



## GEF SECRETARIAT REVIEW FOR FULL/MEDIUM-SIZED PROJECTS\* THE GEF/LDCF/SCCF/NPIF TRUST FUNDS

GEF ID:	<b>5559</b>		
Country/Region:	<b>Russian Federation</b>		
Project Title:	<b>Conservation of Big Cats</b>		
GEF Agency:	<b>WWF</b>	GEF Agency Project ID:	
Type of Trust Fund:	<b>GEF Trust Fund</b>	GEF Focal Area (s):	<b>Biodiversity</b>
GEF-5 Focal Area/ LDCF/SCCF Objective (s):	<b>BD-1; BD-2;</b>		
Anticipated Financing PPG:	<b>\$200,000</b>	Project Grant:	<b>\$12,707,550</b>
Co-financing:	<b>\$60,000,000</b>	Total Project Cost:	<b>\$72,907,550</b>
PIF Approval:		Council Approval/Expected:	<b>November 01, 2013</b>
CEO Endorsement/Approval		Expected Project Start Date:	
Program Manager:	<b>Yoko Watanabe</b>	Agency Contact Person:	<b>Herve Lefevre</b>

Review Criteria	Questions	Secretariat Comment at PIF (PFD)/Work Program Inclusion	Secretariat Comment At CEO Endorsement(FSP)/Approval (MSP)
Eligibility	1. Is the participating <b>country eligible</b> ?	Yes, Russia has ratified the CBD and eligible for GEF BD finance.	
	2. Has the <b>operational focal point</b> endorsed the project?	Yes, an duly signed endorsement letter by the OFP was attached, confirming the use of total \$14.069220 from the BD STAR by having WWF as the project agency.	
Resource Availability	3. Is the proposed Grant (including the Agency fee) within the <b>resources available</b> from (mark all that apply):		
	• the STAR allocation?	Yes, the amount is within the remaining GEF BD STAR allocation for Russia.	
	• the focal area allocation?	Yes, as noted above.	
	• the LDCF under the principle of equitable access	n/a	
	• the SCCF (Adaptation or	n/a	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Nagoya Protocol Investment Fund</li> </ul>	n/a	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>focal area set-aside?</li> </ul>	n/a	
Strategic Alignment	<p>4. Is the project aligned with the focal area/multifocal areas/ LDCF/SCCF/NPIF <b>results framework and strategic objectives</b>?</p> <p><i>For BD projects: Has the project explicitly articulated which Aichi Target(s) the project will help achieve and are SMART indicators identified, that will be used to track progress toward achieving the Aichi target(s).</i></p>	<p>The proposal is in line with the GEF BD1 and BD2, while the approaches could be further strengthened to conform with the focal area strategy by addressing the comments.</p> <p>The description on the alignment with BD2 (page 14) needs to be revised in line with the focal area strategy, particularly focusing on mainstreaming biodiversity in regional planning, land use mapping, and in key production sector policies.</p>	
	<p>5. Is the project consistent with the recipient <b>country's national strategies and plans</b> or reports and assessments under relevant conventions, including NPFE, NAPA, NCSA, NBSAP or NAP?</p>	<p>No, while linkage with key national strategies and plans are noted, please further clarify the conformity particularly with the NBSAP in Russia (not only on high value forests). Further information and linkage with the National Tiger Recovery Plan, and other major strategies and plans are also expected under section B.1.</p>	
Project Design	<p>6. Is (are) the <b>baseline project(s)</b>, including problem(s) that the baseline project(s) seek/s to address, sufficiently described and based on sound data and assumptions?</p>	<p>No, further information are expected under Part II, section A.1.</p> <p>1. Provide brief information on the status of each of the targeted big cats, including its estimated population, range, and trends. Provide some maps as Annex.</p> <p>2. Provide information on the alignment and linkage to each species' strategy and action plan at the national and regional level (not only on tiger). Clarify how the project design is built on to these strategies, and their gaps. Particularly, clearly describe the linkage with the National Tiger Recovery Program.</p>	

		<p>government programs are very weak and lack information on the specific linkage with the big cats and the concerned ecoregions. Please provide additional information.</p> <p>4. The baseline information is particularly weak on North Caucasus. Does WWF and the government have the capacity to work in this area, and is it really cost effective to cover and spread the resources to this region? Please review carefully and it could be effective to focus only on Far East and Altai Sayan in the Eastern regions? North Caucasus could be taken out or clearly distinguish the type of investment compared to the other regions where there are concrete baseline activities and information.</p>	
	<p>7. Are the components, outcomes and outputs in the <b>project framework</b> (Table B) clear, sound and appropriately detailed?</p>	<p>No, the project framework needs to be revised and strengthened. Below are detail comments to be addressed to improve the structure and the content:</p> <p>Project objective: Based on the project approach described in the text, and to better conform with the GEF BD Focal Area Strategy, the PM suggests to revise the project objective to further reflect and highlight the fact that the project is taking a landscape and ecosystem approach for conservation. The project objective could inform that the project will be focused on the conservation of unique landscapes and ecosystems in the globally important ecoregions in Russia, while maintaining big cats as keystone species.</p> <p>The three components are rather confusing and mixed up with landscape</p>	

as institutional/regulatory framework and on-the-ground activities. The PM suggests to have three distinct levels of component as follows: 1) Protected areas and bufferzone/surrounding communities level; 2) Landscape level; 3) Trans-boundary level; and 4) Project monitoring and evaluation.

Component 1:

This component is rather confusing and vague. This component could focus on "landscape/mainstreaming biodiversity conservation," and focus particularly on strengthening related national and regional institutional, regulatory, and strategic framework, while having outcomes and outputs only related to those.

Outcome 1.1. could be clearly focused on strengthening national and regional institutional capacity and regulatory framework for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation at the landscape level.

1.1.1. should distinguish what needs to be done at the: 1) national; and 2) regional levels, considering the structure of the country.

1.1.2. Is the law enforcement related to new institutional/regulatory framework, or more on anti-poaching brigade and other actions at the protected areas and surrounding communities level? Please clarify, and if later, this should better move to component 2.

1.1.3. Capacity building and knowledge

local people, but decision makers and other stakeholders?

1.2.3. Unless biodiversity mainstreaming and EIAs are part of the policies of key production sectors that are identified (infrastructure, mining, etc.) this would not happen. The project needs to identify at least one or two production sectors to possibly mainstream biodiversity in their policies to work on the big cats at the landscape scale, and clearly note it as an output.

Component 2:

The title of this component is similar to the current component 1, and rather confusing. As noted above, this component could focus on management of PAs and bufferzone/surrounding communities.

2.1. Please identify and include approximate coverage (i.e. hectares) of both new and existing protected areas that the project will be investing in.

2.1.1. Please indicate potential geographical sites/areas for expansion and coverage.

2.1.2. Again, please indicate potential sites/areas that the project will be focusing on.

2.2. "Enhanced participation of communities..." is a rather weak and vague outcome. If the participation of communities is mainly focused for decreased wildlife conflict and improved livelihood, better state it that way.

2.2.2.  
"Income generation schemes" is a very broad statement, which experiences show that it does not necessary lead to tangible conservation nor development results. If the activities are focused mainly on ecotourism and non-timber products as noted in the text, focus and specifically state those relevant activities to conservation.

"Community-donor agreement" is a rather limited approach and an uncommon term. The PM suggests to explore different and more sustainable mechanisms, including PES, tax or fee-based system, etc.

"Community-managed protected areas" - is this about co-management of protected areas between government and communities? Please clarify.

Component 3: The scope of this component is rather unclear and unfocused. Is this about "international Cooperation" or "Transboundary management, among the regional countries within the identified ecoregions"? Later seems more appropriate in this context, and please revise appropriately. Further, the PM suggests to target on coordination to combat wildlife trade and transboundary PAs while this component lacks focus.

3.1. It should be rather stated as "decreased wildlife trade or increased coordination among the transboundary PAs" or something very concrete.

		<p>issue? If so, clearly state so.</p> <p>3.1.2. This is very vague and beyond the scope of this project, and should be deleted.</p> <p>3.1.3. There should be already existing related transboundary agreements. What is the baseline, and what are the gaps?</p> <p>3.1.4. Development and management of PAs in the Russian side should be covered by component 2 as part of the network. Though there could be outputs related to coordination among the transboundary countries, which needs to be clarified (e.g. joint planning, monitoring, training?).</p> <p>3.2. This awareness raising outcome and outputs are very vague and too broad with unclear purpose, and should be deleted as it stands. If it is for combating wildlife trade, revise and focus on those related activities. If it is related to policy change etc, it is already covered under component 1.</p> <p>General: While addressing the comments, please carefully review and revise both the table B and the related texts in the PIF.</p> <p>Please also provide brief paragraph that summarize approach and information on each component, under the GEF-funded Alternative section (page 10).</p>	
	<p>8. (a) Are global environmental/adaptation benefits identified? (b) Is the description of the incremental/additional reasoning</p>	<p>No, the global environmental benefits (GEBs) is still unclear. Please state some bullet points that clearly articulate tangible GEBs under the "GEF funded</p>	

		<p>To clarify the incremental reasoning, please provide brief description on the scenarios on with and without GEF funded alternative.</p> <p>As noted also above, the landscape approach should come upfront and be the focus of the project, while using the big cats as keystone species. This should be reflected also in the text (particularly revise para 2 of page 6, and first para of the "GEF funded alterinative" section of page 10).</p>	
	<p>9. Is there a clear description of:  a) the <b>socio-economic benefits</b>, including gender dimensions, to be delivered by the project, and  b) how will the delivery of such benefits support the achievement of incremental/ additional benefits?</p>		
	<p>10. Is the role of public participation, including CSOs, and indigenous peoples where relevant, identified and explicit means for their engagement explained?</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>On indigenous and local communities, despite there are significant number of indigenous communities in the ecoregions, no substantial information has been provided. Please provide basic information on the IPs that are covered in the ecoregions, and brief description on how the project will ensure appropriate engagement with them through the project preparation and implementation.</p> <p>On the CSOs,  - Please clarify the role of WWF-US versus WWF-Russia for project preparation and implementation. It is unclear in both stakeholder and coordination sections (page 12 and 13).</p>	

		<p>- Please clarify baseline activities of TRAFFIC and WCS in these ecoregions.</p> <p>Please clarify the activities of WB and their role in the project as stakeholder (page 11).</p> <p>Please clarify how gender issues/groups maybe relevant and addressed in the project.</p>	
	<p>11. Does the project take into account potential major risks, including the consequences of climate change, and describes sufficient risk mitigation measures? (e.g., measures to enhance climate resilience)</p>	<p>No, the mitigation measures are weak. Please provide information on the concrete project activities to mitigate the risks, rather than as general statement. For example, the risk of international and transboundary collaboration still exists after two decades of investment by WWF in the regions. There should be concrete measures to be built in the project design to do things differently and mitigate the risks, and they should be stated in the "measures" section.</p>	
	<p>12. Is the <b>project consistent and properly coordinated</b> with other related initiatives in the country or in the region?</p>	<p>No, it requires further information.</p> <p>1. GTRP: Please clarify the relationship between the project and GTRP, and what it means "to be integrated into the GTRP."</p> <p>2. WB: While there may not be any duplication of effort, is there any possibility to coordinate closely and work together on some elements of the project? While they are also identified as stakeholder, additional information are required on the linkage and coordination.</p> <p>On other related projects and initiatives, what are the concrete coordination mechanisms that are envisioned at this stage? The text is rather vague and</p>	

	<p>13. Comment on the project's <b>innovative aspects, sustainability, and potential for scaling up.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess whether the project is innovative and if so, how, and if not, why not.</li> <li>• Assess the project's strategy for sustainability, and the likelihood of achieving this based on GEF and Agency experience.</li> <li>• Assess the potential for scaling up the project's intervention.</li> </ul>	<p>All elements are weak or not adequately considered in the project design. Please provide a brief paragraph each on 1) innovative aspects, 2) how the project plans to ensure sustainability (and in-build institutional and financial sustainability in the project design), and 3) potential for scale up (i.e. how the project will ensure replication and scaling up of the initiative at the national and regional scales).</p>	
	<p>14. Is the project structure/design sufficiently close to what was presented at PIF, with clear justifications for changes?</p>		
	<p>15. Has the cost-effectiveness of the project been sufficiently demonstrated, including the cost-effectiveness of the project design as compared to alternative approaches to achieve similar benefits?</p>		
<p>Project Financing</p>	<p>16. Is the GEF funding and co-financing as indicated in Table B appropriate and adequate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs?</p>	<p>The cofinancing ratio is 1 to 5 and considered adequate.</p>	
	<p>17. <u>At PIF:</u> Is the indicated amount and composition of co-financing as indicated in Table C adequate? Is the amount that the Agency bringing to the project in line with its role? <u>At CEO endorsement:</u> Has co-financing been confirmed?</p>	<p>Local governments' cofinance should be clarified with specific amounts for cash and in-kind (i.e. use different line for cash and in-kind and clarify the amounts).</p> <p>WWF is identified to provide a cash cofinance of \$10m and considered</p>	

	18. Is the funding level for <b>project management cost</b> appropriate?	No. The Project Management Cost is identified as close to 10% of the total project cost. For a project of this size, the norm is to be within 5%. Please revise.	
	19. <u>At PIF</u> , is PPG requested? If the requested amount deviates from the norm, has the Agency provided adequate justification that the level requested is in line with project design needs? <u>At CEO endorsement/ approval</u> , if PPG is completed, did Agency report on the activities using the PPG fund?	Yes, a PPG amount of \$275229 is requested. However, considering that the project grant amount is just above \$10 million and it is a single country PIF, the PM suggests that the total amount to be closer to \$200,000. Please revise.	
	20. If there is a <b>non-grant instrument</b> in the project, is there a reasonable calendar of reflows included?	n/a	
Project Monitoring and Evaluation	21. Have the appropriate <b>Tracking Tools</b> been included with information for all relevant indicators, as applicable?		
	22. Does the proposal include a <b>budgeted M&amp;E Plan</b> that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?		
Agency Responses	23. Has the Agency adequately responded to comments from:		
	• STAP?		
	• Convention Secretariat?		
	• The Council?		
	• Other GEF Agencies?		
Secretariat Recommendation			
Recommendation at PIF Stage	24. <b>Is PIF clearance/approval being recommended?</b>	No, substantial additional information and revision is required. Please review the comments carefully, and resubmit a PIF with thorough revision and additional information.	

		The GEFSEC has received a revised PIF that adequately responds to the earlier comments. The GEFSEC expects that some elements as outlined below to be further clarified and elaborated by the time of CEO endorsement. The PIF is technically cleared and may be included in a future work program.	
	25. Items to consider at CEO endorsement/approval.	<p>Following issues should be further clarified by the time of CEO endorsement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Baseline projects/activities supported by the government and others.</li> <li>2. Detailed assessment and alignment of activities with the concerned big cats' strategies, including National Tiger Recovery Program and Snow Leopard Conservation Strategy.</li> <li>3. Assessment of big cats population and habitat, particularly the Persian leopard, which the status is less known. Identify differentiated and appropriate actions for each big cat.</li> <li>4. Incremental reasoning of the project</li> <li>5. Risks and mitigation measures.</li> <li>6. Coordination and implementation arrangements.</li> </ol>	
<b>Recommendation at CEO Endorsement/ Approval</b>	<b>26. Is CEO endorsement/approval being recommended?</b>		
	First review*	August 23, 2013	
<b>Review Date (s)</b>	Additional review (as necessary)	August 30, 2013	
	Additional review (as necessary)		

**\* This is the first time the Program Manager provides full comments for the project. Subsequent follow-up reviews should be recorded. For specific comments for each section, please insert a date after comments. Greyed areas in each section do not need comments.**