



# Asia's Linear Infrastructure safeGuarding Nature (ALIGN)

The USAID-funded ALIGN Project aims to expand the adoption and implementation of high-quality safeguards to protect biodiversity and livelihoods in response to Asia's rapid expansion of linear infrastructure, especially roads, railways, and power lines.

Asia is experiencing the highest infrastructure investment rates in the world, led by transport and energy sector expansion. The Asian Development Bank estimated that between 2016 and 2030, \$1.7 trillion per year in infrastructure investments is needed to maintain Asia's growth, tackle poverty, and respond to climate change. Asia is home to some of the world's richest biodiversity and most complex ecosystems. Asia's ecosystems contribute to human wellbeing in numerous ways such as underpinning economic vitality, increasing communities' resilience to environmental change, and providing natural resources. Linear infrastructure can have particularly significant impacts on biodiversity, impeding wildlife movement, fragmenting intact natural habitats, and causing widespread land conversion.

## PROJECT GOAL

The goal of the ALIGN Project is to enhance the development and implementation of effective, high-quality linear infrastructure safeguards that protect people and nature from harm.

## OBJECTIVES

### Objective 1: Policies and Practices

Strengthen the policy frameworks of government, private and finance sector, and civil society stakeholders and effective application of natural resource safeguards for linear infrastructure by aligning them with international best practices.

### Objective 2: Partnership and Engagement

Enhance partnerships to promote and support investment in and implementation of safeguards for linear infrastructure that contribute to improvements in biophysical conditions and adaptive capacity.

### Objective 3: Capacity Development

Increase capacity of stakeholders to contribute to better management of natural resources by implementing high-quality natural resource safeguards for linear infrastructure and promoting and applying sustainable infrastructure development options.

#### EXPECTED RESULTS

1. Policy frameworks related to natural resource safeguards for LI are updated and revised by key ministries, national and international financial institutions, and the private sector.
2. Natural resource safeguards for LI are increasingly called for and/or implemented by government, private and finance sector, and civil society stakeholders in compliance with internationally accepted standards, as illustrated by at least three linear infrastructure projects.
3. National and regional coalitions and civil society organizations are regularly elevating the profile of NR safeguards for LI at influential events and through strategic communications as a highly impactful mechanism for advancing sustainable development.
4. The staff of government agencies, financial institutions, and private companies have an increased awareness of high-quality NR safeguards for linear infrastructure and have the capacity and incentives to apply them at every stage of the project life cycle.

#### PROGRAM AREAS

The project will address the development and implementation of effective high-quality safeguards throughout Asia with a particular emphasis on three focal countries— India, Mongolia, Nepal.

##### Nepal

In Nepal, existing and planned linear infrastructure projects cross through protected areas, wildlife corridors, and forests and are impacting globally significant populations of tigers, elephants, greater-one horned rhinos, and snow leopards. These ecologically sensitive areas are also home to Indigenous communities and other marginalized groups with strong economic, cultural, and religious ties to their natural resources. Nepal recently allocated funds for construction of wildlife crossings along the East-West Highway and identified the need to design and install such structures for other major highways. In Nepal, the project will primarily focus on natural resource safeguards related to roads. The total budget allocated for project activities in Nepal is \$2.4 million.

#### PERFORMANCE PERIOD

September 2021- September 2025

#### TOTAL BUDGET

\$ 6.03 million

#### IMPLEMENTING ORGANISATIONS

The ALIGN project is implemented by WWF (World Wildlife Fund) in partnership with the Center for Large Landscape Conservation (CLLC). ALIGN project management is based in the WWF Nepal office in Kathmandu, with three focal-country programs led by WWF India, WWF Mongolia, and WWF Nepal.

#### KEY CONTACTS:

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