

# Strengthening Conservation and Resilience of Globally-significant Wild Cat Landscapes through a Focus on Small Cat and Leopard Conservation

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

10235

**Countries**

India

**Project Name**

Strengthening Conservation and Resilience of Globally-significant Wild Cat Landscapes through a Focus on Small Cat and Leopard Conservation

**Agencies**

UNDP, WWF-US

**Date received by PM**

12/10/2020

**Review completed by PM**

4/21/2021

**Program Manager**

Hannah Fairbank

**Focal Area**

Biodiversity

**Project Type**

FSP

## **PIF**

### **CEO Endorsement**

#### **Part I ? Project Information**

##### **Focal area elements**

**1. Does the project remain aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements as presented in PIF (as indicated in table A)?**

#### **Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request**

May 6, 2021 HF:

Comment cleared. Project duration update approved by PM and requested ITS to make back-end change to Portal entry 5/6/21.

April 26, 2021 HF:

Please adjust the project duration to 72 months (from 12 months) in the Portal.

January 26, 2021 HF:

Yes

#### **Agency Response**

**UNDP, 5 May 2021**

Thank you for the comment. The project duration is adjusted in the Portal.

**Project description summary**

**2. Is the project structure/design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs as in Table B and described in the project document?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 6, 2021 HF:

Comment cleared.

April 26, 2021 HF:

1.) PMC Proportionality: Please bring the in the co-financing contribution to PMC into proportionality with the GEF Trust Fund contribution. If the GEF contribution is kept at 5%, for a co-financing of \$53,826,733 the expected contribution to PMC must be around \$2,691,336 instead of \$2,000,000 (which is 3.7%). As the costs associated with the project management have to be covered by the GEF portion and the co-financing portion allocated to the PMC, the GEF contribution and the co-financing contribution must be proportional, which means that the GEF contribution to PMC might be decreased and the co-financing contribution to PMC might be increased to reach a similar level. Please amend by either by increasing the co-financing portion and/or by reducing the GEF portion.

April 7, 2021 HF

All comments cleared.

January 26, 2021 HF:

- 1.) Please include a clear, narrative summary statement of the project's Theory Of Change to accompany Figure 2.
- 2.) The emphasis and resources across the first three Components will focus on Dudhwa and Pakke-Eaglenest, what will the project's role or level of investment be in the other two sites included? And strategically why do these remain in the project scope?
- 3.) Table 1 regarding "assumptions and evidence for the project TOC" is helpful. For project Objective 3, should also include the critical assumption and question about whether "HWC and livelihood improvement activities reduce the threats to wildlife/habitat/biodiversity as designed"? It is incredibly important to test and monitor this key assumption/key causal pathway on which the project components are built.

Agency Response

## **UNDP-WWF Team Response, 5 April 2021**

1. The Theory of Change is fully described in the text immediately above Figure 2. A summary statement has been added to this. CER Part II,1) p14-15

Prodoc Strategy p14-15

2. The project focuses its main interventions on key landscapes for wild cat conservation in the three Biotic Provinces situated in northern, northeastern and western India that support suites of small cat species, along with leopard and tiger (see Prodoc Development Challenge section). Within each of the three Biotic Provinces, the landscapes for the project work were identified through an assessment of alignment to project objectives, and consultation with experts, officials from the MoEFCC, State Forest Departments, NTCA and GTF. The PPG team together with key stakeholders reviewed all landscape options in the project concept as well as other possibilities (including Pakke-Eaglenest) against a set of criteria that identified those of greatest importance for small wild cat conservation, globally significant biodiversity values, prevailing threats, and other factors (see Prodoc Box 2). Three landscapes were selected on the basis of these criteria - Dudhwa landscape in Uttar Pradesh and Pakke-Eaglenest landscape in Arunachal Pradesh, and Ranthambhore landscape in Rajasthan. The original intention was to undertake the same level of intervention in all three of these landscapes, but institutional challenges precluded the option of full engagement. In order to maintain representation of aridland cat communities in the project (including caracal, rusty-spotted cat, jungle cat and Asiatic wild cat), and to open the door for caracal conservation in particular (a national government priority and the subject of one of the species recovery plans), a lower level of engagement has been planned for Ranthambhore that includes limited support for species conservation planning, awareness raising and knowledge exchange through Components 1 and 4 only, with a low level of GEF investment mainly focused on community-based activities in the buffer zone and revenue lands outside the protected areas, and capacity development for Forest Dept staff. No other sites are included in the project. Prodoc Devt Challenge, Box 2, Table 3

3. Thank you for the suggestion, we agree ? this additional assumption and question has been added to Table 1. CER Table 1, p18

Prodoc Table 4, p27

## **UNDP, 5 May 2021**

The co-financing contribution to PMC has been adjusted as suggested.

**3. If this is a non-grant instrument, has a reflow calendar been presented in Annex D?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

**Co-financing**

**4. Are the confirmed expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented, with supporting evidence and a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized, and a description of any major changes from PIF, consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 7, 2021 HF:

Comments cleared. There may still be a portal issue with the uploading of "evidence" of co-financing. The letters are included as one pdf file in the 'documents' tab.

January 26, 2021 HF:

- 1.) The co-finance letters for this project do not show-up in the "evidence" column to the far right of Table C. Please split pdf uploaded in 'documents' tab and upload evidence of co-finance
- 2.) Please ensure that each co-finance letter includes the details below, including the type of co-finance (grant, in kind) among others. Please revise letters as necessary:

7. Supporting evidence should:
- (a) confirm the information provided by the Agency, including the name of the entity that provides the Co-Financing, the type of Co-Financing provided, the amount of Co-Financing, and the time frame over which the Co-Financing will be provided;
  - (b) confirm that the Co-Financing identified supports the implementation of the GEF-financed project or program for which GEF financing is sought, and the achievement of its objective(s); and
  - (c) be presented in English, where feasible, or be accompanied by an English translation of the original.

Agency Response

**UNDP-WWF Team Response, 5 April 2021**

1. This is a GEF Portal uploading issue. This will be fixed at the time of re-submission.
  
2. Most of the co-financing letters have enough details as required by GEF co-financing guidelines. We have revised the two co-financing letters from WWF-US and WWF-India by including the types of co-financing committed by both the agencies.

**GEF Resource Availability**

**5. Is the financing presented in Table D adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 29, 2021 HF:

Yes

Agency Response

**Project Preparation Grant**

**6. Is the status and utilization of the PPG reported in Annex C in the document?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
January 29, 2021 HF:

Yes

Agency Response  
**Core indicators**

**7. Are there changes/adjustments made in the core indicator targets indicated in Table E?  
Do they remain realistic?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
January 29, 2021 HF:

Yes, but they are justified and remain realistic.

Agency Response

**Part II ? Project Justification**

**1. Is there a sufficient elaboration on how the global environmental/adaptation problems,  
including the root causes and barriers, are going to be addressed?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
January 29, 2021 HF:

Yes

Agency Response

**2. Is there an elaboration on how the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects  
were derived?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 7, 2021 HF:  
Comments cleared.

January 26, 2021 HF:

1.) The baseline section on Component 1 in Pakke-Eaglesnest landscape includes referring to a new ecotourism department within the forestry department that references initiation of activities in 2020. Please update this given the (presumed) significant impacts of the pandemic on these plans and future engagement.

2.) Pakke-Eaglesnest: Wouldn't the cultivation of fruit in a wildlife-rich landscape only exacerbate HWC? Seems like the government program regarding horticulture in these landscapes could be a nice opportunity for mainstreaming measures for HWC and wildlife conservation.

#### Agency Response

##### **UNDP-WWF Team Response, 5 April 2021**

1. An Ecotourism Society has already been formed with the Chief Minister as the chairperson for implementing ecotourism schemes. There was a slowdown in funding due to the Covid-19 situation. However, it is expected that funds will be received shortly and the schemes will be activated soon. The expectation is that ecotourism will be rebuilt in appropriate forms as the pandemic impacts eventually subside. The language in the documents has been revised to reflect this change in situation. Prodoc Results Section, p36; CER Baseline section p22.

2. In the present context, horticulture is being suggested as an alternative to agriculture, to address the severe erosion which is taking place due to agriculture on untterraced slopes. Enquiries with the local people reveal that the incidence of wildlife depredations on horticultural crops is negligible. Part of the reason may be wildlife hunting, which is ingrained in Arunachal culture. However, there is a possibility of increase in HWC in future. The project will therefore conduct capacity building of the staff of the horticulture and agriculture departments in mitigation of HWC through the project (Activity 1.5.2). It may also be possible to recommend schemes for solar electric fencing for protecting horticulture crops. A systematic response to HWC is also proposed for targeted communities in Output 3.5.

Overall, the choice of cropping and other livelihood measures in Component 3 will be aligned with site-specific requirements, and will be worked out during the inception phase of the program, and mainstreamed with existing Government schemes as per the

protected area management plans/Tiger Conservation Plans, and other district/agency plans. The choice of crop and its planting pattern would be selected and spatially adjusted to avoid providing cover that may attract wild animals. Prodoc Results Section, p35 (Comp 1 baseline); p43 (Activity 1.5.2); p53 Output 3.4)

CEO ER p19 (Comp 1 baseline); p38 (Activity 1.5.2), p45 (Output 3.4)

**3. Is the proposed alternative scenario as described in PIF/PFD sound and adequate? Is there sufficient clarity on the expected outcomes and components of the project and a description on the project is aiming to achieve them?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

April 21, 2021 HF:

All comments cleared.

April 8, 2021 HF:

1.to 5. ) All comments cleared.

6.) Thank you for the further explanation of the compensation, substitution and incentive approaches to livelihoods that the project is taking. This phrase stands out though, and should be reworked to ensure the intent of it isn't misunderstood: "so the aim is not to improve economic indicators directly, although such co-benefits will occur." It seems that the aims of livelihood activities **should** include improvement in economic/livelihoods in order to have intended impact--unless that isn't the aim of those households or communities targeted for engagement in the livelihood activity. Please revise/clarify.

7.) Thank you for the additional information. Based on those responses:

a.) The companies mentioned are all members of multi-stakeholder platforms such as Business for Nature, the WEF or the WBCSD with biodiversity initiatives and targets aligned to the CBD and post 2020 biodiversity framework. Their engagements and commitments under these platforms can provide an entry point for national level action and long term investment to 2030 and, in addition, such examples of private sector engagement could be used to encourage other platform members to consider such investments. We would also recommend actions and initiatives targeting these platforms through the Indian members; and

b.) Please include a brief statement of any relevant lessons learned from the Wildlife Business Council experience to either emulate or avoid in the development of the Green Business Council (either within private sector engagement, KM or the output itself).

•8. to 10.) Comments cleared.

January 26, 2021 HF:

- 1.) Output 1.5, please describe this output and how it will be designed and institutionalized to ensure greater sustainability.
- 2.) Both components 2 and 3 are addressing direct threats to biodiversity/wildlife in the PA and landscape. How will these localized efforts be sustained over time?
- 3.) A key output of Component 1 will be landscape-level master plans for target landscapes. Who will be leading these efforts? Where will the responsibility sit for coordinating efforts, monitoring implementation etc? Will these be multi-sectoral plans/planning process? Please include lessons learned from other similar attempts/approaches in the KM section of the CER/ProDoc.
- 3.) Activity 1.2.2: Why wouldn't MoEFCC be the initial host and contribute finance to the database establishment, operation and related App from the beginning to increase durability of the investment? The CER states MoEFCC will only do so "after project closure."
- 4.) Activity 1.2.4 the National wildcat atlas: Please describe the intended audience and purpose/intended use and how directly contributes to the generation of global environmental benefits/the GEF increment for this project. Unless tightly justified please plan to fund with project co-finance as this type of publication is not generally supported with GEF funds.
- 5.) Components 3 and 4 include "awareness raising" activities. Please describe in the CER how these are linked to the project TOC and more information about how they will be planned, implemented and sustained given many 'awareness raising' activities often are not well targeted or designed, short-lived, and have limited impact. Will a behavior change approaches be taken/incorporated to ensure awareness is being raised and will actively contribute to project outcomes/impacts over time?
- 6.) Output 3.4: Please include in the TOC narrative, and description of the Output(s) how livelihood interventions will be designed, implemented and monitored to have the intended impacts both in terms of reducing pressure on local ecosystems and improving local economic indicators. Also, have the livelihood baseline assessments taken place for the landscapes?
- 7.) Component 4: Includes the 'establishment and initial operation of a national-level platform for green business including the development of a corporate-sector fund" with Output 4.1 providing further detail and it looks like increasing the overall cost of this component beyond what was initially funded. It is great to have a focus on private-sector engagement, but questions remain:

- a.) Why wouldn't this platform build on/fall-under or revive the India Wildlife Business Council?
- b.) Please provide concrete examples of what this platform would do, and how linked to the project objectives-seems like a bit of an 'add-on'.
- c.) What model or framework will the platform have? Seems to mix many different things, CSR, mainstreaming, grants and more, but it is hard to understand exactly what the "business proposition" is.
- d.) If the platform is envisioned as a "green business platform" it would presumably have a much broader purview than wildlife-correct (to include climate, water etc)-which would make it beyond the scope of what make sense for this project? And if so, it is hard to believe that such a platform or forum doesn't already exist in India?
- 8.) Output 4.2: Is this aimed at changing specific behaviors? Is this co-finance or GEF finance?
- 9.) Output 4.3: Please note, nationally allocated STAR cannot be used for regional activities, investments, planning. (It can however be used to support India to implement its commitments under well-aligned/relevant MOUs). Please redact, revise any regional-level activities, or ensure they are covered by co-finance.
- 10.) As the GEF is not the financing facility for CITES please redact, or cover with co-finance, any direct CITES implementation activities.

## Agency Response

### **UNDP-WWF Team Response, 5 April 2021**

1. To ensure the sustainability of training and capacity building towards landscape level efforts, training initiatives will be monitored through the same coordination mechanism/committee with an institutional TOR to be established at the landscape level (provided in output 1.1), and the modules and training outputs/learnings will be shared with state level departmental training institutes for inclusion in their curricula, workshops and state and centre supported capacity building efforts.

The capacity building would include orientation of senior level state officials (cross-sectoral), followed by training of trainers (TOT) in selected revenue and forest training institutions for each state. Special emphasis would be given to building the capacity of

landscape level frontline functionaries, who would be mandated for field execution (see also Output 2.2). This orientation as well as TOT would incorporate all indicated thematic areas. Outputs 1.3 and 1.4 will result in a standard operating procedures and guidelines for stakeholders grouped under broad categories. The resulting codification through SOPs and guidelines evolving from the project will form a crucial part of capacity building elements.

Further information has been added on capacity building themes and baseline experience in capacity building at landscape level. Results section:

CER p36, prodoc p44

3. The project-led technical assistance for the development of the landscape-level master plans will be provided by GTF as a sub-level Responsible Party under the supervision of the MoEFCC as Implementing Partner. The respective State Forests and Wildlife Departments will lead the planning process with inputs and over-arching approval from NTCA, and Wildlife Division of the MoEFCC. The planning process will be collaborative and involve other relevant institutions such as Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON), Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), Panthera and local NGOs as sources of expertise and to reduce the burden on the Forest Departments. Since the project landscapes encompass parcels of land falling in territorial jurisdictions of more than one department (forest, revenue, etc.) as well as private landholdings, the implementation of prescribed time-bound inputs would be done by respective departments/agencies having jurisdiction over such areas. The overall monitoring of implementation, including course corrections based on annual plans of operations emanating from each master plan would be done by the specially constituted "Coordination Committee" for each landscape under the senior-most forest functionary of the state. The co-ordination committee will include experts from other institutions to strengthen its constituency. The descriptive text for the landscape planning process has been substantially elaborated, including the functioning of the Coordination Committee that will oversee the preparation and implementation of the master plan for each landscape. Lessons from related initiatives have been added to the respective KM sections. Results Section: CER p30, prodoc p37 KM Section: CER p98, prodoc p63

3. It is already mentioned in the para that MoEFCC will be hosting this activity (not only after project closure), developed in partnership with technical agency/consortium etc. We have elaborated the baseline context to this Output: Further, conservation efforts at field level are already supported in a big way by MoEF&CC and respective states

(including deployment of frontline and establishment costs, infrastructure, protection etc.). Such financing is resulting in a database emanating from patrolling/monitoring protocols, management plans and tiger conservation plans and working plan implementation. The durability of investment envisaged in the project is thus supported at the formative stage and beyond. CER p33; Prodoc p40

4. The atlas will be compiled from the database and is intended for several user groups:

- ? forest and wildlife professionals
- ? frontline professionals from other government departments
- ? non-governmental stakeholders
- ? local people

It is envisaged that the use of the atlas by various stakeholders in a heterogenous project landscape would raise awareness of the presence of small cat species (which remain poorly known due to their secretive behaviour) and elicit ownership of efforts to protect cat species as indicators of the well-being of local ecosystems. This is a citizen-science initiative that seeks to engage diverse people in providing information on the presence of small cat species, and to motivate their participation in conservation efforts that will directly benefit these target species, as well as their habitats, co-benefiting other globally significant wildlife. The atlas *per se* represents one tangible product of this work, which in itself will be a significant contribution to local, national and international understanding of small cat distribution and status in India, along with information on their habitat status and conservation needs, supporting the proposed national strategy for small cat conservation. Such compilations are fundamental to the evolution of much needed 'citizen science' in the present juncture - it is not simply a coffee table book. The online database would also support the provision of updated scientific information through periodic reporting on small cat status and distribution that inform national and global Red List assessments for small cats, supporting evaluation of overall progress and achievements of the proposed strategy on small cats. CER p33, prodoc p40

5. Overall, the project's approach to awareness raising in Outputs 3.2 and 4.2 aim to engender stakeholder engagement, sensitization and support for conservation actions, usually as part of an integrated set of activities so they are mutually supportive. In contrast, a targeted Social Behavior Change Campaign (SBCC) approach is a very systematic and resource intensive methodology designed to address specific conservation issues (e.g. retaliation killings, demand reduction for wildlife trade - but

these are generally not major threats for small cats in India). Therefore, this approach is not considered to be appropriate for the context and limited budget of these Outputs.

Awareness target groups and samples will be systematically designed in consultation with local people and authorities, and linked to ongoing communication and awareness schemes of the state and the central government. The sustainability of awareness raising efforts will be ensured through alignment with ongoing efforts, for example: WWF is running a long-standing *One Planet Programme* in partnership with some State Education Departments. Also, WWF has been involving students of village schools in conservation awareness programs. Several children that were involved in the awareness programs over the years have grown up under the mantle of the 'Bagh Mitras (Friends of the Tiger)' program that is being implemented in some areas of the country, including the project landscape in Dudhwa, thus ensuring the necessary shift in attitudes and longevity of such campaigns. Thus, the awareness programs and materials for conservation of small wild cats will complement such ongoing initiatives. Similarly, the GTF's work on planning for reduction of HWC in the Dudhwa project landscape, as well as nationally on supporting conservation planning involves a strong component on communication and awareness, including promotion of 'citizen science' and people's participation, as a key conservation strategy in master planning, protected area management and similar action strategies. CER p13-15 (TOC section)

6. The goals of livelihood interventions in this project include incentivizing engagement in the project's conservation strategies, also compensating for any potential access restrictions (eg on grazing) that may arise from strengthened conservation measures as part of safeguards mitigation for impacted groups (Noted in the project strategy and also referenced in the IPPF/PF), and also as alternatives to baseline livelihood activities that have negative impacts on habitats and wildlife – so the aim is not to improve economic indicators directly, although such co-benefits will occur. The baselines for livelihood interventions will be assessed during the initial phase of the project, along with review of associated indicators, but the methods will take into account the cost and time intensive nature of livelihood baselines, and the overall goal/focus being around engagement and potential mitigation for any access restriction. The interventions will be designed and supported in alignment with the Tiger Conservation Plans of the area, along with existing livelihood schemes in place across the districts. The valuable experiences of executing livelihood micro-planning exercises in the state of Sikkim gained under the GEF-supported SECURE Himalayas project will inform effective engagement of communities in the entire process. Similarly, the GTF is working with the state governments to enhance the capacity of frontline and community groups to develop site specific micro-plans, focusing on livelihoods, with reciprocal commitments to ensure conservation of wildlife and mitigation of human-wildlife interface conflicts to ensure the intended impacts of livelihood actions are visible and sustained as regular

practice. CER p13-14 (TOC section); p45 (Output 3.4); Prodoc Results Section p56 (Output 3.4)

7. a) The India Wildlife Business Council was an initiative which explored the possibility of partnerships with industries/private sector to incorporate wildlife conservation concerns into business sectors where this was not a primary goal. While the Wildlife Business Council is no longer functional, this aim remains relevant in that the importance of green business and compliance by business groups/industries has become a necessity owing to long-term business gains as well as legitimacy and need flagged by the Government.

The Government of India, in its latest National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-2031) prioritizes private sector engagement, while seeking direct corporate support for targeted conservation campaigns. It also promotes 'Corporate Environmental Responsibility' along the lines of 'Corporate Social Responsibility' Programmes. The development of such a green business platform, building on experience gained through the former India Wildlife Business Council would codify and institutionalize a sustainable mechanism through the current project led by the Government of India, MoEFCC, in collaboration with the Global Tiger Forum (GTF), with outreach and partnerships with the private sector secured by WWF and UNDP. Several business groups had expressed interest in the India Wildlife Business Council previously, which can be followed up.

The envisaged platform will enable much needed corporate partnership at a landscape scale, resulting in centrifugal stakeholder involvement, complemented with multiple governmental and non-governmental sectors operating in the landscapes or at national level, with an interest to support in-situ conservation. Such an endeavour is important for building up the composite portfolio of actions with mutual gains based on reciprocity to achieve the goal of conservation beyond protected areas. CER p49-50 (Output 4.1); Prodoc Results Section p63 (Output 4.1)

b) The envisaged 'Green Business Platform' is cardinal to the project objectives owing to its great potential to strengthen environmental and socio-economic sustainability and would broadly carry out the following:

? Identify private sector/business groups operating within the project landscapes (eg involved in ecotourism, processing and marketing of eco-friendly agricultural / herbal / medicinal products, etc);

- ? Take steps to mitigate intensive land use actions of industries as 'eco-filters' to prevent biodiversity loss;
- ? Innovate site-specific business models/micro-enterprises with support for reducing the forest resource dependency of local people through assured, eco-friendly livelihood options (socio-economic buffering);
- ? Put in place safeguards against pollution by industries (sanitary buffering);
- ? Support the implementation of the landscape master plans by making available resources from business houses/groups through CSR commitments or village level funds (strengthening existing institutions like eco-development committees or similar structures);
- ? Propagate the experiences gained in the project landscapes to other areas for replication.

CER p49-50 (Output 4.1)

c) No new institutional architecture is envisaged for the green business platform, since it is important to initiate this from the existing institutional framework of the project state, Government of India (MoEFCC), and the GTF by constituting a steering committee as follows:

- Chair ? Representative of MoEFCC (Wildlife Division)
- Representative of project states ? Member
- Representatives of Industries/Business groups/Public enterprises/Industry Consortiums/GTI Council/similar bodies
- Project Representatives ? WWF, UNDP
- Member Convenor ? GTF

The above committee will decide its own rules of procedure, including quorum and periodicity of meetings, with the terms of reference aligned with the project objectives.

CER p49-50 (Output 4.1)

d) The green business platform has been envisioned to encompass contours of:

- Biodiversity conservation
- Safeguarding ecosystem services
- Reduction of forest resource dependency through payment for ecosystem services in the form of community stewardship

Narrowing the scope only to 'wildlife' may not be as rewarding, since the current project construes wild animal species as indicators of ecological integrity, and securing such integrity would result in obvious gains for wildlife conservation, while ensuring its safeguards against human-wildlife interface problems, targeted killings, and depauperization of habitat values.

CER p13-14 (TOC section)

8. The project's overall approach to awareness raising is explained in the response to comment 5) under the Alternative Scenario subheading. Further to that response, a key issue with small wild cat conservation is that they have had little or no public exposure in most areas, and their secretive habits mean that they are little known even to conservationists and scientists. Consequently, there is a significant need to communicate existing knowledge as well as the new knowledge that will be generated by the project's citizen science efforts to relevant stakeholder groups through a targeted communications programme in order to foster support for conservation efforts at different levels. As explained earlier, this would not be a social behaviour change campaign because the project is not tackling one specific issue here, and the available budget does not allow it. The project work will be GEF financed, but this ties in with co-financed efforts by GTF, WWF and others.

9. Output 4.3 has been edited to address this point.

CER p51-52 (Output 4.3); Prodoc Results Section p66 (Output 4.3)

10. Output 4.3 has been edited to address this point.

CER p51-52 (Output 4.3); Prodoc Results Section p66 (Output 4.3)

UNDP Response, 19 April 2021

Thank you for the feedback.

This has now been edited in the ProDoc and the CER by replacing the phrase in question with economic improvements as a potential co-benefit of the project.

Please refer: CER p13-14 (TOC section); p45 (Output 3.4); Prodoc Results Section p56 (Output 3.4).

Thank you for the additional comments and suggestions.

The green business platform as envisaged under the project would complement or have linkage with other like-minded multi-stakeholder platforms engaged with targets aligned to the CBD and Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework. This would strengthen initiatives for national level actions, vis-a-vis commitments for long term investment, apart from having a demonstrative value. Broadly, initiatives envisaged in this context include:

- ? enhancing outreach towards sensitization of industries operating in green landscapes (garnering support for wildlife conservation);
- ? sharing good practices for incorporation in site-specific planning of smart green infrastructure;
- ? commitment for innovating micro-business models for gains to community stewardship (village level funds);
- ? support for capacity building through state of the art cost-effective technology, as and when required; and

landscape level facilitation for evolving green actions (proactive as well retrofitting) to serve as biofilters for safeguarding corridor connectivity.

CER p49-50 (Output 4.1);

Prodoc Results Section p63 (Output 4.1)

Thanks for the suggestions. Lessons learned from the Wildlife Business Council include the following:

- ? Need for codification and mainstreaming of environmental concerns in CSR;
- ? Institutionalizing exchange of green safeguards/green business practices among business groups to evolve broad SOPs;

? Use of "bioremediation" techniques in sync with the natural ecosystem as a component of smart green infrastructure/restoration of altered landscapes

Past experience in the context of the Wildlife Business Council has also highlighted the redundancy of a separate administrative architecture, while emphasizing the need for a steering mechanism/platform involving Government agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations, including stakeholders. These lessons will be taken into account in the development of the Green Business platform under the current project.

CER p49-50 (Output 4.1);

Prodoc Results Section p62-63 (Output 4.1)

**4. Is there further elaboration on how the project is aligned with focal area/impact program strategies?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 26, 2021 HF:

Yes.

Agency Response

**5. Is the incremental reasoning, contribution from the baseline, and co-financing clearly elaborated?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 7, 2021 HF:

Comment cleared.

January 27, 2021 HF:

1.) Please summarize the project's overall incremental cost reasoning in section 5.). The table is very detailed, but lacking in an overarching statement regarding the incremental reasoning.

Agency Response

**UNDP-WWF Team Response, 5 April 2021**

A summary of the incremental cost reasoning has been added as requested.

CER Incremental Reasoning p54-55

**6. Is there further and better elaboration on the project's expected contribution to global environmental benefits or adaptation benefits?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 29, 2021 HF:

Yes

Agency Response

**7. Is there further and better elaboration to show that the project is innovative and sustainable including the potential for scaling up?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 7, 2021 HF:

Comment cleared.

January 26, 2021 HF:

1.) The project includes significant capacity building activities throughout the Components. Please describe in the sustainability section of the CER, as well as cross-walk within each of the relevant activities, how capacity building under this project will be maintained and sustained once the project period is through. The normal challenges to capacity building remain including staff turn-over, cessation of training and other capacity development activities halting after the project period is through etc. and need to be addressed and planned into the investment for sustained impacts.

Agency Response

**UNDP-WWF Team Response, 5 April 2021**

Capacity building will be conducted at several levels, including forest frontline staff and stakeholders working and operating in the landscape. The training process will involve regular forest guard schools and departmental training institutes. There is ongoing engagement of the GTF, WWF and the Government of India which is focusing on refinement of the frontline staff training curriculum regionally and nationally, incorporating inputs and workshops from training institutes across the country. Sharing of knowledge emanating from the current project and the associated training design will utilize such common platforms for engagement, and the modules will be designed for implementation across the landscape and also for covering thematic areas such as monitoring protocols, SOPs and recovery actions nationally. The focus on staff development is a key theme in the government's tiger conservation plans, and will also be incorporated in the landscape master plans to be monitored through a coordination committee in each state and thus, its implementation across agencies will ensure its sustainability.

To roll out protocol and SOP implementation and regular species and habitat monitoring, it will be important to ensure that the site-specific efforts are also integrated into the country level monitoring efforts for species like tiger and leopard. India will be soon implementing the next cycle of *All India Tiger Estimation* across all tiger bearing habitats, and the project management will work with the NTCA and states to ensure that all small wild cat camera captures are stored in a repository. This will be in addition to following the monitoring protocols designed for specific small wild cat monitoring activities led by trained tiger reserve and forest department staff, along with communities and other relevant landscape stakeholders.

For the local communities, existing structures such as the Eco Development Committees and tiger reserve specific Tiger Conservation Foundations (TCFs) will be engaged for refresher courses evolved around the project themes, with a special focus on community-led monitoring for small wild cats. Scaling up successful capacity building efforts can be done through existing partnerships with state agencies, and forging integration of activities in departmental schemes and goals (as described with National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED) earlier, involvement of animal husbandry, horticulture, skill development department, etc).

See also the response to earlier question on capacity development (Output 1.5)

CER Sustainability Section p60; Results section Outputs 1.3; 1.5; 2.2; 3.1.

Prodoc Sustainability Section p87-88; Results Section Outputs 1.3; 1.5; 2.2; 3.1.

#### **Project Map and Coordinates**

**Is there an accurate and confirmed geo-referenced information where the project intervention will take place?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
January 29, 2021 HF:

Yes

Agency Response  
**Child Project**

**If this is a child project, is there an adequate reflection of how it contributes to the overall program impact?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 29, 2021 HF:

Yes

Agency Response

**Stakeholders**

**Does the project include detailed report on stakeholders engaged during the design phase?  
Is there an adequate stakeholder engagement plan or equivalent documentation for the  
implementation phase, with information on Stakeholders who will be engaged, the means of  
engagement, and dissemination of information?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 7, 2021 HF:

Comments cleared.

January 28, 2021 HF:

- 1.) Annex 7B-stakholder engagement plan: Please update/be more specific regarding the Timing and Frequency of the stakeholder engagement in the table and explanation.
- 2.) If the last stakeholder interactions with those in the landscape occurred in 2019, how is it ensured that what is planned under this investment is still welcome and relevant in those landscapes prior to inception that will be two years later, in 2021? What adaptive steps/mechanisms will be taken if this is no longer the case?

Agency Response

**UNDP-WWF Team Response, 5 April 2021**

1. Updated the SEP Table. Annex 7B
2. The project investments have been planned through stakeholder interactions, as well as regular inputs and feedback from the sites has been incorporated throughout the period (beyond 2019 through 2020). Regular interactions, at the field level by existing programmes, virtual meetings with state representatives to firm up priority activities for small cat conservation, and validation workshops/face to face project meetings convened by the implementing agency, and partners, WWF and UNDP (in 2020) have ensured regular flow of information for project development and refinements, as and when suggested. The project document has been reviewed by the states and agencies at several levels, including during the issuance of the co-financing commitment of the government. Furthermore, landscape projects of WWF in partnership with stakeholders

have been implemented in all the three project geographies over long time periods, with most intensive focus in the Terai/Dudhwa landscape, followed by Ranthambhore and Arunachal Pradesh (Pakke-Eaglenest landscape). Conservation outcomes related to efforts for wild cats like the tiger also overlap with small wild cat habitat protection, including initiatives towards reduction of pressure on landscapes, addressing human wildlife conflict issues, among others. During the start-up phase, the PMU will identify specific intervention sites and adapt project activities as needed for the Annual Work Plan and budget ? FPIC consultations, safeguards mitigation planning for specific sites ? these are all needed and will take account of the time lapse between design and the onset of implementation. Prodoc Stakeholder Engagement (p80) CER Stakeholder Engagement Plan (p66)

#### **Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

**Has the gender analysis been completed? Did the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities? If so, does the project/program include gender-responsive activities, gender-sensitive indicators and expected results?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 28, 2021 HF:

Yes.

Agency Response

#### **Private Sector Engagement**

**If there is a private sector engagement, is there an elaboration of its role as a financier and/or as a stakeholder?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 7, 2021 HF:

Comment cleared. Please see previous comment on the green business platform.

January 28, 2021 HF:

Please further articulate the project's overall approach to private sector engagement (across all the Components) as well as further detail regarding the plans for the green business platform-and how linked to "wildlife business council" and previous WB-supported wildlife business efforts. This should all be clearly spelled out in this section. It is currently unclear what is planned, and to what end, and the GEF increment (e.g. this should not be GEF-driven).

Agency Response

**UNDP-WWF Team Response, 5 April 2021**

This section has been elaborated as requested, with reference to significant revisions to Output 4.1 (see above responses)

CER private sector engagement p69-70.

UNDP Response, 19 April 2021

This has been addressed in the above questions.

#### **Risks to Achieving Project Objectives**

**Has the project elaborated on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved? Were there proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 9, 2021 HF:

All comments cleared.

January 26, 2021 HF:

1.) Risk #12: Visa vis component 3 (in Pakke-Eaglesnest) describes potential rebound in ecotourism as well as project support and financing for ecotourism development in target landscapes (including homestays!), but given the impacts of COVID on travel/tourism industry, makes sense to develop diversified plan for sustainable livelihoods in the area-linked to conservation outcomes. Please further include discussion of how the project is being designed to be flexible enough to adapt to future pandemic conditions and need for diversification of approaches.

2.) Risk #14: In addition to exchange rate fluctuations potentially impacting co-finance, the issue of shifting government priorities due to pandemic relief and

commensurate shrinking of resource availability across the board for public expenditures-has this issue come up in conversations with the government? Please review and consider as a potential risk to project co-finance.

3.) Risk #9: This risk is real, and considerable. Please see previous comments regarding the TOC and assumptions behind the connection between the threats to habitats/wildlife and livelihood options versus other causes and whether what is planned will actually have a substantive impact on reducing threats. Please address.

4.) Please include a summary statement in the CER risks section on COVID that provides an overview of the COVID related risks to the project, potential mitigation measures and any potential opportunities identified. It doesn't have to be comprehensive, but instead a summary paragraph.

#### Agency Response

##### **UNDP-WWF Team Response, 5 April 2021**

1. The project will take a strategic approach towards its support for sustainable livelihood development (see response to question on Alternative Scenario, Output 3.4 above) so that this will be based on fine-tuned assessment of local needs at community level as well as taking into account government priorities / baseline programmes, and would be supported by small grants on the locally-agreed priority activities. The baselines for livelihood interventions will be assessed during the initial phase of the project, along with review of associated indicators. The interventions will be designed and supported in alignment with the Tiger Conservation Plans of the area, along with existing livelihood schemes in place across the districts, and informed by experiences under the GEF-supported SECURE Himalayas project. The annual adaptive management reflection meetings (see response to M&E Plan question below) will allow workplans and budget allocation to be adjusted according to changing circumstances as is necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic and to take account of seasonal weather extremes.

The project's ecotourism activities have been retained in view of government and industry interests in support ecotourism recovery, but focusing on community-based ecotourism options that include mitigation measures for COVID-19 (i.e. not on homestay development).

CER Output 3.4 p45-46; Risks p70 and Table 3 p75;

2. UNDP CO states that there is no risk due to shrinking resource availability. However, the flow of funds through the consolidated fund of Government of India following the National Implementation Modality has the potential to cause delays during the implementation of the project. The risk has been amended to reflect this.

CER Risks section p70 Table 3, p75;

Prodoc Risks section p 75; Annex 5 Risk Register (p141)

3.

- The TOC assumption regarding the connection between project activities and threat reduction impacts in Table 1 of the CER has been elaborated to include climate change related issues.
- The mitigation measures for Risk 9 have been incorporated from the SESP and integrated into Annex 5 Risk Register and the relevant Outputs. A climate risk screening has been completed and is included as Annex 26. The potential climate change impacts/vulnerabilities will be considered while selecting corporate investments and designing master planning process for landscape conservation through:
  - Screening of climate change vulnerabilities for all corporate sponsored projects in Output 4.1 and master planning process (1.1), preparation and implementation of recovery action plans (1.2), protocol and standard operating procedures (SOPs) (1.3) and Site-specific guidelines for small cat conservation (1.4).
  - Integration of inputs from Eco-Sensitive Zone management and climate-smart land use considerations.

Overall, the project's landscape conservation approach will incorporate climate vulnerability assessment and adaptation measures as far as possible, to identify potential climate change impacts and incorporate both ecosystem-based adaptation and disaster risk reduction considerations into the landscape master plan development process, preparation and implementation of species recovery action plans, protocol and standard operating procedures (SOPs) and site-specific guidelines for small cat conservation, and corporate sponsored projects in the landscapes.

CER Table 1, p17, Output 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 4.1; Risk 9, p.74

Prodoc Table 4, p24, Results section Output 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 4.1;

Annex 5 Risk Register (p141); Annex 26 Climate Risk Screening

4. A summary statement has been included on COVID related risks as requested.

CER Risks section p70; Prodoc Risks section p75

### **Coordination**

**Is the institutional arrangement for project implementation fully described? Is there an elaboration on possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 21, 2021 HF:

Comment cleared.

April 9, 2021 HF:

1.) Coordination body described. On a related note: The project budget is split between UNDP and WWF and seems to include some of the same items but with different cost estimates (e.g. LCD projectors budgeted for in each IAs budgets but with different cost estimates) and areas of potential overlap (equipment procurement etc). Given that GTF has been identified as the EA by both project IAs across all four project Components-ensuring coordination and eliminating overlap on budget is important. Please review entire budget in this vein.

All other comments cleared.

January 26, 2021, HF:

1.) Given the project has two IAs (WWF/UNDP) that split the responsibility for the four Components among them, please describe the mechanisms for coordination between the IAs and across the Components to ensure seamless coordination and feedback/communication between them as they are so interlinked.

2.) The role of GTF is articulated in #6 of the CER, but it is unclear how GTF an "inter-governmental international body" will be a lead technical partner for execution of this project. Does this mean they will be an EA? If so, please include as such in project information. Please also include further description under "Institutional Arrangement and Coordination" about GTF, the capacity it has to do the work 'on the ground' (particularly in the case of Components 2 & 3) and what other executing organizations may be considered as well.

3.) Please update GTF section in the "partnerships and coordination with other related projects" section to reflect the proposed role of GTF in execution across all four components (now it only addresses 1 & 4).

4.) Please ensure that for each of the "related projects" mentioned there is a clear statement of what coordination or collaboration is envisioned. Some of the project descriptions include this, but others are vague or lacking this important piece. Thank you for Table 4.

#### Agency Response

##### **UNDP-WWF Team Response, 5 April 2021**

1. A Coordination Committee will be set up involving representatives of UNDP, WWF, GTF, representatives of the States and the Project Management Unit to ensure effective coordination and communication between the two IAs. The Committee will have monthly meetings to track the progress of the project and to address issues and concerns as and when required.

CER Institutional Arrangements p84; Prodoc Governance & Mgt Arrangements p97.

2. The Global Tiger Forum (GTF) will be an Executing Agency and will be responsible for execution of project activities for all project components in the field through an agreement with the MoEFCC and in coordination with landscape level stakeholders. GTF will also host the national Project Management Unit that will coordinate with the States and landscape level units for smooth implementation of project activities. Additional information has been included about GTF and its work as requested. No other executing organizations have been identified at this stage, but diverse organizations will be considered as service providers during implementation under normal IA contracting procedures.

CER Institutional Arrangements p84; Prodoc Governance & Mgt Arrangements p97.

3. This section has been updated as requested.

CER Institutional Arrangements and Coordination section p90; Prodoc Partnerships Section p69.

4. Additional text has been included this section of the CER and Prodoc to describe the coordination and collaboration mechanisms as requested.

CER Institutional Arrangements and Coordination section pp90;

Prodoc Partnerships Section p69.

UNDP Response, 19 April 2021

We have adjusted the budget to ensure consistency and alignment across UNDP & WWF budget.

With regard to split in the budget between UNDP & WWF, once the project is CEO endorsed, the ProDoc will be separated for UNDP & WWF for signature with IP. Each IA will be responsible and accountable for their respective budgets, and allocation to the sub executing agency that is GTF for implementation

#### **Consistency with National Priorities**

**Has the project described the alignment of the project with identified national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under the relevant conventions?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 29, 2021 HF:

Yes

Agency Response

**Knowledge Management**

**Is the proposed Knowledge Management Approach for the project adequately elaborated with a timeline and a set of deliverables?**

## Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 9, 2021 HF:

Comment cleared.

January 26, 2021 HF:

1.) Component 4 includes a 'regional knowledge platform'-what is this and what is its intended use/audience? Where/how will it be housed and managed?

## Agency Response

### UNDP-WWF Team Response, 5 April 2021

The Regional Knowledge Platform will ensure widespread dissemination of information on project results and best practices on wild cat conservation. The Platform shall be anchored with the MoEFCC and will be moderated by the GTF. The Platform will be universally accessible and would be especially useful for national and global audiences including local governments, international organizations, civil society organizations, academic and research institutions, the private sector, and community level institutions. The Platform will serve as a reference point and bring together global, regional and national level reports, technical guidelines, protocols, and informational resources, as well as the main activities, news, publications, videos, infographics, websites and databases related to wild cats conservation. The Platform would also promote citizen science to spearhead outreach and awareness generation and identify nature-based solutions for conservation of wild cats and its habitats.

CER Section 8 Knowledge Management p98; Prodoc Output 4.4, 4.5, p67.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

**Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?**

## Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

April 9, 2021 HF:

Comment cleared

January 26, 2021 HF:

1.) Section 1.a. on page 23 of the CEO endorsement refers to "adaptive management"- what mechanisms that are, or will be built-in to enable true reflection and adaptive management of this investment?

#### Agency Response

##### **UNDP-WWF Team Response, 5 April 2021**

Adaptive management mechanisms will be implemented which will include adaptation of project organizational structures and teams, timelines, results frameworks (including indicators and targets), priorities to align with changing context and needs. The Annual Planning meetings and the quarterly reviews will be undertaken by CO to assess the progress of the project, identify and mitigate risks and challenges and leverage on opportunities for maximising the impact of the project. This would inform the project Steering Committees at national and state levels, the Implementing Partner and state responsible agencies to adapt and implement strategies and actions for achieving the desired outcomes under the project.

More specifically, Output 4.5 on M&E, Activity 4.5.4 includes an Annual Adaptive Management Review to review M&E data and prepare for each coming year, linked to annual work plan preparation (and mid-year reviews) as key tools for adaptive management of project activities. 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, UNDP and the WWF GEF Agency. This is reflected in RF Indicator 17: *Number of annual reflection meetings to review M&E and other data for adaptive management, linked to preparation of progress reports and development of annual workplans* (one review each year is targeted).

CER Section 1.a p27, Output 4.5 p53;

Annex A ? Results Framework 17, p.104

Prodoc Results Section Output 4.5 p68; Results Framework indicator 17, p88

## **Benefits**

**Are the socioeconomic benefits at the national and local levels sufficiently described resulting from the project? Is there an elaboration on how these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of GEBs or adaptation benefits?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
January 29, 2021 HF:

Yes

## **Agency Response Annexes**

**Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
May 6, 2021 HF:  
Comments cleared.

April 26, 2021 HF:

1.) UNDP budget: Office supplies (Supplies: paper, stationery, printer cartridges, personal protective equipment (PPE), etc across all Outputs ? estimated at \$2000/year (plus balancing figure Year 6). Total: \$12,000)- should be charged to PMC, not project components.

2.) WWF-US budget: Office supplies should be charged to PMC, not project components.

April 9, 2021 HF:  
Comments cleared.

Noting that the UNDP audit checklist has been completed.

January 28, 2021 HF:

1.) Safeguards: I see the WWF safeguard categorization memo, that has identified the safeguards triggered, but i do not see any accompanying safeguard review

documentation that includes potential impacts and proposed mitigation measures etc. Please explain/justify and/or submit.

2.) Safeguards: Please confirm, in both the WWF and UNDP safeguard documents, that no resettlement will take place with the use of GEF financing under this project.

3.) Safeguards: It looks as if only the UNDP ESS supporting document was uploaded into the CER as a 'supporting document'-but WWF is IA for Components 2 & 3 of field-based activities-please address.

### Agency Response

#### **UNDP-WWF Team Response, 5 April 2021**

1) The Categorization Memo notes that Natural Habitats was triggered because the project works in natural habitats and will have positive impacts. No potential negative impacts were identified; so this was not covered in the detailed safeguards mitigation plan (the IPPF/PF). The Categorization Memo was drafted in project development before full elaboration of activities to achieve the outcomes and outputs. The Memo noted that the 'Standard on Community Health and Safety' This standard is triggered as there is a risk of health and safety (due to incidences of encounter with illegal wildlife poachers, timber loggers and wild animals like tigers) for frontline staff, line departments, EDCs and other local stakeholders including community rangers involved in cat conservation, monitoring, surveillance and enforcement after their training and deployment under the provisions of Output 2.2. Mitigation measures to ensure community health and safety will be incorporated into the IPPF/PF. Final delineation of project activities did not include support that would lead to increased community encounters with poachers etc through the support for community-based monitoring of small cats; and support to frontline staff was limited to training, awareness raising and small equipment. This project is designed to minimize these risks in the landscape. This policy remains triggered as Community Health and Safety risks are present in the landscape, but the project activities will not increase this risk, and as such it is not covered in detail in the mitigation plan (IPPF/PF). Indigenous people and access restriction (Resettlement) were triggered due to potential impacts from project activities, and these impacts and proposed mitigation measures are documented in the IPPF/PF that was submitted as annex 25a.

Annex 4 UNDP SESP (Risks 1, 6 and Question 4); Annex 25A WWF IPPF/PF (pages 8,14,29,46,55); CER Risks section p70; Prodoc Safeguards Risks section p75.

2. This affirmative statement has been inserted in the SESP; the WWF IPPF/PF and the Risks section of the CER and Safeguards Risks section of the Prodoc.

3.) The WWF safeguards assessment and proposed mitigations for component 2 & 3 are covered in the Annex 25a and 25b (IPPF/PF and Categorization Memo).

**UNDP, 4 May 2021**

1) The budget has been revised accordingly and the initial budget for supplies has been included under training/workshops ? for the development and implementation of landscape master plans (Output 1.1, output 1.2, Output 1.3, Output 1.4 & output 1.5) Please refer to budget note 4 & 6 of TBWP of UNDP ProDoc, p. 109-110.

2) WWF-US budget: The budget has been revised and included for the training workshop and travel cost to undertake consultations in support of Dudhwa pilot intervention (under Component 2); and support consultations and travel within the landscapes for activities under Component 3 (Output 3.4). Please refer to budget notes: 8 & 10 of the ProDoc, p.113-116

**Project Results Framework**

**Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request**

April 9, 2021 HF:

All comments cleared

January 29, 2021 HF:

1.) Will any biophysical indicators be monitored? Given the importance of the status of target species to the overall project goal and approach, including at least biophysical indicators regarding small cats (numbers, presence/absence, species richness etc) to be tracked over time seems prudent. Please explain.

2.) The METT "datasheet 2" mentions small cat and rhino populations (respectively for PAs) at baseline but doesn't set mid-term and project completion targets. Please revise or explain for each PA site. This is also related to 1.) above.

2.) Indicator 7: Please explain how the targets for threat levels were set (maintenance at mid-term and 20% at end of project)? Further, are they ambitious? Conservative? Realistic? Without that, it is hard to understand to what extent/or whether this project will substantively impact the status and population of small cats in these landscapes.

**Agency Response**

**UNDP-WWF Team Response, 5 April 2021**

1. Monitoring of occupancy of small cats has been added (new Results Framework indicator #8) in relation to the areas targeted for habitat management improvement under Output 2.1. These sampling areas are considered feasible for the analysis of species occupancy. The camera trap monitoring conducted for tiger across Dudhwa and Pakke Tiger Reserves also provide data on the presence of other species including small wild cats. The project will collaborate with NTCA and WII in order to gain access to the relevant tiger camera trap data for the purpose of assessing the distribution of wild cat species in these areas (through bycatch data). This has been reflected in the METT.

CER Annex A Results Framework p104; Prodoc Results Framework p88; Prodoc Annex 3 (Monitoring Plan)

2. The METTs were based on the comprehensive assessments conducted for each Tiger Reserve in relation to the implementation of its respective Tiger Conservation Plan. Consultations with the PA managers have confirmed that they do not have set targets for changes in the species populations as part of their conservation plans. The METTs have been revised to indicate the trends expected over baseline values for mid-term and end of project. It is not realistic to set numerical values for these targets at the current time as the data are inadequate.

Prodoc Annex 10 (METT)

3. The sub-indicator targets for this indicator have now been disaggregated to provide more specific targets at end of project in particular. The mid-term targets were set at achieving at least stability over baseline in view of the fact there is a lag between project start up and achieving outcome-level impacts, necessary to put in place the implementation plans, mobilize staff and stakeholders, build capacity where necessary, initiate the activities and for these activities to have an effect on the respective threats. The end of project targets have also been adjusted so that they are more ambitious, but should be reviewed again during project inception to ensure that they are both realistic and feasible in view of the baseline situation.

CER Annex A Results Framework p104; Prodoc Results Framework p88; Prodoc Annex 3 (Monitoring Plan).

**GEF Secretariat comments**

## Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 29, 2021 HF:

Cleared.

### Agency Response

In my budget review, it was noticed that there is a car rental rather than purchase. Please provide a clarification for why rental is preferred/more economical and therefore justified over purchase? please include this justification in the resubmission?

### UNDP Response, 19 April 2021

We have done a cost benefit analysis of rental and procurement of a new car, and it was found that renting a car is economical in this case. This is also because only US\$ 50,000 was budgeted for car rental as WWF will be co-financing the remaining to meet the rental cost during the project period.

#### **Cost of renting the car:**

Type	Model	Description	Cost per Month	Cost per year	Cost for 5 years
Toyota Innova	2015	2000 kms 10 days (Inclusive of Driver allowance & fuel) for 2 landscape	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 24,000.00	\$120,000
Toyota Crysta	2016	2000 kms 10 days (Inclusive of Driver allowance) for 2 landscape	\$ 2500.00	\$ 30000.00	\$150,000

The figure above shows the total amount that will be spent for car renting for the 5-year project life will be \$120,000.00 for Toyota Innova and \$150,000.00 for Crysta. The calculation above is based on previous experiences. The rate of \$120-150 per day (including driver and fuel) and 10 day per month for each landscape.

**Cost of vehicle procurement:**

No.	Items	Cost/Year	Total 5 years
1	Car		\$ 60,000
2	Fuel cost	\$ 4657	\$ 23,285
3	Engine oil change and maintenance	\$ 700	\$ 3,500
4	Tires change	\$ 2000	\$ 10,000
5	Driver's salary	\$ 8219	\$ 41,095
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 15,576</b>	<b>\$ 137,880</b>

Consider buying pick up vehicle that will cost around \$60,000 (2 vehicles) including the operation cost around \$15,576 per year, so the total of procuring 2 vehicles will be \$137,880 for the 5 year project cycle.

Therefore, the total cost of buying a car for the project cycle (US\$ **137,880**) is higher than renting a car (US\$ **120,000**).

Given the available budget of US\$50,000 for travel, which has been proposed considering the co-financing in kind, we propose to go for renting the vehicle.

**Council comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 29, 2021 HF:

Cleared.

Agency Response

**STAP comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 29, 2021 HF:

Cleared.

Agency Response  
**Convention Secretariat comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
January 29, 2021 HF:

NA

Agency Response  
**Other Agencies comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
January 29, 2021 HF:

NA

Agency Response  
**CSOs comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
January 29, 2021 HF:

NA

Agency Response  
**Status of PPG utilization**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
January 29, 2021 HF:

Cleared

Agency Response  
**Project maps and coordinates**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request  
January 29, 2021 HF:

Cleared

Agency Response

**Does the termsheet in Annex F provide finalized financial terms and conditions? Does the termsheet and financial structure address concerns raised at PIF stage and that were pending to be resolved ahead of CEO endorsement? (For NGI Only)**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 29, 2021 HF:

NA

Agency Response

**Do the Reflow Table Annex G and the Trustee Excel Sheet for reflows provide accurate reflow expectations of the project submitted? Assumptions for Reflows can be submitted to explain expected reflows. (For NGI Only)**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 29, 2021 HF:

NA

Agency Response

**Did the agency Annex H provided with information to assess the Agency Capacity to generate and manage reflows? (For NGI Only)**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request NA

Agency Response

**GEFSEC DECISION**

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Is CEO endorsement recommended? (applies only to projects and child projects)**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

May 6, 2021 HF:

All comments cleared. PM has approved of project duration update to Portal and requested ITS to make back-end change.

April 26, 2021 HF:

Please address remaining comments on project duration, PMC proportionality and budget and resubmit. Comments are highlighted in review sheet.

April 21, 2021 HF:

Yes, all comments have been addressed by Agency and CEO endorsement is recommended. UNDP audit checklist has been completed.

April 9, 2021 HF:

No. Please respond and revise based on 2nd GEFSEC review.

January 29, 2021 HF:

No, not yet. Please respond and revise based on GEFSEC review.

#### Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
<b>First Review</b>	1/29/2021	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	4/9/2021	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	4/21/2021	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	4/26/2021	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	5/6/2021	

#### CEO Recommendation

#### Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations

See endorsement memo in comments box.