



GEF-6 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)

PROJECT TYPE: Full-sized project

TYPE OF TRUST FUND: GEF Trust Fund

PART I: PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title:	Integrated Landscape Management to Secure Nepal's Protected Areas and Critical Corridors		
Country(ies):	Nepal	GEF Project ID: ¹	9437
GEF Agency(ies):	World Wildlife Fund, Inc.	GEF Agency Project ID:	G0012
Other Executing Partner(s):	Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation	Submission Date:	03/04/2016 07/21/2016
GEF Focal Area(s):	Multi-focal areas	Project Duration (Months)	60
Integrated Approach Pilot	IAP-Cities <input type="checkbox"/> IAP-Commodities <input type="checkbox"/> IAP-Food Security <input type="checkbox"/>	Corporate Program: SGP <input type="checkbox"/>	
Name of parent program:	n/a	Agency Fee (\$)	602,752

A. INDICATIVE FOCAL AREA STRATEGY FRAMEWORK AND OTHER PROGRAM STRATEGIES²

Objectives/Programs (Focal Areas, Integrated Approach Pilot, Corporate Programs)	Trust Fund	(in \$)	
		GEF Project Financing	Co-financing
BD 4 Program 9: Managing the human-biodiversity interface	GEFTF	2,232,416	14,207,551
LD 2 Program 3: Landscape Management and Restoration	GEFTF	1,382,416	8,797,978
LD 3 Program 4: Scaling-up sustainable land management through the Landscape Approach	GEFTF	850,000	5,409,573
SFM 2 Program 5: Capacity development for SFM within local communities	GEFTF	2,232,416	14,207,551
Total Project Cost		6,697,248	42,622,653

B. INDICATIVE PROJECT DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Project Objective: to promote integrated landscape management to conserve globally significant forests and wildlife						
Project Components	Financing Type ³	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	(in \$)	
					GEF Project Financing	Co-financing
Component 1: National capacity and enabling environment for cross-sectoral coordination to promote forest and landscape conservation	TA	Outcome 1.1: Improved inter-sectoral coordination from national, regional to district level for integrated forest and landscape management to support the 2015-2025 TAL Strategy	1.1.1: Cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms established for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sub-committees under National Biodiversity Conservation Committee (NBCC) Coordination with environment, infrastructure, and development Ministries Landscape Support Unit (LSU) 	GEFTF	1,594,582	10,148,252

¹ Project ID number will be assigned by GEFSEC and to be entered by Agency in subsequent document submissions.

² When completing Table A, refer to the excerpts on [GEF 6 Results Frameworks for GETF, LDCF and SCCF](#).

³ Financing type can be either investment or technical assistance.

		<p>Outcome 1.2: Capacity increased for multi-stakeholder and cross-sector landscape and forest planning and management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task force(s) under TALWG for cross-sectoral communication on specific issues of overlapping land uses in TAL • Department (DoF, DNPWC) representatives and regional focal points within MoFSC for intra-sectoral coordination • Networking mechanism for District Forest Sector Coordination Committees (DFSCC) for 18 TAL Districts <p>1.2.1: Conservation Leadership Training for 18 DFSCCs, LSU, TALWG, and department and regional focal points</p> <p>1.2.2: Training courses on community engagement for buffer zone and corridor management; resilience building for natural disaster response; biodiversity management and monitoring; anti-poaching and law enforcement for existing and newly recruited DNPWC and DoF staff</p> <p>1.2.3: Commissioned joint-studies for cross-sector forest and landscape planning</p> <p>1.2.4: Smart Green Infrastructure (SGI) Guidelines developed jointly by environment and infrastructure government agencies and disseminated at national and sub-regional cross-sectoral workshops for the Terai Arc Landscape</p>			
<p>Component 2:</p> <p>Integrated Planning for Protected Area Buffer Zones and Critical Corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape</p>	TA	<p>Outcome 2.1: Increased protection status for targeted TAL corridors</p>	<p>2.1.1: Biodiversity surveys, socio-economic surveys, and local stakeholder consultation for Bramadav, Karnali, and Kamdi corridors to determine feasibility of protection forest designation</p>	GEFTF	956,750	6,088,952

		<p>Outcome 2.2: Improved participative planning for conservation and protection of targeted protected area buffer zones and corridors in TAL</p>	<p>Output 2.1.2: Three corridors (Bramadav, Karnali, and Kamdi) proposed for Protection Forest designation or Integrated Community Conservation Area designation</p> <p>2.2.1: Land uses, biodiversity values, forest carbon, and key threats assessed, mapped, reported and disseminated to identify priority villages and community forests in targeted PA buffer zones and Corridors</p> <p>2.2.2: Forest Management Operational Plans developed/revised for priority community forests incorporating the assessment from 2.2.1 and coordinated among Regional Directorate of Forests, Protected Areas, Protection Forest Council, DFSCC, District Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, Community Forest User Groups and other forest-support local institutions</p> <p>2.2.3: Corridor management plans developed or revised for all seven TAL corridors</p>			
<p>Component 3: Forest and species management for improved conservation of targeted protected area buffer zones and corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape</p>	TA	<p>Outcome 3.1 Increased application of good forest management practices</p> <p>Outcome 3.2: Improved management of the human-wildlife interface</p>	<p>Output 3.1.1 Demonstration projects and training to build capacity of government, local communities and private sector on applied forest management</p> <p>3.2.1: Capacity and resources for participatory management of human wildlife conflict</p> <p>3.2.2: Training and equipment for real-time SMART for District Wildlife Crime Control Bureaus and buffer zone Community Based Anti</p>	GEFTF	2,870,249	18,266,848

			Poaching Units for transparent collection and reporting of information on illegal logging, poaching, and other threats			
Component 4: Knowledge management and M&E	TA	Outcome 4.1: Improved coordination and dialogue on landscape management from the local, regional to national level Outcome 4.2: Project monitoring system operates, systematically provides information on progress, and informs adaptive management to ensure results Outcome 4.3: Project lessons shared	4.1.1: Annual forums for coordination and feedback among NBCC, subcommittees, LSU, TALWG, DFSCC network on integrated landscape planning and management 4.2.1: Capacity for participatory and efficient monitoring and evaluation and adaptive management 4.3.1: Project lessons captured and disseminated to project stakeholders and to other GEF and non-GEF projects and partners	GEFTF	956,750	6,088,951
Subtotal					6,378,331	40,593,003
Project Management Cost (PMC) ⁴				GEFTF	318,917	2,029,650
Total Project Cost					6,697,248	42,622,653

For multi-trust fund projects, provide the total amount of PMC in Table B, and indicate the split of PMC among the different trust funds here: ()

C. INDICATIVE SOURCES OF CO-FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT BY NAME AND BY TYPE, IF AVAILABLE

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Amount (\$)
Recipient Government	Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation*	In-kind	31,961,653
Recipient Government	Ministry of Population and Environment (AEPC)	In-kind	5,000,000
GEF Agency	WWF-US	In-kind	711,000
CSO	WWF Nepal**	Grants	4,950,000
Total Co-financing			42,622,653

* Includes DNPWC and DoF operations and salary at central and across TAL (at 20% of total) and law enforcement expenditure for 2 PAs

** Includes: Hariyo Ban (USAID), LDF, Sall, IUCN/KfW Tigers, and GS Carbon Finance

⁴ For GEF Project Financing up to \$2 million, PMC could be up to 10% of the subtotal; above \$2 million, PMC could be up to 5% of the subtotal. PMC should be charged proportionately to focal areas based on focal area project financing amount in Table D below.

D. INDICATIVE TRUST FUND RESOURCES REQUESTED BY AGENCY(IES), COUNTRY(IES) AND THE PROGRAMMING OF FUNDS ^{a)}

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	(in \$)		
					GEF Project Financing (a)	Agency Fee (b) ^{b)}	Total (c)=a+b
WWF-US	GEFTF	Nepal	Biodiversity	n/a	2,232,416	200,917	2,433,333
WWF-US	GEFTF	Nepal	Land Degradation	n/a	2,232,416	200,917	2,433,333
WWF-US	GEFTF	Nepal	Multi-focal area	SFM	2,232,416	200,918	2,433,334
Total GEF Resources					6,697,248	602,752	7,300,000

a) Refer to the Fee Policy for GEF Partner Agencies.

E. PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)⁵

Is Project Preparation Grant requested? Yes ☒ No ☐ If no, skip item E.

PPG AMOUNT REQUESTED BY AGENCY(IES), TRUST FUND, COUNTRY(IES) AND THE PROGRAMMING OF FUNDS

Project Preparation Grant amount requested: \$200,000					PPG Agency Fee: \$16,514		
GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	(in \$)		
					PPG (a)	Agency Fee ⁶ (b)	Total c = a + b
WWF-US	GEFTF	Nepal	Biodiversity	n/a	61,162	5,505	66,667
WWF-US	GEFTF	Nepal	Land Degradation	n/a	61,162	5,505	66,667
WWF-US	GEFTF	Nepal	Multi-focal area	SFM	61,162	5,504	66,666
Total PPG Amount					183,486	16,514	200,000

⁵ PPG requested amount is determined by the size of the GEF Project Financing (PF) as follows: Up to \$50k for PF up to \$2m (for MSP); up to \$100k for PF up to \$3m; \$150k for PF up to \$6m; \$200k for PF up to \$10m; and \$300k for PF above \$10m. On an exceptional basis, PPG amount may differ upon detailed discussion and justification with the GEFSEC.

⁶ PPG fee percentage follows the percentage of the Agency fee over the GEF Project Financing amount requested.

F. PROJECT'S TARGET CONTRIBUTIONS TO GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS⁷

Provide the expected project targets as appropriate.

Corporate Results	Replenishment Targets	Project Targets
1. Maintain globally significant biodiversity and the ecosystem goods and services that it provides to society	Improved management of landscapes and seascapes covering 300 million hectares	110,400 hectares of direct impact in project buffer zones and corridors (TBC in ProDoc) and 2,471,000 hectares of improved management of landscapes overall through integrated landscape management
2. Sustainable land management in production systems (agriculture, rangelands, and forest landscapes)	120 million hectares under sustainable land management	x Hectares TBC in ProDoc
3. Promotion of collective management of transboundary water systems and implementation of the full range of policy, legal, and institutional reforms and investments contributing to sustainable use and maintenance of ecosystem services	Water-food-ecosystems security and conjunctive management of surface and groundwater in at least 10 freshwater basins;	n/a
	20% of globally over-exploited fisheries (by volume) moved to more sustainable levels	n/a
4. Support to transformational shifts towards a low-emission and resilient development path	750 million tons of CO _{2e} mitigated (include both direct and indirect)	1,267,665 tCO ₂ (see Annex 1) TBC in ProDoc
5. Increase in phase-out, disposal and reduction of releases of POPs, ODS, mercury and other chemicals of global concern	Disposal of 80,000 tons of POPs (PCB, obsolete pesticides)	n/a
	Reduction of 1000 tons of Mercury	n/a
	Phase-out of 303.44 tons of ODP (HCFC)	n/a
6. Enhance capacity of countries to implement MEAs (multilateral environmental agreements) and mainstream into national and sub-national policy, planning financial and legal frameworks	Development and sectoral planning frameworks integrate measurable targets drawn from the MEAs in at least 10 countries	n/a
	Functional environmental information systems are established to support decision-making in at least 10 countries	n/a

PART II: PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

1. Project Description.

The global environmental problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed

Project Scope: The Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) of Nepal is a 24,710 km² area of critical importance for globally significant biodiversity and ecosystems and for supporting the local livelihoods of a large proportion of Nepal's population. Located in the foothills of the Himalayas, TAL provides forest and grassland habitat for tiger, rhino, and elephant, and essential ecosystem services including watershed protection and provision of water, carbon storage and sequestration, soil protection, and provision of fertile agricultural land. The landscape is approximately 17% of the country's total land area and is home to more than 7.5 million people from numerous ethnic and indigenous groups who depend on natural resources for their livelihoods. The TAL has a system of six protected areas and associated buffer zones, which together cover 5,538 km². In 2015 the northern boundary of the TAL was extended to the include the north-facing slopes of the Chure, adding more than 1,500 km² to the landscape, and further enhancing

⁷ Provide those indicator values in this table to the extent applicable to your proposed project. Progress in programming against these targets for the projects per the *Corporate Results Framework* in the [GEF-6 Programming Directions](#), will be aggregated and reported during mid-term and at the conclusion of the replenishment period. There is no need to complete this table for climate adaptation projects financed solely through LDCF and/or SCCC.

habitat and forest connectivity. Seven habitat corridors create linkage among the protected areas in Nepal and India in the TAL, and of these, four have been declared as Protection Forest (Figure 1). The Terai has a mosaic of land uses and habitat types, with 54% of the TAL land area occupied by forests and 35% occupied by agriculture (TAL Strategy 2015). Just 25% of the forest in TAL is located inside the six protected areas, highlighting the importance of the buffer zones, corridors, and other community forest areas which together account for the remaining 75% of TAL forest (DoF, 2013).

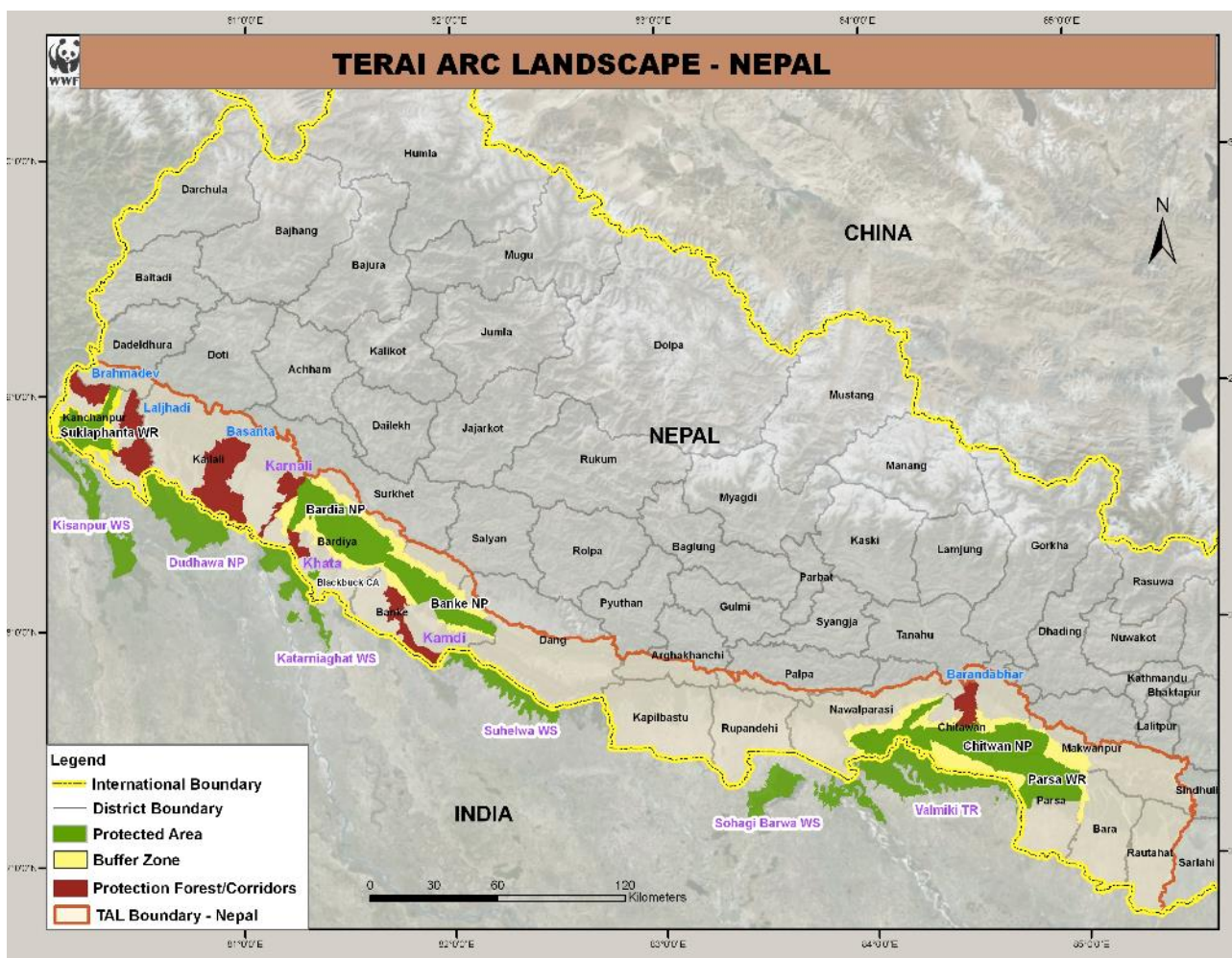


Figure 1: Map of Terai Arc Landscape

Environmental Significance: TAL's system of protected areas, buffer zones, and habitat corridors support extensive forest systems, grasslands, riverine environments, and large mammal populations. Over 12,000 km² of TAL is forested. These forest tracts provide key habitat for globally significant wildlife, corridors among protected areas, and high carbon storage potential. The TAL supports meta-populations of important mega fauna, including Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*), Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*), and Great one-horned rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), as well as endangered species of vulture and gharial. Globally important ecosystems of the TAL include Terai Duar Savanna and Grasslands ecoregion, and three Ramsar wetlands and other wetlands that harbor threatened species of flora and fauna and serve as habitat for migratory and globally threatened birds (NBSAP, 2014). Three large river systems in the TAL (Narayani, Karnali, Mahakali, and their tributaries) create critical habitat and connectivity between the Chure hills and the lowland Terai and provide environmental flows to sustain ecological communities and sustained ecosystem services for people. The Terai climatic conditions and low terrain favor diverse crops, agro-forests, and livestock under traditional farming systems.

Environmental Problems and Root Causes: Despite the ecosystem and livelihood values of the TAL, the area faces a number of threats that are resulting in biodiversity loss, deforestation, degradation of forests, grasslands and

riparian areas, land degradation, and land use related carbon emissions. Analysis of threats for the *TAL Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025* identified large infrastructure as a very high threat, and encroachment, livestock grazing, river channeling, unsustainable fuel wood and NTFP offtake, and wildlife poaching as high-ranked threats to species, grasslands, and forests. The overarching root causes of the threats to biodiversity are population pressure and economic growth. The key threats that stem from these root causes are detailed below:

Development of large infrastructure in the landscape. The rapidly expanding infrastructure development and associated activities invariably puts pressure on the natural and human environment, often with serious and irreversible consequences in the absence of proper planning and mitigation measures. Despite the social, environmental and climate change policies, legislation and guidelines for infrastructure development, there are significant knowledge, capacity and cross-sectoral gaps at the implementation level. The development of inadequately planned infrastructure, including rural roads and illegal settlements, particularly in forested areas, leads to deforestation and degradation. As well as direct forest loss, these roads increase access to forests and exacerbate unsustainable forest use. Currently, there are plans for various development projects in the TAL, including electricity transmission lines, irrigation canals, and national road and rail. The Hulaki Road along the Nepal-India border will traverse a number of critical corridors, and obstruct the movement of wildlife between PAs in Nepal and India. Large-scale irrigation and power lines also impact conservation goals in the landscape; for example, the Sikta canal cuts through Banke National Park and prevents species movement and separates populations within the park.

Unsustainable use of forests. The TAL supports over 7.5 million people, and is one of the most densely populated areas of Nepal. Across Nepal, it is estimated that over 80% of the population is in rural areas and most rural people practice a subsistence agrarian lifestyle that is labor intensive and heavily dependent on natural resources. Impacts from the rural population in the Terai include unsustainable overharvest and use of resources, including:

- Fuel wood collection. An emission reduction survey in 20 Nepali districts indicated that the demand for fuel wood was 5.3 million tons per year, which was more than twice the estimated sustainable supply per year (REDD Cell, 2012). Fuel wood extraction has increased since the April 2015 earthquake, as displaced people and local people have relied more heavily on wood for cooking and heating.
- Livestock grazing areas in forests and grasslands. More than four million livestock are estimated to roam freely in national forests in TAL. This includes cattle, buffalo, goats, and sheep. This open grazing is degrading the forest understory and grasslands, and is preventing forest regeneration.
- Forest fires.
- Conversion of forests and grasslands to agriculture or settlements.
- Off take of construction timber, and non-timber forest products. Timber extraction for construction has increased since the April 2015 earthquake, with a greater need for materials for reconstruction.
- Artisanal sand and gravel mining.

This results in forest loss and degradation, GHG emissions, biodiversity impacts, and land degradation. The forests of the Terai lowlands have experienced high rates of deforestation and degradation over the past four decades, though forest loss is starting to decline with a 0.44% forest loss rate per annum from 2001-2010 (NBSAP, 2014). The TAL has experienced steadily increasing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation over the last decade, driven by a supply-demand deficit for fuel wood and timber. Deforestation and degradation results in a fragmented wildlife and prey base habitat, and brings humans in closer contact with wildlife. Over-harvest of forests and forest products, overgrazing by livestock, and cultivation of marginal lands to meet resource deficits has resulted in soil erosion, and loss of soil nutrients and fertility. Degraded lands then result in a decline in biological and/or economic productivity of agricultural lands, pastures, and forests.

Wildlife poaching and retaliation killings. Threats to globally significant species persist in protected areas, buffer zones, and habitat corridors, including direct killing of wildlife as retaliation to human-wildlife conflict (especially predation of livestock by large cats); decline of the prey base as a result of subsistence hunting; and poaching driven by the demand for wildlife products. Nepal is globally recognized as a leader in wildlife protection, for example, the country has again achieved zero poaching for rhino. However, the demand for tiger products in south and south-east Asia is leading to poaching of tigers in Nepal, and particularly in Bardia National Park. There have been four cases of tiger poaching in Bardia NP in 2015, linked to professional poachers recruited by networks from neighbouring countries.

Barriers to Conservation: Given the globally significant forest, biodiversity and land conservation values of the TAL, and the increasing threats noted above, a long-term strategy for conservation of the landscape is key, and must take into account a number of barriers to conservation. The major barriers to integrated landscape management in TAL include: 1) a current lack of inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder coordination to enable landscape planning and management, from the national to local level; 2) a lack of protection status, planning and management efforts and resources in the buffer zones and corridors that assist to provide to conservation of biodiversity in protected areas and in the wider landscape; and 3) a lack of capacity and application of best practices for forest management in TAL.

Inadequate Cross-Sectoral Coordination. Nepal has a relatively comprehensive set of biodiversity, forest and land management related policies and strategies. However, implementation of the policies, strategies and legislation has been lacking and there is poor integration and harmonization of various environmental laws and policies (NBSAP, 2014). The *TAL Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025* recognizes that there has been poor coordination of plans and programs of different sectoral agencies. A number of large infrastructure developments exist in the TAL, and are causing impacts such as forest loss and prevention of species movement. These infrastructures could have incorporated environmentally sensitive designs, such as wildlife crossing, to make them more compatible to conservation objectives. Several new, large infrastructure developments are being planned for the Terai Arc, including a major highway, as well as ongoing development of smaller roads. With all of these infrastructure plans, there has not yet been coordination with the conservation and environment sector to assess potential impacts and develop appropriate mitigations. Compliance to environmental regulations is key, and sound Environmental Impact Assessments is essential to address conservation and social concerns in the early stages of planning. However, to date, there has been weak and delayed communication among infrastructure development agencies, conservation agencies, and the environmental compliance agencies; and low priority in allocating resources for mitigation measures for land uses that may affect conservation and livelihood goals. The *TAL Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025* identifies a number of key issues that need to be addressed to solve lack of cross-sectoral coordination: inadequate transparency; inadequate communication at the level of inter-departmental, vertical, and across stakeholders; ambiguities in institutional arrangements; and insufficient representation of stakeholders from different sectors in the District Forest Sector Coordination Committees (DFSCCs). The *TAL Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025* recommends that: a coordination committee to represent sectoral ministries should be set up under the chair of the Secretary of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC); the Landscape Support Unit (LSU) under MoFSC should be strengthened to assess land use allocations and changes and to coordinate donor investments in TAL; and inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration should be built to avoid planning and designing infrastructure that has adverse impacts on landscape level conservation and to promote conservation friendly infrastructure.

Lack of capacity for integrated forest, species and land management in protected area buffer zones and corridors. The Protected Area sub-sector has made substantial progress in achieving forest and wildlife conservation in Nepal. The first protected area was established in 1973, and since then the network has grown to cover 23% of Nepal's total land area. Local communities have been linked to benefits from protected areas through the establishment and joint management of buffer zones. However, barriers to comprehensive protected area system management remain. The optimal national staff capacity for the Department of Protected Areas and Wildlife Conservation has been estimated to be 2000 staff, however, the Department is currently staffed at half that number. Illegal hunting, trade of key species, and illegal selective logging still occurs both within the core zones and buffer zones, as well as in corridors, and this reflects a lack of full law enforcement capacity, lack of community implemented reporting to law enforcement, and an increasing demand for wildlife products in the region. Seven habitat corridors, linking protected areas, have been identified for the TAL. Under the Forest Act 1993, The Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation designated four of the seven corridors as Protection Forest, during and just after the UNDP-GEF *Western Terai Landscape Conservation Project* (WTLCP). Protection Forest provides a higher status of protection than community forest, collaborative or national forests. Three corridors – Kamdi, Karnali and Brahmadev – have not yet received Protection Forest status, due to lack of resources, and are under varying management regimes. These three corridors do not have Corridor Management Plans, dedicated staff, and allocated funding that the four Protection Forest corridors have. An institutional mechanism has been recently established for Protection Forests – the Protection Forests Council, which has a role to support implementation and monitoring of Protection Forest Management Plans. Protection Forest Councils will be comprised of the Chief of the Sector Forest Office as Member Secretary, and

members from the District Development Committee, FECOFUN, and Village Development Committees. However, the Council structure is a new and emerging institution, lacking an agreed physical location, governance arrangement or capacity to function. Management plans for buffer zones and corridors are key, as they define the regulation and enforcement of activities in these forests, and are crucial for conservation interventions. Across the TAL, not all buffer zones and corridors have up to date management plans. The *TAL Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025* recognizes, as a lesson from the first ten years of TAL conservation, that more investment and greater efforts at effective community engagement is required for corridors that are affected by encroachment, over-extraction of resources, and over-grazing of livestock.

Lack of options for community-based sustainable forest and land management in TAL. Outside of the protected area core zones, a key contributor to forest conservation in Nepal is community based forest management through community forestry, leasehold forestry, and collaborative forestry, across 30% of the national forest lands. Nepal has gained international reputation for its successful program on community forestry, which started in the wake of Himalayan crisis in the late 1960s. Over 17,000 Community Forest Groups are empowered to manage the small patches of forest in Nepal, totalling 1.7 million hectares. However, the NBSAP (2014) identifies continuous loss and degradation of Terai forests due to inadequate attention to management of biodiversity in community forests. Further, the NBSAP (2014) notes that there has been poor linkage of community forestry with livelihoods, lack of participation from women and disadvantaged social groups, and lack of technical capacity for forest management. Lack of incentives for conservation of agrobiodiversity and weak cooperation among relevant agencies are gaps in achieving agrobiodiversity conservation. There is also a lack of incentives, for example through subsidies, for private landholders to sustainably manage and conserve their land. Overall, a heavy reliance on the forests and agriculture land in the buffer zones and corridors persists, as communities need wood for cooking stoves, land for subsistence agriculture, and forest and grassland areas for livestock grazing. The *TAL Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025* states that a key lesson from the first phase of TAL conservation is that when local stakeholders, through community-based organizations, took the lead in planning and implementing activities, there was better ownership of programs, strengthened capacity of community organizations, and effective uptake of initiatives such as alternative energy to reduce firewood consumption.

The recent devastating earthquake that occurred in April 2015 presents an additional layer of complexity for conservation in Nepal. While the earthquake did not directly impact the proposed project area or wildlife habitat in the Terai, it did disrupt the management and enforcement regime of national parks and wildlife reserves. The earthquake has also contributed to internal migration from the hills and mountains to resource rich lowland areas in TAL, leading to an increase in demand for natural resources, particularly forest products such as timber for rebuilding. This additional dependence on natural resources and forests in critical ecological areas and wildlife habitat is not well regulated, making this a key moment in time to secure, manage, and protect TAL's forests, corridors, and buffer zones to sustain wildlife populations and people's livelihoods.

The baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects

Landscape Approach for integrated forest, wildlife and land conservation: The Government of Nepal has demonstrated a commitment to the landscape approach to conservation planning and management. The GoN signed on to the landscape approach in 2000 under a Ministerial Decision. Three landscapes have been identified for Nepal and the transboundary Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) was declared a priority conservation landscape by the Government of Nepal in 2001. The first TAL Strategy covered the years 2004 to 2014 and achieved policy commitments for the landscape conservation approach, declaration of protection forest in some of the identified corridors, expansion and strengthening of the protected area network, and an increase in community awareness and capacity with institutional mechanisms. The *TAL Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025* was released in late 2015 by the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, and includes an expansion of the northern TAL boundary to include the north-facing slopes of the Churia, adding an area of 1,511 km² to TAL. TAL-Nepal covers 24,710 km² across 18 districts. The TAL Strategy promotes a landscape level approach to conserve key species, sustain environmental flows, and maintain ecosystem services to support people and development in the Terai and Churia region. However, planning and management for conservation of landscapes in Nepal sits squarely with the environment ministries, and a gap remains in terms of cross-sectoral coordination to deal with issues of multiple and often conflicting land uses.

MoFSC has recognized this gap, and has proposed in their TAL Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2015 a number of mechanisms to improve coordination, from district to national level, and through this proposed project, MoFSC will implement these mechanisms.

Cross-sectoral and national to district coordination for conservation. A National Biodiversity Conservation Committee (NBCC) was recently established, as the highest level coordination mechanism for landscape conservation in Nepal. It is a 27-member body chaired by the Minister of Forests and Soil Conservation, with representation from a further seven Ministries as well as academics, private sector, and NGOs. The NBCC is mandated to oversee and provide policy directives at the landscape level and meets on an as-needs basis, and has a number of sub-committees on key topics. With such cross-sectoral convening power, the NBCC could play a stronger role by initiating coordination and collaboration on high level issues. A Landscape Support Unit (LSU) exists under MoFSC, and leads the formulation of projects and programs for landscapes in Nepal. The LSU is responsible for information collection and maintenance of spatial data, including collection and collation of spatial data from other sectors in the landscapes. A Terai Arc Landscape Working Group (TALWG) currently operates under MoFSC as a coordination mechanism for DNPWC and DoF. The TALWG meets regularly and convenes with key conservation NGOs, however, there is no multi-stakeholder or cross-sectoral coordination operating from TALWG or any other group in planning and management for this priority landscape, and it has been proposed to expand the TALWG to include other government and non-government TAL partners and to increase coordination of projects implemented in TAL. MoFSC has proposed roll out of the District Forest Sector Coordination Committee (DFSCC) mechanism that was piloted in the UNDP-GEF WTLC Project. The DFSCCs can be expanded to include multiple stakeholders to provide a forum for consultation and collaboration among organizations working in the landscape, to coordinate landscape planning, and facilitate inter-agency and stakeholder coordination. Proposed composition includes a Chair from the District Development Committee and members from national parks, Women's Development Office, District Forest Office, District Agriculture Development Office, District Livestock Office, Land Reform Office, NGOs, Forest User Groups, and Industry. DFSCCs could operate across TAL for integrated landscape planning at the district scale. The multiple levels of coordination bodies create a baseline for coordination for TAL that can be expanded upon to include broader inter-sectoral and stakeholder inclusion.

Protected Area, Buffer Zone, and Corridor Planning and Management: In Nepal, protected areas form the core habitat for wildlife populations, and are the stronghold for forest protection. The Government of Nepal has established a national network of 20 protected areas since 1973, consisting of ten national parks, three wildlife reserves, six conservation areas and a hunting reserve. The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) in the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation manage the PA System out of Kathmandu; and protected areas are managed by site-based headquarters staffed by federal government. All protected areas in TAL have up-to-date five-year management plans. DNPWC has a total annual budget of around USD \$6.3 million (for operations and salaries, DNPWC 2014/15 Annual Report). The investment to date in protected areas and buffer zones by the Government of Nepal, local communities, and international conservation partners is evident in the recent 63% increase in tiger population to 198 individuals from 2009-2013, and 21% increase in rhino population to 645 individuals between 2011-2015. Nepal also celebrated 365 days of zero poaching in May 2015, the third time this has been accomplished in the past five years. DNPWC is currently staffed with 1000 people. An additional 900 staff will be employed by DNPWC in the next two years, already approved by the public service commission, and will work as game scouts. This provides a strong baseline of government staff during the project period, however, there will be a need for training. Buffer zones of forest and mixed use are designated around protected areas and are managed by the Department of Forests (DoF, under MoFSC) and also by community-forest user groups (CFUG), facilitated by staff from District Forest Offices (under the DoF line). The Department of Forests has an approximate annual budget of USD \$7.2 million (for operations and salaries, DoF 2014/15 Annual Progress Report) to fund planning and management of national forests outside of the protected areas.

There is a strong baseline for protected area management in TAL. DNPWC has a total annual budget of around US\$3.8 million per year for the management of the six protected areas in TAL. The government expenditure, along with donor funding, will implement in the protected areas tiger conservation, comprehensive roll out of SMART, law enforcement by the army, tiger and rhino monitoring, rhino conservation and translocations during the proposed project period. Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation (LDF) funding, tentative through to 2019, will improve protected area

infrastructure in key tiger habitat. IUCN/KfW funding for the *Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Program* (ITHCP), for 2016 to end of 2018, will focus on doubling the tiger numbers in two population recovery sites (Tx2 sites), including one in India and Parsa Wildlife Reserve in Nepal. ITHCP will be implemented in eastern TAL by DNPWC, DoF, National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), and WWF Nepal.

The baseline for buffer zone planning and management in the TAL is less substantial than the investment in protected areas, but is still significant. The buffer zone communities receive between 30% and 50% of the revenue generated by the six protected areas, providing a source of sustainable finance for community development and conservation initiatives. The Hariyo Ban Phase II (2017-2021) project (funded by USAID) will contribute to community and ecological climate resilience in community forest throughout TAL and Chitwan-Annapurna Landscape (CHAL) during the project period.

Unique to the TAL in Nepal, there are seven habitat corridors identified. Four of these corridors were designated as Protection Forest during and after the UNDP-GEF WTLCP, are managed by Protection Forest Officers under DoF, and have Management Plans as defined by the Protection Forest Guidelines established in 2010. The dedicated annual budget amounts to USD \$75,000 per Protection Forest.. Three corridors - Bramadav, Karnali and Kamdi - have been identified in the TAL Strategy as critical corridors, but have not yet received Protection Forest status, as this requires a process of surveys, justification of biodiversity values per the Protection Forest Guidelines, stakeholder agreement, and a administrative process of proposing and adopting protection forest status. To date there has not been resources available within MoFSC to undertake this multi-step process for Bramadav, Karnali and Kamdi corridors in western TAL. The MoFSC recently established the 'Protection Forest Council' as an institutional mechanism to support implementation and monitoring of Protection Forest Management Plans. Such Councils are yet to be set up in a functional way at the sub-landscape level.

Community-based forest, wildlife, and land management in the landscape: A number of projects in the TAL have developed a baseline of natural resource management implemented through communities and community managed forest areas that are supported by district forest offices. The buffer zones and the seven critical corridors identified in TAL consist of cluster of community forests (CFs). Community forests in buffer zones are organized within a Buffer Zone Management Council (BZMC) for each protected area. Each BZMC is made up of 21 Buffer Zone User Committees (BZUCs). The BZUC is represented by individual households residing inside the buffer zone. Each BZUC is made up of several sub-groups, the most important for natural resource management being the buffer zone community forest user group (BZCFUG) and the Community Based Anti-Poaching Unit (CBAPU). Buffer zone management councils and user committees are legally recognized as community based organizations (CBOs) and are formally recognized by DNPWC for conservation and sustainable livelihoods interventions, and receive funds from the protected areas for their activities. These community forest organizations support monitoring, habitat management, community-based relief mechanisms, patrolling and sustainable forest management in buffer zones.

Each community forest in the corridors is managed by a Community Forest User Group (CFUG). Members of CFUGs are the local community holding legal rights to use and manage the forest resources in sustainable manner. CFUGs are community based organizations (CBOs) and so far relatively effective in managing forest resources. However, there is a capacity gap within these forest based CBOs in terms of technical capacity to manage natural resources, capacity to conduct high level forest patrolling (such as real-time SMART patrolling for illegal activities in forested areas), governance issues, and overall management capacity. Within the seven TAL corridors there are 673 CFUGs. Community participation and involvement in natural resources management is viewed as a critical aspect of managing a large landscape, and the *TAL Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025* promotes enhancing community capacities and further institutionalization of the community forest model.

Law enforcement and anti-poaching: In Nepal, the Directorate of the Nepal Army works in close coordination with protected area authorities. In each PA, Nepal Army staff are deputized for the park security in curbing illegal wildlife and forest crimes. They are strategically stationed in series of guard posts in the core zone and buffer zone of PAs. The Nepal Army staff conduct regular patrols and provide security updates to the Chief Warden of the park. The Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) under the Nepal Police works specifically for wildlife and forest crime control outside PAs. With a large network of stations within the national boundary, CIB is one of the most successful

law enforcement agencies operating outside PAs to control illegal wildlife and forest crime. These efforts are enhanced by community-based patrol efforts. In buffer zones of the protected areas, Community Based Anti Poaching Units (CBAPU) have been established as one of the sub-committees under Buffer Zone User Committees (BZUCs). CBAPU are moderately well trained and equipped to do patrolling, however they have not been capacitated for real-time SMART patrolling and there is no data integration beyond the district level. In the protection forest corridors, community Protection Forest Councils are undertaking traditional community patrols. They do not have the equipment and training that CBAPUs have, and there is a lack of data capture and integration.

The proposed alternative scenario, GEF focal area⁸ strategies, with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project

The project objective is to promote integrated landscape management to conserve globally significant forests and wildlife.

The landscape management approach represents a shift away from the current, globally implemented approach of focusing resources solely on isolated protected areas. The landscape approach recognizes protected areas as the foundation of biodiversity conservation and also ensures sustainable land use and management of buffer zones around PAs, and corridors that connect PAs, to deliver forest and land management, and conservation of globally significant large ranging mammals (tiger, rhino, elephant).

The landscape approach necessitates working across multiple stakeholders in the natural resource management sector, including local communities, local forest user groups, and small-scale agriculture users. This is in recognition that a sustainably managed landscape and provision of ecosystem services is critical for local livelihood provision, and likewise, sustainable and biodiversity-friendly community land use options are key to landscape conservation. The integrated landscape management approach recognizes emerging threats to the Terai Arc Landscape, particularly in the form of infrastructure development, and includes coordination with non-conservation sectors, towards reduced threats to biodiversity, increased coordination in landscape planning, and facilitates local to regional to national dialogue.

The proposed integrated landscape management approach:

- supports the Government of Nepal's adoption of the landscape approach to conservation,
- builds on previous GEF support and lessons for the TAL (see Annex 2), and builds on a comprehensive baseline of support for TAL, especially in the protected areas core zones,
- adopts a multi-sectoral coordination strategy to improve planning and management for the forest and multiple land use landscape, and
- supports a participatory process for forest, wildlife and land management, where the community and districts make decisions and deliver on-ground outputs.

The proposed approach is aligned with the GEF Focal Area strategies:

- By working in the community forest and agriculture lands in protected area buffer zones and corridors in the priority landscape of Nepal, the project will mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes (**BD-4**) and specifically support **Program 9**: Managing the human-biodiversity interface. The project recognizes that protected areas in Nepal are embedded in a landscape of mixed uses, including forest-use areas, rural settlements, and agricultural lands. The project recognizes that sustainable management in the landscape contributes to protected area security, biodiversity conservation outside of protected areas, and sustainable local livelihood provision.
- Interventions led by law enforcement agencies, Districts and Community Forest User Groups will assist to reduce threats to globally significant biodiversity (**BD-2**) and prevent the extinction of known threatened species (**Program 3**), particularly tiger, elephant, and rhino. This supports the Aichi Target 12, to prevent extinction of known threatened species and improve their conservation status. Project efforts will focus on

⁸ For biodiversity projects, in addition to explaining the project's consistency with the biodiversity focal area strategy, objectives and programs, please also describe which [Aichi Target\(s\)](#) the project will directly contribute to achieving.

strengthening the capacity of law enforcement agencies and strengthening science-based participative wildlife monitoring (through community use of SMART).

- The project contributes to the goals of generating sustainable flows of ecosystem services from forests (**LD-2**), specifically through landscape management and restoration (**Program 3**), and reducing pressures on natural resources by managing competing land uses in broader landscapes (**LD-3**) by implementing sustainable land management through the Landscape Approach (**Program 4**). Project interventions in priority sites will improve agriculture and livestock productivity while also delivering benefits of reduced land, forest, and grassland degradation. At the national and landscape level, the project will support institutional structures and capacity, policies, and practices for integrated natural resource management.
- The project will deliver benefits across the GEF SFM objectives, including integrated land use planning, cross-sector planning, and integrating SFM in landscape restoration; but will most comprehensively contribute to the goal of capacity development for SFM within local communities (**Program 5**) under **SFM-2**. The project will provide support to communities, government staff and others, in the form of training and equipment for application of good forest management practices in demonstration projects, to deliver SFM with LD and BD co-benefits.

Four components will be implemented to deliver conservation outcomes for the Terai Arc Landscape:

Component 1: National capacity and enabling environment for cross-sectoral coordination to promote forest and landscape conservation.

An integrated landscape management approach will involve collaboration among different government agencies and stakeholders that influence landscape level conservation outcomes. At the national level and for TAL, the project will foster coordination among key actors in the infrastructure, rural development, and forest and wildlife management sectors to implement a shared goal of landscape management for sustainable socio-economic development and ecosystem health. Mechanisms for coordination will be established to develop: a mutual understanding of rights, stakes, and objectives; communication channels for conflict management and negotiation; and adaptive management based on shared learning. This component will be led by the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC).

Anticipated outcomes and outputs under this component include:

Outcome 1.1: Improved inter-sectoral coordination from national, regional to district level for integrated forest and landscape management to support the 2015-2025 TAL Strategy.

The project will support the National Biodiversity Conservation Committee (NBCC) to develop and implement a mandate for cross-sectoral coordination for conservation outcomes. The Division of Planning under the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation will convene relevant ministries (Agriculture Development; Livestock and Poultry Development; Physical Infrastructure and Transport; Energy; Population and Environment; Social Welfare; Federal Affairs and Local Development; Finance) through a round of meetings and workshops, and to identify and propose issues requiring the attention of the high level NBCC. Funds will be dedicated through MoFSC for facilitating sub-committees/task forces around issues of overlapping land uses.

Output 1.1.1: Cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms established for:

- sub-committees under National Biodiversity Conservation Committee (NBCC) to coordinate with environment, infrastructure, and development Ministries;
- Landscape Support Unit (LSU);
- Task force(s) under TALWG for cross-sectoral communication on specific issues of overlapping land uses;
- DNPWC and DoF representatives and regional focal points within MoFSC; and
- District Forest Sector Coordination Committees (DFSCC) for 18 TAL Districts and a networking mechanism for DFSCCs.

Outcome 1.2: Increased capacity for multi-stakeholder and cross-sector forest and landscape planning and management.

The project will support MoFSC to establish a District Forest Sector Coordination Committee (DFSCC) for each TAL district. Each DFSCC will be chaired by the District Development Committee, with district level representation from the offices of Land Reform, Agriculture, Ecotourism, NGOs, Women's Development, and Forest User Groups. The project will support development of the scope and structure of the DFSCC and support training and capacity building for the of the Landscape Support Unit (LSU), the Terai Arc Landscape Working Group (TALWG) and the DFSCCs.

Project support will be provided to develop training courses (based on existing materials and partnerships with key academic centers in Nepal and India) and conduct trainings for the existing DoF and DNPWC staff and the incoming new 900 DNPWC staff. Training will focus on: community engagement for conservation; building resilience for disaster response in protected areas, buffer zones and corridors; and biodiversity management and monitoring.

The project will fund a study tour or commission a relevant study for shared learning for adaptive management and planning regarding integrated landscape management.

Guidelines for Smart Green Infrastructure (SGI) will be developed, facilitated by the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation with the Ministry of Population and Environment as the technical lead, and in coordination with infrastructure agencies, such as the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport, Ministry of Irrigation, Ministry of Energy. The project will assess priorities regarding SGI among the Ministries, promote the SGI approach among the infrastructure Ministries, commission relevant studies, establish working groups to develop SGI Guidelines with interested Ministries, and host workshops with the Ministries and subject matter experts.

Output 1.2.1: Conservation Leadership Training for 18 DFSCCs, LSU, TALWG, and department and regional focal points;

Output 1.2.2: Training courses on: community engagement for buffer zone and corridor management; resilience building for disaster response; biodiversity management and monitoring; and anti-poaching and law enforcement for existing and newly recruited DNPWC and DoF staff;

Output 1.2.3: Commissioned joint-studies for cross-sector forest and landscape planning; and

Output 1.2.4: Smart Green Infrastructure (SGI) Guidelines developed jointly by environment and infrastructure government agencies and disseminated at national and sub-regional cross-sectoral workshops for the Terai Arc Landscape.

Component 2: Integrated planning for protected area buffer zones and critical corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape.

The project will operationalize the integrated landscape management approach for Nepal's priority landscape, the Terai Arc. An integrated landscape management approach will involve collaboration among different land managers and stakeholders at the national, landscape, and district level towards ensuring that forest, biodiversity and ecosystem values are known and considered by multiple actors in land use planning and management. Planning and management, led at the national level and implemented at the district level, will identify and take into account the key forest ecosystem services, such as water provision, soil conservation, carbon storage and sequestration, climate resilience, local livelihood provision, and cultural values; as well as biodiversity protection for species and habitat conservation, connectivity, and associated services, such as ecotourism. This component will be led by MoFSC's Department of Forests and the District Forest Offices.

Investment will focus on key corridors and buffer zone areas that have not yet been fully brought into conservation in the TAL. A selection of 2-3 corridors (Table 1) and 2-3 buffer zones (Table 2) will be made during Project Development, based on criteria such as importance for wildlife movement, baseline of investments, and connection to key protected areas.

Table 1: Critical Corridors in TAL

Corridor	Status	Connectivity	Species/ BD values	Issues	Mang't Plan	Forest Area (km ²)	Impact Area (km ²)	Districts
Barandabhar	Protection Forest	Connects CHAL and TAL	Ramsar wetland Rhino Tiger 270 bird species	Land use change Infrastructure Poaching Logging Fire E-W Highway	Yes	148	113	Chitwan
Basanta	Protection Forest	Connects Nepal's Churia forest with India's Dudhwa National Park	Consists of the Ghodagodi lake Ramsar site	Encroachment Over grazing Fragmentation Forest Loss	Yes	181	471	Kailali
Brahmadev	Designated as corridor in TAL	Connects Shuklaphanta WR with Doon Forest in India	Wetland and streams Tiger Elephant Leopard Goral Blue Bull	Bottlenecked Encroachment Forest fire	No	138	10	Kanchanpur
Kamdi	Designated as corridor in TAL	Links Banke NP to a wildlife sanctuary in India	Wetland and West Rapti Tiger Common leopard	Encroachment Over grazing	No	291	159	Banke
Karnali	Designated as river corridor in TAL	Priority area – connects Churia and wildlife sanctuary in India	Frequent use by elephant, rhino, tiger, Gangetic dolphin, gharial	Over grazing Restoration required Illegal logging Poaching Fire	No	149	78	Kailali
Khata	Protection Forest	Links Bardia NP to Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in India	Tiger, rhino	Threatened by Hulaki Road	Yes	74	128	Bardia
Lalijadi-Mohana	Protection Forest	Route for wildlife between Chure, Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve and India's Dudhwa National Park	Tiger signs Elephant Key flora	Over grazing Encroachment Over-extraction of forest resources Forest clearing	Yes	202	153	Kanchanpur

Table 2: Protected Areas in TAL

Protected Area	Declared	Species/BD values	Issues	Core Area (km ²)	Buffer Zone (km ²)	Total Area (km ²)	Districts
Banke National Park	2010	Priority site for tiger population expansion in Nepal	Newest national park in Nepal; local dependence on natural resources is pressuring and fragmenting tiger and prey base habitat	550	343	893	Banke
Bardia National Park	1976/1988	Second highest density of tigers in Nepal; critical site for expanding rhino population through translocations	Infrastructure development; sand and gravel mining; free grazing of livestock; temporary settlements in the buffer zone	968	507	1,475	Bardia
Chitwan National Park	1973	Highest density of tigers and rhinos in Nepal; Rapti River; gharial breeding center	Infrastructure development; growing human population in the buffer zone of the park; most visited national park by tourists	932	750	1,682	Chitwan, Makwanpur, Nawalparasi
Krishnasar (Blackbuck) Conservation Area	2009	Critical area for expansion of blackbuck population	Recently established and in need of long term financing plan	17	0	17	Bardia
Parsa Wildlife Reserve	1984	Potential for expansion of the tiger population; recently expanded to provide additional tiger and prey base habitat	Located along, and bisected by, a heavily traveled main thoroughfare for large trucks to transport goods to and from India border; illegal logging; absence of a buffer zone along the southern boundary	637	285	922	Parsa
Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve	1976	Recovering tiger population and growing prey population; connects historic elephant migration routes with India; large swamp deer population	Large area with a multitude of entry points and remote stretches, so threat of illegal poaching and extraction of natural resources is a continuous problem	305	243	548	Kanchanpur
Total Area				3,409	2,129	5,538	

Anticipated outcomes and outputs under this component include:

Outcome 2.1: Increased protection status for targeted TAL corridors.

There are seven critical corridors identified in the Terai Arc Landscape. Corridors are comprised of national forest, community forest areas, and community agriculture, and create connectivity among the protected areas, which is key for movement of the large ranging mammals. During the UNDP-GEF WTLC project, three corridors were designated as Protection Forest, and since that project closed, a further corridor was designated as Protection Forest. A further three corridors are under community forest management but have not yet achieved Protection Forest status (Bramadav, Karnali and Kamdi). These corridors, Kamdi, Karnali and Bhramdev, are already being managed by several community forest user groups and Buffer Zone Management Committees (per regulatory arrangements of the Forest Act of 1993 and National Park and Wild Life Reserve Act), but without Protection Forest Status, they lack a Protection Forest Officer, a Protection Forest Management Plan, and a Protection Forest Council. The project will support biodiversity and socio-economic surveys and stakeholder consultations for Bramadav, Karnali and Kamdi corridors to analyze the feasibility for proposal for Protection Forest status. Based on the outcome of the feasibility study, if there is sufficient biodiversity value and community support, the area will be proposed for Protection Forest declaration. If there is not quite sufficient biodiversity value or community support for Protection Forest designation,

then the corridor will be classed as Integrated Community Conservation Area (ICCA), which means that all forest patches in the corridor would come under community-based management and would require a Corridor Management Plan, which includes biodiversity conservation provisions. Both outcomes – Protection Forest designation or ICCA – would be an increased level of protection compared to the baseline.

Output 2.1.1: Biodiversity surveys, socio-economic surveys, and local stakeholder consultation for Bramadav, Karnali, and Kamdi corridors to determine feasibility of protection forest designation; and

Output 2.1.2: Three corridors (Bramadav, Karnali, and Kamdi) proposed for Protection Forest designation or Integrated Community Conservation Area designation.

Outcome 2.2: Improved participative planning for conservation and protection of targeted protected area buffer zones and corridors in TAL.

During project development, 2-3 protected area buffer zones will be selected as targeted project sites (preliminarily anticipated to be the buffer zone extension north of Bardia NP, and the buffer zone around the recently designated Banke NP, see Figure 1) and 2-3 corridors (preliminarily anticipated to be Khata, Karnali, and Kamdi, see Figure 1) will be selected as targeted project sites for integrated planning for natural resource management. An assessment and map will be developed for the project buffer zones and corridors to identify areas of high conservation value forest, significant biodiversity areas (e.g. key habitat or watering holes, key movement areas, known harbors of populations), high carbon storage potential forest areas, human-wildlife conflict hotspot zones, and deforestation and forest degradation hotspots. Support will be provided for the project DFSCCs to undertake a participative (multi sector and multi stakeholder) process to develop District Integrated NRM Plans and for CFUGs and partners to develop Forest Management Operational Plans for priority community forest areas. The project will support CFUGs, District Forest Officers, and DFSCCs to develop or revise the Protection Forest Management Plans, and if relevant, Corridor Management Plans, for all of the seven TAL corridors.

Output 2.2.1: Land uses, biodiversity values, forest carbon, and key threats assessed, mapped, reported and disseminated to identify priority villages and community forests in targeted PA buffer zones and Corridors;

Output 2.2.2: Forest Management Operational Plans developed/revise for priority community forests, incorporating the assessment from 2.2.1 and coordinated among Regional Directorate of Forests, Protected Areas, Protection Forest Council, DFSCC, District Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs), and other forest-support local institutions; and

2.2.3: Corridor management plans developed or revised for all seven TAL corridors.

Component 3: Forest and species management for improved conservation of targeted protected area buffer zones and corridors in the Terai Arc Landscape

The project will build community and district capacity for forest and wildlife management, and will demonstrate applied forest, wildlife and land management management in priority locations in the targeted buffer zones and corridors. Interventions will be focused in the areas where key forest, forest carbon and biodiversity values overlap with high threats (per map developed in component 2) and will use a community-based NRM approach to secure livelihoods and promote forest and wildlife conservation. Activities will be implemented by communities, community organizations, and districts, and will contribute to the goals of securing forests and forest ecosystem services and protecting globally significant biodiversity in TAL.

Outcome 3.1: Increased application of good forest management practices

The project will build capacity and provide resources for applied forest management for villages, CFUGs and District support staff (from District Forest Office, District Livestock Office, District Agriculture Office) in priority forest areas in the targeted buffer zones and corridors. Priority forest areas will be identified under Output 2.2.1 (described above), based on forest cover, high conservation forest areas, high carbon storage or potential for sequestration, and high biodiversity. Support for capacity and applied forest management will include training, technical assistance, equipment, and opportunities for sharing and cross-learning among the project beneficiary communities and communities involved in other ongoing government programs in TAL. Options for applied forest management to be assessed more deeply during ProDoc stage include support to community forest management,

community nurseries, and revegetation using native species⁹ in degraded areas of community forests in target corridors and buffer zones. Applied forest management will follow the detailed planning included in the Forest Management Operational Plans (supported in 2.2.2). Applied forest management efforts from GEF project budget will be further supported through project co-finance for bio-gas units to reduce fuel wood offtake in the forests.

Output 3.1.1 Demonstration projects and training to build capacity of government, local communities and private sector on applied forest management.

Outcome 3.2: Improved management of the human-wildlife interface

Towards wildlife conservation outcomes, support for community-based approaches to human wildlife conflict mitigation will be implemented, to reduce incidents of wildlife killings as retaliation to human wildlife conflict. Additionally, Community Based Anti Poaching Units (already established in protected area buffer zones) and Protection Forest Councils (in protection forest corridors) will be trained and equipped to do patrolling and reporting of illegal activities using SMART, and district staff will be trained to collect, analyze and interpret data from the CBAPUs and feed this data to the law enforcement authorities, including the district level Wildlife Crime Control Bureaus and the Wildlife Crime Control Coordination Committee. Project support will be provided for training and equipment for anti-poaching units in the Bardia NP buffer zone, and to anti-poaching in the core zone, towards ensuring that the demand for tigers in trade does not undermine the efforts of the project to better manage and restore tiger habitat in the project sites.

Output 3.2.1: Capacity and resources for participatory management of human wildlife conflict; and

Output 3.2.1: Training and equipment for real-time SMART for District Wildlife Crime Control Bureaus and buffer zone Community Based Anti Poaching Units for transparent collection and reporting of information on illegal logging, poaching, and other threats in priority areas.

Component 4: Knowledge management and M&E

The project will support knowledge management in the form of increased dialogue from the local to regional to national level. The project will increase the capacity for monitoring and evaluation and ensure the use of M&E outputs for adaptive management in integrated landscape management. Support will be provided for dedicated knowledge management, including capturing and sharing of key project lessons to project stakeholders and beyond the project.

Outcome 4.1: Improved coordination and dialogue on landscape management from the local to national level

4.1.1: Annual forums for coordination and feedback among NBCC and subcommittees, LSU, TALWG, WCCC, DFSCC network on integrated landscape planning and management.

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

4.2.1: Capacity for participatory and efficient monitoring and evaluation and adaptive management.

Outcome 4.3: Project lessons shared

4.3.1: Project lessons captured and disseminated to project stakeholders and to other GEF and non-GEF projects and partners.

Incremental /additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, and **co-financing**
The government of Nepal has clearly identified safeguarding of forests, biodiversity and ecosystems, and improving cross-sectoral coordination for strategic planning and management, as priorities for meeting its biodiversity conservation and sustainability goals.

⁹ Riverine and broad leaf species like *Acacia catechu*, *Dalbergia latifolia*, *Pterocarpus marsupium*, *Dalbergia sisoo*, *Anthocephalus kadamba*, *Michelia champaca*, *Bombax ceiba*, *Shorea robusta*, *Terminalia* spp., *Adina cordifolia*, *Lagerstroemia parviflora*, *Albizia* spp., *Eugenia jambolana*, and *Anogeissus latifolia* will be promoted, as outlined in Nepal's forest decade plan and in the NBSAP. Native fodder, timber and fuel wood species will be promoted in community forests.

The proposed project builds upon a strong national commitment to landscape planning and conservation led by the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation and identified in the *Terai Arc Landscape Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025*. This newly adopted strategy will be the guiding document and key policy priority for development and conservation in TAL over the next ten years. Despite strong commitment and progress made to date in TAL, there is insufficient traction and capacity to remove the institutional barriers to achieving landscape level conservation goals, despite the urgency of deforestation and forest degradation, and associated biodiversity and ecosystem services losses. In the baseline situation, the policy framework and capacity for forest protection from the landscape level to more localized buffer zones and critical corridors is insufficient, and threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services from the population pressures and the agriculture and infrastructure sectors in TAL will continue to grow, and will lead to further habitat fragmentation and destruction, increased greenhouse gas emissions from forest loss and degradation, further land degradation, and species loss due to a lack of habitat connectivity and direct loss of wildlife to poaching and human wildlife conflict retaliation.

The addition of GEF financing to the baseline scenario will assist to drive the transformational change required to address the challenges to biodiversity and ecosystem services conservation to enable landscape conservation in Nepal and on-ground in TAL. The GEF funds will incrementally build on and add value to the ongoing investments in TAL by realizing a more integrated approach for inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder coordination to enable integrated landscape planning and management, from the national to landscape level. This will involve strong coordination of plans and programs of different sectoral agencies; synergies among different sectors and programs/projects; and promotion of conservation friendly infrastructure development.

The incremental funds from GEF will focus efforts and resources in protected area buffer zones and corridors to build on the government and donor's existing strong baseline for species and forest management and law enforcement in the protected area core zones. Through supporting cross-sector coordination and planning, training and equipping DNPWC, DoF, and the District line agencies, and supporting local communities and community forest user groups for on-ground interventions to protect forests and species, GEF finance will facilitate increased protection of protected area buffer zones and corridors. Building on international best practice and lessons from the UNDP-GEF WTLCP, and the GEF finance together with the baseline will develop a consistent and integrated approach to landscape conservation at the national level, and will implement this approach on-ground for the TAL.

Innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up

Innovation: The project represents a truly integrated approach for natural resource management at the landscape scale, by combining community-based biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest and land management with national to regional level planning and coordination among multiple sectors that affect the landscape. This proposed project, as the first multi-focal area GEF project for Nepal, is an opportunity to advance conservation in the context of political change in the provincial structure and recovery efforts in the aftermath of the April 2015 earthquake. The project will illustrate a new approach to inter-sectoral, multi-stakeholder landscape level planning, with the coordination and capacity of key ministries of government and regional natural resource management and planning bodies improved and in place after the project ends.

Sustainability: This project is building on a strong foundation of 15 years of conservation planning and management across the Terai Arc Landscape, and builds on key structures put in place during the UNDP-GEF WTLCP. Policies and institutional mechanisms are in place for protected area and buffer zone management, and community engagement in forestry is a model for community based natural resource management. The project supports the *Terai Arc Landscape Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025*, which will guide conservation in the region for the next ten years. The project will be implementing approaches and technology to reduce dependency on natural resources that communities will adopt and which will last beyond the end of the project, including integrated livestock management to improve productivity. The extensive training of government representatives, coordination and collaboration among key technical ministries in integrated landscape management, and support for the National Biodiversity Coordination Committee (NBCC) will help to sustain project interventions in the Terai Arc Landscape and across other conservation landscapes. The participatory mechanisms employed by the project will engage local communities, with priority for women and indigenous peoples, and this capacity will be maintained after the project ends. The advances

in national and regional natural resource policy will contribute to national expertise in landscape level conservation initiatives and regional green infrastructure planning and development, and will remain in place after the project ends.

Potential for scaling up: The replication potential of this investment reaches beyond the target areas to other areas of the Terai Arc Landscape, as well as to the two other conservation landscapes in Nepal. The policies and mandate of the NBCC supported under this project are national in scope, allowing other areas and conservation landscapes in Nepal to pursue and adopt similar approaches. The project will test the efficacy of integrated landscape management in Nepal by piloting the District Forest Sector Coordination Committee (DFSCC) planning approach, with the intention of establishing the governmental and policy enabling environment to replicate these principles in other landscapes. The demonstration sites that are a part of Component 3 will be chosen across the landscape and thus allow for other communities and district staff to see the outcomes and uptake the same technologies, namely real-time SMART. Beneficiary communities and other communities in the landscape will have the opportunity through the project to participate in community-based learning and lesson exchange on interventions. There is great potential for upscaling through additional governmental support from ongoing programs on community and leasehold forest development; national forest development and management; and soil conservation programs.

2. Stakeholders. Will project design include the participation of relevant stakeholders from civil society organizations (yes ☒ /no ☐) and indigenous peoples (yes ☒ /no ☐)? If yes, identify key stakeholders and briefly describe how they will be engaged in project preparation.

Key Stakeholders	Role	Role in project preparation
Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) Department of Forests (DOF)	Focal ministry for biodiversity conservation and NRM. MoFSC manages forests, protected areas, and other related natural resources. DNPWC manage species conservation, PA system, and all 20 protected areas in Nepal. DoF manage forest resources in national forests and 74 District Forest Offices.	MoFSC is the project's lead ministry. MoFSC will be the lead executing agency for the project in implementation, and will host and coordinate the Project Management Unit (PMU). As such, MoFSC will lead the development of the project (technical content, governance structure, budget, M&E) and coordination with the other partner Ministries (MoPE, MoAD) and key districts. The key departments will provide technical input in project preparation, and.
Partner Ministries Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD), Department of Agriculture (DoA) Ministry of Livestock and Poultry Development (MoLPD), Department of Livestock Service (DoLS) Ministry of Population and Environment (MOPE) (previously, Ministry of Science Technology and Environment), Department of Environment, Department of Hydrology and Meteorology, Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPC)	MoAD and DoA is responsible for increasing agricultural productivity, promoting sustainable agriculture development and knowledge based farming. MoLPD support livestock management and development. DoLS is responsible on pasture management, feed development and livestock breeding at national level. MoPE is the apex body for all environment related issues, including: EIA approvals for development projects; climate change; carbon financing; climate finance; renewable energy; low carbon development; adaptation; pollution. Focal point for MEAs like the UNFCCC, UNCCD and the Montreal Protocol. Mandated to population control of the country.	DoA has district level offices, and they will be engaged in the design of activities for community based sustainable agriculture, as they will be partners in local level implementation.. MoLPD has district level offices in all districts and has services centers throughout the country. They will be engaged in the design of sustainable livestock activities, as they will be partners in local level implementation. MoPE will be included in project preparation, especially in regards to development of renewable energy alternatives to fuel wood. AEPC will be engaged in analysing and designing renewable energy options for communities.

Key Stakeholders	Role	Role in project preparation
Ministry of Local Development (MoLD) Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA)	AEPC under MoPE are mandated to support rural renewable energy policy and implementation at the rural level. MoLD has a mandate for local development MoHA has a mandate on disaster risk management and relief	District Development Committees and Village Development Committees, under the Ministry of Local Development, will be engaged in project design, as they will be partners in local level implementation.
Infrastructure development sector: Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport (Department of Roads, Department of Railways) Ministry of Local Development (Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Roads) Ministry of Irrigation (Department of Irrigation)	Infrastructure development for national integration and socio-economic development Mandate for local development Mandate to develop, manage and monitor irrigation and drainage systems in Nepal.	The infrastructure and development sector will be engaged, mainly at the national level, during project preparation for input on activities for cross-sectoral coordination. They will be invited to stakeholder workshops during preparation.
Enforcement agencies and networks - Nepal Army, Nepal Police, Nepal Armed Police, Wildlife Crime Control Coordination Committee, and the district level Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB).	Government bureau with authority to prosecute any wildlife related crimes. The WCCB has the legal authority to prosecute poachers.	As enforcement agencies are key collaborators with DNPWC and DoF for wildlife conservation at the landscape level, their input to project design will be actively sought.
Local Communities and Organizations Buffer Zone User Committees (BZUCs) Buffer Zone Community Forest User Groups (BZCFUGs) Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs)	Local communities 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 relief mechanisms and sustainable forest resource management.	The project aims to work with local communities and CFUGs in key areas to implement activities. As a key beneficiary and project partner, a sample of villages and CFUGs will be consulted during preparation to inform activity design.
Indigenous People Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) Indigenous peoples in project sites	There are 56 indigenous peoples groups in Nepal, including 11 groups in the Terai. Indigenous people are often disadvantaged or marginalised part of Nepali society.	The project aims to work with indigenous communities in key areas to implement project activities. As a key beneficiary and project partner, a sample of indigenous villages will be consulted to inform activity design. NEFIN will be invited to stakeholder workshops during project preparation.
NGOs and Donors e.g. National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC)	International and National, non-government organizations dedicated to biodiversity conservation.	Key NGOs and donors will be invited to stakeholder workshops during project preparation.
Other GEF Agencies IUCN, UNDP, World Bank, ADB and FAO	These GEF Agencies have strong roles in policy, agriculture and NRM, and infrastructure development; and are implementing GEF projects (e.g. current UNDP-GEF LDCF project).	These agencies are part of a multi-stakeholder forum on common issues. Through that forum, and through invitation to stakeholder workshops, the project will coordinate and consult with the GEF Agencies.

3. *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.* Are issues on gender equality and women's empowerment taken into account? (yes ☒ /no ☐). If yes, briefly describe how it will be mainstreamed into project preparation (e.g. gender analysis), taking into account the differences, needs, roles and priorities of women and men

The rural mid-western and far western regions of Nepal are characterized by high levels of poverty (indicated by poverty income poverty, human poverty, exclusion and marginalization and weak governance), low human development, deep gender disparity, and low gender empowerment. This results in the low empowerment of women and ethnic minorities and disparities towards access to resources, resource use and control, and decision-making.

The Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation is committed to mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion (GESI), as a process of ensuring that women and men have equal access to, and control over, resources for development, benefits, and decision-making at all stages of development process, projects, programs or policy. Mainstreaming of gender equality into preparation of this proposed project will comply with the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation's *Forest Sector Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy* (2007) and the Ministry of Finance's *Gender Responsive Budget Auditing and Planning Directive* (2012), and will be guided by WWF Nepal's *Gender Responsive and Inclusive Conservation* document (2015).

During project preparation, a number of actions will be taken to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment into project design, including:

- training on gender equality and women's empowerment by WWF GEF staff to project preparation staff;
- analysis of gender-equality lessons from the WWF-GEF Churia project, and where appropriate, replication of successes such as: bringing women into the decision making process through positions in the community forest user groups and agriculture groups; working with farmer-managed irrigation groups for climate smart agriculture for gender-equitable benefits from water resources; and promoting agriculture-based micro-enterprises for women's groups;
- gender and livelihoods expert(s) will conduct a gender analysis at an early stage of the project development to determine the different roles, needs, and knowledge of women and men as a critical first step to understand the baseline, propose a gender-sensitive approach to project design and implementation, and propose specific recommendations for mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment into project interventions and project M&E;
- specific focus on gender equality during project preparation workshops and stakeholder consultations, including pursuing equal representation from men and women for participation in workshops and consultations, identification of project preparation team members who can focus on gender and facilitate discussions, and allowing for an effective women's voice (for example, through women-only meetings and discussions during field consultations; inclusion of relevant local CSOs, Women's groups/associations);
- collection of baseline data and information on local-level gender dimensions and inclusion of key indicators for gender in the Results Framework;
- identification in the ProDoc on how the project differentially impacts women and the project inputs to narrow the gender disparity towards more equal roles and benefits;
- development of a project-specific Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy and action plan, to ensure women are included from planning to decision making stages of the project preparation and implementation; and
- articulation in the ProDoc on how project outreach efforts, resources, services, opportunities and communication will be made equally available to both women and men during the life of the project.

4 *Risks.* Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design (table format acceptable).

Risks	Rating	Preventive Measures
Difficulty in establishing the collective endorsement of and support for the integrated landscape management approach among government ministries, NGOs, CSOs, and the private sector.	Low	The project will, from the outset, perform multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement by providing foundational support for the NBCC to coordinate with environment, infrastructure, and development ministries, Landscape Support Unit (LSU), Wildlife Crime Control Coordination Committee (WCCC), and the TALWG. The collaborative leadership and conservation training will facilitate the engagement of stakeholders across sectors in the integrated landscape management approach. This support will directly contribute to the new Terai Arc Landscape Strategy, which defines development over the next 10 years, and the correlation with the strategy will be clearly defined and communicated to relevant stakeholders.
Institutions governing buffer zones and corridors have inadequate capacity or resources for integrated natural resource planning and management.	Moderate	The project will enhance capacities of villages, CFUGs, and district staff for sustainable, community-based approaches for integrated landscape management. This will involve building institutional and community capacity to implement interventions to reduce deforestation, and providing technical training and resources for community based approaches to wildlife conservation.
The administrative and political state of Nepal continues to be fluid and unpredictable, with institutional obstacles to the transition to the new federal structure.	High	The project will, in the context of the newly adopted federal structure with the provincial system, work with the political units to address challenges and capitalize on opportunities for coordination and collaboration, including issues related to land and natural resource use. The devolution of rights and the provincial boundaries will be leveraged as an opportunity to fully integrate landscape level planning and management across ministries and sectors through policy advocacy, annual forums and technical capacity building.
Critical ecosystem services are undermined by climate change and variability, and natural disasters.	Moderate	The integrated landscape management approach of the project will evaluate, where relevant and feasible, potential climate change impacts and incorporate disaster risk reduction considerations. This will take into account, for example, increased climate variability, increase in frequency and intensity of natural disasters, and potential species range shifts.

5. Coordination. Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other initiatives.

The proposed project will coordinate with, and share lessons with, related initiatives at the national level and in TAL, including the following:

- The WWF-GEF *Sustainable Land Management in the Churia Range* MSP (PMIS #5596), which focuses on community approaches to reduce land degradation in the Churia Hills, and is due for completion in December 2016. In particular, lessons on alternative energy interventions, forest restoration, improved agro-pastoral practices, and inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration across government ministries will be incorporated into the proposed project, and successes will be scaled up and applied at the national and landscape level.
- The UNDP-GEF *Renewable Energy for Rural Livelihood* (PMIS #4345) project seeks to remove the barriers to increased utilization of renewable energy resources in order to support economic, environmental, and social development and reduce GHG emissions. The proposed project will coordinate with the *Renewable Energy* project regarding landscape conservation and rural livelihoods, and regarding the government funded biogas, which is co-finance to the proposed project.
- The proposed project will coordinate with the *Supported Extended Biogas* Project under the World Bank to maximize the location of the GEF-financed and co-financed activities. The World Bank is also leading the *Nepal: Power Sector Reform and Sustainable Hydropower* Development project, a \$24 million running through 2020 that will be important to engage to promote green infrastructure principles and guidelines in for hydropower development.

- The UNDP *National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) for Global Environment Management* seeks to identify priorities and needs for capacity building to support the three global conventions on biodiversity, climate change and desertification/land degradation, and explore synergies among and across these areas to promote sustainable development. The NCSA project is currently under implementation, and the proposed project will coordinate on lessons for support to national level collaboration on biodiversity conservation and land degradation.
- The UNDP-GEF *Community Based Flood and Glacial Lake Outburst Risk Reduction* (PMIS #4451) seeks to reduce human and material losses from Glacial Lake Outburst Flooding (GLOF) in Solukhumbu district and catastrophic flooding events in the Terai and Churia Range of Nepal. The reduction in flooding events will be an important consideration for integrated landscape management under the proposed project, and will be a point of coordination for management and planning in the Terai and Chure Range.
- The FAO *Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Adaptive Capacity to Respond to Impacts of Climate Change and Variability for Sustainable Livelihoods in Agriculture Sector in Nepal* seeks to strengthen institutional and technical capacities for reducing vulnerability and promoting climate-resilient practices, strategies and plans for effectively responding to the impacts of climate change and variability in agriculture sector.
- The UNEP-LDCF *Catalyzing Ecosystem Restoration for Climate Resilient Natural Capital and Rural Livelihoods in Degraded Forests and Rangelands of Nepal* (PMIS # 5203), endorsed in August 2015, seeks to increase the capacity of national and local government institutions in Nepal to adapt to climate change by implementing ecosystem based adaptation in degraded forests and rangelands in mid-hill and high mountain areas. The rural livelihoods approach will be a point of coordination with the proposed project.

6. *Consistency with National Priorities.* Is the project consistent with the National strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions? (yes ☒ /no ☐). If yes, which ones and how: NAPAs, NAPs, ASGM NAPs, MIAs, NBSAPs, NCs, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, BURs, etc.

The project is fully aligned with, and contributes to, national priorities for biodiversity and forests, and contributes to Nepal's commitments to international conventions.

This project is based on the priorities of the *Terai Arc Landscape Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025* (MoFSC, 2016) and directly supports the implementation of this strategy. The project will help to address urgent conservation priorities, and tackle persisting and emerging threats to ensure socio-ecological integrity of the Terai Arc Landscape. This project will specifically support the following strategies outlined in the new TAL Strategy: strengthen protected areas, buffer zones and corridors; manage rare and endangered mammals; protect, restore and manage critical habitats; create and revise policies, regulations and action plans; strengthen coordination among law enforcement agencies; mitigate human-wildlife conflict; strengthen and promote sustainable forest management; reduce loss and degradation of forests; and provide local communities with innovative, sustainable economic incentives linked to forest conservation.

The proposed project will help to achieve the goals of the *Nepal National Tiger Recovery Plan to 2020* (2010) and the *Nepal National Tiger Action Plan* (in finalization and to be endorsed in mid-2016). The Terai Arc Landscape is the NTRP identified priority landscape for tigers in Nepal. Specifically, the proposed project contributes to the NTRP goal to maintain, restore and conserve at least 6,500 km² of additional tiger habitats, and contributes to two of the six NTRP objectives: *Obj.1* create an enabling policy environment for landscape-scale conservation in the TAL; and *Obj.3* manage the TAL as a priority conservation landscape with core areas, buffer zones, and corridors to conserve tigers as a metapopulation with transboundary ecological linkages.

This project will support the strengthening of three pillars of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), namely conservation, sustainable utilization and benefit sharing through national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Nepal's *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan* (NBSAP), revised in 2014, is an important means of supporting the CBD. In the context of the NBSAP priorities, this proposed project, through improved protection of buffer zones and corridors, will support the meaningful participation of local communities in the management of natural resources, landscape approaches to address multiple drivers of biodiversity loss, and cooperation among

relevant agencies to achieve success in biodiversity conservation. The proposed project will support the implementation of priority actions linked to the NBSAP to meet the Aichi Targets. Among the Aichi Targets, this proposed project will contribute to progress of the following: Aichi Target 5, loss of natural habitat, including forests; Aichi Target 7 concerning sustainable management of agriculture and forests to ensure conservation of biodiversity; Aichi Target 12, on preventing loss of known threatened species; and Aichi Target 14 related to maintaining ecosystem services to contribute to livelihoods.

The project is consistent with the *Government of Nepal's Forest Policy* (2015), which identifies community, collaborative, leasehold, protection, buffer zone, religious and private forests as key to provision of social, economic and ecosystems services. The *Forest Policy* outlines forests as critical to reduce the impacts of climate change through adaptation so as to ensure the flow of forest ecosystem services. The *Forest Policy* recognizes forests as a renewable natural resource, which contributes to subsistence livelihoods and recognizes subsistence forest use as a stepping stone to increased application of good forest management practices.

The proposed project will contribute to the UNCCD goals and framework and key land degradation related priorities for Nepal. Through integrated landscape management, the project will help to reverse and prevent desertification and land degradation, and help mitigate the effects of drought to support poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. The proposed project will build on the priorities and lessons from Nepal's *National Action Programme for Land Degradation and Desertification* (2002) and the subsequent stocktaking and national capacity assessment report on land degradation prepared by MoSTE in 2008. The proposed project will address the threats, drivers, activities and targets to combat land degradation that were identified and analyzed in these reports. Further, it will support the priorities of Nepal within the UNCCD framework, namely integrated ecosystem management programs to rehabilitate areas prone to landslides, integrate watershed management activities for water management and food security, and disaster forecasting and relief in the Churia range.

The proposed project will contribute to the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), submitted by Nepal to the UNFCCC in February 2016, which outline both the mitigation and adaptation strategies to address climate change. This project specifically aligns with and contributes to the NDC goals by utilizing the landscape approach to resource conservation and management in forest areas; reducing dependency on biomass through the use of alternative energy; maintaining forest cover and enhancing carbon sequestration through sustainable management of forests and improved forest governance to control drivers of deforestation and forest degradation; and institutional strengthening. The project will also contribute to the *Sustainable Development Agenda for Nepal* (2003) goal of low carbon and green economic growth. The project will work toward the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN in 2015 by promoting inclusive, coordinated land management, good governance, and economic development to address the root causes of poverty and the universal need for development that works for all people. Other national level priorities and policies this project will work in parallel with and build upon include: *Climate Change Policy 2011*, which seeks to address the adverse impacts of climate change and utilize the opportunities created from it to improve livelihoods and achieve climate-friendly physical, social and economic development; and *National Land Use Policy 2012*, which uses available land and land resource for sustainable communities and to achieve economic and environmental development. The project will support the *Environmental Friendly Local Governance Framework 2013* by helping to mainstream environment and disaster management in the local planning process, which will feed into and inform landscape level planning. This framework is critical to development and conservation initiatives in the country moving forward.

7. Knowledge Management. Outline the knowledge management approach for the project, including, if any, plans for the project to learn from other relevant projects and initiatives, to assess and document in a user-friendly form, and share these experiences and expertise with relevant stakeholders.

The project will build on important lessons from a number of relevant projects and initiatives, including:

- Lessons from the first TAL Strategy, specifically working to address the gaps identified in the recently released *Terai Arc Landscape Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025*;
- Lessons from landscape level projects in TAL, including the Protected Area and Buffer Zone Project and Corridor and Bottleneck Restoration Project, as well as other priority conservation landscapes in Nepal;

- Lessons from the WWF-GEF Churia Range project (see Annex 2), which will complete a Terminal Evaluation in December 2016, and will have key lessons on community-based management for land and soil protection, project implementation modalities and gender inclusion;
- Lessons from the UNDP-GEF *Western Terai Landscape Conservation Project* (PMIS #1107), in particular, lessons gained from the Terminal Evaluation around the need for careful definition of the implementation arrangement and governance structure during the ProDoc stage, and focus on implementation of the landscape approach as a whole and not through multiple small interventions (see Annex 2); and
- Lessons from the largely successful UNDP-GEF *Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands* (PMIS #1217) project, which was also in the Terai Arc region.

The project will promote learning through national and regional inter-sectoral dialogue and coordination for integrated landscape management. This will include convening an annual multi-stakeholder forum to discuss integrated landscape management in TAL, including the management of critical corridors and buffer zone areas, as well as large infrastructure projects that could impact biodiversity, forests, and local communities. Sharing the approach and progress of integrated landscape management will be a key part of the multi-stakeholder forum. The green infrastructure guidelines proposed for completion under this project will be developed in a participatory manner, incorporating the national, regional, and local stakeholder engagement and feedback. These green infrastructure guidelines will be presented at the multi-stakeholder forum to facilitate their exchange and uptake, and will be printed and disseminated in English and Nepali.

In addition, a webpage will be hosted and regularly updated to communicate the progress of project activities and key outcomes. Important lessons from the project will be documented throughout implementation during regular monitoring and evaluation and reporting. Lessons will be compiled in case studies that can be shared annually or by project close. These case studies will be an important means for the project to promote the exchange of lessons and experiences with other practitioners working on projects in Nepal and other countries. The project will also aim to coordinate with the coordination and knowledge management child project of the *Global Partnership on Wildlife Conservation and Crime Prevention for Sustainable Development*, for sharing lessons and experiences on the wildlife crime prevention sub-component of this proposed project.

PART III: APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT BY GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT(S) AND GEF AGENCY(IES)


A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT¹⁰ OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S):

(Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter(s) with this template. For SGP, use this SGP OFP endorsement letter).

NAME	POSITION	MINISTRY	DATE (MM/dd/yyyy)
Mr. Baikuntha Aryal	Joint Secretary, International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division	Ministry of Finance	07/03/2016

B. GEF AGENCY(IES) CERTIFICATION

This request has been prepared in accordance with GEF policies¹¹ and procedures and meets the GEF criteria for project identification and preparation under GEF-6.

Agency Coordinator, Agency name	Signature	Date (MM/dd/yyyy)	Project Contact Person	Telephone	Email
Mr. Herve Lefevre		07/21/2016	Renae Stenhouse	+1-202 495-4703	renae.stenhouse@wwfus.org

C. ADDITIONAL GEF PROJECT AGENCY CERTIFICATION (APPLICABLE ONLY TO NEWLY ACCREDITED GEF PROJECT AGENCIES)

For newly accredited GEF Project Agencies, please download and fill up the required **GEF Project Agency Certification of Ceiling Information Template** to be attached as an annex to the PIF.

¹⁰ For regional and/or global projects in which participating countries are identified, OFP endorsement letters from these countries are required even though there may not be a STAR allocation associated with the project.

¹¹ GEF policies encompass all managed trust funds, namely: GEFTF, LDCF, and SCCF

Annex 1: EX-ACT Tool

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The EX-Ante Carbon-balance Tool (EX-ACT)

Start

Description

Land Use Change

Crop production

Grassland Livestock

Management Degradation

Coastal Wetlands









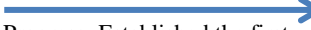



Inputs Investments

Fisheries Aquaculture

Detailed Results

Project Name	Integrated Landscape Man		Climate	Warm Temperate (Moist)		Duration of the Project (Years)			5		
Continent	Asia (Indian subcontinent)		Regional Soil Type	HAC Soils		Total area (ha)			271582.6928		
Components of the project	Gross fluxes			Share per GHG of the Balance					Result per year		
	Without	With	Balance	All GHG in tCO2eq			N2O	CH4	Without	With	Balance
	Positive = source / negative = sink			CO2							
				Biomass	Soil	Other					
Land use changes											
Deforestation	1,107,836	0	-1,107,836	-1,040,033	-36,249		-13,159	-18,395	221,567	0	-221,567
Afforestation	-59,020	-200,846	-141,826	-111,540	-30,286		0	0	-11,804	-40,169	-28,365
Other LUC	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Agriculture											
Annual	-613,525	-613,525	0	0	0		0	0	-122,705	-122,705	0
Perennial	-172,386	-172,386	0	0	0		0	0	-34,477	-34,477	0
Rice	485,202	470,646	-14,556	0	0		-678	-13,878	97,040	94,129	-2,911
Grassland & Livestocks											
Grassland	1,182	-2,265	-3,447	0	-3,388		-31	-28	236	-453	-689
Livestocks	0	0	0				0	0	0	0	0
Degradation & Management	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Coastal wetlands	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Inputs & Investments	0	0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0
Fishery & Aquaculture	0	0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	749,289	-518,376	-1,267,665	-1,151,573	-69,923	0	-13,867	-32,301	149,858	-103,675	-253,533
Per hectare	3	-2	-5	-4.2	-0.3	0.0	-0.1	-0.1			
Per hectare per year	0.6	-0.4	-0.9	-0.8	-0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	-0.4	-0.9

Annex 2: Building on lessons from Past GEF Projects in Nepal

Sustainability of Landscape Investments	WTLCP (2005-2012)	GEF-5 Land Degradation (2014-2017)	GEF-6 Integrated Landscape Management (Proposed)	Future GEF Investment Opportunities (GEF-7 on)
1. Cross-Sectoral Coordination and Integrated Planning <u>Challenge:</u> The Government of Nepal endorsed the Landscape Approach for conservation in 2001 but no on-ground model was implemented for inter-sectoral coordination	 Progress: Showcased importance of developing a suite of tools, policies, institutional improvements, and field demonstrations for landscape approach to conservation Shortcoming: The terminal evaluation notes that development of replicable landscape-level management model was not achieved	 Progress: Created a building block for integrated landscape management, working through land degradation lens to apply best practices among communities in Churia forests Shortcoming: Did not integrate BD and SFM for multiple benefits, so does not provide a replicable landscape level management model	 Aim: Development and implementation of integrated and multiple-benefit landscape and forest management for key areas in TAL. The proposed project involves partnerships among different ministries (such as MoFSC, MoPE, MoAD) and their departments to promote integrated management practices	 Replicate this approach in critical corridors and buffer zones, and climate refugia in extended part of TAL
2. Policies and Cross Sectoral Planning for Landscape Management <u>Challenge:</u> Lack of policy frameworks and adequate landscape level planning; small-scale site activities have little systemic impact; poor coordination of plans and programs across sectors and agencies	 Progress: Development of landscape-based policies: Integrated Landscape Planning Framework Guidelines, Payment for Ecosystem Service Guidelines, Corridor Management Guidelines, and Agrobiodiversity Policy Successfully piloted DFSCC, which was scaled up and became a nationally required district-level institution Shortcoming: Application and implementation of policy frameworks remained inadequate	 Progress: District-level and localized land-use policies and plans developed for sustainable land management in 4 districts Shortcoming: Lack of land use planning at scale, and lack of full BD, SFM, LD integration	 Aim: Implement landscape and forest management policies through cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms for NBCC, LSU, TAL Working Group and ministries Integrated NRM Plans developed for districts and Forest Management Operational Plans developed/revised for buffer zones and corridors Smart Green Infrastructure Guidelines developed by environment/infrastructure government agencies	 Replication of cross-sectoral coordination for landscape and forest management; integrated NRM plans for other landscapes, corridors, PAs and buffer zones. Implementation and integration of Smart Green Infrastructure Guidelines in development plans
3. Protected Area, Buffer Zone and Corridor Management <u>Challenge:</u> Encroachment, land use change, infrastructure development, human wildlife conflict, weak governance and dependence on natural resources	 Progress: Established the first three Protected Forests, and delivered a series of interventions that reduced threats to wildlife, helping to stabilize or increase populations of tiger, swamp deer and blackbuck. Shortcoming: Measures to move toward intermediate state had not yet produced results	 Progress: Improved agricultural and land management through innovative field practices and enhanced enabling environment at local level to reduce erosion and climate vulnerability Shortcoming: No consolidation of field practices for high impact. Localized outcomes	 Aim: The critical corridors which are not under Protected Forest designation will be supported for biodiversity and socio-economic assessment and stakeholder consultation to analyze the feasibility of this designation, and proposed for protection status Aim: Corridor management plans developed/revised Aim: applied forest and wildlife management capacity and demonstration projects	 Protected Forest status plays a critical role in TAL Strategy 2025 Corridor management plan model is used in transboundary work protecting corridors connecting protected areas in Nepal and India Applied forest management replicated