GRM has been provided to all the beneficiary groups.

253 Based on the safeguard issue FPIC is critical and if any interventions do not support the IPLC's, women's, Dalits and marginalized groups concern and have led to negative impact and discrimination takes place while implementing projects complaints can be lodged. So far only 3 complaints were received through grievance mechanism (information on the mechanism also provided through the website) and were found to be not qualified as per project GRM r

254 It was also found that based on the brochure, a grievance mechanism complaints process and team has been set up but their function so far has not been observed or initiated having no complaints yet. Grievance awareness and how to launch complaints still needs to be provided and counsellors needs to be trained so that people are not scared of the consequences.

[15] https://www.mofe.gov.np/downloadsdetail/6/2018/67362203/

4 Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons

A. Key lessons and/or best practices to share and replicate

255 A number of emerging lessons learned and best practices can be distilled from the Project's implementation to date:

- **Emerging lesson 1** - Stronger alignment at design between of project targets and the operational realities faced by project teams, so they are not entirely out of reach from those who ultimately manage projects. While GEF projects must be ambitious to achieve global environmental benefits, they need to balance and take into consideration the sphere of influence of the management teams that implement them so as not to set them up for failure with unrealistic expectations and a complex array of targets and indicators. The quest for perfectly designed projects should be right-sized with the available capacity and PMC budget. Also, contexts change and projects should be afforded flexibility to revise outcomes and outputs that clearly cannot be achieved at the end of the project period and replace them with more rational and feasible alternatives. To this end, the PM needs to be empowered through specific training and / or clear operational guidelines. As a second layer of defense, the Steering Committee and Executing Agency should be positioned to validate the results and targets during the inception phase of a project.
- **Emerging lesson 2** - From the WWF-GEF ILaM project, it becomes evident that addressing human-wildlife conflict requires not just ecological interventions but also socio-economic and cultural considerations. Engaging local communities in devising and implementing mitigation strategies has been crucial for the success of the project. Their firsthand experiences and traditional knowledge can offer valuable insights and sustainable solutions. Additionally, community-driven initiatives have shown greater success rates as they foster a sense of ownership and responsibility, ensuring longer-term commitment to conservation goals. Drawing from other GEF initiatives in the region, there's a shared understanding that multi-pronged approaches are most effective[16,17,18]. Incorporating physical barriers like fencing, early warning systems, and community patrols, alongside awareness campaigns and capacity-building efforts, have proven fruitful. Additionally, initiatives that promote alternative livelihoods or compensation schemes for affected locals can reduce friction and enhance community participation. Collaborative frameworks that involve government agencies, NGOs, and local communities, as seen in some GEF projects, tend to amplify the positive outcomes in addressing HWC[19,20].
- **Emerging lesson 3** - The WWF-GEF ILaM project is a good example of how initial training during the inception phase is not sufficient to equip project teams with the tools and knowledge to succeed; especially in situations where there is turnover. Therefore, as the Project's

[16] Baral, N., & Heinen, J. T. (2007). Resources use, conservation attitudes, management intervention and park-people relations in the Western Terai landscape of Nepal. Environmental Conservation, 34(1), 64-72. doi:10.1017/S0376892907003813
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[20] Nyhus, P. J., Fisher, H. I., & Madden, F. (2003). Taking the bite out of wildlife damage: The challenges of wildlife compensation schemes. Conservation in Practice, 4(2), 37-40. doi:10.1111/j.1526-4629.2003.tb00056.x

implementation has successfully integrated, refresher training and frequent field verification missions by the GEF Agency serve to clarify miscommunication and trigger big jumps in progress. This is especially relevant with respect to gender and safeguards.

- **Emerging lesson 4** - With every GEF replenishment more and more requirements and expectations are added to both project design, with cost implications that are not always factored in PMC costs. The WWF-GEF ILaM project is an example how new requirements such as GEF Core Indicators have presented challenges with their understanding, connectivity with the package of activities and have created a monitoring burden, with 8 Objective-level indicators, in addition to the 22 Outcome-level indicators.
- **Emerging lesson 5** - The WWF-GEF ILaM project provided a significant learning experience on the intricate relationship between communications and knowledge management. Over the course of the project, it became evident that communications and knowledge management, though closely related, serve distinct purposes and need individual attention to ensure project success. Throughout the project's lifespan, there were instances where the mechanisms used to disseminate information (communications) were mistaken for the methods of capturing, storing, and refining project knowledge (knowledge management). Communications has purposes that are different from knowledge sharing. For example, communications might help garner support or boost reputation, whereas knowledge sharing should support learning and replication. This conflation led to gaps in ensuring that learned experiences were systematically captured and made available for future initiatives or to support decision-making. For example, while regular project updates and briefs were effectively communicated to stakeholders, the deeper insights, methodologies, and best practices that could be derived from these updates were not always adequately documented and archived for future reference. The takeaway from this experience is that while effective communication ensures that stakeholders are informed and engaged, a robust knowledge management system is crucial for building on past experiences, refining strategies, and ensuring long-term project sustainability. In future projects, it is vital to delineate clear boundaries and responsibilities between these two functions, ensuring both are given the requisite focus and resources. This will not only amplify the project's current impact but will also provide a rich repository of knowledge for future endeavors in similar domains. There is also an implication here from a team composition perspective that inadequate PMC resources often do not permit the hiring of experienced resources for all roles envisaged at the PMU and Field Office(s).

B. Summary of findings

256 The project's design is both ambitious and purposefully-complex addressing key challenges in endangered wildlife conservation, including cross-sectoral governance, capacity building, and technological transfer, with an emphasis on community-level financial sustainability and resilience. It engages numerous stakeholders and operates across various landscape corridors at different maturity levels. The intervention logic, as delineated in the Project Document and the Theory of Change, aptly identifies and ranks the challenges, reflecting both the national backdrop and nuances of multi-stakeholder international collaboration within a shifting governmental paradigm.

257 Significant strides have been made to cultivate conditions conducive to the broader TAL Program, drawing clear connections between primary goals, outcomes, and anticipated results. Adjustments made during the design phase have harnessed insights from over two decades of national and regional initiatives, underscoring the importance of integrated landscape management. Although the Theory of Change is

cogent, it lacks some critical elements in the description of its impact pathways. The current situation, mirrors the foundational threat and barrier analysis, underscoring the project's continued relevance and urgency.

258 The Project is notably in alignment with the GEF biodiversity, land degradation, and SFM focal area objectives. It supports Nepal's commitment to international conventions, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, and enhances the NBSAP. Furthermore, in resonance with the Aichi Targets, which have transitioned into the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework 2030 targets, the Project addresses multiple objectives, including the prevention of natural habitat loss, promoting sustainable agriculture and forest management, and conserving threatened species.

259 The WWF-ILaM project is inextricably linked with the TAL Program, sharing common objectives and operationalizing Nepal's TAL strategic plan. This connection extends its support to Nepal's tiger conservation efforts, emphasizing the importance of the Terai Arc Landscape. Coordination is evident with numerous related initiatives, including ZSL and the National Trust for Nature Conservation. However, such integration sometimes leads to potential overlaps, risking duplicative efforts.

260 The ILaM project emphasizes gender considerations, incorporating Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) guidelines and laying the foundation for a Gender and Inclusion Responsive guideline for corridor management plans.

261 The project's commencement faced significant delays due to unforeseen challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdowns, limited online connectivity, disruptions due to elections, and natural disasters like floods and landslides. Achievements have been noted against work plans and year two targets, despite initial setbacks. Under Component 1, difficulties in establishing inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms, training outreach, and landscape management planning have been observed. Issues also arose from legislative constraints affecting grants and fund deployment, but individual grants to university students are exemplary and show promise for scaling. Under Component 2, efforts are underway to address data gaps, with commendable strides made in biodiversity assessments and socio-economic surveys in select corridors. Component 3 has seen success in promoting sustainable forest management practices and livelihood strengthening, though challenges persist in private forest registration. Component 4 has yielded impressive results in knowledge management, with the project meeting most of its indicators. Despite operational hiccups, management arrangements are deemed appropriate, and the Project Management Unit (PMU) is lauded for its dedication and professional approach. The operational maturity of the GEF Agency and its partners is commendable, and the strategy of implementation through partners has been a significant value add. Monitoring has been robust, with timely reporting, although there is room for improvement in the monitoring system. Communication within the team is efficient, and external communication strategies have ensured project visibility, although adherence to the latest communications strategy needs improvement. The project's challenges largely stem from external factors like the pandemic, fund disbursement issues, and government response delays.

262 The project has encountered financial challenges in its initial stages, with only 48% of the expected GEF project costs for the first two years being disbursed, equating to a 62% achievement against the Year 2 targets. While most deliverables have been met within their allocated budget, the PMU and Field Office are operating with fewer staff members than designed and are utilizing the entire personnel budget. However, staff at these offices have shown remarkable efficiency by taking on additional tasks and filling vacant roles, even though this approach isn't sustainable for the long haul.

263 Cost-saving efforts have been observed, with the project seeking synergies with other organizations like TAL program, NTNC and ZSL, though care must be taken to avoid duplicating efforts. The pandemic, while having its setbacks, has introduced cost-effective strategies like virtual meetings, which can reduce operational costs in the long run. The project's investment in training has bolstered institutional strength and promises to improve community resilience through efficient strategies in Component 3. The PMU, despite its initial focus on quality assurance over efficiency, is evolving and is expected to balance both in the future. Multiple layers of oversight, along with annual field monitoring missions, suggest a more incrementally efficient delivery model moving forward.

264 From the perspective of the GEF, Core Indicators play a pivotal role in realizing impact, with most of them reaching or nearing their Year 2 targets. Notably, 3 out of the 8 Core Indicators have not met at least 75% of their YR2 targets (see Annex 11). Encouraging progress can be seen in the implementation of training processes, and there is positive anecdotal feedback from communities and beneficiaries. They report that strategies to enhance livelihoods and reduce Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) are effective to the point that they're advocating for further investments. Although it's premature to quantify the overall impact due to initial project delays, the foundational elements set in place promise tangible impacts as the project progresses into its latter stages.

265 The TAL Program boasts diversified funding sources, enhancing its long-term financial sustainability and ensuring continuity. This financial stability is further strengthened by community formalization under legal entities, providing them access to a multitude of financing avenues. Additionally, WWF's expansive approach across the Asia-Pacific region looks to draw from multiple financial reservoirs to champion landscape conservation. The project not only provides local communities with support in both technical and financial management of their revised forest operational management plans, but also accentuates country ownership, thereby shielding it from potential sociopolitical fluctuations. The introduction of governance bodies like PAC and PEC further reinforces sociopolitical resilience. Positive sustainability outlooks are bolstered as implementing partners reaffirm their commitment to sustain cooperation at the site level.

266 Moreover, to navigate the constraints posed by the Procurement Act, the project should prioritize offering a diverse array of financial mechanisms and funding sources, while also fostering an environment conducive to such endeavors. Steps have already been taken in this direction, with the creation of a procedural guideline focusing on resource investment for the execution of green enterprise promotional activities. This guideline, pending approval from the Ministry of Finance , will serve as a blueprint for beneficiary selection and may become a benchmark for future projects. Furthermore, the revamped forest management operational plans have been crafted with longevity in mind, paving the way for potential updates to other plans in the future. Rooted deeply within a 15-year conservation foundation across the Terai Arc Landscape, the project bolsters regional conservation strategies, placing a spotlight on Nepal's national landscape aspirations. By focusing its investments on strategies tailored to combat environmental challenges, the project underscores the resilience of both communities and ecosystems. Lastly, WWF-Nepal's forthcoming project on human-tiger conflict solidifies the continuation of the objectives set by the WWF-IlaM project.

267 From its inception in October 2020, the WWF-GEF ILaM project underwent an extensive review of its conceptual framework, strategies, targets, and indicators, which resulted in multiple modifications. However, as the project advanced, while the overarching goals remained consistent, there were alterations to the activities and outputs designed to achieve them. This adaptability was the outcome of meticulous planning and the ability to respond to shifting external circumstances. On another note, the prescribed

annual adaptive management meetings, as detailed in the Project Document, are not being conducted as separate sessions. Instead, they've been amalgamated with standard Project meetings and Annual Work Planning sessions. While this approach has been instrumental in refining the project's scope of work, it has regrettably overlooked comprehensive evaluations of the Theory of Change, assumptions, and potential risks.

C. Recommendations

268 The table below articulates specific and actionable recommendations to improve the overall design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and management of the project; organized as applicable by evaluation criteria and findings.

Table 4.1 MTR recommendations

C. Recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Time Horizon	Frequency	Responsible
1	It should not be assumed that all stakeholders share the same level of understanding and awareness about the Project, especially because of the turnover of staff and government authorities. Project stakeholders (especially government entities who are involved in a multitude of initiatives) may not be able to differentiate the WWF-GEF IlaM Project with others being implemented at landscape level. Data collected from key informant interviews have surfaced a request for the regular democratization of knowledge on the Project. Therefore, the Project Manager should proactively seek opportunities for more communication with executing partners and federal government staff on a regular basis. It is recommended to hold an ongoing quarterly call to communicate outward more often.	Immediately following MTR	Quarterly	PMU, Field Office
2	a) Recruit a legal expert / sustainable financing specialist to conduct a legal review to identify all financing mechanisms and tools that can still be implemented under Output 3.1.3, and 3.3.1 while still keeping within the boundaries of the Procurement Act. b) Organize and hold a brainstorm exercise with representatives from the Public Procurement Office (PPMO) of the Ministry of Finance using the findings from the legal	Immediately following MTR	Once	PMU, MoFE

No.	Recommendation	Time Horizon	Frequency	Responsible
	review, to determine if there is a pathway to achieving the original scope of sub-grants for SFM; c) If no path is viable, redeploy a portion of the funds earmarked for Output 3.1.3 to develop cattle sheds / goat pens / mesh-wire fence construction / skill based training for CBAPU members and forest-watchers/plantation and restoration embankments and income generating activities. d) Based on learnings from the past 2 years of implementation and reflecting on successes that have been realized in the field / with communities, leverage one or more of the following opportunities for the reallocation of funds, which have been discussed and vetted with the PMU: • Activities under Output 1.2.3 could be relocated in different activities in same output for innovation grant to government entities and student thesis research grants. • If activities under Output 2.2.2 cannot be implemented within the current fiscal year, consider reallocating funds to Output 3.2.3 HWC management as this has become a pervasive issue. • If FMIS establishment and fire reporting system establishment is assessed to not be feasible by the PMU, there are opportunities to scale up the intervention on forest fire control in corridor and buffer zone. • Activities under Output 3.1.2, such as private forest promotion could be reallocated to Outcome 3.1.3 and 3.2.3 to support agroforestry promotion, restoration and plantation in public land and community forest, alternative crop promotion and predator proof pens. • Select activities from Output 3.1.3, such as green enterprise promotion ought to be reallocated to Output 3.2.3 on HWC management. • Reallocation of revolving fund from Output 3.3.1 to capacity building and field gears			

No.	Recommendation	Time Horizon	Frequency	Responsible
	support to CBAPU members and community forest watchers. • A portion of the funds from Output 4.1.1 like Jaibik Chautari and website construction could be considered for reallocation to eco-club promotion under Output 4.1.2. • Any surplus portion of the funds from Output 4.2.1 (audit cost and MTR sharing meeting) could be reallocated to Output 3.1.3 for the development and implementation of a safeguard plan along with output 3.1.3 and ILaM project staff capacity development activity.			
3	Initiate and facilitate an annual review exercise preceding the Annual Workplan phase, where changes to the context are catalogued and prioritized as an input to a thorough review of the Project's Theory of Change. The results chains therein, high-impact pathways assumptions and risks should be discussed and validated consultatively, and activities and budgets developed on the basis of this exercise for consideration in the annual work planning cycle. Finally, risks should be defined for each pathway and mitigations explicitly included as part or work planning.	Immediately following MTR	Annually	PMU
4	Gender mainstreaming should be actively encouraged and pursued at site and systemic level. Gender action plan has been prepared and must be effectively applied by both PMU and implementing partners, to address gender gaps and mainstream them in the project components through the outputs' achievement process.	Immediately following MTR	Annually	PMU, Field Office
5	For the remaining period, the Project must concentrate on charting out an exit strategy prioritizing the transition of products and services to different stakeholders along with a description of how these will be maintained, updated when needed and funded going forward.	Immediately following MTR	Ongoing until Terminal Evaluation	PMU, Field Office in close coordination with MoFE
6	Conduct a rigorous stakeholder needs analysis and to also document the levers (carrots and sticks) by targeted stakeholder and likely	Immediately following MTR	Once	PMU, Field Office, MoFE

No.	Recommendation	Time Horizon	Frequency	Responsible
	members of the committees under Output 1.1.1, that can be deployed to encourage acceleration of cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms.			
7	Given the PMU's maturity, it should push its comfort level and adopt more industry-standard[21] Project Management approaches tools as follows: ● As an alternative to managing schedules in a spreadsheet, it is recommended that the PMU procures and leverages some project management software and utilizes it as part of the Annual Work Planning cycle to connect project activities through dependencies to identify predecessors, successors and constraints and to use work effort as opposed to elapsed time duration estimates; ● Leverage a standard "Risk, actions, issues and decisions (RAID) log to record project-level risks, actions, issues and decisions, as per project management best practice; ● Any risk mitigations should be included as activities under the annual work plan cycle and integrated into the risk register. These include those mitigations in the Project Document, which may not have been actioned yet (i.e., disaster recovery / business continuity plan).	Immediately following MTR	Ongoing	PMU, Field Office
8	A number of opportunities are noted for reallocating to support HWC activities (see recommendation no. 2. Furthermore, as HWC is a growing problem, different branches of government are expected to invest more in this going forward. The justification and benefits in doing so should be documented. There is a need to develop and highlight a business case for governement to address HWC, assessing the cost-benefit of these investments as interesting opportunities for sound federal, state and local investments. This should be	Immediately following MTR	Once	PMU, WWF Nepal

[21] Industry-standard approaches / methodologies would include PMBOK or PRINCE2. Industry-standard tools and software could consider Microsoft Project, although the MTR consultant team does not promote any specific company software.

No.	Recommendation	Time Horizon	Frequency	Responsible
	used to justify any reallocation of funds, should sub-grants not be viable going forward.			
9	MTRs are much too important to rush through. It is recommended to have at least a one-month buffer between the end of the fact-finding stage and the delivery of the draft report to allow for triangulation of data, codification of information against evaluation criteria, cross-referencing of information and room for additional clarification consultations where needed.	Future Evaluations	Ongoing	WWF-US
10	Explore and study the possibility and work effort required to institutionalize the training modules delivered at one of the forest / government training centers so they can be developed into an accredited course and certificate available to future government staff and future generations of foresters and conservationists in Nepal. Furthermore, training sessions ought to be recorded and included online to enable self-directed training and capacity building among different audiences.	Immediately following MTR	Ongoing	PMU, Field Office, MoFE
11	Update the Project Results Framework with the following indicator changes and ensure that it is approved by PEC and PAC to establish a new baseline: iv. Remove or stop reporting against indicator "c" under Outcome 3.1 if no solution is found to deploy sub-grants. v. Remove 1 of the existing 5 indicators under Outcome 3.2 (perhaps "b" related to damage to houses), and replace it with "area of cropland protected (hectares)" to enable better integration and traceability to GEF Core Indicator 4, sub-indicator 4.3. vi. Change the nomenclature of Outcome 4.1 from "number of stakeholders" to "number of people" since it is not possible to disaggregate a stakeholder by gender. Include another indicator under Output 4.1 "changes in attitudes on integrated landscape management, as measured by a X% increase in Knowledge, Attitudes, Perception scores" (the % target increase should be set only upon	Immediately following MTR	Once	PMU, WWF-US, PEC, PAC

No.	Recommendation	Time Horizon	Frequency	Responsible
	completion of the first capacity on Knoweledge, Attitude, Practices (KAP) survey. Given the time remaining in the Project, the KAP survey should only be undertaken twice, with the second just before the terminal evaluation.			
12	a) Recruitment of a replacement M&E officer should ensure a solid understanding of GIS principles and industry standards within this domain, specifically how to measure changes in forest cover using Area Weighted Patch Area; b) Recruitment of a replacement communications officer should focus on augmenting the 2022 Communications Strategy to include (i) a stakeholder assessment and the communication tools that will be used to target specific target segments; (ii) develop and deploy a KAP survey and measure the results at least twice during the remainder of the project. There will be a need to set a realistic end-of-project target following the deployment of the first KAP survey; (iii) include a solid knowledge management strategy articulating how data and information will be converted into knowledge for enhanced decision-making; (iv) be accountable for populating the website with key products developed by the Project and disseminating information and technical reports on a quarterly basis; (v) revisit the communications and knowledge management strategy on a yearly basis; and (vi) develop an transition / exit strategy on how the products and services will be institutionalized, updated and funded post-project.	Immediately following MTR	Yearly	PMU, Field Office
13	It is recommended that the project apply for the maximum 18-month extension for GEF-6 projects, provided that it can cover increases to GEF Agency fees and PMU / Field Office costs.	Following next PEC / PAC meetings	Once	WWF-US
14	Double down on efforts to truly institutionalize cross-sectoral landscape management Refine approach of Output(s) 2.1 and 2.2 to give due recognition to the principles of	Immediately following MTR	Ongoing	PMU, Field Office, MoFE

No.	Recommendation	Time Horizon	Frequency	Responsible
	landscape level management planning (landscape approach) and its participatory nature, by: i. Engaging all stakeholders of the concerned landscapes and forming a singular multi-sectoral standing landscape management committee for the Banke-Bardia complex, which include representatives of ALL land-based departments, local communities, local NGOs and entities currently working in the landscape (ZSL and NTNC, private sector / land holders, etc., ii. During the planning process present a clear spatial analysis of the biophysical and socio-economic baseline data, containing proposals to how to best ensure the flow of multiple ecosystem benefits from the landscape, incl. biodiversity conservation, provision of water, agricultural production, use of community forests, natural resources incl. timber, rocks and minerals, allocation of land for settlement and infrastructure development, etc. Ideally, the lead of the planning should not be outsourced to maximize ownership, however a facilitator and spatial data analyst may be engaged. iii. Engage the multi-sectoral landscape management committee into negotiating and owning the landscape management plans under Outputs 2.1 and 2.2. The plans should contain the objectives of landscape management, strategies to achieve them, which are operationalized through an action plan with a timeframe of ten years. The action plan should spell out activities, associated budget and resource requirements, responsible implementers and monitoring procedures. The plans should identify rules of land management, incl. on the allocation of land for various uses. The plan should also define the zonation of the landscape for various uses for ten years and represents a binding agreement between stakeholders. iv. Implement landscape management plans as defined above governed by the standing			

No.	Recommendation	Time Horizon	Frequency	Responsible
	committee using multiple budget sources, ensuring long-term support for them from the Government of Nepal and other sources of funding, leveraging WWF's whole landscape approach.			
15	In parallel, to the augmentation of the communications strategy highlighted in recommendation 12(b), it is recommended that the PMU design and implement a communication monitoring system with specific indicators (to be added to the results framework indicators, in addition to the KAP survey noted in recommendation 11, where appropriate) to be calculated each year, aiming at assessing the performance of the communication activities, identifying critical issues and challenges to be faced and actions to be implemented to achieve the communication strategy objectives. A brief communication report could be drafted with the monitoring results and the proposed actions to be implemented the next year, specifying responsibilities and targets.	Immediately following MTR	Yearly	PMU, Field Office
16	It is recommended to empower the Project Manager to be the single point of contact and source of truth regarding all co-financing. It is imperative the Project Manager has visibility of the co-financing picture at any given point in time. Currently, information regarding co-financing from WWF-Nepal and WWF-US does not flow to or from the PMU.	Immediately following MTR	Yearly	PMU, WWF-Nepal, WWF-US and MoFE
17	Leadership training and public speaking training should be offered for most marginalized groups (especially women Muslims), that exhibit less confidence in speaking in groups/meetings groups, so as they may be more inclined to actively participate in meetings/workshops, etc. This should be the responsibility of the GESI specialist and the field staff to ensure implementation and proper monitoring	Immediately following MTR	Ongoing	PMU, Field Office

Table 4.2 Contributions of the recommendations to the project implementation and management improvement according to the evaluation criteria

Recommendations / Criteria	Relevance	Coherence	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Results / Potential for impact	Sustainability	Adaptive capacity
N. 1			X				
N. 2			X	X	X		X
N. 3			X	X	X		X
N. 4			X		X	X	
N. 5					X	X	
N. 6			X		X	X	
N. 7			X	X			
N. 8	X	X			X	X	
N. 9	*Transversal*						
N. 10			X		X	X	
N. 11			X	X			
N. 12			X		X	X	
N. 13				X			
N. 14	X	X	X		X	X	
N. 15			X		X	X	X

D. Evaluation rating tables

See Annex 11.

5 Annex 1 – The TORs of the MTR

INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

World Wildlife Fund, Inc. (WWF) policies and procedures for all GEF financed full-sized projects require a midterm review (MTR). The following terms of reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for the MTR for the project: Integrated Landscape Management to secure Nepal's Protected Areas and Critical Corridors[22], hereafter referred to as the "Project." The technical consultant selected to conduct this evaluation will hereafter be referred to as "evaluator."

The Project seeks to promote integrated landscape management to conserve globally significant forests and wildlife. The Project was organized into the following components:

- COMPONENT 1: National capacity and enabling environment for cross-sectoral coordination to promote forest and landscape conservation;
- COMPONENT 2. Integrated Planning for Protected Area Buffer Zones and Critical Corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape;
- COMPONENT 3. Forest and wildlife management for improved conservation of targeted protected area buffer zones and corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape;
- COMPONENT 4. Knowledge Management and Monitoring and Evaluation.

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVE FOR THE EVALUATION

WWF is seeking an independent consultant to undertake a midterm review (MTR) of the Project. The scope of the MTR will cover the WWF GEF financed components.

The objective of this evaluation is to examine the extent, magnitude, sustainability and potential for project impacts to date; identify any project design or management issues; assess progress towards project outcomes and outputs; and draw lessons learned that can improve the project effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of project benefits. Based on this assessment, it is expected that the evaluator will provide feasible recommendations that could be applied for the remaining duration of the project.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHOD

The evaluation will adhere to the relevant guidance, rules and procedures established by WWF[23] and align with GEF policies[24] and guidelines.[25] The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is independent, participatory, transparent, and ethical. The evaluator must be unbiased and free of any conflicts of interest with the project. The evaluator is expected to reflect all stakeholder views and follow a participatory and consultative approach. There should be close engagement with government counterparts, the GEF operational focal points in each country, the Executing Agency project management unit (PMU), partners and key stakeholders. Contact information will be provided.

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[22] See project website and related documents for more information.

[23] For additional information on evaluation methods adopted by WWF, see the WWF Evaluation Guidelines , published on our WWF Program Standards public website.

[24] Please see Evaluation Policy and Monitoring Policy.

[25] Please see the GEF Ethical Guidelines as published on GEF website. Please reference GEF Terminal Evaluation Guidelines, which may be adjusted for midterm reviews.

The Evaluation process will include the following, with deliverables marked by "*":

A. Kickoff and inception meetings;

B. Desk review consisting of, but not limited to:

- Project Document and CEO Endorsement Letter;
- Project agreements, Government of Nepal endorsement letters, project operational manual, program implementation guidelines;
- Relevant safeguards documents, including WWF GEF Agency Categorization and Compliance memo, Environmental and Social Management Framework, Process Framework; Grievance Redress Mechanism, etc.;
- Annual Work Plans (AWP) and Budgets, Line Ministry Budget Information System (LMBIS);
- Project Progress Reports (PPR) including Results Framework and AWP Tracking;
- GEF Agency reports, including Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) and Project Support Mission Reports (PrISM);
- Relevant financial documents, including financial progress reports; co-financing monitoring tables and co-financing letters;
- Meeting minutes (Project Advisory Committee (PAC), Project Executive Committee (PEC), Field Coordination Committee (FCC) and relevant virtual meetings with the WWF- GEF Agency and extended team); and
- Other relevant documents provided by the Executing Agency and partners.

C. Inception report that outlines evaluation methodology, approach and timeline;*

D. Field visits with PMU and project partners, as necessary and feasible;

E. Interviews, discussions and consultations with executing partners, GEF Operational Focal Points (OFP), PAC and PEC members, project beneficiaries (both men and women), and others;

F. Post-field visit debrief and presentation* of initial findings to project management team and other partners as feasible;

G. Draft report* not to exceed 40 pages (excluding annexes) shared with GEF AMU and PMU for review, feedback and approval. A sample outline will be provided; and

H. Final approved MTR report* that has incorporated feedback and corrections.

EXPECTED CONTENT OF THE REPORT

The Midterm review report will include (see Annexes for details):

- Information on the evaluation process, including when the evaluation took place, sites visited, participants, key questions, summary of methodology and rating rubric, and feedback log showing how comments on draft were incorporated;
- Assessment of Relevance (project design, theory of change) and Coherence;
- Assessment of project Results Framework plus rating of project objective and outcomes;
- Assessment of Effectiveness and ratings of Implementation and Execution;
- Assessment and rating of Monitoring and Evaluation design and implementation;
- Assessment of knowledge management and communication approach, including activities and products;
- Assessment of replication and catalytic effects of the project;

- Assessment of stakeholder engagement, gender strategy and gender-responsive measures;
- Assessment of any environmental and social impacts and safeguards used for the project, including the Indigenous People Planning Framework (IPPF) and planning framework (PF). Plus, review of the risk category classification and mitigation measures;
- Assessment of the Grievance Redress Mechanism including its socialization with stakeholders and their understanding of how it operates and their confidence in it;
- Assessment of Efficiency, financial management and summary of co-financing materialized;
- Summary table of key findings by core criteria[26] and GEF ratings, including justification and/or indicators for their determination;
- Key lessons tied to identified strengths or issues;
- Recommendations that include: practical and short-term corrective actions by evaluation criteria to address issues and findings; and reflect best practices towards achieving project outcomes, and knowledge sharing / replication for other projects of similar scope.

EVALUATION TEAM QUALIFICATIONS

Required Qualifications and Experience

- Master's degree or equivalent in Development, Environmental Science, Economics, Public Policy, Social Sciences or other relevant field;
- Minimum 10 years of relevant professional experience;
- Previous experience with evaluation methodologies;
- Excellent written and oral communication in English.

Preferred Qualifications and Experience

- Recent experience conducting evaluations (for GEF financed projects is an advantage);
- Technical knowledge in planning for protected area buffer zones and critical corridors, human-wildlife conflict, and forest/landscape conservation;
- Knowledge of GEF monitoring and evaluation policies;
- Experience with WWF Project and Program Management Standards or Conservation Standards;
- Experience with social assessments, participatory techniques, and gender mainstreaming;
- Knowledge of participatory approach in biodiversity conservation and community based natural resource management;
- Knowledge and experience in implementing or reviewing application of social and environmental safeguards policies in GEF (or similar) projects;
- Fluent Nepali language preferred; and
- Regional experience an asset.

ANNEX A: EVALUATION CRITERIA

Criteria for Overall Evaluation of Project

The evaluation should assess the project against the following GEF and WWF criteria:

[26] See annex A

1. **Relevance** – the extent to which the project design, outcomes, indicators and targets remain valid and consistent with local and national development priorities and organizational policies, including the context of the changing circumstances of the country (e.g. political context);
2. **Coherence** - the compatibility of a project intervention with other interventions (particularly policies) in a country, sector or institution. This can include internal coherence and external coherence. Internal coherence addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the project interventions and those carried about by the same sector or institution in country. External coherence measures consistency and compatibility of the interventions among different sectors, but in the same context.
3. **Effectiveness** - the extent to which the outputs, outcomes and project objective have been or are likely to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. Identify the major factors which have facilitated or impeded this achievement. Review the management structure of the project and determine whether the organizational structure of the project, the resources, the distribution of responsibilities and coordination mechanisms are appropriate for achieving progress towards project outcomes;
4. **Efficiency** - the extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible. This includes efficiency of: funding availability, project management and human resources, coordination and information flow among the project partners;
5. **Results/Impact** – the extent of intended or unforeseen effects that project interventions or strategies will have on the project objective, conservation targets and GEF global environmental benefits, whether positive or negative. Whereas effectiveness focuses on intended outcomes, impact is a measure of the broader consequences of the intervention at different levels. Assess the project's logic or theory of change and the potential to scale up or replicate the project outcomes and impact.
6. **Sustainability** - the likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits, progress and impact after external support has ended. Determine the degree of support and buy-in given to the project at the national and local level;
7. **Adaptive capacity** –the extent to which the use of M&E, lessons learned and adaptive management are used to meet indicator targets and mitigate project issues (such as design flaws or any adverse impacts of the project).

ANNEX B: SAMPLE EVALUATION RATINGS SUMMARY TABLES

1. Progress Towards Results[27] and Individual Outcome Ratings								
Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Baseline level	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement	*Achievement Rating*	*Justification[28]*	Other Notes
Objective								
Outcome 1								
Outcome 2								

[27] If any changes were made to these results, please indicate when they were made and whether those changes were approved.

[28] The evaluator should be objective and provide sufficient justification with empirical evidence to support all ratings given.

Outcome 3								
Outcome 4								

2. Assessment of Project Outcomes	***Rating***	***Justification***
Were project outcomes ***Relevant*** when compared to focal area/operational program strategies, WWF strategies, and country priorities?		
How do you assess the ***Effectiveness*** of project outcomes?		
What is the Cost-efficiency of project outcomes? How does the project cost/time versus output/outcomes equation compare to that of a similar project?		
Overall Rating of Project Outcomes	***Rating***	***Justification***
Using above criteria, please provide an **overall rating** for the achievement of the Project outcomes. This assessment should analyze both the achievement and shortcomings of these results as stated in the project document.		

3. Assessment of Risks[29] to Sustainability[30] of Project Outcomes *Please describe these risks below, taking into account likelihood and magnitude:*
Financial Risks
Sociopolitical Risks
Institutional Framework and Governance Risks

[29] Risks are internal or external factors that are likely to affect the achievement of project outcomes. In this context, please consider how these risks could affect the sustainability or *persistence* of project outcomes. Please feel free to list individual risks for each category (financial, sociopolitical, etc.) and provide a corresponding assessment on likelihood and magnitude for each of these. This will help you in forming your overall rating of sustainability of project outcomes.

[30] Sustainability refers to the likelihood of continuation of project benefits after project completion according to the 2019 Monitoring Policy.

Environmental Risks		
Overall Rating of Sustainability of Project Outcomes	***Rating***	***Justification***
Using above criteria, please provide an **overall rating** for the risks to sustainability of project outcomes.		

4. Assessment of M&E Systems	***Rating***	***Justification***
M&E Design – Was the M&E plan at the CEO endorsement practical and sufficient? Did the M&E plan include baseline data?[31] Did it: specify clear targets and appropriate SMART indicators to track environmental, gender, and socioeconomic results; a proper methodological approach; specify practical organization and logistics of M&E activities including schedule and responsibilities for data collection; and budget adequate funds for M&E activities?		
M&E implementation – Did the M&E system operate as per the M&E plan? Where necessary, was the M&E plan revised in a timely manner? Was information on specified indicators and relevant GEF Core indicators gathered in a systematic manner? Were appropriate methodological approaches used to analyze data? Were resources for M&E sufficient? How was the information from the M&E system used during project implementation? Did it facilitate transparency, sharing and adaptive management?		
Overall Rating of M&E	***Rating***	***Justification***
Using above information as guidance, please provide an overall rating for M&E during project design /implementation.		

5. Implementation and Execution Rating	***Rating***	***Justification***
Please rate the WWF GEF Agency on the project implementation.		
Please rate the Executing Agency on project execution.		

ANNEX C: RATINGS CLASSIFICATIONS

Outcome Rating Classification:[32]

- **Highly satisfactory (HS)** – Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were not shortcomings.

[31] If there is not a project baseline, the evaluator should seek to estimate the baseline conditions so achievements and results can be properly determined.

[32] The calculation of overall outcomes rating of projects will consider all three criteria, of which relevance and effectiveness are critical. The rating on relevance will determine whether the overall rating will be in the unsatisfactory range (MU to HU). If the relevance rating is in the unsatisfactory range then the overall outcome will be in the unsatisfactory range as well. However, where the relevance rating is in the satisfactory range (HS to MS), the overall outcome rating could, depending on its effectiveness and efficiency rating, be either in the satisfactory range or in the unsatisfactory range. Overall Outcome achievement rating may not be higher than the effectiveness rating. For more details see GEF IEO TE Guidelines.

- **Satisfactory (S)** – Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor shortcomings.
- **Moderately satisfactory (MS**) – Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings.
- **Moderately unsatisfactory (MU**) – Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings.
- **Unsatisfactory (U)** – Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major shortcomings.
- **Highly unsatisfactory (HU**) – Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe shortcomings.
- **Unable to assess (UA) –** The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of outcome achievements.

Sustainability/ Risk Rating Classification:

- **Likely (L) -** There are little or no risks to sustainability.
- **Moderately likely (ML)** - There are moderate risks to sustainability.
- **Moderately unlikely (MU) -** There are significant risks to sustainability.
- **Unlikely (U)** - There are severe risks to sustainability.
- **Unable to assess (UA)** – Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability.

M&E Rating Classifications:

- **Highly satisfactory (HS) --** There were no shortcomings and quality of M&E design / implementation exceeded expectations.
- **Satisfactory (S) --** There were no or minor shortcomings and quality of M&E design / implementation meets expectations.
- **Moderately satisfactory (MS) --** There were some shortcomings and quality of M&E design / implementation more or less meets expectations.
- **Moderately unsatisfactory (MU) --** There were significant shortcomings and quality of M&E design/ implementation somewhat lower than expected.
- **Unsatisfactory (U) --**There were major shortcomings and quality of M&E design/ implementation substantially lower than expected.
- **Highly unsatisfactory (HU) --** There were severe shortcomings in M&E design / implementation.
- **Unable to assess (UA) –** The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of M&E design /implementation.

Implementation and Execution Rating Classifications:

- **Highly satisfactory (HS) --** There were no shortcomings and quality implementation / execution exceeded expectations.
- **Satisfactory (S) --** There were no or minor shortcomings and quality implementation /execution meets expectations.

- **Moderately satisfactory (MS) --** There were some shortcomings and quality of implementation /execution more or less meets expectations.
- **Moderately unsatisfactory (MU) --** There were significant shortcomings and quality of implementation /execution somewhat lower than expected.
- **Unsatisfactory (U) --**There were major shortcomings and quality of implementation /execution substantially lower than expected.
- **Highly unsatisfactory (HU) --** There were severe shortcomings in quality of implementation/ execution.
- **Unable to assess (UA) –** The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of implementation / execution.

Additional guidance regarding the evaluation criteria and ratings for each dimension can be found in the GEF Terminal Evaluation Guidelines.

ANNEX D: EVALUATION REPORT OUTLINE[33]

i. Opening page:
- Title of WWF supported GEF financed project
- WWF and GEF project summary table (page 1 TOR)
- Evaluation team members and affiliations
- Locator map (if appropriate)
- Acknowledgements

ii. Executive Summary (~2 – 4 pages)
- Project Description (very brief)
- Principle findings and recommendations, organized by core criteria

iii. Acronyms and Abbreviations

1. Introduction to Evaluation (~3 pages)
- Purpose of the evaluation
- Scope & Methodology
- Composition of the evaluation team, including specific roles
- Limitations of the evaluation
- Structure of the evaluation report

2. Project description and development context (~5 pages)
- Project start and duration
- Concise summary of project evolution, underlying rationale and strategies to achieve conservation results
- Main stakeholders and beneficiaries

[33]The Report length should not exceed 40 pages in total (not including annexes).

- Discussion of baseline (of indicators) and Expected Results

3. Findings (All criteria marked with (*) must be rated[34]) (~3-8 pages)

(will include rationale, tables, graphics, and other figures to convey key findings)

Project Design

- Assessment of Relevance and theory of change (project logic /strategies) together with assumptions and risks
- Analysis of M&E* Design
- Lessons from other relevant projects incorporated into project design
- Additionality
- Replication approach
- WWF comparative advantage (if applicable)
- Coherence/ Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector
- Governance and management arrangements
- Country ownership

Project Implementation

- Assessment of project progress, outcomes and potential for impact
- Governance and management arrangements in implementation
- Effectiveness* /Results*
- WWF and Implementing Agency implementation */ execution * coordination, and operational issues
- Sustainability*

Monitoring and Evaluation / Adaptive Capacity

- Implementation of M&E* plan and use for adaptive management

Gender Equality and Mainstreaming

- Assess design and implementation of the gender analysis and gender mainstreaming strategy, including indicators and intermediate results
- Assess gender responsive measures, as per WWF and GEF gender policies

Stakeholder Engagement

- Evaluate stakeholder engagement and assess the design and implementation of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (if applicable)

Safeguards Review

- Assess if safeguards were adequately considered in design (see IPPF and PF), and whether measures to address safeguards are being effectively implemented
- Assess implementation of the beneficiary criteria developed during project preparation

[34] Using a six-point rating scale: 6: Highly Satisfactory, 5: Satisfactory, 4: Marginally Satisfactory, 3: Marginally Unsatisfactory, 2: Unsatisfactory and 1: Highly Unsatisfactory

- Assess project activities for any additional adverse or unforeseen environmental or social impacts and include potential measures to address these
- Assess Grievance Redress mechanism
- Evaluate risk category/classification, if applicable
- Lessons learned

Finance and Co-finance review

- Extent of co-finance realized to date. Report should include sources of co-financing, name of co-financer, type of co-financing (grant or in-kind, investment mobilized or reoccurring expenditures), amount confirmed at CEO endorsement, and actual amount materialized at midterm
- Assessment of administration of co-financing and financial management of the project, with specific reference to Cost-effectiveness of interventions/ efficiency*
- Utilization of grant funds distributed to project partners
- The impact on project results if any shortfalls in co-financing

4. Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons

- Key lessons and/or best practices to share and replicate
- Summary of findings including sufficient but concise rationale
- Specific and actionable recommendations to improve the design (theory of change), implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and management of the project; organized as applicable by evaluation criteria and findings
- Evaluation rating tables

5. Annexes

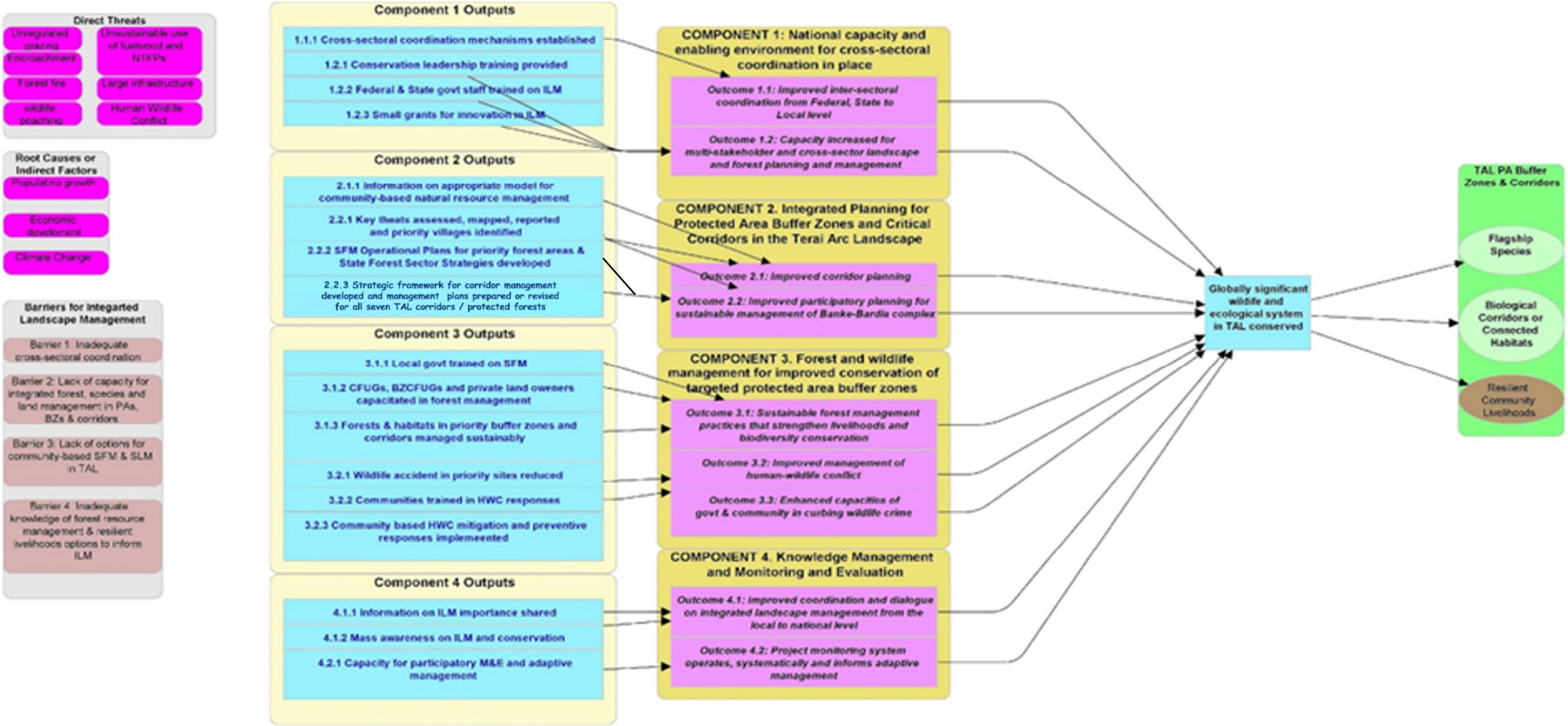
- TOR of TE, including evaluator composition and expertise
- Itinerary of TE (PMU and field visits)
- Geo-referenced maps and photos of project sites
- List of persons interviewed
- List of documents reviewed
- Evaluation Questions/ Matrix
- Questionnaire used and summary of results
- Evaluation Rating Summary Table

6 Annex 2 – Composition of the Evaluation Team and Roles

Team Member	Background	Roles
Giacomo Cozzolino	International consultant with 17 years' experience in biodiversity conservation, PA management and planning and international project preparation. Extensive experience in natural resources management and international cooperation projects, and formulation of GEF-financed projects.	**Team Lead.** Overall technical and project management oversight, coordination, interviews, meeting organization, document review, formats (presentations and reports), analysis, reporting, technical writing, editor.
Daniel Bazzucchi	International consultant with deep experience and subject-matter expertise in natural resources management, mountain ecosystems and protected areas management and planning. Academic qualifications in Engineering for the environment and protection of natural resources, with over 30 years' of professional experience in mountain ecosystems, PA management, sustainable forestry, environmental conservation, and management of natural resources in international cooperation projects.	**Technical Subject-Matter Expert.** Co-preparation of evaluation questions and framework matrix, formats (presentations and reports), field visits observation of physical works, interviews, meeting organization, document review, technical and financial analysis, reporting.
Camillo Ponziani	Seasoned project and program management professional with experience in overseeing end-to-end (design, planning and management) of complex business transformation and biodiversity initiatives, as well as both mid-term and terminal evaluations for myriad clients and within the United Nations system.	**Senior Evaluator.** Methodology development, co-preparation of evaluation questions and framework matrix, formats (presentations, reports, surveys), survey questions, interviews, document review, technical analysis, reporting.
Sushila C. Nepali	Nepali consultant with strong expertise in GESI, forest and wildlife conservation, sustainable livelihoods. Extensive experience in consulting services in the areas of External Evaluation of Programs and Projects, Technical Training, Data Collection and Analysis.	**Gender and Safeguards Specialist.** Methodology development (gender & safeguards), co-preparation of evaluation questions and framework matrix, field visits observation of physical works, focus group discussions, , interviews, document review, technical analysis, reporting.

7 Annex 3 - Theory of Change

Figure 1 Intervention logic diagram, showing barriers, project components and outputs, outcomes, objective and conservation impacts



If-Then Logic (Project Document)	Summary of the Primary Impact Pathway(s)	Associated Assumptions
IF there is improved inter-sectoral coordination from Federal, State to Local level for sustainable forest management and integrated landscape management to support the NBSAP and 2015-2025 TAL Strategy (Outcome 1.1); **AND** there is increased capacity for multi-stakeholder and cross-sector landscape and forest planning and management (Outcome 1.2); **THEN** the national capacity and enabling environment for cross-sectoral coordination to promote forest and landscape conservation will be established (Component 1), removing the first barrier (inadequate cross sectoral coordination).	In this presented "If-then" statement logic from the Project Document, the main impact pathway revolves around enhancing coordination and capacity across various levels and sectors for the advancement of sustainable forest and integrated landscape management. If improved inter-sectoral coordination is achieved from Federal to Local levels, supporting the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and the 2015-2025 Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) Strategy (Outcome 1.1), and if there is a concurrent increase in the capacity for multi-stakeholder and cross-sector landscape and forest planning and management (Outcome 1.2), then a significant positive shift is anticipated. This combined enhancement in coordination and capacity will fundamentally establish the national capacity and the enabling environment necessary for robust cross-sectoral coordination (Component 1). This will subsequently break down the primary barrier facing forest and landscape conservation, namely inadequate cross-sectoral coordination. By removing this obstacle, the pathway is cleared for more effective and integrated efforts towards promoting and realizing tangible conservation goals and sustainable landscape and forest management nationwide.	For this impact pathway to hold true, several underlying assumptions must be made: ● All levels of government (Federal, State, and Local) and different sectors are willing and committed to enhancing coordination and collaboration for sustainable forest management and integrated landscape management; ● Efficient communication and collaboration mechanisms are in place or will be established, allowing for the seamless sharing of information, resources, and expertise across sectors and administrative levels; ● Adequate resources (financial, human, technological) will be available to increase the capacity of various stakeholders; ● Actions taken and coordination improved will be in alignment with the goals and objectives of the NBSAP and the 2015-2025 TAL Strategy; ● Existing policies and regulations support, or will continue to support, or be adapted to support, enhanced inter-sectoral coordination; ● All relevant stakeholders, including local communities and marginalized groups, are actively engaged and their inputs are considered in decision-making processes.
IF there is improved participatory planning for sustainable management of the targeted protected area buffer zones and corridors in the TAL using updated	In this presented "If-then" statement logic from the Project Document, the main impact pathway revolves around a significant emphasis on	For this impact pathway to hold true, several underlying assumptions must be made: ● All stakeholders, from local communities to state-level

If-Then Logic (Project Document)	Summary of the Primary Impact Pathway(s)	Associated Assumptions
information and data on biodiversity and socio-economic engaging communities to state level stakeholders (Outcome 2.1 and 2.2); **THEN** integrated planning for Protected Area Buffer Zones and Critical Corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape will be in place (Component 2), removing the second barrier (lack of capacity for integrated forest, species and land management in PAs, BZs and corridors).	participatory planning and enhanced information usage. The impact pathway begins with the improvement of participatory planning for the sustainable management of targeted protected area buffer zones and corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL). This improvement is anchored on utilizing updated information and data regarding biodiversity and socio-economic factors and actively engaging communities to state-level stakeholders (Outcome 2.1 and 2.2). If these conditions are met, it is anticipated that integrated planning for Protected Area Buffer Zones and Critical Corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape will be effectively established (Component 2). This development will contribute substantially to overcoming the second notable barrier in the landscape conservation efforts: the existing lack of capacity for integrated forest, species, and land management in Protected Areas, Buffer Zones, and corridors.	entities, will actively and effectively participate in the planning process. Their engagement is vital for ensuring that the planning is comprehensive, inclusive, and reflective of the diverse needs, insights, and expertise that different stakeholders bring to the table. The success of the participatory planning process hinges on the assumption that all voices are heard and considered in the decision-making process; ● Updated, accurate, and comprehensive data on biodiversity and socio-economic factors will be readily available and utilized. The effective management of protected area buffer zones and corridors relies on the availability and application of this information to inform decision-making and planning processes, ensuring that strategies implemented are evidence-based and context-appropriate; ● Sufficient capacity and willingness among stakeholders and relevant authorities to undertake and support integrated planning for Protected Area Buffer Zones and Critical Corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape.
IF SFM practices are introduced that strengthen livelihoods and biodiversity conservation (Outcome 3.1); **AND** there is improved management of the human-wildlife interface in the TAL (Outcome 3.2); **THEN** forest and human-wildlife relations management for improved conservation of targeted protected area buffer zones and corridors in the Terai Arc	In this presented "If-then" statement logic from the Project Document, emphasizes the importance of sustainable forest management practices and the human-wildlife interface for promoting conservation in the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL). The impact pathway is activated by the introduction of SFM practices that concurrently bolster both	For this impact pathway to hold true, several underlying assumptions must be made: ● Sustainable Forest Management practices introduced will effectively strengthen both livelihoods and biodiversity conservation. The practices must be relevant, practical, and adaptable to the local context,

If-Then Logic (Project Document)	Summary of the Primary Impact Pathway(s)	Associated Assumptions
Landscape will be achieved (Component 3), removing the third barrier (lack of options for community based SFM and SLM in the TAL).	livelihoods and biodiversity conservation (Outcome 3.1). This step is complemented by an enhanced management of the human-wildlife interface in the TAL (Outcome 3.2), ensuring a balanced and harmonious coexistence that supports conservation efforts while addressing human needs and safety. The anticipated result is the achievement of robust forest and human-wildlife relations management. This advancement is expected to significantly enhance the conservation of targeted protected area buffer zones and corridors within the TAL (Component 3). By meeting these conditions, the theory of change posits the successful removal of the third critical barrier, which is the prevailing lack of community-based options for SFM and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) within the TAL. The dismantling of this barrier paves the way for more comprehensive, community-involved, and sustainable conservation efforts within the TAL's critical regions, fostering both environmental and societal well-being.	ensuring that communities can and will implement them; ● Management of the human-wildlife interface can be improved is essential for this impact pathway. The assumption holds that strategies to manage human-wildlife interactions will be effectively designed and implemented, leading to reduced conflict and enhanced coexistence; ● Communities in the TAL will be actively engaged in, and supportive of, the introduced SFM practices and the efforts to improve the management of the human-wildlife interface.
IF there is improved information sharing mechanism, coordination and dialogue on integrated landscape management from the local to state to federal level (Outcome 4.1); **AND** the project monitoring system operates effectively, systematically provides information on progress, and informs adaptive management to ensure results (Outcome 4.2); **AND** there is improved knowledge management for ILM and share lessons with key stakeholders and	In this presented "If-then" statement logic from the Project Document, the impact pathway centers around the enhancement of information dissemination, coordination, dialogue, and monitoring and evaluation processes. If there is a notable improvement in the information-sharing mechanism, coordination, and dialogue on integrated landscape management from the local to state to federal level (Outcome 4.1), and the project	For this impact pathway to hold true, several underlying assumptions must be made: ● An efficient and comprehensive information-sharing mechanism can be established and maintained at all levels (local to federal). This assumption holds that various stakeholders and authorities are committed to regular, transparent communication and coordination regarding integrated landscape management;

If-Then Logic (Project Document)	Summary of the Primary Impact Pathway(s)	Associated Assumptions
wider audiences (Outcome 4.3); **THEN** knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation will be established (Component 4), removing the fourth barrier (inadequate knowledge of forest resource management and resilient livelihood options to inform ILM).	monitoring system operates effectively and systematically provides information on progress, ensuring adaptive management to secure results (Outcome 4.2), the pathway is set in motion. Additionally, the enhancement in knowledge management for Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) and the sharing of lessons with key stakeholders and broader audiences (Outcome 4.3) bolsters the pathway further. These combined improvements will culminate in the establishment of a robust system of knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation (Component 4). This comprehensive system will effectively dismantle the fourth barrier, which is the existing inadequate knowledge of forest resource management and resilient livelihood options to inform ILM.	● The monitoring system will operate effectively and adaptively is crucial for the impact pathway to unfold as envisioned; ● Willingness and capacity of stakeholders to engage in improved knowledge management for ILM. The stakeholders, from local to federal levels, should be prepared to learn from shared lessons, adopt best practices, and contribute to the collective knowledge base for integrated landscape management.
IF all the above Outcomes are accomplished, **THEN** the Project Objective – to promote integrated landscape management to conserve globally significant forests and wildlife – will be achieved.	In this presented "If-then" statement logic from the Project Document, the central tenet of the impact pathway is intricately connected to the accomplishment of all previously stated outcomes. This pathway is holistic, encompassing improvements in inter-sectoral coordination, participatory planning, sustainable forest management practices, human-wildlife interface management, information sharing, and project monitoring systems. The alignment and successful realization of these multifaceted outcomes form the foundation of the pathway. If all these diverse yet interconnected outcomes are effectively achieved, the pathway leads to the realization of the overarching Project Objective: the promotion of integrated landscape management	Aggregation of aforementioned assumptions for Components 1-4.

If-Then Logic (Project Document)	Summary of the Primary Impact Pathway(s)	Associated Assumptions
	for the conservation of globally significant forests and wildlife. This fulfillment signifies the successful navigation of the impact pathway, culminating in enhanced conservation efforts that prioritize both ecological integrity and sustainable community involvement and development.	
IF the Project Objective is achieved, **THEN** the strengthening of stakeholder engagement, coordination between sectors, technical capacity for ILM and SFM, and reduction of threats will contribute towards sustaining and restoring the integrity of the corridors, buffer zones and other natural habitat areas in the TAL, benefiting the globally significant ecosystems of the Terai and Churia Range, wildlife populations including key species (tiger, Asian elephant, greater one-horned rhinoceros and other globally threatened species), securing forest carbon sequestration through SFM and forest protection, reducing land degradation in forested landscapes, and directly benefiting local populations including women, indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups.	In this presented "If-then" statement logic from the Project Document, the critical impact pathway that begins with the achievement of the Project Objective, which focuses on promoting integrated landscape management to conserve significant forests and wildlife. Upon the successful realization of this objective, a cascade of positive impacts is anticipated to unfold across various dimensions of the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL). Achieving the Project Objective triggers the strengthening of various fundamental aspects: enhanced stakeholder engagement, bolstered inter-sector coordination, increased technical capacity for Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) and Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), and the significant reduction of threats to the environment and wildlife. These collective advancements contribute monumentally to sustaining and restoring the integrity of corridors, buffer zones, and other natural habitat areas in the TAL. The benefits of this pathway radiate expansively, positively impacting the globally significant ecosystems of the Terai and Churia Range. Wildlife populations, including key species such as the tiger, Asian elephant, and the greater one-horned rhinoceros, find enhanced	Aggregation of aforementioned assumptions for Components 1-4.

If-Then Logic (Project Document)	Summary of the Primary Impact Pathway(s)	Associated Assumptions
	protection and thriving environments. Additionally, this pathway fosters the securing of forest carbon sequestration through robust SFM and forest protection, mitigates land degradation in forested landscapes, and brings direct, substantial benefits to local populations, including women, indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable groups, reinforcing the holistic and inclusive approach to conservation and sustainable development within the TAL.	

8 Annex 4 – Analysis of the project's results framework

Table 1: SMART Analysis of Component 1 Indicators

✓ Meets criterion ✘ Does not meet criterion ? Ambiguity or clarification needed

Description of Indicator	General Observations on Indicators and Comments on Project Target(s)	SMART analysis				
		S	M	A	R	T
Outcome 1.1: Improved inter-sectoral coordination from Federal, State to Local level for sustainable forest management and integrated landscape management						
Number of Cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms strengthened and/or newly established and meeting regularly at Federal, State and Local levels	• Strong description and definitions included • Method is intuitive and justifiably not needed • Assumptions would have been helpful to understand why the baseline and end-of-project target for the federal level are the same. This has to do with the second part of the indicator regarding "strengthening", but an explanation would have helped with clarity here	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Outcome 1.2: Improved inter-sectoral coordination from Federal, State to Local level for sustainable forest management and integrated landscape management						
Percentage of agency staff responsible for ILM coordination functions at federal and state levels (including NBCC, NBCC Subcommittees and State Biodiversity Coordination Committees for States 2,3,5,7 and Karnali) that have participated in project supported training on conservation leadership and ILM related subjects	• Only measurable with the accompanying explanation on methodology and assumption that training can only start once committees have been established and operationalized	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 2: SMART Analysis of Component 2 Indicators

✓ Meets criterion ✘ Does not meet criterion ? Ambiguity or clarification needed

Description of Indicator	General Observations on Indicators and Comments on Project Target(s)	SMART analysis				
		S	M	A	R	T
Outcome 2.1: Improved corridor planning for TAL corridors (Brahmadev, Karnali and Kamdi)						
# of TAL corridors assessed for improved community-based natural resource governance status that includes biodiversity conservation	• Vagueness associated with what "assessed for improved community-based natural resource governance" means clarified in definition	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	• Methodology regarding # of surveys completed for each corridor is clear and measurable • Assumptions as to why there are no targets in YR1 and YR5 would have been helpful to strengthen relevance measure					
Outcome 2.2: Improved participatory planning for sustainable management of in Banke-Bardia complex						
No. of CFUGs in Kamdi and Karnali Corridors with updated forest operation plans addressing SFM and biodiversity conservation	• n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
% change in Area Weighted Mean Patch Area (AREA_AM) to determine connectivity of forest cover in targeted corridors	• The measurability assumes that the "weighted mean patch area" is a standard protocol in GIS and means something to the yet-to-be hired GIS specialist. Only measureable if the forthcoming GIS specialist is equipped with the knowledge on this metric	✓	?	✓	✓	✓

Table 3: SMART Analysis of Component 3 Indicators

✓ Meets criterion ✘ Does not meet criterion ? Ambiguity or clarification needed

Description of Indicator	General Observations on Indicators and Comments on Project Target(s)	SMART analysis				
		S	M	A	R	T
Outcome 3.1: Strengthen livelihoods and biodiversity conservation through Sustainable forest management practices						
No. forest fire incidents in targeted corridor / BZ per year	• Disconnect between the indicator nomenclature (incidents) and the way it is being calculated in percentage. Neither the definition nor methodology intuitively bridge this understanding • Budget associated with fire-related outputs in 3.1.1 amount to less than US$100,000 and therefore, the level of achievement is in question	✓	✘	✘	✓	✓
% CFUGs managing open grazing out of total number in the targeted corridor / buffer zone	• n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Women, resident indigenous peoples and marginalized groups empowered for CBNRM in targeted corridors and buffer zones as indicated by: a)	• Definition of "empowered" correctly traces to that in the safeguards assessment • Since the baseline is "0" and there are no targets in the first	✓	✓	✘	✓	✓

Number of womens', indigenous peoples and Dalit groups established for CBNRM and livelihood activities	year the indicator assumes the Project will spend considerable amount of time establishing the women's groups in the first year of operations. This seems like a tall order for the Project with so much going on					
Number of indigenous peoples and Dalit communities engaged in project CBNRM and livelihood interventions	• Specificity could be strengthened here. The targets are quite low, suggesting the Project should be monitoring number of "groups" no "peoples"	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓
Average percentage of female, indigenous and Dalit recipients of project-related loans for community level enterprise and livelihood support	• Not achievable under current procurement legislations	✓	✓	✘	✓	✓
Average percentage of female, indigenous and Dalit participants in project-related training for CBNRM and livelihood activities	• n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Outcome 3.2: Improved management of the human-wildlife conflict						
Reduced incidence of HWC in localities where related project activities occur within targeted corridor and PA buffer zone areas	• Reduced incidence of HWC how often (per year, per quarter)? • Unclear why targets for subsequent years are blank when a baseline has been established	✘	✓	✘	✓	✓
No. livestock taken / year	• Definition to follow local government HWC reporting system • It is clear that targets are dependent on socio-economic studies that have recently been completed	✓	✓	?	✓	✓
Damage to houses/year	• Definition and methodology to follow local government HWC reporting system • It is clear that targets are dependent on socio-economic studies that have recently been completed	✓	✓	?	✓	✓
Human fatalities and injuries / year	• Definition and methodology to follow local government HWC reporting system • It is clear that targets are dependent on socio-economic studies that have recently been completed	✓	✓	?	✓	✓

Number of wildlife fatalities on national park roads	• Definition and methodology to follow local government HWC reporting system • It is clear that targets are dependent on socio-economic studies that have recently been completed	✓	✓	?	✓	✓
Outcome 3.3: Enhanced capacities of government agencies and community in curbing illegal wildlife crime						
# reported cases of poaching in targeted PA Buffer Zones and Corridors per year by species	• Unclear what species are being targeted. No description in the baseline	✘	✓	?	✓	✓

Table 4: SMART Analysis of Component 4 Indicators

✓ Meets criterion ✘ Does not meet criterion ? Ambiguity or clarification needed

Description of Indicator	General Observations on Indicators and Comments on Project Target(s)	SMART analysis				
		S	M	A	R	T
Outcome 4.1: Improved coordination and dialogue on integrated landscape management from the local to national level						
Number of stakeholders participating in annual forums (indicates that national, provincial and local stakeholders involved with TAL are informed of progress and participate in discussion of project-related issues)	• n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Outcome 4.2: Project monitoring system operates, systematically provides information on progress, and informs adaptive management to ensure results						
Number of annual reflection workshops linked to annual stakeholder forums where project management analyses project progress and resource allocation, monitoring result and incorporates adaptive management into work planning.	• n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Outcome 4.3: Project lessons shared						
Number of forums where annual lessons are shared	• Unclear which forums facilitate the sharing of lessons. Should be just number of forums	✓	✘	✓	✓	✓
Articles on project-related websites (No/year)	• n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Number of radio programs hosted by the project	• n/a	✓	✓	?	✓	✓

9 Annex 5 – Field mission meetings and sites' visits

Day / Date	Time	Location / Venue	Item / Activity	Stakeholder / Role	MTR team members (*)
Monday, Sept 4th	10:00 -12:00	PMU, Ktm	– Detailed briefing by the Ilam-TEAM on project strategy, approach, major results, key achievements, bottlenecks, and challenges faced during the project implementation. – Discuss and finalize field mission plan with the SFM-Team – Options and alternative approaches for seeking stakeholders' feedback, including Focus Group Discussion (FGD), covering gender equality & women empowerment.	Ilam-TEAM	DB, SN
	13:00-14:30	DNPWC, Ktm	Meeting with DNPWC Dr. Sindhu Dhungana DG and Ajay Karki -DDG	PMU to take the time with the implementation partner (SN)	DB, SN
	15:00 – 17:00	PMU, Ktm	Meeting with PMU to further finetune mission visit, adoptive management		DB, SN
Tuesday, Sept 5th	9:30 – 11:00	WWF Nepal office, Ktm	Meeting with WWF Nepal staff	Implementation Partner	DB, SN
	11:00-12:00	DOF, ktm	Meeting with DOF Mr Shiva Kumar Wagle DG also the Project Coordinator	PMU to take the time with the implementation partner (SN)	DB, SN
	14:00-15:00	MoFE, Ktm	Badri Dhungana- Joint Secretary and current project Director (M and E division)	Implementation Partner	DB, SN
Wednesday, Sept 6th	8.20 AM Flight time (55 minutes) 11:00-12:00	Travel	– Travel to Banke via first flight and hotel check in and breakfast – Interaction in Kohalpur office – Meet Project Stakeholder Mr Laxman Poudel (WWF TAL Manager)	Field office Kohalpur	DB, SN
	13:00-14:30	Banke	Meeting with Sabitra Pun- FECCOFUN District Chair	Joint monitoring, safeguard monitoring	DB, SN
	15:00-16:30	Banke	Meeting with Bam B. Thapa, NEFIN Chairperson, Banke	Joint monitoring, safeguard monitoring	DB, SN

Day / Date	Time	Location / Venue	Item / Activity	Stakeholder / Role	MTR team members (*)
Thursday, Sept 7th	9:00-12:00	Field visits and interactions-	– Sadabahr Community Forest Office Rapti Sonari Rural Municiplaity-6, Fattepur, Banke and meeting with Neem Bahadur Budhathoki- Sadabahar CFUG chair – Observe river bank protection site IPs group only (20 mins-10 People) – Visit beneficiaries' house to observe IGM work and talk to them (10 min each household only 2 house) – Private forest (10 min – 1 household) – Visit group meeting (30 min)	-Project implementation in IP majority site- Integrated grazing management -LIP (Livelihood Restoration Plan) -Riverbank Protection	DB, SN
	13:30-14:30		– Meeting with DFO Banke, Nepalgunj (implementing entity for Kamdi corridor)	-recipient of project funds through sub-grant for ground work	DB, SN
	15:00-16:30		– Aarati CFUG meeting and interaction with Narayani Tharu-Kohalpur Municipality-7, Banke	-Project implementation - Integrated grazing management Woman group only (20 mins) -Women Chairperson of CF	DB, SN
Friday, Sept 8th	9:00-12:00	Visit Forest Nursery, and eco-club in Kamdi Corridor, Rapti Sonari RM	– Interaction with beneficiaries (Eco-club – 30 mins. owner) – Visit and interaction in Siddeshor Secondary School Office Rapti Sonari Rural Municiplaity-6, Fattepur, Banke and meeting with Jeet Bahadur Tharu- Eco- teacher.	Project implementation	DB, SN
	13:00-18:00	Travel to Chinchhu, Surkhet	– Meeting and interaction in BZUC Office Bheriganga Municiplaity-4, Chhinchu, Surkhet – Meeting with Shant B. Khatri- Chinchhu CFUG chair	Project implementation - Predator proof coral fence (Human wildlife conflict management	DB, SN
Saturday, Sept 9th	9:00-13:00		– Taradebi BZCFUG, Banke National Park, Buffer Zone and interaction with Hira Oli Secretary for BZUC – Grassland and wetland management site observation in Kamdi corridor (Bhagwat CFUG including beneficiearies 10 people)	Project implementing entity at ground - recipient of project funds through sub-grant	DB, SN

Day / Date	Time	Location / Venue	Item / Activity	Stakeholder / Role	MTR team members (*)
			– Wildlife guiding fence at Sikta Irrigation Canal – -Interaction with stakeholders		
	14:00-15:00		Meeting with Mr. Shyam Kumar Shah- Chief Warden Banke	-Project implementing entity at ground - recipient of project funds through sub-grant (Government organization/National Park Offices, Division Forest Offices)	DB, SN
	15:00-17:00		Forest Visit	BaNP (Grassland and wetland management)	DB, SN
Sunday, Sept 10th	9:00-13:00	Drive to Bardiya	– Visit Rammapur wildlife Rescue centre and interaction with stakeholders. – Interaction with project beneficiaries (Predator Proof Pen) at Lauwadada BZCF	Project implementing entity at ground - recipient of project funds through sub-grant (Government organization/National Park Offices, Division Forest Offices)	DB, SN
	15:00-16:00	Travel to Bardia National Park	– Night stay in Bardia National Park and interaction with Mr. Ashok Bhandari- Chief Warden Bardia – Observation of wildlife rescue equipment		DB, SN
Monday, Sept 11th	8:00-10:00	Bardiya National Park Visit	– Observation of Habitat management work		DB, SN
	10:00-13:00	Patabhar BZUC Geruwa RM	– Observation of HWC mitigation activities – Interaction with local government officials – Interaction with project beneficiaries	– Implementation partners communities Coordination partners at local level	– DB, SN
	14:00-16:00	Drive to karnali Corridor	Fly back to Kathmandu		DB, SN
Tuesday, Sept 12th	9:00-12:00			Project implementing entity at ground - recipient	DB, SN

Day / Date	Time	Location / Venue	Item / Activity	Stakeholder / Role	MTR team members (*)
		Janaki Rural Municipality	– Interaction and meeting with Community Forest Office Janaki Rural Municiplaity-6, Kailali and meeting with Nir B. Shahi- CFUG chair Interaction with CBAPU team	of project funds through sub-grant (community organization)	
	13:30-14:30	Ghodaghodi lake, Pahalmanpur	Interaction and meeting with Gokul Rijal Divisional Forest office and site observation	-Project implementing entity at ground - recipient of project funds through sub-grant (Government organization/National Park Offices, Division Forest Offices)	DB, SN
	14:30-17:30	Drive back to Kohalpur			DB, SN
Wednesday 13, 2023		Fly back to Kathmandu			DB, SN
Sept 14th – 16th	*No meetings*				
Sunday, Sept 17th	11,00 – 12,00	MoFE	Depak Kharal, MoFE Secretary (PAC chair)		DB, SN
Monday, Sept 18th	*No meetings*				
Tuesday, Sept 19th			Debriefing in the KTM via online		DB, SN, CP

(*) DB: Daniel Bazzucchi, SN: Sushila Nepali, CP: Camillo Ponziani

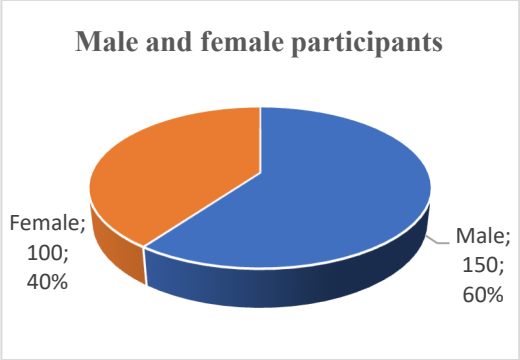
10 Annex 6 – PMU and field office staff hiring and turn over

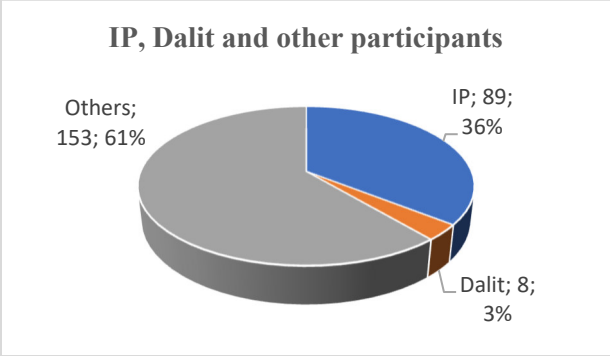
	Officer n.1	From (Month / Year)	To (Month / Year)	Officer n.2	From (Month / Year)	To (Month / Year)
PMU staff						
Project Coordinator	Suman Subedi	mar-20	*Till date*			
Project Manager	Yadav Upreti	gen-20	dic-20	Bharat Gotame	feb-21	*Till date*
Project Technical Specialist	*Vacant*					
Finance & Administration Manager	Divya Karki	gen-20	giu-21	Chaturman Mahato	lug-21	*Till date*
Communication Officer (50% part time)	Pragyawatee Rai	dic-21	15-set-23	*Vacant*		
Front Office Assistant-1	Sarita Gurung	gen-20	giu-21	*Vacant*		
Driver-1	Bidur Gautam	apr-21	nov-22	*Vacant*		
Messanger-1	Monika Rawal	feb-20	*Till date*			
Project Field Staff						
Field manager	Prakash Thapa	gen-20	*Till date*			
Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Officer (MEL Officer)	Pushpanjali Malla	gen-20	gen-22	Pratibha Banstola	ott-22	mag-23
Safeguard and GESI Officer	Chandan Pandit	dic-21	ago-22	Reeta K.C.	ott-22	*Till date*
Field Project Officer	Pralhad Khadka	gen-20	lug-20	Bhawana Sitaula	ott-22	*Till date*
Field Finance and Compliance Officer	Fatta B. Thapa	gen-20	giu-21	*Vacant*		
Field Finance and Administration Associate	Bijendra Shah	gen-20	*Till date*			
Field Program Assistant (4)	Gopi Chaudhary Netra Pariyar Laxmi Chaudhary Kripal Chaudharhy	gen-20	*Till date-3* One Vacant	*One vacant*		
Front office Assistant	Pramila Chaudhary	gen-20	giu-21	*Vacant*		
Messanger	Rajan Tharu	feb-20	lug-20	Manish Khadka	20-ago	*Till date*
Driver-1	*Vacant*					

11 Annex 7 - List of meetings' participants and stakeholders interviewed

Summary of the stakeholder and interviews

SN	Interaction dates	Total	Male	Female	IP	Dalit	Others
1	September 4, PMU	7	5	2	2		5
2	September 4, DNPWC	6	5	1			6
3	September 5, DOFSCE	5	4	1			5
4	September 5, WWF Nepal	11	7	4	3		8
5	September 5, MoFE	5	4	1			5
6	September 6, TAL Office, Banke	7	5	2	2		5
7	September 6,NEFIN, Banke	7	6	1	3		4
8	September 7,Sadahar CFUG Banke	40	16	24	30		10
9	September 7, Arati CFUG, Banke	22	10	12	16	2	4
10	September 7, DFO, Banke	6	5	1			6
11	September 8, Chinchu BZUC Bardia	6	5	1		1	5
12	September 8, Sub DFO, Banke	6	3	3			6
13	September 8, FSU, Banke	7	3	4	1		6
14	September 8, Siddheswari Sec. High School, Eco Club, Banke	7	4	3	3		4
15	September 9, Taradevi and others. Banke	15	9	6	1	2	12
16	September 9, Bhagwati CFUG, Banke	17	9	8	3		14
17	September 9, BNP, Banke	6	3	3	1		5
18	September 10, Bardia Rescue Center	8	6	2			8
19	September 10, Lauwadada BZCFUG	10	6	4	3	3	4
20	September 10, Bardia National Park	9	7	2			9
21	September 11, Geruwa Rural Municipality, Bardia	8	3	2	3		5
22	September 11, Patabhar BZUC	17	12	5	14		3
23	September 12, CFUG and CBPAU Jagatpur, Kailali	11	8	3	2		9
24	September 12, DFO, Pahalmapur, Kailai	6	4	2	2		4
25	September 17, MoFE	1	1				1
	Total	**250**	**150**	**100**	**89**	**8**	**153**





September 4, 2023- PMU meeting

Total participants= 7 (2 female and 2 IP)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Suman Subedi	Project Coordinator	Ilam Project
2	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
3	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
4	Pragyawatee Rai	Communication Officer	Ilam Project
5	Chaturman Mahato	F & A Manager	Ilam Project
6	Prakash Thapa	Field Manager	Ilam Project
7	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project

September 4, 2023- DNPWC, Babar Mahal Kathmandu

Total participants= 6 (1 female)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Dr. Sindhu Prasad Dhungana	Director General	DNPWC
2	Suman Subedi	Project Coordinator	Ilam Project
3	Ajay Adhikari	Deputy Director General	DNPWC
4	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
5	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
6	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project

September 5, 2023- DOFSC, Babar Mahal Kathmandu

Total participants= 5 (1 female)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Shiv Kumar Wagle	Director General	DOFSC
2	Suman Subedi	Project Coordinator	Ilam Project
3	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
4	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
5	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project

September 5, 2023- WWF Nepal, Baluwatar Kathmandu

Total participants= 11 (4 female and 3 IP)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Dr. Ghanashyam Gurung	Country Rep.	WWF Nepal
2	Shiv Raj Bhatta	Senior Advisor	WWF Nepal
3	Ravi Pratap Singh	Chief Operating Officer	
4	Narayan K.C.	Head of Finance and Program Administration	
5	Aarati Gurung Malla	Head Design, Impact and Standards	
6	Sujani Sengdel	Senior Finance and Admin Officer	
7	Kritika Bista	Head People, Culture and OD	
8	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
9	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
10	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project
11	Prakash Thapa	Field Manager	

September 5, 2023- MOFE, Singha Durbar Kathmandu

Total participants= 5 (1 female)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Badri Raj Dhungana	Chief Division, Planning, Monitoring and Coordination	MOFE
2	Suman Subedi	Project Coordinator	Ilam Project
3	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
4	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
5	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project

September 6, 2023- TAL office, Banke

Total participants= 7 (2 female)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Laxman Poudel	Project Manager	TAL Office, Banke
2	Kamal Rai		TAL Office
3	Sabitra Pun	Chair	FECOFUN
4	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
5	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
6	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project
7	Prakash Thapa	Field Manager	Ilam Project

September 6, 2023- NEFIN Office, Banke

Total participants= 7 (1 female)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Dambar Thapa Magar	Chair	NEFIN District Banke
2	Mangal Chaudhary	Vice Chair	
3	Aita Thapa Magar	Member	
4	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
5	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
6	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project
7	Prakash Thapa	Field Manager	FSU

September 7, 2023- Sadabahar CFUG, Banke

Total participants= 42 (25 female, 17 Male ,1 Dalits, 30 Ips ,11-other)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Nim Bahadur Budhuthoki	Chairpersion	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
2	Debi Ram Gharti	Salahkar	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
3	Bikha Ram Pandey	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
4	Bhim Lal Pandey	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
5	Pream Bahadur Rana	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
6	Srmarti Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
7	Kesmaya Rana Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
8	Anita Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
9	Kalpan Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
10	Sib raji Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
11	Sabita Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
12	Kurna Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
13	Menuka Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
14	Bhunya Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
15	Sirjnna Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
16	Chapanya Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
17	Binita Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
18	Chamri Chaudhary	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
19	Ramphali Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
20	Kamala Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
21	Pream kumari Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
22	Dharma Kumari Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
23	Gita Tharu	Member	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
24	Shaym Kumari Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
25	Laxmi Gharti Mager	Secretary	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
26	Maya Kumari Tharu	Sah secretary	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
27	Jugari Tharu	Member	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
28	Rupina Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
29	Bal kisan Tharu	Member	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
30	Bishnu Bahadur Adhikari	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
31	Ful Ram Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
32	Parsu Ram Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
33	Puni ram Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
34	Bipat Ram Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
35	Sabita Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
36	Sita Tharu	User	Sadabahar CFUG Rapti Sonari RM -7 Mohanpur Banke
37	Laxmi Kumari Chaudhary	User	Kamdi Corridor Ranjha Banke
38	Prakash Thapa	Field Manager	FSU
39	Bhawana Sitaula	Program Officer	FSU
40	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
41	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
42	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project

September 7, 2023- Arati CFUG

Total participants= 22 (12 female, 2 Dalits, 16 IPs)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Narayani Tharu	Chair	Aarati CFUG Kohalpur 7
2	Ram Lal Tharu	Secretary	Aarati CFUG Kohalpur 7
3	Mulbia Chamar	Member	Aarati CFUG Kohalpur 7
4	Tarawati Tharu	User	Aarati CFUG Kohalpur 7
5	Dilliram Tharu	Treasurer	Aarati CFUG Kohalpur 7
6	Shakuntala Kumari Chaudhari	User	Aarati CFUG Kohalpur 7
7	Chinki Tharu	User	Aarati CFUG Kohalpur 7
8	Jalbarshi Tharu	User	Aarati CFUG Kohalpur 7
9	Malarani Tharu	User	Aarati CFUG Kohalpur 7
10	Rima Tharu	User	Aarati CFUG Kohalpur 7
11	Pradarshani Tharu	User	Aarati CFUG Kohalpur 7
12	Sawaria Chamar	User	Aarati CFUG Kohalpur 7
13	Sita Janaki Tharu	User	Aarati CFUG Kohalpur 7
14	Ram Prasad Tharu	User	Aarati CFUG Kohalpur 7

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
15	Patiram Tharu	User	Aarati CFUG Kohalpur 7
16	Bharat Kisun Tharu	User	Aarati CFUG Kohalpur 7
17	Laxmi Kumari Chaudhary	User	Aarati CFUG Kohalpur 7
18	Prakash Thapa	Field Manager	FSU
19	Bhawana Sitaula	Program Officer	FSU
20	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
21	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
22	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project

September 7, 2023- Division Forest Office, Nepalgunj Banke

Total participants= 6 (1 female)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Ajeet Kumar Karna	Division Forest Officer	DFO
2	Ganesh Khadka	Forest Officer	
3	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
4	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
5	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project
6	Prakash Thapa	Field Manager	

September 8, 2023- Chinchu BZUC

Total participants= 6 (1 female)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Shanta Bahadur Khatri	Chair	BZUC Chinchu
2	Bishnu B, Bista	Secretary	
3	Netra Kumar Pariyar	Field Staff	IlaM Project
4	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
5	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
6	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project
7	Bhawana Sitaula	Program Officer	FPO

September 8, 2023- Sub Division Forest Office, Kamdi Corridor

Total participants= 6 (3 female)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Manoj Kumar Shah	Chair	BZUC Chinchu
2	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
3	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
4	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project
5	Bhawana Sitaula	Program Officer	FO kohalpur
6	Laxmi Chaudhary	Field program Assistent	Kamdi Corridor

September 8, 2023- FSU interaction, Banke

Total participants= 7 (4 female)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Reeta KC	GESI and Safeguard Officer	IlaM Project
2	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
3	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
4	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project
5	Bhawana Sitaula	Program Officer	
6	Laxmi Chaudhary	Field Officer	
7	Prakash Thapa	Program Manager	

September 8, 2023- Siddheswari Secondary High School, Eco Club, Kamdi Corridor

Total participants= 7 (3 female)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Om Prakash Pun	Head Teacher	
2	Jit Bahadur Tharu	Eco-Teacher	
3	Laxmi Chaudhary	Field Staff	IlaM Project
4	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
5	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
6	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project

September 9, 2023- Taradevi BZCFUG, Madhyabindu BZUC and Shiv Shakti CFUG, Banke

Total participants= (3 female)

Total participants= 14 (female, 17 Male ,1 Dalits, 30 IPs)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Harka Bahadur Bista	chairperson	Madhyabindu BZUC
2	Bharat D.C.	chairperson	Taradevi BZCF
3	Hira oli	Secretary	Taradevi BZCF
4	Lokandra Bista	Secretary	Madhyabindu BZUC
5	Pream Bahadur Khadka	lekhpal	Madhyabindu BZUC
6	Pream Tiruwa	User	Taradevi BZCF
7	Hiera lal K.c.	User	Taradevi BZCF
8	Gauri khatri	chairperson	Siba shakati BZCF
9	Jit Bahadur Bhandari	User	Taradevi BZCF
10	Ganga sumar	User	Taradevi BZCF
11	Huma Khadka	User	Taradevi BZCF
12	Laxmi Chaudhary	Field program Assistant	IlaM Project kamdi Corridor
13	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
14	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
15	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project
16	Prakash Thapa	Field Manager	Ilam Project FO Kohalpur
17	Bhawana Sitaula	Program Officer	Ilam Project FO Kohalpur

September 9, 2023- Bhagawati CFUG

Total participants= (3 female)

Total participants= 17 (8 female, 9 Male ,0 Dalits, 3 Ips)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Tika Ram oli	Chair	Bhagawati CFUG Rapti Sonari RM-8
2	Alina Rana	Forester	Bhagawati CFUG Rapti Sonari RM-8
3	Gagain Khatri	Member	Bhagawati CFUG Rapti Sonari RM-8
4	Chabialal basnet	Member	Bhagawati CFUG Rapti Sonari RM-8
5	Jivenkala Khadka	Member	Bhagawati CFUG Rapti Sonari RM-8
6	Hiemi khatri	Member	Bhagawati CFUG Rapti Sonari RM-8
7	Ganga Budha K.c.	Member	Bhagawati CFUG Rapti Sonari RM-8
8	Sarswati Budhathoki Dangi	Member	Bhagawati CFUG Rapti Sonari RM-8
9	Mohan Kumar Khadka	Member	Bhagawati CFUG Rapti Sonari RM-8
10	Chitra Rawal	Member	Bhagawati CFUG Rapti Sonari RM-8
11	Bhima devi pun mager	Member	Bhagawati CFUG Rapti Sonari RM-8
12	Yam kumari Bohara	Secretary	Bhagawati CFUG Rapti Sonari RM-8
13	Laxmi Kumari Chaudhary	Field Staff	IlaM Project
14	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
15	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
16	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project
17	Prakash Thapa	Field Manager	FO Kohalpur M-6
18	Bhawana Sitaula	Program Officer	

September 9, 2023- Banke National Park

Total participants= 6 (3 female)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Shyam Kumar Sah	Chief Conservation Officer	BNP
2	Laxmi Chaudhary	Field Staff	IlaM Project
3	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
4	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
5	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project
6	Bhawana Sitaula	Program Officer	

September 10, 2023- Meeting and Observation in Rescue Center, Rambhapur, Bardia

Total participants= 8 (2 female)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Bishnu Rokaya	Asst. Conservation Officer	Bardia National Park
2	Ashok Budha		Bardia National Park
3	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
4	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
5	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project
6	Bhawana Sitaula	Field Officer	Ilam Project
7	Ganga B.K	Intern	
8	Prem Budhathoki	Intern	

September 10, 2023- Visit and Interaction with Lauwa Danda, Bagkhor BZCFUG, Bardia

Total participants= 9 (2 female)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	ThaggaaTharu	Chairperson	Lauwadada BZCF, Bagkhor BZUC, Bansgadhi
2	Karna Bahadur lohar	Member	Lauwadada BZCF, Bagkhor BZUC, Bansgadhi
3	Durjan Tharu	User	Lauwadada BZCF, Bagkhor BZUC, Bansgadhi
4	Tulasari Rasaeli	User	Lauwadada BZCF, Bagkhor BZUC, Bansgadhi
5	Rojan Lal Gurtal	Secretary	Bagkhor BZUC, Bansgadhi
6	Mousami Soni	User	Lauwadada BZCF, Bagkhor BZUC, Bansgadhi
7	Asha Rani Tharu	Member	Lauwadada BZCF, Bagkhor BZUC, Bansgadhi
8	Munshing Lohar	Member	Lauwadada BZCF, Bagkhor BZUC, Bansgadhi

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
9	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
10	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
11	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project
12	Bhawana Sitaula	Program Officer	

September 10, 2023- Bardia National Park, Bardia

Total participants= 9 (2 female)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Ashok Bhandari	Chief Conservation Officer	Bardia National Park
2	Ashish Neupane	Conservation Officer	
3	Ramesh Thapa	Ex Staff	
4	Purushottam Wagle	Conservation Officer	
5	Shanta Bahadur Magar	Ranger	
6	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
7	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
8	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project
9	Bhawana Sitaula	Program Officer	

September 11, 2023- Visit and Interaction with Geruwa Rural Municipality, Bardia

Total participants= 8 (2 female)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Bas Bahadur Rana	Chief Administration Officer	Geruwa Rural Municipality
2	Jaman Singh KC	RM chair	Geruwa Rural Municipality
3	Laxmi Chaudhary	RM Vice Chair	Geruwa Rural Municipality
4	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
5	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
6	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project
7	Bhawana Sitaula	Program Officer	FO Kohalpur
8	Gopiram Chaudhary	Field Officer	

September 11, 2023- Patabhar BZUC and BZCFUG interaction, Bardia

Total participants= 5 (1 female)

Total participants= 17 (12 -Male ,5- female, IP-14, other- 3)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Tilak Raj Tharu	Chair	Patabhar BZCF
2	Krishna Tharu	Ward Chair	Patabhar BZCF
3	Manpati kumari Tharu	Voice Chair	Patabhar BZCF
4	Ankala Tharu	Member	Patabhar BZCF
5	Padma devi Tharu	Member	Patabhar BZCF
6	Sabitra Tharu	Member	Patabhar BZCF
7	Dhan Bahadur Tharu	Barghair	Patabhar BZCF

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
8	Kul Bahadur Tharu	User	Patabhar BZCF
9	Kalu Ram Tharu	User	Patabhar BZCF
10	Dukhuwa Tharu	User	Patabhar BZCF
11	Kamal rawat	User	Patabhar BZCF
12	Raju Tharu	User	Patabhar BZCF
13	Sita Ram Tharu	Banharlu	Patabhar BZCF
14	Sonapati Chaudhary	Lekhapal	Patabhar BZCF
15	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
16	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
17	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project
18	Bhawana Sitaula	Program Officer	FO Kohlapur
19	Gopiram Chaudhary	FPA	Kailali

September 12, 2023- Jagatpur CFUG and CBAPU interaction, Kailali

Total participants= 5 (1 female)

Total participants= 11 (8- Male, 3- female, 2-IP,0-, 0- Dalit ,9-other)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Nir Bahadur Shah	Chair	Jagatpur CFUG
2	Tul Bahadur Shah	CBAPU Member	Jagatpur CFUG
3	Lal Bahadur Shah	CBAPU Member	Jagatpur CFUG
4	Krishna Bahadur Shauth	Banheralu	Jagatpur CFUG
5	Bal Bahadur Shauth	Lekhapal	Jagatpur CFUG
6	Narandra Shah	Member	Jagatpur CFUG
7	Channki Tharu	Treasurer	Jagatpur CFUG
8	Rajshowari Khatri	Voice chair	Jagatpur CFUG
9	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
10	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
11	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project
12	Bhawana Sitaula	Program Officer	FO Kohalpur
13	Gopiram Chaudhary	FPA	Kailali

September 12, 2023- Interaction in Division Forest Office, Pahalmanpur, Kailali

Total participants= 6 (2 female)

SN	Participants	Post	Organization
1	Rajib Chaudhary	Forest Officer	DFO, Pahalmanpur
2	Daniel Bazzucchi	MTR team member	SETIN
3	Sushila C. Nepali	MTR team member	SETIN
4	Bharat Gotame	Project Manager	Ilam Project
5	Bhawana Sitaula	Program Officer	FO Kohalpur
6	Gopiram Chaudhary	FPA	Kailali

12 Annex 8 - List of documents reviewed

Folder		Document
Project Document and CEO Endorsement Letter		▪ WWF GEF Project Agency approval ▪ Project Document ▪ CEO Endorsement Letter
Co-Financing letters		▪ WWF US NEPAL co-financing letter (2018_11) ▪ MoFe co-financing letter (2018_11) ▪ WWF-US co-financing letter (2018_11)
Annual Workplans and Budget (AWPB)		▪ FY 2022 AWPB ▪ FY 2023 AWPB ▪ FY 2024 AWPB ▪ FY2024 Procurement Plan
Technical and Financial Reports	WWF GEF Project Implementation Reports	▪ PIR FY21 ▪ PIR FY22 ▪ Results Framework Y1 ▪ PIR FY23 ▪ Results Framework Y2
	PMU Technical and Financial Reports	▪ FY21 Technical & Financial Progress Report ▪ FY22_Q1 Technical & Financial Quarterly Report ▪ FY22_Q2 Technical & Financial PPR ▪ FY22_Q3 Technical & Financial Quarterly Report ▪ FY22_Q4 Technical & Financial Annual Progress Report ▪ FY23_Q1 Technical & Financial Quarterly Report ▪ FY23_Q2 Technical & Financial PPR ▪ FY23_Q3 Technical & Financial Quarterly Report ▪ FY23_Q4 Technical & Financial Annual Progress Report
Supervision		▪ Project Implementation Supervision Mission Report 2022_12
Monitoring and evaluation		▪ WWF Brief Monitoring report 2023
Project Governance Documents		▪ ILaM Project Agreement ▪ Final Grant MoFE WWF ▪ Cabinet decision ▪ Diary 2080
Forms & Formats		▪ Standard bidding documents – Procurement of goods - Direct Purchase ▪ Standard procurement documents - Procurement of Consulting Services - Direct Purchase ▪ Stnadard bidding documents - Procurement of Works - Sealed Quotation
Acts & Regulation		▪ Compliance and compromise on expenditure standard 2078 (2021) ▪ Catalogue Shopping guideline ▪ Procurement Act 2064 amended in 2078 (2021) ▪ Public Procurement Act 2063 (2006) ▪ Public Procurement Regulation 2064 (2007) ▪ Travel cost regulation 2064 (2007)
Safeguards & Stakeholders engagement	Project policy and implementation guidelines	▪ Project agreement ▪ Project Operation Manual – 19 Apr 2021 ▪ Thesis guideline
	FPIC meeting minutes	▪ Consultation Meeting ARC FPIC 17 Feb 2023 ▪ Consultation Meeting RBP FPIC 7 Feb 2023 ▪ Event Report WL_GL Pahalmanpur ▪ Event Report Baseri BZCF Banke RBP ▪ EventAct Report Karnali Wetland Meeting ▪ EventAct Report PH Patabhar BZUC, Bardia

Folder		**Document**
		▪ EventAct Report Ward 7 Kamdi Grassland_Wetland Mgmt ▪ EventAct Report Ward 8 Kamdi Grassland_Wetland Mgmt ▪ Kailali minute_DFO GL_WL Mgmt combined both ▪ Minute ARC Rammapur, Bardia 17 Feb 2023 ▪ Minute Baseri BZCF Banke RBP ▪ Minute Public hearing Patabhar BZUC ▪ Minute RBP DFO Banke 7 Feb 2023 ▪ Minute_Sikta_SMV_23_Feb_2022 ▪ Signed and Verified FPIC report_Wire-fencing along Sikta Irrigation Canal ▪ Ward 7 Bhagwati CFUG minutes Rapti ▪ Ward 8 Bhagwati Ovari Banke minute
	Event Report_Minute Safeguards _ GESI training	▪ Event Act Report Karnali Corr S_GESI Training ▪ Event Act Report Miteri CFUG S_GESI Training ▪ Event Act Report Sadabahar CFUG S_GESI Training ▪ Event Act Report Taradevi BZCF S_GESI Training ▪ Karnali CFUG Safeguards training minutes ▪ Miteri CFUG Safeguards _ GESI minutes ▪ Sadabahar CFUG Safeguards training minutes ▪ Taradevi BZCF Safegurds Training minutes
	Other documents	▪ Safeguards Compliance ILM Nepal 2019 ▪ Pro Doc having Safeguard Policy 2018 ▪ Signed Categorization Memo Nepal 2019 ▪ ILAM FAQ ESS final ▪ Grievance Redress Mechanism Brochure in Nepali and English ▪ IPPF document 2019 ▪ PF document 2019 ▪ Stakeholder engagement plan for the GEF-6 project 2018 ▪ Situation analysis of the policy, legal and institutional framework for integrated landscape management 2018 ▪ GRM ILaM_Approved clean version_21 December 2021 ▪ ILaM project safeguards training data records
Meeting & workshops		*PMU meetings* ▪ 1 event -GEF PAC meeting in Federal Level, MOFE/PMU-April 2021 ▪ 2 events- GEF PEC meeting May 2022 and 2023 ▪ FCC meeting in Provincial level-PMU/FSU done in June 2023 *Field level meetings by ILM project* ▪ FPIC minutes while done trainings and sharing implementation modality of ILM project ▪ Safeguard and GESI training reports conducted in Karnali CFUG, Miteri CFUG, Sadabahar CFUG and Taradevi BZCF ▪ Community Consultation Meeting on Wild Animals Rescue Center Report, Bardia Feb 2023 ▪ Meetings on River Bank Protection with Sadabahar CFUG- April 2023 discusses on the process and community contribution ▪ Meetings conducted in Forest restoration in Feb 2023 in majority of the CFUG- discussed on process and community contributions ▪ Meetings conducted for Fences in Taradevi BZCF along the Sikta Irrigation canal and support cages- ▪ Meetings on wetland construction inside the CFUGs ▪ Meetings conducted for grassland management
Gender documents		▪ Pro Doc having Gender Equity and Empowerment section ▪ GESI assessment report 2018

Folder	Document
	▪ Socio Economic Assessment Report 2023
Communications	▪ The essence of biodiversity (national newspaper article) ▪ Leaflet Nepali ▪ Brochure English ▪ ILaM BLOG – ILaM conducts Annual Review and Planning Workshop ▪ ILaM BLOG – Fostering Environment-friendly Practices among Young Minds ▪ Files audio (2)
Inception meeting related	▪ Inception meeting report ▪ Inception meeting attendance
Terms of Reference	▪ Support Radio Programs (local dialects) (4.1.2.5) ▪ Conduct participatory assessments in targeted PA Buffer Zones and corridors to identify priority community and forest areas ▪ Study on the wildlife traffic accident issue ▪ Socio-economic assessment of biological corridors (Kamdi, Karnali and Brahmadev) ▪ Biodiversity assessment of biological corridors (Kamdi, Karnali and Brahmadev)
Baseline reports	▪ Socio-economic Assessment of Biological Corridors (Kamdi, Karnali and Brahmadev) and Buffer Zones (Banke and Bardia National Parks) of Terai Arc Landscape ▪ Biodiversity Assessment of Biological Corridors (Kamdi, Karnali and Brahmadev) and Buffer Zones (Banke and Bardia National Parks) of Terai Arc Landscape ▪ Biodiversity assessment of biological corridors (Kamdi, Karnali and Bhramadev) and Buffer Zones (Banke and Bardia National Park of TAL-June 2023 ▪ Participatory Assessment to Identify Priority Communities and Forest Areas in Project Sites ▪ Study on wildlife traffic accident issue (Banke Bardiya complex)
Other documents	▪ Staff hiring and turnover ▪ Social media plan ▪ PMU Project briefing with MTR – Presentation (4th Sept 2023) ▪ LRP_LIP final new (in Nepali) ▪ ILaM project grant manual ▪ Communication strategy 2022 ▪ Geruwa Rural Municipality policy and workplan for 2023/2024 ▪ Banke National Park with subtitles (video doc)

13 Annex 9 - Evaluation Framework of Key Questions by Evaluation Criteria

Evaluative Criteria	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Relevance: The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.			
Were the objectives and implementation strategies consistent with: i) global, regional and national environmental issues and needs; ii) expectations and needs of key stakeholder groups; iii) WWF mandate, programming and policies at the time of design and implementation; iv) GEF focal area's strategic priorities and operational programme.	Level of congruence of the ILaM Project Results Framework with the relevant GEF-6 Focal Area strategies Level of congruence between project SRF and WWF strategic objectives Level of congruence between national and provincial priorities and landscape / connectivity / biodiversity objectives Appreciation from national stakeholders with respect to adequacy of project design and implementation to national realities and existing capacities Level of involvement of government officials and other partners in the project design, inception and implementation process	• GEF 6 Focal Area Strategies, GEF Global Environmental Benefits, PIF, Project Document, CEO Endorsement Request, PIRs; • WWF Nepal Strategic Plan(s): 2017-2021 and 2022-2026; • Relevant landscape and connectivity policies in Nepal; • Nepal federal government reforms; • International commitments (e.g. Nepal's UNCBD NBSAP), national and provincial policy and strategic documents; • Project Document, technical reports, literature on landscape integrity and connectivity in Nepal, first-hand information from stakeholders.	• Document analysis, interviews with GEF-OFP & Project Director, direct observation • Document analysis, Interviews • Informal Focus Group / Roundtable discussions • Online questionnaire
Did persons who would potentially be affected by the project have an opportunity to provide input to either its design and strategy?	Level of participation of persons potentially affected by the project.	• Project document, inception report, stakeholder interviews	• Desk review and interviews (including field visits)
Were gender and social inclusiveness considered in modifying the project	Active stakeholder involvement from both men and women.	• Project document, inception workshop report, stakeholder interviews • Gender Action Plan(s)	• Desk review, progress reporting / PIR, field visits and interviews

Evaluative Criteria	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
strategy in the final two years of implementation?	Efforts to change Project Results Framework since design	● Disaggregated data	
Were lessons from other projects, including those pertaining to gender and social issues, incorporated into the project strategy?	Reference of lessons learned from other projects, including those pertaining to gender and social issues, captured in design and planning.	● Project document and stakeholder interviews	● Desk review and interviews
Do the project's intervention logic and Theory of Change correctly identify and prioritize the problems in the national context (political, economic, and social), particularly in relation to forest and biodiversity conservation?	Clear intervention logic in the Theory of Change, supported by well-articulated root causes, assumptions, risks and drivers.	● Theory of Change ● Project Document	● Desk review and interviews
Were the links between the overall objective, specific objectives, expected results and activities logical and what was the quality of the defined objectively verifiable indicators including baseline information?	Clear and well-articulated results hierarchy supported by robust baseline information. Consultation during formulation of Project Results Framework.	● Project Document ● Project Results Framework	● Desk review and interviews
During the first phase of implementation, did the expected outcomes of the project remain relevant to local and national development priorities and organizational policies, including the context of the changing circumstances of the country (e.g. political context)?	Changes to results hierarchy made to align with local and national development priorities and to changing contexts.	● Inception Workshop Report ● Project Results Framework ● Minutes ● PIRs	● Desk review and interviews and online questionnaire
Were the assumptions made during the design phase valid, and were eventual risks adequately anticipated?	Traceability of assumptions and risks in the Project Document and those articulated in progress reporting	● Project Document ● PIRs ● Progress Reports	● Desk review and interviews

Evaluative Criteria	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Does the strategic results framework fulfill SMART criteria, and does it sufficiently capture the added value of the project?	Level of compliance of strategic results framework with SMART criteria	● Strategic results framework, WWF guidance on planning and monitoring for development results, GEF Tracking Tools	● Document analysis, interviews
Did the design of the project appropriately incorporate social safeguards, FPIC principles and collaboration mechanisms with local communities in the Terai Arc Landscape?	Evidence of implementation of FPIC principles and grievances mechanisms in place	● Project Document ● PIRs ● Progress Reports ● Safeguards Plan(s) – Indigenous Peoples Plans and or Framework	● Document analysis, interviews and field visits
To what extent does the intervention's design reflect the rights of persons of all genders and include feedback from a diverse range of local stakeholders including indigenous peoples marginalized groups?	Evidence of implementation of gender responsive approaches	● Project Document ● PIRs ● Progress Reports ● Gender Plan(s)	● Document analysis, interviews and field visits
Coherence: Compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution. Includes internal coherence (synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by the same institution/government) and external coherence (consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context).			
Is the project complementary to (or overlapping with) other policy-related interventions (financial & technical cooperation) within efforts to secure Nepal's Protected Areas and critical corridors implemented by the Government of Nepal, other Development Partners, Agencies, or NGOs?	Coordination with other policy-related interventions.	● Project Document ● PIRs ● Progress Reports ● Government Reports ● Technical Reports by Government of Nepal, other Development Partners, Agencies and NGOs	● Document analysis, interviews and field visits
To what extent have synergies with other projects / programmes specifically listed in the baseline of the Project Document been realized	Nature and kind of partnerships developed by the project	● Project document, Project documents of other projects, Annual Work Plans, Documents on synergies between projects, Progress Reports, PIRs and PIR feedback	● Document analysis, interviews, direct observation

Evaluative Criteria	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
in project design and implementation?			
How has the project accommodated and succeeded in mainstreaming other cross-cutting issues?	New metrics being incorporated into the Project Results Framework	● Project Document ● Inception Workshop Report ● Project Results Framework ● Annual Work Plans ● Budget ● PEC / PAC Minutes	● Desk review, progress reporting / PIR, virtual field visits and interviews
How has the project amplified, scaled-up and replicated the results to other areas in question	Cooperation agreements, number of meetings	● Progress reports, meeting minutes, stakeholder interviews	● Desk review and interviews
To what extent are the intervention's design, delivery and results coherent with international laws and commitments to gender equality and rights, including indigenous peoples rights under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and the 2030 Agenda?	Level of alignment of gender responsiveness in the project with national and macro-level priorities	● Project Document ● CEDAW Documentation ● Platform for Action, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development ● SDG Targets	● Desk review, progress reporting / PIR, virtual field visits and interviews
Effectiveness: The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.			
How successful was the project in realizing the core objective to promote integrated landscape	Output level indicators of Project Results Framework	● Project progress reports/PIR ● Tangible products (publications, studies, etc.) ● Interviews with program staff, partner	● Desk review, field visits, online questionnaire and interviews

Evaluative Criteria	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
management to conserve globally significant forests and wildlife?		organizations in implementation, project beneficiaries	
How successful was the project in realizing each of the following outcomes: **Outcome 1.1:** Improved inter-sectoral coordination from Federal, State to Local level for sustainable forest management and integrated landscape management; **Outcome 1.2:** Capacity increased for multi-stakeholder and cross-sector landscape and forest planning and management; **Outcome 2.1:** Improved corridor planning for TAL corridors (Brahmadev, Karnali, and Kamdi); **Outcome 2.2:** Improved participative planning for sustainable management of Banke-Bardia complex; **Outcome 3.1:** Sustainable forest management practices that strengthen livelihoods and biodiversity conservation; **Outcome 3.2:** Improved management of human-wildlife conflict; **Outcome 3.3:** Enhanced capacities of government and community in curbing wildlife crime; **Outcome 4.1:** Improved coordination and dialogue on	Outcome level indicators of Project Results Framework against midterm targets	• Project progress reports/PIR • GEF Tracking Tools • Monitoring reports • Tangible products (publications, studies, plans etc.) Interviews with program staff, partner organizations in implementation, project beneficiaries • News / Press releases and ministerial statements	• Desk review, results of tracking tools, field visits and interviews

Evaluative Criteria	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
integrated landscape management from the local to national level; **Outcome 4.2:** Project monitoring system operates, systematically provides information on progress, and informs adaptive management to ensure results; **Outcome 4.3:** Project lessons shared.			
Was the project design realistic in terms of the capacities and resources of the executing agencies? Were partners properly identified and roles and responsibilities negotiated before project start? Were partner resources and capacities enabling legislative framework, and appropriate project management arrangements in place at project start?	Level of effectiveness of project implementation Level of efficiency of project implementation Level of effectiveness and efficiency of project implementation	• Project Document, • Progress Reporting / PIRs • Audits • MoUs • PEC / PAC minutes	• Document analysis, interviews, survey, personal observation
Were key stakeholders appropriately involved in producing the programmed outputs?	Stated contribution of stakeholders in achievement of outputs	• Citation of stakeholders' roles in tangible products (publications, studies, etc.) • Interviews with partners and project beneficiaries	• Desk review and interviews
Has the project been successful in operationalizing an inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms with wide stakeholder participation at different levels of government?	A functioning inter-sectoral coordination mechanism meeting regularly	• Annual project implementation reports • Minutes from inter-sectoral coordination mechanism	• Desk review and interviews
Are the methodologies and/or approaches adopted by the project	Technical analysis on the robustness of methodologies and	• Annual project implementation reports	• Desk review, online questionnaire and interviews

Evaluative Criteria	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
working? Why or why not?	approaches	• Technical reports • Interviews with sub-contractors / consultants	
To what extent is the project management structure (organization, resources, distribution of responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms) appropriate for achieving progress towards project outcomes?	Org chart vs. implementation analysis Benchmarking from previous project evaluations	• Org chart and roles and responsibilities • Evidence from successfully implemented projects	• Desk review, online questionnaire, field visits and interviews
Are roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders initially identified in the stakeholder analysis, commonly understood and playing out effectively?	Content and Comparative Analysis	• Org chart and roles and responsibilities • Evidence from successfully implemented projects	• Desk review, online questionnaire, field visits and interviews
Have the tracking tools (capacity development etc.) shown improvements since the baseline established?	Improved scoring (consistent upward trend) from respective tracking tools.	• Tracking tools, stakeholder interviews	• Desk review and interviews
What remaining barriers exist to achieving the project objective and can these be achieved post-project with little to no investment?	Identification of barriers and strategies to address the barriers	• Progress reports, meeting minutes, stakeholder interviews	• Desk review and interviews
What lessons can be drawn regarding effectiveness for other similar projects in the future?	Impressions on what changes could have been made at design and / or implementation to improve the achievement of the expected result.	• Interviews / questionnaire	• Interviews, online questionnaire, field visits
Was the theory of change and results framework informed by analysis of gender equality, political economy analysis and human rights? If so, to what extent?	Clear intervention logic in the Theory of Change, supported by well-articulated root causes, assumptions, risks and drivers.	• Theory of Change • Project Document	• Desk review, field visits, focus group discussions with beneficiaries and interviews

Evaluative Criteria	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
To what extent and why is effectiveness different for people of different genders?	Analysis based on Gender subject-matter expertise	• Project Gender Plan(s) • Progress reports and PIRs	• Desk review, field visits, focus group discussions with beneficiaries and interviews
Efficiency: The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic[35] and timely way.			
Were the project results framework and work plans and any changes made to them, actively used as management tools during implementation?	Timeliness and adequacy of reporting provided	• Project documents and evaluations.	• Desk review of key documentation and interviews
To what degree of success was the project able to establish synergies with other initiatives that resulted in opportunities for increased cooperation and coordination between similar interventions?	Cooperation agreements / evidence of joint planning and shared results	• Interviews with key stakeholders (partner organizations, other projects) • Project products (publications, data) that show collaboration / complementation with other initiatives	• Desk review and interviews
How was the operational execution vs. original planning (time wise)?	Level of compliance with project planning / annual plans	• Project progress reports/PIR • Interviews with project staff	• Desk review and interviews
How was the operational execution vs. original planning (budget wise)? Was the project implemented cost-effective?	Level of compliance with project financial planning / annual plans	• Project financial reports • Interviews with project staff • ROI assessment	• Desk review and interviews
Were you afforded the resources (human and financial) to get the job done?	Annual plans vs. achievement of objectives	• Interviews with project staff • Annual work plans	• Interviews and data analysis
Were different resources allocated in ways that considered gender equality? If so, how were they allocated? Was differential resource allocation appropriate?	Annual plans vs. achievement of objectives	• Interviews with project staff • Annual work plans	• Interviews and data analysis
If present, what have been the main reasons for delay/changes in	List of reasons, validated by project staff	• Interviews notes with project staff	• Interviews and possibly a lesson learned workshop

[35] "Economic" is the conversion of inputs (funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc.) into outputs, outcomes and impacts, in the most cost-effective way possible, as compared to feasible alternatives in the context.

Evaluative Criteria	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
implementation? Have these affected project execution, costs and effectiveness?			
Has the lead Project Executing Partner been effective in guiding the implementation of the project?	Leadership of the Project Director and ownership of other officials	• PEC, PAC and PMU minutes, project outputs, stakeholder interviews	• Desk review and interviews with project staff + PEC / PAC direct observations and discussion if possible
Have other executing partners been effective in implementation of the project?	Evidence of an active role in project activities with catalytic support to the project implementation	• Project status reports and PIRs • Delivery of Project Outputs	• Desk review, online questionnaire and interviews
Has the GEF Agency been effective in providing support for the project?	Quality and timeliness of support	• Stakeholder interviews, project procurement,	• Desk review, data analysis, online questionnaire and interviews
Since inception, were delays encountered in project implementation, disbursement of funds, or procurement?	Compliance with schedule as planned and deviation from it is addressed Agreed Service Level Agreement Procurement Analysis	• Annual workplan • Delivery of Project Outputs • Finalized Procurements	• Desk review and interviews
Has work planning for the project (i.e., funds disbursement, scheduling, etc.) effective and efficient?	Responsiveness to significant implementation problems	• Annual workplan • Delivery of Project Outputs • Financial Delivery Reports	• Desk review, data analysis, online questionnaire and interviews
Have co-financing partners been meeting their commitments to the project?	Mobilization of resources by partners beyond project funding	• Co-financing reports	• Desk review and evidence of co-financing letters versus annual work planning and budgeting of co-financing on an ongoing basis
Impact: The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.			
To what extent was the GEF necessary for this initiative?	GEF Additionality	• Comprehensive review and determination.	• Document reviews, field visits, and interviews.
To what extent has the GEF alternative been realized?	Assessment of GEF increment Realization of Global Environmental Benefits	• Comprehensive review and determination.	• Document reviews, field visits, and interviews.
Has the project contributed or is likely to contribute to long-term social, economic, technical, environmental changes for	Clear trends from descriptive and comparative analysis	• Comprehensive review and determination.	• Document reviews, field visits, and interviews.

Evaluative Criteria	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
individuals, communities, and institutions related to the project?			
Are beneficiaries better off than they would have been under the status quo?	Beneficiary assessment, including gender and local indigenous communities	• Comprehensive review and determination.	• Document reviews, field visits, and interviews.
Do the project interventions have any unforeseen effects (positive or negative)?	Descriptive Analysis	• Project Results Framework • Project Status Reporting and PIRs • Anecdotal notes • Budget and planning documents	• Document reviews, field visits, and interviews.
To what degree have the project products (e.g. studies, methodologies, etc.) been accessible to decision makers and other relevant stakeholders, and what effect has this had?	Indicators in the Project Results Framework	• Project Results Framework • Project Status Reporting and PIRs • Anecdotal notes • Budget and planning documents	• Detailed document reviews and interviews
Sustainability: The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue, and to what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
Has a sustainability / business continuity plan(s) been drafted for the project?	Active planning for project closure	• Sustainability plans approved	• Documentation review
Are legal frameworks, policies, and institutional arrangements favourable for sustaining the project's outcomes following conclusion of the project?	Processes and insertion project objectives in national plans and policies.	• National Biodiversity Strategy • Net new policies supporting landscape integrity and connectivity	• Document review and interviews
Will stakeholder ownership will be sufficient to sustain the project's outcomes?	Handover plan and knowledge transfer ongoing	• Sustainability plans • Progress reports • Interviews	• Document review and interviews and questionnaire
What is the likelihood that adequate financial resources will be in place to sustain the project's outcomes by project end?	Opportunities for financial sustainability from multiple sources exist	• Project Document • Status Reporting • PIRs	• Desk review, field visits and • interviews
Are operational budgets in place and gaps reduced?	PAs are on a stronger footing as opposed to project baseline.	• Operating costs and funding gap.	• Document reviews and interviews.
Adaptive Capacity: The extent to which the use of M&E, lessons learned and adaptive management are used to meet indicator targets and mitigate project issues.			

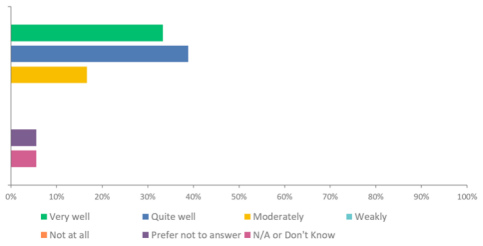
Evaluative Criteria	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
To what extend did the (political, environmental, social, institutional) context change during project implementation and how did the project adapt to this/these change(s)?	Reported adaptive management measures in response to changes in context	• Project progress reports/PIR • Notes from interviews with project staff and key stakeholders	• Desk review and interviews
Since Inception, how is risk and risk mitigation being managed?	How well are risks, assumptions and impact drivers being managed? What was the quality of risk mitigation strategies developed? Were these sufficient? Whether or not risks articulated in Project Document and in PIRs have been addressed.	• Quality of risk mitigations strategies developed and followed articulated in progress reporting and PIRs	• Document analysis and interviews with PMU team
Was adaptive management applied adequately? Were any cost- or time-saving measures put in place in attempting to bring the project as far as possible in achieving its results within its secured budget and time?	Measures taken to improve project implementation based on project monitoring and evaluation	• Project progress and implementation reports • Notes from interview with project staff	• Documentation review and interviews

14 Annex 10 - Questionnaire used and summary of results

Below, are screenshots to the aggregated and anonymized responses to each survey question. Full PowerPoint of results and more granular data are available upon request from the MTR consultant team.

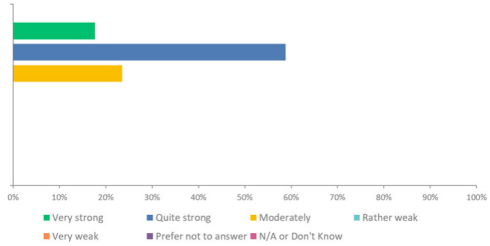
Q1: How well does the project address the integrated land management and biodiversity priorities of Nepal?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



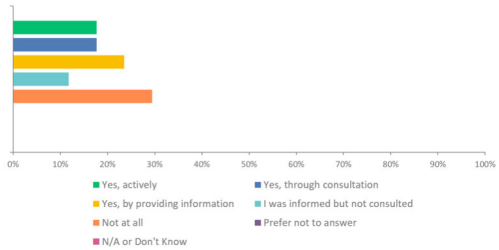
Q2: The project is well-designed and the Project Document is a good blueprint for what needs to be implemented?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 1



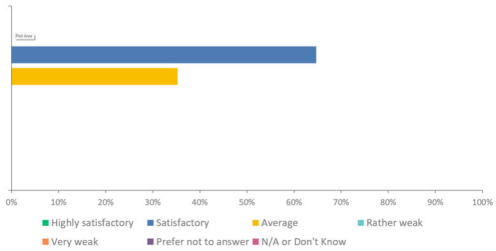
Q3: Were you or your organization involved in the design of the project?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 1



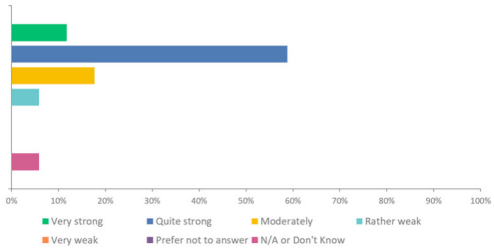
Q4: How do you consider overall project progress at midterm?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 1



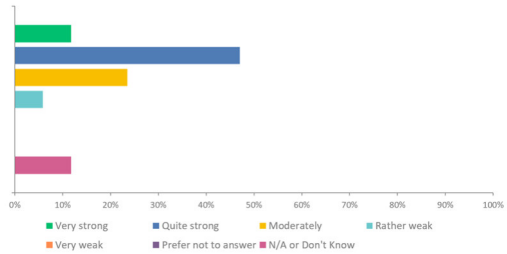
Q5: How strong do you consider the engagement of various stakeholders in project implementation?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 1



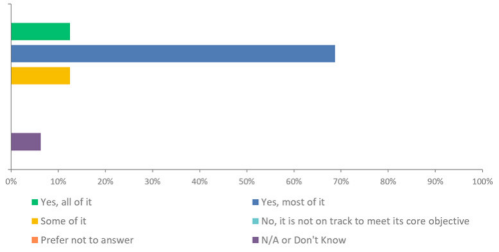
Q6: The project is coordinating efforts with other integrated land management and corridor initiatives in Nepal and in the Region?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 1



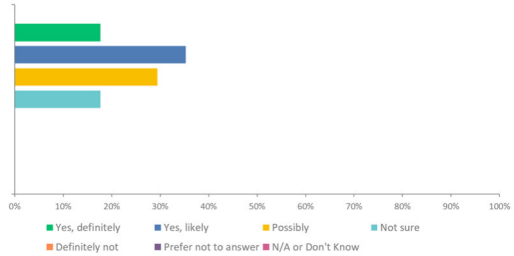
Q7: Do you think the project will be able to achieve its core objective "to promote integrated landscape management to conserve globally significant forests and wildlife"?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 2



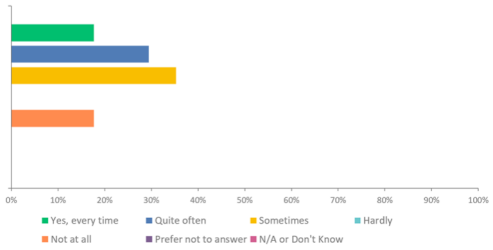
Q8: Do you think the project's achievements can be sustained after project closure?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 1



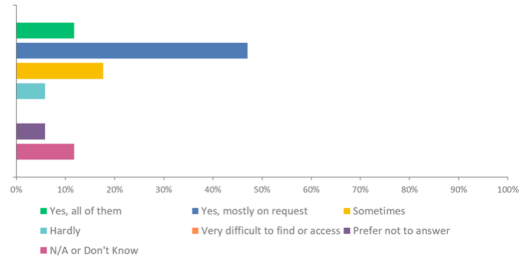
Q9: Do you receive regular information about the progress of project implementation?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 1



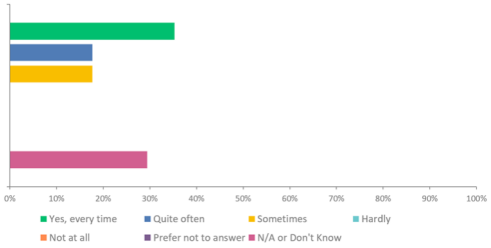
Q10: Are project reports made readily available?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 1



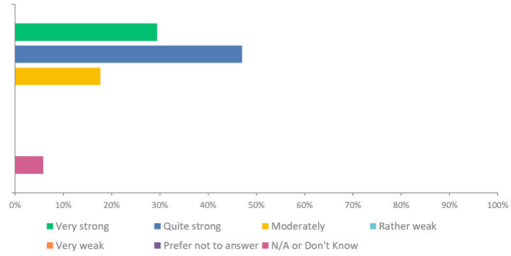
Q11: Does the project communicate its progress and achievements well to internal or external stakeholders?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 1



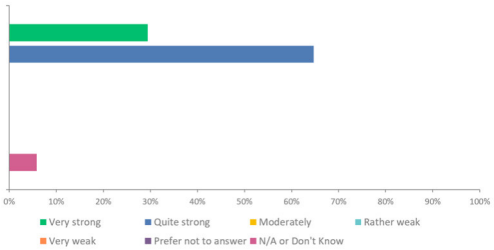
Q12: The project has the right project management, governance and support structures in place to achieve its objectives?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 1



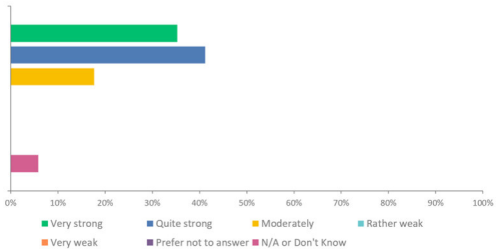
Q13: Authority and accountability have been well-defined in the project.

Answered: 17 Skipped: 1



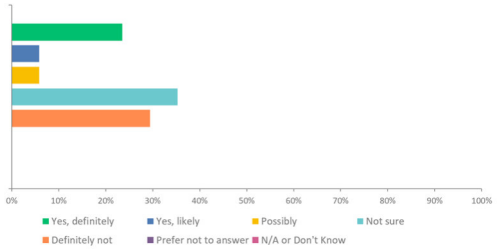
Q14: The project design and strategy prioritizes the needs and involvement of women?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 1



Q15: The project's achievements and results to date could / would have happened in the absence of a GEF-funded project within the same time period?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 1



15 Annex 11 - Evaluation Rating Summary Tables

Progress Towards Results – GEF Core Indicators

Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Sub-Indicator	Baseline level	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement	Achievement (%)	DO rating (*)		Clarifications / Notes / Comments
GEF Core Indicator 3	Area of degraded lands restored	GEF Sub-indicator 3.1: Area of degraded agricultural lands restored (ha)	0	50	150	9.6	19			
		GEF Sub-indicator 3.2: Area of forest and forest land restored (ha)	0	200	2,900	191	96			
		GEF Sub-indicator 3.3: Area of natural grass and shrublands restored (ha)	0	100	1,000	136.2	100			
GEF Core Indicator 4	Area of landscapes under improved practices	Sub-indicator 4.1: Area of landscapes under improved management to	0	Not defined	229,500	TBC				

Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Sub-Indicator	Baseline level	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement	Achievement (%)	DO rating (*)		Clarifications / Notes / Comments
	(hectares; excluding protected areas)	benefit biodiversity (ha)								
		Sub-indicator 4.3: Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems (ha)	0	500	4,000	39	8			The % achievement value has been modified, considering incoherency between Results Framework and FY2023 PIR value
GEF Core Indicator 6	Greenhouse gas emission mitigated	GEF Sub-indicator 6.1: Carbon sequestered or emissions avoided in the sector of Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (tCO2e)	0	Not defined	1,270,919	TBC				
GEF Core Indicator 11	Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of	Women	0	2.895	3.193	4.800	100			Non-cumulative target values to be achieved each year.
		Men	0	2.895	3.194	4.809	100			

Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Sub-Indicator	Baseline level	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement	Achievement (%)	DO rating (*)		Clarifications / Notes / Comments
	GEF investment. a) Community members in targeted CFUGs and BZUGs in intervention areas receiving capacity development / training									
Project Objective Achievement							**63**	**Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**		

(*) Reference to the WWF GEF rating scales (see Annex 1 – Section C):

- **Highly satisfactory (HS)** (100%) – Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were not shortcomings.
- **Satisfactory (S)** (80 – 99%) – Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor shortcomings.
- **Moderately satisfactory (MS)** (60 – 79%) – Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings.
- **Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)** (40 – 59%) – Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings.
- **Unsatisfactory (U)** (20 – 39 %) – Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major shortcomings.
- **Highly unsatisfactory (HU)** (Below 20%) – Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe shortcomings.

Progress Towards Results and Individual Outcome Ratings

Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Sub-Indicator	Baseline level	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement	Achievement (%)	Outcome DO rating (*)	Outcome IP rating (*)		Clarifications / Notes / Comments
Outcome 1.1	Number of Cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms strengthened and/or newly established and meeting regularly at Federal, State and Local levels		4 mechanisms (Federal level: 2; Local Level: 2)	(no target)	7 (Federal level: 2; State Level: 2; Local Level: 3)	0	N / A				
	Outcome ratings						**N / A**	**N / A**	**26 % (U)**		
Outcome 1.2	Percentage of agency staff responsible for ILM coordination functions at federal and state levels that have participated in project supported training on conservation leadership and ILM related subjects	At federal level (%)	0 participants	50	100	65	100				Number of Parks' officers (199) that have participated in project supported training on conservation leadership and ILM related subjects against the total number of staff (311). The target group is all staff participating in biodiversity coordination committees and subcommittees at federal and state
		At state level (%)	0	(no target)	80	TBC	N / A				

Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Sub-Indicator	Baseline level	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement	Achievement (%)	Outcome DO rating (*)	Outcome IP rating (*)		Clarifications / Notes / Comments
			participants								agencies. But those committees haven't been established yet. The indicator's definition has been changed.
	Outcome ratings						**100**	**HS**			
Outcome 2.1	Number of biodiversity surveys, socio-economic surveys and local stakeholder consultation for Brahmadev, Karnali, and Kamdi corridors to determine feasibility of appropriate models for community-based natural resource management and strategic framework development,		0 assessments	3	21	6	100				

Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Sub-Indicator	Baseline level	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement	Achievement (%)	Outcome DO rating (*)	Outcome IP rating (*)		Clarifications / Notes / Comments
	including KBA assessments										
	Outcome ratings						**100**	**HS**	**33 % (U)**		
Outcome 2.2	No. of CFUGs in Kamdi and Karnali Corridors with updated forest operation plans addressing SFM and biodiversity conservation	Kamdi Corridor (76 CFUGs)	11 CFUGs	20	76	12	60				
		Karnali Corridor (54 CFUGs)	0 CFUGs	15	54	12	80				
	% change in Area Weighted Mean Patch Area (AREA_AM) to determine connectivity of	Kamdi corridor	3,767.2 ha	(no target)	>5% increase in mean patch size over baseline	TBC	-				

Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Sub-Indicator	Baseline level	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement	Achievement (%)	Outcome DO rating (*)	Outcome IP rating (*)		Clarifications / Notes / Comments
	forest cover in targeted corridors	Karnali corridor	5,687.6 ha	(no target)	>5% increase in mean patch size over baseline	TBC	-				
	Outcome ratings						**70**	**MS**	**54 % (MU)**		
Outcome 3.1	a) No. of forest fire incidents in targeted corridor / BZ per year (%)	Kamdi	74	70 (5 % reduction over baseline)	20% decrease over baseline	- 25,7%	100				Indicator values are expected to change every year depending on many factors (among which climate conditions). For this reason, the ProDoc proposed deadline was a 5-year average value (period 2012-2016). It would have been better to define the indicator as a 2-year average value with target achievement being assessed each two years from the second year and the end of project indicator value as a 5-year average value.
		Karnali	114	108 (5 % reduction over baseline)	20% decrease over baseline	+ 33,3%	0				
		Banke	505	479 (5 % reduction over baseline)	20% decrease over baseline	- 97 %	100				
		Bardia	505	479 (5 % reduction over baseline)	20% decrease over baseline	- 76,7%	100				

Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Sub-Indicator	Baseline level	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement	Achievement (%)	Outcome DO rating (*)	Outcome IP rating (*)		Clarifications / Notes / Comments
	b) % CFUGs managing open grazing out of total number in the targeted corridor / buffer zone	Kamdi	65 CFUGs	10 (at least 15% of CFUGs control open grazing in forest areas)	At least 50% of CFUGs control open grazing in forest areas	3	31				
		Karnali	54 CFUGs	8 (at least 15% of CFUGs control open grazing in forest areas)	At least 50% of CFUGs control open grazing in forest areas	1	12				
	a) Women, resident indigenous peoples and marginalized groups empowered for CBNRM in	Women's group	0 groups	5	10	2	40				Non-cumulative target values to be achieved each year.
		IP groups	0 groups	5	10	5	100				Non-cumulative target values to be achieved each year.

Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Sub-Indicator	Baseline level	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement	Achievement (%)	Outcome DO rating (*)	Outcome IP rating (*)		Clarifications / Notes / Comments
	targeted corridors and buffer zones as indicated by: a) Number of womens', indigenous peoples and Dalit groups established for CBNRM and livelihood activities	Dalit groups	0 groups	2	5	1	50				Non-cumulative target values to be achieved each year.
	b) Number of indigenous peoples and Dalit communities engaged in project CBNRM and livelihood intervention	IP groups	0 groups	5	10	4	80				Non-cumulative target values to be achieved each year.
		Dalit groups	0 groups	2	5	0	0				Non-cumulative target values to be achieved each year.
	c) Average percentage of female, indigenous and Dalit recipients of project-related loans for	Female	0 %	60	60	0	0				Same target value ("60") to be achieved each year
		IP	0 %	25	25	0	0				Same target value ("25") to be achieved each year

Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Sub-Indicator	Baseline level	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement	Achievement (%)	Outcome DO rating (*)	Outcome IP rating (*)		Clarifications / Notes / Comments
	community level enterprise and livelihood support (% female, IP and Dalit recipients of total recipients)	Dalit	0 %	10	10	0	0				Same target value ("10") to be achieved each year
	d) Average percentage of female, indigenous and Dalit participants in project-related training for CBNRM and livelihood activities (% female, IP and Dalit recipients of total recipients)	Female	0 %	60	60	25	42				Same target value ("60") to be achieved each year
		IP	0 %	25	25	45	100				Same target value ("25") to be achieved each year
		Dalit	0 %	10	10	5	50				Same target value ("10") to be achieved each year
	Outcome ratings						**44**	**MU**	**66 % (MS)**		
Outcome 3.2	Reduced incidence of HWC in localities where related project	a) No. of livestock taken / year	1,052	947 (10 % reduction over baseline)	50 % reduction over baseline	1,097	0				Definition should follow local government HWC reporting system, that has been designed and

Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Sub-Indicator	Baseline level	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement	Achievement (%)	Outcome DO rating (*)	Outcome IP rating (*)		Clarifications / Notes / Comments
	activities occur within targeted corridor and PA buffer zone areas	b) No. of damages to houses/year	87	78 (10 % reduction over baseline)	50 % reduction over baseline	49	100				implemented only in Bardiya Park (Ref. Activity 3.2.3.4). One rating value has been modified due to XLS worksheet error.
		c) Human fatalities and injuries / year	21	19 (10 % reduction over baseline)	50 % reduction over baseline	19	100				
		d) Number of wildlife fatalities on national park roads	86 (wild animals killed in road accidents)	77 (10 % reduction over baseline)	50 % reduction over baseline	97	0				One rating value has been modified due to XLS worksheet error.
	Outcome ratings						**50**	**MU**	**75 % (MS)**		
Outcome 3.3	Number of reported cases of poaching in targeted PA Buffer Zones and	Banke	0	0	0	2	0				As per the ProDoc Results Framework, a reporting system of poaching incidents should have been established for targeted

Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Sub-Indicator	Baseline level	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement	Achievement (%)	Outcome DO rating (*)	Outcome IP rating (*)		Clarifications / Notes / Comments
	Corridors per year by species	Bardia	0	0	0	0	100				BZs/Corridors by the first year. This target value is not clearly related to ProDoc activities. Training activities are expected to be provided (Activity 3.3.2.1 and 3.3.2.2), but the ProDoc descriptions of those activities don't mention reporting systems of poaching incidents. The year 2 target (MidTerm Target) is "*Reporting system provides comprehensive data; zero poaching*". The reporting systems haven't been established yet. Furthermore, the reporting system should be populated with data provided by DFOs and CBAPUs,
		Kamdi corridor	Not available	0	0	0	100				
		Karnali corridor	Not available	0	0	1	0				

Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Sub-Indicator	Baseline level	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement	Achievement (%)	Outcome DO rating (*)	Outcome IP rating (*)		Clarifications / Notes / Comments
											but meetings with CBAPUs have been delayed. So, data provided by DFOs don't reflect the results of the project implementation. Same target value from year 2 ("0") to be achieved each year. One rating value has been modified due to XLS worksheet error.
	Outcome ratings						**50**	**MU**	**70 % (MS)**		
Outcome 4.1	Number of stakeholders participating in annual forums (indicates that national, provincial and local stakeholders involved with TAL are informed of progress and participate in		Not defined	100	300	520	100				The definition of the indicator is not clear. "Number of stakeholders" could mean number of stakeholders' groups (institutions, NGOs). The indicator description should have referred to "individual stakeholders".

Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Sub-Indicator	Baseline level	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement	Achievement (%)	Outcome DO rating (*)	Outcome IP rating (*)		Clarifications / Notes / Comments
	discussion of project-related issues)										Non-cumulative target values to be achieved each year.
	Outcome ratings						**100**	**HS**	**86 % (S)**		
Outcome 4.2	Number of annual reflection workshops linked to annual stakeholder forums where project management analyses project progress and resource allocation, monitoring result and incorporates		Not defined	1	1	2	100				Same target value ("1") from year 2 to be achieved each year.

Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Sub-Indicator	Baseline level	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement	Achievement (%)	Outcome DO rating (*)	Outcome IP rating (*)		Clarifications / Notes / Comments
	adaptive management into work planning.										
	Outcome ratings						**100**	**HS**	**74 % (MS)**		
Outcome 4.3	a) Number of forums where annual lessons are shared		0	2	2	2	100				Non-cumulative target values to be achieved each year
	b) Articles on project-related websites (No/year)		0	15	15	18	100				Non-cumulative target values to be achieved each year
	c) Number of radio programs hosted by the project		0	4	4	0	0				Non-cumulative target values to be achieved each year

Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Sub-Indicator	Baseline level	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement	Achievement (%)	Outcome DO rating (*)	Outcome IP rating (*)		Clarifications / Notes / Comments
	Outcome ratings						**50**	**MU**	**70 % (MS)**		

(*) Reference to the WWF GEF rating scales (see Annex 1 – Section C):

- **Highly satisfactory (HS)** (100%) – Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were not shortcomings.
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- **Highly unsatisfactory (HU)** (Below 20%) – Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe shortcomings.

Project progress assessment for each output

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	RESULTS
Outcome 1.1 "Improved inter-sectoral coordination from Federal, State to Local level for sustainable forest management and integrated landscape management"	**Output 1.1.1** "Cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms established to support integrated landscape management for conservation outcomes at different levels"	• **Activity 1.1.1.1**: Provide support to NBCC committee (ensure gender inclusive team) • **Activity 1.1.1.2**: Organize State level Biodiversity Co-ordination Committee (State 2,3,5,7 and Karnali) meetings • **Activity 1.1.1.3**: Provide technical and financial support to State Biodiversity Co-ordination committee • **Activity 1.1.1.4**: Organize inter-ministerial coordination mechanism for wildlife friendly infrastructure • **Activity 1.1.1.5**: Organize inter-state coordination (2, 3, Gandaki, 5, Karnali, 7) for implementation of the NBSAP and TAL Strategy • **Activity 1.1.1.6**: Carry out cluster meetings with Municipalities • **Activity 1.1.1.7**: Conduct final review of NBSAP (2014-2020) • **Activity 1.1.1.8**: Provide technical and financial support to WCCB • **Activity 1.1.1.9**: Field program implementation support & coordination	The progress made is **moderately unsatisfactory**, considering that the low (unsatisfactory) level of progress is mostly not dependent on the project management. Most of the targets planned under Outcome 1.1 could not be achieved as it required new policy instrument (e.g., National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan), based on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework , that should be approved by the end of 2024. Indeed, activities 1.1.1.1, 1.1.1.2, 1.1.1.3 and 1.1.1.5 depend on the development of the activity 1.1.1.7 (Conduct final review of NBSAP), which is expected to be carried out by the end of 2024, after the global biodiversity framework approval. The activity 1.1.1.6 has been partially delayed because meetings should have been organized to take up integrated landscape management approach, NBSAP issues and implementing guidelines with the participants. However, some meetings were organized mostly focused on integrated landscape management. Activity 1.1.1.8 is progressing as expected. According to the FY2024 work plan, activities 1.1.1.1, 1.1.1.3, 1.1.1.4, 1.1.1.5 and 1.1.1.6 will go ahead, even though 1.1.1.7 is not expected to be carried out; that seems to be incoherent
Outcome 1.2 "Capacity increased for multi-stakeholder and cross-sector landscape and forest	**1.2.1 Output**: Conservation Leadership Training provided	• **Activity 1.2.1.1**: Conduct training to ILM coordinators for capturing international best practice and applying this to the local context	Activity 1.2.1.1 hasn't started yet.
	1.2.2 Output: Training courses provided on key subjects for integrated	• **Activity 1.2.2.1**: Conduct training on Biodiversity conservation and monitoring	The Output should be achieved through the implementation of 4 activities, which have been rolled out as expected. Activity 1.2.2.1

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	RESULTS
planning and management"	landscape management for responsible federal and state government staff	• **Activity 1.2.2.2**: Conduct training on Disaster Risk Management • **Activity 1.2.2.3**: Orientation on roles and responsibilities for new park staff (senior/game scouts) • **Activity 1.2.2.4**: Orientation on roles and responsibilities for new divisional staff	and 1.2.2.2 should start the next year, as per the approved last Procurement Plan and FY2024 work plan.
	1.2.3 Output: Small grants for innovation in ILM (conservation, natural resource, and landscape management) in TAL corridors and PA buffer zones	• **Activity 1.2.3.1**: Provide Individual grant (Bachelors and Master's thesis) • **Activity 1.2.3.2**: Provide Institutional grant to Academic Institutional and CBOs/CSOs • **Activity 1.2.3.3**: Provide innovation grant to the government agencies (National Park, Forest Division, Research and Training Centre) at state level	The Output should be achieved through the implementation of 3 activities, which have been partially rolled out. The project has been facing challenges mainly regarding grants and revolving funds. The Procurement Act has to be followed and doesn't mention those funding mechanisms. The PMU has got through implementing individual grants (Bachelors and Master's thesis) (Activity 1.2.3.1) and this model is exemplary and adding value and ought to be scaled or replicated, while no progress has been made for the grants targeting Academic Institutional and CBOs/CSOs (Activity 1.2.3.2) and government agencies at state level (Activity 1.2.3.3). The budget for those activities might need to be partially reallocated.
Outcome 2.1 "Improved corridor planning for TAL corridors (Brahmadev, Karnali and Kamdi)"	**Output 2.1.1** "Biodiversity surveys, socio-economic surveys, and local stakeholder consultation for Brahmadev, Karnali, and Kamdi corridors to determine feasibility of appropriate models for community-based natural resource management"	• **Activity 2.1.1.1**: Conduct assessment to update biodiversity inventory and socio-economic status in corridors (incorporating GESI aspect) • **Activity 2.1.1.2**: Provide technical support to review existing forest encroachment status and response options considering GESI aspect • **Activity 2.1.1.3**: Prepare corridor/bottleneck assessment report with GESI integration	The output has been partially achieved and the progress made is **moderately unsatisfactory**. The assessments to update biodiversity inventory and socio-economic status in corridors (incorporating GESI aspect, indigenous people and access restriction information) (Activity 2.1.1.1) have been conducted. The number of surveys completed is 6 (two for each corridor) (Outcome 2.1 target is 3). The PMU will support the next year the implementing partners (Parks) to review the existing forest encroachment status and response options for integrating the GESI aspects (see Section 3.4), The corridor/bottleneck assessment report (Activity 2.1.1.3) will likely be drafted the 4th year. The ProDoc had foreseen the implementation of those activities (2.1.1.2, 2.1.1.3) in the 3rd year.

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	RESULTS
Outcome 2.2 "Improved participatory planning for sustainable management in Banke-Bardia complex"	**Output 2.2.1** "Land uses, biodiversity values, forest carbon, and key threats assessed, mapped, reported and disseminated to identify priority communities and forest areas in the targeted PA buffer zones and corridors"	• **Activity 2.2.1.1**: Conduct participatory assessments in targeted PA buffer zones and corridors to identify priority community and forest areas • **Activity 2.2.1.2**: Conduct resource mapping of CFUGs at corridor level and BZUCs • **Activity 2.2.1.3**: Carry out consultations at identified communities	The output should be achieved through the implementation of 3 activities, which have been partially rolled out. The participatory assessment in the targeted PA buffer zones and corridors aiming at identifying priority community and forest areas was undertaken (Activity 2.2.1.1) and an update should be carried out next year (the ToR has already been drafted). Resource mapping of CFUGs at corridor level and BZUCs hasn't started yet (Activity 2.2.1.2). Consultations with the identified communities didn't start the 1st year as expected, but PMU got through organizing 35 meeting the 2nd year and 60 meetings should be organized the next year, according to the FY2024 work plan, exceeding the end of project target (60 meetings). The cost of meetings has been lower than expected (by per ProDoc), so the PMU decided to organize more consultations, considering that more consultations mean more transparency and participation and ensure good governance practices. This can be considered a best practice, to be replicated.
	Output 2.2.2 "Sustainable Forest Management Operational Plans developed or revised for priority forest areas, incorporating the assessment from 2.2.1"	• **Activity 2.2.2.1**: Provide financial support to develop State forest sector strategies (including Community Forests, Protected Forests and Leash-hold Forest) • **Activity 2.2.2.2**: Support CFUGs and BZ CFUGs to develop/revise forest operational plan (GESI aspect is revised/incorporated	The output should be achieved through the implementation of 3 activities, which have been partially rolled out. State forest sector strategies document should be prepared (Activity 2.2.2.1). Concerned state ministry shall implement this activity through consultancy, which will help to bring ownership of state ministry. The activity was expected to start the 1st year and then included in the FY2022 work plan, but, to date, no progress has been made. The project foresees the drafting of 3 strategies (one for each corridor) the next year, according to the FY2024 work plan. Meanwhile, support has been provided to 24 CFUGs in buffer zones and corridors to develop/revise forest operational plan (with GESI aspects revised/incorporated) and it is expected to support other 70 CFUGs the next year. The number of CFUGs in Kamdi and Karnali Corridors with updated forest operation plans addressing SFM and biodiversity conservation is respectively 12 (target is 20 - 60%) and 12 (target is 15 - 80%) (Outcome 2.2 targets).

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	RESULTS
	Output 2.2.3 "Strategic framework for corridor management developed and management plans prepared or revised for all 4 instead of 7 corridor plans TAL corridors / protected forests"	• **Activity 2.2.3.1**: Develop a gender and inclusion responsive guideline (GIRD) to prepare management plans of PF/Corridors • **Activity 2.2.3.2**: Support to revise PF / Corridor Management Plans through a participatory process • **Activity 2.2.3.3**: Field program implementation support & coordination	All the activities should be carried out the next year.
Outcome 3.1 "Strengthen livelihoods and biodiversity conservation through sustainable forest management practices"	**Output 3.1.1** "Training and tools to local government on SFM"	• **Activity 3.1.1.1**: Prepare Sustainable Forest Management Training (SFM) Manual incorporating GESI • **Activity 3.1.1.2**: Provide "Training of Trainers" (TOT) to Division Forest Offices staff based on SFM Training Manual • **Activity 3.1.1.3**: Establish Forest Management Information system (FMIS) including forest fire management • **Activity 3.1.1.4**: Support the State Forest Directorate fire reporting system • **Activity 3.1.1.5**: Support forest fire management through innovative tools and techniques such as leaf litter collection and composting (within targeted sites identified in component 2) • **Activity 3.1.1.6**: Provide multi-year support for nursery to Division forest offices (within targeted sites identified in component 2)	The output should be achieved through the implementation of 6 activities, which have been partially rolled out. The Sustainable Forest Management Training Manual (Activity 3.1.1.1) and the related training program for the Division Forest Offices staff (Activity 3.1.1.2) are expected to be carried out the next year. The MoITFE of the two concerned States haven't already established the Forest Management Information System (FMIS) (with the financial support of the project) (Activity 3.1.1.3) as well as the consequent technical support of PMU to the State Forest Directorate to implement fire reporting system (Activity 3.1.1.4) hasn't been provided. The project office decided to financially support the MoITFE of the two concerned States to establish the Forest Management Information System (FMIS) (Activity 3.1.1.3) on the basis of their specific needs and situations, so that their ownership could be higher. To date the ministries have not been able to implement it; the activity will likely be implemented next year. Consequently, the expected technical support of PMU to the State Forest Directorate to implement the fire reporting system hasn't been provided yet (Activity 3.1.1.4). PMU hopes that after developing the activity 3.1.1.3, the ministries will be able the following year to design the reporting system based on the results and lessons learned from that activity. The DFOs have gotten through implementing the activities 3.1.1.5 (Support forest fire management through innovative tools and techniques - within targeted sites identified in

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	RESULTS
			component 2) and 3.1.1.6 (Provide multi-year support for nursery to Division forest offices) as expected, with the technical and financial support of the project office.
	Output 3.1.2 "Technical support to CFUGs, BZCFUGs and land holders for forest management"	• **Activity 3.1.2.1**: Provide training to CFUGs and BZ CFUGs for forest management implementation (including applied SFM, restoration technique - lined with 3.1.1 • **Activity 3.1.2.2**: Conduct exchange visits for targeted BZ CFUG members (learning from successful UCs on fund mobilization and HWC management) • **Activity 3.1.2.3**: Support BZUCs annual meetings for Bardia and Banke NP Buffer Zones (northern side) • **Activity 3.1.2.4**: Provide coaching on "Governance and Financial management" for CFUGs of corridors and PA Buffer zones • **Activity 3.1.2.5**: Provide support private forest development (providing seedling, irrigation, fencing) • **Activity 3.1.2.6**: Support to register private forest	The output should be achieved through the implementation of 6 activities, which have been partially rolled out. The training to CFUGs and BZ CFUGs for forest management implementation (Activity 3.1.2.1) and exchange visits for targeted BZ CFUG members (Activity 3.1.1.2) are expected to be carried out the next year. 7 annual BZUCs meetings in Bardia and Banke NP Buffer Zones (Activity 3.1.2.3) were organized against the expected 6 meetings included in the approved FY2023 work plan. Only one training package on "Governance and Financial management" has been provided to a CFUG (Activity 3.1.2.4). The activity has registered delays. PMU is supposed to provide coaching for CFUGs of corridors and BZs that have been benefited by interventions, so there is the need to go ahead with interventions. Next year PMU foresees to support many CFUGs in the implementation of ground interventions, so even this activity should go ahead; as per the FY2024 work plan, 30 CFUGs will be trained. Private forest registration is challenging in Parks buffer zones, because Parks don't have the mandate to register private forest enterprises. The registration has to be managed by other concerned local authorities. Because of this policy gap, the activity 3.1.2.5 (and 3.1.2.6) hasn't progressed in the BZs as planned. This target is linked to the Core Indicator 3.1. So, PMU proposes to partially shift interventions in corridors and focus more on agroforestry, instead of targeting only private forestry. This could be a valuable strategy to guarantee more meaningful results in restoring agriculture lands. Anyway, PMU will conduct at the same time a dialogue with policy makers to facilitate the registration of private forest, trying to go ahead on both the directions (private forestry to the extent it is possible, agroforestry).

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	RESULTS
	Output 3.1.3 "Forests and associated habitat in priority buffer zones and corridors managed sustainably"	• **Activity 3.1.3.1**: Create revolving fund to implement forest operational plans in project targeted corridors • **Activity 3.1.3.2**: Provide financial and technical support to improve livestock management (AI, fodder plant support, feeding trough, vet support, stall improvement) • **Activity 3.1.3.3**: Provide financial and technical support for management of grassland and wetland in project targeted area • **Activity 3.1.3.4**: Provide financial and technical support for river bank protection in project targeted area • **Activity 3.1.3.5**: Safeguard plan implementation • **Activity 3.1.3.6**: Provide financial and technical support to small scale green enterprises in project targeted area • **Activity 3.1.3.7**: Provide financial and technical support to develop business plan	The output should be achieved through the implementation of 7 activities, which have been partially rolled out. The Activity 3.1.3.1 (Create revolving fund to implement forest operational plans in project targeted corridors) has been facing challenges due to the institutional fund flow mechanism, which doesn't consider revolving funds. There might be the need for a realignment of activities and budget reallocation. For examples, revolving fund's allocated for community forest operation plans' implementation might be reallocated to support the activities that directly benefit local communities in the same target areas, such as improved cattle sheds and predator proof pen constructions, responding to the demand of interventions of the households that haven't been benefited to date. Financial and technical support to improve livestock management (Activity 3.1.3.2), manage grassland and wetland (Activity 3.1.3.3), for riverbank protection (Activity 3.1.3.4) and for safeguards measures' implementation, based on IPPF and Safeguard policy, (Activity 3.1.3.5) have been provided as planned. The project has prepared the procedural guideline on Resource investment for implementation of green enterprise promotion activities, which will be the basis for beneficiaries' selection after approval from Ministry of Finance (Activity 3.1.3.6). The approval of this guideline is expected very soon. After the end of the project, the guideline might be one of the reference documents for the following projects. The financial and technical support to develop business plans will be provided next year, as per the approved last Procurement Plan and FY2024 work plan.
Outcome 3.2 "Improved management of the	**Output 3.2.1** "Pilot method to reduce the wildlife accident in priority sites"	• **Activity 3.2.1.1**: Conduct study on the wildlife traffic accident issue • **Activity 3.2.1.2**: Install tools/facilities to pilot measures to reduce accidents	The output should be achieved through the implementation of 4 activities, which have been partially rolled out. The study on the wildlife traffic accident issue (Activity 3.2.1.1) was carried out last year, while support packages for technology and capacity

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	RESULTS
human-wildlife conflict"		• **Activity 3.2.1.3**: Support in operation and monitoring of wildlife related traffic accidents in highway • **Activity 3.2.1.4**: Support to erect fence on both sides of Sikta irrigation canal	development for reducing wildlife traffic accident (Activity 3.2.1.2) and monitoring wildlife related traffic accidents (Activity 3.2.1.3) have been provided as planned. The budget saved through the bidding process to erect fence in both side of Sikta irrigation canal (Activity 3.2.1.4) has been allocated for a 3rd year intervention, exceeding the end of project targets (2 interventions already realized).
	Output 3.2.2 "Training and facilities for human wildlife conflict response"	• **Activity 3.2.2.1**: Prepare species-specific guidelines for HWC management • **Activity 3.2.2.2**: Pictorial manual on Wildlife identification and behavior in Nepali and local dialects • **Activity 3.2.2.3**: Conduct training on identification and behavior of wild animals to Divisional forest office staff • **Activity 3.2.2.4**: Support Wildlife Rescue center • **Activity 3.2.2.5**: Support wildlife rescue and handling equipment and training	The output should be achieved through the implementation of 5 activities, which have been partially rolled out. The species-specific guidelines for HWC management (Activity 3.2.2.1) and the pictorial manual on wildlife identification and behavior in Nepali and local dialects (Activity 3.2.2.2) haven't been drafted in the first two years as planned; they should be carried out next year, as per the approved last Procurement Plan and FY2024 work plan. The trainings on identification and behavior of wild animals to DFO staff (Activity 3.2.2.3) have been carried out has planned. The Support Wildlife Rescue center was built (Activity 3.2.2.4) last year and the budget saved through the bidding process has been allocated to provide more facilities to the Center. Support to wildlife rescue and handling equipment and training (Activity 3.2.2.5) has been provided as planned.
	Output 3.2.3 "Community based HWC mitigate and preventive action implemented"	• **Activity 3.2.3.1**: Conduct workshop on preventive and curative measures for HWC • **Activity 3.2.3.2**: Implement measures for HWC based on prepared plans (mentha plantation, biological/virtual fencing) • **Activity 3.2.3.3**: Support to establish community-based insurance (crop, livestock) scheme • **Activity 3.2.3.4**: Implement community-based reporting system of HWC incidents	The output should be achieved through the implementation of 4 activities, which have been partially carried out as planned.

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	RESULTS
Outcome 3.3 "Enhanced capacities of government agencies and community in curbing illegal wildlife crime"	**Output 3.3.1** "Community Based Anti-Poaching Units functional in priority areas"	• **Activity 3.3.1.1**: Provide support for field gear to CBAPU members • **Activity 3.3.1.2**: Provide technical and financial support for skill based training to CBAPU members • **Activity 3.3.1.3**: Establish revolving fund to initiate green enterprise for CBAPUs member (link to above activities)	The output should be achieved through the implementation of 3 activities, which have been partially rolled out. The support provided to CBAPU members (basic safety and health equipment to community youth volunteer like torch light, field gears) (Activity 3.3.1.1) has registered delays; the next year 100 CBAPU will be targeted as well as technical and financial support for skill-based training will be provided to CBAPU members (Activity 3.3.1.2), as per the FY2024 work plan. Regarding the activity 3.3.1.3 (Establish revolving fund to initiate green enterprise for CBAPUs member), due to aforementioned challenges faced by the project in the implementation of grants and revolving funds, activities' realignment and budget reallocation might be needed. PMU proposes to support entrepreneurship development through skill-based training to CBAPUs and forest watcher and other small infrastructures works including mesh-wire fencing construction
	Output 3.3.2 "Training and operation support to Park staff, rangers on wildlife crime management" should	• **Activity 3.3.2.1**: Update training manual on illegal wildlife crime scene management • **Activity 3.3.2.2**: Conduct training to investigation officers level on Illegal wildlife crime scene management • **Activity 3.3.2.3**: Support Transboundary coordination at local level • **Activity 3.3.2.4**: Field program implementation support & coordination	The output should be achieved through the implementation of 4 activities, which have been partially rolled out. The training manual on illegal wildlife crime scene management (update) (Activity 3.3.2.1) hasn't been drafted in the 2nd year as planned; it should be done the next year, as per the FY2024 work plan. Training activities to investigation officers' level on Illegal wildlife crime scene management (Activity 3.3.2.2) have been provided as planned, while activities to support transboundary coordination at local level (Activity 3.3.2.3) are ongoing, even though with a moderate delay.
Outcome 4.1 "Improved coordination and dialogue on	**Output 4.1.1** "Information on ILM importance shared among key stakeholders"	• **Activity 4.1.1.1**: Organize monthly dialogue through "Jaibik Chautari" (Biodiversity Platform) at field level • **Activity 4.1.1.2**: Organize annual technical thematic discussion session at center	The output should be achieved through the implementation of 3 activities, which have been partially carried out as planned.

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	RESULTS
integrated landscape management from the local to national level"		• **Activity 4.1.1.3**: Establish and maintain online Landscape Knowledge Learning Platform (including project website)	
	Output 4.1.2 "Mass awareness products on biodiversity conservation and integrated landscape management"	• **Activity 4.1.2.1**: Provide technical and financial support to green/eco-clubs formation and its operation • **Activity 4.1.2.2**: Support annual meetings of green/eco-clubs network at district level • **Activity 4.1.2.3**: Support special conservation events at local level • **Activity 4.1.2.4**: Sensitize media (print and TV) on integrated landscape management • **Activity 4.1.2.5**: Support radio program (local dialects) on ILM	The output should be achieved through the implementation of 5 activities, which have been partially rolled out. Technical and financial support have been provided to capacitate eco-clubs through the implementation of eco-projects and awareness campaign (e.g. massive awareness on plastic pollution control) (Activity 4.1.2.1). The activity represents a successful case study, so PMU decided to invest more in this activity to create more awareness. To date 20 eco-clubs have been benefitted, but the next year other 30 support packages will be provided (exceeding the end of project target (40)), targeting new schools and some eco-clubs that have already been benefitted, considering the students' turn over during the project. Support to green/eco-clubs network will be provided to organize annual meetings at district level (Activity 4.1.2.2). Technical support to government entities to organize conservation events with multi-stakeholder (Ips, LCs) participation has been provided, exceeding the end of project target, and the organization of other events will be provided even the next year (Activity 4.1.2.3). Support packages to sensitize media (print and TV) on integrated landscape management (Activity 4.1.2.4) have been provided as planned. Technical support to develop radio programs to disseminate information about ILM hasn't been provided as planned, so the next year 10 radio programs are expected to be supported, as per FY2024 work plan.
Outcome 4.2 "Project monitoring system operates, systematically provides information on progress, and	**Output 4.2.1** "Participatory planning and M&E system"	• **Activity 4.2.1.1**: Organize project inception workshops at Kathmandu and field level • **Activity 4.2.1.2**: PAC/PEC planning review workshop (Central and Field) • **Activity 4.2.1.3**: Conduct periodic (trimester) workplan review and planning sessions	The output has been partially achieved and the progress made is **moderately satisfactory.** Outcome indicator value (Number of annual reflection workshops linked to annual stakeholder forums where project management analyses project progress and resource allocation, monitoring result and incorporates adaptive management into work planning): 2 (target: 1). The activities have been carried

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	RESULTS
informs adaptive management to ensure results"		• **Activity 4.2.1.4**: Conduct periodic and joint monitoring visits • **Activity 4.2.1.5**: Conduct Safeguard Monitoring visits • **Activity 4.2.1.6**: Conduct training on "participatory monitoring and evaluation" to CFUGs and relevant sub-grantees • **Activity 4.2.1.7**: Capacity building/training of PSU staff (on project management - WWF network standards, report writing and GESI and safeguard) • **Activity 4.2.1.8**: Organize Project Mid-term review workshops with all key stakeholders • **Activity 4.2.1.9**: Conduct Project Evaluations (Mid-term and terminal evaluation - GEF/SWC) • **Activity 4.2.1.10**: Annual Financial Audit	out with some delays that are expected to be catched up with higher targets the next year (Activities 4.2.1.2, 4.2.1.4 and 4.2.1.5).
Outcome 4.3 "Project lessons shared"	**Output 4.3.1** "Project lessons captured and disseminated to project stakeholders and to other projects and partners" most	• **Activity 4.3.1.1**: Documentation on Traditional Knowledge associated to natural resources • **Activity 4.3.1.2**: Prepare success stories and videos of the project • **Activity 4.3.1.3**: Print case studies and periodic project reports • **Activity 4.3.1.4**: Provide financial support to participate in national/international scientific forum for field staff • **Activity 4.3.1.5**: Provide financial support to publish journal articles • **Activity 4.3.1.6**: Field program implementation support & coordination	Most of the activities will start the next year, except for Activity 4.3.1.1 (Documentation on Traditional Knowledge associated to natural resources) that hasn't been carried out the 1st year and should be realized the 4th year, and the Activity 4.3.1.3 (Print case studies and periodic project reports) that has started last year as planned. Outcome targets partially achieved: 1) Number of forums where annual lessons are shared: 2 (target: 2); 2) Articles on project-related websites (No/year): 18 (target: 15); 3) Number of radio programs hosted by the project: 0 (target: 4).

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	RESULTS
		• **Activity 4.3.1.7**: Organize final project lessons sharing workshop	

2. Assessment of Project Outcomes	***Rating***	***Justification***
Were project outcomes ***Relevant*** when compared to focal area/operational program strategies, WWF strategies, and country priorities?	***Highly Satisfactory***	The Project's intervention logic as presented in the Project Document correctly identifies the problems to be solved, describing the relevant elements and barriers in the national context. The WWF-GEF ILaM project catalyzes and hones in on specific strands and approaches of the wider TAL Program (leaded by WWF Nepal) and by design, significantly influences the creation of enabling conditions for it, which is very relevant for long-term sustainability. By working in the community forest and agriculture lands in protected area buffer zones and corridors in the priority landscape of Nepal, the project is consistent with (BD-4) and specifically supports Program 9: Managing the human-biodiversity interface. The project also contributes to the goals of generating sustainable flows of ecosystem services from forests (LD-2), specifically through landscape management and restoration (Program 3) and reducing pressures on natural resources by managing competing land uses in broader landscapes (LD-3) by implementing sustainable land management through the Landscape Approach (Program 4). Finally, the project delivers benefits across the GEF SFM objectives, including integrated land use planning, cross-sector planning, and integrating SFM in landscape restoration; but contributes mostly to the goal of capacity development for SFM within local communities (Program 5) under SFM-2. The Project will also directly contribute to the implementation of the CBD's Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) and although now replaced by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, it was designed to advance the achievement of Aichi Targets.
How do you assess the ***Effectiveness*** of project outcomes?	***Moderately Satisfactory***	The Project experienced extended delays in preparing and approving key activation and operational documents during the inception phase, largely exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Lockdowns, restricted office access for government staff, there was limited online connectivity, and meetings and travel were halted, further exacerbated these initial challenges, impacting the project's start-up until the last quarter of 2021, and further delays registered in 2022 due to elections and challenging conditions at field sites due to floods and landslides. Furthermore, the project has been faced considerable challenges deploying grants and revolving funds, mainly due to constraints with the Procurement Act not mentioning fund flows to the affected entities. Nonetheless, there has been considerable success with rolling out individual grants to university students to warrant scaling this mechanism. Notwithstanding, the evaluation of the Project effectiveness is moderately satisfactory, as the project, from a delivery perspective, has activated the majority of outputs, with delays in some activities that are mostly not

		dependent from the project management (mainly due to bottlenecks to the disbursement of grants, dependency on the global biodiversity framework approval process, inoperability of some of the involved government institutions). Average level of achievement of 61% against the last workplan and 62% against the Y2 Project Results Framework targets are consistent with the ascribed rating.
What is the **Cost-efficiency** of project outcomes? How does the project cost/time versus output/outcomes equation compared to that of a similar project?	***Moderately Satisfactory***	The project efficient implementation has been hampered by financial and technical issues, mostly not dependent from the project management. Notwithstanding the PMU has gotten through implementing most of the project activities and especially those targeting the local communities (Component 3), which have been sensitized on environmental and social issues and have a clear perception of the project benefits. Local implementing partners (Parks, DFOs) have been strongly engaged, ensuring their higher ownership. In the first years the PMU has had (understandably so) more focus on careful quality assurance than project efficiency, with the added challenge of aligning the government and donors' processes and requirements. Overall financial disbursement and burn rate is low. A silver lining of the Project's rigid fund flow mechanism is that it has resulted in careful and detailed activity and budget planning; this has reduced waste. Most planned deliverables met within budget, but in the case of the PMU and Field Office it is utilizing all the personnel allocated budget but with fewer staff than it should per design.
Overall Rating of Project Outcomes	***Rating***	***Justification***
Using above criteria, please provide an **overall rating** for the achievement of the Project outcomes. This assessment should analyze both the achievement and shortcomings of these results as stated in the project document.	***Moderately Satisfactory***	The rating balances the totality across relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, recognizing that there are gaps in implementation that need to be tightened in the second half of the project.

3. Assessment of Risks[36] to Sustainability[37] of Project Outcomes *Please describe these risks below, taking into account likelihood and magnitude:*
Financial Risks
Since the Project is nested within the TAL Program that operates with parallel and diversified sources of funding, there is a reasonable likelihood that new projects, donors and funding sources will come into the fold to take the lead to ensure continuity through mid- to long-term financial support. The implementation of the activities aiming at strengthening livelihoods through the mobilization of sub-grants for community SFM has been hampered by the rigid institutional fund flow mechanism. It is important to note this was not anticipated during the design due to WWF's previous experiences with these financial mechanisms in other initiatives in Nepal, before government restructuring. While the Project has developed guidelines for grants which are under review, it is clear that the expectations of improved delivery of SFM, biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, and community livelihood development in the targeted areas will have to be tempered. The project is expected to provide coaching on "Governance and Financial management" for CFUGs of corridors and PA Buffer zones that will help households in the financial management of their updated forest operational management plans.
Sociopolitical Risks
The project's design inherently promotes country ownership, with primary execution responsibilities lying with the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE) and active involvement of various local and state-level entities. This deep integration within the national and local governance structures provides a degree of insulation against abrupt sociopolitical shifts.
Institutional Framework and Governance Risks
The project is founded on a strong foundation of more than 15 years of conservation planning and management across the Terai Arc Landscape and builds on key structures put in place during the UNDP-GEF WTLCP. Policies and institutional mechanisms are in place for protected area and buffer zone management, and community engagement in forestry is a model for community based natural resource management. The project also supports the Terai Arc Landscape Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025, which will guide conservation in the region going forward. The extensive training of government representatives, coordination and collaboration among key technical ministries in integrated

[36] Risks are internal or external factors that are likely to affect the achievement of project outcomes. In this context, please consider how these risks could affect the sustainability or *persistence* of project outcomes. Please feel free to list individual risks for each category (financial, sociopolitical, etc.) and provide a corresponding assessment on likelihood and magnitude for each of these. This will help you in forming your overall rating of sustainability of project outcomes.

[37] Sustainability refers to the likelihood of continuation of project benefits after project completion according to the 2019 Monitoring Policy.

landscape management, and support for the National Biodiversity Coordination Committee (NBCC) will help to sustain project interventions in the Terai Arc Landscape and across other conservation landscapes.

Environmental Risks

The Project has been implementing approaches and technology to reduce dependency on natural resources that communities will adopt, and which will last beyond the end of the project, including integrated livestock management to improve productivity.

The updated forest management operational plans will be applied even after the end of the project and might lead to an overall updating process of other plans.

Some tools such as the Forest Management Information System (FMIS) (including forest fire management) (Activity 3.1.1.3), the (updated) State Forest Directorate fire reporting system (Activity 3.1.1.4), the community-based reporting systems of HWC incidents (Activity 3.2.3.4) will be designed to support Parks, DFOs and local communities even after the end of the projects.

Finally, the project has prepared the procedural guideline on Resource investment for implementation of green enterprise promotion activities, which will be the basis for beneficiaries' selection after approval from Ministry of Forests and Environment (Activity 3.1.3.6). The approval of this guideline is expected very soon. After the end of the project, the guideline might be one of the reference documents for the following projects.

Overall Rating of Sustainability of Project Outcomes	***Rating***	***Justification***
Using above criteria, please provide an **overall rating** for the risks to sustainability of project outcomes.	***Likely***	As the project is embedded within and coordinates extensively with the TAL program, with its management, project outcomes have a solid chance of being adopted and institutionalized across all sub-measures of sustainability. Low risk on all sub-measures of sustainability of project outcomes.

4. Assessment of M&E Systems	*Rating*	*Justification*
M&E Design – Was the M&E plan at the CEO endorsement practical and sufficient? Did the M&E plan include baseline data?[38] Did it: specify clear targets and appropriate SMART indicators to track environmental, gender, and socioeconomic results; a proper methodological approach; specify practical organization and logistics of M&E activities including schedule and responsibilities for data collection; and budget adequate funds for M&E activities?	***Satisfactory (S)***	The M&E plan was based on the GEF Results Based Management approach and includes a description of M&E activities, frequencies through a calendar of monitoring activities and reporting requirements, indicators with respect to outcome and objective levels. The Results Framework does not, in all cases, specify an owner for each indicator and responsibility for data collection is disproportionally allocated to the PMU across the Results Framework, as opposed to a broader executing government and field partners, as is normally best practice. Another shortcoming observed by the MTR consultant team includes the identification for some indicators of target values not clearly referred to the project specific context. Thus, it is not possible to understand how ambitious the identified (not / partially / fully achieved) target values are. From a design perspective, the GEF Core Indicators are poorly aligned with and do not intuitively roll up from the Outcome-level indicators, nor do they reflect to the work happening at the Output and Activity levels. The MTR consultant team considers that the present M&E plan and available budget is adequate for monitoring and reporting.
M&E implementation – Did the M&E system operate as per the M&E plan? Where necessary, was the M&E plan revised in a timely manner? Was information on specified indicators and relevant GEF Core indicators gathered in a systematic manner? Were appropriate methodological approaches used to analyze data? Were resources for M&E sufficient? How was the information from the	***Satisfactory (S)***	In spite of not having a designated M&E Officer in place for ten months since January and October 2022 and for the past four months in 2023, the Project - and specifically the PMU and Project Field Staff - have done a commendable in holding the fort on the M&E front while driving the Project and activities forward. Despite lean human resources, a solid monitoring system exists, physically maintained in the form of MS Excel workbooks at the PMU. As evidenced by document analysis and the views of more than three key informants, the M&E Officer and concerned PMU staff conduct joint field monitoring visits on a quarterly to bi-annual basis that leads to the physical verification of the Project's physical activities. WWF-US staff

[38] If there is not a project baseline, the evaluator should seek to estimate the baseline conditions so achievements and results can be properly determined.

M&E system used during project implementation? Did it facilitate transparency, sharing and adaptive management?		also conduct annual verification missions - with the next one planned in the coming month following the MTR – that will also include reviews of gender and environmental and social safeguard elements. Detailed monitoring reports contain information on the background of activities, the quantitative and qualitative progress towards Work Plan targets, technical suggestions of the project team and conclusions. Activities are also documented through photos, though these do not always form part of the field monitoring reports. It is important to note the monitoring of progress towards spatial targets of forest restoration and changes in connectivity has yet to happen as this is dependent on a yet to be recruited GIS specialist. Finally, the Project routinely collects gender and community disaggregated data, not just for training but for most other indicators as well where appropriate.
Overall Rating of M&E	***Rating***	***Justification***
Using above information as guidance, please provide an overall rating for M&E during project design /implementation.	***Satisfactory (S)***	Overall, a solid M&E framework, both in the manner it was conceptualized and rolled out during implementation.

5. Implementation and Execution Rating	***Rating***	***Justification***
Please rate the WWF GEF Agency on the project implementation.	***Highly Satisfactory (HS)***	Despite initial challenges with the Project, the MTR consultant team is highly impressed by WWF-US's project management maturity. Throughout the Project's lifecycle, WWF-US has proven its ability to effectively design and implement complex conservation projects. Their expertise in handling logistical, bureaucratic, and on-site obstacles showcases their vast experience and institutional knowledge. Their knack for building partnerships, integrating community insights, and adapting to varied contexts highlights their global leadership in conservation management. Clearly, WWF-US boasts a team of experienced professionals and takes its role as a recent GEF Agency with great pride and responsibility.
Please rate the Executing Agency on project execution.	***Satisfactory***	The PMU, embodied in the MoFE, is perceived as supportive and experienced; it combines specific technical profiles with managerial and coordination capacities. The PMU and FSU personnel are strong, devoted, have a positive attitude towards course correction. They followed an adaptive approach taking into account the results obtained in the previous years, aiming at achieving outcomes and activities' end of project targets. The project management implemented the monitoring, reporting and verification tools required by the GEF respecting the frequency of release set up by the ProDoc. PMU and FSU staff are efficient by taking on additional tasks and stepping into vacant roles seamlessly, but this is not sustainable long-term and nor should they be expected to shoulder these responsibilities.

16 Annex 12 - Interview Protocol and Guided Questions

Introduction and Background

My name is ……, a member of the team hired by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to conduct a Mid-Term Review (MTR) for the "Integrated Landscape Management to Secure Nepal's Protected Areas and Critical Corridors" supported-GEF financed Project executed by the Ministry Od Forest and Environment (MoFE) of Nepal. In this evaluation, we will focus on the four key components of the project (namely : ***Component 1*** - *National capacity and enabling environment for cross-sectoral coordination to promote forest and landscape conservation;* ***Component 2*** - *Integrated Planning for Protected Area Buffer Zones and Critical Corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape;* ***Component 3*** - *Forest and wildlife management for improved conservation of targeted protected area buffer zones and corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL);* ***Component 4*** - *Knowledge Management and Monitoring and Evaluation.*

We will try to quantify or document the progress made, and what you have put in placed in sustaining the successes while noting the Risks and challenges faced and mitigation strategies for learning purposes. Throughout this interview, please feel free to share your thoughts and experience with us and ask for clarification if the questions are not clear to you. Participation in the interview is voluntary and you may opt out at any time. The answers to our questions will remain strictly confidential and should we use elements of the response in our report, it will be scrubbed for anonymity.

I would like to start by asking you about some General Information:

General Information

1. Can you please introduce yourself, stating your name, position and tell me little about your role and how long you have been in this role?
2. Based on your work and background, what is your understanding about the Integrated Landscape Management to Secure Nepal's Protected Areas and Critical Corridors project in Nepal?

Probing: *How involved are you or your department? - your specific role?*

Topic - A1 : Project Design and Relevance

1. From your involvement with this project, how important can you say the project is relative to improving conservation and sustainable use of Nepal's forest resources? (Probe for theory of change.)
2. What key policy changes can you say the project is currently bringing? Can you name some

policy changes so far achieved?

3. To what extent can you say the project is aligned with closing the gaps identified in the conservation and sustainable use of Nepal's natural resources?
4. In what way (s) do you think the project is addressing the conservation and sustainable use of Nepal's natural resources?
5. How does the project relate to the main objective of the GEF focused areas, and to the environment and sustainable development priorities at local, regional, and national levels?

Probe for

- Is the project relevant to the needs of the targeted beneficiaries?
- How are they being consulted in the project implementation?
- To what extend the project is in line with the Country strategic plan and the SDGs?

Topic - A2 : Project Implementation – Effectiveness

6. Do you think the project activities are roll out in accordance with the planned timeframe? If yes, how; if no, why?
7. What do you know this project is particularly intended to achieve?
8. What progress has this project made so far in achieving the planned outcomes?
9. You as a stakeholder to this project, how satisfied are you with the project results? (Probing: What factors contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended outcomes? Did the assumption and theory of change hold true? If not, why?)

Topic - A3 : Project Implementation – Efficiency

10. Looking at the methodology (ies) introduced by the project, do you think it is easily adoptable to the local Nepal context?
11. What can you say about the overall quality of management of the project? Do you think it is in line with best practices?
12. To what extend have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost effective?

    (Probe: To that extend is the project fund being delivered in a timely manner? Have the project management body and partners been sufficiently active in guiding and responding to issues? Were the targeted activities and interventions implemented in a timely manner?) How is fund disbursed during activities implementation?
13. Is there appropriate and timely monitoring and evaluation mechanism put in place? Were there joint monitoring and evaluation of planned results?

Topic - A4 : <u>Sustainability</u>

14. What two/three mechanisms that the project is putting into place for its impact to continuously be felt in Nepal's environmental sector?

15. Which particular local or national structure (s) are being empowered to continue engagements and coordination of sector stakeholders and institutions?
16. What footprint is this project leaving behind that will continue to live with the Nepal's environmental programs?
17. What are the financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of the project outputs?

    (**Probe:** To what extend will financial and economic resources be used to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?)

Topic -A5 : <u>Impact, gender and cross-cutting issues</u>

18. How have women/men, girls/boys as well as vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities benefiting from the project activities at the moment?
19. To what extent is the project benefiting women, enhanced their participation?
20. Do you know that the project has a grievance redress mechanism? (if they answer yes, ask them how they would file a complaint to test their real knowledge)

Topic - A7 : MTR - Lessons Learned

21. What lessons and good/worst practices are learned/achieved from the project design, implementation, and monitoring mechanisms that can be considered in the design and implementation of similar projects?
22. What are some environmental issues that you think the project is not addressing? Why?

Topic - A8 : Challenges and Constraints Faced

23. What three challenges you are experiencing in the executing this project?

Probing: How are you addressing these identified challenges?

24. What measure do you recommend addressing such challenges in future project design and implementation process?

Topic - A9: Closing Questions

25. What innovations have the project developed?
26. Overall, what is your impression of the management of the project?
27. What are the strengths of the project? What are the weaknesses?
28. What are the clear external threats to the project and What strong project opportunities lie ahead for such projects in Nepal in future?

29. What have been achieved so far under each of the project components : **Component 1** - National capacity and enabling environment for cross-sectoral coordination to promote forest and landscape conservation; **Component 2** - Integrated Planning for Protected Area Buffer Zones and Critical Corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape; **Component 3** - Forest and wildlife management for improved conservation of targeted protected area buffer zones and corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL); **Component 4** - Knowledge Management and Monitoring and Evaluation.

Probe: what is yet to be achieved under each component and why?

Thank you, for your participation.

17 Annex 13 – List of stakeholders and their role

Stakeholder	Role in the implementation of the project
Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE) Division of Planning, Monitoring & Coordination (MoFE) Environment and Biodiversity Division (MoFE) Climate Change Management Division (MoFE) National REDD Centre (MoFE) Department of Forest (DoFSC) Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC)	MoFE is the project's lead ministry and the Executing Agency for project implementation. MoFE will host and coordinate the Project Management Unit (PMU). The four Divisions and two Departments are PAC and PEC members. The *Division of Planning, Monitoring & Coordination* will have a lead role in supporting intersectoral coordination, especially at Federal Level (e.g. NBBC) in the strengthening of EIA practices for infrastructure development. The *Environment and Biodiversity Division* will provide technical support for project activities on biodiversity conservation and will be engaged in training activities. The *Climate Change Management Division and National REDD Centre* will provide technical support on CC adaptation and mitigation, synergies with related CC projects including ERP/FIP and renewable energy uptake. The *key departments (DoFSC, DNPWC)* will play a significant technical role during implementation. DoFSC plays the important role in formulation of corridors, strategy, SFM and control the land degradation, providing the technical support for forest management and planning activities. DoFSC will provide technical support for PA and wildlife management. Both the Departments will be engaged in training activities. The project will provide significant support to MoFE's role in implementing the TAL Strategy and NBSAP.
International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division (IECCD) of the Ministry of Finance	International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division (IECCD) of the Ministry of Finance is PAC member and will be engaged for the integration of the project with national development planning and other international projects.
Forest Research and Training Centre (FRTC)	Project partner for delivery of training and capacity building activities in C 1, 2 & 3.
Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation (MoEWRI)	Both the Ministries will have a role in the: - coordination and involvement in training and awareness raising on ILM at all levels and strengthening of EIA practices; - coordination and engagement in Output 3.2 on piloting SGI to mitigate impacts of irrigation canals on wildlife.
Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport (MoPIT)	

Stakeholder	Role in the implementation of the project
State Governments State MoITFE / Forest Directorate for States 2,3,5,7 and Karnali	The key departments under the new state govts will be key partners during implementation. They will monitor and supervise project activities during implementation and play a role in intersectoral coordination. The project will assist the new state government to develop their capacity for SFM and ILM. The project team will coordinate with the Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forests and Environment (MoITFE) to ensure synergies for project implementation. State MoITFE / Forest Directorate for States 2,3,5,7 and Karnali will provide technical support during formulation of local policies related to forest management and for implementation of C 2 and C3 activities on SFM for corridors and buffer zones.
Local Governments Rural Municipality Municipality Sub-Metropolitan City	Local government will be major partners for the PMU to execute project activities of the different components within the TAL, including strengthening capacity for coordination, management of corridors and PA Buffer Zones, livelihood support and responding to Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC). The project will coordinate with the local government's establishment and capacity development during the implementation of C 2 & 3. Local governments will play a strategic role in: - strengthening of the District Coordination Committees role in delivering inter-sectoral coordination for ILM at local level and networking (C1) - strengthening of awareness and capacity of Municipal Governments for ILM, CBNRM and biodiversity conservation (C1, C3) - strengthening of Wildlife Crime Coordination Bureau networking and functions (C1, C3).
Division Forest Office (DFO)	Division Forest Office is the major implementing partner for building capacity for SFM and corridor and buffer zone management in Components 2 and 3, as this is the responsible organization for the management of corridors. They will also be engaged in inter-sectoral coordination for ILM in components 1 and 4.
National Parks	Banke and Bardia National Parks are major implementing partners for components 2 and 3 of this project within the National Park Core Zone (for certain activities, e.g., anti-poaching, training) and Buffer Zone (the main focus of the project)
Local Communities and Organizations Buffer Zone User Committees (BZUCs) Buffer Zone Community Forest User Groups (BZCFUGs) Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs)	The project aims to work with local communities and forest user groups in key areas to implement activities of component 2 & 3. These stakeholders will be the main beneficiaries of the project, receiving capacity development and operational support for conducting SFM, sustainable livelihoods and tackling threats such as forest fires, uncontrolled grazing and HWC. The sharing of project experiences and lessons learned in C4 will include outreach to CBOs, including use of mainstream media.

Stakeholder	Role in the implementation of the project
Buffer Zone Council Community Based Anti-Poaching Units	
Indigenous People Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) Indigenous peoples in project sites	The project aims to work proactively with indigenous communities in key areas to implement project activities, to build capacity for SFM and sustainable livelihoods and resolve HWC issues. The project team will consult and coordinate with NEFIN, district chapter and communities during the implementation of components 2 & 3 throughout the project duration. Further to the project safeguards assessment, the project team will inform NEFIN regarding planned project activities and receive feedback on potential impacts on local indigenous communities in the project area
WWF	- WWF-GEF Agency: oversight of implementation, liaison with WWF Nepal, supervisory visits; - WWF Nepal: PAC and PEC invitee (as an observer only).
Networks Federation of Community Forest User Groups of Nepal (FECOFUN) Community Forest Coordination Committee (CFCC)	Networks will facilitate the local process for implementation among CFUGs and BZUGs. The project will positively engage these networks and facilitate their engagement in ILM approaches
Interest groups The Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association of Nepal (HiMAWANTI) Dalit Alliance for Natural Resources (DANAR)	They have expertise in social issues of natural resource management and can facilitate project activities to enhance gender equity and social inclusion. The project would engage them in stakeholder coordination and engagement (components 1 & 4), and in implementing field activities in Components 2 & 4.
Conservation I/NGOs e.g. National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) Zoological Society of London (ZSL)	NTNC and ZSL are working actively in the project area on wildlife conservation, and will be involved in coordination, technical support and co-financing for related activities during project implementation, especially during the implementation of components 2 & 3. NGOs will participate in the stakeholder forums in C4, and have access to project news, reports and lessons learned through online project resources
Academic Institutions	Academic Institutions be considered for support for policy and capacity development and involved in targeted research and technical advice related to project activities. They will be included in participants for stakeholder forums in C4, and have access to the project's online resources.

Stakeholder	Role in the implementation of the project
Media	- Key role in raising awareness of environmental issues and in disseminating information; - Participation in awareness raising events and activities across the project; - Supporting outreach for project news and activities.
Donors and related initiatives	Coordination and collaboration on related projects to develop synergic benefits.
Private sector	Private sector forms part of multi-stakeholder forum on income related issues; private landowners will be involved in afforestation work in the project corridors and buffer zones. The project will work with WB/ERP to provide incentives for forestry activities on private land.

18 Annex 14 – Traceability of of Midterm Review Requirements to the Report

MTR Requirement	Addressed	Section(s)
Information on the evaluation process, including when the evaluation took place, sites visited, participants, key questions, summary of methodology and rating rubric, and feedback log showing how comments on draft were incorporated.	✓	1.1, 1.3, 1.3.2, Annex 1 (Annex C - Ratings Classification), Annex 5, Annex 7, Annex 9 **Note:** Audit log to be included alongside the final MTR report.
Assessment of Relevance (project design, theory of change) and Coherence.	✓	3.1.1, 3.1.8, 3.2.1, Annex 3
Assessment of project Results Framework plus rating of project objective and outcomes.	✓	3.1.3, 3.2.2, Annex 4, Annex 11
Assessment of Effectiveness and ratings of Implementation and Execution.	✓	3.2.2, 3.2.5, 3.2.6, Annex 11
Assessment and rating of Monitoring and Evaluation design and implementation.	✓	3.1.3, 3.3.1, Annex 11
Assessment of knowledge management and communication approach, including activities and products.	✓	3.2.1 (Component 4), 3.2.3
Assessment of replication and catalytic effects of the project.	✓	3.1.7
Assessment of stakeholder engagement, gender strategy and gender-responsive measures.	✓	3.4
Assessment of any environmental and social impacts and safeguards used for the project, including the Indigenous People Planning Framework (IPPF) and planning framework (PF). Plus, review of the risk category classification and mitigation measures.	✓	3.6
Assessment of the Grievance Redress Mechanism including its socialization with stakeholders and their understanding of how it operates and their confidence in it.	✓	3.6 (para 255)
Assessment of Efficiency, financial management and summary of co-financing materialized.	✓	3.2.8, 3.7
Summary table of key findings by core criteria and GEF ratings, including justification and/or indicators for their determination.	✓	Annex 11
Key lessons tied to identified strengths or issues.	✓	Section 4

MTR Requirement	Addressed	Section(s)
Recommendations that include: practical and short-term corrective actions by evaluation criteria to address issues and findings; and reflect best practices towards achieving project outcomes, and knowledge sharing / replication for other projects of similar scope.	✓	Section 4