

Partnership for Ecological Advancement and Conservation of Endangered Big Cats in India (PEACE +)

Review PPG Request and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID
12196
Countries
India
Project Name
Partnership for Ecological Advancement and Conservation of Endangered Big
Cats in India (PEACE +)
Agencies
UNDP
Date received by PM
1/15/2026
Review completed by PM

Program Manager
Benjamin Singer
Focal Area
Biodiversity
Project Type
GBFF

GEF-8 Project Preparation Grant request Review Sheet

1. General Project Information / Eligibility

a) Does the project meet the criteria for eligibility for GBFF funding?

b) Is the General Project Information table correctly populated?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

II. Indicative Project Overview

- a) Is the project objective presented as a concise statement and clear?**
- b) Are the components, outcomes and outputs sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objective?**

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

- c) Are the components adequately funded?**
- d) Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional (only for Multi-trust Funds PPGs with BD from the GEF Trust Fund)?**
- e) Is the PMC equal to or below 5% of the total GEF grant for projects of more than \$2 million or 10% for projects of less than \$2 million? If the requested PMC is above the caps, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?**

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

III. Project Rationale

- a. Does the project adequately describe the: (i) current situation/baseline conditions within the project geographic area or project thematic area; (ii) problem(s) that the project will address; (iii) goal and objectives of the project; and (iv) justification for the project intervention; and (v) expected results including the Global Environmental Benefits and an estimate of the project's contributions to the relevant biodiversity core indicators.**

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

IV. Project Description

- a) Is there a concise theory of change that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements will contribute to the objective, the expected causal pathways, and the key assumptions underlying these?**
- b) Are the project components and activities identified in the theory of change adequately described.**
- c) Is a list of stakeholders that will be involved in the project and their roles in the design and implementation of the project provided?**
- d) Are the Specific Action Area(s) that the project is aligned with identified and an explanation provided on and how the project will support the achievement of the specific Action Area objective(s).**

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

V. Does the proposal adequately describe how the project meets the following criteria:

- a) Potential to generate global environmental benefits (GEBs) (include a description of the GEBs the project will generate per the GEF-8 Core Indicators for biodiversity);**
- b) Alignment with the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and/or National Biodiversity Finance Plans or similar instruments to identify national and/or regional priorities;**
- c) The level of policy coherence and coordination across multiple ministries, agencies, the private sector, and civil society that the project aims to support;**
- d) Whether the project will mobilize the resources of the private sector and philanthropies'; and**
- e) Whether and how the project will engage with and provide support to IPLCs.**

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

VI. Project results indicators

Is the table correctly populated and consistent with the Project Description?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

VII. Project Financing Tables

- a) Are all the tables correctly populated?**
- b) Are the indicative expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines (only for projects with GEF TF components)?**

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

VIII. Project Endorsement

- a) Has the project been endorsed by the country's(ies) OFP and has the OFP at the time of PPG request submission name and position been checked against the GEF database?**
- b) Are the OFP endorsement letters uploaded to the GEF Portal (compiled as a single document, if applicable)?**
- c) Do the letters follow the correct format and are the endorsed amounts consistent with the amounts included in the Portal?**

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

IX. GEFSEC Decision

a. Is the PPG recommended for technical clearance?

b. Additional comments to be considered by the Agency during project preparation

Secretariat's Comments

2026/02/19 Dear Colleagues, thank you for this submission. For this project to be further considered in the selection round, please address the comment below and resubmit as soon as possible:

- The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) is not mentioned in the letter of endorsement. Please resubmit a revised letter or remove IBCA from the portal.

Please note that the selection process remains ongoing.

2026/02/28 Dear Colleagues, an additional review by the team generated the following comments. Please address these comments in your resubmission, with many thanks in advance for your understanding.

1. The project has a transnational dimension as stated in the title and throughout Component 3. However, it was submitted as a single-country project, with just one LOE (India). If this is a multi-country project, it would need to list all the countries involved, with each country submitting an LOE. If this is to remain a single-country project, it is difficult to see how a transnational component could be implemented in just one country - in which case we would recommend removing references to "transnational".

2. GBFF funds cannot be used in this UNDP-implemented project to deploy non-grant instruments in which UNDP does not have the operational and technical capacity to operate and transact (e.g. credit lines, guarantees, etc.) given the provisions of the **GEF Non Grant Instrument (NGI) policy**. Unless another GEF implementing agency is used that qualifies as capable of using NGI, the PPG request should thus make clear that GBFF funds would only be used as technical assistance and/or to deploy grants, including performance-based grants or reimbursable grants only. The use of GBFF funds as technical assistance to establish the operational and financial framework for blended finance instruments pilots IS acceptable, if these pilots and instruments deploy public funding from sources other than GBFF.

If this project were to be selected in this GBFF selection round, clarity would need to be provided at CEO endorsement request stage on *the exact blended finance instruments and financial structures that would be supported/developed through TA, which financial institution would deploy them, and with what source of funds*. For financial instruments other than grants/reimbursable grants such as loans, guarantees, insurance, these would have to be designed with the direct involvement of the financial institutions/investors/DFIs that can put the money into the financing window/platform. For GBFF funds that may be deployed as performance-based grants or reimbursable grants, a term sheet would need to be provided that notably clarifies how reflows are triggered and how they will be managed by the project.

This project includes a blended finance facility as output 3.2. It will be important to clearly state that GBFF financing will not be used for financial instruments other than grants or reimbursable grants. While the use of GBFF funding for TA or enabling activities in the form of grants is possible, the use of GBFF funding for instruments such as debt/loans (including bonds and credit lines), guarantees and insurance are ineligible in UNDP-implemented GEF/GBFF projects.

2026/03/06 Thank you very much for this resubmission. We note that several references to cooperation with neighbouring/range countries remain, notably in outputs 3.1 and 3.3 (screenshot below). To maintain this, UNDP would need to secure letters of endorsement from the countries involved (which will need to be listed explicitly, rather than subsumed under "other range countries"). These can be \$0 LOEs, meaning that countries other than India can indicate \$0 in the table contained in the LOE. This will not affect their country maximum under the GBFF. Please make sure to resubmit with the LOEs of all countries mentioned in Component 3 (in which case, reference to "transnational" can be reinserted where relevant).

3.1. **IBCA Fund established to ensure financial sustainability for big cat conservation in India and other range countries**

3.2. Blended Finance Facility for Big Cat Landscapes (non-grant capital mobilization) is established to mobilize private/CSR and domestic bank capital for community enterprises and insurance mechanisms.

3.3 **A Knowledge Management Hub is established at IBCA as a knowledge management and conservation cooperation mechanism (including Illegal Wildlife Trade) between India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Tajikistan and other range countries.**

2026/03/20 Congratulations! We are pleased to inform you that this proposal has been selected under the fifth round of the GBFF.

As you develop the CEO endorsement request, please take account the following comments:

1. Please double-check the project's expected climate change mitigation impact as it might be overstated, and provide a spreadsheet (e.g., EXACT) to justify the figures.

2. The specifics of the IBCA Transnational Fund established through a Blended Finance Facility requires significant elaboration as the PPG request is not very clear or explicit on this critical component of the project, bearing in mind the comments above on the need to avoid using GBFF financing to deploy non-grant instruments.

3. The project must discuss how it complements historical GEF investments on big cat conservation in the region before and during the current wildlife integrated program.

4. Evidence of involvement of TPLCs in designing the proposal is necessary (see also comment below).

5. Since submission, [GBFF guidelines on supporting actions by IPLCs](#) have been published. Please follow these guidelines carefully during PPG implementation, taking care to involve IPLC representatives in co-designing relevant components and including IPLC institutions identified by IPLCs themselves. The CEO endorsement request is expected to provide evidence that the reported dollar amount to support actions by IPLCs for biodiversity was calculated according to the guidelines.

6. Since submission, the GBFF Council adopted a [new results framework](#) for the GBFF. Please note this project will be requested to transition to this new results framework at its next iteration (either the CEO endorsement request if submitted after July 1, 2026, or the first PIR). Please note that detailed guidelines for the new results framework will be released before July. New requirements include the provision of polygon data for the location of project interventions at CEO endorsement stage. In addition, projects' results frameworks are:

- Encouraged to draw extensively in the headline, binary, component or complementary indicators of the [KMGBF monitoring framework](#) to better measure their contributions to the KMGBF goals and targets; and
- Requested, where feasible and relevant, to include indicators of biodiversity outcomes to complement and underpin GBFF indicators.

We look forward to receiving the CEO ER package and remain available should you wish to contact us.

Agency's Comments

20 March 2026

Response to the comments on 6/03/2026:

Thank you for the guidance. UNDP, in collaboration with IBCA and the Ministry, confirms its intent to secure and submit \$0 LoEs from all relevant range countries by the time of the CEO Endorsement request. Formal requests have already been initiated with the concerned countries, and the LoEs will be obtained and submitted at the time of CEO ER submission. As suggested, references to 'transnational' elements will be reviewed and reintroduced, where appropriate, during the PPG stage.

Response to the comments on 20/03/2026:

Thank you for the continued guidance.

1. As advised, the references to specific countries ('India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Tajikistan and other range countries') under Component 3, including in Output 3.3 and the component description, have been removed.
2. A statement has been added in the PPG request confirming that UNDP, in collaboration with IBCA and the Ministry, will secure and submit \$0 LoEs from the relevant countries by the time of CEO Endorsement. Requests to this effect have already been initiated with the concerned countries.

6 March 2026

1.

Thank you for this clarification. We agree with the observation and have addressed it accordingly. The concept has been confirmed as a single-country project (India) with one LOE, and we have therefore removed references to a 'transnational' project dimension throughout the document to ensure full consistency with the submission modality.

Specifically, we revised the project title to clearly reflect the single-country scope (*Partnership for Ecological Advancement and Conservation of Endangered Big Cats in India (PEACE +)*) and adjusted the narrative in Component 3 and related sections so that any regional cooperation

elements are framed strictly as knowledge exchange and dissemination activities hosted/led from India, rather than as a multi-country implementation component requiring additional country LOEs.

2.

Thank you for the clarification. We fully agree with the comments and guidance provided. The GBFF resources will not be used to deploy non-grant instruments (such as loans/credit lines, guarantees, insurance products, or bonds) in line with the GEF Non-Grant Instrument (NGI) policy constraints for UNDP-supported GBFF projects.

Accordingly, the PPG request and the project narrative have been revised to clearly specify that GBFF financing will be used exclusively for:

(a) technical assistance (TA) and enabling activities delivered through grants, and/or (b) grants, including performance-based grants and reimbursable grants, as applicable. Any potential blended-finance pilots or financing mechanisms developed under the project will therefore be supported through TA only, with capitalization expected to come from non-GBFF public and/or private sources deployed by qualified financial institutions, investors, or development finance institutions. To reflect this clarification, the following statement has been included in the description of Component 3:

(?GBFF resources will not be used to deploy non-grant instruments (loans/credit lines, guarantees, insurance, bonds). Any pilots requiring such instruments will be capitalized and deployed by qualified financial institutions/DFIs/investors using non-GBFF funding.?)

Accordingly, we have revised the PPG request and concept narrative to make explicit that GBFF financing will be used only for (a) technical assistance (TA) and enabling activities delivered through grants, and/or (b) grants, including performance-based grants and reimbursable grants, as applicable. Any potential blended-finance pilots and associated financial instruments will be developed through TA and would be capitalized with non-GBFF public and/or private resources deployed by qualified financial institutions/investors/DFIs, not by GBFF. The following has been added to the description of Component 3:

(GBFF resources will not be used to deploy non-grant instruments (loans/credit lines, guarantees, insurance, bonds); any pilots requiring non-grant instruments will be capitalized and deployed by qualified financial institutions/DFIs/investors using non-GBFF funding)

We would also like to note that UNDP has been developing innovative nature-finance mechanisms in the region, including through the **Tiger Landscapes Investment Facility (TLIF)**. TLIF provides a blended-finance platform designed to mobilize public and private capital for tiger landscape conservation and sustainable livelihoods. The facility is currently being operationalized in **Malaysia** and **Thailand**, demonstrating proof of concept for structuring nature-finance mechanisms that combine grants, technical assistance, and catalytic capital mobilization. The experience and lessons emerging from TLIF will help inform the design of the enabling framework and financial architecture under this project, while remaining fully consistent with GEF/GBFF policies governing the use of grant resources.

Finally, we acknowledge that, should the project be selected in this GBFF round, additional clarity will be provided at CEO Endorsement stage regarding the proposed financial structure of the Blended Finance Facility for Big Cat Landscapes supported through TA, including the participating financial institution(s), the sources of capital to be mobilized, and?where reimbursable or performance-based grants are applied?the indicative term-sheet parameters, (including how reflows will be triggered, tracked, and managed).

27 February 2026

Thank you. We've revised the Letter of Endorsement to include The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA).

Review Dates

	PPG Request Review	Agency Response
First Review	2/19/2026	2/27/2026
Additional Review (as necessary)	3/6/2026	3/6/2026
Additional Review (as necessary)	3/20/2026	3/20/2026
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		