



**WWF GEF/GCF Agency**

**Environmental and Social Management Framework & Process  
Framework & Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework:**

**Managing the Human-Tiger Interface in Nepal**

GEF project ID: 11157

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

BES	Brief Environmental Study
BZCF	Buffer Zone Community Forest
BZUC	Buffer Zone User Committee
CF	Community Forest
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CFUG	Community Forest User Group
DNPWC	Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Act
EPR	Environmental Protection Regulation
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
ESSF	Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GoN	Government of Nepal
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
Ha	hectare
HTC	Human-Tiger Conflict
HWC	Human-Wildlife Conflict
IEE	Initial Environmental Examination
IPs	Indigenous Peoples
IPP	Indigenous Peoples Plan
IPPF	Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LRP	Livelihood Restoration Plan
MOFE	Ministry of Forests and Environment
NFDIN	National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
PAs	Protected Areas
PAP	Project Affected People
PCC	Project Coordination Committee
PSC	Project Steering Committee

PF	Process Framework
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPE	Personnel Protective Equipment
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SEAH	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SIPP	Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures
TAL	Terai Arc Landscape
WCD IP	Wildlife Conservation and Development Integrated Program
WHO	World Health Organization
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nepal is facing a growing challenge with Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC), prompting the integration of effective HWC management policies and strategies into national frameworks. As a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Nepal collaborates with the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Human-Wildlife Conflict Specialist Group. Additionally, Nepal's active participation in the IUCN World Conservation Congress underscored the importance of enhancing the management standards of protected areas (PAs) and fostering the exchange of best practices among tiger range countries. This engagement reflects Nepal's commitment to addressing HWC while contributing to broader regional conservation efforts.

The Wildlife Conservation and Development Integrated Program (WCD IP) aims to protect wildlife and preserve landscapes by addressing the root causes of species decline while ensuring that both nations and local communities benefit sustainably from their natural resources. This initiative focuses on safeguarding terrestrial, freshwater, and marine wildlife populations and their critical habitats through a comprehensive, integrated strategy. A key aspect of the program emphasizes promoting harmonious coexistence between humans and wildlife. This is achieved by implementing conservation measures at the landscape level and developing effective strategies for managing Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC). These efforts aim to create balanced solutions that protect biodiversity while supporting human livelihoods and well-being. In Nepal, the child project of WCD IP will be implemented as “Managing the Human Tiger Interface in Nepal”. This project is critical to the WCD IP as it represents a situation where Nepal has successfully increased numbers of a globally significant species - tiger - and now needs to enhance human wildlife coexistence, to maintain and embrace community support for conservation. This project will provide on the ground implementation models for human-tiger coexistence that can be shared with other countries with HWC issues.

The Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) is one of the most ecologically significant regions globally, featuring the tallest grasslands and adjoining riverine forests that sustain the highest tiger densities and the second-largest population of greater one-horned rhinoceroses. Notably, the rise in tiger numbers has been a significant achievement in species conservation. However, this growth has also intensified Human-Tiger Conflict (HTC), especially in buffer zones of protected areas, making it a pressing concern. The project aims to address the root causes of species decline, including human-wildlife conflict (HWC) and habitat degradation, while promoting landscape-level interventions in high-priority protected areas (PAs) and buffer zones within TAL—a critical tiger habitat in South Asia.

The project aims to enhance habitat management in high-impact PAs, address Human-Tiger Conflict (HTC) through integrated approaches, and strengthen policies, protocols, and research for effective HTC management, ensuring conservation benefits reach local communities. There are four project components;

Component 1: Strengthen enabling condition for HWC management and coexistence: It will develop HWC management training modules, and undertake training of trainers, so that holistic HWC management measures can be integrated into the work of Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) across Nepal.

Component 2: Human Wildlife coexistence approaches and livelihood support: Interventions will be designed under site-specific situations, social dynamics, and local sociocultural contexts.

Component 3: Habitat management: It will promote science-based habitat management practices within existing tiger habitats (grassland, wetland). The project will ensure availability of space for

tigers where interactions with humans are less likely by adopting science-based management of existing grassland/wetland.

Component 4: Knowledge Management. This aims to achieve knowledge generation, exchange and learning to enable replication and scaling up of best practices. It will also strengthen regional cooperation between Nepal and India in key aspects of HWC management, and global knowledge exchange through the Global Wildlife Program.

Total Funding amount for this project is 4,498,319 USD (not including Agency Fees or PPG) from the GEF Trust Fund.

The project activities under various components have been assessed and categorized as medium risk (Category B) in alignment with WWF's Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework. Accordingly, the development of an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) and Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) is required.

The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), under the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MOFE), will serve as the implementing agency for the WCD IP child project titled "Managing the Human-Tiger Interface in Nepal."

### **1.1. Objective of the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)**

The preparation of this ESMF was required in accordance with the WWF's Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF), through guidance and procedures described in WWF's Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures (SIPP), in order to identify and manage the environmental and social risks and impacts of the "Managing the Human Tiger Interface in Nepal" project. The ESMF aims to outline the principles, procedures, and mitigation measures for addressing environmental and social impacts associated with the project in accordance with the laws and regulations of Nepal and with the ESSF.

Since the precise scope of activities that will be implemented as part of the project will only be determined during the implementation phase, site-specific social and environmental impacts are uncertain at this stage. Thus, the development of site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) is currently not feasible, and an ESMF is necessary to set out procedures for addressing potential adverse social and environmental impacts that may occur during project activities. Site-specific ESMPs will be developed pursuant to the guidance provided by this ESMF during project implementation.

The specific objectives of the ESMF include the following:

- Conduct an initial analysis to identify potential positive and negative social and environmental impacts and risks associated with the Project, including risks related to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH).
- Summarize the relevant legal and regulatory frameworks applicable to the implementation of the Project.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and parties involved in implementing the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF).
- Provide preliminary recommendations and propose measures to mitigate adverse impacts while enhancing beneficial outcomes.
- Develop a methodology for screening and assessing potential activities, enabling the classification of environmental and social risks and the identification of suitable safeguards instruments.

- Establish procedures to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the proposed mitigation measures.
- Detail requirements for information disclosure, grievance redress mechanisms, capacity-building initiatives, and the budget needed for ESMF implementation.

## **1.2. Objective of the Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF)**

WWF recognizes Indigenous Peoples as communities with distinct cultural identities, historical ties to their ancestral lands, and unique governance systems. They emphasize principles like self-identification, territorial ties, and cultural distinctiveness. WWF adopts the statement of coverage contained in the International Labor Organization Convention 169 (ILO), which includes both indigenous and tribal peoples. Characteristics of indigenous and tribal peoples include social, cultural and economic ways of life different from other segments of the national population, traditional forms of social organization, political institutions, customs and laws and long-term historical continuity of residence in a certain area.

The WWF’s Policy on Indigenous Peoples is triggered given that proposed project activities will involve Indigenous Peoples. Therefore, an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework thus has to be prepared. Indigenous people (Tharu, Sonaha, Chepang, Bankariya, Bote, Majhi, Danuwar and Mushhar) have been living in the Terai region for generations and their cultural and traditional values have evolved in response to their dependence on and use of natural resources from forests, grasslands, rivers, and wetlands. Among them, the Tharu community is the dominant inhabitants living in and around the PA’s buffer zones and corridors selected under the project.

An Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) is developed to outline the principles, processes, and organizational structures for engaging with indigenous peoples (IPs) within the scope of the proposed project. The primary goal of the IPPF is to protect the rights of IPs, ensuring their participation and access to culturally appropriate benefits from the project. Specifically, the framework establishes policies and procedures for assessing project impacts on IPs and preparing an Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP). This plan serves as a detailed document to safeguard IP rights and ensure adherence to WWF’s Indigenous Peoples Policy before implementing any project activities that may affect them.

The objective of the IPs Planning Framework (IPPF) is to clarify the principles, procedures and organizational arrangements to be applied to IPs for the “Managing the Human Tiger Interface in Nepal” project. This framework will serve as a guideline to the project team to:

- Enable them to prepare an IPs Plans (IPPs) for specific activities proposed consistent with WWF’s Environment and Social Safeguard Integrated Policies and Procedures.
- Engage affected IPs in a Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process.
- Enable IPs to benefit equitably from the project.

## **1.4. ESMF/IPPF Preparation Methodology**

Preparing an ESMF/IPPF involves a structured and participatory approach. The ESMF serves as a guiding document for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social risks and impacts of project activities. An assessment process was carried out as part of preparation of IPPF and ESMF and was based on the following:

- Understand the Project Context:** Project objectives were reviewed to understand the goals, components, and activities of the project. Potential Environmental, Social Risks and associated risks with project activities were identified, particularly those related to biodiversity, climate

change, pollution, and social inclusion. Various Environmental and Social Safeguards Policy of WWF and GEF were reviewed and determined its applicability to the project.

- b. Conduct a Scoping Study:** Assess the environmental and social baseline of the project area (e.g., ecosystems, communities, livelihoods, cultural heritage). Then key stakeholders (e.g., local communities, government agencies, indigenous peoples) were identified and assessed for their interests and potential concerns. Various relevant national and local laws, WWF's and GEF's policies, and international agreements applicable to the project were reviewed.
  
- c. Site visit and Consultations with local communities and Indigenous Peoples:** After identifying a potential site with a high incidence of human-wildlife conflict, a site visit and consultations were conducted in mid-December 2024. The visit prioritized engaging with local communities, Buffer Zone Management Committees, and Forest User Committees, with a particular focus on meetings with Indigenous groups such as the Tharu, Bote, and Chepang, as well as key informant interviews (KII) with park officials. These consultations aimed to gather baseline data on the demographics and the social, cultural, and political characteristics of the area to assess the potential impacts of project activities. A total of 10 FGDs and 4 KIIs were conducted during the site visit, and the inputs and feedback from consultation participants were incorporated into both the project documents and this ESMF.
  
- d. Assess Environmental and Social Impacts:** Classify project activities based on their risk levels (e.g., high, moderate, low). Identify and evaluate specific environmental and social impacts (e.g., deforestation, habitat loss, displacement, cultural impacts). Develop strategies to mitigate potential impacts.
  
- e. Develop Management Plans:** Environmental Management Plans were developed to identify measures to mitigate negative environmental impacts and enhance positive outcomes. Similarly, ESMF and IPPF were prepared.

The ESMF/IPPF draws on consultations results, and on the relevant laws and regulations of Nepal and the ESSF and SIPP. The relevant laws and regulations of Nepal related to safeguards apply to the project since it is implemented within the jurisdiction of Nepal. WWF's SIPP apply since the project is managed by WWF, which is an implementing agency of GEF.

In order to avoid duplications and for ease of reference, the ESMF and IPPF are combined into a single document.

## 2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This chapter outlines the objectives of the "Managing the Human-Tiger Interface in Nepal", its components, milestones, and major supported activities.

### 2.1 Project Objectives and Components

The child project of Wildlife conservation for development integrated program refereeing to **"Managing the Human-Tiger Interface in Nepal"** involves balancing conservation efforts with the safety and well-being of communities living near tiger habitats. Nepal is home to a significant tiger population, primarily in the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL), which spans 14 protected areas along the southern plains and forests near the Indian border. The child project focuses on tiger-bearing terrestrial protected areas (PAs) in the Terai Arc Lowlands area of Nepal. The project will contribute to the sub-indicator "Terrestrial protected areas under improved management" through strengthening park management capacity for addressing HWC and especially HTC in their buffer zones, where conflict hotspots occur impacting local communities; support behavior change and livelihood interventions to reduce HTC impacts in hotspot areas; and improve the management and restoration of key habitats for tigers and their prey in the park core zones. Based on the intensity of conflict in buffer zones and management of habitat within core areas, the project will contribute towards improvement management across the total areas of three high impact PAs (Chitwan National Park 95,263 ha, Bardia National Park 96,800 ha and Parsa National Park 62,739 ha) and their buffer zones.

The objective of the project is to promote human wildlife coexistence in key tiger bearing protected areas in Nepal. The project aims to achieve three major outcomes. Firstly, strategic action will focus on habitat management (grassland and wetlands) within the core areas of high impact PAs to avoid unusual movements and behavior of tigers and their prey into the forest fringe areas as result of food shortage within PAs. Secondly, management of HTC through integrated approaches that incorporate prevention, mitigation, response, policy, and others; and ensuring that benefits of conservation through effective economic incentives and ecosystem services reach local communities. Thirdly, the project will strengthen the enabling factor related with HTC management in Nepal. This outcome prioritizes drafting polices and action plans related to the management of HTC and science-based protocols for habitat management, and Human Tiger Conflict (HTC) research and monitoring. All project components will have an overarching focus on behavior change communications among the communities and stakeholders living and working in buffer zones of tiger bearing PAs.

#### **Component 1: Strengthen enabling conditions for HWC management and coexistence:**

The component aims to strengthen policy and planning frameworks to promote human-wildlife coexistence while encouraging collaboration across three tiers of governments and in integrating coexistence in key sectors to increase finance in sustainable manner. The component will improve the capacity of key stakeholders in the sector while generating knowledge and information through applied research on HWC, effectiveness of mitigation measures and monitoring of problem animals to avoid potential conflict. Activities under this component include the development of HWC management strategies and guidelines, developed based on the experiences of HTC management in component two. It will develop HWC management training modules, and undertake training of trainers, so that holistic HWC management measures can be integrated into the work of DNPWC across Nepal.

There are two Outcomes of this component;

**Outcome 1.1:** Integrated policy and planning framework for HWC management and coexistence established

*Outcome 1.2:* Stakeholders' capacity increased and training provided on HTC prevention and situation management

### **Component 2: Human wildlife coexistence approaches and livelihood support**

This component will strengthen human wildlife coexistence through behavior change in an effort to garner positive support for tiger conservation. The component will aim to digitize and make relief claim and distribution process more efficient and improve the conflict database. The major focus on the component will be on strengthening local livelihood strategies in an effort to reduce the risks of human-wildlife interactions of forest resource dependent households in conflict hotspots of Chitwan, Parsa and Bardia National Parks. Strategies under this component will include holistic HTC approaches to identify and address existing drivers of conflict. Interventions will be designed under site-specific situations, social dynamics, and local sociocultural contexts. It will incorporate behavior change as an overarching theme while reducing the risks of human wildlife interaction through diversification of livelihood strategies that reduce the exposure of vulnerable households in conflict hotspots.

There are three Outcomes of this component;

*Outcome 2.1:* HTC impacts reduced through strengthened engagement of stakeholders, social behavior changes and relief and response approach.

*Outcome 2.2:* Buffer Zone communities are empowered and provided with livelihood options that reduce their dependence on forest resources and exposure to HTC.

*Outcome 2.3:* Strengthened human-tiger conflict response and delivery of relief informed by monitoring and piloting interventions

### **Component 3: Habitat management**

The initiative aims to enhance habitat quality and connectivity within tiger-bearing protected areas, specifically Chitwan, Parsa, and Bardia National Parks, to restore their ecological functions in the face of climate change. These areas are particularly vulnerable to climate impacts such as prolonged dry spells, which deplete water sources, and an increased risk of forest fires affecting critical habitats. Stakeholder consultations and available data emphasize that habitat management is severely underfunded, with resource limitations posing a major challenge. The project will introduce a grid-based approach to habitat management, allowing for systematic monitoring and learning to improve the effectiveness of interventions. These practices will serve as models for replication in other landscapes and countries. By adopting science-driven methods, the initiative will improve grassland and wetland habitats essential for tigers. Ensuring the availability of water, prey, and cover, the project will create safer spaces for tigers with minimal human interaction.

Additionally, a habitat management guideline, developed by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, will be piloted. This guideline focuses on managing and restoring habitats within the national parks under changing climate conditions.

There is one Outcome of this component;

*Outcome 3.1:* Critical habitats in conflict hotspots are effectively functioning through science-based management and restoration under changing climate

#### **Component 4: Knowledge Management**

This component aims to manage the knowledge generated through the project in an effort to scale-out and replicate the learning at national and regional scale in coordination with the WCD Integrated Program. There is one Outcome of this component;

*Outcome 4.1:* Knowledge generation, exchange and learning enable replication and scaling up of best practices

### **2.2. Project Area Profile**

The Terai Arc Landscape includes six protected areas- Chitwan National Park, Parsa National Park, Banke National Park, Bardiya National Park, Shuklaphanta National Park and Krishnasar Conservation Area and their buffer zones encompassing a total of 5,538.12 sq km of an area<sup>1</sup>. It adopts a landscape-level approach to conserve large mammals such as the Bengal Tiger, the Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros, the common leopard, the Asian elephant, and more. Moreover, the region is dominated by the larger river system of Narayani, Karnali, Mahakali, and their tributaries and includes the Shiwalik hills and Terai regions of southern Nepal. *Shorea robusta* is the dominant tree species and the other common tree species include *Adina cordifolia*, *Brandis*, *Albizia spp*, *Anthocephalus chinensis*<sup>2</sup>. The ecosystem services provided by the region play a significant role in supporting the socioeconomic well-being and development of people living in the Terai and extended Churia regions of Nepal. Forest is the dominant land-use type in the TAL covering an almost 13,332 ha area of land followed by agriculture covering almost 8721 ha of the total land area. Many grassland patches in protected areas (PAs) are being encroached by woody perennials in the absence of the annual monsoon floods that set back natural succession and maintain grasslands<sup>1</sup>. Apart from its biological significance, the region faces immense pressure from high infrastructure development, migration, urbanization, and overexploitation of resources<sup>2</sup>. The Terai region is already experiencing more extreme weather events, with more frequent, devastating floods. More intense rainfall, coupled with denuded and deforested watersheds in the Churia range and Mahabharat, is resulting in soil erosion. Poorly managed extraction of sand, gravel, and boulders from streams and rivers in the fragile Churia is changing river profiles and flow regimes. Construction of roads without adhering to appropriate engineering safeguards has caused slopes to become unstable and susceptible to landslides<sup>1</sup>. The key threats and environmental issues in TAL area are mainly Encroachment, poaching, illegal trade, unsustainable harvesting of resources, forest fire, grazing pressure, human wildlife conflict, climate change and natural disaster.

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<sup>1</sup> [terai arc landscape strategy.pdf \(panda.org\)](https://panda.org/terai-arc-landscape-strategy.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [Impact of Land Cover Change on Ecosystem Services in a Tropical Forested Landscape \(mdpi.com\)](https://www.mdpi.com/1033/12/12/2000)



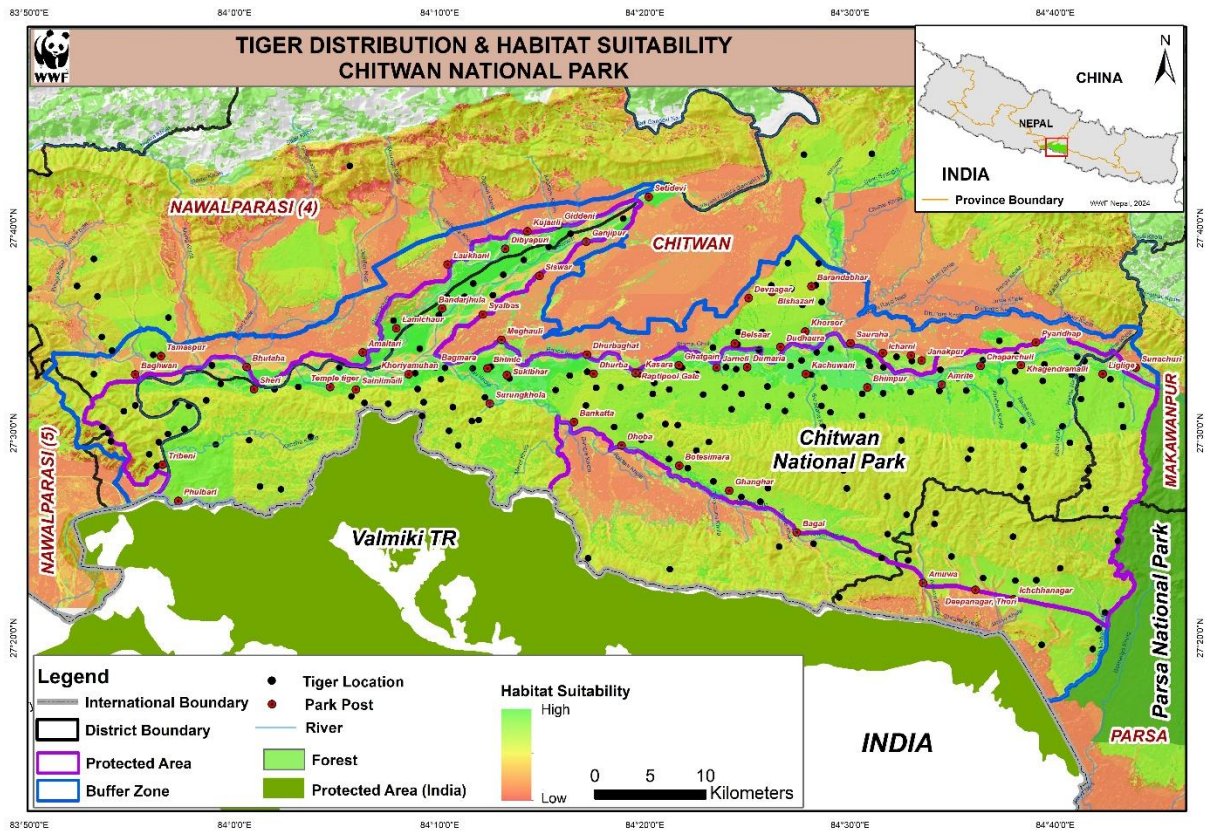
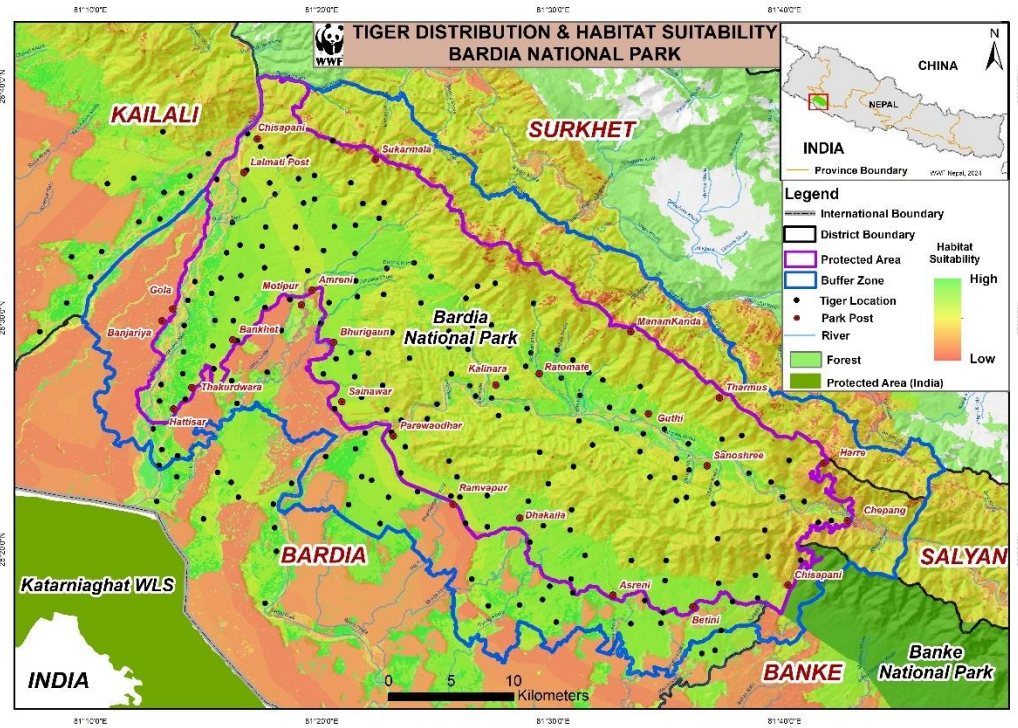
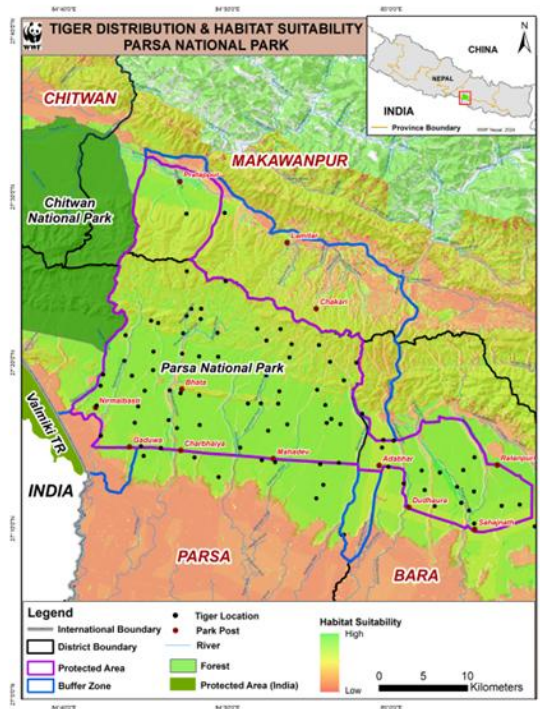


Figure 1. Map of Project Implementation Site - Chitwan National Park



**Figure 2. Map of Project Implementation Site - Bardia National Park**



**Figure 3. Map of Project Implementation Site - Parsa National Park**

### **2.3. Demographic and economic information**

The Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) in Nepal is a vital region spanning several lowland districts across provinces like Province 2, 5, 6, and 7. It is home to a diverse population, including ethnic groups such as Madhesi, Tharu, Brahmin, Chhetri, and various indigenous communities. Nepali is the official language, but local languages like Maithili, Bhojpuri, and Tharu are also spoken. Hinduism dominates the region's religious practices. While urban centers like Narayangadh, Butwal, Nepalgunj, Dhangadi exist, much of TAL remains rural. The region faces challenges like poverty, environmental concerns, and balancing development with conservation.

The economic status of the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) in Nepal is primarily driven by agriculture, with crops like rice, maize, and sugarcane, alongside livestock farming. The region also benefits from its rich biodiversity, supporting eco-tourism and the sustainable use of forest resources. Proximity to India facilitates trade, but infrastructure remains underdeveloped in some areas, limiting market access. Despite these opportunities, TAL faces challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate vulnerability, and land degradation. The economic divide between urban and rural areas is notable, with remote communities lacking access to basic services.

The project focuses mainly on the buffer zones of the Parsa, Chitwan and Bardia National Parks while also seeking to benefit Banke and Shuklaphanta National Parks; together these represent all of the major tiger-bearing protected areas of the TAL region. The buffer zones of these protected areas are inhabited by more than 620,000 people. The project area has a mixed population of Indigenous people and immigrants from the hills. The majority of the population is dominated by the high-caste Hindus (Brahmin, Chhetri), followed by Indigenous group such as Tharu, Tamang, Gurung, Magar and underprivileged lower-caste such as Pariyar, Kami, Damai, Sarki and others.

### **2.4. IPs and Vulnerable Groups**

#### **(a) Overview of Indigenous Peoples Situation**

Indigenous Peoples of Nepal are officially described as Indigenous Nationalities (Adivasi Janajati). They make up for 35.08 per cent of the country's total population as per CBS data of 2021 Census. Despite constituting such a significant portion of the population, indigenous peoples have been marginalized in terms of language, culture and political as well economic opportunities throughout the history. Indigenous Peoples in Nepal have distinct cultures, languages and belief systems. They live across the country – the mountains, the hills and the plains. They are in majority in as many as 27 of the total 75 districts. Most of indigenous people live in remote and rural areas and make a living out of subsistence farming.

National Foundation for Upliftment of Adivasi/Janjati Act, 2058 (2002) defines those ethnic groups and communities who have their own mother language and traditional rites and customs, distinct cultural identity, distinct social structure and written or unwritten history. The act has recognized 59 indigenous communities in Nepal. These indigenous communities are known as Adivasi/Janjati in Nepali and Indigenous Nationalities in English as per the act. These groups as whole are generally considered to be the marginalized segment of the population who engage in economic activities ranging from hunting/gathering and shifting agriculture in or near forests to wage laborers or even small-scale market-oriented activities.

Indigenous peoples in Nepal, constitute a significant portion of the country's population and are recognized for their rich cultural heritage and distinct identities. Despite constitutional guarantees

and international commitments to uphold their rights, these communities continue to face multifaceted challenges.

Indigenous groups in Nepal advocated for ethnicity-based federalism and self-determination during the constitution drafting process. However, the final constitution fell short of these demands, as provinces were not named after ethnic groups, and promised autonomy was not fully realized. This has led to dissatisfaction and concerns about the erosion of their rights. Indigenous populations often experience higher rates of poverty, limited access to education, and inadequate healthcare services. Landlessness remains a critical issue, exacerbated by historical injustices and displacement.

While Nepal has made strides in recognizing the rights of Indigenous peoples through constitutional provisions and international commitments, substantial challenges persist. Addressing issues related to land rights, political representation, and socioeconomic disparities is crucial for the genuine empowerment and inclusion of Indigenous communities in Nepal's development trajectory.

### **(b) IPs in project sites**

Indigenous people (Tharu, Sonaha, Chepang, Bote, Majhi, Danuwar and Mushhar) have been living in the Terai region for generations and their cultural and traditional values have evolved in response to their dependence on and use of natural resources from forests, grasslands, rivers, and wetlands. These practices can be incorporated to meet landscape-scale conservation objectives. In Parsa and Chitwan NP, indigenous ethnic groups such as Tharu (in the south), Tamang and Praja and Bote are major groups. Similarly, Ethnic groups such as Tharu, Badi, Khuna, Sunaha and Kumal communities have been residing in and around the buffer zone of Bardia NP. The indigenous people are provided special use rights inside the national park; for example, the Bote, Sonaha, and other predominantly fishing communities are provided with fishing licenses during certain seasons to use their traditional fishing gears and methods inside the park as well. Similarly, religious and cultural sites inside Parsa and Chitwan National Parks are accessible to the general public during the time when certain communities have to perform their cultural and religious practices.

The project area of TAL spans five districts: Chitwan, Parsa, Banke, Bardia, and Kanchanpur. According to CBS 2021 data, the Indigenous Peoples (IP) population in these districts is predominantly composed of the Tharu community, which has the largest population, totaling 504,483 individuals, including 242,152 males and 262,331 females. Other Indigenous communities such as Chepang/Praja, Bote, Majhi, Danuwar, Musahar, Tamang, Badi, and Kumal are also present, with varying population sizes across the districts. The Chepang/Praja community mainly resides in Chitwan and Parsa, with a total population of 44,777. The Bote community is primarily found in Chitwan, with smaller groups in Parsa, Banke, and Kanchanpur. The Majhi community is spread across all five districts, with a total population of 6,235, the largest concentration being in Chitwan.

## **2.5. Gender**

In Nepal, significant strides have been made in gender equality, especially in legal frameworks that ensure women's rights and political representation. The constitution mandates one-third female representation in parliament, and women's participation in education and the workforce is improving. However, deep-rooted traditional gender roles and cultural norms persist, particularly in rural areas, limiting women's leadership roles and economic participation.

Despite progress, Nepal faces challenges such as gender-based violence, early marriage, and limited access to quality education and healthcare, particularly in rural and marginalized communities. Additionally, the risk of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) remains a critical issue.

Women and girls, especially in remote areas, are at higher risk of abuse, trafficking, and exploitation due to weak law enforcement and limited access to support services.

Efforts to address these risks includes ensuring strong policies and legal frameworks, improving access to education, health, and justice, and strengthening awareness around SEAH risks. Additionally, social norms that perpetuate gender-based violence and exploitation need to be actively challenged through community engagement and advocacy.

### **3. ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY, REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES**

This chapter first outlines the laws and regulations of Nepal and the WWF's ESSF and SIPP that are applicable to the project, and then discusses gaps between Nepal laws and regulations and the SIPP. For the purposes of the "**Managing the Human Tiger Interface in Nepal**" Project implementation, the principles and procedures of the ESSF and SIPP shall prevail in all cases of discrepancies.

#### **3.1 Nepal's Policies, Laws, Regulations Guidelines**

This section summarizes the legal and institutional framework for the project, including the country's applicable policy framework (i.e. national laws and regulations) relating to relevant social and environmental issues, including obligations of the country directly applicable to the project.

- a) ***Constitution of Nepal, (2015)***: The constitution requires the nation to give priority to the protection of environment and prevention of the further damage of the environment on the account of physical development activities. The constitution of Nepal, 2015 Guarantees people's welfare and all-round-progress through economic, social and cultural transformation, while defending and strengthening political achievements and their development. The constitution ensures rights of women and Dalits in Articles 38 and 40 respectively as fundamental rights which guarantee the participation of women and Dalits in all agencies of state on the basis of the principle of proportional inclusion.
- b) ***Environment Protection Act, 2019***: This act provides a legal basis for the concerned authorities for regulating a Brief Environmental Study (BES), Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) or/and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This act stipulates that no one is to create pollution that would cause significant adverse impacts on the environment or harm to public life and health, or to generate pollution beyond the prescribed standards. It provides a basis for the protection of objects and places of national heritage and places with rare plants, wildlife and biological diversity and states that any person/party affected by pollution or adverse environmental impact caused by anybody may apply to the prescribed authority for compensation to be recovered from the polluter/pollution generator.
- c) ***Forest Act of Nepal, 2019***: This act is a key piece of legislation aimed at conserving, managing, and utilizing forest resources sustainably. It has undergone revisions over the years, reflecting the country's changing priorities in forest management. Its objective is to promote conservation and sustainable use of forest resources, enhance community participation in forest management, protect forests from degradation and encroachment and to contribute to local livelihoods and national development. The Forest Act of Nepal remains a cornerstone in balancing ecological sustainability with the livelihoods of communities dependent on forest resources.
- d) ***National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1973***: This act is enacted to make arrangement for the management of national parks, conservation of wildlife and their habitat and regulation of hunting. It also conserve, promote, develop, and make appropriate arrangements for and the

use of places which are of special importance from the point of view of natural beauty and to maintain good manners and welfare of the general public. According to this Act, Conservation Area is an area to be managed according to an integrated plan for the conservation of natural environment and balanced utilization of natural resources.

- e) ***Labor Act, 2017:*** The Act emphasizes on occupational health and safety of workers and stipulates provision of necessary safety gears and adopting necessary precautionary measures against potentially hazardous machine/equipment in the workplace. It also stipulates to arrange such as removal of waste accumulated during production process and prevention of dust, fume, vapor and other waste materials, which adversely affect the health of workers. This act classified people below 15 years as child and “Nabalik” for the age group of above 14 years and below 18 years. The act also stated that equal opportunity will be given to women as man. Similarly, the working period of other employees must not exceed 8 hours a day and 48 hours in week.
- f) ***Child Labor Prohibition and Regulation Act, 2001:*** This act prohibits engaging children below 16 years in work in risk-prone sectors such as construction-related works. In other words, any employment of children below the age of 16 is to be excluded from becoming contracted in any of the project construction works.
- g) ***Soil and Watershed Conservation Act, 1982:*** This act was enacted to manage and conserve soil and watershed resources to prevent degradation and ensure sustainable land use. It outlines provisions for conserving soil and water resources, particularly in areas prone to erosion and degradation. According to this act, the government can designate areas as "soil conservation areas" to protect against soil erosion and watershed degradation. This act prohibits harmful activities that may harm soil and watershed conservation, such as deforestation, excessive grazing, and unsustainable agricultural practices etc.
- h) ***National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities Act, 2058 BS (2002 AD):*** It defines those ethnic groups and communities who have their own mother language and traditional rites and customs, distinct cultural identity, distinct social structure and written or unwritten history. These indigenous communities are known as Adivasi/Janjati in Nepali and Indigenous Nationalities in English as per the act. These groups as whole are generally considered to be the marginalized segment of the population who engage in economic activities ranging from hunting/gathering and shifting agriculture in or near forests to wage laborers or even small-scale market-oriented activities.
- i) ***National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, 2029 (1973):*** This act is a key piece of legislation in Nepal aimed at conserving the country's natural heritage, including wildlife, biodiversity, and protected areas. Its objective is to conserve and manage national parks, wildlife reserves, conservation areas, and buffer zones in Nepal while promoting biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. This Act has played a critical role in protecting Nepal's rich biodiversity and iconic species like the Bengal tiger, one-horned rhinoceros, and red panda, while promoting eco-tourism and community engagement in conservation.
- j) ***Environment Protection Rule, 2020:*** Nepal's Environment Protection Rules (EPR), 2020 (Amended), are a set of legal provisions established under the Environment Protection Act (EPA),

2019, to ensure sustainable development and environmental conservation. These rules outline procedures, standards, and responsibilities for environmental governance in the country. The key provisions of this rules are Environmental assessment, pollution control, establishing environmental standards, establishing a fund to finance environmental conservation projects, public participation, biodiversity and natural resource conservation, climate change and disaster management, monitoring and compliance. These rules aim to balance development needs with environmental sustainability, emphasizing public participation, transparency, and accountability.

- k) **Forest Regulations 2022:** This regulation was introduced to operationalize the Forest Act, 2019, focusing on sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, and community involvement. Key provisions of the regulations include forest classification, community forest management process and their rights and responsibilities, forest product utilization, conservation and protection, plans
- l) **The National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Regulations, 1974** of Nepal govern the conservation, management, and utilization of national parks, wildlife reserves, conservation areas, and hunting reserves. These regulations are implemented under the broader framework of the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1973. The key components of this regulations are establishment and management of National parks, reserve and conservations area, provide access and permits, conservation of flora and fauna including endangered species, community participation in conservation efforts and ecotourism etc.
- m) **The Buffer Zone Management Regulation, 1996:** This regulation is a critical legal framework in Nepal, aimed at integrating local communities into the conservation and sustainable management of protected areas. Established under the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1973, this regulation governs the buffer zones surrounding national parks and reserves. Its objective is to balance conservation efforts with community development by reducing the dependency of local populations on core protected areas and to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts. This regulation emphasizes participatory management, allowing local communities to play a central role in buffer zone management, revenue sharing, conservation and development balance. This regulation has been instrumental in promoting community-led conservation and improving the socio-economic conditions of people living near protected areas in Nepal.
- n) **The Forestry Sector Strategy, 2016–2025:** This strategy is a comprehensive framework developed by the Government of Nepal to guide sustainable forest management and enhance the sector's contributions to economic growth, environmental conservation, and community development. This strategy envisions sustainable, equitable, and inclusive development of Nepal's forestry sector to contribute significantly to local livelihoods, biodiversity conservation, and national prosperity. This strategy serves as a roadmap for harnessing the potential of Nepal's forestry sector while addressing challenges like deforestation, climate change, and resource inequities.
- o) **National Environment Policy, 2019:** This policy ensures sustainable development by protecting the right to a clean environment through pollution control, waste management, and green initiatives. It promotes research, resource stewardship, and collaboration among stakeholders to address environmental challenges at all levels.

- p) **Rural Energy Policy, 2006:** This policy gives emphasis on development of the environment friendly Rural Energy technologies. It has targeted poverty reduction and environment conservation in rural areas by incorporating the different sources of energy used in rural communities.
- q) **Wildlife Damage Relief Guideline, 2009:** This is prepared to provide relief of human and livestock casualty, crop, house and shed damage to the victims due to the wildlife. Providing relief procedures are mentioned in this guideline. In definition, a victim is eligible to get relief from the damage caused by an Elephant, Rhinoceros, Tiger, Snow Leopard, Leopard, Arna and Bear. However, there is confusion about Wild Boar, Python and Crocodile as they are also mentioned in preamble. There is also provision of Relief Distribution Recommendation Committee in each district.

Even though Nepal's EPA & EPR and WWF SIPP serve complementary yet distinct purposes, there are certain gaps that emerge when comparing them, due to differences in their scope, application and implementation standards.

- Nepal's legislation does not explicitly incorporate integrated socio-environmental safeguards, whereas WWF policies emphasize the interconnection between biodiversity and community well-being.
- Nepal lacks a comprehensive Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) framework aligned with international standards and a robust monitoring mechanism.
- The EPA and EPR in Nepal utilize a threshold-based approach for impact assessment, while WWF's Social and Environmental Safeguards Policies and Procedures (SIPP) adopt a risk-based approach.
- WWF's commitment to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and its explicit recognition of Indigenous rights go beyond the provisions in Nepal's legislation.
- Unlike WWF's safeguards, Nepal's policies do not incorporate specific frameworks for gender integration.
- Nepal's legislative framework is less comprehensive in addressing climate risks and lacks integration of these risks into planning processes.
- Nepal does not have structured grievance mechanisms that align with global conservation standards, unlike WWF's policies.

### **3.2 WWF Safeguards Standards and Procedures Applicable to the Project**

WWF's safeguards standards require that any potentially adverse environmental and social impacts are identified, and avoided or mitigated. Safeguards policies that are relevant to this project are as follows.

#### **(i) Standard on Environment and Social Risk Management**

This standard is applicable because "Managing the Human Tiger Interface in Nepal" intends to support activities that result in a variety of environmental and social impacts. The Project is expected to deliver multiple positive impacts, starting with the preparation of comprehensive human-wildlife conflict mitigation management plans to address conflict issues effectively. It will also conduct various training sessions, capacity-building programs, and workshops to support stakeholders and park officials to minimize HWC. Additionally, the project will enhance local livelihoods through diverse activities aimed at improving economic status and fostering sustainability. Outreach

programs will disseminate key conservation and conflict-reduction messages while encouraging active community participation. Livelihood diversification initiatives, such as fish farming, alternative crop cultivation, market promotion, and skill-based training, will further support the community. The project also emphasizes improving habitat quality through measures like grassland management, habitat connectivity, and fire management prescriptions. Efforts will include restoring critical habitats and developing habitat management guidelines.

HWC minimization projects aim to promote coexistence and reduce conflicts but can have unintended negative consequences if not carefully planned or implemented. These may include favoritism toward certain groups, leading to resentment; gender discrimination; risks to occupational health and safety; Community health; child labor; unaddressed grievances; unmanaged waste from construction materials; environmental impacts from machinery use in forests; unsustainable resource extraction, and a mismatch with local priorities, potentially undermining long-term sustainability of the project activities.

The precise location and impact of specific activities cannot be determined at this stage, and will only be known during project implementation. Thus, an ESMF is prepared to set out guidelines and procedures on how to identify, assess and monitor environmental and social impacts, and how to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts. Site-specific ESMPs will be prepared as required, based on principles and guidelines of the ESMF.

#### **(ii) Standard on Protection of Natural Habitats**

WWF's mission is to protect natural habitats, and it does not undertake any projects that would result in conversion or degradation of critical natural habitats, especially those that are legally protected, officially proposed for protection, or identified as having high conservation value.

Overall, the "Managing the Human Tiger Interface in Nepal" activities will produce benefits on natural habitat conservation and mitigating human-wildlife conflict often bring significant benefits, such as preserving biodiversity, maintaining ecosystem balance, and fostering community-based conservation efforts. However, potential adverse environmental impacts could arise if not carefully managed from activities such small scale construction work inside core forest area.

#### **(iii) Standard on Restriction of Access and Resettlement**

The WWF's Standard seeks to ensure that adverse social or economic impacts on resource-dependent local communities as a result from restrictions on resource access and/or use are avoided or minimized. The project does not involve resettlement or restriction of access issues, and will not make any policy proposals to change community access rights, hence this standard is not triggered.

#### **(iv) Standard on Indigenous Peoples**

The WWF's standard requires ensuring that indigenous rights are respected, that IPs do not suffer adverse impacts from projects, and that IPs receive culturally appropriate benefits from conservation. The policy mandates that projects respect IPs' rights, including their rights to FPIC processes and to tenure over traditional territories; that culturally appropriate and equitable benefits (including from traditional ecological knowledge) are negotiated and agreed upon with the IPs' communities in question; and those potential adverse impacts are avoided or adequately addressed through a participatory and consultative approach. As there are Indigenous people's community residing near project area such as Tharu, Tamang, Praja, Bote, Badi, Kuna, Sanaha and Kumal, the proposed activities under this project might potentially impact IP communities, thus triggering this standard.

**(v) Standard on Community Health, Safety and Security**

This Standard ensures that the health, safety and security of communities are respected and appropriately protected. The Guidance on Labor and Working Conditions requires employers and supervisors to implement all reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of workers through the introduction of preventive and protective measures. It also requires that the labor rights of project-employed workers are observed, as indicated in Annex 1: Screening Tool. Project activities should also prevent adverse impact involving quality and supply of water to affected communities; SEAH- related risks to both affected communities as well as project staff; safety of project infrastructure, life and properties; protective mechanisms for the use of hazardous materials; disease prevention procedures; and emergency preparedness and response. This Standard has been triggered for two reasons, the first being that there is small scale construction related work, and there might be some issues related to community health, safety and security. The second reason is due to the risk of human tiger conflict affecting project staff, partners, or stakeholders while carrying out the activities of the project. Although the project is designed explicitly to mitigate these risks, they are currently present in the project sites and pose potential risks to people and project implementation.

**(vi) Standard on Pest Management**

WWF-funded projects are not allowed to procure or use formulated products that are in World Health Organization (WHO) Classes IA and IB, or formulations of products in Class II, unless there are restrictions that are likely to deny use or access by lay personnel and others without training or proper equipment. The project will follow the recommendations and minimum standards as described in the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides and its associated technical guidelines, and procure only pesticides, along with suitable protective and application equipment, that will permit pest management actions to be carried out with well-defined and minimal risk to health, environment, and livelihoods. This standard is not applicable as there are no activities that would involve the use of pesticides or related materials.

**(vii) Standard on Cultural Resources**

This Standard ensures that Cultural Resources are appropriately preserved and their destruction, damage or loss is appropriately avoided. Physical cultural resources (PCR) include archaeological, paleontological, historical, architectural, and sacred sites including graveyards, burial sites, of unique natural values. Intangible cultural resources include traditional ecological knowledge, performing arts, oral traditions and expressions, traditional craftsmanship and social practices, rituals and events. The impacts on cultural resources resulting from project activities, including mitigating measures, may not contravene either the recipient country's national legislation or its obligations under relevant international environmental treaties and agreements. The presence of Indigenous communities nearby the project area, along with culturally significant sites associated with these groups, indicates that the proposed project activities could potentially affect the cultural resources, thereby triggering this standard.

**(viii) Standard on Grievance Mechanisms**

Project-affected communities and other interested stakeholders may raise a grievance at any time to the PMU and WWF. The PMU will be responsible for informing project-affected parties about the Accountability and Grievance Mechanism. Contact information of the PMU and WWF will be made publicly available. Relevant details are also provided in the Grievance Redress section of this ESMF.

The WWF Standard on Grievance Mechanisms is not intended to replace country-level dispute resolution and redress mechanisms. This mechanism is designed to: address potential breaches of WWF's policies and procedures in a gender-responsive manner; be independent, transparent, and effective; be survivor-centered and offer protections to those reporting SEAH-related grievances; be accessible to project-affected people; keep complainants abreast of progress of cases brought forward; and maintain records on all cases and issues brought forward for review.

**(ix) Standard on Public Consultation and Disclosure**

This standard requires meaningful consultation with relevant stakeholders, occurring as early as possible and throughout the project cycle. It requires the Project Team to provide relevant information in a timely manner and in a form and language that are understandable and accessible to diverse stakeholders. This standard also requires that information concerning environmental and social issues relevant to the project is disclosed for at least 30 days prior to implementation, and 45 days if the Indigenous Peoples Standard has been triggered. WWF will disclose safeguards documentation on its Safeguards Resources web page, and the final safeguards documents should be published on national websites of the Implementing Agencies and made available locally in specific locations. The project is also required to locally release all final key safeguards documents via hardcopy, translated into the local language and in a culturally appropriate manner, to facilitate awareness by relevant stakeholders that the information is in the public domain for review.

**(x) Standard on Stakeholder Engagement**

This standard ensures that WWF is committed to meaningful, effective and informed stakeholder engagement in the design and implementation of all GEF projects. WWF's commitment to stakeholder engagement arises from internal standards such as WWF's Project and Program Standards (PPMS), as well as WWF's commitment to international instruments such as United Nations Declaration on Indigenous People (UNDRIP). Stakeholder engagement is an overarching term that encompasses a range of activities and interactions with stakeholders throughout the project cycle and is an essential aspect of good project management. The project has prepared a Stakeholder Engagement Plan that will be implemented during the project.

**(xi) Guidance Note on Gender-based Violence and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment**

All over the world, it is estimated that one in three women and girls experience GBV during her lifetime. A recent study conducted by IUCN, in collaboration with USAID as part of Advancing Gender in the Environment (AGENT), states that forms of GBV (ranging from sexual, physical and psychological violence, to trafficking, sexual harassment, sexual coercion and in some cases rape) can be linked to environmental issues.

Many projects implemented by WWF relate to effective management of protected areas and the landscapes in which they are located through support to law enforcement, patrolling and better management and restoration of landscapes by restricting access to natural resources. These activities can potentially give rise to GBV/SEAH risks where government-employed law enforcement officials/rangers/guards supported by the project may misuse the power of their positions by sexually exploiting women in local communities. This is a particular risk if women are collecting water or natural resources in a protected area. As another example, projects that promote alternative

livelihoods, particularly ones that improve women's empowerment and decision making, can often lead to changes in power dynamics within communities and increase the risks of GBV/SEAH toward those empowered women.

GBV and SEAH in the implementation of WWF activities in projects and programs is unacceptable and requires timely, proportional, and appropriate action. WWF recognizes that to achieve biodiversity conservation it is vital to promote gender equality and make every effort to ensure that project activities implemented by WWF respect integrity and human rights and mitigate any risk that gives rise to discriminatory and exploitative gender inequalities. WWF does support projects in areas where there is civil war, ethnic conflict, and insurgencies where there are existing GBV/SEAH risks. WWF therefore needs to understand these risks in order to avoid exacerbating local conditions that contribute to GBV/SEAH, which would undermine any conservation outcomes the project may seek to achieve.

For WWF projects, including GEF projects, under the Standard on Community Health and Security, the project team should identify any potential GBV/SEAH risks by screening proposed project activities using the following questions:

- Is there a risk that the project could pose a greater burden on women by restricting the use, development, and protection of natural resources by women compared with that of men?
- Is there a risk that persons employed by or engaged directly in the project might engage in gender-based violence (including sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, or sexual harassment)?
- Does the project increase the risk of GBV and/or SEAH for women and girls, for example by changing resource use practices?
- Does any mandated training for any individuals associated with the project (including project staff, government park rangers and guards, other park staff, consultants, partner organizations and contractors) cover GBV/SEAH (along with human rights, etc.)?

The identification of GBV/SEAH risks in a project is normally undertaken as part of project preparation and could be conducted during community/stakeholder consultations together with identifying potential risks and screening impacts on vulnerable groups, community health, safety and security, labor and working conditions, gender equality issues, and any other social or environmental risks. Any potential GBV/SEAH risk identified during this stage would be factored into the project's overall social risk, which, in turn, is factored into the overall environmental and social risk associated with a project.

#### **(xii) Guidance Note on Labor and Working Conditions**

As a conservation organization, WWF does not typically fund large infrastructure activities in conservation projects implemented by WWF's GEF Agency and therefore does not directly adversely impact labor and working conditions. However, WWF GEF Agency projects do implement projects in the forestry, agriculture and fisheries sectors, which may have potential unintended adverse impacts. This is mostly seen in financing activities necessary for strengthening protected area management systems, including construction of protected area administrative buildings, watch towers, or accommodations for park guards.

In such cases, these activities are usually executed by third party contractors who employ construction workers including sub-contractors. In such cases, WWF will ensure that any funding for such activities complies with WWF's Environment and Social Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures (SIPP) and more specifically international labor and working condition standards such as the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and any relevant local labor standards of the project specific countries.

This Guidance Note provides detailed guidance of reasonable precautions to implement in managing principal risks to occupational health and safety. The following is based on the IFC's Environmental, Health, and Safety Guidelines (April 30, 2007), and covers the following general thematic areas:

1. General Facility Design and Operation
  - a. Integrity of Workplace Structures
  - b. Severe Weather and Facility Shutdown
  - c. Workspace and Exit
  - d. Fire Precautions
  - e. Lavatories and Showers
  - f. Potable Water Supply
  - g. Clean Eating Area
  - h. Lighting
  - i. Safe Access
  - j. First Aid
  - k. Air Supply
  - l. Work Environment Temperature
2. Training
  - a. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Training
3. Physical Hazards
  - a. Rotating and Moving Equipment
  - b. Vibration
  - c. Electrical
  - d. Eye Hazards
  - e. Welding / Hot Work
  - f. Industrial Vehicle Driving and Site Traffic
  - g. Working Environment Temperature
  - h. Ergonomics, Repetitive Motion, Manual Handling
  - i. Working at Heights
  - j. Illumination
4. Standards for Workers Living Conditions
  - a. General living facilities
  - b. Drainage
  - c. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation and light
  - d. Water
  - e. Wastewater and solid waste
  - f. Rooms/dormitories facilities
  - g. Bed arrangements and storage facilities
  - h. Sanitary and toilet facilities

- i. Toilet facilities
- j. Showers/bathrooms and other sanitary facilities
- k. Canteen, cooking and laundry facilities
- l. Medical facilities
- m. Leisure, social and telecommunications facilities

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### **(xiii) Guidance Note on Projects Relating to Dams**

In many river basins, WWF's freshwater conservation work is affected by the development of new dams or by the operations of existing dams. WWF is opposed to unsustainable dams that do not adhere to internationally recognized principles and criteria for good practice. WWF advocates that (1) no dams be built in, or affect, areas of high conservation value; (2) alternatives be fully considered before decisions are made to build new dams; and (3) principles, tools,<sup>14</sup> and inclusive, transparent processes be applied that make the best possible choices regarding the management of existing dams and development of new dams.

WWF actively works to assess existing dams to minimize impacts and maximize benefits and to reduce the demand for new dams. WWF advocates for improvement of operational management for environmental benefits at existing dams, through related policies, plans, or regulations. This can include:

- Establishing environmental flow regimes to restore ecological functions downstream of a dam by mimicking natural variability in river flows. Work may include assessment of environmental flow requirements, hydrological studies, design of reservoir releases, and policy work;
- Promoting retrofitting dams or infrastructure to improve performance and reduce need for new infrastructure;
- Promoting adaptation of existing infrastructure to allow for improved environmental performance; and
- Promoting decommissioning or removal of hazardous or obsolete dams.

### **Dam Safety**

Given the above instances, and in line with WWF Network's position on dams, WWF can:

- For GEF projects, partner with a GEF Implementing Agency that is accredited for Safety of Dams safeguards to jointly support such efforts, so long as the other agency's safeguards system is applied for the entire project;
- Implement projects that involve working with the government or relevant sector on strategic river basin planning, with the goal of restricting or concentrating dams to appropriate rivers and watersheds of lower conservation value (e.g., already altered);
- Implement projects that result in recommendations for environmental flow requirements for a stream or river (e.g., timing, volume, duration);

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<sup>3</sup> Specific guidance and standards can be found in the Guidance Note on Labor and Working Conditions.

- Implement projects that involve working with governments to ensure better regulation of hydropower sector;
- Implement projects that build capacity in the hydropower sector and government ministries to improve environmental-based approaches/tools for sustainable development; and
- Implement small or minor water infrastructure work whose impact is deemed not to trigger Safety of Dams safeguards through WWF's Policy on Environment and Social Risk Management

**(xiv) Guidance Note on Ranger Principles**

Rangers play a key role in protecting wildlife, managing protected areas, and resolving human-wildlife conflict. Rangers must act within the law and under high ethical standards in order to achieve positive outcomes from both people and nature. WWF only supports legitimate law enforcement activities that are carried out in a way that respects and protects the human rights of local communities and Indigenous Peoples. Certain measures are in place to uphold WWF's high ethical standards, including a risk assessment, mitigation actions, and continuous monitoring throughout implementation.<sup>4</sup> Rangers are expected to adhere to the following principles:

1. Act within the law.
2. Ensure accountability.
3. Build ranger capacity
4. Support the welfare of rangers and their families.
5. Partner with local communities.
6. Identify, monitor and plan for challenges.
7. Maintain impartiality.
8. Communicate regularly.
9. Sanctions for malfeasance.

**3.3 Gaps between Nepal laws and policies and the WWF's SIPP**

There are discrepancies between Nepal's environmental laws and policies and the priorities outlined in WWF's ESSF, particularly in terms of specific objectives, implementation strategies, and goal alignment as shown in Table 1 below;

**Table 1: Gaps between Nepal laws and WWF's SIPP**

<b>Focal Area</b>	<b>National laws</b>	<b>WWF's ESSF and SIPP</b>
<b>Environmental Standards and general Environmental and social Assessments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National laws may not mandate comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) or consider cumulative and indirect impacts.</li> <li>• Lack of comprehensive screening of adverse impacts of development interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WWF's ESSF emphasizes holistic assessments, including stakeholder engagement, biodiversity offsets, and ongoing monitoring.</li> </ul>
<b>Biodiversity Conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National laws may inadequately protect critical habitats and they are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WWF's ESSF prioritizes "no net loss" or "net gain" outcomes,</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> See [Ranger Principles document](#) for more details.

<b>and Protected Areas</b>	not specifically required to be assessed	surpassing national frameworks in biodiversity safeguards.
<b>Social Inclusion and Community Rights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National laws may not fully recognize Indigenous Peoples' rights, FPIC, or equitable benefit-sharing.</li> <li>Gender and vulnerable group inclusion may be weak.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WWF's ESSF ensures FPIC and explicitly prioritizes vulnerable populations, while national laws may overlook these aspects.</li> </ul>
<b>Occupational health and safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of comprehensive legislation on occupational health and safety in Nepal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occupational health and safety measures will be undertaken in line with WWF's requirements and in compliance with this ESMF.</li> </ul>
<b>Grievance Mechanisms and Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National frameworks often lack accessible, transparent grievance redress mechanisms.</li> <li>- Accountability may focus only on procedural compliance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WWF's ESSF requires comprehensive grievance mechanisms for addressing stakeholder concerns promptly and effectively.</li> </ul>
<b>Climate Change and Resilience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National laws may not integrate climate risk assessments or emphasize resilience-building for ecosystems and communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WWF's ESSF includes climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, often absent or underdeveloped in national policies.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring and Compliance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weak monitoring and enforcement mechanisms in national frameworks.</li> <li>Lack of periodic reviews or third-party audits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WWF's ESSF mandates rigorous reporting, third-party validation, and community-based monitoring, ensuring greater accountability.</li> </ul>
<b>Resource Allocation and Capacity Building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National laws may lack resources for implementing safeguards.</li> <li>Limited capacity-building efforts for stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WWF's ESSF emphasizes resource allocation for training and capacity building, filling gaps in national policies.</li> </ul>

**For the purposes of the “Managing the Human Tiger Interface in Nepal”, the provisions of the WWF’s ESSF and SIPP shall prevail over Nepal legislation in all cases of discrepancy.**

#### **4. ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

The "Managing the Human-Tiger Interface in Nepal" project aims to promote human-wildlife coexistence within critical tiger-bearing protected area landscapes in Nepal. It focuses on fostering consensus, collaboration, and capacity-building to enhance coexistence, mitigating the impacts of human-tiger conflicts, and improving the quality and connectivity of vital tiger habitats. While the project is anticipated to deliver significant positive environmental benefits, it is important to recognize that every project can lead to both favorable and unfavorable environmental outcomes.

##### **4.1 Adverse Environmental Impacts**

The project includes four components, and the potential negative environmental impacts associated with each component are outlined below, based on the activities involved in their implementation.

##### **Component 1: Strengthen enabling conditions for HWC management and coexistence:**

This component has two outcomes: 1.1 Integrated policy and planning framework for HWC management and coexistence established; 1.2 Stakeholders' capacity increased and training provided on HTC prevention and situation management;

**Outcome 1.1** is centered on improving the planning processes for addressing human-wildlife conflict (HWC) in Nepal. This involves the development and revision of conflict mitigation and management plans for all five tiger-bearing protected areas in the country. The initiative aims to ensure that HWC management strategies are seamlessly integrated into broader sectoral plans, including agriculture, forestry, and municipal planning. This integration will specifically target conflict hotspot municipalities within the Terai Arc Landscape, which is known for its biodiversity and frequent human-wildlife interactions. A key aspect of this outcome is providing capacity-building opportunities through workshops. These workshops will guide municipal authorities and stakeholders in effectively planning and budgeting for HWC management. By enhancing the capacity of local institutions and fostering collaboration, the initiative seeks to strengthen long-term resilience and preparedness for HWC challenges. It is important to note that this activity is primarily focused on planning and documentation, with no direct field implementation. As a result, it does not entail significant adverse environmental impacts. The activities are confined to preparing strategic plans and do not involve physical interventions or on-ground operations that could disturb ecosystems or wildlife.

**Outcome 1.2** aims to enhance the capacity and training of stakeholders. Output 1.2.1 focuses on improving the capacity and resources of frontline staff and key stakeholders in HTC prevention and situation management.

### **Component 2: Human wildlife coexistence approaches and livelihood support**

This component has three outcomes: 2.1 HTC impacts reduced through strengthened engagement and social behavior change for affected stakeholders; 2.2 Buffer Zone communities are empowered and provided with livelihood options that reduce their dependence on forest resources and exposure to HTC; 2.3 Strengthened human-tiger conflict response and delivery of relief informed by monitoring and piloting interventions.

Output 2.1.1 under Outcome 2.1 focuses on conducting formative research to identify the underlying causes of problem behaviors related to Human-Tiger Conflict (HTC), recruiting and training community members for local mobilization and awareness efforts, developing a Social Behavior Change campaign strategy, organizing local awareness events, and planning national calendar day events. As these activities primarily involve research, training, campaigns, awareness events, and software development, they are not expected to cause any negative environmental impacts.

On the other hand, Output 2.2.1 under Outcome 2.2 involves the development of diversified livelihood strategies for communities impacted by HTC. This output includes activities such as supporting alternative crops to deter prey species, fish farming, and building predator-proof livestock sheds. These activities may lead to potential adverse environmental impacts, that can be considered perverse outcomes in project components related to wildlife-based economies flagged by the STAP review of the WCD IP, including;

- a) Some alternative crops may require different soil, water, or climate conditions than the local environment can support, potentially leading to soil degradation, water scarcity, or increased use of pesticides and fertilizers.

- b) Shifting focus to cash crops or alternative crops may result in the displacement of staple food crops, which could negatively affect food security and increase reliance on external sources for basic food needs.
- c) Constructing fish ponds involves excavation and construction activities, and waste and material management during these processes could pose environmental concerns.
- d) Fish ponds can release waste, excess feed, chemicals, and antibiotics into surrounding waters, leading to eutrophication, where an overabundance of nutrients causes algal blooms that deplete oxygen and harm aquatic ecosystems.
- e) High-density fish farming can increase the risk of disease and parasite transmission, which, if not managed properly, could spread to wild fish populations and threaten biodiversity.
- f) Escaped farmed fish may compete with native species for food and breeding spaces, potentially causing a loss of genetic diversity and the introduction of invasive species.

Output 2.3.1 under outcome 2.3 focuses on developing software to facilitate the digitization of conflict relief claims and processing mechanisms at the provincial level. Output 2.3.2 aims to pilot a collaborative insurance-based approach to mitigate human-tiger conflict (HTC) in hotspot areas. Similarly, Output 2.3.3 is centered on monitoring HTC and tracking problem tigers to enhance the effectiveness of prevention and management measures. Output 2.3.4 involves piloting an early warning system, conducting camera trap surveys, and organizing study visits. Since these activities primarily focus on management mechanisms, they are not anticipated to result in any adverse environmental impacts.

### **Component 3: Habitat management**

This component has one outcome: 3.1 Critical habitats in conflict hotspots are effectively functioning and resilient through science-based management and restoration under changing climate conditions. Output 3.1.1 centers on grassland management by identifying habitat clusters, implementing management prescriptions, and adopting fire management strategies. Similarly, output 3.1.2 involves constructing water holes with solar pumps in low-lying areas, building concrete water ponds, and restoring natural wetlands. The environmental concerns related to these activities include:

- (a) Artificial water holes created by solar pumps may alter the natural behavior of wildlife. Animals may become more dependent on the artificial water source, leading to changes in migration patterns and social dynamics.
- (b) Supplying water to large groups of animals using solar pumps poses a risk of over-extraction, especially in regions with limited water availability. Excessive withdrawal of groundwater or surface water could deplete aquifers, lower water tables, and harm the local ecosystem.
- (c) Poorly designed water holes, such as those with inappropriate depth or access, could increase the likelihood of accidents involving animals.
- (d) Construction activities, including excavation and machinery use, can lead to environmental impacts such as improper waste disposal and site material mismanagement.
- (e) Clearing vegetation to create fire lines can heighten soil erosion risks, as exposed soil becomes more vulnerable to runoff during rainfall.
- (f) Controlled burns used to establish fire lines can sometimes spread beyond the intended area, damaging more vegetation than planned. This may contribute to air pollution and adversely impact plant species.

Similarly, Output 3.1.3 emphasizes monitoring and knowledge sharing to support scientific habitat management and restoration efforts. As it primarily involves documentation, monitoring of habitat management, and facilitating national and regional learning, no adverse environmental impacts are anticipated.

**Component 4: Knowledge Management**

This component aims to achieve a single outcome: 4.1, which focuses on generating, sharing, and learning knowledge to replicate and scale up best practices. The activities under this component include developing knowledge products, exposure visits, learning exchanges, documentation, all of which are unlikely to have any negative environmental impacts.

## 4.2 Environmental Mitigation Measures

**Table 2. Anticipated Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

Project Activity	Potential impact	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsible party
<b>Component 2: Human wildlife coexistence approaches and livelihood support</b>			
Alternative crops to deter prey species for conflict impacted households along hotspot area	<p>Some alternative crops may require different soil, water, or climate conditions than the local environment can support, potentially leading to soil degradation, water scarcity, or increased use of pesticides and fertilizers.</p> <p>Shifting focus to cash crops or alternative crops may result in the displacement of staple food crops, which could negatively affect food security and increase reliance on external sources for basic food needs.</p>	<p>Assess the suitability of land, water availability, and climate for the alternative crops before promotion.</p> <p>Avoid monoculture by encouraging farmers to grow a variety of crops, including native or traditional ones.</p> <p>Use integrated pest management (IPM) instead of chemical pesticides to control pests sustainably.</p> <p>Promote organic or natural fertilizers to maintain soil health and reduce chemical runoff.</p> <p>Provide training on sustainable farming techniques to minimize environmental harm.</p>	<p>Technical team leader</p> <p>Safeguard expert</p>
Fish farming for bote/majhi/tharu/mushahar/darai households including conflict victims	<p>Excavation and construction activities, and waste and material management issues</p> <p>Fish ponds can release waste, excess feed, chemicals, and antibiotics into surrounding waters, leading to eutrophication.</p> <p>High-density fish farming can increase the risk of disease and</p>	<p>Choose locations that do not disrupt natural water flows or affect downstream users.</p> <p>Use high-quality, low-impact feed and avoid overfeeding to reduce nutrient waste.</p> <p>Use native fish species to prevent invasive species from disrupting local ecosystems.</p> <p>Strictly avoid the use of banned or hazardous substances in pond.</p>	<p>Technical team leader</p> <p>Safeguard expert</p> <p>GESI Expert</p> <p>Contractor</p>

	<p>parasite transmission, which, if not managed properly, could spread to wild fish populations and threaten biodiversity.</p>	<p>Educate stakeholders about the potential environmental impacts and benefits of sustainable methods.</p>	
<b>Component 3: Habitat management</b>			
<p>Construct waterholes with solar water pumps in low-lying areas</p> <p>Construct concrete water ponds in the dry Chure foothills</p>	<p>Artificial water holes created by solar pumps may alter the natural behavior of wildlife. Animals may become more dependent on the artificial water source, leading to changes in migration patterns and social dynamics.</p> <p>Supplying water to large groups of animals using solar pumps poses a risk of over-extraction, especially in regions with limited water availability.</p> <p>Poorly designed water holes, such as those with inappropriate depth or access, could increase the likelihood of accidents involving animals.</p> <p>Construction activities, including excavation and machinery use, use of cement, can lead to environmental impacts such as improper waste disposal and site material mismanagement.</p>	<p>Ensure water holes are placed in areas where they will least disrupt existing ecosystems.</p> <p>Design water holes to mimic natural ponds or springs, blending with the environment to minimize visual and ecological disturbance. Also, design the water holes with scientific and appropriate measurements to minimize accidents involving animals.</p> <p>Maintain natural vegetation around water holes to prevent soil erosion and provide shade and cover for smaller animals.</p> <p>Schedule construction work to avoid sensitive seasons, such as breeding or migration periods.</p> <p>Use low-impact construction techniques and machinery to minimize disturbances.</p> <p>Implement a strict waste management plan to prevent pollution from construction debris including cement waste, plastics, paper etc.</p>	<p>Technical team leader</p> <p>Safeguard expert</p> <p>Contractor</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt fire management prescription to complement GoN's habitat management guidelines through creation of fire lines within habitat clusters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constructing fire lines often involves clearing vegetation, which may lead to increased soil erosion. Without plant cover, the soil becomes more susceptible to being washed away by rain.</li> <li>• fire lines are created through controlled burns; however, these can unintentionally burn more vegetation than intended, particularly if not managed carefully. This can contribute to air pollution and harm plant species.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove only the vegetation necessary to create the fire line, leaving larger trees and shrubs that can serve as windbreaks or habitat.</li> <li>• Use hand tools or lightweight machinery instead of heavy equipment to minimize soil disturbance and compaction.</li> <li>• Leave some mulch or plant debris on the fire line to protect the soil and promote natural regeneration.</li> <li>• Ensure close supervision of the fire line by the designated individual to prevent uncontrolled burning, using the appropriate equipment. Provided necessary guidance if necessary.</li> </ul>	<p>Technical team leader</p> <p>Safeguard expert</p> <p>Contractor</p>
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### 4.3 Adverse Social Impacts

The project is divided into four main components, each involving specific activities. As these activities are executed, there may be certain social risks or negative impacts. The potential adverse effects on social aspects are identified and outlined for each component, allowing for the anticipation and management of possible challenges during implementation.

#### **Component 1: Strengthen enabling conditions for HWC management and coexistence:**

**Outcome 1.1** focuses on developing and updating conflict mitigation and management plans for all five tiger habitats in the country. The goal is to integrate Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) management strategies into broader sectoral and municipal planning processes. Key activities include preparing management plans, policy formulation, organizing meetings, and conducting training sessions with local, provincial, and federal governments. By building the capacity of local institutions and encouraging collaboration, the initiative aims to enhance long-term resilience and preparedness for HWC challenges. It's important to note that this initiative is primarily focused on planning and documentation, with no direct field implementation, so it is unlikely to cause significant social impacts.

**Outcome 1.2** is aimed at strengthening the capacity of stakeholders involved in HTC (Human-Tiger Conflict) prevention through comprehensive training initiatives. Specifically, Output 1.2.1 seeks to enhance the abilities and resources of frontline staff, key stakeholders, and local communities, including buffer zone management committees. However, the implementation of this output may encounter social challenges, particularly in the selection of beneficiaries for training and capacity-building activities. It is crucial to ensure that the selection process is transparent, equitable, and inclusive, taking into account the diverse needs and representation of different community members.

#### **Component 2: Human wildlife coexistence approaches and livelihood support:**

**Outcome 2.1** under this component especially focuses on social behavior change and are directly linked with engagement of affected communities, there are probably significant social issues. Output 2.1.1 focuses on recruit and train community members as “friends of Tiger” to enhance knowledge and skills to lead mobilization, awareness efforts and conducting campaigns. These activities may lead to potential adverse social impacts, including:

- a. The benefits of conservation programs may not always be equally distributed among communities. More affluent or better-connected groups might benefit from training or employment opportunities, leaving poorer communities at a disadvantage. This can increase social inequalities.

**Outcome 2.2** of this component particularly aims at empowering buffer zone communities by providing livelihood alternatives to lessen their reliance on forest resources. Output 2.2.1 emphasizes promoting alternative crops, supporting fish farming, encouraging fodder plant cultivation, and building predator-proof livestock sheds. However, these activities may result in possible negative social consequences, including:

- a. In some cases, the new crops may require more labor, better soil quality, or irrigation, increasing the financial burden on the community.
- b. Traditional crops may hold cultural or social significance in certain communities. Replacing these with alternative crops can lead to a loss of cultural heritage and identity, especially if the community's customs or diets are deeply tied to specific plants.
- c. If the alternative crops are not well integrated into existing market systems, communities might struggle to find buyers or achieve fair prices. This can lead to food waste, financial losses, or economic stress if the crops cannot be sold profitably.
- d. If fish farming resources, like ponds or technology, are not distributed equitably, wealthier or more influential community members may dominate the benefits, leaving poorer or less influential people without access to these opportunities.

- e. Fish farming might lead to overuse of local water resources, especially in regions with limited freshwater availability. This can strain community resources, affecting agriculture and drinking water supplies.
- f. If the distribution of predator-proof sheds is not done equitably, it may create or exacerbate social inequality. Some community members may feel marginalized or left out if they do not receive the same resources or benefits.
- g. If the predator-proof sheds are provided selectively or based on certain criteria (such as income or herd size), it might lead to divisions within the community. Those who do not receive the sheds may feel neglected, resulting in social fragmentation.

Outcome 2.3 of this component particularly aims at Strengthened human-tiger conflict response and delivery of relief informed by monitoring and piloting interventions. Output 2.3.2 focuses on piloting collaborative insurance-based mechanism for mitigating HTC. These activities may lead to potential adverse social impacts, including:

- a. These planned activities of insurance schemes may unintentionally exclude the most vulnerable populations who are unable to afford the premiums, lack access to necessary information, or face barriers in understanding how the system works.
- b. While insurance aims to reduce risk, the way the benefits are distributed could reinforce or increase inequality. Wealthier individuals or communities may be able to access more favorable terms, while poorer or marginalized groups may receive insufficient support, deepening social divides.
- c. In some cases, communities may prioritize immediate needs (such as food, water, or health care) over participation in insurance schemes, which could lead to a lack of engagement or support for the program.

**Component 3: Habitat management:**

Output 3.1.1 primarily addresses the management of grassland habitats, which includes activities like creating fire lines within the forest. The activity is not expected to have any significant social impacts. However, there is a potential risk of negative effects on nearby communities if a fire were to spread uncontrollably. Uncontrolled fires could lead to damage to property, loss of agricultural crops, or disruption to livelihoods, especially for those living in close proximity to the grasslands.

Output 3.1.2 primarily involves the construction and restoration of waterholes within the core areas of national parks. There are no major social issues related to these activities, apart from occupational health and safety concerns for the construction workers. The construction work is mainly technical in nature, which does not interfere with social structures. However, one area of concern is the occupational health and safety of the workers involved in the construction and restoration tasks. Construction workers face potential hazards from working with heavy machinery, working in remote locations inside forest.

#### 4.4 Social Mitigation Measures

**Table 3. Anticipated Social Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

Project Activity	Potential impact	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsible party
<b>Component 1: Strengthen enabling conditions for HWC management and coexistence:</b>			
Training on wildlife management and crowd management for enforcement agencies, Buffer zone management committees and local communities	May encounter social challenges, particularly in the selection of beneficiaries for training and capacity-building activities	Ensure that the selection process is transparent, equitable, and inclusive, taking into account the diverse needs and representation of different community members.	Technical team leader Safeguard & GESI expert BZUC
<b>Component 2: Human wildlife coexistence approaches and livelihood support:</b>			
Recruit and train community members as "Friends of Tiger" (FoT) to build their knowledge and skills in HTC issues, empowering them to lead local mobilization and awareness efforts	Unequal distribution of opportunities among communities might increase social inequalities. More affluent or better-connected groups might benefit from training or employment opportunities, leaving poorer communities at a disadvantage.	<p>Conduct a thorough needs assessment to understand the specific challenges and aspirations of the community. This will ensure the training program is relevant and aligned with their interests.</p> <p>Ensure that the training program is inclusive, providing equal access to all segments of the community, including marginalized groups, women, and people with disabilities.</p> <p>Communicate the goals, benefits, and expectations of the program clearly to the community. Transparency helps to prevent misunderstandings and misconceptions.</p>	Technical team leader Safeguard & GESI expert BZUC CFUG

<p>Piloting collaborative insurance-based mechanism for mitigating HTC in one hotspot area</p>	<p>The planned insurance schemes may unintentionally exclude vulnerable populations who cannot afford premiums, lack information, or face barriers in understanding the system.</p> <p>Insurance benefits may exacerbate inequality, with wealthier groups receiving better terms while poorer or marginalized communities get inadequate support.</p> <p>Communities may prioritize urgent needs like food, water, or healthcare over participating in insurance schemes, resulting in limited engagement or support for such programs.</p>	<p>Educate the community about the benefits and structure of the insurance scheme, addressing any misconceptions or fears related to it.</p> <p>Involve community members in designing the insurance model to ensure it is tailored to their needs and concerns.</p> <p>Ensure that the terms of the insurance policies are clear and accessible to local communities, especially in areas with low literacy levels.</p> <p>Provide support to the vulnerable and marginalized communities, with the payment of a certain amount of premium and encourage them to participate in insurance schemes,</p>	<p>Technical team leader Safeguard &amp; GESI expert BZUC</p>
<p>Alternative crops to deter prey species for conflict impacted households along hotspot area</p>	<p>In some cases, the new crops may require more labor, better soil quality, or irrigation, increasing the financial burden on the community.</p> <p>If the alternative crops are not well integrated into existing market systems, communities might struggle to find buyers or achieve fair prices. This can lead to food waste, financial losses, or economic stress if the crops cannot be sold profitably.</p>	<p>Involve local communities in the decision-making process regarding the introduction of alternative crops.</p> <p>Provide farmers and local communities with education and training on the new crops, including best practices for cultivation, pest management, and marketing.</p> <p>Encourage crop diversification rather than a complete switch to a single alternative crop.</p> <p>Establish clear pathways to local, national, and international markets for alternative crops.</p>	<p>Technical team leader Safeguard &amp; GESI expert BZUC</p>

<p>Fish farming for bote/majhi/tharu/mushahar/darai households including conflict victims</p>	<p>Unequal distribution of fish farming resources may allow wealthier community members to dominate, excluding poorer individuals from opportunities.</p> <p>Overuse of local water resources for fish farming can strain freshwater supplies, impacting agriculture and drinking water.</p>	<p>Involve local communities in the planning and decision-making processes related to fish farming projects.</p> <p>Ensure equitable distribution of resources to avoid creating or exacerbating social inequalities.</p> <p>Give priority to communities that rely on fishing activities for their livelihood.</p>	<p>Technical team leader</p> <p>Safeguard &amp; GESI expert</p> <p>BZUC</p> <p>CFUG</p>
<p>Predator proof livestock sheds/coral and support fodder plants</p>	<p>Unequal distribution of predator-proof sheds can increase social inequality, leaving some community members feeling marginalized.</p> <p>Selective distribution based on criteria like income or herd size may cause divisions, leading to feelings of neglect and social fragmentation.</p>	<p>Ensure that the distribution of sheds is based on the specific vulnerability of farmers and herders, prioritizing those who are most affected by predator attacks.</p> <p>Establish transparent criteria for who receives the sheds, ensuring equal access for all members of the community, and avoid favoritism.</p>	<p>Technical team leader</p> <p>Safeguard &amp; GESI expert</p> <p>BZUC</p> <p>CFUG</p>
<p><b>Component 3: Habitat management:</b></p>			
<p>Adopt fire management prescription to complement GoN's habitat management guidelines through creation of fire lines within habitat clusters</p>	<p>Potential risk of negative effects on nearby communities if a fire were to spread uncontrollably.</p> <p>Worker safety issues (Occupational Health and safety)</p>	<p>Use controlled, low-impact methods to clear fire lines, avoiding large-scale destruction</p> <p>Provide Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE) to every worker associated with fire activities</p>	<p>Technical team leader</p> <p>Safeguard &amp; GESI expert</p> <p>BZUC</p> <p>CFUG</p>

<p>Construction and restoration of waterholes within the core areas of national parks</p>	<p>Worker safety issues (Occupational Health and safety)</p>	<p>Project technicians and the implementing contractors shall provide a safe and healthy work environment.</p> <p>Provide Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE) to every worker associated with construction activities</p> <p>Provision of first aid facilities in the working site</p> <p>Adequate measures for WASH facilities including safe drinking water in the work site</p>	<p>Technical team leader</p> <p>Safeguard &amp; GESI expert</p> <p>Contractor</p>
<p>Construction and restoration of waterholes within the core areas of national parks</p>	<p>The field consultations with Indigenous people revealed that there are culturally important sites inside the protected areas</p>	<p>The project will initiate a consultation with Indigenous people and National Park authorities to ascertain the existence of the cultural heritage site inside the protected area.</p> <p>Furthermore, project will hire ESS expert/ GESI expert in the Project management Unit and will undertake a review of all the cultural heritage sites currently located inside the boundaries of protected areas as part of the yearly ESS screening.</p> <p>The project will facilitate the discussion with government officials and Indigenous community in order to avoid the impact from project activities to culturally important site.</p>	<p>Technical team leader</p> <p>Safeguard &amp; GESI expert</p>

#### **4.5 Process Framework: Livelihood Restoration Measures**

The Process Framework is specifically designed to address situations where project activities may result in restrictions on access to natural resources that could impact the livelihoods of local communities. It ensures that affected communities are involved in the decision-making process and that measures are in place to mitigate negative impacts and support alternative livelihoods. The objective of this project is to promote human-wildlife coexistence within key tiger-bearing protected area landscapes in Nepal. It aims to achieve this by fostering consensus, collaboration, and capacity for coexistence, mitigating the impacts of human-tiger conflict, and enhancing the condition and connectivity of critical tiger habitats. Importantly, none of the planned activities under this project are intended to restrict local communities' access to natural resources. Specifically, the activities under Component 2 focus on providing livelihood support to communities living near forest areas to reduce their dependency on forest resources, but they are not designed to impose strict restrictions. The activities under Component 3 focus on enhancing habitat management within protected areas, which are already designated as restricted zones. Therefore, process framework is not required in this case.

#### **4.6 Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF)**

##### **(a) IP Population of Project Sites**

The Government of Nepal (GoN) has officially recognized fifty-nine indigenous communities under the National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) Act-2002. These communities are distinguished by their distinct social, cultural, and economic lifestyles, which differ from other national groups. They maintain traditional forms of social organization, political institutions, customs, and laws, and have a long history of residing in specific areas.

The project regions are known for their rich cultural heritage and ethnic diversity. Indigenous groups like the Tharu, Majhi, Bote, Darai, Kumal, Danuwar, and Raji have inhabited these areas for generations. In Parsa and Chitwan National Parks, major indigenous groups include the Tharu (in the south), as well as Tamang, Praja, and Bote. In the buffer zones of Banke and Bardia National Parks, communities such as the Tharu, Badi, Khuna, Sunaha, and Kumal are also present.

Indigenous people in these areas are granted special use rights within the national parks. For instance, groups like the Bote, Sonaha, and other fishing communities are allowed to use traditional fishing methods and tools inside the parks during specific seasons. Additionally, certain religious and cultural sites within Parsa and Chitwan National Parks are open to the public at times when these communities conduct their cultural and religious ceremonies. Their lifestyle, deeply rooted in cultural traditions and a close relationship with nature, plays a vital role in the conservation of forests and biodiversity. The region is also home to various other ethnic groups and has witnessed a steady migration of people from the Mid-Hills and Himalayas, including Hill-origin Indigenous Peoples such as the Magar, Gurung, Tamang, Raute, and Newar, who settled in these areas after the 1950s.

##### **(b) Project Impacts on IPs Groups**

The project aims to strengthen policy and planning for human-wildlife coexistence by fostering collaboration across government tiers and integrating coexistence into key sectors for sustainable financing. It will enhance stakeholder capacity, generate knowledge through research on human-wildlife conflict (HWC), and improve conflict monitoring. The project will also focus on behavior change to support tiger conservation and streamline relief claim processes. A key emphasis is on strengthening livelihoods in conflict hotspots near Chitwan, Parsa, and Bardia National Parks, reducing human-wildlife interactions.

The project will have a positive impact on the local community, including Indigenous Peoples (IP) communities, by enhancing livelihoods through the promotion of alternative crops and their market access, fish farming, and the construction of livestock sheds. It will also focus on awareness raising and capacity building, benefiting IP communities through these initiatives. The livelihood support programs offer alternative income opportunities, encourage sustainable practices, and help preserve cultural traditions. By empowering communities through education, capacity building, and involvement in resource management, these programs create jobs, reduce poverty, and support environmental conservation. This integrated approach ensures long-term sustainability for both the community and the environment.

The project aims to support the livelihood and economic status of Indigenous Peoples (IP) communities, such as the Bote, Majhi, Tharu, Mushahar, and Darai communities, by promoting fish farming. By engaging in fish farming, these communities will have access to a sustainable and profitable source of income, which can significantly improve their economic situation. This initiative will also contribute to environmental conservation, as responsible fish farming practices can help maintain the ecological balance and biodiversity in the local areas.

Additionally, many IP communities living near forest areas face challenges due to HTC, particularly regarding the loss of livestock to predators. This impacts their livelihoods as livestock is a crucial asset for these communities. To address this issue, the project will provide predator-proof livestock sheds to IP households. These sheds will help reduce the losses caused by wildlife, thus safeguarding the economic stability of these communities and improving their overall livelihood security. Through these interventions, the project will work towards enhancing both the economic and environmental well-being of IP communities.

The negative impact of project activities on Indigenous Peoples (IP) communities are minimal, with the main concerns being occupational health and safety issues, as well as the possibilities of unequal distribution and selection of beneficiaries for the capacity development and livelihood support programs.

### **(c) Mitigation Planning**

Mitigation planning that the project must take for Indigenous Peoples in a project area involves a systematic process to identify, assess, and address social and environmental risks. Here are the key steps:

- **Screen for Impacts:** Identify Indigenous communities in the project area and assess potential risks including environmental and social context.
- **Conduct Impact Assessment:** Gather baseline data, assess risks, and engage Indigenous communities through consultation.
- **Ensure Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC):** Seek consent from Indigenous communities for any project activities affecting their lands or resources, and proceed with said activities if consent is given.
- **Develop Mitigation Measures:** Create strategies to minimize risks, protect livelihoods, safeguard cultural heritage, and address environmental impacts.
- **Monitor and Evaluate:** Involve Indigenous communities in monitoring, provide feedback mechanisms, and adapt measures as needed.
- **Capacity Building:** Train both Indigenous communities and project staff to enhance understanding and engagement.

By following these steps, a project can effectively screen, assess, and mitigate potential risks to Indigenous Peoples, ensuring their rights, cultures, and livelihoods are respected and protected throughout the project lifecycle.

The technical team leader, GESI and safeguards expert will be responsible for undertaking the planning/implementation of screening and assessing the potential social and environmental risks on Indigenous Peoples in the project area

#### **(d) Steps for Formulating an IPP**

WWF's Standard on Indigenous People requires that, regardless of whether Project affected IPs are affected adversely or positively, an IPP needs to be prepared with care and with the full and effective participation of affected communities.

The requirements include screening to confirm and identify affected IP groups in the project areas, social analysis to improve the understanding of the local context and affected communities; a process of free, prior, and informed consent with the affected IPs' communities in order to fully identify their views and to obtain their broad community support to the project; and development of project-specific measures to avoid adverse impacts and enhance culturally appropriate benefits.

Minimum requirements for projects working in areas with IPs are:

- Identification of IP groups through screening;
- Assessment of project impacts;
- Consultations with affected IP communities following FPIC principles and obtain their broad community support;
- Development of sites specific IPs plan (IPP) to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits; and
- In activities with no impacts, the requirements could be limited to consultations during implementation to keep local communities informed about project activities and documentation of all consultations held.

#### **(e) Development of IP Plans (IPP)**

Based on the results of the social assessments, an IP Plan shall be developed for each project site.

The contents of the IPP will depend on the specific project activities identified and the impacts these activities may have on IPs in the project area. As a minimum, the IPP should include the following information:

- ✓ Description of the IPs affected by the proposed activity;
- ✓ Summary of the proposed activity;
- ✓ Detailed description of IPs' participation and consultation process during implementation;
- ✓ Description of how the project will ensure culturally appropriate benefits and avoid or mitigate adverse impacts;
- ✓ Budget;
- ✓ Mechanism for complaints and conflict resolution; and
- ✓ Monitoring and evaluation system that includes monitoring of particular issues and measures concerning indigenous communities.

For project activities that may result in changes in IPs' access to livelihoods, the provisions of the Process Framework (Section 4.5) should be followed.

### **(f) Free, Prior and Informed Consent Framework**

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is an approach for ensuring that the rights of IPs are guaranteed in any decision that may negatively affect their lands, territories or livelihoods. It ensures that they have the right to give or withhold their consent to these activities without fear of reprisal or coercion, in a timeframe suited to their own culture, and with the resources to make informed decisions.

FPIC is composed of four separate components:

- Free—Without coercion, intimidation, manipulation, threat or bribery.
- Prior—indicates that consent has been sought sufficiently in advance, before any project activities have been authorized or commenced, and that the time requirements of the indigenous community's consultation/consensus processes have been respected.
- Informed—Information is provided in a language and form that are easily understood by the community, covering the nature, scope, purpose, duration and locality of the project or activity as well as information about areas that will be affected; economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts, all involved actors, and the procedures that the project or activity may entail.
- Consent—The right of IPs to give or withhold their consent to any decision that will impact their lands, territories, resources, and livelihoods.

The processes of consultation and obtaining FPIC will be applied to all the aspects of the project (financed under WWF) that may negatively affect the rights of the IPs and ethnic minorities. FPIC will be required on any matters that may affect the rights and interests, water areas, lands, resources, territories (whether titled or untitled to the people in question) and traditional livelihoods of the IPs concerned.

Thus, FPIC is integral to the execution of the proposed project, as the project areas includes diverse indigenous communities. WWF recognizes the strong cultural and spiritual ties many IP groups have to their lands and territories and committed to strengthen these ties in all WWF GEF funded projects. FPIC gives IPs the freedom to determine their own development path to promoting conservation sustainably. The following checklist (Box 1) may assist in helping to determine whether some Project activities may require an FPIC process

#### **Box 1. Checklist for appraising whether an activity may require an FPIC Process**

1. Will the activity involve the use, taking or damage of cultural, intellectual, religious and/or spiritual property from IPs?
2. Will the activity adopt or implement any legislative or administrative measures that will affect the rights, lands, territories and/or resources of IPs (e.g. in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources; land reform; legal reforms that may discriminate de jure or de facto against IPs, etc.)?
3. Will the activity involve natural resource extraction such as logging or mining or agricultural development on the lands/territories of IPs?
4. Will the activity involve any decisions that will affect the status of IPs' rights to their lands/territories/water resources, resources or livelihoods?
5. Will the activity involve the accessing of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities?

6. Will the activity affect IPs' political, legal, economic, social, or cultural institutions and/or practices?
7. Will the activity involve making commercial use of natural and/or cultural resources on lands subject to traditional ownership and/or under customary use by IPs?
8. Will the activity involve decisions regarding benefit-sharing arrangements, when benefits are derived from the lands/territories/resources of IPs (e.g. natural resource management or extractive industries)?
9. Will the activity have an impact on the continuance of the relationship of the IPs with their land or their culture?
10. Will the interventions/activities restrict on access to NTFPs, timber, lands, etc. and other sources of livelihoods and community resources?

If the answer is 'Yes' to any of these questions in Box 1, it is likely that FPIC will be required of the potentially affected indigenous peoples for the activity that may result in the impacts identified in the questions. When an FPIC process is required, a stakeholder consultation process will need to be initiated to define and agree on an FPIC process with the community or communities. The IPs who may be affected by the Project will have a central role in defining the FPIC process, based on their own cultural and governance practices. The consultation process should be launched as early as possible to ensure full, effective and meaningful participation of IPs.

All consultations with IPs should be carried out in good faith with the objective of seeking agreement or consent. Consultation and consent is about IPs' right to meaningfully and effectively participate in decision-making on matters that may affect them. Consultations and information disclosure are integral parts of FPIC process and any development support planning for IPs to ensure that the priorities, preferences, and needs of the indigenous groups are taken into consideration adequately. With that objective in view, a strategy for consultation with IPs has been proposed so that all consultations are conducted in a manner to ensure full and effective participation. The approach of full and effective participation is primarily based upon transparent, good faith interactions, so that everyone in the community is empowered to join fully in the decision-making process. It includes providing information in a language and manner the community understands and, in a timeframe, compatible with the community's cultural norms.

The affected IPs will be actively engaged in all stages of the project cycle, including project preparation, and feedback of consultations with the IPs will be reflected in the project design, followed by disclosure. Their participation in project preparation and planning has informed project design and will continue to actively participate in the project execution. Once the IPP or LRP is prepared, it will be translated into local languages (as applicable) and made available to them before implementation, including in formats other than written documents if and when requested by the communities.

Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation shall ensure adequate flow of funds for consultation and facilitation of planned activities within the IPP. Project brochures and pamphlet with infographic containing basic information such as sub-project location, impact estimates, and mitigation measures proposed, and implementation schedule will be prepared, translated into a language understandable to the IPs, and distributed among them. If literacy is low in the communities, other means of communication must also be agreed upon with them, especially targeting community members who may have lower literacy levels.

A range of consultative methods will be adopted to carry out consultation including, but not limited to: focus group discussions (FGDs), public meetings, community discussions, and in-depth and key informant interviews; in addition to the censuses and socioeconomic surveys.

The key stakeholders to be consulted during screening, impact assessment; design and implementation of IPP, LRP and Process Framework (PF) include:

- All affected persons belonging to IPs/marginalized groups;

- Appropriate government Departments/Ministries
- Provincial and municipal government representatives;
- Insert relevant community cooperatives, management structures, umbrella bodies, etc;
- The private sector:
- Academia representatives.

The project will ensure adequate representation of each group of stakeholders mentioned above while conducting consultations using various tools and approaches.

The views of IPs communities are to be considered during execution of project activities, while respecting their practices, beliefs and cultural preferences. The outcome of the consultations will be documented into the periodical reports and included in project's trimester progress reports. The Project Manager with support of the Safeguards Specialist will also ensure that affected persons are involved in the decision-making process.

### **Procedures to seek FPIC**

Project interventions and activities adversely affecting the IPs, therefore, need to follow a process of free, prior, and informed consent, with the affected IPs in order to fully identify their views and to seek their broad community support to the project; and development of project-specific measures to avoid adverse impacts and enhance culturally appropriate benefits.

Community involvement is a critical component of FPIC, as FPIC is a collective process, rather than an individual decision. In practice, FPIC is implemented through a participatory process involving all affected groups that is carried out prior to the finalization or implementation of any project activities, decisions or development plans. FPIC is established through good faith negotiation between the project and affected IPs. A facilitator should support this process, a person who will be available throughout the Project, who speaks the necessary languages and is aware of the project context. This person may or may not be part of the PMU, but should be agreeable to all parties involved.

Box 2 below outlines some generic steps to be followed for FPIC with the affected IPs in order to seek their broad community support.

#### **Box 2. Steps for Seeking FPIC from Project Affected Indigenous Peoples**

1. Identify communities, sub-groups within communities, and other stakeholders with potential interests/rights (both customary and legal) on the land or other natural resources that are proposed to be developed, managed, utilized, or impacted by the proposed project activity.
2. Identify any rights (customary and legal) or claims of these communities to land or resources (e.g., water rights, water access points, or rights to hunt or extract forest products) that overlap or are adjacent to the site(s) or area(s) of the proposed project activity;
3. Identify whether the proposed project activity may diminish the rights, claims, or interests identified in Step 2 above and also identify natural resources that may be impacted by this project and the legal and customary laws that govern these resources;
4. Provide the details of proposed project activities to be implemented along with their likely impacts on IPs either positively or negatively, as well as the corresponding proposed mitigation measures in a language or means of communication understandable by the affected IPs;
5. All project information provided to IPs should be in a form appropriate to local needs. Local languages should usually be used and efforts should be made to include all

- community members, including women and members of different generations and social groups (e.g. clans and socioeconomic background);
6. Selection of facilitator, who will be available throughout the Project, who speaks the necessary languages and is aware of the project context, and is culturally and gender-sensitive. The facilitator should be trustworthy to affected IPs. It will also be helpful to involve any actors which are likely to be involved in implementing the FPIC process, such as local or national authorities
  7. If the IP communities are organized in community associations or umbrella organizations, these should usually be consulted.
  8. Provide sufficient time for IPs' decision-making processes (it means allocate sufficient time for internal decision-making processes to reach conclusions that are considered legitimate by the majority of the concerned participants)
  9. Support a process to create a mutually respected decision-making structure in cases where two or more communities claim rights over a project site.
  10. If FPIC is not familiar to the community, engage in a dialogue to identify existing decision-making structures that support the principles underlying FPIC.
  11. Identify the community-selected representative(s) or "focal people" for decision making purpose-- identification of the decisionmakers and parties to the negotiation.
  12. Agree on the decisionmakers or signatory parties and/or customary binding practice that will be used to conclude the agreement, introducing the chosen representatives, their role in the community, how they were chosen, their responsibility and role as representatives;
  13. If consent is reached, document agreed upon outcomes/activities that are to be included into the project, and agree on a feedback and a project grievance redress mechanism. Agreements reached must be mutual and recognized by all parties, taking into consideration customary modes of decision-making and consensus-seeking. These may include votes, a show of hands, the signing of a document witnessed by a third party, performing a ritual ceremony that makes the agreement binding, and so forth;
  14. When seeking "broad community consent/support" for the project, it should be ensured that all relevant social groups of the community have been adequately consulted. This may mean the project staff have to seek out marginalized members, or those who don't have decision-making power, such as women. When this is the case and the "broad" majority is overall positive about the project, it would be appropriate to conclude that broad community support/consent has been achieved. Consensus building approaches are often the norm, but "broad community consent/support" does not mean that everyone has to agree to a given project;
  15. When the community agrees on the project, document the agreement process and outcomes including benefits, compensation, or mitigation to the community, commensurate with the loss of use of land or resources in forms and languages accessible and made publicly available to all members of the community, providing for stakeholder review and authentication;
  16. The agreements or special design features providing the basis for broad community support should be described in the IPs Plan; any disagreements should also be documented; and
  17. Agree on jointly defined modes of monitoring and verifying agreements as well as their related procedures: how these tasks will be carried out during project implementation, and the commission of independent periodic reviews (if considered) at intervals satisfactory to all interest groups.

The final IPPF and any site specific IPPs and LRPs will be disclosed on the website of the DNPWC and the website of WWF and made available to affected IPs in a manner understandable to them; information dissemination and consultation will continue throughout project execution. Summaries of IPPs and mitigation measures proposed in IPPs will be translated Nepali language

and paper copies will be made available to the affected persons in the office of relevant local authorities.

### **(a) Disclosure**

### **(b) Institutional and monitoring arrangements**

The Safeguards Specialist and GESI expert will be responsible for the development and implementation of the IPPF and any IPP, with support from the Project officer and Assistants on logistical matters (e.g., conducting field visits, reaching out to IP communities, convening meetings, etc.).

The Safeguards and GESI Specialist will periodically report on the implementation of the IPPF/IPP to the Project Manager, PCC and WWF US. Monitoring and reporting will be undertaken together with reporting on the other ESMF commitments (as indicated in Section 5.4).

## **5. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

### **5.1. Procedures for the Identification and Management of Environmental and Social Impacts**

The following is an exclusion list of activities will not be financed by the “Managing the Human-Tiger Interface in Nepal” project. This includes activities that:

1. Lead to land management practices that cause degradation (biological or physical) of the soil and water. Examples include, but are not limited to: the felling of trees in core zones and critical watersheds; activities involving quarrying and mining; commercial logging; or dredge fishing.
2. Negatively affect areas of critical natural habitats or breeding ground of known rare/endangered species.
3. Significantly increase GHG emissions.
4. Use genetically modified organisms or modern biotechnologies or their products.
5. Involve the procurement and/or use of pesticides and other chemicals specified as persistent organic pollutants under the Stockholm Convention or within categories IA, IB, or II by the World Health Organization.
6. Develop forest plantations.
7. Result in the loss of biodiversity, alteration of the functioning of ecosystems, and introduction of new invasive alien species.
8. Involve the procurement or use of weapons and munitions or fund military activities.
9. Lead to private land acquisition and/or physical displacement and voluntary or involuntary relocation of people, including non-titled and migrant people.
10. Contribute to exacerbating any inequality or gender gap that may exist.
11. Involve illegal child labor, forced labor, sexual exploitation or other forms of exploitation.
12. Adversely affect indigenous peoples' rights, lands, natural resources, territories, livelihoods, knowledge, social fabric, traditions, governance systems, and culture or heritage (physical and non-physical or intangible) inside and/or outside the project area.
13. Negatively impact areas with cultural, historical or transcendent values for individuals and communities.

In advance of the initiation of any project activity, the Safeguards Specialist should fill in detailed information regarding the nature of the activity and its specific location in the *Safeguards Eligibility and Impacts Screening* form (Annex 1). Part 1 of this form comprises of basic information regarding the activity; Part 2 contains basic “pre-screening” questions. If the

response to any of the questions in these two parts is “Yes”, the activity will be deemed ineligible for funding under the Project. The executing partners will thus be required to change the nature or location of the proposed activity so that it complies with all safeguard’s requirements and all responses at the *Safeguards Eligibility and Impacts Screening* form are negative.

If the activity is deemed eligible according to Part 2, an environmental and social screening procedure will be carried out in accordance with Part 3 of *Safeguard Eligibility and Impacts Screening* format, which is based on the WWF’s SIPP and applicable Nepal’s laws and regulations. The executing partners shall respond to the specific questions in Part 3 of the form, provide general conclusions regarding the main environmental and social impacts of each proposed activity, outline the required permits or clearances, and specify whether any additional assessments or safeguard documents (e.g., ESMP) should be prepared.

Issues that are considered as part of this environmental and social screening include the following:

- a. Need for government-land acquisition;
- b. Environmental impacts (e.g., dust, noise, smoke, ground vibration, pollution, flooding, etc.) and loss or damage to natural habitat;
- c. Social impacts: identification of vulnerable groups or indigenous peoples, impacts on community resources, impacts on livelihoods and socio-economic opportunities, restrictions of access to natural resources, land usage conflicts, impacts on tangible or intangible cultural heritage, etc.; and
- d. Health and safety issues (both for workers and for local communities).

The screening of each activity should be undertaken by the Safeguards Specialist. If the screening process indicates that additional assessments or safeguards documents shall be prepared, these should be carried out by the executing partners prior to the start of activities.

If the screening reveals adverse environmental or social impacts that may arise from the planned activity, an ESMP should be prepared. The ESMP should be prepared by the Safeguards Specialist, in collaboration with the Project Manager(s).

## 5.2. Guidelines for ESMP Development

In case that the Environmental and Social screening process identifies any adverse environmental or social impacts as a result of specific project activities, the Safeguards Specialist in collaboration with the Project Manager(s) should develop a site- and activity-specific ESMP. The ESMP should be prepared before the initiation of the project activity and closely follow the guidance provided in this ESMF.

The ESMP should describe adverse environmental and social impacts that are expected to occur as a result of the specific project activity, outline concrete measures that should be undertaken to avoid or mitigate these impacts, and specify the implementation arrangements for administering these measures (including institutional structures, roles, communication, consultations, and reporting procedures).

The structure of the ESMP should be as follows:

- (i) **A concise introduction:** explaining the context and objectives of the ESMP, the connection of the proposed activity to the project, and the findings of the screening process.
- (ii) **Project description:** Objective and description of activities, nature and scope of the project (location with map, construction and/or operation processes, equipment to

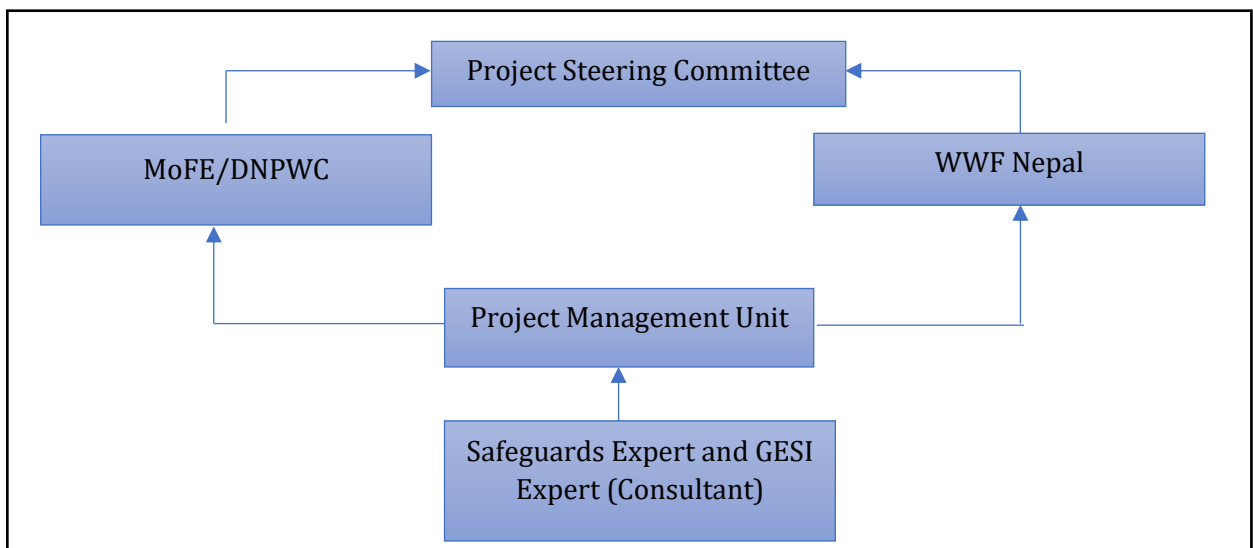
be used, site facilities and workers and their camps; bill of quantities if civil works are involved, activity schedule).

- (iii) **Baseline environmental and social data:** Key environmental information or measurements such as topography, land use and water use, soil types, and water quality/pollution; and data on socioeconomic conditions of the local population. Photos showing the existing conditions of the project sites should also be included.
- (iv) **Expected impacts and mitigation measures:** Description of specific environmental and social impacts of the activity and corresponding mitigation measures.
- (v) **ESMP implementation arrangements:** Responsibilities for design, bidding and contracts where relevant, monitoring, reporting, recording and auditing.
- (vi) **Capacity Need and Budget:** Capacity needed for the implementation of the ESMP and cost estimates for implementation of the ESMP.
- (vii) **Consultation and Disclosure Mechanisms:** Timeline and format of disclosure.
- (viii) **Monitoring:** Environmental and social compliance monitoring with responsibilities.
- (ix) **Grievance Mechanism:** Provide information about the grievance mechanism, how PAPs can access it, and the grievance redress process.
- (x) **A site-specific community and stakeholder engagement plan:** In order to ensure that local communities and other relevant stakeholders are fully involved in the implementation of the ESMP, a stakeholder engagement plan should be included in the ESMP. Specific guidelines on community engagement are provided in Section 5.8 below.

### 5.3. Stakeholders' Role & Responsibilities in the ESMF Implementation

(a) General

The institutional arrangement (Figure 1) for project implementation includes WWF as the GEF Agency, MoFE/DNPWC as the Lead Executing Agency and a Project Steering Committee.



**Figure 1. Project Institutional Arrangement**

DNPWC is the Lead Executing Agency for the project, which will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of project activities. As part of its responsibilities, MoFE/DNPWC will host a

Project Management Unit (PMU). The PMU will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the project, including project administration (including issuing sub-grants), project management, and monitoring and reporting.

**Project Steering Committee (PSC):**

**WWF GEF Agency:** WWF-US, through its WWF GEF Agency will: (i) provide consistent and regular project oversight to ensure the achievement of project objectives; (ii) liaise between the project and the GEF Secretariat; (iii) report on project progress to GEF Secretariat (annual Project Implementation Report); (iv) ensure that both GEF and WWF policy requirements and standards are applied and met (i.e. reporting obligations, technical, fiduciary, M&E); (v) approve annual workplan and budget; (vi) approve budget revisions, certify fund availability and transfer funds; (vii) organize the terminal evaluation and review project audits; (viii) certify project operational and financial completion, and (ix) provide no-objection to key terms of reference for project management unit.

(a) Safeguards Implementation

Specific arrangements and responsibilities related to the implementation of environmental and social safeguards requirements, as stated in this ESMF are as follows:

**Lead executing agency:**

- Overall Supervision and coordination responsibility for project implementation
- Project Management and Oversight
- Develop and manage detailed work plans and timelines

**Project Steering Committee:**

- Provide executive and strategic guidance.
- Ensure alignment with national and GEF requirements and standards.

**WWF GEF Agency:**

- Overall oversight and monitoring of compliance with safeguards commitments.
- Support and specific recommendations on specific safeguard issues if needed.

**PMU:**

- Ensure project oversight and coordination for effective and timely implementation of safeguard commitments as per Environmental management plan and GESI commitments as per GAP.
- Deliver project results in alignment with WWF/GEF project standards.

**Safeguards and GESI Expert within PMU:**

- Take overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with the ESMF Safeguards, Gender Action Plan and associated annexes.
- Confirm that bidding documents and contracts incorporate relevant environmental and social safeguard clauses, with particular attention to occupational health and safety provisions.

- Submit reports on safeguard implementation and compliance to the PSC and WWF GEF Agency.
- Screen all project activities to assess potential environmental and social impacts.
- Develop site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) where required.
- Oversee contractors to ensure adherence to safeguards requirements.
- Organize consultation meetings with local stakeholders to provide updates on project activities, ensuring inclusive and participatory engagement, including FPIC principles for Indigenous Peoples, and thoroughly document all consultations.
- Conduct field visits to monitor project activities and verify compliance with safeguard and GESI requirements.
- Facilitate the disclosure of safeguards-related documents to relevant stakeholders.
- Monitor safeguards implementation and ensure sub-projects follow the best practices and guidelines outlined in the ESMF and GAP.
- Manage the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), including tracking grievances, overseeing resolution processes, and providing feedback to complainants.
- Advise the Project Manager on safeguard and GESI related issues and support adaptive management as necessary.
- Report on safeguards and GESI performance to the Project Steering Committee, WWF GEF Agency, and other relevant stakeholders.

#### **5.4. Monitoring**

- ***Monitoring at the project level***

The Project Management Unit (PMU) holds the overall responsibility for implementing the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and monitoring compliance with the project's environmental safeguard activities. This ensures that all activities are aligned with the required standards and guidelines for environmental and social safeguards throughout the project lifecycle.

The GESI and Safeguards Expert plays a crucial role in ensuring the successful implementation of field activities while maintaining compliance with the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). Their responsibilities include providing technical support to project staff in conducting environmental and social screenings, developing Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs), and preparing other necessary compliance documentation. They also oversee the project's Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), evaluating the effectiveness of grievance resolution to ensure timely and satisfactory outcomes for all stakeholders.

In addition, the expert monitors and reports on overall safeguards compliance. These reports are shared with key stakeholders, such as the Project Manager of the PMU, the Technical Team Leader, the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) and Communication Officer, the Project Coordination Committee (PCC), the Project Steering Committee (PSC), and the WWF GEF Agency. By fulfilling these responsibilities, the GESI and Safeguards Expert upholds high standards of environmental and social accountability throughout the project.

- ***Monitoring at the field activity level***

The GESI and Safeguards Expert is responsible for overseeing all field activities to ensure they fully comply with the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and adhere to the environmental clearance requirements set by Nepali authorities. The Expert must also ensure that all external contractors and service providers involved in the project meet the safeguard

requirements specified in the ESMF, Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF), and Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP), as applicable. Additionally, the Expert is required to prepare and submit monthly monitoring reports to the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) & Communication Officer at the Project Management Unit (PMU).

***Disbursement of project funds will be contingent upon their full compliance with the safeguard's requirements.***

- ***Monitoring at the agency level***

WWF as the project's implementing agency and DNPWC as the executing agency are responsible to oversee compliance with the ESMF.

In order to facilitate compliance monitoring, DNPWC will include information on the status of ESMF implementation in the six-monthly Project Progress Reports (PPRs) and the annual Project Implementation Review (PIR) reports.

## **5.5. Community Engagement**

Public consultation and participation are essential in the implementation of project activities because they enable Indigenous Peoples to actively engage in shaping both the design and execution of projects. This inclusive approach ensures their voices are heard and integrated, fostering a deeper understanding of the local context, community dynamics, and potential risks and opportunities. It also helps secure free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) from affected communities, reflecting their agreement with and support for project activities that may impact their lives. Moreover, it ensures the development of an Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP), a tailored framework that incorporates measures to prevent negative impacts, promote culturally appropriate benefits, and uphold the rights and dignity of Indigenous Peoples throughout the project.

### **(a) Community engagement during Project Preparation**

During project preparation, extensive stakeholder consultations were conducted to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the project's context and to formulate an effective execution strategy. These consultations included national-level workshops involving government officials, relevant ministries, agencies, NGOs, and other key stakeholders. The workshops focused on aligning the project with national policies, identifying institutional and regulatory opportunities, and incorporating insights from civil society to address local needs and concerns. Input from these diverse groups helped refine the project design, ensure inclusivity, and establish a clear execution strategy, covering timelines, resource allocation, and risk management. This collaborative approach aimed to create a project that is both feasible and sustainable, with broad-based support from all stakeholders.

### **(b) Community engagement during ESMF Preparation**

WWF's requirements emphasize the need for a comprehensive Environmental and Social Impact Assessment that incorporates the active participation of Indigenous Peoples. This approach ensures that both environmental and social dimensions of a project are thoroughly evaluated to identify potential risks and opportunities. By including Indigenous communities in the study, WWF aims to achieve a deeper understanding of the local context, culture, and values.

The communities residing in and around the project area are at the heart of this process, as they are the ultimate recipients of both the impacts and benefits arising from the project. These impacts could range from changes to natural resources, ecosystems, and livelihoods to potential opportunities such as employment, improved infrastructure, and community development. The consultations aimed to engage affected indigenous communities by informing them about the

project's objectives and activities, while also discussing potential adverse impacts to gather their input on how to avoid or mitigate such effects.

As part of the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) preparation, extensive consultations were carried out to ensure inclusivity and representation of diverse community perspectives. A total of 10 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted, engaging various stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples (IPs), marginalized groups, and women. These discussions served as a platform for participants to voice their concerns, experiences, and recommendations regarding the project. In addition to the FGDs, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were held with key stakeholders such as National Park officials, the Chairperson of the Buffer Zone User Committee (BZUC), representatives from the Community Forest User Group (CFUG), officials from the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL), and the Chairperson of a local homestay program.

The consultations witnessed active participation from 103 individuals, with Indigenous Peoples, including the Tharu, Bote, and Chepang communities, comprising approximately 50% of the participants. This demonstrates a significant level of engagement from the IP communities, ensuring their voices and concerns were well-represented in the consultation process. Moreover, the participation of women also stood at around 50%, reflecting their active involvement and growing role in decision-making processes within the area. The balanced representation of both Indigenous communities and women highlights the inclusiveness of the consultation process and underscores their critical role in shaping environmentally and socially sustainable interventions. The details of consultation held is provided in table 4 below;

**Table 4: Details of Field consultation**

S.N	Name of Institution	Male participants	Female Participants	Total Participants	IP Participation
1	Navajyoti BZCF	10	12	22	2
2	Patihani BZCF	1	7	8	8
3	Meghauli CF	6	4	10	9
4	Bote Homestay	4	6	10	10
5	Kalyanpur CF	5	5	10	0
6	Ayodhyapuri BZCF	4	3	7	0
7	Nirmalthori BZCF	14	1	15	7
8	Sunakhari BZUC	3	4	7	4
9	Chepang Community	3	7	10	9
10	Kumroz CF	4	0	4	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>54</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>50</b>

*Source: Field visit, 2024*

## 5.6. Guidance for SEAH Risk Mitigation

A detailed plan to address SEAH risks will be developed within the first six months of project start-up, using both information already included in the GAP and updated procedures for SEAH-specific grievances outlined in below. This will include:

- Inclusion of any identified SEAH-related risk mitigation measures into the project's annual workplan and budget and annual reporting requirements.
  - This will require the participation of the entire PMU in reviewing any identified risks and mitigation measures to ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities and the responsibilities of EEs, project partners, contractors, and any other entities who will receive GCF funding for this project.
- Development of a communication mechanism between the local project partners and the PMU's Gender and SEAH Specialist in order to address in a timely manner any SEAH

situation that may arise at the territorial level. This early warning system will be included in the project's security protocol, and will require:

- Reporting any such grievances or challenges within a defined time period of no less than 5 business days. This shall hold true even if grievances are informally submitted (i.e. not through an official GRM)
- The confidentiality of anyone who has received a complaint or become aware of a SEAH-related situation, including protecting the personal identifiable information of all parties- both the potential victim(s) and potential perpetrators(s).
- Strengthen the capacities of the project's implementing partners on prevention of GBV and SEAH as well as WWF policies and codes of conduct to address SEAH risk. These trainings will be done in partnership by the project's Gender & SEAH and ESS Specialists and should include:
  - Training within the first 3 months of project implementation that have been prepared with oversight and final approval from the WWF GCF AE Safeguards and Gender Leads.
  - Be mandatory for all implementing partner staff who will be involved in the GCF-financed activities.
- Strengthen the landscape technical committees so that they can establish rapid response mechanisms to address issues associated with threats to environmental leaders and gender-based violence. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - In cases of such threats, provide them with additional resources to ensure a timely response that is focused on the well-being of anyone who is threatened.
  - Provide the same GBV and SEAH training to these committees that the implementing partners will receive.
- Strengthen the capacities of the entities that participate in the multi-stakeholder bodies that will be strengthened by the project, so that specific prevention and rapid response measures are included to address GBV and SEAH-specific threats, including to social and environmental leaders they may work with.
  - Provide the same GBV and SEAH training to these multi-stakeholder bodies that the implementing partners will receive.

## **5.7. Communications and Disclosure**

All affected communities and relevant stakeholders shall be informed about the ESMF requirements and commitments. The executive summary of the ESMF will be translated into Nepali language and made available along with the ESMF and SEP on the websites of DNPWC, as well as the websites of the WWF GEF Agency. Hard copies of the ESMF will be placed in appropriate public locations and at DNPWC. Project Managers and the Safeguards and Gender Specialists at DNPWC will be responsible to raise community awareness regarding the requirements of the ESMF, and will also ensure that all external contractors and service providers are fully familiar and comply with the ESMF and other safeguards documents.

During the implementation of the project, activity-specific ESMPs shall be prepared in consultation with affected communities and disclosed to all stakeholders prior to project concept finalization. All draft ESMPs shall be reviewed and approved by DNPWC in consultation with the PSC and WWF GEF Agency in advance of their public disclosure. The PMU must also disclose to all affected parties any action plans prepared during project implementation, including gender mainstreaming.

Disclosure should be carried out in a manner that is meaningful and understandable to the affected people. For this purpose, the executive summary of ESMPs or the terms and conditions in environment clearances should be disclosed on DNPWC and WWF websites.

The disclosure requirements are summarized in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Disclosure framework for ESMF related documents**

<b>Documents to be disclosed</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Where</b>
Environment and Social Management Framework	Once in the entire project cycle. Must remain on the website and other public locations throughout the project period.	On the website of DNPWC and WWF. Copies should be available at PMU office, and in local municipal offices in project areas
Environmental and Social Management Plan/s	Once in the entire project cycle for every activity that requires ESMP. Must remain on the website and other disclosure locations throughout the project period.	On the website of DNPWC and WWF. Copies should be available at BFAR, and in local municipal offices in project areas
Safeguards Monthly Progress Report	Monthly	Copies should be available at PMU office, and in local municipal offices in project areas
Grievance redress process	Quarterly, throughout the project cycle	On the website of DNPWC. Copies should be available at the PMU office

### **5.7. Capacity Building and technical assistance**

Capacity-building activities will be provided as needed by WWF US or WWF Nepal to the PMU situated within DNPWC to provide the latter with ESMF/IPPF implementation requirements and good practices. These will focus in particular on issues related to things such as preparation of LRPs and IPPs, organization of consultations, operationalization of the GRM, and monitoring of ESMF implementation. The budget for capacity building shall be included in Components 1,2 and 3.

### **5.8. Grievance Mechanisms**

The project will have a direct and tangible effect on local communities and individuals residing within or in the vicinity of project sites. There is thus a need for an efficient and effective Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) that collects and responds to stakeholders' inquiries, suggestions, concerns, and complaints. This section will describe the general outlines of the GRM, including details on the process to submit a grievance, how long the PMU will have to respond, and who on the PMU will be responsible for its implementation and reporting. A fully detailed GRM must be created within the first six months of project implementation and submitted to the WWF US GEF Agency for approval.

The GRM will operate based on the following principles:

1. **Fairness:** Grievances are assessed impartially, and handled transparently.
2. **Objectiveness and independence:** The GRM operate independently of all interested parties in order to guarantee fair, objective, and impartial treatment to each case.

3. ***Simplicity and accessibility:*** Procedures to file grievances and seek action are simple enough that project beneficiaries can easily understand them and in a language that is accessible to everyone within a given community, especially those who are most vulnerable.
4. ***Responsiveness and efficiency:*** The GRM is designed to be responsive to the needs of all complainants. Accordingly, officials handling grievances must be trained to take effective action upon and respond quickly to grievances and suggestions.
5. ***Speed and proportionality:*** All grievances, simple or complex, are addressed and resolved as quickly as possible. The action taken on the grievance or suggestion is swift, decisive, and constructive.
6. ***Participation and inclusiveness:*** A wide range of affected people—communities and vulnerable groups—are encouraged to bring grievances and comments to the attention of the project implementers. Special attention is given to ensure that poor people and marginalized groups, including those with special needs, are able to access the GRM.
7. ***Accountability and closing the feedback loop:*** All grievances are recorded and monitored, and no grievance remains unresolved. Complainants are always notified and get explanations regarding the results of their complaint. An appeal option shall always be available.

Complaints may include, but not be limited to, the following issues:

- (i) Allegations of fraud, malpractices or corruption by staff or other stakeholders as part of any project or activity financed or implemented by the project, including allegations of gender-based violence or sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment;
- (ii) Environmental and/or social damages/harms caused by projects financed or implemented (including those in progress) by the project;
- (iii) Complaints and grievances by permanent or temporary workers engaged in project activities.

Complaints could relate to pollution prevention and resource efficiency; negative impacts on public health, environment or culture; destruction of natural habitats; disproportionate impact on marginalized and vulnerable groups; discrimination or physical or sexual harassment; violation of applicable laws and regulations; destruction of physical and cultural heritage; or any other issues which adversely impact communities or individuals in project areas. The grievance redress mechanism will be implemented in a culturally sensitive manner and facilitate access to vulnerable populations. Special training will be provided to the ESS Specialists within the first 6 months of project implementation, or before the GRM is finalized, whichever is sooner. This will help to ensure they have the capacity to address SEAH-related grievances in a culturally sensitive and victim-centered way.

**(1) Disseminating information about the GRM:**

**(2) Submitting complaints:**

**(3) Processing complaints:**

**(4) Acknowledging the receipt of complaints:**

**(5) Investigating complaints:**

**(6) Responding to complainants:**

**(7) Appeal:**

**(8) Monitoring and evaluation:**

The GRM seeks complement, rather than substitute, the judicial system and other dispute resolution mechanisms. All complainants may therefore file their grievance in local courts or approach mediators or arbitrators, in accordance with the legislation of Nepal.

In addition to the project-specific GRM, a complainant can submit a grievance to the WWF GEF Agency. A grievance can also be filed with the Project Complaints Officer (PCO), a WWF staff member fully independent from the Project Team, who is responsible for the WWF Accountability and Grievance Mechanism and who can be reached at:

Email: [SafeguardsComplaint@wwfus.org](mailto:SafeguardsComplaint@wwfus.org)

Mailing address:

Project Complaints Officer  
Safeguards Complaints,  
World Wildlife Fund  
1250 24th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20037

Stakeholder may also submit a complaint online through an independent third-party platform at <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/59041/index.html>

## **5.9. Budget**

The ESMF implementation costs, including all costs related to compensation to project affected people, will be fully covered by the project budget. It will be the responsibility of the Safeguards Specialist to ensure that a sufficient budget is available for all activity-specific mitigation measures that may be required in compliance with the ESMF.

A Safeguards Expert and a GESI Expert will be engaged as consultants on an as-needed basis to support the implementation of the Environmental and Social Management Framework, implement Gender Action Plan and to develop project specific ESMPs. A long-term agreement with both the consultants will be established for the duration of the project implementation, allowing their mobilization as required to carry out safeguards and GESI-related tasks as needed. The project manager in PMU will oversee the ESMF and GAP implementation.

Budget for capacity building on [ESMF/IPPF/GAP] implementation, travel costs and workshops and meetings for safeguards monitoring (including travel, workshops and meetings) will be included in the overall monitoring and evaluation budget under Component 2 and 3 of the projects.

## Annex 1. Safeguard Eligibility and Impacts Screening

This screening tool needs to be filled out for each activity or category of activities included in the annual work plan and budget. In addition, the screening tool needs to be completed whenever management measures or management plans are developed and/or when project intervention areas are determined.

The tool will be filled out by the Safeguards Specialist and reviewed by the M&E Officer. The decision on whether a Site-Specific Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) are required shall be made by the Safeguards Specialist in consultation with the WWF GEF Agency Safeguards Specialists, based on the information provided in this screening form, as well as interviews with the PMU staff, local communities, and any other relevant stakeholders.

### Part 1: Basic Information

1	Activity Name	
	Description of Activity (“sub-activities”)	
2	Type of Activity:	New activity <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation of activity <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Activity location:	
4	Total size of site area	
5	Activity implementation dates	
6	Total cost	

(Move to Part 2 after filling in all information in the table above)

### Part 2: Eligibility Screening

No.	Screening Questions: <i>Would the project activity</i>	Yes	No	Comments/ Explanation
1	Lead to land management practices that cause degradation (biological or physical) of the soil and water? Examples include, but are not limited to: the felling of trees in core zones and critical watersheds; activities involving quarrying and mining; commercial logging; or dredge fishing.			
2	Negatively affect areas of critical natural habitats or breeding ground of known rare/endangered species?			
3	Significantly increase GHG emissions?			
4	Use genetically modified organisms or modern biotechnologies or their products?			
5	Involve the procurement and/or use of pesticides and other chemicals specified as persistent organic pollutants under the Stockholm Convention or within categories IA, IB, or II by the World Health Organization?			
6	Develop forest plantations?			
7	Result in the loss of biodiversity, alteration of the functioning of ecosystems, and introduction of new invasive alien species?			

No.	Screening Questions: <i>Would the project activity</i>	Yes	No	Comments/ Explanation
8	Involve the procurement or use of weapons and munitions or fund military activities?			
9	Lead to private land acquisition and/or the to physical displacement and voluntary or involuntary relocation of people, including non-titled and migrant people?			
10	Contribute to exacerbating any inequality or gender gap that may exist?			
11	Involve illegal child labor, forced labor, sexual exploitation or other forms of exploitation?			
12	Adversely affect indigenous peoples' rights, lands, natural resources, territories, livelihoods, knowledge, social fabric, traditions, governance systems, and culture or heritage (physical and non-physical or intangible) inside and/or outside the project area?			
13	Negatively impact areas with cultural, historical or transcendent values for individuals and communities?			

Please provide any further information that can be relevant:

If all answers are “No”, project activity is eligible and move to Part 3

If at least one question answered as “yes”, the project activity is ineligible and the proponent can reselect the site of project activity and do screening again.

### Part 3: Impacts screening

Answer the questions below and follow the guidance to provide basic information regarding the suggested activity and describe its potential impacts.

No.	Would the project activity:	Yes/No	Provide explanation and supporting documents if needed
<b><i>Environmental Impacts</i></b>			
1	Result in permanent or temporary change in land use, land cover or topography.		
2	Involve clearance of existing land vegetation		If yes, number of trees to be cut down: Species of trees: Are the trees protected: Total land area of vegetation cover removed: Estimated economic value of the trees, crops and vegetation to be cut down / removed and any replacement costs (e.g., fees, registration, taxes): <i>Provide additional details:</i>

3	Does the activity involve reforestation or modification of natural habitat? If yes, will it involve use or introduction of non-native species into the project area?		
4	Will pesticides be used? If so, are they on the list of those excluded by the Stockholm Convention?		
5	Result in environmental pollution? This may include air pollution, liquid waste, solid waste, or waste as the result of earth moving or excavation for example		
6	Trigger land disturbance, erosion, subsidence, or instability?		
7	Result in significant use of water, such as for construction?		
8	Produce dust during construction and operation?		
9	Generate significant ambient noise?		
10	Increase the sediment load in the local water bodies?		
11	Change on-site or downstream water flows?		
12	Negatively affect water dynamics, river connectivity or the hydrological cycle in ways other than direct changes of water flows (e.g. water filtration and aquifer recharge, sedimentation)?		
13	Result in negative impacts to any endemic, rare or threatened species; species that have been identified as significant through global, regional, national, or local laws?		
14	Could the activity potentially increase the vulnerability of local communities to climate variability and changes (e.g., through risks and events such as landslides, erosion, flooding, or droughts)?		
<b>Socio-Economic Impacts</b>			
15	Negatively impact existing tenure rights (formal and informal) of individuals, communities or others to land, fishery and forest resources?		
16	Operate where there are indigenous peoples and their lands/territories/waters are located?  OR  Operate where any indigenous communities have close cultural/spiritual or land use relationships? If yes to either, answer questions below:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Has an FPIC process been started?</li> <li>b. Will any restrictions on their use of land/territories/water/natural resources be restricted?</li> </ul>		

17	Restrict access to natural resources (e.g., watersheds or rivers, grazing areas, forestry, non-timber forest products) or restrict the way natural resources are used, in ways that will impact livelihoods?		
18	Restrict access to sacred sites of local communities (including ethnic minorities) and/or places relevant for women's or men's religious or cultural practices?		
19	Operate where there are any cultural heritage or religious or sacred sites that may be impacted by the project?		
20	Undermine the customary rights of local communities to participate in consultations in a free, prior, and informed manner to address interventions directly affecting their lands, territories or resources?		
<b><i>Labor and Working Conditions</i></b>			
21	Involve hiring of workers or contracting with labor agencies to provide labor? If yes, answer questions a-b below.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Are labor management issues prevalent in the landscape?</li> <li>d. Are illegal child labor issues prevalent in the landscape?</li> </ul>		
22	Involve working in hazardous environments such as steep, rocky slopes, areas infested with poisonous animals and/or disease vectors?		
<b><i>Minorities and Vulnerable Groups</i></b>			
23	Negatively affect vulnerable groups (such as ethnic minorities, women, poorer households, migrants, and assistant herders) in terms of impact on their economic or social life conditions or contribute to their discrimination or marginalization?		
24	Stir or exacerbate conflicts among communities, groups or individuals? Also considering dynamics of recent or expected migration including displaced people, as well as those who are most vulnerable to threats of sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment.		
<b><i>Occupational and Community Health and Safety</i></b>			
25	Involve any risks related to the usage of construction materials, working high above the ground or in canals where slopes are unstable?		
26	Expose local community to risks related to construction works or use of machinery (e.g., loading and unloading of		

	construction materials, excavated areas, fuel storage and usage, electrical use, machinery operations)		
27	Generate societal conflicts, increased risk of sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment or pressure on local resources between temporary workers and local communities?		
28	Work in areas where forest fires are a threat? If yes, how recently was the last one?		
29	Work in areas where there the presence or history of vector-borne diseases (some examples include malaria, yellow fever, encephalitis)		
<b>GBV/SEAH Risks</b>			
30	Is there a risk that the project could pose a greater burden on women by restricting the use, development, and protection of natural resources by women compared with that of men?		
31	Is there a risk that persons employed by or engaged directly in the project might engage in gender-based violence (including sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, or sexual harassment)? The response must consider risks not only at the beneficiary level, but also to workers within all the organizations receiving GEF funding.		
32	Does the project increase the risk of GBV and/or SEAH for women and girls, for example by changing resource use practices or singling out women and girls for training without complimentary training/education for men? The response must consider all workers within the organizations receiving GEF funding.		
33	Does any mandated training for any individuals associated with the project (including project staff, government officials, park rangers and guards, other park staff, consultants, partner organizations and contractors) cover GBV/SEAH (along with human rights, etc.)?		
<b>Conflict Sensitivity and Risks</b>			
34	Are there any major underlying tensions or open conflicts in the landscape/seascape or in the country where the landscape/seascape is situated? If yes, answer a-d below		
	<p>e. Is there a risk that the activities interact with or exacerbate existing tensions and conflicts in the landscape/seascape?</p> <p>f. Do stakeholders (e.g. implementing partners, rights holders, other stakeholder groups) take a specific position in relation to the conflicts or tensions in the landscape/seascape or are they perceived as taking a position?</p> <p>g. How do stakeholders perceive WWF Country Office and its partners in relation to existing conflicts or tensions?</p>		

	h. Could the conflicts or tensions in the landscape/seascape have a negative impact on the activities?		
35	Could the activities create conflicts among communities, groups or individuals?		
36	Are some groups (stakeholders, rights holders) benefiting more than others from the activities? And if so, how is that affecting power dynamics and mutual dependencies?		
37	Do the activities provide opportunities to bring different groups with diverging interests positively together?		

List of documents to be attached with Screening form:

1	Layout plan of the activity and photos
2	Summary of the activity proposal
3	No objection certificate from various departments and others relevant stakeholders

**Screening Tool Completed by:**

Signed:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Screening Conclusions [TO BE COMPLETED BY Safeguards Specialist]**

i. Main environmental issues are:

ii. Permits/ clearance needed are:

iii. Main social issues are:

iv. Further assessment/ investigation needed and next step.

a. Need for any special study:.....

b. Preparation of ESMP (main issue to be addressed by the ESMP):.....

c. Preparation of LRP (main issue to be addressed by the LRP):.....

d. Any other requirements/ need/ issue etc:

**Screening Tool Reviewed by:**

Signed:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Exclusion list**

The following practices and activities will not be supported by the project:

1. Land or water management practices that cause degradation (biological or physical) of the soil and water.
2. Activities that negatively affect areas of critical natural habitats or breeding ground of known rare/ endangered species.
3. Actions that represent significant increase in GHG emissions.
4. Use of genetically modified organisms, or the supply or use of modern biotechnologies or their products in crops.

5. Introduction of crops and varieties that previously did not grow in the implementation areas, including seed import/transfer.
6. Actions resulting in loss of biodiversity, alteration of the functioning of ecosystems, and introduction of new invasive alien species.
7. Procurement of pesticides or activities that result in an increase in the use of pesticides.
8. Activities that would lead to physical displacement and voluntary or involuntary relocation.
9. Activities that do not consider gender aspects or contribute to exacerbating any inequality or gender gap that may exist.
10. Child Labour.
11. Activities that would adversely affect IPs' rights, lands, natural resources, territories, livelihoods, knowledge, social fabric, traditions, governance systems, and culture or heritage (physical and non-physical or intangible) inside and/or outside the project area.
12. Activities that would negatively impact areas with cultural, historical or transcendent values for individuals and communities.