



Managing the Human Tiger Interface In Nepal

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11157

Countries

Nepal

Project Name

Managing the Human Tiger Interface In Nepal

Agencies

WWF-US

Date received by PM

2/9/2025

Review completed by PM

4/2/2025

Program Manager

Hannah Fairbank

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

FSP

CEO

Part I - General Project Information

1. a) Is the Project Information table correctly filled, including specifying adequate executing partners?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF March 2025

Yes

Agency Response

b) Are the Rio Markers for CCM, CCA, BD and LD correctly selected, if applicable?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF May 2025

Cleared.

HF March 2025

Wouldn't climate change mitigation and land degradation both be considered "significant objectives" for this project given the restoration and conservation/AFLOU-like activities?

Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response (4/17/2025):

- CM ? No significant CCM benefits are expected from the planned interventions. While the project will undertake grassland restoration, this largely involves removing woody plants in order to sustain open grassland habitats. As such it is unlikely to result in increased carbon sequestration. Wetland creation and restoration is on a small scale and likely to be carbon neutral. Other activities mainly concern combating HWC through a range of livelihood, awareness raising, behavior change, planning and capacity development approaches.

- LD ? No significant LD benefits are expected for similar reasons as above.

2. Project Summary.

a) Does the project summary concisely describe the problem to be addressed, the project objective and the strategies to deliver the GEBs or adaptation benefits and other key expected outcomes?

b) Does the summary capture the essence of the project and is it within the max. of 250 words?

c) [If a child project under a program] Does the project summary include adequate and substantive link with the parent program goal and approach?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF May 2025

Cleared.

HF March 2025

Yes

c.) Please further describe the link and contribution to the GEF-8 Wildlife IP (eg. GWP GEF-8) in the project summary to better link in this project.

Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response (4/17/2025):

We have addressed this comment in the Summary, please note adding this to the summary we have had to remove other text due to the character limit of the Portal.

This child project of the GEF-8 Global Wildlife Program, which focuses on reducing human-wildlife conflict and advancing coexistence with wildlife, contributes directly to three GEF-8 GWP Components and 12 Outcomes: 1: Coexistence of People and Wildlife in Connected Habitats, through its overall project aim of advancing human-wildlife coexistence in key tiger-bearing PA landscapes in Nepal; 3: Wildlife for Prosperity, through community empowerment and livelihood diversification in targeted landscapes; and 4: Coordination and Knowledge Exchange for Transformational Impact, through knowledge generation, exchange and learning to enable scaling up, strengthening of technical capacity, and international cooperation.

3. Project Description Overview

- a) Is the project objective statement concise, clear and measurable?**
- b) [If a child project under a program] Is there a project Theory of Change that is aligned and consistent with the overall program goal and approach?**
- c) Are the components, outcomes, and outputs sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objective and the core indicators per the stated Theory of Change?**
- d) Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and M&E included within the project components and budgeted for?**
- e) Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?**
- f) Is the PMC equal to or below 10% (for MSP) or 5% (for FSP)? If above, is the justification acceptable?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF March 2025

Yes.

Agency Response

4. Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

a) Is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective and adequately addressed by the project design?

b) Have the role of stakeholders, incl. the private sector and local actors in the system been described and how they will contribute to GEBs and/or adaptation benefits and other project outcomes? Is the private sector seen mainly as a stakeholder or as financier?

c) If this is an NGI project, is there a description of how the project and its financial structure are addressing financial barriers?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF May 2025:

Clear.

HF March 2025:

Clear

b.) Please describe specifically how this project will engage with the private sector to achieve targets and objective.

Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response (4/17/2025):

b.) See the updated section in the Baseline of the CEO ER. For livelihood related activities in Component 2, agriculture related cooperatives, forest related enterprises, hotel and homestay associations, and other private sector enterprises will contribute through supporting market access and generating local employment in targeted rural areas. These could be forest and agriculture-based jobs or industries that demand skilled labor that may be able to divert local communities from forest resources collection activities.

The project will collaborate with the UNDP BIOFIN Nepal program and private sector insurance companies to design a HWC insurance pilot in the project area in Output 2.3.2. This would aim to build on BIOFIN's ongoing baseline work in conducting a feasibility study to identify the most appropriate insurance schemes (private led, community led or a mixed model), estimate insurance premiums using risk methodologies and develop mechanisms to finance the premiums.

In terms of technology company engagement, there is strong potential to replicate the use of the TrailGuard AI [1] camera-alert system (or similar) that has been successfully deployed in the Kanha-Pench Tiger Corridor in India [2] under Output 2.3.4.

[1] <https://www.nightjar.tech/>

[2] <https://conservewildcats.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2023/10/biad076.pdf>

5 B. Project Description

5.1 a) Is there a concise theory of change (narrative and an optional schematic) that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements are contributing to the objective, the identified causal pathways, the focus and basis (including scientific) of the proposed solutions, how they provide a robust approach? Are underlying key assumptions listed?

b) [If a child project under a program] Is the Theory of change aligned with and consistent with the overall program goal and approach?

c) Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region? [If a child project under a program] Does the description include how the alternative aligns with and contributes to the overall program goal and approach?

d) Are the project components (interventions and activities) described and proposed solutions and critical assumptions and risks properly justified? Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?

e) Incremental/additional cost reasoning: Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12? Has the baseline scenario and/or associated baseline projects been described? Is the project incremental reasoning provisioned (including the role of the GEF)? Are the global environmental benefits and/or adaptation benefits identified?

f) Other Benefits: Are the socioeconomic benefits resulting from the project at the national and local levels sufficiently described?

g) Is the financing presented in the annexed financing table adequate and demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives? Are items charged to the PMC reasonable according to the GEF guidelines?

h) How does the project design ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers and adaptive management needs and options (as applicable for this FSP/MSP)?

i) Are the relevant stakeholders (including women, private sector, CSO, e.g.) and their roles adequately described within the components?

j) Gender: Does the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities and have these been taken up in component design and description/s?

k) Are the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs and strategic communication adequately described?

l) Policy Coherence: Have any policies, regulations or subsidies been identified that could counteract the intended project outcomes and how will that be addressed?

m) Transformation and/or innovation: Is the project going to be transformative or innovative? [If a child project under an integrated program] Are the specific levers of transformation identified and described? Does it explain scaling up opportunities?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF May 2025

Cleared.

HF March 2025

a.b.) TOC graphic is blurry, please upload clearer file.

c.) Yes.

d.i.) Outcome 1.2: what are the plans for institutionalizing and sustaining this important capacity-building effort?

ii.) Outcome 2.2 should also be sustainable from an environmental/nature perspective. Please revise and include further information about how this activity will be developed, provide example enterprises and how tiger-safe sustainable livelihoods will be developed and monitored.

iii.) Outcome 2.3 seems like an opportunity for private sector engagement in both insurance and the digital/tech side. Has this been explored/planned?

iv.) How does Component 3 fit into the wildlife landscape approach of GWP GEF-8? Please revise and see subsequent budget question.

v.) Component 3: The project proposes a very small wetland restoration target (20 ha) and have it included under CI 3. However, the project indicates "wetland habitat creation and restoration" and "creating small waterbodies and restoring small wetlands" in the PAs under Outcome 3.1. Please provide clarification on the proposed "creation" of wetland/waterbodies, including the benefit of such proposed activities and how potential negative impacts of altering natural landscapes and habitats will be prevented/mitigated. This should be included in the project design document as well as the safeguards/risks.

f.) Please include the anticipated socio-economic benefits of the project from the livelihood activities as well.

Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response (4/17/2025):

a.b.) The Theory of Change diagram has been reuploaded as two images to appear clearer and be accepted by the portal without running into the margins. Unfortunately the portal restricts the size of image in each portal entry box without cutting off the image or having it run into the margins.

d. i.) Language Under Outcome 1.2 has been updated. The proposed protocol for wildlife handling measures in HTC prone areas will apply to all tiger-bearing protected areas in Nepal, while ongoing training needs on HTC situation management, wildlife management and crowd management, and replacement and upgrading of wildlife handling equipment will be included in

park management plans and budget requests to DNPWC. The government will make use of the improved capacity for management of problem tigers through institutionalization in DNPWC as this issue will continue to be of national importance.

ii) Language Under Outcome 2.2. has been updated.

Environmental sustainability ? all project activities including livelihood activities will be subject to screening in line with ESMF provisions for this project to ensure that impacts on natural habitats are avoided or mitigated, and only native species are used for aquaculture and forestry projects. In principle, as the aim is to reduce the exposure of villagers to tiger attacks by providing alternatives to the collection of forest produce and free grazing practices, this should result in a general reduction on pressure on natural habitats away from villages in the PA buffer zones.

Tiger-safe livelihood development and monitoring ? the project will work with the park Buffer Zone Management Council and Buffer Zone User Committees to select key areas and communities where HTC has been identified as a particular problem and where alternative livelihood development is seen as a viable means of reducing its prevalence. The project will undertake a participatory process for the discussion and selection of livelihood options for the affected communities, in collaboration with the BZMCs, BZUCs and relevant municipalities (as appropriate). A livelihood action plan will be developed for each community, including the identified livelihood options, capacity development needs, activities and estimated investments required. The project will then work with the BZMCs, BZUCs, municipalities, sectoral extension officers (agriculture, livestock, fisheries, enterprise development, etc.) and other stakeholders to provide the required technical assistance based on a comprehensive package approach. The livelihood action plans will include monitoring and evaluation requirements for each strategy which will be implemented by the project in collaboration with the BZUCs. M&E will also track the number of cases of HTC in each community throughout the project to determine the effectiveness of the intervention in reducing attacks on livestock and people. The project has taken into account learning from several other projects in the TAL in developing this approach (including the UK Darwin Initiative ?IUCN/KfW (ITHCP phase 1 and 2), WWF UK Partnership Project? project, GEF6 Integrated Landscape Management project).

See Annex 10 to the CEO ER (Detailed project strategy) which describes the planned activities.

iii) Yes: the intention for this Outcome is to engage with the UNDP BIOFIN Nepal program and private sector insurance companies to design a HWC insurance pilot in the project areas. This would aim to build on BIOFIN?s ongoing baseline work in conducting a feasibility study to identify the most appropriate insurance schemes (private led, community led or a mixed model), estimate insurance premiums using risk methodologies and develop mechanisms to finance the premiums.

In terms of technology company engagement, subjected to feasibility, there is strong potential to replicate the use of the TrailGuard AI [2] camera-alert system (or similar) that has been successfully deployed in the Kanha-Pench Tiger Corridor in India [3] under Output 2.3.4. The

activities include a study tour to review such an Early Warning System in action and subsequent follow up and capacity development for its use in Nepal.

[1] <https://www.biofin.org/news-and-media/nepal-introductory-workshop-risk-financing-pilot-project-wildlife-damage>

[2] <https://www.nightjar.tech/>

[3] <https://conservewildcats.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2023/10/biad076.pdf>

iv) v.) The language under Component 3, has been updated. Component 3 of the project will contribute directly to GWP GEF-8 Component 1: Coexistence of People and Wildlife across Connected Landscapes, with the long-term Outcome: Healthy, stable or increased populations of threatened wildlife (see CEO ER Table 1: Alignment of the project with the GEF-8 Wildlife Conservation and Development Integrated Program framework).

The rationale for Component 3 is that in the baseline, important natural grassland areas in the three targeted National Parks are not being effectively managed at scale, which has resulted in their degradation through encroachment of woody vegetation and invasive species and reduced value for tiger prey species and other wildlife. As a result, tiger prey disperse into the buffer zones forests resulting in increased tiger presence in these areas, contributing towards the incidence of human-tiger conflict. The paucity of small wetlands / waterbodies in the core zone grasslands is another factor affecting the distribution of herbivores and tigers, exacerbated by climate change-influenced seasonal water shortages. By improving grassland condition and connectivity and providing small wetlands in strategic areas of the park core zones, the project can improve the prey base within the core zones for the tigers, and reduce the potential for tigers to follow prey into the buffer zones? forests.

Nepal has pioneered the landscape approach to conservation, hence protected areas of the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL, in both Nepal and India) are connected by a series of corridors that permit wildlife movements, within the context of the TAL Strategy and Action Plan, as well as species action plans. This has been the subject of the GEF6 Integrated Landscape Management TAL Project; hence corridors are not the focus of the current project. As the three targeted National Parks support most of the source population of tigers for the TAL (and Banke and Shuklaphanta NPs will also benefit through some shared activities), improved management of the declining grasslands as key habitats for tigers is a critical need to sustain the status of this population. This will also benefit other important grassland species (with significant needs for small wetlands) such as the Greater One-horned Rhinoceros (VU), Asian Elephant (EN), Gaur (VU), and Bengal Florican (CR).

Having established this system, the government plans to reduce HWC/HTC in buffer zone forests, which is where it is most prevalent. As such it does not support habitat improvement to attract wildlife in the buffer zones ? it seeks to ensure the park core zones provide the needs for core

populations of wildlife, while the designated corridors allow for their movement and dispersal (they are important for tiger dispersal). The project is therefore well aligned with the government's approach in focusing on habitat management in the protected area core zones, and on tackling HWC/HTC in the buffer zones. Inter-agency coordination on HWC management supported in Component 1 and through the TAL Strategy and Action Plan provides for connections between the parks, corridors and production landscapes.

v.) The language under Component 3, Outcome 3.1 has been updated. Component 3 contributes to the overall objective of the project, on the understanding that effective habitat management will contribute toward minimizing HWC by retaining wildlife within PA core zones and away from village lands. In this context, proposed activities such as wetland/waterbody creation and restoration within PAs is crucial for wildlife including herbivores and tigers. This is even more critical in the current context of climate change (water scarcity) impacts such as drought and wildfires, to prevent wildlife dispersal outside the PA core zones. Existing created wetlands in the TAL have added considerable value to the landscape, for example as wallows for rhinos and habitat for waterbirds in addition to their intended function as watering holes for herbivores, tigers and other wildlife. Proposed sites for creating wetlands will be assessed for potential environmental impacts before construction according to ESMF provisions and will be located in natural depressions without altering the natural landscape. In addition, these newly created waterbodies will enhance the soil moisture that directly reduces the extent of wildfires. The project will provide Personal Protective Equipment to ensure work safety during construction while special consideration will be provided to make these wetlands wildlife friendly.

f.) The Socioeconomic Benefits Section has been updated. The strengthened HWC management planning and institutional collaboration in Component 1 will result in long-term benefits to HWC-affected communities across Nepal. The engagement of at least 20 municipalities adjacent to project targeted PAs will leverage considerable additional resources to support HWC-affected communities.

In Component 2, targeted communities supported by project livelihood activities are expected to receive socio-economic benefits in the form of: reduced human and livestock fatalities and injuries from tiger attacks (including reduced medical and veterinary support needs); improved returns from livestock husbandry through protective corrals, stallfeeding and marketing support; improved returns as a result of assistance with crop selection to avoid HWC losses; improved returns from ecotourism development such as homestay and guiding services; skill-based training and material support (e.g. for lighting, solar fencing) to reduce exposure to HTC and HWC; and improved market access and assistance with market promotion, processing and value chain creation. Improved HWC relief mechanisms applied for enhanced efficiency and transparency will result in more prompt and fair relief payments for affected communities.

In Component 3, actions to retain wildlife within park Core Zones will help to reduce HWC impacts on Buffer Zone communities.

5.2 Institutional Arrangements and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project

- a) Are the institutional arrangements, including potential executing partners, outlined on regional, national/local levels and a rationale provided? Has an organogram and/or funds flow diagram been included?**
- b) Comment on proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception). Is GEF in support of the request?**
- c) Is there a description of coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF and non-GEF financed projects/programs (such as government and/or other bilateral/multilateral supported initiatives in the project area, e.g.).**
- d) [If a child project under an integrated program] Does the framework for coordination and collaboration demonstrate consistency with overall ambition of the program for transformative change?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF May 2025

Clear.

c.i.) Noted on coordination with ADB on GRID Nepal. Adjustments to the resubmission are welcomed as needed.

HF March 2025

a.i) GEFSEC provides guidance to GEF Agency so a red arrow is also suggested there. Unless the definition of this guidance doesn't apply in this case? Please revise.

ii.) The institutional arrangement diagram makes clear the opportunity and need to network the participating protected areas directly. I looks like Parsa and Chitwan will coordinate, but why not Bardia? This could also be addressed under the technical and KM components of the project.

In order for GEFSEC to consider this request for dual execution, please submit:

b.i) A request letter from the OFP for this dual-execution support that includes the execution activities that the OFP is requesting the GEF Implementing Agency to carry out.

b.ii) Justification for requesting an exception on the prohibition of dual execution.

c.i) The ADB GRID IP project is mentioned, but please include further detail in terms of opportunities for engagement and collaboration/coordination.

ii.) Are there synergies/opportunities for collaboration with GCF/FAO project in Churia region under implementation, especially in terms of livelihoods development?

Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response (4/17/2025):

- a. i) This is noted and a red arrow denoting the guidance provided has been included
- ii) All parks will collaborate, coordination arrows have been added between all 3 parks.

- b. i. ii.) WWF Nepal does not access project funding but provides co-financing to the project.
 - The executing agency is MFoE, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation.
 - MFoE and Ministry of Finance approved the CERDoc before submission to GEF including the institutional arrangements ? we received formal letter and every page of the CERDoc was signed.

- c. i.) During the entire ProDoc preparation and submission time, ADB's project was still not initiated. However, after submission of WWF's ProDoc, two consultations were held on 25th and 26th March and on 15th April. During these consultations, WWF Nepal shared the project's detail and suggested potential areas of engagement.
- ii) The project will coordinate with FAO for collaboration during the implementation phase. An ad hoc working group of all GEF Agencies working in Nepal was formed in 2023, which meets on an as-needed basis to share updates on different GEF funded projects

5.3 Core indicators

- a) **Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology and adhering to the overarching principles included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.62/Inf.12/Rev.01)? [If a child project under a program] Is the choice of core indicators consistent with those prioritized under the parent program?**
- b) **Are the project's targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators and additional listed outcome indicators) /adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable? Are the GEF Climate Change adaptation indicators and sub-indicators for LDCF and SCCF properly documented?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF May 2025

Cleared.

HF March 2025

Core indicator 6: Please see the assumptions made in Ex-ACT with clarifications next to each:

- 1.) 3,350 Ha ?degraded land? will be restored to ?temperate Steppe? Please correct/clarify what degraded land will be restored to as there is no temperate steppe ecosystem in the Terai which is subtropical humid with savanna and grasslands.

2.) 388,969 Ha ?non-degraded grassland? will be improved to ?improved grassland?. Please clarify what improved grassland is if it started out non-degraded.

3.) Fire management will be reduced from 5 times/year to 1 time/year. Is this accurate? That fire management measures will be reduced from 5 times a year to 1 time a year under this project? Please confirm/clarify.

Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response (4/17/2025):

Thank you for this comment. After further analysis and consideration, the project has determined the ExACT tool is not applicable for this project as there will be no significant change causing the grassland to be ?improved? grassland. Therefore, the indicator 6 has been removed from the project results framework and project document.

5.4 Risks

a) Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk to outcomes and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category? Are mitigation measures clearly identified and realistic? Is there any omission?

b) Is the rating provided reflecting the residual risk to the likely achievement of intended outcomes after accounting for the expected implementation of mitigation measures?

c) Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately assessed and rated and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF May 2025

Cleared.

HF March 2025

a & b.) Yes

c.) Please include the risk that project activities unintentionally increase human-wildlife-conflict and corresponding avoidance and mitigation measures.

Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response (4/17/2025):

c.) As the aim of the entire project is to reduce HWC, and this risk is not tied to one specific project activity, it is not called out specifically in the ESMF Mitigation table. The overall project goals and activities are the mitigation measures for the risk of HWC. It is assumed that effective habitat management and mitigation measures, including research and monitoring, shall contribute to minimizing HWC. In this context, all proposed activities are intended to reduce HWC together

with all the necessary safeguards measure which are included in ESMP. Furthermore, it is assumed there are no unintended risks.

5.5 For NGI Only: Is there a justification of the financial structure and of the use of financial instrument with concessionality levels?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

6 C. Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies and Country/Regional Priorities

6.1 a) Is the project adequately aligned with Focal Area objectives, and/or the LDCF/SCCF strategy?

b) [If a child project under an integrated program] Is the project adequately aligned with the program objective in the GEF-8 programming directions?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF March 2025

Yes.

Agency Response

6.2 Is the project alignment/coherent with country and regional priorities, policies, strategies and plans (including those related to the MEAs and to relevant sectors).

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF March 2025

Yes.

Agency Response

6.3 For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), does the project clearly identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and how it contributes to the identified target(s)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF May 2025

Cleared.

HF March 2025

How will the project contribute to KMGBF targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23? A table describing this might be useful.

Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response (4/17/2025):

d. A table describing project contributions to the KMGBF targets has been included in CEO ER in the alignment section.

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF March 2025

Yes.

Agency Response

7.2 Is the Gender Action Plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF March 2025

Yes.

Agency Response

7.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF May 2025

Cleared.

HF March 2025

Yes. Please specify which local community groups and CBOs will be engaged and what will the roles and contribution of these stakeholder groups be, related to project components and outputs? Please address.

Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response (4/17/2025):

Thank you for this comment, please refer to the Stakeholder Engagement Plan for details on the stakeholders and their roles.

Name	Relevance and roles in the project	Engagement during Project Preparation
IPLCs/ CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS/FEDERATIONS		
Indigenous People	NEFIN is the representative voice for the indigenous peoples. Its mission is to work in the advocate, defense, and respect of collective rights, to expose indigenous people?s problems and to present alternative proposals for development that correspond to their worldview.	NEFIN will be consulted to inform activity design and participate throughout the project preparation.
Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN);		Mode: Through field consultations, individual consultations, consultation workshop, and validation workshop
Indigenous peoples in project sites	The project aims to work with indigenous communities in key areas to implement project activities. Enhancing social safeguards in terms of protecting their customary practices will be the key concern of the project.	GESI: Consult with the district chapter of NEFIN to obtain the disaggregated baseline information and set the activities for benefiting indigenous communities.

Name	Relevance and roles in the project	Engagement during Project Preparation
Federations/Networks :		
Federation of Community Forest User Groups of Nepal (FECOFUN);	Networks of community-based forest user groups advocate for rights of users, raise awareness and coordinate with line agencies to facilitate community based forestry program. The networks are an effective and efficient means to generate awareness and disseminate information at the local level including in areas related to HWC and behaviour change. Networks will facilitate the local process for implementation.	Networks will be engaged in project preparation and they will be invited to stakeholders? workshops and consulted individually.
Community Forest Coordination Committee (CFCC);		Mode: Through the field consultations, individual consultations, consultation workshop and validation workshop
Association of Collaborative Forest Users Nepal (ACOFUN);		GESI: Consult with the district chapters of FECOFUN, CFCC, and ACOFUN to obtain communities priorities for activities design and the disaggregated baseline data information and design field activities for alternative livelihoods that include empowerment of women.
Association of Family Forest Owners, Nepal (AFFON)		As key beneficiaries and project partners, these CBOs will be consulted during project design.
Local Community-based Organizations (CBOs)		
Buffer Zone Management Committees (BZMC); Buffer Zone User Committees (BZUC); Buffer Zone Community Forest User Groups (BZCFUG);	Local CBOs are represented by community-based organizations with a mandate to support conservation initiatives in the buffer zones of protected areas and community forests and in corridors. They support monitoring, habitat management, community-based compensation and relief mechanisms and sustainable forest resource management. They are also the ones directly impacted positively and negatively by conservation and the ones immediately responding to conflict situations in almost all of the cases. The project aims to work with local communities and forest user groups in key areas to implement activities.	Mode: Through field consultation (FDG), individual consultations, consultation workshop and representatives of demo project sites participate in validation workshop
Community Forest User Groups (CFUG); Forest Conservation Area (FCA) Councils;		GESI: Consult with the executive committee of BZUCs, BZCFUGs, CFUGs, PFCs, and RRT representing participants from, IPs, Women, Farmers, and BZCFUGs. Consult to obtain the gender and social inclusion disaggregated baseline information and set targets for capacity development activities
Community-based Anti-poaching Units (CBAPU); Community level Rapid Response Team (RRT)		

CONSERVATION PARTNERS

Name	Relevance and roles in the project	Engagement during Project Preparation
I/NGOs	International and National, non-government organizations dedicated to biodiversity conservation. Coordination during project implementation and co-financing.	Key I/NGOs will be invited to stakeholder workshops during project preparation.
National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC);		Mode: Through the field consultations, individual consultations, consultation workshop and validation workshop
Zoological Society of London (ZSL);		Gender: Consult with the NTNC, ZSL, MWT, and Green Growth Nepal to obtain disaggregated baseline information & design field activities of capacity building and sustainable livelihoods that empower women.
IUCN Nepal;	These GEF Agencies and other donors have strong roles in policy, agriculture and NRM, and infrastructure development; and are implementing related conservation and development projects. The project will coordinate and consult with the GEF Agencies.	Donor agencies and other GEF agencies will be invited to stakeholder workshops during project preparation for coordination and replication of learning.
Other GEF Agencies and donors		Mode: Consultation workshop and individual consultations
IUCN, UNDP, UNEP, World Bank, ADB and FAO; bilateral donors such as USAID, IKI, KfW		Gender: Consult with agencies on gender strategy, and environmental and social safeguards policy.

7.4 Have the required applicable safeguards documents been uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
HF May 2025

Cleared.

HF March 2025

Yes. Please include in the safeguard review the waterhole creation and other physical construction or works with potential impacts and mitigation measures included.

Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response 4/17/2025

Thank you for this note. Please note we have already addressed this in the ESMF and all activities will be upfront screened.

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

8.1 GEF Financing Table and Focal Area Elements: Is the proposed GEF financing (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines? Are they within the resources available from (mark all that apply):

STAR allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF March 2025

Yes.

Agency Response

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF March 2025

Yes.

Agency Response

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

SCCF B (Tech Transfer, Innovation, Private Sector)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

8.2 Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

a) Is the use of PPG attached in Annex: Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant (PPG) properly itemized according to the guidelines?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF May 2025

Cleared.

HF March 2025

Please remove ineligible activities from the PPG utilization including:

- a.) Due diligence Assessment and Project Operational Manual.
- b.) Personnel cost for WWF-Nepal and WWF US are not an eligible expenditure as in Guidelines it is explicitly prohibited to pay Agency's personnel or consultants ? please return to the GEF Trustee the amount spent (\$15,735.07 + \$27,800) and cover these with co-financing resources.

GEFTF will only cover eligible activities included in Guidelines.

Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response (4/17/2025):

This is noted,

The table was inaccurately reporting based on which WWF Team was managing the funding to hir external consultants.

External consultants were contracted by WWF-US (International Consultant to develop project options, develop terms of reference, technical design parameters and a financial plan) and the Gender and Environmental Social Safeguards Analysis and framework. WWF Nepal contracted external consultants for local experts for consultations and national workshops, this was displayed as "WWF Nepal Staff"

Please see the updated PPG utilization table.

8.3 Source of Funds

Does the sources of funds table match with the amounts in the OFP's LOE?

Note: the table only captures sources of funds from the country's STAR allocation

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF March 2025

Yes.

Agency Response

8.4 Confirmed co-financing for the project, by name and type: Are the amounts, sources, and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

e.g. Have letters of co-finance been submitted, correctly classified as investment mobilized or in-kind/recurring expenditures? If investment mobilized: is there an explanation below the table to describe the nature of co-finance? If letters are not in English, is a translation provided?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF March 2025

Yes.

Agency Response

Annex B: Endorsements

8.5 a) If ? and only if - this is a global or regional project for which not all country-based interventions were known at PIF stage and, therefore, not all LOEs provided:

Has the project been endorsed by the GEF OFP/s of all GEF eligible participating countries and has the OFP name and position been checked against the GEF database at the time of submission?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

b) Are the OFP endorsement letters uploaded to the GEF Portal (compiled as a single document, if applicable)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF March 2025

Yes.

Agency Response

c) Do the letters follow the correct format and are the endorsed amounts consistent with the amounts included in the Portal?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF March 2025

Yes.

Agency Response

Annex C: Project Results Framework

8.6 a) Have the GEF core indicators been included?

b) Have SMART indicators been used; are means of verification well thought out; do the targets correspond/are appropriate in view of total project financing (too high? Too low?)

c) Are all relevant indicators sex disaggregated?

d) Is the Project Results Framework included in the Project Document pasted in the Template?

e)[If a regional/global coordination child project under an integrated program] Does the results framework reflect the program-wide result framework, inclusive of results from child projects and specific to the regional/global coordination child project? [If a country child project under an integrated program] Is the child project result framework inclusive of program-wide metrics monitored across child project by the Regional/Global Child project?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF May 2025

Cleared.

HF March 2025

Cleared.

d.) Yes, but the current RF in the Portal entry is illegible as it exceeds the margins. Please revise/rework the RF and re-upload it to ensure it is legible in the Portal and auto-generated PDF. Please contact ITS directly if you encounter issues. The attached spreadsheet was reviewed for now.

e.) Yes, though should note that given the scale of interventions in component 3 on habitat and the significant historic and ongoing investments in these three parks and adjoining landscapes it seems questionable as to whether this will have an influence on tiger numbers during the life of this project (as reported under GWP GEF-8 Required Indicator 1.1.1). Therefore it is worth noting/documenting that this is a parallel monitoring effort, rather than a direct causal link between this project investment and the overall pop of tigers in these three parks per se.

Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response (4/17/2025):

d.) The results framework has been uploaded to be more clear and fit within the margins.

e.) We added the GWP GEF-8 Required Indicator 1.1.1 in the Results Framework column ?Notes and Assumptions?.

The monitoring of tigers in the targeted three parks represents a parallel monitoring effort rather than an attempt to establish a direct causal link between this project investment and the overall populations of tigers in these parks, which may only occur beyond the project lifetime. (see Results Framework Excel file ? cell L11)

Annex E: Project map and coordinates

8.7 Have geographic coordinates of project locations been entered in the dedicated table? Are relevant illustrative maps included?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF May 2025

Cleared.

HF March 2025

Please include a more readable map where project sites/PAs are clearly demarcated. This is one is difficult to decipher and will be more challenging with printing.

Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response (4/17/2025):

Thank you for this comment. The image in the new submission was uploaded in the largest possible size with the color scale diminished to allow the portal to accept it. Unfortunately the portal restricts the characters allowed in each portal entry box, after discussing with the GEF ITSOP team, it is understood that the larger and more colorful an image is, the more characters it has and the higher the likelihood the portal will not accept it. Please see the Site Selection Annex for clearer images.

Annex F: Environmental and Social Safeguards Documentation and Rating

8.8 Have the relevant safeguard documents been uploaded to the GEF Portal? Has the safeguards rating been provided and filled out in the ER field below the risk table?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF March 2025

Yes.

Agency Response

Annex G: GEF Budget template

8.9 a) Is the GEF budget template attached and appropriately filled out incl. items such as the executing partner for each budget line?

b) Are the activities / expenditures reasonably and accurately charged to the three identified sources (Components, M&E and PMC)?

c) Are TORs for key project staff funded by GEF grant and/or co-finance attached?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF May 2025

Cleared.

HF March 2025

a.i) Budget attachment is present, but in Word format which is hard to read, please upload in excel but also please include the budget directly in the Portal template/view since the Council will not receive attachments, just an auto-generated pdf of the portal entry. Please double check that it is within margins and legible.

Please use the template provided in the Guidelines on the Project Cycle and remove the columns 'outcome' and only leave the columns 'components' so that there is more margin for the details on the activities implemented.

ii.) Please include the proposed executing partner for each budget line.

iii.) Please provide a justification for vehicle (motorbike) purchase.

iv.) Most of the project budget is earmarked under the category of Grants/Subgrants, totaling more than \$3 million. What does Grants/Sub-grants is meant here (outsourced? Or, is WWF contracted back by the government?) Please explain, revise.

v) Of the \$3 million of Grants/sub-grants, \$1.4 million is for 'grassland management prescription.' Please explain what this is and this heavy focus on grassland management, how this fits into the approach to address HWC which seems to be core of the project, the wildlife landscape approach through GWP and what, if any activities will be taken to conserve and management the broader landscape including multiple ecotypes/ecosystems. This is also flagged in a previous comment but now the budget makes the scale clear.

b.) Project manager should be charged to PMC rather than components. Please revise.

M&E and PMC totals in the budget table do not match the figures in the Child Project Description Overview ? though the difference is only \$1 and \$2 dollars, they need to match. Please amend.

c.) Yes.

We will review the final budget table per the resubmission and provide comments as appropriate.

Agency Response

WWF GEF Agency Response (4/17/2025):

Thank you for these comments,

a) i.)The GEF portal does not allow for an Excel file to be uploaded in the budget section of the portal, only a word version. The excel file has been uploaded in the roadmap section. The table was pasted into the portal entry field from Word document per specifications from the GEF Portal ITSOP team, we hope this appears legible.

ii.) The executing entity column has been populated

iii) Vehicle (motorbikes) will be used by PMU staff for their mobility in different PAs where there is no other means of transportation available. an explanation has been included in the footnotes

iv) The project budget earmarked under the category of Grant/sub-grant will be channeled through government treasury system resulting in ?on budget on treasury? financial system. This system is recommended by Ministry of Finance (OFP) for all GEF fundings.

v) Contributing to the overall objective of the project with an assumption that effective habitat management will contribute toward minimizing HWC. In this context, proposed activity such as wetland/waterbodies creation and restoration within PAs is crucial for wildlife including herbivores and tigers. This is even more critical in current context of changing climate (water scarcity) such as drought, forest fires to prevent wildlife dispersal outside the core area. Sites for creating wetland will be in the natural depression without altering the natural landscape. In addition, these newly created waterbodies will enhance the soil moisture that directly reduces the extent of forest fires. This activity is focused in 3 high tiger density areas (Chitwan, Parsa and Bardia) with actual ground implementation along with qualifiers (need assessment, research, data base creation, monitoring). This budget also entails detailed activities related with safeguard measures while grassland management.

b) The proposed Project Manager and Technical Lead will contribute as a technical expert for the successful implementation of the components (1, 2 and M&E). However, 20% of Project

Manager is charged under PMC for the overall project operation and administrative oversight. The TOR for the additional functions are available and have been updated to directly provide technical details.

Annex H: NGI Relevant Annexes

8.10 a) Does the project provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to assess the following criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments.

b) Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments.

c) Is the Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

Agency Response

Additional Annexes

9. GEFSEC DECISION

9.1.GEFSEC Recommendation

Is the project recommended for approval

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

HF May 2025

Yes.

HF March 2025

No, not yet recommended for approval. Please revise and resubmit.

9.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency during the inception and implementation phase

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

9.3 Review Dates

	CEO Approval	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	3/31/2025	4/17/2025

**CEO
Approval**

**Response to Secretariat
comments**

Additional Review (as necessary)	5/5/2025
Additional Review (as necessary)	
Additional Review (as necessary)	
Additional Review (as necessary)	