

Midterm Review

Conservation of Snow Leopards and their Critical Ecosystems in Afghanistan
GEF/UNDP/Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
UNDP GEF PIMS: 5844

Implemented by The Wildlife Conservation Society
Government Partner: National Environmental Protection Agency



Camera trap image: Ween Sar, Shikargah Valley, Wakhan National Park, 28 Jun 2020

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24 May 2021

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Acknowledgements

The consultants would like to thank the many people in Afghanistan, including experts and officials from government, international aid organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia and the private sector, who gave up their time to talk or write about their observations and experiences in relation to the project, often through unstable video links and at inconvenient times and locations. We are grateful too to Koustubh Sharma of the Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Partnership (GSLEP), Tom McCarthy, John Farrington, John MacKinnon and others who talked with us about their experience of Snow Leopard conservation outside Afghanistan. Together, our interlocutors (listed in Annex 8) helped us to build up a picture of the project and to inform the review. We were welcomed by the WCS team in Kabul in an initial Zoom meeting and received steady support throughout from Project Manager Mujtaba Bashari, Country Director Garry Shea and other members of the team. We thank also Project Analyst Mohammad Salim of the UNDP Country Office in Afghanistan, and Tashi Dorji, UNDP Regional Technical Advisor, for their assistance and support. We were unable to visit the project field site in Wakhan and we thank Wakhan Governor Juma Gul Amu and others from Wakhan for taking the time to talk with us during a visit to Kabul.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AKDN	Agha Khan Development Network	MoIC	Ministry of Information and Culture
AKF	Agha Khan Foundation	MoJ	Ministry of Justice
AWEC.	Afghanistan Wildlife Executive Committee	MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
AWP	Annual Work Plan	MP	Management Plan
BD1	Biodiversity 1	MRRD	Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development
BIOFIN	Biodiversity Finance	MTR	Mid Term Review
CC	Climate Change	MUDL	Ministry of Urban Development and Land
CD	Capacity Development	NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
CDC	Community Development Council	NEPA	National Environment Protection Agency
CDV	Canine Distemper Virus	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	NP	National Park
CEPF	Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund	NSLEP	National Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection Plan
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species	PA	Protected Area
CNA	Capacity Needs Assessment	PAC	Protected Area Committee
CoP	Conference of Parties	PB	Project Board
DAIL	Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock	PIF	Project Identification Form
DfID	Department for International Development	PIR	Project Implementation Review
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid	PMU	Project Management Unit
EEP	Environmental Education Program	PPR	Peste des Petits Ruminants
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment	ProDoc	Project Document
EU	European Union	RMA	Rangeland Management Associations
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	RMPs	Rangeland Management Plan
FMA	Forest Management Associations	ROD	Researches Organization for Development
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease	RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
GEF	Global Environmental Facility	SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
GIS	Geographic Information System	SESP	Social and Environmental Safeguards Procedure
GIZ	German Development Agency	SGF	Small Grants Fund
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism	SLN	Snow Leopard Network
GSLEP	Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Partnership	SRF	Strategic Results Framework
GWP	Global Wildlife Program	SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
HWC	Human Wildlife Conflict	TBW	Total Budget and Workplan
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development	ThOC	Theory of Change
IPAT	Interim Protected Areas Tarzluamal	TNA	Training Needs Assessment
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature	TOR	Terms of Reference
IWT	Illegal Wildlife Trade	TRAC	Target for Resource Assignments
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency	UNDP	United Nations Development Program
LD	Land Degradation	UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund	US	United States
LITACA II	Livelihood Improvement in Tajik-Afghan Cross-border Areas II	USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation	VU	Vulnerable (IUCN globally threatened category)
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock	WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool	WNMP	Wakhan National Park Management Plan
Mol	Ministry of Interior	WNPPAC	Wakhan National Park Protected Area Committee
		WPA	Wakhan Pamir Association
		WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature

1. Executive Summary

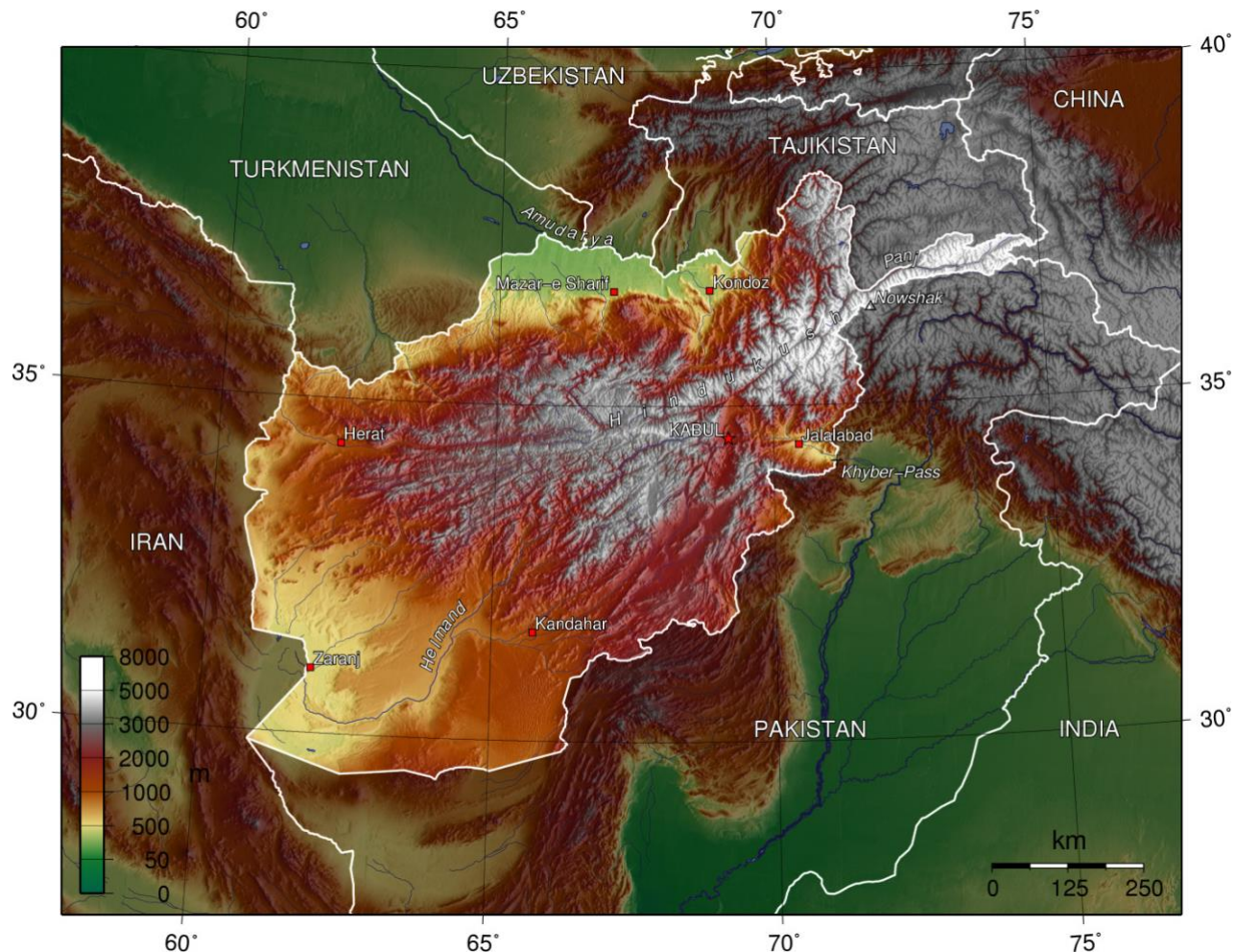
1.1 Project Information Table

Project Title	Conservation of Snow Leopards and their Critical Ecosystems in Afghanistan		
UNDP Project ID	5844	PIF Approval Date:	4 June 2015
GEF Project ID	9531	CEO Endorsement Date:	19 March 2018
Atlas Project ID:	00105859	Project Document Signature Date (date project began):	20 July 2018
Country:	Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	Project Cooperation Agreement signed:	29 July 2019
Region:	Asia Pacific	Inception Workshop Date (date implementation began):	22 October 2019
Focal Areas:	Biodiversity, Land Degradation, Climate Change Mitigation	Midterm Review Time Frame:	28 Dec 2020 - 15 May 2021
		Scheduled Date for Terminal Evaluation	Apr 20, 2022
GEF Focal Area Objectives and Outcomes:	BD 2: Reduce Threats to Globally Significant Biodiversity <i>Programme 3: Preventing the Extinction of Threatened Species</i> BD 4: Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into production landscapes, seascapes and sectors <i>Programme 9: Managing the Human-Biodiversity Interface</i> LD 2: Generate Sustainable Flows of Ecosystem Services from Forests, including in Drylands <i>Programme 3: Landscape Management and Restoration</i> CC 2: Demonstrate Systemic Impacts of Mitigation Options <i>Programme 4: Promote conservation, enhancement of carbon stocks in forest, and other land-use, and support climate smart agriculture</i>	Planned closing date:	19 July 2022
		If revised, new date:	N/A
Trust Fund:	GEF TF		
Implementing Partner:	Wildlife Conservation Society		
Supervising Agency:	National Environmental Protection Agency		
Project Financing	<i>at CEO endorsement (US\$)</i>		<i>at MTR (1 Jan 2021) (US\$)</i>
[1] GEF financing:	2,704,862		2,131,412
[2] UNDP TRAC:	250,000		228,906
[3] Total Budget: [1+2]	2,954,862		2,360,318
Parallel Cofinance			
[4] Government:	4,501,598		2,501,598
[5] UNDP:	1,200,000		1,200,000
[6] Total cofinance [4+5]	5,701,958		3,701,598
TOTAL COST [3 + 6]	8,656,460		6,061,916

1.2 Description of Project

Afghanistan is a landlocked, mountainous and very dry country with an area of around 653,000 km² and a human population of around 39 million¹. It is bordered by Pakistan in the south and east; Iran in the west; Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in the north; and China in the far northeast. The high mountains of Baba, Hindu Kush and Pamir stretch north-east from the middle of the country, and Afghanistan's major rivers originate from these ranges. The highest point, Mount Noshak (7,492m), lies at the end of the Wakhan Corridor in the far north east where four countries share the high mountains. The map below shows topographical relief in the regional setting.

The project focuses on the Wakhan Corridor, part of the westernmost range of the globally threatened Snow Leopard (*Panthera uncia*) (VU) and is the latest episode in a long-term conservation programme in Afghanistan that The Wildlife Conservation Society has been involved in since 2006 and that will continue beyond the end of the project.



The Snow Leopard in Afghanistan lives largely above 3,000m² and feeds mainly on wild mammals, including Siberian Ibex, Marco Polo Sheep and Long-tailed Marmot. Local herders graze livestock at high altitudes and Snow Leopards take sheep, goats and yak out on the mountains from time to time. Occasionally Snow Leopards get into the corrals that herders use to protect their flocks at night, and this can lead to mass killings of sheep and goats inside the confined space of the corral. Herders have retaliated at times by killing Snow Leopards and although they may not have killed with a profit in mind, there is a black market price for Snow Leopard pelts that can encourage hunters to go after Snow Leopard for profit. Hunting of prey species such as Ibex also occurs, and government officials and members of the armed forces have been implicated. Some local people now understand the importance of Snow Leopards to the National Park and the potential benefits of tourism.

The project was designed to follow up on previous work a) on controlling the illegal trade in wildlife (IWT), and b) on changing human behaviour that threatens Snow Leopards and their prey in the Wakhan National Park. The design emphasized considerations of the likely impacts of the global climate crisis on the Snow Leopard ecosystem and takes a holistic approach that encompasses a range of activities with direct and indirect impacts on Snow Leopards,

their prey and their habitat requirements. The project covers research and monitoring, capacity development, improved land-use planning, discrete interventions in tree planting, vaccination of livestock, the building of predator-proof corrals, and public information and education. Lessons learned under the project, both negative and positive are to be shared with Snow Leopard conservation projects and programmes in other range states³. Three GEF6 Focal Areas are addressed (Biodiversity, Land Degradation and Climate Change Mitigation) (see Section 1.1).

A high level of parallel cofinance from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) indicates the strong commitment of government to the project. Although the arrangements took over a year to finalize at the beginning of the project, government is now giving good support to WCS as the implementing agency of the project under UNDP's NGO modality. The National Environmental Protection Agency is the supervising agency and the Director General of NEPA (GEF Operational Focal Point) chairs the Project Board. Other members of the Project Board (see Prodoc para 166) include MAIL, Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development (MRRD), Ministry of Interior (MoI), Wakhan Pamir Association, and UNDP.

1.3 Project Progress Summary

There has been slow but good progress towards the *Objective*. After Prodoc signature in July 2018 one year was lost due to discussions dragging on about project management arrangements, including staff salaries. The Project Cooperation Agreement was signed in July 2019, followed by a three-month Inception Phase, and the Inception Workshop took place on 22 October 2019, 15 months after project signature. Although an advance was made to WCS in the third quarter of 2019, the first year for the project for accounting purposes is 2020 (see Section 4.3.5) when activities started in earnest. The Covid-19 pandemic then slowed project progress in 2020 as interprovincial travel was banned between February and June, meetings were restricted, and international travel was also curtailed. However, activities picked up again considerably in the third quarter of 2020. Annex 2 summarizes the main activities and achievements under each of the seven *outputs* (see Table 3) of the project. It is based on project management's assessment of progress in the 2020 Project Implementation Review (PIR), and at the time of the MTR⁴ (see Annex 4), and the MTR desk review, interviews, questionnaires and observations. Activities have covered public meetings, training, field surveys, village level planning, and management interventions such as tree planting, strengthening of livestock corrals, and vaccinations.

WCS implements several projects with related *objectives* that provide cofinance that was not included at the time of project design. Costs for some activities are shared between a number of different projects and this has resulted in savings when, for example, workshops and market surveys are carried out to provide data for informing both the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) component of this project and the process for revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) which is being carried out by WCS under separate funding. However, the GEF project tends to lose its identity because it is so embedded in a wider programme of activities that started before and will continue afterwards. Most of the individual activity reports seen by the MTR consultant are well written, with plenty of detail. Annual and quarterly project progress reports list substantial achievements in various fields; but they focus on *outputs* and *output* targets and it is hard to gauge progress towards the *objective* and the three project *outcomes*.

The project, and related parts of the overall WCS country programme, take a holistic approach to conservation that aims to lessen the impact of people on Snow Leopards and other wildlife through implementation of laws and regulations; through persuasion; and through assistance with people's livelihoods in the land that they share with the Snow Leopard. Training workshops on controlling illegal wildlife killing and trade have been held in cities, in Wakhan District and in the neighbouring district of Ishkashim (see Annex 4). These have been carried out in conjunction with market surveys to assess the trade in wildlife products: so far such market surveys have been undertaken in four of eight regions where they are planned. The results are not yet available. Public meetings, and seminars for government officials have been held to discuss the threats posed by the climate crisis and to mark international days for biodiversity, climate change and Snow Leopards. WCS employs about 30 Community Rangers in Wakhan, and their salaries are currently paid by the project. These Community Rangers and some of the government employed Wakhan National Park Rangers have received training under the project, most recently in use of a mobile app (SMART) that is used to record and analyse observations made on patrols and would be available for consideration in National Park management decision-making. The project has carried out tree planting in widely separated villages in the alluvial plains of Wakhan, paying the villagers according to the number of saplings or cuttings that survive to September of the same year. About 40,000 livestock have been vaccinated against Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), also known as sheep, or goat plague. Surveys have collected information on livestock numbers; canine distemper virus (CDV) in village guard dogs; Snow Leopard habitat use and livestock predation; Long-tailed Marmots; Marco Polo Sheep; and rangeland productivity. A major investment has been made in development of a climate model and vulnerability assessment tool to help with future conservation planning in north-east Afghanistan in conjunction with an EU project under implementation by WCS.

Many discrete activities based on the project document and the Inception Workshop Report have been undertaken, mainly very well, but progress towards the *objective* and *outcomes* is hard to pin down because *outcomes* and *outputs* are not very specific in terms of how much strengthening is expected, and the *indicators* in the Prodoc focus too much on activities completed as opposed to impacts of those activities on expected results. So although individual activities are well executed for the most part, the contribution of each to the overall project aims could be better scrutinized and may lead to useful adaptive management. Training has been undertaken and much of it is greatly appreciated. However, no comprehensive training needs analysis has been carried out for the project or specifically for WCS' wider Snow Leopard conservation programme. Institutional (MAIL and NEPA) training needs have been analysed in the past, and WCS look at training required activity by activity, but none of these substitute adequately for a TNA focused on the project objective.

1.4 MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary

The ratings⁵ given at midterm, based on findings in the report below and the full table in Annex 2, are given in Table 1 with a summarized assessment of the achievements under each aspect. Some aspects are rated as Moderately Satisfactory (MS), and others are rated Satisfactory (S) or Moderately Likely (ML). Where progress is rated MS it is simply because the delays experienced by the project and the work remaining to be done make it impossible to award a higher rating (see Annex 15) even though recent progress and the quality of outputs has been good.

Table 1. Summary of Ratings and Achievements

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy (as in Prodoc)	S	Good holistic approach recognizing that the key to success is the attitude of local residents and that national level actions are required in parallel to combat trade in wildlife and wildlife parts. Builds on sound basis provided by earlier work and provides ample scope for evidence-based conservation through emphasis on assessments and monitoring. Could have been improved by explanation of what is meant by 'land-use planning' under the project. Links to the Wakhan National Park management plan make sustainable results more likely. Shortcomings include Strategic Results Framework (SRF) indicators that do not adequately measure impact on the <i>outcomes</i> and the <i>objective</i> and a rather narrow stakeholder engagement plan.
Progress Towards Results	<i>Objective</i> MS	After a 15 months delay to project inception, project activities were further delayed and restricted by the COVID19 pandemic. It is to the project's credit that it was able, under pandemic conditions, to achieve as much as it did in 2020. Taking this and the poor security situation in Afghanistan into account, actual progress towards the <i>objective</i> in the time that the project has been running has been good. However, unless an extension is granted to make up for time lost the project will fall short in the expected progress towards the <i>objective</i> .
	<i>Outcome 1</i> MS	Significant progress in market surveys of IWT in several provinces, formation of an IWT Task Force and provision of training and information to Border Police and Wakhan Community and National Park rangers. Outstanding tasks include completion and reporting on the planned comprehensive assessments of IWT and Human-wildlife Conflict (HWC), further training, and more work on predator-proof corrals and vaccinations. A capacity needs analysis should precede further training.
	<i>Outcome 2</i> MS	Preparation of a Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool in progress to predict impacts of climate crisis in the whole Panj-Amu river basin. Many discrete activities carried out, including wildlife, pasture and livestock surveys, tree planting, village-level rangeland and forest management planning. More work is required at local level to link these various activities together under a holistic and long-term approach to land management under the WNP Management Plan through the newly established Protected Area Committee (PAC), engaging in extended dialogue with local communities, managing synergies with rural development programmes, and sharing experience through exchange visits.

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
	Outcome 3 S	Public events have been held – and well received - in various cities with NEPA and MAIL to celebrate Climate Change Week, International Snow Leopard Day and World Environment Day. Workshops were held in Wakhan to inform women about conservation issues. A range of publicity materials, including brochures, leaflets, posters and notebooks, have been distributed. An updated communication strategy, including online methods is required. The project has supported NEPA in its official communications with the Global Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection Programme (GSLEP) and CITES. More remains to be done in links and collaboration with GSLEP, the Snow Leopard Network (SLN) and others to standardize survey methods and share experiences on conservation strategies, and this will require increased attention to monitoring, and evaluation of lessons learned.
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	S	WCS has an enthusiastic, able and highly committed project staff and a good reputation as a conservation NGO in Afghanistan and Wakhan since 2006. Some of the staff have been with the organization for many years. The project is part of an ongoing WCS country programme and benefits considerably from synergies with projects funded by other donors under the programme. This makes it difficult in some cases, however, to measure the impacts of this particular project. Adaptive management is evident - in changes made to the SRF at Inception, in proposals for expansion of activities from Wakhan to include nearby districts, and in adjustments to tree planting protocols for example. Also needed is a close and critical review of the direct and indirect contributions to the <i>objective</i> and <i>outcomes</i> of standard programme and project interventions. Although the indicators given in the project document were revised, they still require adjustment if they are to measure impact on the <i>objective</i> and <i>outcomes</i> as opposed to progress on the <i>outputs</i> .
Sustainability	ML	Sustainability is viewed as satisfactory thanks to the overarching WCS country programme and WCS' good relationships with NEPA and MAIL. The project will inevitably pass on to the programme some of the tasks of institutionalization of training, livestock animal health management, and the development and delivery of public information campaigns; inclusion of WCS-salaried Wakhan community rangers into the governmental fabric; and the ongoing operation of the IWT Task Force. Such results require longer than the typical three to five years of a GEF project to achieve. WCS has a core of expert and interested people who champion the cause of protected areas and species conservation and keeping exploitation to sustainable levels. WCS projects already involve university students and staff to a certain extent, but there is scope for greater university involvement in the project, that could provide an opportunity for the gradual rise of a body of professional and enthusiastic conservationists outside WCS, and the project could do more in this respect.

1.5 Summary of conclusions

1.5.1 The GEF project as an integral part of the WCS programme

This is an exciting project, well implemented by a strong WCS team and inextricably woven into a wider country programme of that started 15 years ago and will continue after the GEF project ends. The project is implemented in parallel with other projects with overlapping *objectives* and planned *outcomes* and this provides significant synergies. Individual activities are implemented well but assessment and reporting of impacts on the project *objective* and *outcomes* could be improved. Some indicators are poorly formulated to monitor impact as they focus on counting *outputs* as opposed to impacts on the *outcome* (see Section 4.1.3 and Annex 3).

Policy and institutional changes typically require a programme time frame as opposed to a typical project time frame. The project aims to establish the IWT Task Force within its time frame, and all efforts should be made to complete the work, but placing the project within an ongoing programme allows sustainability to be postponed to a certain extent. On the other hand, some *outputs* are inherited by the project. The Wakhan National Park Management Plan is one example: the project may well see the final approval at the highest level of this document that has been under development for the last seven years.

The project reviews and adjusts methodology constantly through periodic assessments of operational success (as in tree planting for example) at the *output* level, but would benefit from review of impacts at the higher level of the *objective* and *outcomes* to determine whether each individual activity per se is effective or not in the longer term.

1.5.2 Stakeholder engagement, collaboration and communication

A wide range of local stakeholders were consulted during project development. WCS' relationships with many national, local government and community stakeholders have enhanced project progress. Some government agencies and some universities expressed dissatisfaction with project governance and frustration that they were not involved more.

WCS has the greatest concentration of wildlife conservation professionals in Afghanistan and is regarded as a centre of excellence in wildlife conservation. Although those people will be in Afghanistan even if WCS leaves, it would be wise to do more to encourage other strongholds of wildlife conservation, including in universities.

Gender representation in project activities has been equitable, and WCS staff working on the project include several women, including a recently appointed gender and environment specialist.

Many project activities are carried out on short duration missions to Wakhan in summer and autumn. For some purposes, this works well but for others more prolonged engagement is required. Some staff, mainly community rangers, live and operate in Wakhan (and neighbouring Ishkashim) year round, but technical staff spend the winter outside Wakhan. There would be advantages for land-use and protected area planning in posting technical staff in Wakhan over winter, because local residents are at home more. Two WCS activity reports recommend employing community facilitators to work with residents over longer periods, and WCS leadership informed the MTR that they will look at maintaining winter presence in 2021-2022.

Although the project carries out a range of activities in the field of public information, its Communication Strategy focuses mainly on public events marking anniversaries such as World Environment Day, International Snow Leopard Day and Climate Change week. A written communication strategy and plan with wider scope is required - preferably catering for more prolonged interactions and increased dialogue.

Informative project reports are prepared both quarterly and annually but often the wider picture is not clear because the reporting sticks strictly to activities for which project funds were utilized and sometimes this raises more questions than it answers. The real value will be in thematic reports from the wider programme and in lessons learned and exchanges of information on the internet and internationally about the wider programme. The project's online presence is very light and increasing this could help in engaging with new audiences. The level of communication to compare approaches, successes and failures with other GEF projects on Snow Leopards and with GSLEP and SLN could also be raised. A March 30th SLN webinar led by the project is a promising sign of progress on this.

Risk assessment was realistic and the SESP was conducted assiduously but better coordination between the UNDP Risk Log and the SESP risk monitoring is required (see Section 4.3.6).

1.5.3 Project delays and work outstanding

Progress is much less than was expected by midterm because time was lost (see Section 4.3). There is also a risk that further time will be lost to COVID19, depending on the progress of the pandemic. Expenditure of project funds stands at about 20% at midterm, leaving US\$2.3m⁶ available for the final 18 months of the project. It is not possible to achieve the planned results and to disburse the remaining funds in ways consistent with the project *objectives* and *outcomes* by the planned closure date of July 2022. In particular, the required data collection, and the promotion and facilitation of co-management of the WNP alongside spatial planning for the WNP will take time and cannot be speeded up. Without any increase in operational costs, the project could be extended for 12 months.

1.5.4 Financial matters

The first project audit appears to be overdue. Project management is strong and the staff are good, dedicated and experienced. The breadth of experience and qualifications of the whole WCS network is available to the project. However, operational costs or overheads are not clearly differentiated from technical consultant support in the total budget and workplan (TBWP), and it is surprising that no formal limits were put on WCS overheads in the TBW.

1.6 Summary of Recommendations

The recommendations are given in full in Section 5. Table 2 here gives a short summary.

Table 2 Summary of Recommendations

Rec #	Summarized Recommendations	Entities Responsible ⁷
IMPACTS AND SUSTAINABILITY		
1	Project reports and work plans should always present the project firmly in the context of the overall programme	WCS
2	Deeper routine review and assessment of the impacts of project and programme actions and expenditure as measured against the <i>objective</i> and the <i>outcomes</i>	WCS, UNDP CO
3	The Project should explore avenues for continued funding for Snow Leopard conservation	WCS, NEPA, UNDP CO, MAIL
4	Prepare a plan for extension of conservation activities to the whole of the Snow Leopard range in Afghanistan	WCS, NEPA, MAIL
5	Assess all project and programme initiated bodies and plans for sustainability and take appropriate action	WCS
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT, COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION		
6	Diversify and widen stakeholder engagement	WCS
7	Expand project engagement with local universities	WCS, UNIVERSITIES
8	Ensure that training is deployed in most effective manner	WCS
9	Prepare new communication strategy emphasizing dialogue, feedback and dissemination	WCS
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT		
10	Extend the project by 12 months to ensure proper use of the remaining funds	UNDP CO, UNDP-GEF
11	Emphasize further development of the Wakhan National Park Management Plan through the PAC	WCS, MAIL, WPA, PAC NEPA
12	Engage community conservation facilitators to deepen the dialogue and interaction with villagers	WCS, WPA
13	Post additional project staff ⁸ in Wakhan over winter to work with communities and local government officials	WCS, WPA
MONITORING AND EVALUATION		
14	Carry out the first audit	UNDP CO
15	Consolidate risk management documentation	UNDP CO, WCS, NEPA

2. Introduction

2.1 Purpose of the MTR

GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (2010)⁹ has two overarching *objectives* at the project level: to promote accountability for the achievement of GEF *objectives* through the assessment of results, effectiveness, processes and performance; and to improve performance by the promotion of learning, feedback and knowledge sharing. The Midterm Review (MTR) is an integral part of the UNDP/GEF project cycle. Its purpose is to identify potential project design issues, assess progress towards the achievement of *objectives*, identify and document lessons learned, and to recommend specific actions that might improve the project. It is expected to serve as a means of validating or filling the gaps in the initial assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency obtained from monitoring. So the MTR provides an opportunity to assess early signs of project success or failure and prompt necessary adjustments.

Particular emphasis is placed on project results to date, and the probability of the planned results being achieved within the given timeframe. Circumstances change between project design and inception, and also during implementation, so adaptive management is an important part of project implementation. The MTR looks at how well the project document has been adapted to new circumstances while keeping to the original aims and satisfying the stakeholders. Sticking to the letter of the project document rather than the spirit of the project is a common flaw in project management.

2.2 MTR Scope, Method and Limitations

The MTR followed GEF monitoring and evaluation policy, the Terms of Reference (Annex 6) and Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects¹⁰. The review process is independent of GEF, UNDP, the Government of Afghanistan, WCS, project staff and project partners. The review was carried out by an International Consultant and a National Consultant between January and April 2021 through a desk review, interviews, discussions and questionnaires. An Inception Report was submitted on 25 January. This laid out the proposed methods and timetable, including a list of interviewees that had already been discussed with UNDP and WCS. It was revised in response to comments from UNDP Regional Office and UNDP CO and was approved on 9 February. The National Consultant, in addition to his role as reviewer, did interpretation and translation when required. The consultants worked together on making the arrangements for interviews and meetings and were supported in this from time to time by the Project Manager. Opinions and recommendations are those of the MTR consultants, who adhered to the Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct, and signed and submitted the Agreement Form (Annex 9) to UNDP CO in January 2021.

MTRs are normally carried out in person with the International Consultant traveling to the country involved and making a field trip to project sites. In the case of this MTR modifications were made: COVID19 restrictions to international travel prevented the International Consultant from visiting Afghanistan; and security considerations and winter weather conditions related to internal travel prevented the National Consultant from visiting the field sites. So the requested annex on MTR itinerary has not been included in this report. Security considerations also limited face to face meetings for the National Consultant. So no field visits were made and as a result the evidence-based approach to the review was a challenge and relied to a certain extent on triangulation from different interviewees. Most meetings and interviews were held remotely via Zoom or Skype, although the National Consultant did manage to attend in person sometimes with the International Consultant joining by Zoom. In normal times an MTR is carried out in person by both consultants over a period of two or three weeks, and data gathering is not restricted to formal interviews and meetings. Observations are important and informal conversations held and overheard, for example at tea-breaks or mealtimes or on long drives or walks in the field, provide invaluable information. This MTR suffered as a result of not being based around such a "mission". It was also drawn out more than normal a) because interviews were restricted to mornings in the UK (afternoons in Afghanistan) and b) because in the absence of a tight mission timetable the interviews and document gathering phases dragged on a bit: meetings with NEPA and MAIL proved particularly difficult to arrange.

It was not possible to establish accurately the extent to which the in-kind co-finance confirmed in the ProDoc has materialized, so the figures supplied are rough estimates provided by the project team. The MTR team asked the project team repeatedly for information on cofinance. They had difficulty in providing the information partly, it has to be said, because one of the initial sources of cofinance was not linked closely enough to the project (see 4.3.5.2).

Details of stakeholders met are provided in Annex 8. The documents consulted are listed in Annex 7. Consultations included semi-formal interviews (in person and by Zoom or Skype), a limited number of informal conversations, and email exchanges. Interviewees included people active in Snow Leopard conservation in other countries. Those

interviewed either individually or in small groups are listed in Annex 8: of the 57 interviewees 12 are women. Those working on the project and all those in Afghanistan were invited to complete a simple questionnaire (Annex 10) and 17/45 of them did so. The results of the questionnaire analysis are given in Annex 11. Many of the responses illustrated the merging of project and programme in people's perceptions. Interviews covered some of the same ground as the questionnaire, were guided by the kind of questions found in Annexes 12 and 13, and explored different aspects of the project according to the interviewees' expertise and role with regard to the project. The Project Team was asked to complete various assessments (see MTR Inception Report submitted February 2021) of project progress and performance. The completed forms (Annexes 4a, 4b and 5) were analyzed, along with the completed questionnaires, in support of the overall review. The consultants prepared a presentation and discussed their initial findings and draft recommendations with WCS, UNDP CO, MAIL and NEPA between 15 and 28 March (see Annex 8). the draft report was submitted on 18 April. The review period dragged on rather too long, with final feedback received from WCS only on 24 May. A full audit trail of all comments, including suggested edits, has been attached as instructed (Annex 22). Recommendations have been made for some limited changes in project implementation over the remaining months of the project and a no-cost extension to allow time for *outputs* to be completed satisfactorily.

The review was undertaken in as participatory a manner as possible in order to build consensus on achievements, short-comings, lessons learned and opportunities for strengthening the project through adaptive management and other means. Information was cross-checked between as many different sources as possible before inclusion in the findings. The report provides descriptive assessments of strategy and design, and formal ratings of progress, implementation and adaptive management, and sustainability against the criteria given in the TOR. The rating systems used follow those specified in the Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects (see Annex 15). The status and quality of delivery of the project *objective* and *outcomes* were assessed against the targets established for indicators in the Strategic Results Framework. The indicators themselves were also assessed both for design and application. Many of the indicators are inappropriate as measures of project impact, and this has implications for some of the assessments of progress made in the project progress reports, and in particular in the 2020 PIR where progress is reported against indicators only (see Section 4.1.2 and 4.3.6).

2.3 Structure of the review report

The report begins with an Executive Summary (Section 1), followed by this introductory section describing the purpose, scope and methodology of the MTR (Section 2). Section 3 describes the goal and expected results of the project. Findings are presented in Section 4, dealing in turn with project design and strategy, implementation and adaptive management, progress towards results, and sustainability of results. Section 5 summarizes conclusions and makes 14 recommendations. There are 23 annexes as listed on page ii above and on page 44 below.



3. Project description and background

3.1 Development context

3.1.1 Environmental significance

The project aims to protect the Snow Leopard through a concerted effort to control the illegal trade in wildlife on the one hand, and a broad approach to conservation of the Snow Leopard's ecosystem on the other, taking into account the likely impacts of the climate crisis on the ecosystem. This approach protects not just the Snow Leopard but other species threatened by illegal trade, wild species on which the Snow Leopard preys, and the vegetation types on which the prey species browse and graze. The Snow Leopard is the top predator of Asia's great mountain ranges, and Afghanistan encompasses the far western part of its distribution. The Wakhan Corridor, home to most of Afghanistan's Snow Leopards, is part of a complex folded knot of high peaks and valleys that marks the junction of the great mountain ranges of the Pamir, Karakoram, Hindu Kush, Himalaya, Altai, Kunlun and Tien Shan and extends like a finger eastwards to China, with Pakistan to the south and Tajikistan to the north. It is about 300 km long, varies in width from 17-60 km and ranges in altitude from 2,500 m to the 7,492 m Mt Noshaq. The whole corridor has been declared as the Wakhan National Park (ca 11,000 km²), and the final stage in its gazetting is expected during 2021. The 2,400 km Amu Darya River, the largest in Central Asia rises in Wakhan and flows generally north-westwards through Tajikistan to the southern remnants of the Aral Sea. Fourteen percent of the NP is covered in glacier, and less than 25% is vegetated with the most common vegetation classes being *Artemisia* types (11.9%) and Alpine grass and forbs (6.5%)¹¹. Its alpine desert, alpine steppe and xeric woodland including the *tugai* (riparian) forest are recognized as globally vulnerable or endangered ecoregions¹². The vegetation in many areas is degraded from overgrazing and the extraction of biofuels. Climate change is having an impact on vegetation, with altitudinal zones moving upwards and expanding areas that could support forest or woodland. Twenty-five species of mammals and 250 species of birds been reported from the NP. Wakhan has been classified as a Key Biodiversity Area¹³ and two International Bird Areas (Big Pamir¹⁴ and Little Pamir¹⁵) cover most of the NP.

The project's holistic approach, including its substantial emphasis on potential impacts on vegetation and glaciers of the ongoing global climate crisis, provides benefits not only for Snow Leopards but for the whole of this important ecosystem that protects important watersheds. Through its links to the Wakhan National Park Management Plan the project has the potential to demonstrate sound management that will benefit other protected areas in Afghanistan.

3.1.2. Socio-economic significance

The mountains and glaciers of the Wakhan provide vital resources for the livelihoods of ca 14,500 Wakhi cultivators and pastoralists who grow barley, wheat, millet, lentils, beans and grass pea in the Wakhan Valley. The warmer climate has allowed the introduction of new fruits and vegetables. Four major rivers and numerous streams, mainly from glacier meltwater, provide water for cultivation in the short growing season. The majority (ca 85%) own livestock (sheep, goats, cattle, yaks and horses) which are grazed under customary access rights in summer camps (and recently in winter camps too) in the Big Pamir. In addition around 2,000 Kyrgyz herders live year-round in the Big Pamir (ca 600) and the Little Pamir (ca 1,400) shifting between summer, autumn and winter camps. Retreat of glaciers is a mounting concern well addressed by the project. Healthy pastures are a necessity for long term sustainability of herders' livelihoods, and overgrazing has been identified as a cause of rangeland degradation, particularly in the western Big Pamir. Poverty levels are high, and many people migrate for work: many men from Wakhan have joined the Afghan army, for example. Remittances are very important for many households. Most of the livestock are owned by a few rich families and individuals.

Biodiversity supplies a wide range of resources used for subsistence or commercial purposes by society, and is hence of value to the nation's economic development, and in poverty alleviation, food security, and the good health, nutrition and wellbeing of people. In order to benefit from those resources people, either collectively, through government for example, or individually can take measures to lessen the impacts of their livelihoods and other behaviour on wild species and ecosystems. Those who live in or adjacent to natural ecosystems with high biodiversity more often see themselves as in conflict with wild species (but see Section 4.2.1.2). The project addresses the conservation of Snow Leopards and their ecosystem in Wakhan partly through working with local short-term and long-term residents to find ways to reduce deleterious impacts of their behaviour on the ecosystem, and build up understanding and appreciation of their amazing homeland. It is introducing better land-use planning for sustainable forest and rangeland management, helping to reduce predation on livestock, assisting with measures

that protect livestock from disease and prevent spillover of livestock diseases to primary prey species of Snow Leopards, and developing fuelwood plantations and orchards in certain areas. Together with other support provided through the EU, GIZ, AKDN and others, levels of education and human health are being improved. The key to achieving the project objective will be livelihoods that provide steady monetary and non-monetary benefits and rely on intact ecosystems. Nurturing local pride in the unique ecosystem, its austere peaks, its majestic megafauna and its smaller species can facilitate this because it can provide non-monetary benefits. Tourism in Wakhan is in the early stages of development, which is exactly when measures should be introduced to ensure that environmental damage and unwanted social impacts are minimized. The Wakhan National Park Management Plan, which provides a constant backdrop to the project, has been developed over the last seven years with the support of WCS under an earlier GEF project. However, it already requires revision. When completed it will be a key planning document that will guide development in the Wakhan over the coming years. To bring it up to date, a major revision, together with an implementation or development plan, is planned, although not until 2022. This will include spatial planning to control building, roads and other infrastructure according to the zoning system and an EIA procedure that takes into account biodiversity. The work of the project on the impacts of climate change will inform development and land-use decisions for Wakhan and the whole of the Panj-Amu Basin and possibly beyond.

3.1.3 Institutional and policy significance

The project aims to strengthen the control of illegal trade in wildlife (IWT) and institutional coordination and effective policy implementation will be the key to success. A new body, the IWT Task Force is being established by the project and it is expected that this task force will be operational before the end of the project. It is anticipated that the taskforce will be chaired and coordinated by NEPA and will include representatives from MAIL, Ministry of Interior (MoI), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC), Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, private sector entities involved in the animal trade, national and international NGOs, community-based organizations and others. Overall TOR have been developed and if arrangements can be made for inclusion in the Afghanistan's institutional fabric this will represent a major achievement.

The Wakhan District is in its entirety a National Park (managed as IUCN Category VI - "Protected Area with Sustainable Use of Natural Resources"). NEPA has overall responsibility for policy and oversight of protected areas and has delegated to MAIL the responsibility and authority to fund and implement on-the-ground management. Routine decisions on NRM and all aspects of development made locally are at present mediated through a whole spectrum from customary law (underpinning the complicated system that determines grazing rights for example), the 42 Community Development Councils (CDC) (set up under the National Solidarity Programme and MRRD), the Wakhan Pamir Association (WPA) (a social organization set up by WCS under the Associations Law), the Wakhan National Park Protected Area Committee (WNPPAC) (established in accordance with the Interim Protected Areas Tarzluamal (IPAT)), village level Rangeland Management Associations (RMA) and Forest Management Associations (FMA) (established by various projects under regulations of MAIL) and the local offices of the Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL) and the District Governor. A body of 31 Community Rangers employed by the project operates alongside 16 Park Rangers employed by MAIL. Rural development projects funded by other donors, including EU, GIZ, RUPANI, and AKF are engaged in tree-planting, school, hospital and road construction and training in various sectors. The project therefore works against this complex and overlapping institutional backdrop to find the best ways for the district to be managed effectively as a National Park with all the complications of ca 17,000 residents living within the borders.

The WNP Management Plan (WNPMP) is consistent with the three goals of the National Environment Strategy:

- Secure a clean and healthy environment for the people of Afghanistan;
- Attain sustainable economic and social development while protecting the natural resource base and the environment of the country; and
- Ensure effective management of the country's environment through participation of all stakeholders.

The IPAT agreed to by MAIL and NEPA in 2009 stated that the management plan must be harmonized with National and Provincial Development plans. The current management plan states that it is consistent with the Badakhshan Regional Economic Development Plan (2014). Questions remain over policy precedence in the future should National Park priorities clash with new provincial and national development priorities.

3.2 Problems that the project sought to address: threats and barriers targeted

The Snow Leopard, its ecosystem and associated species in Afghanistan are of global significance but protecting them is difficult because humans who share that ecosystem have some damaging impacts - some that could easily be avoided and others that are the result of people being driven by poverty to look after the short-term needs of themselves and their families. The problems that the project is addressing are on two levels.

First are the threats to biodiversity and ecological services, including:

- Illegal hunting and trade of wildlife and wildlife products
- Livestock herding that reduces food availability for wild species, with knock-on effect on predators such as Snow Leopards and Wolves
- Over-collection for fuel of upland shrubs such as *Artemisa leucotricha*, *Krascheninnikova ceratoides*, *Acantholimon diapensioides* that are eaten by wild mountain ungulates in winter
- Some agricultural practices; over-collection of fuelwood and tree fodder and overgrazing leading to soil erosion
- Killing of Snow Leopards by herders in retaliation for killing of livestock by Snow Leopards¹⁶
- Transmission of disease (particularly PPR) from livestock to wild species of ungulates
- Global climate change that in absence of management action is expected to lead to reduction in Snow Leopard populations through impacts on prey populations of higher temperatures, decreased annual precipitation, increased winter snow precipitation, increased spring floods leading to erosion, and melting of glaciers leading to lower water availability

The barriers targeted by the project are expressed in the Prodoc as:

1. Constrained capacities for controlling illegal hunting and wildlife trade.
2. Limited available and up-to-date knowledge on illegal hunting and wildlife trade
3. Constrained capacities for minimising human-wildlife conflict and transmission of diseases from domestic to wild animals.
4. Poor community engagement on resource sustainability and protection of critical ecosystems
5. Insufficient data on land and forest ecosystems to inform appropriate decision-making and planning.
6. Limited inclusion of climate concerns into conservation and management of critical ecosystems.

There is an inherent problem in phrasing a barrier or a threat as the lack of something (see Annex 16) as the solution is implicit in the statement of the problem. It happens in many projects and it is better practice to state the actual problems and barriers in language free of the preferred solution, and then to analyse the underlying problems and come up with solutions that might be far wider in scope than the limited solutions suggested by wording of the barriers. For example, the following barriers are by no means totally devoid of hints of the solutions but they open up thinking to wider solutions

- Ease with which illegal activities can be carried out in many parts of Afghanistan
- Close kinship ties with rangers complicate enforcement of protected area and environmental laws and regulations
- Absolute needs of local people for food and warmth is often what leads to unsustainable land-use practices
- Anger directed at wild predators is difficult to dissipate
- Local people have little information on the science behind animal diseases and the costs and benefits of vaccination and other livestock health measures
- No one knows exactly how the climate crisis will affect the Wakhan and there is a certain inertia that puts off action
- The Wakhan Management Plan is slowly advancing through the approval steps but it has taken 7 years so far and the final steps are holding up implementation

3.3 Project Description and strategy

The project *objective*, *outcomes* and *outputs* are given in Table 3. Twenty-seven activities are described in the Prodoc (see Annex 4b) and these illustrate the heavy workload expected of the project.

Table 3: Project Objective, Outcomes and Outputs

THE PROJECT OBJECTIVE: To strengthen conservation of the Snow Leopard and its critical ecosystem in Afghanistan through a holistic and sustainable landscape approach that addresses existing and emerging threats
OUTCOME 1: Strengthened conservation of Snow Leopards through reduced illegal wildlife trade and decreased incidences of human–wildlife conflict
Output 1.1: Illegal wildlife trade assessed and monitored. Output 1.2: Improved government capacity to combat illegal wildlife trade. Output 1.3: Human-Snow Leopard conflict assessed and mitigated.
OUTCOME 2: Improved land use planning across critical Snow Leopard ecosystems to reduce the impacts of forest loss, land degradation and climate change impact
Output 2.1: Improved understanding of Snow Leopard ecology to inform landscape approach to conservation. Output 2.2: Unsustainable grazing and fuelwood collection reduced through sustainable land use plans that promote conservation-compatible land uses and livelihoods. Output 2.3: The impacts of climate change on Snow Leopards and their ecosystem addressed through land use planning.
OUTCOME 3: Enhanced knowledge management through awareness raising, monitoring and evaluation
Output 3.1: Knowledge management, education and outreach conducted to promote Snow Leopard conservation and trade reduction

The project has a multi-pronged approach:

- Introducing and enabling high level policy and institutional measures to establish a national system for controlling the illegal trade in wildlife, including Snow Leopards
- Training of rangers in protected area management both through formal courses and, where possible, through on-the-job participation in surveys and routine patrols
- Direct assistance to local people to plant trees, build and strengthen predator-proof corrals and vaccinate livestock
- Collection of information required to monitor impacts of actions and to plan for better conservation
- Participatory approach to village and village cluster level land-use planning
- An emphasis throughout on consultation with local government officials, traditional leaders, organizations and communities to explain and lobby for the National Park and Snow Leopards
- Constant emphasis on public information concerning biodiversity conservation, including school presentations, workshops for women, and events in provincial capitals
- International links with organizations such as GSLEP, SLN and GWP

3.4 Project Implementation and partner arrangements

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is the Implementing Partner for the project under UNDP's NGO implementation modality, in cooperation with both NEPA and MAIL. NEPA is specified as the national institution responsible for supervising the project and both NEPA and MAIL work with WCS to provide technical support, oversight and guidance. WCS is accountable to UNDP for the disbursement of funds and the achievement of the project *objective* and *outcomes*, according to approved work plans. No Responsible Parties have been designated. Funds are advanced directly to WCS Afghanistan quarterly on receipt of the quarterly financial statement from WCS New York. UNDP has an important guidance role, including quality assurance and oversight, and monitoring of risks, and holds overall accountability and responsibility for the delivery of the results to GEF.

The Prodoc specifies that day-to-day project management and coordination will be under the supervision of a Project Manager (the WCS Country Director), a National Project Coordinator (the WCS Country Manager) and a Finance and Admin Officer, based in WCS' office in Kabul, with sub-national work facilitated by a project task team based in Wakhan District. WCS is responsible through the Project Manager for assigning existing WCS senior staff experts and recruiting additional technical experts to assist with implementation of project activities. WCS is well experienced in Afghanistan, and specifically in Wakhan, and has worked under cooperation agreements and MOUs with both NEPA and MAIL since 2007. The project is designed to integrate GEF support within the pre-existing country programme of WCS.

A Project Board, composed of nominated representatives from NEPA (Chair), MAIL, WPA, WCS, UNDP, MRRD and Mol is to meet at least annually to ensure that the project is on track to achieving its *outcomes*, to contribute to and endorse workplans, budgets and annual reports, and to arbitrate any conflicts that might arise.

3.5 Project timing and milestones

The main milestones with actual and expected dates are given in Section 1.1. The dates of relevance now are that the MTR is due to be completed and approved by UNDP by 15 May 2021, and the current planned date for project completion is 19 July 2022. Proper annual reporting under the PIR system began, as required, in 2020 and the next PIR is due in August 2021.

3.6 Main stakeholders

The ProDoc (para 100/Table 5) lists the following stakeholders and defines their roles:

- WCS - supervision and technical oversight
- UNDP - project oversight and monitoring
- NEPA - assistance with IWT and HWC (*Outcome 1*) land-use planning and climate change (*Outcome 2*), and data management (*Outcome 3*).
- MAIL - as for NEPA
- MRRD - assistance with HWC (*Outcome 1*) and land-use planning and climate change (*Outcome 2*)
- Mol - assist with IWT assessment, monitoring and control (*Outcome 1*)
- WPA - help to identify, plan, implement, and monitor alternative livelihood activities, and be responsible for knowledge-sharing that improves the understanding of Snow Leopards to inform a sustainable landscape approach to conservation.

In addition, the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) (Prodoc Annex J) lists local communities in Wakhan District as vital stakeholders and direct beneficiaries of the project. The SEP foresees multi-stakeholder workshops and consultations at national and local levels including a broad range of representatives from government, donor organisations and civil society not yet identified in the plan.



Project stakeholders from Wakhan after interview with MTR consultant at WCS Office, Kabul. 28 Jan. 2021
(see Annex 8 page 1)

4. MTR Findings

4.1 Project Strategy

4.1.1 Project Design

The overall thrust of the Project is clearly defined and sound, with its emphasis on strengthening the conservation of the globally threatened Snow Leopard and its ecosystem in Afghanistan through a holistic landscape approach. The Prodoc contains much useful information and makes the case well for the need to take a holistic approach, recognizing that the key to success in Wakhan is the collaboration of local residents who live close to the Snow Leopard, and that national level actions are also required to control the trade in Snow Leopard parts. The design recognizes the benefits of taking a wider approach than a single species: so the trade component, for example, addresses illegal trade in all wild species, and the knowledge management component stresses the importance to humans of biodiversity conservation in general.

The *Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program* (GSLEP) unites the Snow Leopard range states, UN agencies, and NGOs in efforts to conserve the Snow Leopard. The design envisaged Afghanistan benefitting from standards and models developed under GSLEP. The strategic framework for the project is the six-year Afghanistan *National Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection Plan 2014-2020* (NSLEP).

The design is built upon the sound basis of work done over many years by WCS and partners on Snow Leopard conservation, protected area management and local institution building in Afghanistan and in particular in Wakhan. The ongoing programme of WCS Afghanistan provides an excellent backdrop to the project, with a lot of relevant research, training, community consultations and tangible support already achieved. However, the project design could have been improved by a more complete description of the work done to date and plans for the future. Reference to previous work on tree-planting, corrals, livestock vaccinations, wildlife and rangeland surveys for example, (all proposed in the new project), and tourism, marketing of local handicrafts, transboundary collaboration (e.g. Peace Park) and information exchange (not proposed specifically), and the very fact that WCS employs the community rangers, would have helped by placing the project clearly in the context of the programme. There is a general account of WCS' work in Afghanistan in support of its nomination as the Implementing Partner (Prodoc paras 170-172) but it would have been helpful to have some gap analysis under Expected Results (paras 59-93) referring to the whole picture and including more reference to what had been done and was being done already. The Prodoc puts good emphasis on the importance of careful data collection and assessment of circumstances to inform planning and action and here too more information on what has been done already, and the current state of knowledge, in both the national level IWT components and the Wakhan components would have helped to put the project in context and focus on the gaps. This would also have helped the MTR team in putting project progress and activity reports into overall context.

The design calls for incorporation into the Wakhan National Park Management Plan of measures to adapt to or mitigate impacts of changes in the climate on Snow Leopards and by extension their habitat and the livelihoods of the local people. It would have been good to give more prominence than this to the NP Management Plan in the design. There are several generic references to land-use and wildlife management plans but these are not specific and make the *outcomes* rather loosely formulated in places. Land-use planning is given big prominence but nowhere is it made clear what land-use planning actually consists of in Wakhan. The MTR found different interpretations of land-use planning in different interviewees (see Annex 11).

Key strengths and weaknesses of the design are summarized in Table 4, together with threats and examples of opportunities to address some of the weaknesses. Recommendations for taking up potential opportunities are outlined in Section 5.

Table 4. Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of project design

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>The overall project concept is simple and rational and built upon sound basis provided by earlier work of the Implementing Partner</p> <p>Strong technical expertise and clear duties specified for management of the project</p> <p>Wide local stakeholder involvement in preparation</p> <p>Much useful information - policy, institutional and biological/technical</p> <p>Ample provision for data collection and assessment preceding action under each <i>outcome</i>.</p> <p>Good link to Wakhan National Park Management Plan with reference to adaptation to impacts of climate change.</p> <p>Local representation (WPA) on the Project Board foreseen.</p> <p>Strong emphasis on participatory planning and a sensible focus on two CDC clusters for demonstrations of the work on land-use planning in accordance with specific zone management regimes under the Wakhan NP Management Plan</p> <p>Sound scientific approach to planning for climate change impacts</p>	<p>Dissemination of final project results and written <i>outputs</i> through wildlife conservation networks such as GSLEP and GWP is proposed but dialogue and regular information exchange would be preferable.</p> <p>Many of the SRF indicators are flawed in that they measure project <i>outputs</i> rather than impacts on expected <i>outcomes</i> (see Annexes 3 and 18); some are impractical, for example trying to determine absolute values as opposed to trends; and some are all or nothing measures that don't allow more nuanced assessment of progress.</p> <p>Project management costs are not clearly stated and no limits are set. So project pays a proportion¹⁷ of the salaries of around 50 Kabul and US based WCS personnel as International and National Consultants but there is no differentiation between technical and administrative.</p> <p>The design does not place the project clearly in the context of the ongoing WCS programme.</p> <p>No links with academia so misses the potential that involvement with academia can lead to sustainable results in centres of authoritative knowledge and expertise in conservation</p> <p>Some details not elaborated; such as what is meant by land-use planning; and a full explanation of why planting 1000 ha of forest will ultimately benefit Snow Leopards through whatever route</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Further partnership with the Afghanistan GEF Small Grants Programme to support development of sustainable livelihoods in or around Wakhan NP thus supplementing the work of the project and maintaining some continuity after the project ends</p> <p>Bring the Wakhan National Park Management Plan much more into focus as a framework on which to hang project activities and project results and to maintain impacts of the project after it ends</p> <p>The project is well placed to initiate more links with Afghan universities to provide scientific background to biodiversity and protected area policies, activities and technical tools in the country outside the WCS programme</p> <p>As a result of delayed start to project inception, unused project funds are sufficient to finance 12 month extension with no additional project management costs</p> <p>More interaction with GSLEP, SLN, GWP and seven other GEF Snow Leopard projects would improve synergies and lead to benefits in all directions</p>	<p>Long term future of project <i>outcomes</i> and <i>outputs</i> that rely on continued support and funding (eg Community Rangers, IWT Task Force, RMA and FMA management plans) depend for the time being on the ongoing WCS country programme. If and when the WCS Country Programme terminates sustainability is threatened</p>

4.1.1.1 Stakeholder engagement

A wide range of national and local stakeholders were consulted and they supported the development of the project (Prodoc Annex J p99) but the Prodoc (Annex J p103) Stakeholder Engagement Plan is light on detail.

4.1.1.2 Replication and sustainability

The project design includes several activities that could be profitably repeated elsewhere: indeed many project activities are themselves replication of activities piloted already under the WCS or other agency programmes (e.g. predator-proof corrals; fuelwood and orchard plantations; vaccination programmes; social and ecological surveys; ranger training; community-based participatory planning). The design puts a special emphasis on data collection and assessment to precede action, and this provides a great opportunity to really analyse effectiveness of the various approaches to Snow Leopard conservation made in the past as a tool to modifying methods and approaches under the project. The focus on two CDC clusters for land-use planning allows knowledge, best practices and lessons

learned from experience gained there to be available for dissemination throughout the Wakhan Valley and other areas of Afghanistan within both confirmed Snow Leopard range and areas that still have the potential to support Snow Leopards. There is scope to replicate the approach in Panjshir in particular.

The design foresaw long-term financing of activities at the community level through (a) integration of outcomes into the fabric of government so that capacity is increased and at the same time, funding is secured through government budgets, and (b) self-financing local initiatives, including use of member fees of the Wakhan Pamir Association. The design also foresaw integration of project activities into local communities with a special emphasis on participation of women. Close links with the GEF Global Wildlife Programme and the Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Partnership were seen as excellent ways to ensure that lessons learned become available to the wider conservation community regionally and globally. And engagement with local institutions was seen as the route to maintenance of project impact after termination. Surprisingly the project design did the great advantages for sustainability, or implementation through WCS as part of a longer and wider programme of activities: the project inherited the results of earlier projects, was set up to work in parallel with projects funded by other donors in the same field, and will pass on unfinished results to future projects under the programme. Spelling this out would have added strength to the design

The training proposed under the project does not include steps towards institutionalization of such training, or even discussion of the need for that. Much of the training under projects such as this one is one-off training that later requires another project to come along before it can be repeated. This design follows the same pattern: again, the difference is that the ongoing WCS programme is expected to continue to provide any necessary repeat training.

4.1.1.3 Cost-effectiveness

The Prodoc (paras 107-114) states the grounds upon which the selected GEF Alternative (Prodoc para 61) can be considered cost-effective. The arguments are for the most part good:

- Lessons learned from conservation initiatives in other Snow Leopard range states through GSLEP;
- Focus on incremental assistance to efforts of government, natural resource users, rural communities and partner institutions;
- Partnerships and collaboration with related projects both in Afghanistan leading to additional cofinancing support during project implementation
- Partnership and collaboration outside Afghanistan through the GWP;
- Benefits of the accumulated experience of WCS after 12 years of work in wildlife conservation in Afghanistan, including reduction in IWT
- Highly integrated approach involving multiple sectors, including MAIL, NEPA, MRRD, Mol, and aiming to ensure that activities area continued following project closure
- Engagement with local researchers, experts and institutions to increase research and leadership capacity for knowledge-sharing and increase in particular in-country expertise in climate modelling

Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector

The design provides for collaboration and partnerships with a number of rural development projects in Afghanistan, other GEF projects and the GWP. In particular the project builds on the GEF-UNDP project “Establishing integrated models for protected areas and their co-management in Afghanistan” that was at the time under implementation - by WCS - in Wakhan District. This project laid the foundation for the current project's work on strengthening PA management through initial capacity building on establishment and management of PAs.

Alignment is foreseen with four LDCF funded projects on rural livelihoods and adaptation to climate change, implemented by UNDP, UNEP and ICIMOD; two disaster preparedness projects funded by GIZ and DfID, an FAO-GEF project on community based forest management, a GEF-SGP project on ecotourism in Wakhan, a USAID funded project on development of enhanced planning and decision-making through sharing of geo-spatial information within the Himalaya/Hindu Kush region (particularly relevant for the current project in relation to informing land-use plans and climate models), and a JICA-UNDP funded project on livelihood improvement in Tajik-Afghan cross-border areas. This is a strong feature of the design but not developed sufficiently to indicate exactly how the various projects interrelate. It is surprising that only one of these projects (LITACA II) was listed as cofinance, that it is not closely related to the *outputs* and *outcomes* of the current project and that it is not referred to elsewhere in the Prodoc (see Section 4.3.5.2).

4.1.1.4 Risks and assumptions

The outline of risks to project implementation (Table 6 para 115 in the Prodoc) summarizes the relevant risks well and gives realistic and sensible mitigation measures. So far it appears that the probability assessments have been

accurate. Potential shortfalls in cross-sectoral cooperation, which is reflected in the assumptions of the SRF and the ThOC, is not included as a risk, and probably should have been. Global pandemics were not included, but this project is not alone in failing to think ahead to that extent.

The SESP was conducted assiduously. In the opinion of the MTR several questions in the SES Checklist were marked YES that need not have been (see this report Annex 20 for MTR comments on this). Some of the risks identified through the SESP were included in Table 6 as the last four risks in the Table. The UNDP Risk Log (Prodoc Annex H) does not match Table 6 and as a result omits risks derived from the SESP. As a result there are three different accounts of risks, and this has affected risk and safeguards monitoring during implementation (see Section 4.3.6)

4.1.1.5 Gender

Extensive provisions were made for an equitable approach to involving women in the project (Prodoc Table 6 para 103; Annex K pp 106-108), based on a comprehensive gender analysis undertaken during project preparation. The project aims to involve female government staff from partner institutions in all training activities, surveys and assessments. Wakhan women are culturally freer than women in many parts of the country to engage in decision making and work outside the home, and that provides a good start to build upon so that women become fully involved in planning, decision making and action in natural resource management activities under the project and beyond. The design also foresees increasing the engagement of women as rangers and ensuring that they have a meaningful role in active patrol duties. Separate outreach activities for women and men are proposed.

4.1.2 Results Framework/Logframe

The overall *objective/outcome* hierarchy of the SRF is logical and because the nature of the project is to strengthen, address, improve, reduce, decrease and enhance things that are inherently difficult to measure, it has obviously proved difficult to come up with sound indicators to track progress towards the *objective* and the *outcomes*. Many of the indicators and their targets are poorly formulated (see Annexes 3, 18) and it would have been useful to have a section on means of verification. Some of the indicators, rather than measuring progress towards the *outcome*, simply count up or tick off achievements on the list of planned project *outputs* and add assumptions that the *outputs* will lead to the *outcome*. For example, Indicator 4 will be met if certain numbers of tools are developed, and a monitoring system and a task force are established where it would have been preferable to use something that even as a proxy measure, reflects actual impact on reducing wildlife trade (even if that has to be detected in post project monitoring); and indicator 6a counts numbers of corrals with the proviso (assumption) that corrals will lead to zero predation¹⁸. Indicator 6b is sound but the SRF provides no details on how loss of livestock is to be measured. WCS have been measuring livestock predation regularly since 2006, albeit with different methods, and report that a new method has now been developed (see Annex 4) so this should be used and, for linking the two, it may be possible to rerun the earlier method. Indicator 1 also requires details on means of verification, and consideration should be given to defining an index of abundance involving rangers' patrol reports, or analysis for occurrence of livestock DNA through metabarcoding of Snow Leopard scats to continue post-project. WCS has monitored rangeland health through standard methods for years: this would make an excellent indicator at the objective level, and it is available and ready to use with historical data. Many indicators are rather undemanding, 11 and 12 in particular, and for those that rely on scores (2,3 and 5) insufficient attention is being given to consistency in the way the scorecards are completed. Some indicators are fine but they are poorly formulated, without definition of required criteria or description of means of verification.

A good indicator does not have to be an accurate measure of something: for monitoring purposes we do not need a method that tells us the exact number of Argali, for example, but a method that tells us whether there are more or fewer than the previous year. The best way to test for precision is to repeat the measurement repeatedly within a short period and look at the variation in the results. Although changes cannot be attributed precisely to the project this does not matter: they at least indicate which direction conservation is going in, and this is of immediate significance in planning - whether under the GEF project, the WCS programme, or the wider context¹⁹.

The lists of key assumptions in both the original (Prodoc pp 60-63) and revised (Inception Workshop Minutes) SRF and the ThOC (Prodoc para 55) include redundant assumptions. For example, the first indicator in the SRF is framed to measure the impact of project activities on the population sizes of key species in Wakhan, including Snow Leopards. So it is a circular argument for the accompanying assumption to be that the project activities are successful ("Project activities lead to a reduction in retaliatory killing of Snow Leopardsreduced hunting reduced transmission of diseases...". There are valid assumptions too, including those about continuing level of political will and institutional cooperation in national and provincial government; the accuracy of the capacity development scorecard in capturing real changes in capacity; continuity of staff in their positions in key institutions: official

government approval of the WNP Management Plan. Some sensible changes to the SRF were made at inception but they did not address these basic problems. Better indicators - indicators that do not mirror *outputs* so closely - are really important for project management and it is not too late to make adjustments to the SRF, particularly as this could benefit the overall programme (see Annex 3). The ThOC could have been improved, in the opinion of the MTR, by starting at the Pre-project State and the Drivers of that State (see Annex 19 for an example).

4.2 Progress Towards Results

4.2.1 Progress towards *Objective* and *Outcomes*

Annex 2 gives the justification for the *Objective* and *Outcome* ratings in the requested format and they are summarized in Table 1 above. The SRF indicators do not fully capture progress towards *objective* and *outcomes*: many measure process - or progress with certain *outputs* - and others have proved difficult to deploy satisfactorily (see Section 4.1.2 and Annex 3). So the ratings given at MTR include an element of assessment against the indicators and an element of qualitative judgement using common sense to assess how much more needs to be done to achieve the progress expected in the Prodoc.

Progress has been good considering the short time that the project has been operational, but the ratings given by the MTR must also reflect the fact that the project had a late start, and that, on top of that, its single full year of operation was slowed by the Covid-19 pandemic (see Section 4.3). Many of the expected results depend on participatory processes with communities and institutions that take time to achieve, and full incorporation of climate change impacts into land-use planning awaits the completion of the Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool which has been commissioned under the project. The ratings given for progress towards results are Moderately Satisfactory simply because there will be significant shortcomings in expected achievements and impacts at the original closing date of July 2022.

Annex 2 also gives project management's assessment of progress at the time of the PIR (August 2020) (rated as Moderately Satisfactory) and at the MTR (January 2021). The PIR and MTR assessments by project management are informative but wordy and demonstrate the difficulties of reporting impact against an inadequate suite of indicators.

The project is implemented as part of WCS' ongoing country programme alongside other projects funded by, for example, the European Union, Harvey Bookman Foundation, Fondation Segré, GEF-UNEP, and the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund (CEPF²⁰) (see Section 4.3.5). When reporting progress under individual projects it is inherently difficult for WCS to a) separate out specific achievements that are attributable to a single project, b) refer to all related activities carried out with parallel funding, that have a bearing on the specific activity being reported on and c) make clear assessments of the impacts of activities within a specific project when those activities were started before the project and will continue post project. So the MTR made a point of asking for details of all related activities and not only the activities charged specifically to the GEF project. For example, workshops held for women in Wakhan in 2019, before fund disbursement under the project, are included in Annex 5 because they provide good context for the second round of such workshops. The MTR team asked about consideration of tourism and marketing of handicrafts as potential factors to include in the land-use planning under *Outcome* 2. It emerged that WCS is addressing these under different funding (including talks with Burberry on certification of sheep and goat wool), so it is important that the programme unites projects under common *outputs*.

The MTR also became aware that interviews and questionnaire responses sometimes related to WCS activities under different funding, or even the projects and programmes of other donors. So the MTR took these into account when reviewing responses (e.g. the questionnaire responses summarized in Annex 11).

4.2.1.1 *Objective*

There has been slow but steady progress towards the *Objective* and the rating given by the MTR is **Moderately Satisfactory** (Table 1 and Annex 2). Technical capacity is high but progress has been slower than expected as a result of the delay to the start of implementation (2020 was the first full year of project activities) and the fact that 2020 activities were slowed by COVID-19 restrictions on travel and gatherings (see above). The indicator targets may be met but most are rather undemanding and the indicators themselves do not capture the key to the *objective*, which is "a holistic and sustainable landscape approach addressing existing and emerging threats". Achievement of the *objective* requires more time than is now available following the slow start of the project. The project has carried out a considerable number of discrete activities²¹ efficiently and professionally and these are valuable, but the participatory land-use planning in particular, the coordination of all project activities into a landscape approach with multiple stakeholders, and the operationalization of the IWT Task Force will not be completed by the original closing

date of July 2022. So the MS rating in this case indicates in effect that to compensate for time lost, an extension is required to provide the implementation time allocated in the Prodoc.

4.2.1.2 Outcome 1

"*Strengthened conservation of Snow Leopards through reduced illegal wildlife trade and decreased incidences of human–wildlife conflict*" is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory** (Table 1 and Annex 2), reflecting the amount of work remaining to be done in a short time, as opposed to the quality of the work done already (see above 4.2.1 para 2).

Good progress has been made on formation of an Illegal Wildlife Trade Task Force comprising 16 governmental and non-governmental organizations, and plans are being made for establishment by the project of a Rapid Response Team under this Task Force (see Annex 2), although exactly what its duties would be has not been settled yet. The MTR was told that the IWT Task Force might possibly becoming involved in a rehabilitation centre for problem Snow Leopards. Policy is clearly required on this, as in general, taking Snow Leopards into captivity is detrimental to conservation. Captive holding centres and rehabilitation centres, if they are to be established at all, have to be meticulously planned and managed. It is easy to be diverted from dealing with the problems in the wild to dealing with problems of maintaining animal care at the highest level, public opinions (on both sides), the expectation in many that the best place for "problem" animals is in captivity, and the real difficulties faced when the conversation turns to release into the wild.

In parallel with regional consultations on revisions to the NBSAP under a different project, market surveys of IWT, including in restaurants, souvenir shops and traditional medicine outlets, have been completed in a selected urban centre in seven out of eight regions scheduled for consultation²². Each regional consultation meeting is attended by about 100 participants from key provincial government agencies, regional municipal governments, law enforcement officials, universities and research institutes, civil society organizations, community representatives, and the private sector. A full three day programme with one day devoted to the NBSAP, one to IWT and one to Women and Youth in conservation is held in each centre. Additional information is being gathered through questionnaires from about 100 participants across each region. Costs are shared with other projects under the overall WCS programme. A full assessment framework will be published after review by the IWT Task Force. Eventually a briefing report with detailed recommendations for all partners on decreasing wildlife trade activities will be published.

Training for Border Police with specific relevance to IWT was carried out in both Wakhan and Ishkashim Districts in July 2020. Border police themselves, usually stationed for relatively short periods in the area, are suspected of being involved in poaching. As they wear the same make of boots that the rangers wear, it was decided to change the standard issue boots worn by rangers in order to make it easier to find out what is going on. Training continued too for community and government rangers (see Section 3.1.3 and 4.1.1) and new mobile phone software was introduced to help with recording and analysing observations made on patrol. The MTR were told that paper records are also kept and this seems wise in remote areas where support for IT is low. A protocol for monitoring levels of livestock killing by predators has been drafted and, after minor adjustments, will be deployed in the field during 2021 as part of a long-term monitoring programme (see also under *Outcome 2* below). Ranger training has been done for many years under the WCS overall programme and now includes training for both the community rangers employed under the project and the government rangers employed by MAIL. SMART apps for recording patrol data are envisaged as eventually enabling the data to be available immediately for consideration in National Park management decision-making. It would be helpful to have an updated capacity or training needs assessment done soon (see Section 4.2.1.5) looking systematically at the various competences required of rangers in a National Park. MTR understand that 46 rangers (including current and former rangers) have been trained in all (22 basic level, 20 SMART, and 4 Elite)²³.

WCS has been building and strengthening communal and household corrals to protect livestock against predators in Wakhan since 2010 and this has been linked to local elimination of retaliatory killing. The project aimed to increase the number of communal corrals that are resistant to Snow Leopards and wolves from about 35 to 47²⁴, and has now completed 41. A new design has been publicized and a standard materials and tool kit defined. In addition to organizing and paying for the construction (3) and repair (4) of seven communal corrals, materials were purchased for additional communal corrals, agreements were made with villagers on their corrals' maintenance and upkeep, and the project supplied door or window frames and wire netting for the strengthening of 198 individual household corrals, bringing the total to about 1,100. As long as these corrals are well maintained they save livestock from predation by Snow Leopards and Wolves²⁵. If they are not maintained well, or villagers remove wire netting for other use, for example, Snow Leopards can enter and get trapped inside, and this can lead to mass killing of livestock. This happened once during 2020 and happily the villagers did not kill or injure the Snow Leopard but called the authorities and released it instead. In one of the project reports²⁶ the challenge of keeping villagers to their

commitments is mentioned, and it is recommended that a community mobilizer is hired to work and communicate with local people in support of project activities in the Pamirs. The former Wakhan Governor reported that a national NGO is also planning to build corrals in Wakhan and requested WCS to coordinate on site selection. Another NGO is proposing to begin a livestock insurance programme, following on a recent GEF Small Grants Project and an earlier WCS initiative, both of which failed to establish a workable system. The project also considers the problem of predators killing livestock while out grazing - and ways to reduce that.

The term Human Wildlife Conflict is perhaps no longer a useful term to use in describing problems arising from crop-raiding or livestock predation. By patient engagement in Wakhan WCS has been successful in encouraging a less adversarial attitude towards Snow Leopards and other wild species (see also under *Outcome 3*), and the animals do not have adversarial attitudes towards humans²⁷. Guns are a problem however. Some local people possess illegal guns and engage in hunting wildlife for profit but most such hunting is carried out by armed police and border guards who have been posted to Wakhan in increasing numbers and in more places. As the project team stressed to the MTR, this is something that has to be addressed at the centre in addition to locally. In November 2020 10 ibex, including young ones, were shot in Wakhan and photos of the carcasses became viral on social media. The project is working on community engagement on the one hand, and law enforcement on the other, and it is hoped that a combination of peer pressure, honest policing and representations in Kabul will help to reduce the frequency of such incidents. It is difficult to eliminate such incidents altogether, and it is even more difficult when people in authority are either poaching themselves or providing support and cover to others to do it for them. This is no longer an emerging threat but a major conservation issue that should be addressed urgently by the government. A delegation from the project-initiated IWT Taskforce is scheduled to meet soon with the responsible in Kabul to enlist support in eliminating this behaviour.

A decision was made to vaccinate more livestock against Peste de Petits Ruminants (PPR) in 2020. 39,000 sheep and goats were vaccinated in 40 villages in collaboration with the General Directorate of Livestock and Animal Health at MAIL, and with the assistance of six Wakhan para-veterinarians. This followed vaccination of 58,000 sheep and goats between 2017 and 2019 under the WCS programme²⁸. Further vaccinations of young animals will be required to make this effective in reducing the chance of livestock infecting wild ungulates. The cost was shared with a direct grant²⁹ from the European Union under the WCS programme (Annex 14). Vaccination against PPR will be continued in 2021, targeting sheep and goats born after 2020. It is not planned to vaccinate livestock against any other diseases at present, unless they threaten wild species and the integrity of the Wakhan ecosystem. However, a survey of canine distemper in the big guard dogs of Wakhan was carried out to assess the prevalence of Canine Distemper Virus (CDV). Although no cases of canine distemper have been found in wild Snow Leopards captive animals are known to be susceptible to the disease so it is prudent to start to assess the risk. Forty percent (24/58) of dogs tested positive (with 14/58 negative and 20/58 inconclusive) so although the risk of infecting Snow Leopards is still unknown, the high seroprevalence indicates that further investigation would be wise. First the project plans to retest the samples with a more accurate laboratory test. In some countries feral dogs take more livestock than Snow Leopards and even attack Snow Leopards themselves^{30,31} but in Afghanistan this is not reported to be a big problem at present. A radiotelemetry study is planned to learn more about the movements of guard dogs in relation to those of yaks and other livestock.

4.2.1.3 Outcome 2

"Improved land use planning across critical Snow Leopard ecosystems to reduce the impacts of forest loss, land degradation and climate change " is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory** (Table 1 and Annex 2), reflecting the amount of work remaining to be done in a short time, as opposed to the quality of the work done already (see above 4.2.1 para 2).

A programme of discrete ecological surveys is being carried out - many of them repeated in standard manner and therefore of great importance for monitoring trends and impacts of conservation initiatives. In 2020 a livestock survey in Big Pamir, a Marco Polo Sheep survey in Big Pamir, a Long-tailed Marmot survey in Big Pamir and Little Pamir and a rangeland biomass, productivity and soil health survey (113 plots) in Big Pamir and Little Pamir. Training of rangers to collect information on patrol and organize it effectively using apps on their phones has continued in Wakhan and it is planned to expand this training to community rangers in neighbouring Ishkashim District in 2021.

Camera trapping in the mountains will be resumed after a winter break and will continue to provide information on Snow Leopard numbers and movements. Computer aided pattern recognition software is helping to identify individual Snow Leopards from their coat patterns. Eve Bohnett, currently at the University of San Diego, works on this under the project, and the results indicate that population size of Snow Leopards may be substantially higher than the estimated baseline in the SRF. There is potential to collect images from Tajikistan, China and Pakistan and find out

more about movements between countries, and software has been developed that will allow Snow Leopard images from camera traps across the range to be analysed securely³². Combined with recapture analysis the artificial intelligence approach provides an opportunity to establish a standard index of population size for monitoring purposes, and GSLEP and SLN provide a perfect platform on which to coordinate its application internationally^{33,34}.

A "Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool" for the whole Panj Amu basin is being developed under agreements with Columbia University's Center for Climate Systems Research (CSSR) involving as adjunct analyst a former WCS Afghanistan GIS Manager now at the University of Florida. A subcontract on hydrological aspects began in February 2021 with Researches Organization for Development (ROD) which involves research staff and students in Afghanistan and Switzerland. The project has high expectations regarding incorporation of the results of these analyses into land-use planning and the Wakhan NP Management Plan. The resolution of the climate risk information and impact models will be much higher than in past models for the region - about 1km per pixel compared with 15-30km previously. A small amount of training is foreseen under the subcontract, for WCS staff, government officials and national universities. The MTR team was told by several informants that they felt links with Afghan national institutions were insufficient and should be strengthened for sustainability and best performance. WCS³⁵ aims to institutionalize management of the model through capacity development within NEPA to make recommendations for policy in biodiversity conservation, protected areas, water, natural resources, land-use management, disaster risk reduction and renewable energy, and to work towards their uptake. Numbers of livestock are said to be increasing, but productivity is low, reflected in milk production figures for example. Diverting the interest of residents from livestock to other livelihood options is one of the avenues the project is pursuing.

Participatory forest and rangeland management planning and the tree planting components are also cost-shared with the EU under the direct grant to improve participatory management and efficiency of rangelands and watersheds, which has similar expected results to the GEF project (see also under *Outcome 1*). Workshops in 13 villages or village clusters on land-use planning led to preparation of 9 draft Rangeland Management Plans, and 4 draft Forest Management Plans are also under preparation. WCS, with the support of the Wakhan District Governor and the Wakhan Agriculture Manager had already set up 10 Rangeland Management Associations (RMA) in 2019, and four Forest Management Associations (FMA) are now being set up. The 13 villages have either an RMA or a FMA but not both. Planning for marketing of agricultural produce and potential involvement in tourism is not included in the plans at present. The RMPs contain much useful information, and management measures are sound. If implemented they would provide clear benefits to Snow Leopards and the Snow Leopard ecosystem. However, the participatory process seems short, funding for implementation in the long term is unsure, and compliance mechanisms are unconvincing. Some interlocutors were concerned that the level of genuine participatory decision making and "ownership" falls short of that required to ensure sustainable results, and that RMAs and FMAs are still dependent on donor-funded projects for their survival. The challenge of working on such plans in such remote areas was described in another project report³⁶, and, as above under *Outcome 1* (Section 4.2.1.2), a recommendation was made to hire and train a community mobilizer to work closely with RMAs.

Land-use planning as in Outcome 2 of the ProDoc is understood by the project team and stakeholders in various ways: overall spatial planning including infrastructure on the one hand, and local village resource use planning on the other hand. Links to overall spatial planning and zonation under the WNP Management Plan (WNPMP) are not specified in the ProDoc and questions remain about how individual plans will be integrated under that plan. Plans are being drawn up under the Belt and Road Initiative for a road through Wakhan to the Chinese border. When the plans are available the environmental implications of this road, in particular for Snow Leopards and their ecosystem, could be assessed under this *outcome*.

Planting in Wakhan of 90ha of willow cuttings in 13 villages, and poplar and fruit trees in another 7 ha in 10 villages adds to 200ha of previous plantings by WCS under different funding since 2006 and to 2,000 ha planted by RUPANI³⁷ under WFP funding^{38,39}, and to recent and ongoing planting operations under GIZ⁴⁰ (implemented by RUPANI) and AKF⁴¹ funding. A further 200 ha are planned under the GEF project and 1,050 ha under the EU direct grant (Annex 14). Such plantations have many benefits for local people. The main justification for the additional GEF project planting in the Prodoc (originally 1000ha, reduced to 300ha at the Inception Workshop) was the potential contribution of these plantations to reducing collection for fuel of highland shrubs such as *Artemisia* spp. and *Krascheninnikovia lanata*. It was surprising to the MTR that none of our interlocutors could provide or come back to us with an estimate of the potential yield of fuel-wood/ha from the willow plantations to set against the estimated 25-37 kg/family/day fuelwood consumption in Wakhan. As some stands are now mature it should be possible to estimate the yield now.

There is much enthusiasm for tree-planting in Afghanistan, where large areas of forest have been destroyed in many areas, although discussions with elders, visitors, and examination of early Landsat imageries and photographs indicate that Wakhan is not significantly more forested than in the 1960's. A lot of rural development programmes are engaged in tree-planting, often in ways that do not maximise biodiversity benefits. WCS has experimented with planting densities in Wakhan and has been developing improved protocols. This is complicated by the standard ways in which payment is made to villagers for planting work: they are paid per willow or sea-buckthorn cutting that survives to 6 months and as WCS' improved protocols include substantially reduced planting density this has affected pay rates. The project reports⁴² that commitment of local people to their responsibilities to manage the plantations has proved difficult to maintain in some places, and that better coordination is required with the other agencies engaged in tree planting. The Wakhan Governor was asked to set a standard pay rate for NGOs to follow in tree-planting programmes as the pay rates per sapling also differed. The Governor also indicated that there was too much tree planting capacity for the riverine land in Wakhan and that he would arrange for Rupani to move their willow and poplar planting operations to the neighbouring districts of Ishkashim and Zebak. The Project Board recently approved expansion of the project's own tree-planting operations to those districts.

Mass tree planting operations around the world have often faltered^{43,44}. In some places natural regeneration through simply fencing off of former forest areas and protection from livestock grazing, with some light planting to supplement species has proved promising, although that is more difficult on alluvial fans such as in Wakhan. WCS is well aware of the problems and is attempting to find the right approach, using native species, adequate irrigation that does not take water from crops, and monitoring survival. Survival of the willow cuttings planted under the WCS programme in 2019, for example, was between 50% and 60% at one year, which is considered low. This is attributed by the project to a late start (May), and some of the sites selected being too saline. Higher survival rates are reported for the 2020 cuttings following changes in planting protocols.

The project is in a good position to be able to assess impacts on biodiversity - whether direct or mediated through socio-economic impacts - of all tree planting operations in Wakhan, not limited to those being done under the project. The project could usefully work with other agencies in Wakhan and neighbouring districts to modify the way that planting is carried out, as biodiversity benefits might be captured with only slight modifications to methodology. The MTR heard that biodiversity is "not on the table" in the planning of some other donors' afforestation work. The growing emphasis on consideration of climate change, risks reducing consideration given to biodiversity; and it is here that WCS has an important opportunity to influence planting protocols of other agencies.

4.2.1.4 Outcome 3

"Enhanced knowledge management through awareness raising, monitoring and evaluation" is rated as **Satisfactory** (Table 1 and Annex 2). Much remains to be done, particularly on disseminating the results, but completion of this *outcome* depends a lot on completion of the other *outcomes*.

Public presentations on the occasions of anniversaries such as Climate Change Week, International Snow Leopard Day, and World Environment Day were held in some provincial capitals and in Kabul. Between 110 and 150 people including representatives from government, academia and local residents attended, and brochures, posters and other items were distributed. Costs were shared with the EU direct grant for Climate Change Week and, in Panjshir, a grant from Harvey Bookman (Annex 1b). The WCS Environmental Education Program (EEP) held events in Wakhan itself, including a specific month-long campaign to inform women and children in 40 villages of Wakhan. Over 1,200 women and 200 children attended the meetings in November and December 2020. The original plan was to hold a meeting in each of 42 Community Development Council seats. Two had to be canceled in the end, because of snow, and generator malfunctions disrupted the presentations in some villages and this illustrates the difficulties faced by the team in traveling and operating in the district. This was a repeat of the same programme held in 2018, before the project began, and in 2019 just after it started. Posters, brochures and stickers were distributed and, in 2020, large numbers of the manual for construction of predator-proof corrals (see above under *Outcome 1* para 4). This activity, repeated each year, includes a basic questionnaire which records an increase from year to year in the proportion of women who reply that Snow Leopards are useful, although it is not clear in what way they consider them as beneficial to their livelihoods. Under the current programme the EEP team hold either one or two meetings per day, including travel between villages, so there is not much time for two-way communication⁴⁵. The project might consider longer engagements in selected villages to explore ideas more thoroughly through dialogue. This takes a lot of time but the evidence shows that it is usually worth it.

It is difficult to learn online about the GEF Snow Leopard Project in Afghanistan. The WCS country website⁴⁶ is not maintained, there is no project website, the UNDP Afghanistan website⁴⁷ describes only the 2016-2018 PPG phase, the entry on the GSLEP⁴⁸ website is very out of date. GSLEP would appreciate faster exchange of information and

there would be benefits both ways. A webinar⁴⁹ during which two of the WCS team presented on Snow Leopards is a good sign of progress here. Project staff are contributing to a substantially revised edition of the authoritative volume on Snow Leopards: T. McCarthy and D. Mallon, Eds., *Snow Leopards: Biodiversity of the World: Conservation from Genes to Landscapes* originally published in 2016.

WCS assists NEPA and MAIL with a range of activities adjunct to the project's *objectives*, including reports to CITES for example, and Snow Leopard conservation has been covered in these reports. Under the project communication strategy there is also support to NEPA and other government agencies to prepare and send delegates to Conferences of the Parties (CoP) of relevant international treaties. WCS works in neighbouring countries so the project has insight into transboundary issues affecting Snow Leopards, and was also consulted by NEPA on a recent MOU with Tajikistan on the environment.

4.2.1.5 Training

Formal training under the project appears to be well done. However, it consists mainly of one-off courses or exercises led by project staff or consultants. This pattern will leave little behind in terms of institutionalized training courses that can be repeated. In the case of this project WCS will outlive the project so in effect the question of ultimate institutionalization is being postponed. The MTR was told that in the case of Afghanistan one-off training is often required because of such rapid changes in government personnel. WCS has provided grants to local NGOs under a different project and has been training personnel of those institutions.

No training needs or other capacity needs assessments (TNA, CNA) have been done under the project. Training in the topics covered under the project, now updated to include use of specific *apps* has been done for many years under the WCS overall programme, and it would be helpful to have an updated capacity or training needs assessment done soon, to work out the priorities looking at all the various skills⁵⁰ that will be required in the management of the Wakhan National Park as the Management Plan begins to be implemented.

The MTR team was unable to assess adequately the extent of on-the-job training, but feels that this is an area that should be expanded. One of the most striking lasting effects of three to five year GEF biodiversity projects such as this one is the number of project employees, volunteers, grantees, or interns who are still active years later in conservation in country whether in government, academia or civil society organizations. The WCS country team itself is strong, enthusiastic and committed and many of its members have been in the team for years, some from the very start in 2006. The more people that can be engaged to work alongside this talented team the better. The MTR noted some reluctance to involve university students and university staff, although two interns were about to be engaged in the IWT work. This kind of involvement through early career practical training can have great benefits. International organizations such as WCS face administrative problems in engagement of permanent and temporary staff in places like Wakhan, but nevertheless it is something that should be pursued⁵¹.

4.2.1.6 Public information and involvement

The project's draft communication strategy⁵² focuses on public events marking anniversaries such as World Environment Day, World Wildlife Day, the annual Agricultural Fair, International Snow Leopard Day, World Earth Day, World Migratory Birds Day, International Biodiversity Day, and Climate Change week, and large numbers of posters, stickers, leaflets and other items such as pens. This is good for visibility - as the strategy states - and it must also help to spread the message about conservation and climate change risks but it is inadequate as a guide to communication under this complex project. The project would benefit from a communication strategy and plans with wider scope, preceded by a full and focused communication needs analysis - message, target audience, method of communication, cost, overall effectiveness through whatever path, and monitoring of effectiveness. Assessment of impact is complicated by political considerations of access and influence. Such a strategy would of course have to be incorporated, for reasons of efficiency, within the overall WCS programme. The MTR team noted a prevalence of short events in the project activity reports. The team also noted several recommendations in Wakhan activity reports for longer engagement by community facilitators who would have the time to listen, observe, learn and engage in dialogue more than on short visits.

4.2.1.7 Global and regional benefits

The project is contributing through each of its three outcomes to reducing the illegal trade in wildlife and supporting the sustainable management of natural ecosystems in the Mountains of Central Asia Biodiversity Hotspot⁵³. Implementation of the WNP Management Plan will contribute to reducing land and forest degradation in this Hotspot. Under Outcome 3 knowledge is being shared through GSLEP and GWP and this is enhancing collaboration on conservation of the globally threatened (VU). WCS works in other Snow Leopard range states, so placing the project with WCS for implementation facilitates regional collaboration and exchange of lessons learned.

4.2.2 Remaining barriers to achieving the project *objective*

The project is making good progress in addressing the six barriers identified in the Prodoc (see above Section 3.1.3). They still remain of course, and that is to be expected, considering the delays to project implementation. Additional barriers to achieving maximum impact in project implementation include a low level of trust and reputation with a few institutions; slow progress in finalization and launching of the Wakhan National Park Management Plan; and absence of technical project staff from Wakhan in winter.

4.2.2.1 Stakeholder relationships

Of the national level government agencies, the project works mainly with NEPA and MAIL although the work on IWT is involving a wider group of agencies. The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) is represented on the Project Board and has expressed a concern that the Project Board is not involving all members effectively in project planning. This needs attending to, particularly as much of the community-based work in Wakhan is with CDCs, who report to MRRD. The Ministry of Urban Development and Land (MUDL) is responsible for high level land-use planning in the country so it should be included in the conversation about land-use planning under the project, at least to settle the legal position.

At the local level it is possible to build up good relationships with the long-term residents, but it is often those who come from outside the valley and live there for short periods, whose behaviour must be changed if conservation is to succeed. People from other districts and even other provinces (Takhar) regularly bring their livestock to Wakhan and it is difficult to engage with everyone. Sadly some border police officers and members of the armed forces have been implicated in hunting, and this has been identified by WCS as a major conservation problem that has to be addressed both at the central level and the local level (see Section 4.2.1.2).

The MTR team heard concerns from university staff members in Kabul and Badakhshan that they should be contributing more to the project, and, in some cases felt deliberately excluded. On the other hand, we heard from WCS that involvement of university staff and students on field trips can be problematic. There are concerns about behaviour on field trips, and also administrative concerns about payments to universities. But that could be said of anywhere in the world: not all involvement with university staff on field projects goes perfectly, and there are always administrative hurdles to jump in any project. These are concerns that should be addressed of course, but universities around the world are important centres for science-based conservation and increased joint activities and links between this project and universities in Afghanistan would provide an opportunity for the gradual rise of additional professional and enthusiastic conservationists outside WCS. The Project Manager also holds a post at the University of Kabul so the project is in an ideal position to seek ways to address the various administrative and legal problems identified. WCS has an active Internship Programme that involves students and recent graduates. Interns are already engaged or about to be engaged on the IWT work under the project (see Section 4.2.1.5), and there is promise of gaining a better level of trust with the academic institutions involved.

4.2.2.2 Staff deployment

Many project activities rely on short duration missions to Wakhan from Kabul, and although some project staff, including all the community rangers, live in Wakhan and Ishkashim year-round, the majority of technical staff (see Section 4.3.1) spend the winter in Kabul, so many activities in Wakhan simply stop over winter. It is possible to work productively in Wakhan in winter on some aspects of the project - indeed one NGO told us that it is the best time to get engagement with the local villagers and local government officials, and to establish good dialogue on rural development programmes and plans. Talking with local people patiently, first asking them how they themselves want to plan their land use for example, under *Outcome 2*, and then including biodiversity conservation *objectives* as relationships are formed and the project is able to explain the benefits, is well known to take more time than is available in short visits⁵⁴. The same applies to engagement with local government officials and the PAC who will be key to launching of the Management Plan. WCS leadership told us that it is not cost-effective to station staff there in winter and that they use a lot of fuelwood. However, they agreed that it is important and that they would look at stationing more staff there in winter 2021-2022 to work with communities and government on village level and National Park level planning. The MTR team is aware that security considerations in running a project in Afghanistan are paramount, and that project management has to weigh up the risks of engaging interns in remote areas. However, it is still something that should be considered.

Genuine and fully representative participation is required - transparent processes and decision-making structures, frequent community updates, and slow and steady building of trust, confidence and self-reliance. WCS have been involved in this for years, but there is more that can be done to make sure that the public believe that they are in control and will take responsibility for the future of the Snow Leopard. Many people in Wakhan are overwhelmed by

meeting basic survival needs, so getting people's genuine engagement in the *objectives* is not straightforward. The project is already engaging with youth and women, and is well aware of the complications of "elite capture"⁵⁵, or the diversion of resources directed towards conservation by elite persons or groups of local residents who on the one hand could frustrate the *objectives* of conservation, but on the other hand, if well managed (through prolonged engagement for example), can be pivotal in helping to resolve barriers to achieving project objectives because they wield a lot of influence and can become "champions" of conservation.

4.2.2.3 *The long unfinished journey of the Wakhan National Park Management Plan*

The Wakhan MP is very valuable document that does not appear to be getting the attention it warrants in project implementation. It has been in preparation for over 7 years, has recently gained local government approval, and is now awaiting final signature at central government level. Until it is launched its effectiveness as the backdrop to all project activities is lessened, and this creates a barrier to its role in the project and in Wakhan as a whole. The MP is already in need of revision - early sections in particular are out of date. A revision is planned for 2022, but work should start on that in 2021. However, there is still much that can be done in the meantime and it can provide a focus as a key document to which people refer routinely in Wakhan. The project has lobbied successfully for the selection of PAC members in a transparent and democratic way. The next step, already being discussed, is to develop the detailed implementation or development plans that should determine the future of the whole Wakhan Valley. The working links between village level plans, WNPMP management zones and their regimes, tourism development plans, road construction, power lines from Tajikistan, marketing plans for Wakhan goods, and species conservation plans for example, are yet to be established through the recently formed Protected Area Committee (PAC). Under the project's landscape approach there should be overall gains, but there will be trade-offs and there will be losers as well as winners, among humans and among other species too. The basic approach is to identify the needs of Snow Leopards and the needs and impacts of humans; to analyse systematically where overlaps and conflicts occur and are likely to develop; and to plan and carry out actions (and policy changes if necessary) so that land uses provide for the needs of both people and wild species. This is a complex and time-consuming process and should be one of the areas for project involvement from 2021 onwards.

4.3 *Project Implementation and Adaptive Management*

The four-year project was CEO endorsed in March 2018 and the Project Document was signed in July 2018. Disagreements between UNDP and government over the salaries to be paid to WCS project staff, which should presumably have been settled during the PPG phase, lasted over a year, and the Inception Workshop took place only in October 2019. Although a few project activities started at that time project funds were not officially treated as spent until accounts for the initial advance were submitted in the first quarter of 2020. Almost immediately after its delayed inception the project ran into the difficulties and further delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that brought restrictions on travel and meetings and cost the lives and long-term health of so many people. The project dealt well with these difficulties, and since activities were allowed to start up again a lot has been achieved by a dedicated and able team. Under these circumstances Project Implementation and Adaptive Management has been given the rating **Satisfactory (S)** (see Table 1, and Annex 15).

4.3.1 Project Management Unit

Under the NGO Implementation Modality (see above Section 3.4) WCS provides implementation of the project through its programme staff and its Kabul office. The project document specified a Project Manager, Project Coordinator, Finance and Admin Officer, and other technical and administrative staff, as required. However, the Project Total Budget and Workplan included zero staff costs under Project Management so all staff costs are charged against *outcomes* under the international and national consultant lines whether they be administrative or technical staff or community rangers. The system is that WCS divide their programme staff costs between projects: currently between EU and GEF projects. The WCS staff (85) shared between the EU and the GEF projects in 2021 are as follows:

- Policy and Public Relations Manager - *also GEF Project Manager* (1)
- Operations and Logistics (5)
- Finance and reporting (7 – incl. 2 in New York)
- Education and Outreach (4)
- Veterinary (1)
- Biologist (1 in New York)
- Policy and Public Relations Senior Officer (1)
- Natural Resources Management (3)
- GIS Officer(1)
- Climate Change (1)
- Driver (4)
- Cleaner (2)

Cook (2)
Security (16)
Field team Leader (1)
Rangers (31 – all in Wakhan)

International consultants to be hired (TOR not yet available):

1. SMART Expert to integrate IWT into SMART System
2. Climate and Habitat Modelling Expert (WCS International staff member)
3. Carrying capacity analyst for Wakhan National Park
4. Camera trap image analyst and Snow Leopard population estimate focusing on artificial intelligence and matching learning (Extension of earlier subcontract)

This is a lot of people, but WCS Afghanistan employ more staff than are charged to the project - the Country Director, and the Conservation Science Manager for example, and they both contribute much to project implementation. GEF projects normally have a 5% cap on project management costs and this is so low that it is standard, and necessary, practice to distribute management costs over the *outputs*, so the MTR understand entirely how the current situation has arisen. However, staff costs have changed from year to year, with most pay rates increasing by at least 35% from 2020 to 2021, so it is not possible to calculate a standard management cost or overhead for the project and this complicates annual project work planning.

Although in the Prodoc the expatriate WCS Country Director was to be the Project Manager, he actually oversees the whole programme. He is very familiar with the project and was the source of much of our information on project implementation during the MTR, but he is not involved in day-to-day management. That has been delegated to the Afghan WCS Policy and Public Relations Manager, whose main duties are in reporting on project results to donors and government, recruitment and team management, and the development of new external partnerships to support WCS Afghanistan program development. This arrangement has the advantage of building Afghan capacity in project management and ensuring good support and back-stopping in the same office. There is a strong operational team including the Operations Director with particular responsibilities for liaison with central government partners, a Field Projects Manager, Badakhshan Team Leader and administrative and finance officers and accountants both in Kabul and in New York.

The Conservation Science Manager's main duties are in technical coordination of the parallel EU climate project (Annex 14), with other responsibilities in team management and WCS Afghanistan programme development. The MTR noted that there was considerable overlap in activities such that the Conservation Science Manager was also involved in Snow Leopard (GEF) project activities and outreach⁵⁶. Technical coordination and support for the GEF project is provided by the Regional Technical Adviser from WCS International who visits Afghanistan periodically, and by members of the WCS Afghanistan team such as the Country Director and the Senior Ecologist.

4.3.2 Role of UNDP

UNDP, as the GEF agency, holds overall accountability and responsibility for the delivery of results through oversight and monitoring by the Programme Officer of the Livelihoods and Resilience Unit. UNDP CO played a major role during the three-month Inception Phase leading up to the October 2019 Inception Workshop and take the lead in coordinating with NEPA on Project Board Meetings. The MTR team was unable to get a clear picture of why a disagreement over salaries and other matters took over a year to resolve, and understand that UNDP were faced with a difficult arbitration role. UNDP organizes the Project Board meetings and is involved in other project meetings and consultations with WCS. The UNDP CO M&E Focal Point coordinated this MTR. Adaptive management and flexibility are required, and expected by GEF, to reach project outcomes, and UNDP CO understands this well. The MTR urges an impact based, as opposed to an output based, approach to adaptive management, and this applies to project design just as much as, if not more than, to project implementation.

UNDP CO has provided smooth financial services including review of the advance requests under the standard quarterly advance system, the Annual Work Plan, and Quarterly and Annual Reports. The UNDP Deputy Country Representative attended the Project Board meeting in September 2020 and plans to attend the 2021 Project Board meeting to be held in Wakhan in the summer. UNDP are responsible for arranging an annual audit (see below Section 4.3.6.4) but no audit has been done or scheduled to date and there were no financial spot checks in 2020.

The MTR find that the method used to cover an administrative overhead (Section 4.3.1) under the project makes planning more than a year ahead difficult as the charges under the project personnel budget lines can change greatly from year to year. UNDP, however, have accepted this system. It is difficult, as the services of the whole WCS family are much appreciated, but there is room for UNDP to request more clarity in exactly how decisions are made on consultants (in the project budget this covers all project staff whether technical or administrative) to be paid

through the project budget, and for more justification to be provided, probably in terms of mini-TOR at the very least, for "New Hire" technical consultants to be engaged during the year.

UNDP CO and the UNDP RTA in Bangkok have ensured that reporting is undertaken in line with GEF requirements, specifically in relation to the annual PIR which was filed as required.

UNDP are expected to facilitate project learning, exchange and outreach within the GEF family that address Snow Leopard conservation. UNDP Ecosystems and Biodiversity produced an excellent photo essay, Silent Roar⁵⁷, on those nine UNDP-GEF projects across the Snow Leopard Range. The MTR note that there has been relatively little formal contact between the Afghanistan project and the other eight, and that a good opportunity is being missed.

UNDP CO consider, in all their projects (including those funded by GEF) how well they also fulfil key aspects of UNDP's own agency development mission, including contributions towards higher level development changes, impacts on the poor, marginalized and disadvantaged, gender equality and empowerment, instances of south-south cooperation. This project by its very nature addresses all these aspects as biodiversity and the environment is at the heart of sustainable economic development. Lessons learned and examples of innovative solutions to identified problems will be taken on by UNDP and applied in project design and implementation in the future.

It is understood that signature of the WNP MP is awaited at the highest level of government. UNDP, as one of the lead stakeholders of the project has the status necessary to bring agency heads together at high level and has an opportunity to lobby for expeditious approval of the document.

4.3.3 Project Board

The Project Board was formed as described (see Section 3.4) and is chaired by NEPA, with WCS as secretary to the Board. No revisions to membership or TOR were made at the Inception Workshop and the MTR understands that official membership stands as in the Prodoc⁵⁸. Membership is defined by institution and it is left up to each institution to decide who represents them. Two of the seven institutions have so far been represented at meetings by women, and this reflects the extent to which woman hold high office in Afghanistan.

Three meetings have been held and the MTR saw minutes of the last meeting in September 2020. WPA and MoJ were not able to attend either the Inception Workshop meetings or the 2020 meetings. MoJ was invited and attended the 2020 meeting. It is proposed to hold the next Board meeting in Wakhan, so WPA will be able to attend.

UNDP CO report that it is difficult to arrange Project Board meetings. The Steering Committee meeting for the EU project is comprised of almost the same members, and there may be mutual benefit in combining Board meetings of these two closely related projects at least for planning purposes.

The MTR reviewed the one set of minutes available (for the October 2020 meeting). The main action points were a decision to extend the project activities out of Wakhan into neighbouring districts, possibilities to increase spending under the project before the end of the financial year, changes to carbon sequestration targets linked to additional tree planting under the EU direct grant, and arrangements for a virtual meeting with WCS' consultancy arm, Conservation Solutions, to answer questions about the Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool.

So far, the engagement of the Project Board as a specific entity has been rather limited, and this is partly because it is made up mainly of agencies that work with the project on a routine basis. MRRD is the only agency represented that does not have routine involvement in project activities, and they feel that they do not enjoy the genuine participation in project planning and decision making that should come with representation on the Board.

4.3.4 Work planning

The original total budget and workplan⁵⁹ in the Prodoc (Section IX) was revised during the Inception Phase and annual work plans were produced for 2019 (final part) and 2020. The level of detail in these standard annual workplans is insufficient to get a full picture of what is proposed because the activities are not dealt with separately but lumped together under each, rather broad, *outcome*, and the list of activities given under each *outcome* is in any case incomplete. The AWP keeps to the wording of the Prodoc activities although it would be more informative in most cases to be more specific. The only way that a reviewer in UNDP CO for example can find out from the document any detail about what is proposed is to look at the "Human Resources" tab of the AWP where some unit costs are provided. The detail under the PP tab differs from year to year with more provided in 2020 than in 2021: and is not possible to see from either AWP for example how many ha of trees will be planted, or how many workshops are planned.

Quarterly advance requests are made based on the AWP and supported by proof of expenditure and quarterly progress reports. There is plenty of detail available on expenditure but it is not user friendly for a clear view of exactly what is being done or the details of what is planned for the following quarter. Excessive time preparing documents takes resources away from the work itself, but a clear plan is absolutely necessary both for implementation and for oversight by UNDP, so a reasonable balance has to be struck. At present it is not clear from the AWP what precisely will be done in each quarter.

Work plans for individual projects are more complicated to produce when different projects with overlapping targets and activities are taking place under the same programme. It would be clearer probably to present a programme work plan and to indicate for individual donors what activities are covered by their grant (see Section 5.1.1).

4.3.4.1 Adaptive approach

The project is following the Prodoc (and changes introduced during Inception) and yet is keeping a good flexible approach to planning. However, it would be better if quarterly work plans listed actual activities (specific surveys, training events, consultations etc) rather than listing the generic Prodoc activities in the AWP as a formality (see above under 4.3.4).

In questionnaire returns, reports, and interviews the MTR noted planning for increased spending to speed up "delivery"⁶⁰, which, when applied systematically, goes against the core principles of *objective*-oriented planning. There may be good reasons to speed up expenditure, but the extent to which responses focused on speeding up delivery, even referring to it as the "burn rate" gave the impression that the alternative of going slowly and steadily realizing that results take time, was not being given adequate consideration.

4.3.5 Finance and cofinance

4.3.5.1 Finance

The project budget covers a period of four years under UNDP rules and regulations for NGO implementation. The total cost of the project is US\$8,656,460. This is financed through a GEF Trust Fund grant of US\$ 2,704,862, cash co-financing of US\$250,000, and US\$5,701,598 in parallel, or in-kind co-financing. The cash cofinance covers the cost of project activities alongside GEF funds. In-kind finance is background parallel support for infrastructure, strengthened institutions and capacity building in planning at provincial level.

Table 5 Total GEF budget and annual expenditures

Budgets and expenditure	US\$
Four year budget (Prodoc)	2,954,862
Spent 2018	NIL
Spent 2019 (Inception Phase)	NIL *
Spent 2020	594,544 **
So expenditure to 1 January 2021	594,544 (20% of 4 yr budget)
Budgeted 2021	1,414,100
Budgeted 2022 (Q1 to Q2)	946,218
<i>Funds that remained as of 1/1/2021***</i>	2,360,318 (80% of total budget)

*US\$ 129,151 advance in Q4 but mainly spent in 2020 **includes 129,151 advance for Q4 2019 ***some spent by now

As of 1 January 2020 there was still over US\$ 2.3m (Table 5) in the project budget yet only 18 months remaining under the project. The Prodoc allocated the fourth year of the project solely to terminal evaluation, so if the same approach was taken now that would leave only six months remaining for project implementation. The period allowed for terminal evaluation can of course be cut to 3 or 4 months but even so that still leaves only about a year and a half under current project timing in which to spend 75% of the project funds. It is unsurprising⁶¹ that 2019/2020

expenditure (US\$594,544) was only 55% of that expected (1,083,953 in 2020 AWP): and it is to the project's credit that it achieved as much as it did under the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2021 AWP (see Table 5) is costed at US\$ 1,414,100, leaving US\$ 946,218 for the first two quarters of 2022,. Without a project extension at least three months of that would have to be set aside for winding down and evaluation. It is unrealistic and potentially wasteful of funds to attempt to catch up on delivery by drawing up a work plan that would disburse funds over the final 15 months at 1.9 times the annual rate planned in the Prodoc, and that is without any allowance for further disruption caused by security restrictions and the COVID-19 pandemic. This proposed rate of disbursement would be well over three times the proven rate of expenditure since Inception.

The project is in one way in an excellent position because there are plenty of funds remaining for achievement of results in line with the *objective* and *outcomes*. The MTR (see Section 4.3.4) detected pressure to speed up activities and financial progress. It is important, however, that steps are taken to ensure technical quality and effectiveness. Pursuing financial progress at the expense of important progress towards the *outcomes* is poor use of funds. The obvious solution is an extension of the duration of the project. In discussions with the MTR our interlocutors were concerned that an extension would add operational costs and make them a higher proportion of the project budget. However, no additional operational costs would be required to extend the project to the end of 2022, with terminal evaluation, as in the Prodoc, following after that.

4.3.5.2 Cofinance

The co-financing letters (Prodoc Annex Q)⁶² confirm commitments to provide the cofinance listed in Section 1.1. The US\$250,000 cash pledged for project operations by UNDP Afghanistan (TRAC) demonstrates real commitment on behalf of UNDP, and the MAIL pledge of \$4,501,598 appears to be core funding contributing directly to the GEF project. It is clear that MAIL is making considerable in-kind contributions to the project's *objective* and *outcomes*, not least in its employment of rangers for Wakhan. The US\$1,200,000 pledged in-kind by UNDP is part of joint funding with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) of the project "Livelihood Improvement in Tajik-Afghan Cross-border Areas - 2 (LITACA II)" for the period 2018- 2020. That project does not appear to contribute sufficiently to the Snow Leopard project *objective* and *outcomes* to be counted as cofinance⁶³, and the project sites are distant from Wakhan. It is closing down in June 2021 and will be succeeded by LITACA III (2021-2025).

Annex 1 provides data on project cofinance in three parts. Annex 1a is the standard GEF cofinancing template. The MTR have concluded that certain investment from other donors during project implementation qualifies as cofinance because it is contributing directly to project objectives. Annex 1a therefore includes three such sources from which investment has been mobilized in projects implemented by WCS in parallel with and under the same overall programme. Annex 1c gives the justification for inclusion of this *de facto* cofinance in terms of direct contribution to the project *objective* and *outcomes*. It includes the \$11,000,000 project implemented by WCS with EU funding, which shares activities with the project (see Annex 14). Annex 1c also lists additional cofinance for which funds are guaranteed but have not yet been fully mobilized on common *objectives* and *outcomes*. Some of these other projects were active or envisaged at the time of project preparation and could have been included as cofinance commitments at the time of project design. Annex 1b lists the cofinance confirmed in the ProDoc. It includes the UNDP in-kind commitment of US\$1,200,000 which is not included in Annex 1a simply because no funds have been applied to the project *outcomes* and *objective*. Although the UNDP/MRRD- implemented LITACA II project is not sufficiently relevant to be counted as cofinance, that is not important from the point of view of project implementation, and no action is required. The MTR note this for the benefit of project formulation and design in the future, and for follow-up by UNDP CO with UNDP-GEF if necessary.

4.3.6 Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems and reporting

The mandatory GEF M&E requirements (Prodoc para 155, Table 7) are listed in Annex 17 with MTR comments. Monitoring takes place constantly - it is a fundamental part of project activities and the scientific basis of the various project investigations and management actions. Interesting and valuable results are given in the text of project reports. The team produce informative quarterly reports that are not mandated under the monitoring protocol. However, reporting against the standard monitoring formats such as the SRF and the Tracking Tools tends to be repetitive and unconvincing. These tools are being used according to the letter rather than the spirit of monitoring. Selection of indicators at the design stage have limited the usefulness of the SRF in assessing progress towards objective and outcomes (see Section 4.1.2). The UNDP Risk Log has been completed regularly but SESP risks were not adequately identified, reviewed and dealt with in terms of management response and incorporation into the Risk Log at the design stage (see Section 4.1.1.4).

All project reports routinely disaggregate data by gender. The 2020 Project Implementation Review (see below 4.3.6.1) reported fully, with data, on progress in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

No audit has been conducted so far, and an audit is overdue. Budget allocation is sufficient: personnel resources should be applied to thinking more about the ways that the formal monitoring tools can be made to support project performance rather than be seen as an administrative chore.

4.3.6.1 Project Implementation Review

The 2020 PIR was submitted on time and the rating given by all parties is Moderately Satisfactory (MS), largely because of the delays to project implementation rather than concern about the actual quality of the work being done. The format of the PIR relies heavily on the indicator table to collect information on project progress. As some of the indicators are flawed, and others have not been measured since inception (see above 4.1.2 and Annex 3), the reports of progress are not focused on the important questions. The PIR is frustrating to read as there is too much repetition in Section G of what has already been presented in the Cumulative Progress column of Section C.

The MTR found the PIR recommendations sound. Some have been followed up on well. However proper attention to the SESP risks (see below, 4.3.6.5) is still outstanding. The PIR confounds the UNDP Risk Log with the SESP (PIR Section I).

4.3.6.2 Tracking Tools

The following Tracking Tools and Scorecard were completed in August 2017 at submission, and updated for the MTR in December 2020 and they are attached as Annex 21:

- GEF BD1 Tracking Tool: Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) for Wakhan National Park
- Capacity Development (CD) Assessment Scorecard for Wakhan Pamir Association (related solely to IWT)
- Capacity Development (CD) Assessment Scorecard for NEPA and MAIL combined (related solely to IWT)

These are used in the list of indicators in the SRF. The CD baseline scores in the SRF (Indicator 5) are totally different from those in the Scorecard (see Annex 3). The METT uses just two internal indicators (Data Sheets 2, 3 and 5) and they do not correspond with those in the revised SRF. The MTR found some of the responses, even at inception, overgenerous. These monitoring tools should be completed according to a standard, consultative process. Results can be affected by who does the assessments and how. No information is available about this on the CD Scorecards. The METT shows that the Project Manager took part in the baseline assessment, but more information should be provided on the process. These scorecards would be more helpful if a group is established that will dedicate time to the task and be available for repeat assessments later in the project and post project.

4.3.6.3 Reporting

Internal reporting has been good: both quarterly and annual reports have been circulated and they give detailed accounts of the various project activities. These are brief and to the point and backed up with annexes. The updated UNDP Risk Log is included in each quarterly report.

The MTR asked for reports of individual consultants, but these were not available. WCS mainly engages its international staff as consultants or uses its consultancy wing, Conservation Solutions. The MTR wanted to see TOR of consultants proposed to be engaged during 2021 but these were still under development.

4.3.6.4 Audit

The project has not been audited yet although the Prodoc specifies that it should be done annually, and there is a budget allocated for this⁶⁴ (see Prodoc paras 145-146 and Table 7). MTR interlocutors gave differing reasons as to why an audit had not been done, and the MTR was told by one that the project was not even on the list for an audit in 2021.

4.3.6.5. Risk management

The quarterly updates to the UNDP Risk Log (see above Section 4.3.6.3) are well written and reflect the risks realistically. Critical risk management and social and environmental standard were reported on in the 2020 PIR. An additional risk (Risk 7 COVID-19 pandemic is a risk to WCS staff, partners and beneficiaries with potential negative impact on project implementation) was added in the 2020 PIR. WCS responded robustly to COVID risks and were able to continue with project work albeit with changes to the activity schedule. Risk ratings applied to the risks in the UNDP Risk Log are for the most part well judged.

The risks identified under the SESP, however, were never comprehensively incorporated with other identified risks into the UNDP Risk Log, so some SESP risks have gone unmonitored. Many of the missing SESP risks are being

maintained as *low* simply on the grounds that the project is a conservation project, but it should be acknowledged that even conservation projects can have deleterious environmental impacts. A recent Desk Review of Safeguards has raised questions about risk management that should have been asked at the project design stage (see Section 4.1.1.4 and Annex 20). The problem lies not in assessment of the risks in the UNDP Risk Log, but in the management of the risks identified through the SESP.

4.3.7 Stakeholder engagement

Local stakeholder engagement was a strong point of the process of project design and development but was not given prominence in the official list of stakeholders in the Prodoc (see above Sections 3.6 and 4.1) However, it is clear that the project engages well with local stakeholders in designing its activities, a process that was made difficult during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic when travel was restricted. WCS staff are in contact with a wide range of stakeholders outside the those listed in the Prodoc. The MTR heard quite forceful opinions about low level of engagement by the project with universities, however, and also to a certain extent with MRRD. However difficult this may be to address and whether the opinions are justified or not, this does need addressing by the project. Stakeholder engagement cannot be based simply on representation on the Project Board or invitations to speak at project workshops. There are inherent difficulties in getting people with the necessary authority in each agency to meet on a sufficiently regular basis to reach consensus on policy, strategy and action plans and as mentioned above (Section 4.3.3) there may be merit in combining Project Boards of different projects under the WCS Programme, particularly because they have large overlaps in memberships. WPA is listed as a Project Board member but was not represented at the PB meetings in Kabul. The backdrop to this project is the WNP Management Plan and the project could make a huge impact on the progress and visibility given to this important plan if it focused more on coordinated stakeholder involvement for the MP, beginning with the need for a coordinated process for bringing it up to date (see below 5.2.6, 5.2.11). This will be difficult because the MP is viewed by some as ready to implement, but in fact still requires changes.

4.3.8 Communications

Public awareness and training activities have been planned and implemented in every quarter. Both are important. Good work has been done, but value can be added quite easily. So far, no overall project communication and training plans based on needs assessment have been prepared, and there is inadequate overall direction to communications as a whole. The MTR noted that design of communication tools is done jointly with WCS International to bring in examples of global best practice. The current communication plan is very limited in its scope (see above Section 4.2.1.6) and the MTR is aware that many of the project activities, for example in schools in Wakhan do not appear in the plan. It would be good practice, however, to do as the project document suggests and develop a comprehensive plan⁶⁵ that includes sophisticated means for measuring impact. The effectiveness of posters has been assumed (as it often is in such projects), but there may be better approaches. It is important to consider international as well as local experience.

4.3.9 Gender

There is good and growing representation of both sexes in the management and implementation of the project and the MTR saw no evidence of discrimination on the basis of sex. Gender issues have been given high prominence in staffing, programming and reporting, and frequently came up in discussions with the MTR team. Afghanistan is a particularly difficult place at present for women to become established professionally, and WCS is making great efforts to assist both in general and on the individual level, accommodating the needs of female staff to work reduced office hours for security reasons for example.

As was reported in the 2020 PIR, The Environmental Education Programme is largely led by WCS female staff, including the Team Leader and two EEP Field Officers, and female teachers are involved in the delivery of the EEP at the community level. The aim is to change social norms, values and power structures to benefit women, and contribute to the empowerment of women and girls within the project target areas. The project has made special efforts to employ female staff despite the difficulties in contemporary Afghanistan, in order to advance gender equity within the project team. The project reports that having female staff encourages more local women to participate in the capacity building and awareness raising efforts.

4.4 Sustainability

The MTR rating given for Sustainability (see Table 1) is **Moderately Likely (ML)**. A lot of momentum has been built up under the wider WCS programme. The assessment of sustainability is complicated because the WCS programme in effect provides a "sustainability cushion". Although sustainability will have been improved under the project, thought should be given to a strategy to reduce risks of dependence on project technical and financial support once the

project closes. This will require an assessment of the probability of funding for conservation being maintained nationally, including through fiscal means, and internationally, including through donations and possibly a Trust Fund.

4.4.1 Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability

The project involves the formation and/or the further development of bodies such as the IWT Task Force for tackling illegal trade in wildlife, the RMAs and FMAs for rangeland and forest planning, and the Protected Area Committee for management of the Wakhan NP. The project also works with groups such as the Community Ranger team and the Wakhan Pamir Association both of which were formed under the WCS programme and both of which are important for the sustainability of project *outcomes*. Further support to these institutions - whether technical or financial - is likely to be required post project. However, implementation under a long-established and well-regarded NGO programme that is set to continue well beyond the end of the project makes it easier to assess sustainability positively. All these bodies need a clear path to institutionalization so that they can continue without further project or WCS input. Future work under the WCS programme is reasonably expected to complete work started under the project, and the WPA is a good example of successful establishment of a new institution. The Afghanistan Wildlife Executive Committee (see Annex 11, Q14) on the other hand, was established jointly by NEPA and MAIL with support of WCS under a donor-funded project in 2008 and started off well, but it is not yet properly integrated into the Natural Heritage Division of NEPA.

Training for protected area management and biodiversity conservation is being carried out under the project, and this is generally one-off training or repeated training done by WCS staff. In order to ensure sustainability of project results, it is important that required recurrent training be established locally so that it can be repeated for new staff, so training will eventually require institutionalization. Training courses under the project should ideally be established in Afghan institutions to ensure that they can be repeated for new trainees into the future (see Section 4.2.1.5). Universities could provide in-service or pre-service training as standard post-graduate training if a concerted effort was made to involve them. A solid body of conservation expertise is often found in universities: in Afghanistan it is found in WCS, and it would be wise to try to spread this out a bit. WCS involves many people in its programme, has built itself up as a conservation centre in Afghanistan staffed almost entirely with Afghans and is keen to pursue new talent and to enthuse young students interested in conservation work, some of whom might take it up long term. Having a well-established NGO with such excellent resources is of course wonderful. However, the annual running costs of WCS are substantial and are at present met from charitable donations and official development assistance. In the long run a strategy to ensure more institutional diversity and a wider funding base would be more secure.

NEPA with the support of the World Bank has done a rapid institutional capacity assessment and the MTR were informed that this is now the basis for a programme to establish an in-house research and training institution in NEPA. This would be an excellent moment to ensure that biodiversity conservation training equivalent to that done until now under the project and the wider WCS programme is provided for in that system. Technical support to the National Agriculture Education College in reviewing curricula has been provided by WCS but the MTR has not seen details of this. Contributions could also be made to "PAWS" training modules developed by GSLEP⁶⁶. A Natural Resources Management Center of Excellence, which may be launched by MAIL, is another platform to consider. Linking WCS research results with national biodiversity databases is also important.

One of the risks facing the WNP is that the Hunting Prevention Law is still not clear. Lists of the species in each protection schedule, and the penalties for killing them and/or trading them are not yet specified in the requisite regulations. In one interpretation hunting without license is illegal but selling and buying of hunted animals or birds are still lawful. The MTR heard from one interlocutor that completion of the legislative process is absolutely vital, and at present limits prosecutions. Unless NEPA, together with MoJ get this work done, the work of the rangers is undermined. The project is in a good position to facilitate progress on this, under *Outcome 1*, and is already working on it.

The ProDoc includes much on assessment and data collection but nothing on how data is stored in national or subnational databases. In practice WCS is working with Kabul University to develop an archive for publications and grey literature.

The future of the WNP depends on the continued support of the District Government - particularly as the whole of the District has been declared as a Protected Area. The balancing of national priorities, local government priorities, and the priorities of the local people will be a difficult act. Formalization of the consideration of biodiversity in policy and practice in land use planning and decision making, energy provision (it is expected that Wakhan may, within a few years be on the Tajikistan electricity grid), tourism, agriculture and infrastructure development⁶⁷ is going to be difficult. The project can at least bring clarity to the issues using the WNP Management Plan as the backdrop. Without

this there will be increased risks to sustainability of project - and programme - results.

4.4.2 Financial and socio-economic risks to sustainability

The project is providing salaries to the community rangers. After the end of the project the WCS programme will take this on, covering the cost from other funding, so this is not an immediate risk to sustainability. However, as discussed above (Section 4.4.1) the project should develop a strategy to create more independence and facilitate in any way it can the absorption of the community ranger force into the institutional fabric of the NP under MAIL.

The WNP Management Plan is expected to get its final approval imminently but will require immediate review and the preparation of an implementation or development (business) plan that will include issues of financial viability alongside the biodiversity benefits. There is a risk that local income will not be sufficient to cover costs, in which case potential sources of national or international funding to plug the gap will have to be found. Even a number of small grants can provide important funds, but this is a fragile way to operate and a steady budget is much preferable. There is a risk, even at the modest levels required that funding for the NP management will fall short. Little has been done yet on financial sustainability under the project and there does not appear to be a good assessment of the funds available and being used, and whether increased inter-agency and stakeholder coordination could improve performance and increase cost-effectiveness. There are numerous opportunities to develop incentives for local communities to take action themselves, and the project is working to develop these.

4.4.3 Environmental and social risks to sustainability

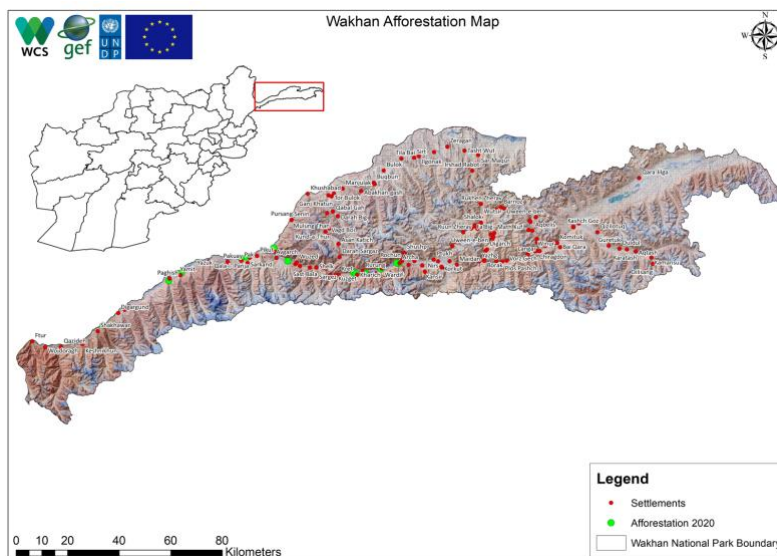
4.4.3.1 Internal risks

There are risks to the environment and biodiversity with every project activity. WCS is already taking care to monitor the impacts of its tree-planting, but environmental and social assessment is needed for every intervention, including each additional tree plot (see Section 5.2.2). An ecosystem-based approach should be taken.

Some interventions carried out under conservation and development projects may appear to be beneficial both environmentally and socially, but after time can prove counterproductive. Social changes, for example, can feed back through either empowerment (or unintentional disempowerment) to development of new livelihoods that may have their own, novel risks to biodiversity. The project requires good screening of all proposed activities and robust post-implementation monitoring of completed actions, and this should be done for the combined WCS programme, rather than singling out what is done, in the narrow sense of funding source, by the project itself.

4.4.3.2 External risks

The road being planned along the Wakhan corridor all the way to China is outside the control of the project and if, as is likely, it is built it will create risks to the NP through improved access, ribbon development leading to increased poaching⁶⁸. The project can be active already in consultation with local government and people and assistance with making the case for either cancelation, postponement, design and route changes, or mitigation of the effects.



Map of Wakhan District (same boundaries as Wakhan NP) in isolation

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

IMPACTS AND SUSTAINABILITY: THE GEF PROJECT AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE WCS PROGRAMME

5.1.1 Exciting project as a constituent of a wider programme

The Snow Leopard fascinates people far beyond its homeland and the Wakhi people have traditionally regarded it almost as a sacred animal living in the pure high places which are the realms of spiritual beings or *mergichan*⁶⁹. Hard to see, rarely interacting with people, powerful, beautiful, potentially dangerous, and famous around the world, the Snow Leopard has the potential to motivate people to act together to protect them. WCS and its partners in government and civil society has been setting the stage for people in Afghanistan to do just this since 2006. The more that people understand the life of the Snow Leopard the better the chances that government and the general public alike will understand the reasons for the ecosystem-wide conservation measures that have to be taken to protect the Snow Leopard. The work is wide-ranging; addressing the illegal trade in wildlife, the ecological damage caused by people desperate for firewood, and the sometimes devastating losses suffered by herders whose livestock are killed by Snow Leopards. Backing this up with science and monitoring is a key part of the WCS approach and the work on Snow Leopard biology never fails to fascinate as well as inform management. The GEF project is one part of this wider programme. Recent work applying artificial intelligence to individual identification of Snow Leopards captured on camera traps through computer aided analysis of coat patterns should help with estimating trends in Snow Leopard population size and movement patterns; and through collaboration with Snow Leopard experts in neighbouring countries (see Section 4.2.1.3) it also has the potential to enthuse and promote national and regional pride.

5.1.2 Monitoring and reporting

The project design is technically strong and it is being implemented by a strong technical team on the sound basis of earlier work under the WCS country programme (Table 4). WCS runs a range of different projects under its country programme and this provides significant synergies for the GEF project, but it can also make it difficult to understand the impacts of individual projects on overarching *objectives*.

Individual activities are implemented well but assessment and reporting of impacts on the project *objective* and *outcomes* could be improved. Some indicators are poorly formulated to monitor impact as they focus on counting *outputs* as opposed to impacts on the *outcome* (see Section 4.1.2 and Annex 3). Project management explained this as a result of the project being part of the wider programme and that *outcome* impacts are measured at programme level and *outputs* at project level. Reporting is typically against *output* indicators⁷⁰. This is unsatisfactory and is easily remedied by also reporting programme impacts to the project and showing the project much more clearly in the context of the wider programme (see Section 5.2).

When the MTR enquired about components that appeared to be missing from the activities we were often told that these were taken care of under parallel funding. So that made slowed down progress in gaining a full picture of the various interventions. For example, the MTR asked why no training needs assessments were carried out, and were informed that TNAs will be carried out under CEPF funding in 2021. This is too late for the project, but inclusion of that fact in project reporting would at least put the project in context and show that TNAs were not forgotten.

5.1.3 The programme vs the project time frame and its effects on sustainability

Policy and institutional changes typically require a programme time frame as opposed to the typical three to five year project time frame. For example, WCS has had notable success in establishing the WPA an independent organization through careful attention to the law and government procedures over many years. The project aims to establish the IWT Task Force within the project time frame, and all efforts should be made to complete the work, but placing the project within an ongoing programme changes the conversation about project sustainability. On the other hand, some *outputs* are inherited by the project. The Wakhan National Park Management Plan is one example: the project may well see the final approval at the highest level of this document that has been under development for the last seven years. The community ranger force is inherited by the GEF project and the project is contributing to its eventual assimilation into the government fabric alongside the government WNP rangers. Whether that assimilation can be achieved within the time frame of the project remains to be seen.

5.1.4 Impact assessment of GEF project, WCS programme and parallel interventions by partners

The project reviews and adjusts methodology constantly through periodic assessments. Recently, for example, the project has been adjusting the planting density of willow cuttings in its biomass plantations (see 4.2.1.3). Critical review of the operational success of this kind of project activity at the *output* level (eg ha of surviving trees) is important. More is required, however, on screening and reviewing the direct and indirect impacts at the higher level

of the *objective* and *outcomes* to determine a) whether each individual activity *per se* is effective or not in the longer term, and b) whether individual activities are likely to have - or have had - unplanned and unforeseen side-effects. The SESP has not been used to develop environmental or social risk management procedures, and this is a gap in implementation (see sections 4.1.1.4., 4.4.3., and 4.3.6.5).

Tree planting is carried out by a number of different agencies and has been for many years, even in Wakhan (see Section 4.2.1.3) and those other agencies do not all have biodiversity conservation, let alone Snow Leopard conservation, as a criterion in their planning. For tree planting there is plenty of history to evaluate - it is not a matter of looking at the most recent project intervention. Tree planting is having a major impact on the lowland ecology and economy and constant assessment of the cumulative impacts of all interventions would be valuable. Tree planting is a popular activity of NGOs in Wakhan - the MTR was told that there was in effect competition for sites on the alluvial sites along the main rivers. Cost-sharing commitments for tree-planting and corral building, such that real monetary or non-monetary contributions are made by villagers appear rather light, and in some cases tree-planting is viewed as provision of employment. Alfalfa planting was reported in the questionnaire (see Annex 11) although it is actually implemented by WCS under the EU grant. Presumably this is to provide fodder in the lowlands and reduce or delay upland grazing. As for all interventions, an assessment of the wider environmental impacts of this would be useful: it has been blamed for creating more bare land and for encouraging livestock ownership based solely on alfalfa thus increasing livestock numbers. Working with nationally funded or donor funded rural development programmes to "green" their activities. An assessment of the wider impacts of could be very effective, and cost-effective too, in providing benefits for the Snow Leopard ecosystem.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT, COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

5.1.5 Stakeholder engagement and collaboration

A wide range of local stakeholders were consulted during project development (ProDoc pp162-170). The list of stakeholders to be engaged in project implementation, however, is limited, with academia poorly represented for example (see Section 3.6). Nevertheless, close relationships between WCS and many national, local government and community stakeholders have enhanced project progress. WCS assists NEPA in particular with a range of activities adjunct to the project's *objectives* (see Section 4.2.1.4), but some government agencies and some universities reported feeling excluded to some extent from decision making or participation (see Section 4.2.2). It is of course impossible to satisfy everyone in a project like this, but it is also good to listen and reach out. Local stakeholder WPA has not been present at Project Board meetings but the next PB meeting is scheduled to take place in Wakhan in summer 2021 and WPA will be able to attend. At the local level it is possible to build up good relationships with the long-term residents, but more difficult to engage with the outsiders who either work in the district or graze their livestock there.

5.1.6 Building up expertise

WCS has the greatest concentration of wildlife conservation professionals in Afghanistan and is regarded as a centre of excellence in wildlife conservation. Although those people will be in Afghanistan even if WCS leaves, it would be good to do anything to encourage additional professional and enthusiastic conservationists outside WCS, including through actions that contribute even in small ways to building up other centres of wildlife conservation capability in the country. The project is planning to engage interns on a number of its activities. Difficulties in working together with university staff in the field have been reported to the MTR team, and vice versa, solutions should be possible with perseverance. WCS staff lecture at universities and university staff lecture at project events, but it is agreed that further collaboration is desirable.

5.1.7 Role of women

Gender representation in project activities has been equitable, and WCS staff working on the project include several women, including one recently appointed to work on gender issues.

5.1.8 Value of prolonged engagement at local level

Many project activities rely on short duration missions to Wakhan from Kabul, and although some project staff, including all the community rangers, live in Wakhan and Ishkashim year-round, the majority of technical staff (see Section 4.3.1) spend the winter in Kabul, so many activities in Wakhan simply stop over winter. For some purposes this works well. However, talking with local people patiently, first asking them how they themselves want to plan their land use for example, under *Outcome 2*, and then including biodiversity conservation *objectives* as relationships are formed and the project is able to explain the benefits, is well known to take more time than is available in short visits⁷¹ and winter is a good time to achieve this (Section 4.2.2.2). The same applies to engagement with local government officials and the PAC who will be key to launching of the Management Plan. There would be advantages for land-use and protected area planning in posting technical staff in Wakhan over winter, because local residents are at

home more. Although many of the WCS technical staff are well known in Wakhan and have worked there for years, there would still be advantages in recruiting (or posting existing) technical staff to be based in Wakhan.

5.1.9 The importance of dialogue

The project's communication strategy (see Section 4.2.1.4) focuses on public events marking anniversaries such as World Environment Day, International Snow Leopard Day and Climate Change week, school environmental education in Wakhan, and distribution of posters, stickers and leaflets. The project also runs an annual month-long campaign to inform women and children in all 42 CDCs of Wakhan (see Section 4.2.1.4). The presentations and workshops in cities and in Wakhan have been well-received by government and local residents but a communication strategy and plan with wider scope is required - perhaps catering for more prolonged interactions and increased two-way communication as is already being practiced under the annual engagement of women workshops in Wakhan.

5.1.10 Dissemination of results and learning from other Snow Leopard projects

Informative project reports are prepared both quarterly and annually but often the wider picture is not clear because the reporting sticks strictly to activities for which project funds were utilized and sometimes this raises more questions than it answers. The real value will be in thematic reports from the wider programme and in lessons learned and exchanges of information on the internet and internationally about the wider programme.

The WCS country website⁷² is not kept up to date at present; there is no project website; the UNDP website⁷³ describes only the 2016-2018 PPG phase; and the entry on the GSLEP⁷⁴ website is old. So it is difficult to learn online about the GEF Snow Leopard Project in Afghanistan.

Communication with GSLEP, SLN and the other eight or so UNDP-GEF Snow Leopard projects (see Section 4.2.1.4) should be improved and speeded up. A March 2021 SLN webinar led by the project was a promising sign of progress on this during the MTR itself. Maps produced by the project and seen by the MTR all stop rather abruptly at the international borders, which is counterproductive for a project such as this one. The project assists NEPA with official communications.

PROJECT DELAYS AND WORK OUTSTANDING

5.1.11 Project delays necessitate an extension

Progress is much less than was expected by midterm because of the late and slow start of the project. Expenditure of project funds stands at about 20% at midterm, leaving US\$2.3m⁷⁵ available for the final 18 months of the project. It is not possible to achieve the planned results and to disburse the remaining funds in ways consistent with the project *objective* and *outcomes* by the planned closure date of July 2022 (see 5.2). There is a risk too that further time will be lost to COVID19, depending on the progress of the pandemic.

In particular, the required data collection, and the promotion and facilitation of co-management of the WNP alongside spatial planning for the WNP to guide the scheduled 2022 revision of the WNP MP, will take time and cannot be speeded up. The project could be extended for 12 months without any increase in operational costs.

5.1.12 Wakhan NP Management Plan

Everything that the project is doing is against the backdrop of the Wakhan National Park Management Plan, which was developed with WCS assistance over many years and was finally signed and endorsed by all local stakeholders with the support of the project. Final approval at central level is said to be imminent. The project has been producing vital information for management through collection of biological and socio-economic data and through work on the Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool which, when completed, will provide high resolution predictions on impacts of the climate crisis on the Snow Leopard ecosystem.

5.1.13 Clarity on land-use planning

The whole concept of land-use planning under the project has not been presented clearly from design stage on into implementation. It appears to be treated as a mixture of rangeland and forest management planning at village level, and spatial planning at National Park level. The concept of the RMA and the FMA was established by MAIL as a result of donor driven rural development projects, and they are eligible to receive funds for implementation of approved plans, but their future, particularly in a national park, is not entirely clear.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

5.1.14. Audit

The first project audit appears to be overdue and there were no financial spot checks in 2020.

5.1.15 Operational costs

Project management is strong and the staff are good, dedicated and experienced. The breadth of experience and qualifications of the whole WCS network is available to the project. However, operational costs or overheads are not clearly differentiated from technical consultant support in the total budget and workplan, and it is surprising that no formal limits were put on WCS overheads in the TBW, where technical and administrative staff salaries are lumped together. Salaries charged to the project have risen considerably in the second year⁷⁶, and although there is nothing inherently wrong with this, it does complicate forward planning. Justification for engagement of international consultants is weak. Even if good results are being produced it is important that reasonable details of proposed tasks be available with the annual workplan.

5.2. Recommendations

Valuable work is being done under the project and it all contributes to the overall programme. The MTR is confident that WCS will continue to make good progress towards protecting the Snow Leopard and its ecosystem in Afghanistan and hopes that the project management and UNDP will take the following suggestions or recommendations in the spirit in which they are made: a reasoned effort to increase understanding of the project and its context within the overall programme; to make maximum use of the funds in contributing to the *objective* and *outcomes*; and to work constantly towards sustainability of *outputs*.

IMPACTS AND SUSTAINABILITY

5.2.1 Project reports and work plans should always present the project firmly in the context of the overall programme

In reading reports and holding interviews and larger meetings, the MTR found it difficult to disentangle the achievements of the project from those of the programme. We thought we had understood the big picture and then something else kept on coming up to add to it. Reports that put the project clearly in the context of the whole WCS programme as it affects Snow Leopards and their ecosystem would be more useful to UNDP, UNDP-GEF and the Terminal Evaluation than most of those seen by the MTR.

GEF prefers to see impact on *outcomes* as opposed to just *outputs*. Presentation of programme impact on *outcomes* accompanied by an assessment of project contribution is recommended in addition to the current presentations of project impact on *outputs*.

Work plans for individual projects are more complicated to produce when different projects with overlapping targets and activities are taking place under the same programme. It would be clearer probably to present a programme work plan and to indicate for individual donors what activities are covered by their grant.

5.2.2 Deeper routine review and assessment of the impacts of project and programme actions and expenditure as measured against the *objective* and the *outcomes*

The MTR observed that questions about impact could not always be answered satisfactorily. Ongoing critical review of the effects and potential effects of project actions is recommended for:

- a) Operational viability - whether they actually work on the local scale and are sustainable in terms of maintenance and local people's will to follow up
- b) Impacts on project *objective* and *outcomes*.

This should be done using the full range of data available to WCS - ie not limiting analyses to the project period. It should also include review where appropriate of the interventions of other rural development programmes in Wakhan (see Section 4.2.1.3)

- c) Adherence to Social and Environmental Standards (SES)

Each new project activity should be subject to social and environmental assessment being careful to consider side-effects and feedback through social change. In light of the recent Safeguards Desk Review for the project (Annex 20) it is recommended (below Section 5.2.15) that a procedure be drawn up showing how each project activity is screened. This procedure will in effect be the project's Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) and should be employed to assess both unintended and intended impacts (see Section 5.1.4). This will in practice be applied to the wider programme and not just to project activities *sensu stricto*.

In order to support this review and assessment, some changes to the the SRF in light of MTR comments on indicators (see Annex 3 and Section 4.1.2) will be useful. Even at this stage it is not too late to add impact indicators that could benefit the overall programme. WCS is already collecting information that could immediately serve as impact indicators. For example, consider using independent impact indicators such as occurrence of livestock DNA in SL scats, state of rangeland health, level of collection of *Artemisia* and other shrubs. The MTR heard objections to suggested impact indicators such that it was impossible to measure them precisely: but indicators are not to be

measured precisely they are to detect trends and an index is all that is required (see Annex 3 and Section 4.1.2). Many of the required data are already being collected. Some could be extracted immediately from the existing SMART recorded patrol data of the community rangers (see Section 1.3) and others include measures of rangeland health (measured by WCS 2006-2008 and 2016-2018), livestock predation (since 2006), people's economic wellbeing (through basic necessity surveys) and use of recapture analysis on camera trap data (see Section 4.2.1.3). Annex 3 includes these and further suggestions for improving the indicators.

5.2.3. The Project should explore avenues for continued funding for Snow Leopard conservation

The long term sustainability of many of the project and programme *outputs* is uncertain. UNDP's Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN⁷⁷) is a mine of information and ideas about how to access funding for biodiversity conservation. Five Snow Leopard range states - Kyrgyzstan, India, Bhutan, Kazakhstan and Mongolia - are among the 36 countries that implement the BIOFIN method. Consideration could also be given to the feasibility of the establishment, capitalization and management of an Afghanistan Conservation Trust Fund, but the project should be clear that GEF funds are not convertible to be used for capitalization of any such fund⁷⁸.

5.2.4. Prepare a plan for extension of conservation activities to the whole of the Snow Leopard range in Afghanistan

During the remainder of this project and as part of *Outcome 3* the opportunity should be taken to prepare a follow-up project under the WCS programme that would protect Snow Leopards and their habitats inside and outside protected areas. Although protected areas are being declared regularly now in Afghanistan, protection on the ground is patchy and some are little more than paper parks. Practical measures are required to put in place conservation measures that take into account the slow pace at which protected areas are operationalized.

5.2.5 Assess all project and programme initiated bodies and plans for sustainability and take appropriate action

Clarify how much the project will leave to the ongoing work of WCS before true sustainability is achieved, whether the institutions being formed will survive after the end of the project, or after the end of WCS involvement? The IWT, some RMAs and some FMAs are being established under the project and the project works with organizations such as the WPA, the PAC and the community ranger force that were established under the wider programme. The community ranger force is still paid by the project, and the PAC still requires technical support to fulfil its role. The project should assist with that, alongside the CEPF project that WCS implements. The project should also assess formally the current state and role of the WPA, its relationships with CDCs and the PAC, and capacity building required to get all these agencies to work together and with government to manage the WNP. The WPA is more or less independent now but it still requires depth and capacity - and a "champion" to lead it. Originally all 27 members were active and contributing but recently this tends to be only a few people. The project has already begun to link training of the WCS Community Rangers with training of the national park (government) rangers and this should be continued, together with any steps that can be taken towards integration of the two forces.

The WNP MP requires considerable support still to prepare it for implementation (see below 5.2.11) and the village rangeland and forest management plans are still in the early stages of approval and implementation with much depending on acquiring the promised government backing.

Funding, institutional and operational requirements for the IWT Task Force have to be determined urgently and then decisions have to be made on the best ways for these requirements to be met and necessary action taken. The project should define clearly what exactly the IWT is expected to achieve within the project time frame and what they are doing month to month at this time. The project should also define the legal issues surrounding the Hunting Prevention Law and the urgent requirements to make it a workable law in wildlife protection. As at the moment, crimes related to wildlife are not defined well and species are not listed.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT, COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

5.2.6. Diversify and widen stakeholder engagement

Widen inputs from stakeholders into project planning at the same time as making clear the thematic boundaries within which the GEF grant can be used.

Include Wakhan based rural development programmes and projects in the project's stakeholder network and work with donors and programme/project managers to include biodiversity considerations into the roll-out of their activities (see Section 5.1.4). Simple adjustments could have major benefits for conservation and come with little or no immediate financial costs - and eventual financial benefits.

Widen participation on the Project Board, particularly at provincial and district level, and ensure that all members feel their opinions and services are genuinely valued and that they are not there just to rubber-stamp decisions on budgets. Include provincial and district level representatives whenever possible.

5.2.7 Expand project engagement with local universities

In order to build local capacity in fields of wildlife conservation outside WCS the project should persevere with and expand their efforts to:

- Institutionalize successful approaches and lessons-learned into the curricula of Afghan Universities
- Provide university students with opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in conservation and sustainable development through engaging students from Kabul, Wakhan, Ishkashim, and Zebak in project activities
- Facilitate opportunities for high school graduates from the three districts to succeed in national university entrance exams or to be awarded scholarships for study at private or foreign universities.
- Seek ways to involve university staff and university students wherever the opportunity arises – to assist with assessments, monitoring, in the development of training courses within universities, and in participatory planning for example.

5.2.8. Ensure that training is deployed in the most effective manner

Carry out a quick training needs analysis (TNA) for the project to decide project priorities, taking into account training completed and scheduled under other projects and TNAs proposed under the CEPF working groups. Through the TNA it should be possible to determine whether the project is training the people who will use the skills taught in furthering the aims of the project and the wider programme, and to identify inefficiencies, gaps or overlaps. The project should start to work out priorities by looking at the various skills that will be required in the management of the Wakhan National Park as the Management Plan begins to be implemented (see, Section 4.2.1.5 and, as an example, *Competence Standards for Protected Area Jobs in South East Asia*⁵⁰).

The project should strengthen its on-the-job training for government officials. This means project staff working alongside government officials doing their government job and providing advice and technical assistance. Government officials working alongside project staff doing their project job is also valuable but it is not what is normally called on-the-job training - unless, as sometimes happens, both jobs are the same.

It is recommended that the project increase its use of, and contribute more to, SLN and GSLEP training modules.

5.2.9. Prepare new communication strategy emphasizing dialogue, feedback and dissemination

The current strategy needs review in order to increase diversification and focus on different groups. A new strategy should aim to inform and involve all stakeholders, including the general public and government staff and could apply beyond the project too, being relevant to the programme as a whole. Guidance is available through IUCN's Commission on Education and Communication⁷⁹.

Even before the strategy is done a project website or other social media presence (perhaps programme based) should be established and it should be kept up to date, interesting, and relevant.

Project management is eager to arrange a film of the Wakhan and the programme. One potential film project has fallen through but another one, in collaboration with a British student, is still possible. A well-produced film portraying the magic of the place and the reality of living there year-round would be extremely valuable, and this possibility should be pursued if quality can be expected.

Ensure that all results of the project initiatives – both negative and positive – are shared widely with relevant people and organizations. Just as much can be learned from negative results as from positive ones. Project reports even now, should be on the website (after taking into account any security related restrictions)

Keep up reputation of the WCS project offices as the places where people go to for information on both Snow Leopards and the wider issues of Biodiversity and Climate Change impacts. Ensure that all project maps include relief information for neighbouring countries to facilitate thinking and emphasis on transboundary issues for snow-leopard conservation. The MTR was told of several initiatives in transboundary conservation planned for 2021, including survey work in Tajikistan in areas bordering Wakhan. These should be reflected in project reporting to give a full picture.

Increase routine contacts with GSLEP and SLN and other international Snow Leopard conservation groups and project, in particular the 7 other GEF Snow Leopard Projects across the Snow Leopard Range. This would lead to more sharing of information and lessons learned, and could include internet discussion groups and webinars held to compare methods and results between projects and programmes. A regular webinar run in turn by each of the 8 GEF Snow Leopard projects would be particularly valuable to the public where the requisite internet facilities are available.

Work to build up knowledge management expertise to be built up outside WCS. This means engaging with interested people who can learn from the WCS staff the skills of communication under the new strategy.

Monitoring the results after projects end is particularly important to guide landscape planning initiatives worldwide⁸⁰. Many projects employing the landscape approach have been implemented but data on long term impacts are sparse.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

5.2.10 Extend the project by 12 months to ensure proper use of the remaining funds

The recommendation is to extend the project for 12 months until July 2023, with the final 6 months devoted exclusively to Terminal Evaluation. A budget revision will be required to enable this extension and to move funds between *outcomes* if that becomes necessary (see below 5.2.11) .

This is a no-cost extension as it will not require any additional management costs. Salary costs under the project design are covered for three years and the TE costs are covered for the fourth year. The first charges against the project were in 2020, so three years of project implementation with management costs would take the project to January 2023, and the TE stage would, as agreed in the original Prodoc not attract management costs. The project design included a whole year for the terminal evaluation. That is excessive even given the difficulties of staging a review in Wakhan, and six months should be plenty for the TE.

The project should not accelerate activities to increase the delivery rate because land-use and protected area planning cannot be speeded up while maintaining quality and ownership.

5.2.11 Emphasize further development of the Wakhan National Park Management Plan through the PAC

The project will continue with practical tangible *outputs* such as corral construction, vaccination and tree-planting and those activities will help to some extent to build support with local villages. However, project involvement in enhancing community and government systems and institutions for sound decision making and planning for land-use, livelihoods and protected area management are vital for the long term. Slow implementation in 2020 and potential further delays due to COVID-19 in 2021 has reduced the time available but there is still sufficient, particularly if winter months are used in Wakhan. The project aims to use the finalized Climate Change Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool (now due July 2022), the results of continuing surveys and assessments, and rangeland and forest management plans to feed into the proposed 2022 revision of the Wakhan National Park Management Plan and the development of an "implementation" or District Development Plan that will be in line with NP status and can be integrated into the Badakhshan Provincial Development Plan. The priorities will be:

- Community-led conservation and development in Wakhan by building the capacity of an inclusive Protected Area Committee (PAC) for the co-management of WNP, and resolving institutional relationships between community-based organizations (including WPA, CDCs, RMAs, FMAs, Water Users' Group, cooperatives, savings and loan groups) and government agencies
- Spatial planning for Wakhan District through incorporation of results from surveys and the Climate Model, the planned market system assessments as basis for improved access to markets (see Section 4.1) for different products (including livestock and dairy, fruit and vegetables, renewable energy, tourism, handicrafts, and nature-based products, as well as the labour market system and financial market system). Consultations with MRRD and MLUD in addition to NEPA and MAIL
- Review requirements at District government and WNPMP level for land-use plans including consideration of rangeland and forests, roads, buildings, tourist facilities.
- Hang all activities on the Wakhan National Park Management Plan. It is accepted that the MP already requires updating and this should be done as soon as possible. Coordinate this through the PAC and other local institutions while keeping up ministerial level dialogue. Liaise where necessary with other NGOs active in the NP.
- Prepare the PAC to take on the implications of the Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool
- It is probably best not to take on new commitments to tree-planting under the project, especially as project reports indicate there are many NGOs competing for planting sites. Consider leaving biomass planting to other NGOs

(see similar recommendation in GEF 5 WCS implemented project). Consider fencing to encourage natural regeneration of trees.

5.2.12 Engage community conservation facilitators to deepen the dialogue and interaction with villagers

In order to develop stronger commitment to preparation and implementation of village plans and collaboration on joint conservation activities under the WNP MP the project should engage skilled community conservation facilitators to work with villagers using participatory planning procedures over prolonged periods of residence in the villages. It should be possible to achieve the *objective* of *strengthening* protection of Snow Leopards and their ecosystem within the project time-frame, but that is a short time in which to get substantial impacts on the ground.

Focus on a few core villages - covering both the Wakhi and Kirgiz areas - where trained community conservation facilitators will work to establish models that can be duplicated widely. These facilitators should help to establish genuine and fully representative participation at village level, transparent processes and decision-making structures, frequent community updates, and slow and steady building of trust. Planning will address traditional livelihoods, potential new livelihoods such as tourism for example, expanded markets for local agricultural products, including fruits from plantations, and handicrafts, and the viability and effects on project *outcomes* of expanding the use of solar energy. This can include the preparation of 'village book' assessments leading to simple community development plans.

The community conservation facilitators could also be involved - at the community end - in developing Snow Leopard-friendly standards for Wakhan tourism in order to avoid the (predictable) uncontrolled development of tourism facilities that could threaten the ecology and the social fabric. The selected facilitators should have skills in facilitation and be fully trained before deployment.

Persevere with examination of possible use of insurance schemes to cover livestock deaths. The viability of insurance schemes has been examined under the wider programme, and piloted under a UNDP-GEF Small Grant, and the general conclusion was that it will not work in Wakhan. A scheme that sets higher premiums per animal as herd size increases might counter some of the objections heard. Other countries are doing better with insurance schemes but it has often taken a long time to find a good formula (for example in Pakistan and Mongolia), so it is perhaps worth persevering with the concept.

Ensure commitment – money, time, labour, materials – from villagers for assistance with capital investments such as corrals, tree planting and vaccinations, at the same time taking care to avoid favouring the rich and the well-connected, and excluding people who really cannot contribute in any way.

5.2.13. Post additional project staff⁸¹ in Wakhan over winter to work with communities and local government officials

Achieving lasting change in landscape management takes longer than the typical project duration of 3-5 years, and the more time that is spent on site the better. So rather than merely visiting from time to time, it is recommended that more project staff live and work in Wakhan year-round. Apart from community conservation facilitators at village level, protected area planners should work year-round on village and district level planning against the backdrop of the WNP MP.

Winter in Wakhan provides a time for discussion and participatory planning that is utilized by some NGOs because people travel less and are in their villages or the district centre more. It is recommended to expand work of this kind in the winter (see also similar GEF 5 MTR recommendation). Prolonged engagement in knowledge management would also be possible alongside the land-use and protected area development planning, and the project should also aim make substantial advances in participation of women during winter.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

5.2.14. Carry out the first audit

Carry out the first project audit immediately and include a review of the way that operational costs are managed in the total budget and workplan.

5.2.15 Consolidate risk management documentation

Taking the UNDP Risk Log (as revised for the 2020 PIR), the SESP (as in the Prodoc), Table 6 of the Prodoc, and the results of the recent Safeguards Desk Review (Annex 20) a consolidated risk matrix should be prepared. Based on this matrix (which will be an updated version of Table 6) a very simple Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) should be drafted with environmental and social standards that have to be met. The ESMP should

then be used to screen proposed and completed activities against the defined standards/criteria as described under Section 5.2.2 above. A Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)⁸² should be established unequivocally in response to the Safeguards Desk Review (see Annex 20).



From: Searching for the Snow Leopard - Guardian of the High Mountains (2020) ©Björn Persson

Annexes

Annex 1 Project status of cofinance at design and at MTR

Annex 1a GEF Co-financing template

Annex 1b Confirmed cofinance at ProDoc signature

Annex 1c Cofinance accumulated during project implementation

Annex 2 Matrix for assessment of Project Progress

Annex 3 The project indicators (from SRF at Inception) with MTR comments on design

Annex 4 Project Management's assessment of progress at MTR stage

Annex 4a Objective and Outcomes

Annex 4b Activities

Annex 5 Project Management's assessment of progress against indicators at MTR

Annex 6 MTR Terms of Reference

Annex 7 List of documents, books and videos reviewed, and webinars participated in

Annex 8 List of people interviewed with dates and times

Annex 9 UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators and Midterm Review Consultants

Annex 10 Questionnaire

Annex 11 Analysis of Responses to the Questionnaire

Annex 12 Mid-term Review Evaluative Matrix Template

Annex 13 Indicative interview questions

Annex 14 Parallel European Union project under the WCS programme

Annex 15 MTR Ratings scales

Annex 16 UNDP GEF Advisory Note - Lack of the Solution

Annex 17 Monitoring and Evaluation Plan from Inception Report, with MTR comments

Annex 18 UNDP GEF Biodiversity Advisory Note - Indicators

Annex 19 Example of a flow diagram for a GEF Project Theory of Change analysis

Annex 20 Safeguards Desk Review 2021 with MTR comments

Annex 21 Tracking Tools -- [see separate files]

Annex 21a Capacity development scorecard for Wakhan Pamir Association

Annex 21b Capacity development scorecard for NEPA and MAIL

Annex 21c METT for Wakhan National Park

Annex 22 Comment Audit Trail -- [see separate file]

Annex 23 MTR Clearance Form

Endnotes

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- ¹ <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/afghanistan-population/>
- ² It is of course possible that Snow Leopards would range lower down as in other countries depending on the habitat availability and level of disturbance by humans
- ³ <http://www.pacific-r2r.org/r2r-documents/rsc-meeting-documents/rpsc2-presentations/110-status-report-on-project-implementation-rpsc2-20170730/file>
- ⁴ Completed by the Project Manager during the MTR
- ⁵ according to the rating system in Annex 15
- ⁶ at time of start of MTR mission, January 2021
- ⁷ The entities in column 3 are ultimately responsible for seeing that these recommendations are carried out but may engage others in the process
- ⁸ recruited both locally and at provincial or national level
- ⁹ <http://www.thegef.org/news/independent-evaluation-gef-partnership-promoting-accountability-and-learning>
- ¹⁰ http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/mid-term/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20_EN_2014.pdf
- ¹¹ Wakhan National Park Management Plan February 2020 p15
- ¹² World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) Global Terrestrial Ecoregion classification, 2001
- ¹³ <http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/46714>
- ¹⁴ http://birdlaa8.miniserver.com/dz_uat/site/factsheet/8002
- ¹⁵ http://birdlaa8.miniserver.com/dz_uat/site/factsheet/8003
- ¹⁶ The sudden loss of a herder's livestock in a single night in a corral can be a devastating blow
- ¹⁷ sharing with other donors' projects under the WCS country programme
- ¹⁸ Presumably this zero predation refers to predation in corrals. There is also predation outside corrals.
- ¹⁹ See the following for a good treatment of the whole question of impact assessment in biodiversity conservation projects. Look at what happened in places where the intervention did not take place and compare. Compare similar interventions to see if they are getting similar results. Even if time is short within the project this project forms part of a programme so it would use good impact indicators as part of the project and continue them into the programme. One needs a range of approaches *Biodiversity Indicators for Monitoring Impacts and Co Biodiversity Indicators for Monitoring Impacts and Conservation Actions*
<https://nbsapforum.net/sites/default/files/Biodiversity%20indicators%20for%20monitoring%20impacts%20and%20conservation%20actions.pdf>
The Holy Grail of biodiversity conservation management: Monitoring impact in projects and project portfolios
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2530064418301743>
- ²⁰ CEPF support the NBSAP revision under the overall WCS programme
- ²¹ e.g. training courses, development of a climate model and vulnerability tool for the Panj Amu basin, assessment of status of IWT and HWC, tree planting, corral construction, PPR vaccinations, wildlife surveys and monitoring, rangeland health monitoring, public information events, ranger supervision, advice and assistance lent to MAIL and NEPA, drafting of village and village cluster rangeland and forest management plans
- ²² As of May 2021
- ²³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKMjRz8mxYU>
- ²⁴ Different data in different documents
- ²⁵ Wolves take considerably more livestock than Snow Leopards in Wakhan
- ²⁶ Amruddin Sanjer (2020) Protecting livestock corral against predators in Wakhan National Park 2020. Unpublished report 6pp
- ²⁷ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326634702_The_term_human-wildlife_conflict_creates_more_problems_than_it_resolves_Better_labels_should_be_considered
- ²⁸ Over 90,000 sheep and goats were vaccinated against PPR and 30,000 yaks and cattle against Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) under the WCS programme since 2006
- ²⁹ "Improve participatory management and efficiency of rangelands and watersheds"
- ³⁰ <https://snowleopard.org/understanding-dogs-protect-cats/>
- ³¹ <https://www.thethirdpole.net/en/nature/feral-dogs-aggravate-biodiversity-crisis-in-indian-himalayas/>
- ³² Whiskerbook <https://www.whiskerbook.org> has been adapted with a platform trained for Snow Leopards
- ³³ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-63367-z>
- ³⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKMjRz8mxYU>

³⁵ Dividing responsibilities between GEF project and EU grant

³⁶ Kharoosh Sahel (2021) Conducting of 14-consultation workshop with line government to provide 14 management plans for 14 FMAs and RMAs and establish 4 FMAs in Wakhan National Park Unpublished report 6pp

³⁷ <https://rupanifoundation.org/vision-mission-values/>

³⁸ https://medium.com/@WFP_Asia_Pacific/we-can-breathe-better-plan-better-and-improve-our-lives-e5c10a2b5602

³⁹ <https://www.equatorinitiative.org/2020/04/24/solution10991/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/75926.html>

⁴¹ https://dlzahnki91r.cloudfront.net/s3fs-public/Publications/2010_akf_brief_badakhshan.pdf

⁴² Kharoosh Sahel (2021) Tree plantations in Wakhan National Park, 2020, Unpubl. report, 8pp

⁴³ <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/143891468059947579/pdf/377950M0G0less1ing0P09260901PUBLIC1.pdf>. (MONGOLIA)

⁴⁴ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46033998_Damage_Caused_to_the_Environment_by_Reforestation_Policies_in_Arid_and_Semi-Arid_Areas_of_China. (CHINA)

⁴⁵ Asli Gul Amin and Susan Gul Rahimi (2020) Public Awareness and Education Program in WNP villages. Unpubl. report 7pp

⁴⁶ <https://afghanistan.wcs.org/Publications/News/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/1348/WCS-Snow-Leopard-Project.aspx>

⁴⁷ <https://www.af.undp.org/content/afghanistan/en/home/projects/Snow-Leopards.html>

⁴⁸ <https://globalsnowleopard.org/gef-undp-projects/afghanistan-conservation-of-snow-leopards-ecosystems/>

⁴⁹ <https://snowleopardnetwork.org/2021/04/07/snow-leopard-conservation-in-wakhan-afghanistan/>

⁵⁰ This provides an example: <https://biodiversitylinks.org/learning-evidence/combating-wildlife-trafficking/documents/competence-standards-for-protected-area-jobs-in-south-east-asia/view> Competence Standards for Protected Area Jobs in South East Asia

⁵¹ At review stage of this MTR report the MTR learned that WCS has already taken on additional interns

⁵² Communication Strategy on the importance of Snow Leopards and their critical ecosystem conservation

⁵³ <https://www.cepf.net/our-work/biodiversity-hotspots/mountains-central-asia>

⁵⁴ As described for tourism planning in protected areas but equally applicable in this context, by Bello, F., et al. (2016). "Community participation framework for protected area-based tourism planning". Tourism Planning & Development Vol. 13, Iss. 4, 2016. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/293010156_Community_participation_framework_for_protected_area-based_tourism_planning

⁵⁵ see for example, Moyo F. et al. (2017) Between Policy Intent and Practice: Negotiating Access to Land and Other Resources in Tanzania's Wildlife Management Areas. Tropical Conservation Science Volume 10: 1–17 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940082917744167>

⁵⁶ He presented the March webinar on the project organized by Snow Leopard Network for example

⁵⁷ <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/silent-roar---undp-and-gef-in-the-snow-leopard-landscape.html>

⁵⁸ para 166 and Annex E

⁵⁹ There is some confusion here because the UNDP ATLAS workplan is in fact little more than a budget. This is a point that needs attention in UNDP/GEF projects in general.

⁶⁰ some referred to increasing the burn rate - a practice that former WCS Afghanistan Country Director Alex Dehgan in his book The Snow Leopard Project (2019) felt inappropriate for conservation projects

⁶¹ First, many projects experience a slow start, and second COVID-19 resulted in substantial delays to project outputs.

⁶² comments here on cofinance are based entirely on that documentary evidence and, as stated at the end of the paragraph are purely for consideration in the light of future project design

⁶³ LITACA II takes place in four northern provinces with only Shahr-e-Bozorg district in Badakhshan province and that far west of Wakhan and without Snow Leopard habitat <https://mrrd.gov.af/node/402>

⁶⁴ USD 24,000 have been allocated in the project budget for Audit, plus USD 21,000 for financial spot checks (Project Total Budget and Work Plan)

⁶⁵ <https://www.cbd.int/cepa/toolkit/2008/cepa/index.htm>

⁶⁶ <https://globalsnowleopard.org/gslp-projects/paws/paws-resources/>

⁶⁷ such as the proposed transport links to China, for example

⁶⁸ SLN video

⁶⁹ <http://www.mockandoneil.com/sllegend.pdf>

⁷⁰ On corral construction, tree planting, livestock vaccination, land-use planning, new management "tools" developed, and trainees for example

⁷¹ As described for tourism planning in protected areas but equally applicable in this context, by Bello, F., et al. (2016). "Community participation framework for protected area-based tourism planning". Tourism Planning & Development Vol. 13,

Iss. 4, 2016. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/293010156_Community_participation_framework_for_protected_area-based_tourism_planning

⁷² <https://afghanistan.wcs.org/Publications/News/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/1348/WCS-Snow-Leopard-Project.aspx>

⁷³ <https://www.af.undp.org/content/afghanistan/en/home/projects/Snow-Leopards.html>

⁷⁴ <https://globalsnowleopard.org/gef-undp-projects/afghanistan-conservation-of-snow-leopards-ecosystems/>

⁷⁵ at time of start of MTR mission, January 2021

⁷⁶ Staff costs for 80 administrative and technical employees in Kabul, New York and Wakhan, all listed as consultants, are cost-shared with an EU funded project and vary considerably from year to year (see Section 4.3.1).

⁷⁷ <https://www.biodiversityfinance.net/index.php/news-media>

⁷⁸ The project team is in favour of diverting project funds into capitalization of a Trust Fund and the MTR team gave their opinion that this would not be approved by GEF.

⁷⁹ <http://www.cectalksnature.org/about>

⁸⁰ Reed, J. et al. (2016). "Integrated landscape approaches to managing social and environmental issues in the tropics: learning from the past to guide the future their progress is measured and to support indicators, so they capture measurements". *Global Change Biology* (2016) 22, 2540–2554, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gcb.13284>

⁸¹ recruited both locally and at provincial or national level

⁸² https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SES%20Document%20Library/Uploaded%20October%202016/UNDP%20SES%20Supplemental%20Guidance_Grievance%20Redress%20Mechanisms.pdf

Annex 1a. GEF Cofinancing template

CONFIRMED SOURCES OF CO-FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT BY NAME AND BY TYPE

PLEASE COMPLETE FOR ALL PROJECTS AT MTR AND TE STAGES

Please include evidence for co-financing for the project with this form (please add rows as necessary)

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Cofinancing	Investment Mobilized	Amount (\$)
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2,000,000
GEF Agency	United Nations Development Organization	Grant	Investment mobilized	21,094
Civil Society Organization	Fondation Segre	Grant	Investment mobilized	50,000
Donor Agency	European Union	Grant	Investment mobilized	3,158,392
Civil Society Organization	Harvey Bookman	Grant	Investment mobilized	40,148
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
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(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
Total Co-financing				5,269,634

Annex 1b. Confirmed cofinance with data reports and notes on expenditure

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Cofinancer	Type of Cofinancing	Amount Confirmed at CEO Endorsement (US\$) Million	Actual Amount Reported at stage of Midterm Review (US\$) Million	Actual % of Expected Amount Reported
Government ¹	MAIL	In-kind	4,501,598	2,000,000	44.4
UNDP ²	UNDP Afghanistan	Cash	250,000	21,094	8.4
UNDP ³	UNDP Afghanistan	In-kind	1,200,000	0	0
		TOTALS	5,951,598	2,021,094	34.0

¹ **Component 1;**

1. Ranger of technical staff, and rangers for Wakhan National park (WNP).
2. Providing training courses for provincial staff and rangers
3. Renovation of 100 corals in WNP.

Component 2;

4. Total 5 Forest Management Association identified and established.
5. Providing Technical Staff.

Component 3;

Providing building for office.

²Budget lines allocated in project budget

³ LITACA II but appears not to be relevant (see Sections 4.1.1.3 and 4.3.5 for discussion

Annex 1c. Cofinance accumulated by project team during implementation

The table below shows the projects that acted as added value to the “Conservation of Snow Leopards and their Critical Ecosystem in Afghanistan” project and can effectively be considered as cofinance pending official confirmation through signature as required. These could be officially added as co-finance if letters are obtained from the various donors. Note that commitments and actual amounts contributed are provisional and estimated by the project team.

Sources of Funding which supports and complements the project	Name of Cofinancer	Type	Amount of commitment to joint and parallel aims (unofficial co-finance) (Provisional)	Actual Amount Contributed at stage of Midterm Review (US\$) (Estimates)	Percentage of Expected Amount	For in-kind contributions list the main contributions with values
Private Donor	Fondation Segré	In-kind	50,000	50,000	100%	Fondation Segré funding ended in March 2020 Funds covered salaries of one staff at operation level, and community-rangers in Wakhan. Funded community and government engagement actions for the development of WNP management plan (Sept-Oct 2019), a ranger awarding ceremony (Dec 2019), livestock vaccination (Sept-Oct 2019), SMART continuing Cybertracker development in Wakan, participation to a meeting on protected area management in Pakistan (Dec 2019)
EU Climate Change Project	European Union	In-kind	11,158,223	3,158,392	28.30%	Funds salaries of staff who work on activities which contribute to GEF Project Funds complementary activities (Afforestation, Corrals, One Health, Environmental Education) Funds Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool which covers much of the Snow Leopard Range in Afghanistan Funds improved management of WNP

Sources of Funding which supports and complements the project	Name of Cofinancer	Type	Amount of commitment to joint and parallel aims (unofficial co-finance) (Provisional)	Actual Amount Contributed at stage of Midterm Review (US\$) (Estimates)	Percentage of Expected Amount	For in-kind contributions list the main contributions with values
						Funds market system assessments for key commodities and services. Strategic targeting for sustainable livelihood improvements – alternative livelihoods to overuse of natural resources Funds research and monitoring for poaching, human-wildlife conflict, prey populations, and predator monitoring, including snow leopards.
Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan and the World Bank	Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund	In-kind	250,000	n/a - to be assessed further	n/a	Funds meetings of landscape forum and Protected Area Management Committee over in 2021 and 2022, and capacity building for PAC to improve co-management of WNP Funds gender analysis for WNP Funds household surveys for WNP Funds specific working groups for key stakeholders including women, youth, livestock and One Health, food crops and food security, tourism and traditional handicrafts, biofuel and renewable energy, poaching and illegal wildlife trade, and human-wildlife conflict in Wakhan and Buffer Zone Districts of Zebak and Ishkashim Funds sub-grant Afghan NGOs to participate in and lead some of CEPF funded activities. Building capacity of Afghan NGOs in Conservation and Sustainable Development. Assists Afghan NGOs in fundraising, including the preparation of proposals for small grants.

Sources of Funding which supports and complements the project	Name of Cofinancer	Type	Amount of commitment to joint and parallel aims (unofficial co-finance) (Provisional)	Actual Amount Contributed at stage of Midterm Review (US\$) (Estimates)	Percentage of Expected Amount	For in-kind contributions list the main contributions with values
Private Donor	Harvey Bookman	In-kind	180,000	40,148	22%	Panjshir lies within the snow leopard range or landscape for Afghanistan. The snow leopard landscape extends from Wakhan across the Hindu Kush Mountains to Takhar, Baghlans, Panjshir, and Nuristan. Thus, Panjshir is part of snow leopard habitat for Afghanistan. This project funds biophysical and social economic surveys, the preparation of justification document for a new protected area in Panjshir, and the preparation of the first Park Management Plan based in lessons-learned in Wakhan.
		TOTALS	11,638,223	3,248,540	28%	

Annex 2 Matrix of assessment of Project Progress

Indicator Assessment Key. Note that ratings apply to whole Components, not individual Indicators

Green= Achieved	Yellow= On target to be achieved	Red= Not on target to be achieved
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	Indicator	Baseline Level (2018)	First PIR Level (August 2020)	MTR Level - Project Team January 2021	Final Target EOP ¹ July 2022	MTR Assessment March 2021	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
Objective: To strengthen conservation of the snow leopard and its critical ecosystem in Afghanistan through a holistic and sustainable landscape approach that addresses existing and emerging threats								
O B J	1. Population of key species in Wakhan District remains stable or increases as indicated by the following species: • Snow Leopards • Marco Polo Sheep • Himalayan Ibex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41 (26 in monitoring area in Hindu Kush – from Pagish to Sast & 15 in monitoring area in west Big Pamir) • 344+/- 122 (in west Big Pamir) • 717+/-253 (in monitoring area in Hindu Kush) 	The indicator is on track as the project contributed to stabilizing the population of these three species by providing on going logistical, financial and capacity building supports for operation of the national park rangers, facilitating the Wakhan National Park management planning process, and mobilizing and raising capacity of local communities to engage in conservation.	The indicator is on track. Wildlife surveys and ecological monitoring activities confirms impact of project for increasing and/or stabilization of populations of key species in the area (WNP). Five wildlife surveys and ecological assessments (i.e. camera trap survey, Marmot survey, Marco Polo sheep survey, Glacier monitoring, and annual livestock count) which recently conducted will confirm stabilization of the population of targeted species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ≥41 • Stable or significant increase • Stable or significant increase 	<p>No estimate for Snow Leopard, but camera trap and patrol data give no indication of any significant decrease</p> <p>Survey of Marco Polo Sheep in west Big Pamir estimated 377 individuals and no significant change</p> <p>No estimate for Himalayan Ibex, but camera trap and patrol data give no indication of any significant decrease</p>		
	2. Number of direct project beneficiaries,		Indicator is on track on direct benefits to the local communities	The indicator is on track. The project improved capacity and knowledge		(a) (b) (c): Indicator confounds numbers of individuals benefiting		

¹ EOP = End of Project

	Indicator	Baseline Level (2018)	First PIR Level (August 2020)	MTR Level - Project Team January 2021	Final Target EOP ¹ July 2022	MTR Assessment March 2021	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
E C T I V E	disaggregated by gender [UNDP IRRF indicator] from the following groups:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a) 0; • (b) 0; • (c) 0 	and off track about delivery of IWT training to the government officials due to the state of COVID-19. Achievements include:	for 80 law enforcement officials and park rangers (all male). Law enforcement officials represented by the Border Police, National Police, National Directorate of Security, and Afghan INTERPOOL received three trainings on poaching and illegal wildlife trade in Wakhan and Ishkashim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a) 20 • (b) 20; • (c) 25 	from project activities with institutional scores on CD scorecard. The standard IRRF indicator generally refers to socio-economic benefits only.	MS	The indicators do not fully reflect the objective (see Annex 3), so a subjective assessment is necessary to assign the rating. Progress has been good since project activities began. However, the holistic landscape approach takes time to implement and, given the late start of the project, and COVID-19 related delays, the expected level of achievement against the objective will not be reached by July 2022.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of (a) central and (b) provincial government officials including (c) community rangers who improved their knowledge and skills on IWT and law enforcement as measured by the CD scorecard. • No. of local people in project demonstration areas benefitting from engagement in conservation activities, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 national park rangers (all male) have been trained in using the SMART system for field monitoring and timely and accurate information management (see indicator # 4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livelihoods of 5,434 local people in 814 households in 13 villages were supported with 2,633 (all males) directly benefiting through short term employment for tree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,500 (50% female) 	<p>Training has been provided to the target numbers of individuals, and the (incomplete) CD Scorecards indicate increases from 13/45 to 16/45 for Wakhan Pamir Association and from 11/45 to 14/45 for MAIL +NEPA combined.</p> <p>Expect that this sub-indicator's end of project target will be reached, but emphasis should be on improved livelihoods, and possibly education, as opposed to short term employment.</p>		

	Indicator	Baseline Level (2018)	First PIR Level (August 2020)	MTR Level - Project Team January 2021	Final Target EOP ¹ July 2022	MTR Assessment March 2021	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
	<i>reduced HWC and improved livelihoods (m/f)</i>		<p>planting activity. Another 2,801 people indirectly benefited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term job opportunity and livelihood support provided to 15 local people (all male) during construction of one predator proof corral • The project reached to and benefitted 1,339 women and 236 children by public awareness campaign covering 42 CDCs in Wakhan National Park in Nov-Dec 2029 (also reported under indicator # 12) 	(1,900 females and 5,063 male) financially benefitted through livestock vaccination, construction of predatory proof corrals and afforestation program.				
	3. Increase in Protected Areas Management Effectiveness score [GWP Indicator Outcome 1]	68	The indicator is on track. To improve PA management effectiveness, the project deployed 35 camera traps in western big Pamir and continued supporting operation of 30 community rangers (including snow leopard rangers) for	Indicator is on track. The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) Score for targeted Protected Areas (PAs) conducted for mid-term of the project. The METT result shows 2 percent increase from baseline (70). This increase is mainly the result of the operationalization of the	72	<p>70</p> <p>These scores refer to Wakhan National Park.</p> <p>METT requires standardized application, preferably by the same team from design onwards</p> <p>This is a marginal improvement, but there is no doubt that the PA is getting more attention</p>		

	Indicator	Baseline Level (2018)	First PIR Level (August 2020)	MTR Level - Project Team January 2021	Final Target EOP ¹ July 2022	MTR Assessment March 2021	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
			monitoring the wildlife and collecting related information. Rangers patrolled the Wakhan corridor and Pamirs, collected data, controlled hunting/poaching, and provided awareness to local communities.	30 community rangers, improvement of the SMART system, establishment of the WNP Protected Area Committee and development of the PA management plan.		both nationally and locally since the Management Plan was all but approved by government, with project support in 2020.		
Component 1: Illegal take and trade of snow leopards and human-wildlife conflict reduced through greater community involvement								
Outcome 1: Strengthened conservation of Snow Leopards through reduced illegal wildlife trade and decreased incidences of human–wildlife conflict								
	<p>4. Status of illegal wildlife trade in Afghanistan with specific focus on snow leopard and prey species, as indicated by the following measurement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of tools developed to combat wildlife crime in Wakhan [GWP Indicator Outcome 4] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No tools are used in Wakhan to combat wildlife crime No system for monitoring of wildlife trade markets currently available to the government 	<p>The indicator is off track. In preparation for establishment of the wildlife trade task force, coordination has been initiated with the national government. This includes submission of formal letters to NEPA and MAIL and having meetings with relevant authorities in NEPA and MAIL. To combat wildlife crime in Wakhan, the Project has designed a paper-based SMART System, and 30 national park rangers</p>	<p>Indicator is on track.</p> <p>The project has further developed Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) to facilitate systematic monitoring over livestock predation cases by wild carnivores.</p> <p>An assessment framework has been developed for monitoring of the IWT which will be conducted in eight regions of Afghanistan. The assessment framework includes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One tool (SMART) to detect and monitor illegal wildlife trade in Wakhan is finalized and fully operationalized. A comprehensive system for monitoring of wildlife trade markets is operationalized and used by NEPA 	<p>The SMART tool already in use in Wakhan has been enhanced with the Cybertracker plug-in and translated into Dari. Training was been carried out for 20 rangers in WNP and Ishkashim District, who will use the app to record all their observations on routine patrols.</p> <p>Good progress has been made on establishing the system for monitoring of wildlife trade markets, but information is still being gathered and the planned briefing report is still to be prepared.</p>		

	Indicator	Baseline Level (2018)	First PIR Level (August 2020)	MTR Level - Project Team January 2021	Final Target EOP ¹ July 2022	MTR Assessment March 2021	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
C O M P O N E N T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One system for monitoring of wildlife trade markets is established A wildlife trade task force established consisting of representatives of relevant governmental organizations. 	Wildlife trade task force does not exist.	have been trained in adopting this system in December 2019. A SMART Cyber Tracker system is being adopted to accommodate relevant data, and 15 mobile phones have been ordered to enable communication between protected area staff and enforcement officials. A SMART expert was employed (for 20 days over 4-months) to train WCS SMART manager on how to produce SMART Patrol reports and upgrade the SMART database.	<p>questionnaires for: 1) Regionals Consultation Workshops for government, NGOs, and local communities, 2) Market Assessment, 3) Restaurant Survey, and 4) Traditional Medicine Shops Surveys.</p> <p>The project facilitated the successful establishment and first meeting of the national Illegal Wildlife Trade Taskforce hosted by NEPA in December 2020, with the participation of 16 relevant ministries and non-government institution members. The participating organizations included: the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), the Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), the Ministry of Interior (Border Police and Interpol Police), Kabul Municipality (Kabul Zoo), the Ministry of Finance</p>	<p>for CITES reporting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Wildlife trade task force is functional with 2-3 meetings held annually. 	Overall TOR for a IWT Task Force have been prepared, but the Task Force is not yet functional and the specific responsibilities of institutional members are not yet established and agreed upon	MS	Good work has been done under this outcome, and the indicators do not capture it all. The MS rating reflects the fact that the project is behind schedule. The very nature of projects aiming at capacity development and changes in institutional structure and working practices is that patient and extended dialogue is required. Particularly as there is still uncertainty over the impacts of the global

	Indicator	Baseline Level (2018)	First PIR Level (August 2020)	MTR Level - Project Team January 2021	Final Target EOP ¹ July 2022	MTR Assessment March 2021	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
NT 1				(Customs), the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, the Ministry of Information and Culture, the National Directorate of Security (NDS), Afghanistan's General Attorney, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Agha Khan Foundation (AKF), Ministry of Justice, Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) and the Faculty of Veterinary Science - Kabul University.				pandemic, it is not expected that the project results will be achieved without major shortcomings by the original termination date of July 2022.
	5. Level of institutional capacity to combat IWT as indicated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP Capacity Development scorecard for NEPA, MAIL and WPA • A comprehensive IWT training package developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEPA+MAIL : 24; WPA: 29 • No comprehensive training materials or technical training provided on 	The indicator is off track in terms of delivery of the training but the relevant training package has been developed to be delivered during the next reporting period. The UNDP Capacity Development scorecard to measure the level of institutional capacity of NEPA, MAIL and WPA to combat IWT	Indicator is on track. The UNDP Capacity Development scorecard for NEPA, MAIL, and WPA for midterm shows a significant increasing by establishing IWT Taskforce, provide training for law enforcement agencies to combat illegal wildlife hunting and trade, establishing the WNP Protected Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEPA + MAIL: 34; WPA: 37 • One comprehensive training course in at least three locations (in Kabul and 	NEPA + MAIL: 14 WPA: 16 (Note that baseline scores here are totally different and these scores presumably should be compared with scores of 11 and 13 at CEO Endorsement.(See Annex 3) Training course delivered, and comprehensive IWT		

	Indicator	Baseline Level (2018)	First PIR Level (August 2020)	MTR Level - Project Team January 2021	Final Target EOP ¹ July 2022	MTR Assessment March 2021	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
	<i>and training delivered to law enforcement staff – including development of training materials – to enhance Inter-agency collaboration on IWT (Afghan police, customs, MAIL, NEPA and Ministry of Interior).</i>	<i>combatting illegal wildlife trade</i>	will be implemented once the training workshops have been delivered. Depending on travel and gathering related restriction situation, the workshop will be conducted during September-October 2020 after project steering committee meeting. • There is a change in planning and approach for delivery of this indicator. The IWT Task Force will be established first and then an IWT assessment will be undertaken. Based on findings of this assessment the comprehensive IWT training package will be developed. These proposed changes will be discussed in the upcoming PSC meeting.	Committee, delivering training for community and government rangers and etc. For MAIL and NEPA, the CD scorecard reached to 31% in mid-term (24 % baseline) and WPA 36% (29% baseline)- Over target. The IWT training package for law enforcement agency has been prepared and training in Wakhan and Ishkashim have also been delivered in 2020. The remaining training about IWT will be delivered during the first – third quarter of 2021. Under the IWT Taskforce, the project will establish a Rapid Response Team to act immediately if something happens in the field related to the IWT and hunting. Establishment and functioning of this RRT is still in discussion and our main concern for this is the level of government coordination and support.	Badakhshan) provided to officials from Afghan police, customs, MAIL, NEPA and Ministry of Interior on combatting illegal wildlife trade	training package in preparation.		

	Indicator	Baseline Level (2018)	First PIR Level (August 2020)	MTR Level - Project Team January 2021	Final Target EOP ¹ July 2022	MTR Assessment March 2021	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
	<p>6. Reduced levels of human-wildlife conflict as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of predator-proof corrals constructed to reduce predation of domestic livestock by Snow Leopards • Decrease in livestock lost to predators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31 • Mortality rate = 4% 	<p>The overall indicator is off track.</p> <p>Construction of one predator-proof corral has been completed in June 2020 and arrangements for two others has been initiated. This activity provided short-term job opportunity and livelihood support to 15 local people (all male) during COVID-19 pandemic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A methodology (Predation Incident Survey Report –PISR) to identify, describe and report on the Snow Leopard predation incidents has been drafted 	<p>Indicator is partially achieved.</p> <p>The project constructed four communal corrals and rehabilitated 6 other. Using the EU fund as added value, 10 communal corrals and 198 household corrals also enhanced. In total, 1,330 people and 198 households benefitted from reduced loss of livestock due to predations and 3,000 people in 314 households benefitted from livestock vaccination.</p> <p>The livestock predation survey methodology is drafted. However, due to COVID-19, the team was unable to travel to the project site to conduct the livestock predation survey. This activity is planned for 2021.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight additional predator-proof corrals constructed (new total of 39 corrals) and eight corrals repaired. • 3.2% (20% reduction in loss) 	<p>Made new corral design, constructed or repaired seven more communal predator-proof corrals, and supplied window/door frames and wire netting to 198 households so that they could strengthen existing household corrals.</p> <p>No figure available for this at mid-term. It is a difficult figure to estimate and the indicator requires better definition (see Annex 3)</p> <p>MTR was told that regular scat analysis is planned under the project to monitor changes in predation patterns with respect to livestock and wild prey and that 2020 scats are awaiting analysis</p>		
	7. Mechanisms put in place to monitor,	None	The indicator is off track. However the project team met	Indicator is on track.	At least 1 set of extension materials	A major vaccination programme was undertaken in 2020 with		

	Indicator	Baseline Level (2018)	First PIR Level (August 2020)	MTR Level - Project Team January 2021	Final Target EOP ¹ July 2022	MTR Assessment March 2021	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
	<i>manage and disseminate epidemiology and ecology of diseases in livestock and wildlife</i>		with the Epidemiology Department of the General Directorate of Animal Health and Production (GD-AHP) at MAIL and agreed to adopt the existing Early Warning System of GD-AHP, as well as an existing reporting and sampling form for monitoring and managing epidemiology and ecology of diseases in livestock and wildlife within WNP.	MAIL has already the system in place to monitor, manage and disseminate the epidemiology and ecology of disease in Badakhshan Province. The project is facilitating and coordinating to extend it to WNP. In addition, the project conducted annual livestock count and rapid antibody detection test. Canine Distemper (CD) virus tests among domestic dogs will help to understand the status and significance of CD Disease among free-ranging big cats like snow leopards. Annual livestock count can contribute in understanding impact of livestock epidemiological disease.	disseminated on each of the following themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • epidemiology • transmission of disease between domestic and wild animals • vaccination 	39,000 sheep and goats belonging to 314 herders, vaccinated against PPR in 40 villages in Wakhan in September 2020. The project worked with Wakhan para-veterinarians thus adding to their learning and experience. Work is continuing on the exact mechanisms to be put in place and their relationship to the existing Early Warning System Simple extension materials exist and more comprehensive materials are planned.		
Component 2: <i>Landscape approach to conservation of snow leopards and their ecosystem that takes into account drivers of forest loss, degradation and climate change impacts.</i> Outcome 2: <i>Improved land use planning across critical Snow Leopard ecosystems to reduce the impacts of forest loss, land degradation and climate change</i>								
	<i>8. Areas (ha) of degraded riparian forest</i>	Zero	The indicator is mainly on track. 89 hectares of alluvial	This indicator is on track The project planted a total of 607,940 local	300 ha	89 ha of willow plantations in 13 villages		

	Indicator	Baseline Level (2018)	First PIR Level (August 2020)	MTR Level - Project Team January 2021	Final Target EOP ¹ July 2022	MTR Assessment March 2021	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
C o m	and shrubland brought under sustainable management as indicated by: • Reforestation of alluvial fans in the Wakhan region [GEF Indicator 2.4, LD-2 Prog 3; GWP Indicator Outcome 3]		lands have been reforested through the planting of 607,940 local willow stakes in 13 villages of Wakhan National Park. This activity is cost shared between the project and EU grant.	willow saplings on 90 hectares of alluvial lands in 13 villages of WNP. This will lead to the sequestration of 18,485 tons of CO2 from the ambient air in the area. To guide future tree planting activities, a comprehensive land potential assessment was conducted in Zebak, Ishkashim and Wakhan National Park to identify suitable and available land for upcoming afforestation activities. This included consultations with local communities.		7 ha of poplar and fruit trees in another 10 villages. So, in the sense of numbers of ha planted (as opposed to impacts on snow leopard populations through reduced harvest of high altitude shrubs which are food for ibex) the project is on track. This contributes to the nationwide tree planting programme in Afghanistan to reforest areas that have been managed unsustainably for years. Several organizations are planting trees in Wakhan. It is important that the project keep monitoring planting success, ensures that local villagers are engaged in maintenance and necessary irrigation, continue to adjust planting methods to ensure best results for both harvests and the ecology, and wherever possible work with other agencies to maximize the impacts of their own plantations on snow leopard conservation.		The indicators do not capture what is required to complete the Outcome, which

	Indicator	Baseline Level (2018)	First PIR Level (August 2020)	MTR Level - Project Team January 2021	Final Target EOP ¹ July 2022	MTR Assessment March 2021	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
p o n e n t 2	9. Tonnes of CO ₂ e emissions mitigated through afforestation/reforestation [GEF Indicator 4, CCM-2 Programme 4]	Zero	The indicator is on track. The plantations will sequester 18,485 tons of CO ₂ from the ambient air through the above mentioned (indicator 8) tree plantation efforts. For estimation of this carbon sequestration, FAO's EX-Ante Carbon Balance Tool (EX-ACT) has been used.	The indicator is on track. Sequestration of CO ₂ calculated for 90 hectares of reforested alluvial lands applying FAO's EX-Ante Carbon Balance Tool (EX-ACT).	104,352 tCO ₂ e sequestered through afforestation/reforestation	No data at Mid-term The project is recalculating the mitigation figures. Will have to take into account harvesting of the fuelwood.	MS	specifies improved land-use planning across the ecosystem taking into account climate change impacts. Work has been satisfactory on all important aspects but the expected results will not be achieved by July 2022.
	10. No. of Protected Area management and district/community land use plans integrating sustainable, conservation-compatible livelihoods and climate change concerns.	Zero Protected Area or district/community land-use plans currently exist with integration of climate change into planning or management of the Wakhan National Park	The indicator is on track. A five-year management plan for WNP has been drafted through extensive consultations with local communities, government agencies and non-government stakeholders. The plan incorporates many ecological, social and socio-economical aspects resulting from field studies and surveys. The plan is currently under final approval of NEPA.	Though the COVID-19 impacted the project staff travel to WNP due to travel restriction by the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the WNP management plan was finalized, signed and endorsed by provincial MAIL, NEPA and Badakhshan Governor and local community members in Badakhshan Province. In addition, the climate vulnerability assessment further improved through developing species distribution model, grassland degradation	1 Protected Areas management plan and 2 community-level plans for 2 community associations (3 plans in total) are developed/ revised with integration of climate change concerns and conservation-compatible livelihoods for the Wakhan National Park or (if WNP management plan not approved) in the Teggermansu Wildlife Reserve,	Wakhan NP Management Plan has been under preparation for many years and in 2020 the project was instrumental in getting it approved by government. Under the project work will begin on integrating results of livelihoods, ecological survey and climate change work into revisions of the MP (due in 2022) and into the preparation of a subsidiary NP Development Plan Introductory one-day workshops were held with 9 Rangeland Management Associations and 4 Forest Management Associations		

	Indicator	Baseline Level (2018)	First PIR Level (August 2020)	MTR Level - Project Team January 2021	Final Target EOP ¹ July 2022	MTR Assessment March 2021	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To predict the impact of climate change on communities and Snow Leopard habitat and develop sustainable land-use plans, WCS, working with Conservation Solutions, contracted Colombia University to downscale climate data and develop a climate model under three different scenarios. This contract is cost shared between EU and GEF 6 grants. 	<p>model, hydrological model and Socio-economic indicators.</p> <p>In addition, Rangeland Management Associations (RMAs) and Forest Management Associations (FMAs) have been formed, and have prepared land used plans for their community. These have been under process to be officially registered with MAIL.</p>	and in the Big Pamir Wildlife Reserve Management Plans as well as in the Rangeland Management Plans of two community associations.	and draft rangeland and forest management plans were developed. Further work is required on these, and the project proposes to engage community facilitators to ensure the extended dialogue that will be required. Two plans could be produced within the existing project timeframe, but to ensure integration of all the results from the Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool more (not complete yet) it is likely that more time will be required.		
Component 3: Knowledge management and M&E.								
Outcome 3: Enhanced knowledge management through awareness raising, monitoring and evaluation								
C	11. Number of knowledge products reflecting lessons learned and best practices disseminated on the programme website, nationally, regionally and internationally	Zero	Indicator on track. As part of the human-wildlife conflict mitigation plan, an information brochure containing step by step instructions on how to construct a communal predator proof corral has been developed. Predator-proof corrals help	Manual for predator-proof corrals and the snow leopard communication and visibility strategy reflects lessons learned and best practices of the project have been drafted.	5 including at least one each on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> wildlife trade human-wildlife conflict mitigation Snow Leopard ecology, i.e. population trends of snow leopards and prey species 	Various products produced and should easily reach the target. Programme website not updated for some time. But number of products is not the best measure of success without some measure of quality and impact; i.e. it is not necessarily the case that the more publications		

	Indicator	Baseline Level (2018)	First PIR Level (August 2020)	MTR Level - Project Team January 2021	Final Target EOP ¹ July 2022	MTR Assessment March 2021	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
Component 3	as relevant [GWP Indicator Outcome 6]		communities to reduce livestock predation (see indicator # 6).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information technology tools e.g. SMART • Animal health at wildlife/livestock interface 	<p>produced, the greater the progress towards the goal.</p> <p>Various products produced and should easily reach the target. But number of products is not the best measure of success without some measure of quality and impact.</p> <p>The impact of the various knowledge products produced should be critically assessed under the project, taking into account international experience with printing and distribution of public information products, and decisions for the campaign made accordingly.</p>	S	<p>Satisfactory in that the (unsatisfactory) indicators will be reached by the current termination date in July 2022, and that the MTR knows that the programme is in good hands.</p> <p>However, there is a proviso. Although the project is on track to achieve these indicator targets by July 2022, and the work done to date looks promising, the indicators do not fully capture what is expected in the prodod by the end of the project.</p> <p>Standing alone, this outcome can be</p>
	12. Number of awareness campaigns and outreach activities to educate target groups on the importance of wildlife	Zero	The indicator is on track. During this reporting period, the project conducted a public awareness campaign covering 42 CDCs in Wakhan. The campaign reached 1,339 women and	Although COVID-19 negatively impacted this indicator because the government ban all social gathering. Some of the project outreach events such as the World Wildlife Day, World Biodiversity Day, Ag-fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 3 outreach activities on the importance of wildlife conservation and relevant laws, including at least 	<p>Target number of outreach activities has been achieved.</p> <p>Emphasis so far on participating in international and national anniversaries - Climate Change Week, International Snow</p>		

	Indicator	Baseline Level (2018)	First PIR Level (August 2020)	MTR Level - Project Team January 2021	Final Target EOP ¹ July 2022	MTR Assessment March 2021	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
	conservation and the negative impacts of illegal wildlife trade [GWP Outcome 5.3]		236 children. The campaign covered principles of conservation, snow leopard behavior and importance of the species conservation for Wakhan community development. During this campaign 1,350 snow leopard posters and 1,200 anti-poaching stickers were distributed to the participants. For 2020, the awareness campaigns and outreach activities have been planned and are ready to be conducted as soon as social restrictions due to COVID-19 situation are lifted in the project target area. This will be done through the Environmental Education Programme. The following preparation steps have been	festival and etc. were not convened and postponed for 2021 at the national level. Nevertheless, public awareness campaigns have been delivered in 2019 and 2020. In 2019, the campaign covered 42 CDCs of Wakhan Valley that was targeting specifically women and children. Under this campaign, the knowledge of 1,339 women and 236 children on snow leopard basic ecology, behaviour and the importance of the species conservation for Wakhan community development and ecosystem management was increased. During this campaign, 1,350 snow leopard posters and 1,200 snow leopard anti-poaching stickers distributed in all households of the Wakhan Valley.	2 specifically for women	Leopard Day, World Environment Day etc. This is the basis of the project's Communication Strategy and should be re-assessed in conjunction with a communication needs analysis. Project held a webinar in March broadcast by the Snow Leopard Network. Routine links with GSLEP, SLN and other GEF funded Snow Leopard projects would be advantageous to all.		completed but for maximum effect completion of Outcome 3 is dependent on completion of Outcomes 1 and 2 so that knowledge products fully reflecting lessons learned under the project can be disseminated widely. There is room for improvement: a review of effectiveness of current approaches to public information, a revised project communication strategy, and some innovative work on monitoring and evaluation and presentation of lessons learned. The outcome is open-ended: the more time that is available the more can be achieved.

	Indicator	Baseline Level (2018)	First PIR Level (August 2020)	MTR Level - Project Team January 2021	Final Target EOP ¹ July 2022	MTR Assessment March 2021	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
			<p>completed for this purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafted a Communication and Visibility Strategy addressing Snow Leopard conservation • Drafted two storybooks about Snow Leopard conservation and climate change • Prepared a poster introducing key wildlife species within WNP • Drafted a brochure about Afghanistan's biodiversity • Designed a notebook containing GEF project information to be distributed during EEP and outreach activities 	<p>In 2020, the project delivered the second round of the campaign and reached 1228 women and 211 children (1,439 people) in 40 CDCs of WNP through PowerPoint presentations, distribution of 3,000 posters and 1,500 brochures. As part of the EEP mural of Wakhan wildlife was painted in 5 schools of Wakhan National Park</p> <p>Additionally, in 2020, the project facilitated the celebration for World Environment Day and International Snow Leopard Day in Faizabad City, Badakhshan Province. In this event 2,000 brochures were distributed and two round table discussions were facilitated and broadcasted via a local radio station. The radio broadcast reached about 40,000 people living in and around Faizabad City</p>				

	Indicator	Baseline Level (2018)	First PIR Level (August 2020)	MTR Level - Project Team January 2021	Final Target EOP ¹ July 2022	MTR Assessment March 2021	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
				with friendly messages about sustainable natural resources management, wildlife conservation focused on snow leopards, and climate change adaptation and mitigation				

Annex 3 The project indicators (from SRF at Inception) with MTR comments on design

Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target	Assumptions	MTR Comments
					Missing section on means of verification that usually comes above the Assumptions in the final column of SRF? This is an important section and if not in this form should be included elsewhere.
Project Objective: To strengthen conservation of the snow leopard and its critical ecosystem in Afghanistan through a holistic and sustainable landscape approach that addresses existing and emerging threats					
1. Population of key species in Wakhan District remains stable or increases as indicated by the following species: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snow Leopards • Marco Polo Sheep • Himalayan Ibex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41 (26 in monitoring area in Hindu Kush –from Pagish to Sast & 15 in monitoring area in west Big Pamir) • 344+/- 122 (in west Big Pamir) • 717+/-253 (in monitoring area in Hindu Kush) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ≥41 • Stable or significant increase • Stable or significant increase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ≥41 • Stable or significant increase • Stable or significant increase 	Project activities lead to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a reduction in retaliatory killing of Snow Leopards; • reduced hunting and thus stable or increased prey base for Snow Leopards; and • reduced transmission of diseases from domestic animals to Snow Leopards and their prey species. • Continuing level of political will from the national and provincial level governments to accord high priority to protect and monitor snow leopards and prey species. 	INDICATORS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the METT there is reference to camera trapping and faecal DNA analysis for Snow Leopards. Need some reference to method(s) used here. [Note: The METT has the old figure of 140 (from the Prodoc version of SRF) for Mid-term] • As WCS readily agree, it is notoriously difficult to measure actual population size. An indicator that tells us something about abundance but is not actual population size would be useful as a measure of trend. • It is good indicator in that it does not set up unrealistic targets • Possible alternatives/additions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As cannot determine population sizes precisely better to use an index that reflects population size (which could be converted to an estimated population size). For Argali you have the result of the annual West Big Pamir census and that would be excellent here. ○ Index derived from ranger patrol SMART or notebook data that measures frequency of finding sign on standard patrol routes ○ Rangeland health measures already being recorded by WCS on long term basis, including through on the ground surveys and remote sensing. Rangeland health in the upland areas would be a good proxy for Snow Leopard prey measures ○ Abundance of the Artemisia and other shrubs that tree-planting is aimed at reducing collection of ○ Index derived from WCS' camera trap AI analysis for individual identification (see Section 4.2.1.3) ○ Standardized approach under PAWS scheme of GSLEP ASSUMPTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First three assumptions are implicit in the impact - i.e. assessing the impacts of the project assuming the impacts are positive. Could call them 'circular'. • The fourth assumption is fine - something outside the project control that has to hold for the impacts to be positive
2. Number of direct project beneficiaries, disaggregated by gender [UNDP IRRF indicator] from the following groups:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a) 0; (b) 0; (c) 0 • Zero 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a) 10; (b) 10; (c) 15 • 500 (50% female) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a) 20; (b) 20; (c) 25 • 1,500 (50% female) 	Training of government officials and community rangers leads to increased knowledge, skills and capacity to monitor and combat trade in Snow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INDICATORS This is a multifaceted indicator and difficult to measure because criteria are not provided for what constitutes

Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target	Assumptions	MTR Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of (a) central and (b) provincial government officials including (c) community rangers who improved their knowledge and skills on IWT and law enforcement as measured by the CD scorecard. No. of local people in project demonstration areas benefitting from engagement in conservation activities, reduced HWC and improved livelihoods (m/f) 				<p>Leopard, other species and wildlife products.</p> <p>Capacity development scorecard accurately captures enhancements in capacity that result directly in improved performance in law enforcement and addressing IWT</p>	<p>improvement in knowledge and benefits from engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why limited to just IWT and Law enforcement? Could expand this to other training too? The CD Scorecard is for an institution not for a set number of individuals within an institution. The local people sub-indicator is sound in principle but requires a lot of criteria for decision on whether people qualify to be counted in to the total <p>Possible alternatives/additions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCS have been measuring economic wellbeing through basic necessity surveys and this may be utilizable Questionnaire surveys, with robust sampling protocol <p>ASSUMPTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First assumption circular again Second assumption is very valid concern - but there is something wrong with the formulation of the indicator and the targets - should be looking at score of a whole institution, not number of individuals who improved scores (see above under INDICATORS)
3. Increase in Protected Areas Management Effectiveness score [GWP Indicator Outcome 1]	68	68	72	<p>Project activities lead to improved effectiveness in protected area management in the Wakhan National Park</p> <p>WNP Management plan to be approved and enacted in Wakhan during the life time of the project.</p>	<p>INDICATORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Just use METT score - the indicator here is the score not the increase in the score. What is the consistency of METT scores when the measurement is done by different individuals/teams? It would be good to assess this for future reference. Recommend a team be established for future including post-project. <p>Possible alternatives/additions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of binding WNPMP priority conservation measures taken through decisions made by responsible body <p>ASSUMPTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First assumption circular again - merely repeats the indicator - aiming for increase in management effectiveness score only if management improved by the project Second assumption is fine
Component 1: Illegal take and trade of snow leopards and human-wildlife conflict reduced through greater community involvement Outcome 1: Strengthened conservation of Snow Leopards through reduced illegal wildlife trade and decreased incidences of human-wildlife conflict					Component normally gives the general topic and the Outcome the specific result or state to be attained
<p>4. Status of illegal wildlife trade in Afghanistan with specific focus on snow leopard and prey species, as indicated by the following measurement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of tools developed to combat wildlife crime in Wakhan [GWP Indicator Outcome 4] One system for monitoring of wildlife trade markets is established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No tools are used in Wakhan to combat wildlife crime No system for monitoring of wildlife trade markets currently available to the government Wildlife trade task force does not exist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One tool (SMART) to detect and monitor illegal wildlife trade in Wakhan is developed. A system for monitoring of wildlife trade markets is being developed. A Wildlife trade task force is established. 	<p>One tool (SMART) to detect and monitor illegal wildlife trade in Wakhan is finalized and fully operationalized.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A comprehensive system for monitoring of wildlife trade markets is operationalized and used by NEPA for CITES reporting. 	<p>Training results in rangers of Wakhan being able to understand and easily use SMART tool.</p> <p>Use of SMART will improve effectiveness of efforts to combat wildlife trade in Wakhan.</p> <p>The assessment framework will enable accurate monitoring of wildlife trade, which will in turn support efforts to combat such trade.</p>	<p>INDICATORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outcome deals with actual impacts on Snow Leopard Conservation and Human Wildlife Conflict - not how many tools have been developed. This is three indicators in one - but the subdivisions - the bullet points - are "process" indicators as opposed to "impact" indicators, and generally the SRF is supposed to measure impact. It reads like a number of outputs linked to the control of illegal wildlife trade but there is no measure of the status of illegal wildlife trade. <p>Possible alternatives/additions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We should be looking here at impact on the wildlife trade – trends in numbers of snow leopards and other wildlife being traded - or numbers of incidents detected. Eventually

Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target	Assumptions	MTR Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wildlife trade task force established consisting of representatives of relevant governmental organizations. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Wildlife trade task force is functional with 2-3 meetings held annually. 	Relevant agencies are cooperative and interested to combat IWT, and political will exists to strengthen and maintain collaboration between relevant institutions.	<p>numbers of arrests of traders could be used but at present there are no such arrests (see Main Report 4.4.1).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to measure, but an indicator - an index - linked to the status of illegal trade rather than tools produced to combat illegal trade. Possibly, if available, numbers of airport detections of wildlife crime - and Snow Leopard specifically? Number of cases of poaching (or whatever you have to call it) in a)Wakhan b) Ishkashim - including by Afghan police and border police (see Section 4.2.1.2) <p>ASSUMPTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All these assumptions need examination even if there is an element of circularity in the first three. It is indeed true that a high quality assessment framework is vital to the impact of the project on IWT.
<p>5. Level of institutional capacity to combat IWT as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDP Capacity Development scorecard for NEPA, MAIL and WPA A comprehensive IWT training package developed and training delivered to law enforcement staff – including development of training materials – to enhance Inter-agency collaboration on IWT (Afghan police, customs, MAIL, NEPA and Ministry of Interior). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NEPA & MAIL: 24; WPA: 29 No comprehensive training materials or technical training provided on combatting illegal wildlife trade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NEPA & MAIL: 29; WPA: 34 One comprehensive training package on combatting illegal wildlife trade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NEPA & MAIL: 34; WPA: 37 One comprehensive training course in at least three locations (in Kabul and Badakhshan) provided to officials from Afghan police, customs, MAIL, NEPA and Ministry of Interior on combatting illegal wildlife trade 	<p>HR of the relevant organizations remain stable and does not change.</p> <p>Political will exists to strengthen and maintain collaboration between relevant institutions.</p> <p>Training is easily understood and applicable in day-to-day activities of the relevant officials in government institutions.</p>	<p>INDICATORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of institutional capacity is what is being measured with the bullet points in Indicator 4. The CD scorecard is fine, as long as there is confidence in the scorecard to reflect this particular capacity, and in the way the scorecard is applied. As above, under METT, what is the consistency of CD scorecard scores when the measurement is done by different individuals/teams? The baselines in the SRF (24/45 for NEPA/MAIL and 29/45 for WPA) are totally different from those in the Tracking Tools (11/45 for NEPA/MAIL and 13/45 for WPA) (See Tracking tools in Annex 21 of this MTR report). For the second indicator, see note above under Indicator 4 about “process” indicators. The comprehensive IWT training package is part of Output 1.2 – so should not also be used as an indicator. <p>ASSUMPTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good, all these assumptions are valid "Reliability of the scorecard...." would be a very valid additional <i>assumption</i>.
<p>6. Reduced levels of human–wildlife conflict as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of predator-proof corrals constructed to reduce predation of domestic livestock by Snow Leopards Decrease in livestock lost to predators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 31 Mortality rate = 4 %. 	<p>Four additional predator-proof corrals constructed (new total of 35 corrals)</p> <p>3.6% (10% reduction)</p>	<p>Eight additional predator-proof corrals constructed (new total of 39 corrals) and eight corrals repaired.</p> <p>3.2% (20% reduction in loss)</p>	<p>Corrals are properly constructed and result in zero predation of livestock by Snow Leopards and wolves.</p> <p>The ‘Snow Leopard Livestock Predation Survey’ allows developing mechanisms to accurately identify and report Snow Leopard predation events.</p>	<p>INDICATORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of corrals is process but if you know that it always results in zero predation (in corrals) - your assumption, then it could be used “Decrease in livestock lost...” is in principle an excellent numerical indicator (just what is required), but perhaps define area and period of time. And be precise. Number killed, or percentage – and there has to be information on how it is measured. Whether changes can be made quickly enough to show impacts during the project remains to be seen, but there could be post project monitoring too. Possible alternatives/additions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perhaps number of reports of Snow Leopards being killed in whole of Wakhan. Perhaps not enough breadth to this as it would be very small range.

Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target	Assumptions	MTR Comments
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Or a measure of loss of livestock to snow-leopards? This could be done through meta-DNA analysis of Snow Leopard scats. MTR team was informed that there are plans to analyse Snow Leopard scats collected in 2020 for prey species DNA WCS' revised Snow Leopard Livestock Predation Survey data (see Sections 4.1.2 and 5.2.2) should be referred to in the indicator description <p>ASSUMPTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both are circular Ongoing support, enthusiasm and "ownership" of project objective on behalf of local people would be a valid assumption
7. Mechanisms put in place to monitor, manage and disseminate epidemiology and ecology of diseases in livestock and wildlife	None	Existence of a network trained para vets on animal diseases in WNP.	At least 1 set of extension materials disseminated on each of the following themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> epidemiology transmission of disease between domestic and wild animals vaccination 	Willingness of the state veterinary services to collaborate with the network.	<p>INDICATORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Again, this is a process indicator measuring outputs of the project, not impact on reduced snow leopard trade and HWC <p>Possible alternatives/additions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need here a measure of incidence of transmission of diseases of concern from livestock to wildlife. Focus on one - PPR - if that possible through routine surveys <p>ASSUMPTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is very appropriate
<p>Component 2: Landscape approach to conservation of snow leopards and their ecosystem that takes into account drivers of forest loss, degradation and climate change impacts</p> <p>Outcome 2: Improved land use planning across critical Snow Leopard ecosystems to reduce the impacts of forest loss, land degradation and climate change</p>					Component normally gives the general topic and the Outcome the specific result or state to be attained
8. Areas (ha) of degraded riparian forest and shrubland brought under sustainable management as indicated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reforestation of alluvial fans in the Wakhan region [GEF Indicator 2.4, LD-2 Prog 3; GWP Indicator Outcome 3] 	Zero	100 ha	300 ha	Afforestation/reforestation activities are successful and lead to improved vegetation cover as well as reduced ecosystem degradation.	<p>INDICATORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Again, this is the output not an indicator. Reads like a good indicator, but of what? – it should be measuring the outcome - ie how good the land-use planning is. If it was measuring how much degraded forest and shrubland brought under sustainable management through the land-use plans that would be fine, but the reforestation is done to a programme (reduced at Inception from 1000 ha to 300ha as target) Confusion as to whether this is all reforestation (first column) or some of its afforestation (final column - Assumptions - in both Indicator 8 and Indicator 9). <p>ASSUMPTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circular assumption. Better, as with the suggestion for corrals, would be assumption that local people participate in genuine manner and keep up the necessary maintenance
9. Tonnes of CO ₂ e emissions mitigated through afforestation/reforestation [GEF Indicator 4, CCM-2 Programme 4]	Zero	52,176 tCO ₂ e sequestered through afforestation/reforestation	104,352 tCO ₂ e sequestered through afforestation/ reforestation	Afforestation/reforestation activities are successful and lead to improved carbon sequestration.	<p>INDICATORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very difficult to calculate this usefully for the short period of the project. Suggest that this is an ex post facto indicator something like "Estimated amount of carbon (tCO₂eq) forecast to be sequestered per year over the six years following the project as a result of project activities". For fuelwood plantations should take into account burning of the fuelwood unless can show that former harvest of highland shrubs is abandoned or reduced as a result of availability of firewood. Timber of fruit tree plantations would sequester C more permanently

Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target	Assumptions	MTR Comments
					ASSUMPTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implicit in the indicator, although could have an assumption on effectiveness of planting protocols
10. No. of Protected Area management and district/community land use plans integrating sustainable, conservation-compatible livelihoods and climate change concerns.	Zero Protected Area or district/community land-use plans currently exist with integration of climate change into planning or management of the Wakhan National Park	One Climate change model using three different scenarios are developed for WNP.	1 Protected Areas management plan and 2 community-level plans for 2 community associations (3 plans in total) are developed/ revised with integration of climate change concerns and conservation-compatible livelihoods for the Wakhan National Park or (if WNP management plan not approved) in the Teggermansu Wildlife Reserve, and in the Big Pamir Wildlife Reserve Management Plans as well as in the Rangeland Management Plans of two community associations.	Climate change models are easy to understand and the implications thereof are easily integrated into management plans. This leads to effective implementation of measures to reduce the impacts of climate change on the Wakhan National Park, its wildlife and ecosystems. Conservation-compatible livelihood planning results in more sustainable land use with reductions in ecosystem degradation.	INDICATORS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protected area management plan rather out of place here as it does not make for a straightforward SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable and action-oriented, Relevant, and Time-bound) indicator when mixed with district and community land-use plans. Number of district plans (is that just one or zero ie Wakhan?) "sustainable, conservation-compatible livelihoods and climate change concerns" needs definition ASSUMPTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important to stress the need to make sure that the climate model is explained clearly, but the assumptions are circular or redundant in other ways Possible alternative/additional indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area of land being administered under sound (define criteria for this) land-use plans would be a better measure of impact. Score on how RMA and FMA official guidance in management planning reflect biodiversity conservation standards. Some measure of number of steps taken to ensure that NP status is reflected in decisions on the Belt and Road Initiative plans for Wakhan
Component 3: Knowledge management and M&E Outcome 3: Enhanced knowledge management through awareness raising, monitoring and evaluation					Component normally gives the general topic and the Outcome the specific result or state to be attained
11. Number of knowledge products reflecting lessons learned and best practices disseminated on the programme website, nationally, regionally and internationally as relevant [GWP Indicator Outcome 6]	Zero	1	5 including at least one each on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> wildlife trade human-wildlife conflict mitigation Snow Leopard ecology, i.e. population trends of snow leopards and prey species information technology tools e.g. SMART Animal health at wildlife/livestock interface 	The production and dissemination of knowledge products lead to improved understanding of Snow Leopards and how to conserve them. In turn, this improved understanding leads to enhanced action that effectively reduces threats to Snow Leopards, their prey base and the critical ecosystems upon which they depend.	INDICATORS (11 and 12) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers are useful but not the ultimate point: although numbers of products/outreach activities reflect efforts and output, it would be better to also get an indication of the impact of the project on people's knowledge, or how well it is getting publicized. Perhaps the number of online or print publications that refer to the project? Alternatively, the indicator could measure the degree to which knowledge products/outreach activities are fully produced/implemented by local institutions without further input from the project ASSUMPTIONS (11 and 12)These assumptions state that the knowledge products/outreach activities will lead to impact but the indicators are supposed to measure the trend along the path from knowledge product/outreach activities to impact. Possible alternative/additional indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of knowledge products supporting project objective and outcomes that are produced by agencies independently of the project Number of agencies producing such products Number of hits to project website Eventually, number of downloads of documents from archive (see Section 4.4.1) Numbers and categories of mentions of new information about Afghanistan Snow Leopard project on GSLEP and SLN websites
12. Number of awareness campaigns and outreach activities to educate target groups on the importance of wildlife conservation and the negative impacts of illegal wildlife trade [GWP Outcome 5.3]	Zero	At least 1 outreach activity on the importance of wildlife conservation and relevant laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 3 outreach activities on the importance of wildlife conservation and relevant laws, including at least 2 specifically for women 	Outreach activities lead to improved understanding of Snow Leopards, which in turn leads to improved conservation of Snow Leopards, other wildlife and critical ecosystems.	

Annex 4. Project Management's assessment of progress at MTR stage

Annex 4a Progress against the objective and outcomes

Project Management's assessment of progress at MTR stage and any relevant problems, constraints or bonuses			
Project Objective, Components and Outputs	Progress by January 2021 (MTR)	Any relevant problems or constraints – expected and unexpected	Any unexpected bonuses arising from events/circumstances
Project Objective: <i>To strengthen conservation of the snow leopard and its critical ecosystem in Afghanistan through a holistic and sustainable landscape approach that addresses existing and emerging threats</i>	<p>The project is on track to achieve objective, outcomes and outputs, with some delay because of COVID-19.</p>	<p>The main constraint during 2020 was the COVID-19 and government restrictions on movement and meetings.</p>	<p>During 2020, WCS has been able to access funds from CEPF to funding improvements in the co-management system for Wakhan National Parks.</p> <p>In June 2020, NEPA declared 4 new protected areas in Afghanistan based on the Wakhan model. This includes Nuristan National Park which covers the whole of Nuristan Province. Nuristan and Panjshir (new protected area in process) are part of the snow leopard landscape or range in Afghanistan. WCS with project funding supported the declaration of these new protected areas.</p>

Project Management's assessment of progress at MTR stage and any relevant problems, constraints or bonuses				
<p>Component 1: <i>Illegal take and trade of snow leopards and human-wildlife conflict reduced through greater community involvement</i></p> <p>Outcome 1: Strengthened conservation of Snow Leopards through reduced illegal wildlife trade and decreased incidences of human–wildlife conflict</p>		<p>Activities have been completed and/or are on schedule to be completed.</p> <p>Communities in Wakhan understand the important of stopping poaching and IWT. Communities are not involved in poaching and IWT and have change their habits. Poaching is now done by outsiders. Most Wakhan people resent outsiders breaking the laws and rules which are outlined in the WNP Park Management Plan. The WNP O</p>	<p>Poaching and IWT in WNP is mainly carried out by outsiders. Outsiders are difficult to control. New infrastructure is now linking upper Wakhan to China, and this will be a challenge in the future.</p>	<p>Communities in Wakhan understand the important of stopping poaching and IWT. Communities are not involved in poaching and IWT and have change their habits. Poaching is now done by outsiders. Most Wakhan people resent outsiders breaking the laws and rules which are outlined in the WNP Park Management Plan. The WNP PAC is committed to ending poaching and IWT in WNP. They support community rangers.</p>
	<p>Output 1.1: Illegal wildlife trade assessed and monitored.</p>	<p>In progress. Tools and methods have been prepared and are now being used.</p>	<p>Transparency is a constraint, since people involved in IWT are not forthcoming when being surveyed. There is a need for triangular to get a better understanding of the reality.</p>	<p>People involved in the IWT (markets, restaurants, traditional medicine shops) tend to be more forthcoming and honest when surveys are conducted by students or young graduates as part of their academic studies. WCS has therefore engaged interns and new graduates for this purpose with better results. Funding is needed to support internship programs and for engaging new graduates.</p>
	<p>Output 1.2: Improved government capacity to combat illegal wildlife trade.</p>	<p>Training has been provided at the local level in WNP, and government authorities are now engaged in the IWT Taskforce at the national level. Through meetings, they are building their capacity to combat the illegal wildlife trade.</p>	<p>Project was initially conceptualized to focus on WNP. It has now been extended to Zebak and Ishkashim. IWT is a national and international issues which needs to be addressed at the local, provincial,</p>	<p>Through regional consultations associated with NBSAP and IWT Surveys, representatives of government agencies from all regions and provinces have a better understanding of the IWT and have more capacity for</p>

Project Management's assessment of progress at MTR stage and any relevant problems, constraints or bonuses				
			national and international levels. This is a constraint.	combating the trade at the provincial level.
	Output 1.3: Human-Snow Leopard conflict assessed and mitigated.	Assessments have been carried out and tools are being developed for monitoring.	No comprehensive systems for addressing human-wildlife conflict across snow leopard range in Afghanistan. There is no compensation scheme for lost livestock and no rapid response team to capture and release predators following attacks.	There is now a consensus that a compensation scheme should be funded under a Trust Fund established under this project. There should also be a rapid response team in Wakhan which can response to predator attacks, especially snow leopards, and remove the snow leopard to a safe area away from settlements. This would strength the support of communities for snow leopard conservation.
Component 2: <i>Landscape approach to conservation of snow leopards and their ecosystem that takes into account drivers of forest loss, degradation and climate change impacts</i> Outcome 2: Improved land use planning across critical Snow Leopard ecosystems to reduce the impacts of forest loss, land degradation and climate change impact		Development of the Climate Model and vulnerability assessment tool is on track. This will be used to improve land use planning across the snow leopard landscape (within Panj-Amu River Basin). This will guide community level land use planning as well. Forest and rangeland associations have and are being establishment across the landscape and these institutions will carry out land use planning at the community level.	The main challenge has been to access data from a range of government agencies. All data and information related to area along international boundaries are considered confidential and not open accessed data. WCS has established MOUs with MAIL and NEPA, and is developing MOU with NWARA to access data.	WCS has convinced Columbia University and NASA to extend their Climate Model to all of Afghanistan and not just to the Panj-Amu River Basin. This is being done without any additional cost.

Project Management's assessment of progress at MTR stage and any relevant problems, constraints or bonuses

<p>Output 2.1: Improved understanding of snow leopard ecology to inform landscape approach to conservation.</p>	<p>Surveys and assessments have been design and implement with only a few delays because of COVID-19. This has been linked to the development of the vulnerability assessment tool which will improve landscape management and held target investments to areas which are most critical for snow leopards.</p>	<p>COVID-19 restrictions where were a challenge in 2020. However, WCS was able to complete most surveys.</p>	<p>WCS has funding for other projects which is being used to pay salaries and carry out surveys related to snow leopard and prey. This includes EU Project and NBSAP. With funding from NBSAP, WCS has hired an Afghan PHD graduate (US University) as Ecology Specialist. He will be support snow leopard and prey surveys, and will co-author any publications resulting from this research.</p>
<p>Output 2.2: Unsustainable grazing and fuelwood collection reduced through sustainable land use plans that promote conservation-compatible land uses and livelihoods.</p>	<p>The project is on track to deliver this output. Targets will be achieved or exceeded. The surveys and assessment associated with the development of the Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool are guiding the development of strategies and activities. The Model and Tool are also building community forest and rangeland associations in the development of their community land use plans, which include conservation-compatible land uses and livelihoods.</p>	<p>COVID-19 restrictions negatively impacted the program and delayed some activities.</p>	<p>Delays associated with COVID-19 provided an opportunity for the project to carry out and complete a assessment of land available for riparian afforestation/reforestation. It also allowed time for WCS and Conservation Solution to remotely map areas in Wakhan which are suitable for reforestation based on a set of biogeoclimatic criteria.</p>
<p>Output 2.3: The impacts of climate change on snow leopards and their ecosystem addressed through land use planning.</p>	<p>The surveys and assessment associated with the development of the Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool are on track. Columbia University and NASA have completed their work on developing the Climate Model. Surveys and assessment required for vulnerability</p>	<p>COVID-19 restrictions negatively impacted the program and delayed some activities.</p>	<p>Columbia University and NASA have extended Climate Model to cover all of Afghanistan instead of limiting it to the Panj-Amu River Basin. This is done a no added cost to the project.</p>

Project Management's assessment of progress at MTR stage and any relevant problems, constraints or bonuses				
		assessment tool are on track. The tool will identify vulnerable ecosystems and guide interventions and investments for reduce vulnerability and increase resilience. This will guide land use planning and the basin, provincial, district and village level.		
Component 3: <i>Knowledge management and M&E</i> Outcome 3: Enhanced knowledge management through awareness raising, monitoring and evaluation		This is on track and the project will achieve targets by end of project.	COVID-19 restrictions negatively impacted the program and delayed some activities. This includes some of the scheduled events.	The project was proactive and used the time of COVID-19 restrictions to prepare materials for awareness and knowledge management.
	Output 3.1: Knowledge management, education and outreach conducted to promote snow leopard conservation and trade reduction	This is on track and the project will achieve targets by end of project.	COVID-19 restrictions negatively impacted the program and delayed some activities. This includes some of the scheduled events.	<p>The project was proactive and used the time of COVID-19 restrictions to prepare materials for awareness and knowledge management.</p> <p>Time was also spent preparation presentation and training materials for regional/province consultations on NBSAP and IWT. The materials have been well received by participants in these consultations.</p>

Annex 4b Review of progress against the 27 prodoc activities

Instructions for completion.

This should be completed in summary form, just a few lines per action. It is not intended as a full report, rather to provide a concise assessment of what has been achieved against each of the activities described in the Prodoc. Once completed it will be used by the MTR to assess current status and potential status at project end (July 2022), and it will also inform review of project design. If any activities contribute to other outputs please indicate in the final column. It is important to know the current status of actions carried out in parallel but that contribute to the project outcomes, so please give relevant information on that too. If some activities have been postponed or it has been decided not to pursue them under the project please say so: this is not an examination to test what proportion of planned activities have been carried out (there may be good reasons why they have been delayed or even dropped, and activities may have been added – in which case please indicate): it is an overall assessment that will inform MTR conclusions on both IMPLEMENTATION and PROJECT DESIGN. If the Project Team have been working on additional activities relevant to the Project Objective and Outcomes then please mention them (eg on tourism/handicrafts in collaboration with EU?).

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES (27) BY PROJECT, BY OTHERS, OR IN PARTNERSHIP			
Activities as listed in PRODOC	Status, degree of completion and what remains to be done. If not to be pursued further, say so.	Main actors and responsibilities	Requirements for future inputs from project + assessment of priority and feasibility within project timeframe
Outcome 1: Strengthened conservation of Snow Leopards through reduced illegal wildlife trade and decreased incidences of human–wildlife conflict.			
Output 1.1: Illegal wildlife trade assessed and monitored.			

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES (27) BY PROJECT, BY OTHERS, OR IN PARTNERSHIP			
Activities as listed in PRODOC	Status, degree of completion and what remains to be done. If not to be pursued further, say so.	Main actors and responsibilities	Requirements for future inputs from project + assessment of priority and feasibility within project timeframe
Activity 1.1.1 <i>Prepare a comprehensive assessment framework (including a detailed methodology, guidelines and questionnaires) for periodic monitoring of wildlife trade markets.</i>	The draft assessment framework has been prepared and shared with members of IWT Taskforce for their inputs.	NEPA and WCS with members of IWT Taskforce	The assessment will be finalized and implemented during the project's timeframe. Implementation can be expanded with additional funding (reallocation of funds).
Activity 1.1.2 <i>Conduct wildlife trade assessments in the project target areas using a 'learning-by-doing' approach involving government staff from NEPA, MAIL and other relevant institutions.</i>	National IWT Taskforce formed comprising key stakeholders from government and civil society. Survey questionnaires prepared for live markets, meat markets, restaurants, and traditional medicine shops. Presentation prepared for NBSAP Consultation Workshops – will cover all regions and provinces of Afghanistan. NBSAP questionnaires include questions on IWT and will be completed by participants from all provinces of Afghanistan.	NEPA leading taskforce comprising key government and civil society stakeholders. Funding from EU, GEF UNDP, GEF UNEP.	Funding for on-going training and awareness raising for communities, law enforcement, and other stakeholders in Wakhan and all across the snow leopard range in Afghanistan. Funding support for key staff now funded by other projects. Funding for establishment and operation of rapid respond force and the national and provincial levels across Afghanistan, starting with the snow leopard range provinces. This can be partially completed during the project but would need to extend beyond the project's timeframe.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES (27) BY PROJECT, BY OTHERS, OR IN PARTNERSHIP			
Activities as listed in PRODOC	Status, degree of completion and what remains to be done. If not to be pursued further, say so.	Main actors and responsibilities	Requirements for future inputs from project + assessment of priority and feasibility within project timeframe
Activity 1.1.3 <i>Analyse data collected and produce a briefing report with detailed recommendations for relevant government agencies and local institutions on decreasing wildlife trade activities.</i>	TOR drafted for IWT Taskforce. Questionnaires are being processed and analysis as the consultation workshops and IWT surveys are being rolled-out to all provinces of Afghanistan. Once surveys completed for all provinces of Afghanistan, a final comprehensive report will be prepared for IWT in Afghanistan. Once complete, consultations and trainings will be held with key stakeholders in all regions and provinces of Afghanistan. This will inform the preparation of new policies and legislation, or the revision of existing policies and legislation.	NEPA leading taskforce comprising key government and civil society stakeholders. Funding from EU, GEF UNDP, GEF UNEP. WCS and interns from Afghan Universities. Afghan NGOs provide support for consultations and surveys in regions.	Additional funding for consultations and surveys. Additional funding for work at policy and legislation level. Additional funding for preparation and publishing of reports and findings. This can be done within the project timeframe with additional resources, funding and human resources. Work on policy and legislation may extend beyond the project's timeframe.
ANY OTHER ACTIVITIES			

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES (27) BY PROJECT, BY OTHERS, OR IN PARTNERSHIP			
Activities as listed in PRODOC	Status, degree of completion and what remains to be done. If not to be pursued further, say so.	Main actors and responsibilities	Requirements for future inputs from project + assessment of priority and feasibility within project timeframe
Output 1.2: Improved government capacity to combat illegal wildlife trade.			
Activity 1.2.1 <i>Develop and deliver training materials in local languages on monitoring of illegal wildlife trade nationally as well as at international border posts.</i>	<p>Initial training packages have been prepared and used to train law enforcement agencies in Wakhan. Awareness materials have been prepared and used in Wakhan and events.</p> <p>Training packages and awareness materials will be revised and enriched based on the findings of the national surveys.</p> <p>Training packages and awareness materials will be reviewed by the IWT Taskforce.</p>	NEPA leading taskforce comprising key government and civil society stakeholders. Funding from EU, GEF UNDP, GEF UNEP.	Additional funding will be required to roll-out the training materials for Wakhan and the rest of the snow leopard range in Afghanistan. Additional funding will also be required to roll-out the training materials to all regions and provinces of Afghanistan. This can be done within project timeframe with additional funding and human resources.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES (27) BY PROJECT, BY OTHERS, OR IN PARTNERSHIP			
Activities as listed in PRODOC	Status, degree of completion and what remains to be done. If not to be pursued further, say so.	Main actors and responsibilities	Requirements for future inputs from project + assessment of priority and feasibility within project timeframe
Activity 1.2.2 <i>Develop and deliver a Training Management Package for MAIL and NEPA technical staff in the use of the 'Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool' to improve understanding and monitoring of environmental issues in protected areas.</i>	Columbia University has completed their modelling work for the Panj-Amu River Basin. At the request of WCS, they have extended their modelling work to the whole of Afghanistan. The indicator document for the vulnerability assessment tool has been prepared and shared with key stakeholders. A hydrological consultant company has been contracted to develop models for the Panj-Amu River Basin, which includes much of the snow leopard range in Afghanistan.	NEPA, MAIL and NWARA WCS and Conservation Solutions (WCS Scientific Group) working with Columbia University and NASA. Aga Khan Foundation with the Support of University of Central Asia.	Funding is required for the further development of the Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool for Panj-Amu River Basin. This can be done within the timeframe of the project with some additional funding. To cover the whole of the snow leopard range in Afghanistan, the Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool needs to be extended to the Kabul (Indus) River Basin of Afghanistan. This can be done within the timeframe of the project with some additional funding.
Activity 1.2.3 <i>Train border police and customs officials on use and deployment of the mobile app for species identification of wildlife products</i>	Modules have been developed and training has been provided for border police and other law enforcement in Wakhan. Development and use of mobile app by border police and custom officials is in process.	NEPA and IWT Taskforce.	Specialist support will be required for the development and deployment of the mobile app for species identification of wildlife products.
ANY OTHER ACTIVITIES			
Output 1.3: Human-Snow Leopard conflict assessed and mitigated.			

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES (27) BY PROJECT, BY OTHERS, OR IN PARTNERSHIP			
Activities as listed in PRODOC	Status, degree of completion and what remains to be done. If not to be pursued further, say so.	Main actors and responsibilities	Requirements for future inputs from project + assessment of priority and feasibility within project timeframe
Activity 1.3.1 <i>Develop guidelines for conducting surveys on Snow Leopard predation of livestock</i>	Mobile tool has been developed and tested.	WCS. WNP PAC and Park Warden. Communities in Wakhan. WCS is has prepared and tested the mobile tool.	<p>This will require further development and then roll-out to other areas of Wakhan and Buffer Zone Districts (Ishkashim and Zebak) and to the rest of the snow leopard range. This will require the recruitment and training of rangers, either community rangers or government rangers. This can be roll-out to Wakhan, Zebak and Ishkashim during project's timeframe, if funding is available for recruitment and training of rangers. This Project Board has approved the expansion of project to include Zebak and Ishkashim.</p> <p>This should become part of compensation system for livestock killed by predator. The compensation system would be more sustainable and effective if funded under a Trust Fund. Underspent funds from the project could be used to fund the establishment of a trust fund for this purpose.</p>
Activity 1.3.2 <i>Train community and government rangers in identifying Snow Leopard predation incidents, as part of the 'Snow Leopard Livestock Predation Survey' team</i>	Training has been carried out for existing community and government rangers in WNP.	WCS. WNP PAC and Park Warden. Communities in Wakhan. WCS is has prepared and tested the mobile tool	If funding is allocated, this can be done within project's timeframe for Wakhan, Zebak and Ishkashim.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES (27) BY PROJECT, BY OTHERS, OR IN PARTNERSHIP			
Activities as listed in PRODOC	Status, degree of completion and what remains to be done. If not to be pursued further, say so.	Main actors and responsibilities	Requirements for future inputs from project + assessment of priority and feasibility within project timeframe
Activity 1.3.3 <i>Conduct Snow Leopard livestock predation surveys and present recommendations for co-management actions to mitigate human-wildlife conflict.</i>	Tool has been prepared and rangers have been trained for WNP. The tool has been piloted. It now needs to be rolled out to cover all of WNR and Buffer Zone Districts of Zebak and Ishkashim. This will require the recruitment and training of rangers.	WCS. WNP PAC and Park Warden. Communities in Wakhan. WCS is has prepared and tested the mobile tool	Ranger program can be extended to Zebak and Ishkashim during the project's timeframe. It will require reallocation of funds. In the future, this needs to be extended to the whole of the snow leopard range in Afghanistan.
Activity 1.3.4 <i>Construct predator-proof corrals in communal grazing areas to reduce incidences of Snow Leopard predation.</i>	Designs and guidelines have been prepared for the construction of predator-proof corrals. A survey has been completed to determine community demand for both communal and household corrals. The project has completed construction of predator-proof corrals in selected areas.	WCS. WNP PAC and Park Warden. Communities in Wakhan.	The project expects to exceed targets for predator-proof corrals in WNP. With reallocation of funds, this activity can be extended to Zebak and Ishkashim Districts (parts of the confirmed snow leopard range)
Activity 1.3.5 <i>Conduct an assessment of domestic animal-wildlife disease transmission to understand the epidemiology and ecology of diseases prevalent in the Wakhan District</i>	Survey has been designed with support of WCS international experts in One Health. Initial assessment were completed in 2020.	WCS. WNP PAC and Park Warden. Communities in Wakhan.	This activity can be up-scaled to cover WNR and the Buffer Zone Districts of Zebak and Ishkashim within project's timeframe with some reallocation of funds.
Activity 1.3.6 <i>Conduct vaccination and de-worming programmes to combat disease occurrence in communities' livestock and domestic animals.</i>	Activity was carried out in Wakhan in 2020. It needs to be up-scaled to cover more livestock in WNP and buffer zone districts.	WCS. WNP PAC and Park Warden. Communities in Wakhan.	This activity can be completed during the project's timeframe. It can up-scale to cover both WNP, Zebak and Ishkashim with reallocation of funds.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES (27) BY PROJECT, BY OTHERS, OR IN PARTNERSHIP			
Activities as listed in PRODOC	Status, degree of completion and what remains to be done. If not to be pursued further, say so.	Main actors and responsibilities	Requirements for future inputs from project + assessment of priority and feasibility within project timeframe
Activity 1.3.7 <i>Develop a reporting network to disseminate information on disease prevalence in domestic animals between community, provincial and national levels.</i>	The government already has a reporting system which is being used by WCS and partners such as AKF. The project is linking to this existing system. The project will develop a local reporting system which links to the government system. This will ensure sustainability of the activity.	WCS and MAIL	This activity can be completed during the project's timeframe, and can be extending to Zebak and Ishkashim with some reallocation of funds.
Activity 1.3.8 <i>Develop and disseminate extension materials to guide local communities in approaches to identifying and managing animal diseases.</i>	Extension materials have been prepared and tested with communities. Materials are adapted from those available from government (MAIL). Use existing materials ensure sustainability of the system.	WCS and MAIL	This can be completed within the timeframe of the project. It can be extended to Zebak and Ishkashim with some reallocation of funds.
ANY OTHER ACTIVITIES			
Outcome 2: Improved land-use planning across critical Snow Leopard ecosystems to reduce the impacts of forest loss, land degradation and climate change impact.			
Output 2.1: Improved understanding of snow leopard ecology to inform landscape approach to conservation.			

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES (27) BY PROJECT, BY OTHERS, OR IN PARTNERSHIP			
Activities as listed in PRODOC	Status, degree of completion and what remains to be done. If not to be pursued further, say so.	Main actors and responsibilities	Requirements for future inputs from project + assessment of priority and feasibility within project timeframe
Activity 2.1.1 <i>Train community rangers in collecting data on snow leopards and their prey species.</i>	This has been completed for existing community rangers. To have a more significant impact across their range in Afghanistan, the data collection system should be extended throughout the range starting with Zebak and Ishkashim (buffer zone districts)	WCS, MAIL, PAC and Communities	This can be completed during the project's timeframe. It can be extended to Zebak and Ishkashim with some reallocation of funds.
Activity 2.1.2 <i>Collect and analyse data on snow leopards and their prey species to support land-use planning.</i>	Field assessments were designed and data has been collected and is being analyzed as part of the development of the Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool. The Model and Tool will be used to identify communities and ecosystems which are most vulnerable to climate change. This will support land use planning and also investments to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience.	NEPA, MAIL and NWARA WCS and Conservation Solutions (WCS Scientific Group) working with Columbia University and NASA. Aga Khan Foundation with the Support of University of Central Asia.	The Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool for the Panj-Amu River Basin will be completed within the project's timeframe. With additional funding, it can be expanded to cover the whole of the snow leopard range in Afghanistan – that is, expanded to cover the Kabul River Basin.
ANY OTHER ACTIVITIES			

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES (27) BY PROJECT, BY OTHERS, OR IN PARTNERSHIP			
Activities as listed in PRODOC	Status, degree of completion and what remains to be done. If not to be pursued further, say so.	Main actors and responsibilities	Requirements for future inputs from project + assessment of priority and feasibility within project timeframe
Output 2.2: Unsustainable grazing and fuelwood collection reduced through sustainable land use plans that promote conservation-compatible land uses and livelihoods.			
Activity 2.2.1 <i>Undertake sustainable land-use planning for livelihood enhancement aligned with zoning requirements and conservation priorities of the Wakhan National Park</i>	Land use planning will be guided by the Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool. Households in Wakhan have mixed livelihood strategies. In 2021, market system assessments will be carried out for key market systems. This will guide livelihood interventions and also guide the revision of the WNP Management Plan in 2022.	NEPA, MAIL and NWARA WCS and Conservation Solutions (WCS Scientific Group) working with Columbia University and NASA. Aga Khan Foundation with the Support of University of Central Asia. Funding from EU and CEPF will support this work.	The Protected Area Committee for WNP has been official formed, and they have endorsed the WNP Management Plan. This provided guidance on zoning and conservation priorities. The Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool will use modern technology to support sustainable land use planning and also adaptation to climate change. This will be completed within the timeframe of the project. Additional or reallocated funding could be used to extend this to the whole of the snow leopard range in Afghanistan.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES (27) BY PROJECT, BY OTHERS, OR IN PARTNERSHIP			
Activities as listed in PRODOC	Status, degree of completion and what remains to be done. If not to be pursued further, say so.	Main actors and responsibilities	Requirements for future inputs from project + assessment of priority and feasibility within project timeframe
Activity 2.2.2 <i>Train community members and district agricultural officials on tree husbandry for sustainable forestry practices.</i>	Community members and DAIL staff have been trained in sustainable forestry practices. Initially, this focused on riparian forest, but is now be expanded to agroforestry systems mixing trees with pastures (silvopastoral systems). An assessment has been carried to identify land available for riparian afforestation in Wakhan. The Conservation Solution team has used remote sensing and biogeoclimatic indicators to make areas suitable for reforestation in Wakhan.	WCS and MAIL	Activities will be completed within the project's timeframe. Activities can be extended to Zebak and Ishkashim with some reallocation of funds. In coordination with the EU Project, afforestation will extend to dryland sites in and around settlement areas. This will increase both biofuel from planted trees and fodder/silage from planted trees.
Activity 2.2.3 <i>Undertake afforestation/reforestation of 1,000 ha of alluvial fans in Wakhan National Park area to improve connectivity across protected areas and result in carbon sequestration.</i>	This is on track with planning and initial planting. Lesson-learned from year 1 and 2 are being used to improve the planting models and make them more cost efficient. It is anticipated that 1,000 ha or more will be afforested/reforested.	WCS and MAIL Communities	This will be completed during the project's timeframe. Additional land can be afforested/reforested in Zebak and Ishkashim with reallocation of funds. The Project Board approved expanding project to Zebak and Ishkashim.
Activity 2.2.4 <i>Facilitate exchange visits and study tours for relevant government technical staff and community representatives at the national level to observe best practices on co-management of national parks</i>	This has been planned but not yet implemented.	WCS, NEPA and MAIL,	India and Georgia Republic have been discussed as potential sites from study tours. It is anticipated that this will be completed within project's timeframe.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES (27) BY PROJECT, BY OTHERS, OR IN PARTNERSHIP			
Activities as listed in PRODOC	Status, degree of completion and what remains to be done. If not to be pursued further, say so.	Main actors and responsibilities	Requirements for future inputs from project + assessment of priority and feasibility within project timeframe
ANY OTHER ACTIVITIES			
Output 2.3: The impacts of climate change on snow leopards and their ecosystem addressed through land use planning.			
Activity 2.3.1 <i>Develop models incorporating environmental and social indicators to assess impacts of climate change on snow leopards, their prey and habitats.</i>	Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool development is on track and will be completed by end of the project. The Tool will identify communities and ecosystems which are most vulnerable to the impact of climate and will guide the development of interventions to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience. This will cover snow leopard range in Panj-Amu River Basin.	NEPA, MAIL and NWARA WCS and Conservation Solutions (WCS Scientific Group) working with Columbia University and NASA. Aga Khan Foundation with the Support of University of Central Asia. Funding from EU and CEPF will support this work.	Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool will be completed during the project's timeframe. With reallocation of funds it could be extended to the rest of the snow leopard in the Kabul River Basin.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES (27) BY PROJECT, BY OTHERS, OR IN PARTNERSHIP			
Activities as listed in PRODOC	Status, degree of completion and what remains to be done. If not to be pursued further, say so.	Main actors and responsibilities	Requirements for future inputs from project + assessment of priority and feasibility within project timeframe
Activity 2.3.2 <i>Create a system for monitoring environmental and social indicators to inform climate-smart conservation planning.</i>	Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool development is on track and will be completed by end of the project. The Tool will identify communities and ecosystems which are most vulnerable to the impact of climate and will guide the development of interventions to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience. This will be used for climate-smart conservation planning.	NEPA, MAIL and NWARA WCS and Conservation Solutions (WCS Scientific Group) working with Columbia University and NASA. Aga Khan Foundation with the Support of University of Central Asia. Funding from EU and CEPF will support this work.	Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool will be completed during the project's timeframe. With reallocation of funds it could be extended to the rest of the snow leopard in the Kabul River Basin.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES (27) BY PROJECT, BY OTHERS, OR IN PARTNERSHIP			
Activities as listed in PRODOC	Status, degree of completion and what remains to be done. If not to be pursued further, say so.	Main actors and responsibilities	Requirements for future inputs from project + assessment of priority and feasibility within project timeframe
Activity 2.3.3 <i>Train government staff at national, provincial and district level on adaptive, climate-smart land-use planning across the snow leopard landscape.</i>	Government staff have been participating in the development of the Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool. Information sessions and workshop have been held. Trainings are planned for future users of the model and tool.	NEPA, MAIL and NWARA WCS and Conservation Solutions (WCS Scientific Group) working with Columbia University and NASA. Aga Khan Foundation with the Support of University of Central Asia. Funding from EU and CEPF will support this work.	This will be completed within the project's timeframe. Addition investments are needed to extend the Model and Tool for the Kabul River Basin to cover snow leopard range, and to the rest of Afghanistan for other wildlife species.
Activity 2.3.4 <i>Produce recommendations on incorporating climate change impacts into future revisions of the Wakhan Management Plan.</i>	The results of the Climate Model and Vulnerability Assessment Tool and other activities will be used to revise the WNP Management Plan in 2022.	WCS, NEPA, MAIL, WNPPAC, Communities.	Activities funded under this project, EU Project and CEPF have been designed, coordinated and implemented to generation information required for the revision of the WNP Management Plan 2022. Inputs would be completed within timeframe of project, but the revision of the Management Plan will take place after the project has ended.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES (27) BY PROJECT, BY OTHERS, OR IN PARTNERSHIP			
Activities as listed in PRODOC	Status, degree of completion and what remains to be done. If not to be pursued further, say so.	Main actors and responsibilities	Requirements for future inputs from project + assessment of priority and feasibility within project timeframe
ANY OTHER ACTIVITIES			
Outcome 3: Enhanced knowledge management through awareness raising, monitoring and evaluation			
Output 3.1: Knowledge management, education and outreach conducted to promote snow leopard conservation and trade reduction			
<i>Activity 3.1.1 Develop a communication strategy to increase awareness of local communities and other actors involved in trade, and on the importance of wildlife conservation and relevant laws.</i>	This have been developed. It has also be expanded beyond WNP as part of celebrations of national and international events, the wider IWT surveys, and the NBSAP consultation process.	WCS, NEPA, MAIL	This will be completed during project's timeframe. Working groups will be carried out in 2021. This will include working groups for Poaching and illegal wildlife trade (Wakhan, Zebak and Ishkashim). The will help project to better target information to specific groups.
<i>Activity 3.1.2 Develop outreach materials and undertake outreach activities (reaching both men and women) on the importance of biodiversity and conservation.</i>	This have been developed. It has also be expanded beyond WNP as part of celebrations of national and international events, the wider IWT surveys, and the NBSAP consultation process. This has been integrated with WCS's Environmental Education Program which is delivered in schools in Wakhan.	WCS, NEPA, MAIL, DoE.	This will be completed during project's timeframe. Gender analysis and working group discussions with women and youth in 2021 will be used to better identify the information needs of these disadvantaged groups and guide the development of targeted materials. Educating youth and women will have a positive impact in future on poaching and IWT.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES (27) BY PROJECT, BY OTHERS, OR IN PARTNERSHIP			
Activities as listed in PRODOC	Status, degree of completion and what remains to be done. If not to be pursued further, say so.	Main actors and responsibilities	Requirements for future inputs from project + assessment of priority and feasibility within project timeframe
<i>Activity 3.1.3 Share data, information, lessons learned and best practices nationally, regionally and internationally – including through GSLEP and GWP initiatives.</i>	This has been done under the project. Lessons-learned and best practices have been highlighted in presentations development for regional/provincial consultations for NBSAP revision. This training will be provided during consultations in all regions and provinces of Afghanistan. The project has helped NEPA to report to GSLEP and GWP.	WCS, NEPA and MAIL>	This will be completed during the project's timeframe.
ANY OTHER ACTIVITIES			

Annex 5. Project Management's assessment of progress against indicators, and comments on indicator quality

Project Management's assessment of progress against indicators, and comments on indicator quality	
Indicator	<p>A. Status January 2021 at time of MTR</p> <p>B. Comments on indicator quality – with any weaknesses noticed?</p>
<p>Project Objective: <i>To strengthen conservation of the snow leopard and its critical ecosystem in Afghanistan through a holistic and sustainable landscape approach that addresses existing and emerging threats</i></p>	
<p>1. Population of key species in Wakhan District remains stable or increases as indicated by the following species:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snow Leopards • Marco Polo Sheep • Himalayan Ibex 	<p>A. The indicator is on track.</p> <p>Wildlife surveys and ecological monitoring activities confirms impact of project for increasing and/or stabilization of populations of key species in the area (WNP). Five wildlife surveys and ecological assessments (i.e. camera trap survey, Marmot survey, Marco Polo sheep survey, Glacier monitoring, and annual livestock count) which recently conducted will confirm stabilization of the population of targeted species.</p>
	<p>B. This indicator is a good indicator and still relevant.</p>
<p>2. Number of direct project beneficiaries, disaggregated by gender [UNDP IRRF indicator] from the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of (a) central and (b) provincial government officials including (c) community rangers who improved their knowledge and 	<p>A. The indicator is on track.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project improved capacity and knowledge for 80 law enforcement officials and park rangers (all male). Law enforcement officials represented by the Border Police, National Police, National Directorate of Security, and Afghan INTERPOOL received three trainings on poaching and illegal wildlife trade in Wakhan and Ishkashim.

Project Management's assessment of progress against indicators, and comments on indicator quality	
Indicator	<p>A. Status January 2021 at time of MTR</p> <p>B. Comments on indicator quality – with any weaknesses noticed?</p>
<p><i>skills on IWT and law enforcement as measured by the CD scorecard.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>No. of local people in project demonstration areas benefitting from engagement in conservation activities, reduced HWC and improved livelihoods (m/f)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct benefits include short term jobs during construction of communal and household corrals, livestock protection against predation and tree plantation activities. In total 6,963 people (1,900 females and 5,063 male) financially benefitted through livestock vaccination, construction of predatory proof corrals and afforestation program.
	<p>B. Indicator on knowledge and skill improvement for local communities, national, provincial and sub-national is relevant and the project can meet the target. In addition, indicator for local communities benefitting from engagement in conservation activities are relevant to the project. In 2021, based on gender analysis and women working groups, the project will design specific interventions for women and youth e.g. tourism and handicraft related activities. In addition, a trust fund to compensate killing of local communities' livestock to reduce retaliatory killing of wildlife will improve the HWC indicator.</p> <p>In this indicator we recommend the word "gender" should be replaced by the word "sex".</p>

Project Management's assessment of progress against indicators, and comments on indicator quality	
Indicator	<p>A. Status January 2021 at time of MTR</p> <p>B. Comments on indicator quality – with any weaknesses noticed?</p>
<p>3. <i>Increase in Protected Areas Management Effectiveness score</i> [GWP Indicator Outcome 1]</p>	<p>A. Indicator is on track.</p> <p>The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) Score for targeted Protected Areas (PAs) conducted for mid-term of the project. The METT result shows 2 percent increase from baseline (70). This increase is mainly the result of the operationalization of the 30 community rangers, improvement of the SMART system, establishment of the WNP Protected Area Committee and development of the PA management plan.</p> <p>B. This indicator is a good indicator and still relevant. Indicator is expected to improve as a result of additional activities funded under CEPF.</p>
<p>Outcome 1: <i>Strengthened conservation of Snow Leopards through reduced illegal wildlife trade and decreased incidences of human–wildlife conflict</i></p>	
<p>4. <i>Status of illegal wildlife trade in Afghanistan with specific focus on snow leopard and prey species, as indicated by the following measurement:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>No. of tools developed to combat wildlife crime in Wakhan</i> [GWP Indicator Outcome 4] <i>One system for monitoring of wildlife trade markets is established</i> 	<p>A. Indicator is on track.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project has further developed Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) to facilitate systematic monitoring over livestock predation cases by wild carnivores. An assessment framework has been developed for monitoring of the IWT which will be conducted in eight regions of Afghanistan. The assessment framework includes questionnaires for: 1) Regionals Consultation Workshops for government, NGOs, and local communities, 2) Market Assessment, 3) Restaurant Survey, and 4) Traditional Medicine Shops Surveys.

Project Management's assessment of progress against indicators, and comments on indicator quality	
Indicator	<p>A. Status January 2021 at time of MTR</p> <p>B. Comments on indicator quality – with any weaknesses noticed?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>A wildlife trade task force established consisting of representatives of relevant governmental organizations.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project facilitated the successful establishment and first meeting of the national Illegal Wildlife Trade Taskforce hosted by NEPA in December 2020, with the participation of 16 relevant ministries and non-government institution members. The participating organizations included: the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), the Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), the Ministry of Interior (Border Police and Interpol Police), Kabul Municipality (Kabul Zoo), the Ministry of Finance (Customs), the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, the Ministry of Information and Culture, the National Directorate of Security (NDS), Afghanistan's General Attorney, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Agha Khan Foundation (AKF), Ministry of Justice, Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) and the Faculty of Veterinary Science - Kabul University.
	<p>B. This indicator is a good indicator and still relevant. Under the IWT Taskforce, the project will establish a Rapid Response Team (RRT) to deal with any poaching and IWT in WNP. This RRT will be equipped and operationalized during 2021. If this works, WCS would recommend to extend the RRT all over the country particularly in the areas where we have high HWC such Nuristan National Park, which is part the snow leopard landscape.</p>
<p>5. Level of institutional capacity to combat IWT as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>UNDP Capacity Development scorecard for NEPA, MAIL and WPA</i> 	<p>A. Indicator is on track.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UNDP Capacity Development scorecard for NEPA, MAIL, and WPA for midterm shows a significant increasing by establishing IWT Taskforce, provide training for law enforcement agencies to combat illegal wildlife hunting and trade, establishing the WNP Protected Area Committee, delivering training for community and government

Project Management's assessment of progress against indicators, and comments on indicator quality	
Indicator	<p>A. Status January 2021 at time of MTR</p> <p>B. Comments on indicator quality – with any weaknesses noticed?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>A comprehensive IWT training package developed and training delivered to law enforcement staff – including development of training materials – to enhance Inter-agency collaboration on IWT (Afghan police, customs, MAIL, NEPA and Ministry of Interior).</i> 	<p>rangers and etc. For MAIL and NEPA, the CD scorecard reached to 31% in mid-term (24 % baseline) and WPA 36% (29% baseline)- Over target.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IWT training package for law enforcement agency has been prepared and training in Wakhan and Ishkashim have also been delivered in 2020. The remaining training about IWT will be delivered during the first – third quarter of 2021. Under the IWT Taskforce, the project will establish a Rapid Response Team to act immediately if something happens in the field related to the IWT and hunting. Establishment and functioning of this RRT is still in discussion and our main concern for this is the level of government coordination and support.
	<p>B. This indicator is a good indicator and still relevant.</p>
<p>6. Reduced levels of human–wildlife conflict as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Number of predator-proof corrals constructed to reduce predation of domestic livestock by Snow Leopards</i> <i>Decrease in livestock lost to predators</i> 	<p>A. Indicator is partially achieved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project constructed four communal corrals and rehabilitated 6 other. Using the EU fund as added value, 10 communal corrals and 198 household corrals also enhanced. In total, 1,330 people and 198 households benefitted from reduced loss of livestock due to predations and 3,000 people in 314 households benefitted from livestock vaccination. The livestock predation survey methodology is drafted. However, due to COVID-19, the team was unable to travel to the project site to conduct the livestock predation survey. This activity is planned for 2021.

Project Management's assessment of progress against indicators, and comments on indicator quality	
Indicator	<p>A. Status January 2021 at time of MTR</p> <p>B. Comments on indicator quality – with any weaknesses noticed?</p>
	<p>B. This indicator is a good indicator and still relevant. However, it could be improved by adding a trust fund to compensate livestock loss due to carnivores e.g. snow leopards. Local people in Wakhan National Park especially in Little and Big Pamirs are herders and their livelihoods are totally depended on their livestock. The snow leopard prey could jeopardize their livelihoods and people consider snow leopard as their enemy. Thus, people try to kill snow leopards when they kill their livestock. Therefore, a trust fund can help to reduce HWC by compensating communities. A good lesson learned gathered from UNDP Small Grand Program (SGP) which is established a livestock insurance scheme in WNP. In the recent year, after establishment of the compensation program (as pilot) in one or two Community Development Councils (CDCs) of the WNP, a snow leopard entered into a communal corral and killed 55 sheep and goats. Local people cooperate with local government, national and international conservation organization to release the snow leopard safe and sound.</p>
<p>7. Mechanisms put in place to monitor, manage and disseminate epidemiology and ecology of diseases in livestock and wildlife</p>	<p>A. Indicator is on track.</p> <p>MAIL has already the system in placed to monitor, manage and disseminate the epidemiology and ecology of disease in Badakhshan Province. The project is facilitating and coordinating to extend it to WNP. In addition, the project conducted annual livestock count and rapid antibody detection test. Canine Distemper (CD) virus tests among domestic dogs will help to understand the status and significance of CD Disease among free-ranging big cats like snow leopards. Annual livestock count can contribute in understanding impact of livestock epidemiological disease.</p>

Project Management's assessment of progress against indicators, and comments on indicator quality	
Indicator	<p>A. Status January 2021 at time of MTR</p> <p>B. Comments on indicator quality – with any weaknesses noticed?</p>
	<p>B. This indicator is a good indicator and still relevant.</p>
<p>Outcome 2: <i>Improved land use planning across critical Snow Leopard ecosystems to reduce the impacts of forest loss, land degradation and climate change impact</i></p>	
<p>8. Areas (ha) of degraded riparian forest and shrubland brought under sustainable management as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reforestation of alluvial fans in the Wakhan region [GEF Indicator 2.4, LD-2 Prog 3; GWP Indicator Outcome 3] 	<p>A. This indicator is on track.</p> <p>The project planted a total of 607,940 local willow saplings on 90 hectares of alluvial lands in 13 villages of WNP. This will lead to the sequestration of 18,485 tons of CO2 from the ambient air in the area. To guide future tree planting activities, a comprehensive land potential assessment was conducted in Zebak, Ishkashim and Wakhan National Park to identify suitable and available land for upcoming afforestation activities. This included consultations with local communities.</p>
	<p>B. Afforestation in settlement areas is a good fuel wood alternative to reduce pressure on natural ecosystems. This should also extend to above settlement areas using silvopasture initiatives (Agroforestry) to further provide food and shelter for wildlife.</p> <p>Moreover, land availability and human capacity at WNP is limited. During the field season, people are busy with agriculture, particularly in lower Wakhan during the field season. Meanwhile, afforestation is also occurring during the field season that people are</p>

Project Management's assessment of progress against indicators, and comments on indicator quality	
Indicator	<p>A. Status January 2021 at time of MTR</p> <p>B. Comments on indicator quality – with any weaknesses noticed?</p>
	usually busy. In addition to WCS, AKF and Rupani Foundation also have afforestation activities in WNP. This limits the available land for afforestation in the settlement areas and alluvial fans. Thus, the Project Board recommended to extend project activities particularly afforestation to Ishkashim and Zebak Districts which are also part of the snow leopard landscape.
9. Tonnes of CO ₂ e emissions mitigated through afforestation/reforestation [GEF Indicator 4, CCM-2 Programme]	A. The indicator is on track. Sequestration of CO ₂ calculated for 90 hectares of reforested alluvial lands applying FAO's EX-Ante Carbon Balance Tool (EX-ACT).
	B. This indicator is a good indicator and still relevant. However, during the Project Board meeting which was held placed in NEPA Headquarter on 23 rd September 2020, Mr. Mohammad Rafi Qazizada the NRM Director General of MAIL suggested that the FAO Ex-Ante Carbon Balance Tool (EXACT) is not applicable in the context of Afghanistan particularly in WNP. Therefore, he suggested that WCS and MAIL should develop Afghanistan specific tool to measure CO ₂ sequestration from afforestation and other land use interventions. Funds can be reallocated for this purpose.
10. No. of Protected Area management and district/community land use plans integrating sustainable, conservation-compatible livelihoods and climate change concerns.	A. Though the COVID-19 impacted the project staff travel to WNP due to travel restriction by the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the WNP management plan was finalized, signed and endorsed by provincial MAIL, NEPA and Badakhshan Governor and local community members in Badakhshan Province. In addition, the climate vulnerability assessment further improved through developing species distribution model, grassland degradation model, hydrological model and Socio-economic indicators.

Project Management's assessment of progress against indicators, and comments on indicator quality	
Indicator	<p>A. Status January 2021 at time of MTR</p> <p>B. Comments on indicator quality – with any weaknesses noticed?</p>
	In addition, Rangeland Management Associations (RMAs) and Forest Management Associations (FMAs) have been formed, and have prepared land used plans for their community. These have been under process to be officially registered with MAIL.
	B. This indicator is a good indicator and still relevant.
Outcome 3: <i>Enhanced knowledge management through awareness raising, monitoring and evaluation</i>	
11. Number of knowledge products reflecting lessons learned and best practices disseminated on the programme website, nationally, regionally and internationally as relevant [GWP Indicator Outcome 6]	A. Manual for predator-proof corrals and the snow leopard communication and visibility strategy reflects lessons learned and best practices of the project have been drafted.
	B. This indicator is a good indicator and still relevant.

Project Management's assessment of progress against indicators, and comments on indicator quality	
Indicator	<p>A. Status January 2021 at time of MTR</p> <p>B. Comments on indicator quality – with any weaknesses noticed?</p>
<p>12. Number of awareness campaigns and outreach activities to educate target groups on the importance of wildlife conservation and the negative impacts of illegal wildlife trade [GWP Outcome 5.3]</p>	<p>A.</p> <p>Although COVID-19 negatively impacted this indicator because the government ban all social gathering. Some of the project outreach events such as the World Wildlife Day, World Biodiversity Day, Ag-fair festival and etc. were not convened and postponed for 2021 at the national level.</p> <p>Nevertheless, public awareness campaigns have been delivered in 2019 and 2020. In 2019, the campaign covered 42 CDCs of Wakhan Valley that was targeting specifically women and children. Under this campaign, the knowledge of 1,339 women and 236 children on snow leopard basic ecology, behaviour and the importance of the species conservation for Wakhan community development and ecosystem management was increased. During this campaign, 1,350 snow leopard posters and 1,200 snow leopard anti-poaching stickers distributed in all households of the Wakhan Valley.</p> <p>In 2020, the project delivered the second round of the campaign and reached 1228 women and 211 children (1,439 people) in 40 CDCs of WNP through PowerPoint presentations, distribution of 3,000 posters and 1,500 brochures. As part of the EEP mural of Wakhan wildlife was painted in 5 schools of Wakhan National Park</p> <p>Additionally, in 2020, the project facilitated the celebration for World Environment Day and International Snow Leopard Day in Faizabad City, Badakhshan Province. In this event 2,000 brochures were distributed and two round table discussions were facilitated and broadcasted via a local radio station. The radio broadcast reached about 40,000 people living in and around Faizabad City with friendly messages about sustainable natural</p>

Project Management's assessment of progress against indicators, and comments on indicator quality	
Indicator	<p>A. Status January 2021 at time of MTR</p> <p>B. Comments on indicator quality – with any weaknesses noticed?</p>
	resources management, wildlife conservation focused on snow leopards, and climate change adaptation and mitigation
	B. This indicator is a good indicator and still relevant.

Annex 6 MTR Terms of Reference

Mid-Term Review Terms of Reference

Project	PIMS 5844: Conservation of Snow Leopards and their critical ecosystem in Afghanistan
Assignment	Mid-Term Review
Positions (provisional)	International Consultant for Mid Term Evaluation of the project - Conservation of Snow Leopards and their critical ecosystem in Afghanistan
Contract Type	IC (Individual Consultant)
Duration	30 Working Days within four months (Home based, assignment) ¹
Timeframe	28 December 2020 – 15 May 2021

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the Terms of Reference (ToR) for -the Midterm Review (MTR) of the full-sized UNDP-supported GEF-financed project titled Conservation of Snow Leopards and their critical ecosystem in Afghanistan (PIMS#5844) implemented through the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), which is to be undertaken in 2021. The project started in July 2019 and is in its 2nd year of implementation. This ToR sets out the expectations for this MTR. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document *Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*.

http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/mid-term/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20 EN 2014.pdf

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The heavily degraded rangelands and natural ecosystems in lower valleys in Wakhan have driven local people to extend grazing to higher elevations. Livestock are now threatening the habitat for endangered Snow Leopards and their key prey species. The project addresses the issues of human–wildlife conflict, ecosystem degradation, and the rapid melting of glaciers due to climate change on traditional livelihood practices and resources.

The project “Conservation of Snow Leopards and their Critical Ecosystems in Afghanistan” is a Global Environment Facility (GEF) financed and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported project with an overall budget of USD 2,709,226 for the period of July 2018 until July 2022. This is an NGO implemented project with Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) as the Implementing Partner of the project, and oversight provided by National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA). The project’s objective is to strengthen conservation of the snow leopard and its critical ecosystem in Afghanistan through a holistic and sustainable landscape approach that addresses existing and emerging threat with special focus on human–wildlife conflict and ecosystem degradation.

The project has two main components as below:

¹ “Due to COVID-19 and remoteness of project site, all meetings and consultation will be conducted remotely.”

- **Component 1:** Illegal take and trade of Snow Leopards and conflict between humans/livestock and wildlife reduced through greater community involvement;
- **Component 2:** Landscape approach to conservation of Snow Leopards and their ecosystems that takes into account drivers of forest loss, degradation and climate change impacts
- **Component 3:** Knowledge management, awareness raising and monitoring and evaluation. This component will improve awareness, knowledge and education concerning Snow Leopards, their prey species and the critical ecosystems upon which they depend.

Afghanistan is especially vulnerable because of its limited health care system and few medical personnel, weak infrastructure, and poor social cohesion after 40 years of war, along with a large influx of refugees returning from Iran and Pakistan. The Ministry of Public Health's (MoPH) data showed that as of today (December 8, 2020) 48,136 people across all 34 provinces in Afghanistan are now confirmed to have COVID-19. Some 37,984 people have recovered, and 19,02 people have died (65 of whom are healthcare workers).

90,992 people out of a population of 37.6 million have been tested. 15 per cent of the total confirmed COVID-19 cases are among healthcare staff. Due to limited public health resources and testing capacity, as well as the absence of a national death register, confirmed cases of and deaths from COVID-19 are likely to be under reported overall in Afghanistan.

As a second wave sets in in Afghanistan, COVID-19 and the secondary effects of the pandemic are continuing to hit communities who are already struggling with deep seated poverty, long-running conflict and an extremely fragile health system. According to an assessment by United Nations Development Programme, the pandemic could push Afghanistan's already extreme poverty rate to nearly 70%.

With winter approaching, there are concerns that the second wave will create dangerous implications for communities who are still struggling to make it through the first wave. Kabul remains the most affected part of the country in terms of confirmed cases however, due to the limited public health resources and testing capacity, as well as the absence of a national death register, confirmed cases and deaths from COVID-19 are likely to be under-reported in the country.

As the World Health Organisation noted, when health systems like Afghanistan's are overwhelmed, deaths both as a direct result of the outbreak and resulting from other preventable and treatable conditions increase dramatically. Indeed, Hospitals and clinics continue to report challenges maintaining or expanding their facilities' capacity to treat patients with COVID-19, whilst also maintaining essential health services.

Millions of Afghans were already facing extreme food insecurity and a lack of basic services, such as access to clean water and sanitation, continues to be a serious problem in many areas of the country. The existing challenges faced on a daily basis by these families are being magnified by this new threat. Over half the population lives below the poverty line and the spread of the pandemic poses a serious threat to their ability to cope. The cost of basic essentials has increased dramatically, leaving at least a third of the population faced with food shortages. This includes 7.3 million children, according to recent findings from Save The Children. Conflict and natural disasters have continued to effect and displace thousands across the country, compounding pre-existing issues faced by these families and the communities they settle in, and leaving them more vulnerable to serious consequences from COVID-19

The government has adopted strict containment and quarantine measures, including social distance and using mask. Moreover, strict quarantine for those tested positive and closure of public places and public gatherings have been put in place. Schools, universities and all other government organizations were

declared to be closed till now. In the meantime, the Ministry of Hajj and Religious affairs had called upon all people to pray at home and do not hold any mourning/ religious ceremonies at mosques.

3. MTR PURPOSE

The MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document, and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability.

The MTR will also review the project's strategy, its risks to sustainability and make recommendations on how to improve the project over the remainder of its lifetime.

The mid-term evaluation is expected to serve as a means of validating or filling the gaps in the initial assessment of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability obtained from monitoring. The mid-term evaluation provides the opportunity to assess early signs of project success or failure and prompt necessary adjustments. Specifically, the mid-term evaluation is intended to provide the project team with a basis for identifying appropriate actions to:

- a. Address particular issues or problems in project design, identify potential project design issues or problems;
- b. Address particular issues or problems regarding project implementation;
- c. Address particular issues or problems regarding the project management;
- d. Assess progress towards the achievement of objectives and targets;
- e. Identify and document initial lessons learnt from experience (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other Livelihoods and Resilience (L&R) Unit projects);
- f. Identify additional risks (which are not part of the current risk log, if any) and countermeasures;
- g. Make recommendations and aid decision-making regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve the project and reinforce initiatives that demonstrate the potential for success;
- h. Find out the impact of COVID-19 on the project and propose necessary changes in the project strategy for the remaining project period.

4. MTR APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The MTR report must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.

The MTR team will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure/SESP), the Project Document, project reports including annual PIRs, project budget revisions, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based review. The MTR team will review the baseline GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools submitted to the GEF at CEO endorsement, and the midterm GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools that must be completed before the MTR field mission begins.

The MTR team is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach² ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), the Nature, Climate and Energy (NCE) Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders.

² For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR.³ Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to: UNDP Afghanistan, UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), Ministry to Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD); executing agencies, senior officials and task team/ component leaders, key experts and all consultants in the subject area who have been hired by the project, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, local government and CSOs including project beneficiaries (CDCs), etc. Additionally, the MTR team is expected to conduct field missions to Badakhshan province, including Wakhan district.

The final MTR report should describe the full MTR approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review.

The specific design and methodology for the MTR should emerge from consultations between the MTR team and the above-mentioned parties regarding what is appropriate and feasible for meeting the MTR purpose and objectives and answering the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data. The MTR team must, however, use gender-responsive methodologies and tools and ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as other cross-cutting issues and SDGs are incorporated into the MTR report.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the MTR must be clearly outlined in the Inception Report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, stakeholders and the MTR team.

The final MTR report must describe the full MTR approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review.

As of 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic as the new coronavirus rapidly spread to all regions of the world. Travel to the country has been restricted since 21 March 2020 and travel in the country is also restricted. If it is not possible to travel to or within the country for the MTR mission then the MTR team should develop a methodology that takes this into account the conduct of the MTR virtually and remotely, including the use of remote interview methods and extended desk reviews, data analysis, surveys and evaluation questionnaires. This should be detailed in the MTR Inception Report and agreed with the Commissioning Unit.

If all or part of the MTR is to be carried out virtually then consideration should be taken for stakeholder availability, ability or willingness to be interviewed remotely. In addition, their accessibility to the internet/computer may be an issue as many government and national counterparts may be working from home. These limitations must be reflected in the final MTR report.

If a data collection/field mission is not possible then remote interviews may be undertaken through telephone or online (skype, zoom etc.). International consultants can work remotely with national evaluator support in the field if it is safe for them to operate and travel. No stakeholders, consultants or UNDP staff should be put at risk and safety is the key priority.

A short validation mission may be considered if it is confirmed to be safe for staff, consultants, stakeholders and if such a mission is possible within the MTR schedule. Equally, qualified and independent national consultants can be hired to undertake the MTR and interviews in country as long as it is safe to do so.

³ For more stakeholder engagement in the M&E process, see the [UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 3, pg. 93.

5. DETAILED SCOPE OF THE MTR

The MTR team will assess the following four categories of project progress. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for extended descriptions.

i. Project Strategy

Project design:

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
- Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?
- Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.
 - Were relevant gender issues (e.g. the impact of the project on gender equality in the programme country, involvement of women's groups, engaging women in project activities) raised in the Project Document?
- If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

Results Framework/Logframe:

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project's log-frame indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse, beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.
- Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART 'development' indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.
- Undertake critical analyses how the project has been delayed because of the COVID-19 and what are the mitigation measurements that the project should take to finish the project on-time with delivering all targets of the project as per agreed Results Framework/Log-frame.

ii. Progress Towards Results

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:

- Review the log-frame indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix and following the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*; colour code progress in a "traffic light system" based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as "Not on target to be achieved" (red).

Table: Progress Towards Results Matrix (Achievement of outcomes against End-of-project Targets)

Project Strategy	Indicator ⁴	Baseline Level ⁵	Level in 1 st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target ⁶	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment ⁷	Achievement Rating ⁸	Justification for Rating

Note: the log-frame of the project will be shared with successful candidate

Indicator Assessment Key

Green= Achieved	Yellow= On target to be achieved	Red= Not on target to be achieved
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⁴ Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards
⁵ Populate with data from the Project Document
⁶ If available
⁷ Colour code this column only
⁸ Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

- Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool/Core Indicators at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review.
- Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project.
- By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.

iii. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Management Arrangements:

- Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Do the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and/or UNDP and other partners have the capacity to deliver benefits to or involve women? If yes, how?
- What is the gender balance of project staff? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in project staff?
- What is the gender balance of the Project Board? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in the Project Board?

Work Planning:

- Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.
- Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?
- Examine the use of the project's results framework/logframe as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.

Finance and co-finance:

- Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.
- Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?
- Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out by the Commissioning Unit and project team, provide commentary on co-financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement (US\$)	Actual Amount Contributed at stage of Midterm Review (US\$)	Actual % of Expected Amount
GEF-Agency	UNDP Afghanistan	Cash	250,000		
GEF-Agency	UNDP Afghanistan	In-kind Grant	1,200,000		
Recipient Government	MAIL	In-kind Grant	4,501,598		
		TOTAL	5,951,598		

- Include the separate GEF Co-Financing template (filled out by the Commissioning Unit and project team) which categorizes each co-financing amount as ‘investment mobilized’ or ‘recurrent expenditures’.

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

- Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
- Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were incorporated in monitoring systems. See *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
- Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
- Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?
- How does the project engage women and girls? Is the project likely to have the same positive and/or negative effects on women and men, girls and boys? Identify, if possible, legal, cultural, or religious constraints on women’s participation in the project. What can the project do to enhance its gender benefits?

Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

- Validate the risks identified in the project’s most current SESP, and those risks’ ratings; are any revisions needed?
- Summarize and assess the revisions made since CEO Endorsement/Approval (if any) to:
 - The project’s overall safeguards risk categorization.
 - The identified types of risks⁹ (in the SESP).

⁹ Risks are to be labeled with both the UNDP SES Principles and Standards, and the GEF’s “types of risks and potential impacts”: Biodiversity and conservation of the Snow Leopard or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups; Disability Inclusion; Adverse Gender-Related impact, including Gender-based Violence and Sexual Exploitation; Biodiversity Conservation and the Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources;

- The individual risk ratings (in the SESP) .
- Describe and assess progress made in the implementation of the project's social and environmental management measures as outlined in the SESP submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval (and prepared during implementation, if any), including any revisions to those measures. Such management measures might include Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) or other management plans, though can also include aspects of a project's design; refer to Question 6 in the SESP template for a summary of the identified management measures.

A given project should be assessed against the version of UNDP's safeguards policy that was in effect at the time of the project's approval.

Reporting:

- Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board.
- Assess how well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfil GEF reporting requirements (i.e. how have they addressed poorly-rated PIRs, if applicable?)
- Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

Communications & Knowledge Management:

- Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?
- Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)
- For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project's progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.
- List knowledge activities/products developed (based on knowledge management approach approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval).

iv. Sustainability

- Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the ATLAS Risk Register are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why.
- In addition, assess the following risks to sustainability:

Financial risks to sustainability:

- What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)?

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key

Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement; Indigenous Peoples; Cultural Heritage; Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention; Labor and Working Conditions; Community Health, Safety and Security.

stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project? Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

- Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.

Environmental risks to sustainability:

- Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?

Conclusions & Recommendations

The MTR team will include a section in the MTR report for evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings.

Additionally, the MTR consultant/team is expected to make recommendations to the Project Team. Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report's executive summary. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for guidance on a recommendation table.

The MTR team should make no more than 15 recommendations in total.

Ratings

The MTR team will include its ratings of the project's results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements in a *MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table* in the Executive Summary of the MTR report. See Annex E for ratings scales. No rating on Project Strategy and no overall project rating is required.

Table. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for (Conservation of the Snow Leopard and their critical eco-system in Afghanistan)

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Etc.	
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
Sustainability	(rate 4 pt. scale)	

6. TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the MTR will be approximately 30 working days over a time period of 18 weeks and shall not exceed four months from when the consultant(s) are hired. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF WORKING DAYS	COMPLETION DATE
Document review and preparing MTR Inception Report (MTR Inception Report due no later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission)	5 working days	January 30, 2021
MTR mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits if possible	10 Working days	February 30, 2021
Presentation of initial findings- last day of the MTR mission	1 working day	March 10, 2021
Preparing draft report (due within 3 weeks of the MTR mission)	10 Working days	April 20, 2021
Finalization of MTR report/ Incorporating audit trail from feedback on draft report (due within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on the draft)	4 working days	May 15, 2021

Options for site visits should be provided in the Inception Report.

7. MIDTERM REVIEW DELIVERABLES

#	Deliverable	Description	Timing	Responsibilities
1	MTR Inception Report	MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of Midterm Review	No later than January 30, 2021	MTR team submits to the Commissioning Unit and project management
2	Presentation	Initial Findings	End of MTR mission (February 30, 2021)	MTR Team presents to project management and the Commissioning Unit
3	Draft MTR Report	Full draft report (using guidelines on content outlined in Annex B) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of the MTR mission (April 20, 2021)	Sent to the Commissioning Unit, reviewed by RTA, Project Coordinating Unit, GEF OFP
4	Final Report*	Revised report with audit trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft (May 15, 2021)	Sent to the Commissioning Unit

*The final MTR report must be in English. If applicable, the Commissioning Unit may choose to arrange for a translation of the report into a language more widely shared by national stakeholders.

8. MTR ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project's MTR is the UNDP Afghanistan Country Office.

The Commissioning Unit will contract the consultants and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the MTR team and will provide an updated stakeholder list with contact details (phone and email). The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the MTR team to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

9. TEAM COMPOSITION

A team of two independent consultants will conduct the MTR - one team leader (with experience and exposure to projects and evaluations in other regions globally) and one team expert, from the country of the project. The team leader (International Consultant) *will be responsible for the overall design and writing of the Mid-term Evaluation Report and may work from home considering the COVID-19 mitigation measurements.* The team expert (National Consultant) *will assess emerging trends with respect to regulatory frameworks, budget allocations, capacity building, work with the Project Team in developing the MTR itinerary and will go to the relevant provinces to collect the required data, following COVID-19 protocols, and will have regular communication with the international consultant and make sure the data collected is correct and align with the GEF requirements.* The consultants cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with project's related activities.

The selection of consultants will be aimed at maximizing the overall "team" qualities in the following areas:

Education

- A Master's degree in Environment, Climate Change, Natural Resources, or other closely related fields

Experience

- Relevant experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to Biodiversity and conservation of the Snow Leopard;
- Experience in evaluating projects;
- Experience in GEF project evaluation;
- Experience working in Asian Countries (incl. Afghanistan);
- Experience in relevant technical areas with at least 5 years of experience
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and biodiversity and conservation of the Snow Leopard;
- Experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis;
- Excellent communication skills;
- Demonstrable analytical skills;
- Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset;
- Experience with implementing evaluations remotely will be considered an asset.

Language

- Fluency in written and spoken English.

10. ETHICS

The MTR team will be held to the highest ethical standards and is required to sign a code of conduct upon acceptance of the assignment. This MTR will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The MTR team must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The MTR team must also ensure security of collected information before and after the MTR and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information, knowledge and data gathered in the MTR process must also be solely used for the MTR and not for other uses without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

11. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

- 20% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final MTR Inception Report and approval by the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the draft MTR report to the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final MTR report and approval by the Commissioning Unit and RTA (via signatures on the TE Report Clearance Form) and delivery of completed TE Audit Trail

Criteria for issuing the final payment of 40%¹⁰:

- The final MTR report includes all requirements outlined in the MTR TOR and is in accordance with the MTR guidance.
- The final MTR report is clearly written, logically organized, and is specific for this project (i.e. text has not been cut & pasted from other MTR reports).
- The Audit Trail includes responses to and justification for each comment listed.

Notes:

- The deliverables may experience delays because of the COVID-19. The evaluation team has to inform the evaluation commission unit (UNDP Country Office) of any delays, adopt mitigation measures and provides justification for no-cost extension.
- In line with the UNDP's financial regulations, when determined by the Commissioning Unit and/or the consultant that a deliverable or service cannot be satisfactorily completed due to the impact of COVID-19 and limitations to the MTR, that deliverable or service will not be paid.
- Due to the current COVID-19 situation and its implications, a partial payment may be considered if the consultant invested time towards the deliverable but was unable to complete to circumstances beyond his/her control.

12. APPLICATION PROCESS¹¹

¹⁰ The Commissioning Unit is obligated to issue payments to the MTR team as soon as the terms under the ToR are fulfilled. If there is an ongoing discussion regarding the quality and completeness of the final deliverables that cannot be resolved between the Commissioning Unit and the MTR team, the Regional M&E Advisor and Vertical Fund Directorate will be consulted. If needed, the Commissioning Unit's senior management, Procurement Services Unit and Legal Support Office will be notified as well so that a decision can be made about whether or not to withhold payment of any amounts that may be due to the evaluator(s), suspend or terminate the contract and/or remove the individual contractor from any applicable rosters.

¹¹ Engagement of the consultants should be done in line with guidelines for hiring consultants in the POPP: <https://info.undp.org/global/popp/Pages/default.aspx>

Recommended Presentation of Proposal:

- a) **Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability** using the [template](#)¹² provided by UNDP;
- b) **CV** and a **Personal History Form** ([P11 form](#)¹³);
- c) **Brief description of approach to work/technical proposal** of why the individual considers him/herself as the most suitable for the assignment, and a proposed methodology on how they will approach and complete the assignment; (max 1 page)
- d) **Financial Proposal** that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price and all other travel related costs (such as flight ticket, per diem, etc), supported by a breakdown of costs, as per template attached to the [Letter of Confirmation of Interest template](#). If an applicant is employed by an organization/company/institution, and he/she expects his/her employer to charge a management fee in the process of releasing him/her to UNDP under Reimbursable Loan Agreement (RLA), the applicant must indicate at this point, and ensure that all such costs are duly incorporated in the financial proposal submitted to UNDP.

Incomplete applications will be excluded from further consideration.

Criteria for Evaluation of Proposal: Only those applications which are responsive and compliant will be evaluated. Offers will be evaluated according to the Combined Scoring method – where the educational background and experience on similar assignments will be weighted at 70% and the price proposal will weigh as 30% of the total scoring. The applicant receiving the Highest Combined Score that has also accepted UNDP's General Terms and Conditions will be awarded the contract.

Annex 7 List of documents, books and videos reviewed, and webinars participated in

A. National documents

1. National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)
2. Environment Law
3. National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA)
4. Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)
5. Afghanistan Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
6. National Adaptation Plan for Afghanistan (NAPA)
7. Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions for Afghanistan (NAMA)
8. National Natural Resource Management Strategy (2017-2021)
9. Biennial Updated Report of Afghanistan sent to UNFCCC
10. National Protected Area System Plan (NPASP)
11. Wakhan Protected Area Management Plan (Dari and English Versions)
12. Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework
13. Afghanistan's National Inventory Report (NIR) 2019
14. Initial Biennial Update Report 2019 Under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
15. National Snow Leopard Ecosystem Priority Protection (NSLEP) for Afghanistan 2014-2022

B. Project Documents

1. MTR Consultant Agreement Form
2. UNDP code of conduct
3. Consultants Terms of references (TOR)
4. Inception Workshop Report 2019
5. UNDP MTR guideline
6. Project Board Meeting Minutes Sep 2020
7. Mission Report from Wakhan National Park (WNP)
8. Global Climate Change Week Celebration Report held in Kabul 2020
9. Global Climate Change Week Celebration Report held in Parwan Province 2020
10. Training on Wildlife Hunting, Trading and Law Enforcement in Wakhan National Park and Ishkashim District 2020
11. Public Awareness and Education Program in WNP villages 2020
12. Numbers of Livestock in Western Big Pamir (2006-2020)
13. Celebration of National Days (World Environment, Global Climate Change and Snow Leopard International Celebration day in Faizabad 2020)
14. Wakhan National Park and its Key Species brochure (in Dari and English Languages)
15. Calendar 2020-2021
16. Environmental Education Program Brochure (in Dari Language)
17. Predator Proof Corral Guideline (in Dari Language)

18. Sustainable Land Use Management in a Changing Climate Brochure (in Dari and English Languages)
19. Biodiversity and its Importance to the human an informative brochure (in Dari Language)
20. SMART Mobile Training in Wakhan National Park and Ishkashim buffer zone and ranger awarding event for 2020
21. Vaccination at livestock-wildlife interface in Wakhan National Park in 2020
22. Rangeland Biomass Monitoring in Big Pamir and Little Pamir
23. Indicators and assessment protocol for the vulnerability assessment for Panj-Amu River Basin
24. Small Pamir Siki Rangeland Management Association's Management Plan (in Dari language)
25. Marco Polo sheep survey in Big Pamir, Wakhan National Park
26. Long-Tailed Marmot monitoring in Big Pamir and Little Pamir for assessing climate change impacts
27. Protecting livestock corral against predators in Wakhan National Park 2020.
28. Conducting of 14-consultation workshop with line government to provide 14 management plans for 14 FMAs and RMAs and establish 4 FMAs in Wakhan National Park.
29. Tree plantations in Wakhan National Park, 2020
30. Camera trap survey in Western Big Pamir, June-November; 2020
31. Presentation on wildlife conservation in Afghanistan's laws (in Dari language)
32. Presentation on What is Wildlife and wildlife of Afghanistan? (in Dari language)
33. Presentation on WCS in Afghanistan and its mission (in Dari language)
34. Activity report on Global Climate Change Week and International Snow Leopard Day Celebration in Panjshir Province
35. Summary of land assessment report
36. Methodology for the Consultation Workshops for Illegal Wildlife Trade and the Revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)
37. Questionnaire for surveys:
 - a. Traditional Medicine Store Survey Questionnaire
 - b. Afghanistan Restaurant Survey Questionnaire
 - c. Afghanistan Wildlife Market Survey Questionnaire
38. Preliminary study of canine distemper in the domestic dog in Wakhan National Park
39. Communication Strategy On The Importance Of Snow Leopards And Their Critical Ecosystem Conservation
40. 2019 Annual Project Progress Report
41. 2020 Annual Project Progress Report
42. Project Document for nationally implemented projects financed by the GEF/LDCF/SCCF Trust Funds

43. Tools

- a. Capacity development indicators for the GEF funded projects
- b. Tracking Tool for GEF-6 Global Wildlife Program (GWP)
- c. Biodiversity - Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT)

44. Subcontracts documents

- a. WCS and Columbia University
- b. Conservation Internship working out of Gainesville, Florida with Haqiqrahman Rahmani
- c. Contract of services agreement with Research and Development Organisation
- d. Service Agreement with Ms Eve Bohnette

45. Financial Report

- a. Financial Report-Jul-Aug 2020
- b. Financial Report-Sep-Dec 2020

46. Annual Work plans

- a. Annual Work Plan (AWP) 2019
- b. Annual Work Plan (AWP) 2020
- c. Annual Work Plan (AWP) 2021

47. Term of References (TORs)

- a. Illegal Wildlife Trade Taskforce (Draft)
- b. IWT and NBSAP Intern Fellow
- c. Junior Consultant

C. Books, Reports and Articles

- a. Bashari, M., Sills, E., Peterson, M., & Cubbage, F. (2018). Hunting in Afghanistan: Variation in motivations across species. *Oryx*, 52(3), 526-536. doi:10.1017/S0030605316001174
- b. T. McCarthy and D. Mallon, Eds., *Snow Leopards: Biodiversity of the World: Conservation from Genes to Landscapes*, Elsevier Inc., 2016.
- c. McCarthy, T. M. and G. Chapron. 2003. *Snow Leopard Survival Strategy*. ISLT and SLN, Seattle, USA.
- d. Snow Leopard Working Secretariat. 2013. *Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program* Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic
- e. Jackson, R. M., & Wangchuk, R. (2004). A community-based approach to mitigating livestock depredation by snow leopards. *Human dimensions of wildlife*, 9(4), 1-16.
- f. Din, J. U., H. Ali, A. Ali, M. Younus, T. Mehmood, Y. Norma-Rashid, and M. A. Nawaz. 2017. Pastoralist-predator interaction at the roof of the world: Conflict dynamics and implications for conservation. *Ecology and Society* 22(2):32. <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-09348-220232>
- g. Din, J. U., Nawaz, M. A., Mehmood, T., Ali, H., Ali, A., Adli, D. S. H., & Norma-Rashid, Y. (2019). A transboundary study of spatiotemporal patterns of

livestock predation and prey preferences by snow leopard and wolf in the Pamir. *Global Ecology and Conservation*, 20, e00719.

- h. MoFSC. 2017. Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Management Plan (2017-2026). Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Kathmandu, Nepal
- i. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Global Environment Facility (GEF), "Silent Roar: UNDP and GEF in the snow leopard landscape," UNDP and GEF, 2016.
- j. Moheb, Z. and R. Paley. 2016. Central Asia : Afghanistan. In: McCarthy T and Mallon D (eds). *Snow Leopards (Series: Biodiversity of the World: Conservation from Genes to Landscapes)*. Academic Press. Pp 409–417.
- k. Hermann Kreutzmann, « Transformation of high altitude livestock-keeping in China's mountainous western periphery », *Études mongoles et sibériennes, centrasiatiques et tibétaines* [En ligne], 43-44 | 2013, mis en ligne le 20 septembre 2013, consulté le 20 septembre 2013.
URL : <http://emscat.revues.org/index2141.html> ; DOI :10.4000/emscat.2141
- l. Update report to CITES on Status of Snow Leopard in Afghanistan and Asian Big Cats and role and engagement of local communities
- m. Wildlife Survey Program: Status of Mammals of Wakhan Afghanistan
- n. Afghanistan's Report to CITES Secretariat Asian Big Cats (Felidae Spp.)
- o. Mid-Term Review of the UNDP-GEF project: Establishing integrated models for protected areas and their co-management in Afghanistan (Biodiversity Project) 2014-2018
- p. Terminal evaluation of the GEF-financed project Establishing Integrated Models of Protected Areas and their Co-management in Afghanistan
- q. Mid-Term Review GEF/UNDP/Government of Cook Islands Conserving biodiversity and enhancing ecosystem function through a "Ridge to Reef" approach in the Cook Islands UNDP GEF PIMS: 5168
- r. War and wildlife: A post-conflict assessment of Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor
- s. Pakistan Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program Report
- t. Searching for the Snow Leopard: Guardian of the High Mountains. Shavaun Mara Kidd with Björn Persson (2020) Arcade, New York
- u. Alex Deghan (2019) The Snow Leopard Project . Public Affairs, New York

D. Documentaries/Videos

- a. F. Kaufman, Director, Silent Roar The Snow Leopard National Geographic Documentary. [Film]. National Geographic Channel, 2016.
<https://youtu.be/gwPIr-AvHRM>
- b. Yamamoto, Director, Snow Leopard - The Silent Hunter. [Film]. Altai Mountain: Nature & Adventure, 2020. https://youtu.be/oFqccD6_X_I
- c. Tracking Elusive Snow Leopard in Afghanistan. [Film]. ABC News, 2012.
<https://youtu.be/78OslhDNABM>

- d. Snow Leopards Tagged in Afghanistan. [Film]. National Geographic, 2012.
- e. <https://youtu.be/wFU9qUpLbXY>
- f. Nawaz, Director, Scaling up Snow leopard conservation in Pakistan. [Film]. Pakistan: Snow Leopard Foundation, 2019. <https://youtu.be/hYaztpAYkzk>
- g. EuroNews, 2016. حفاظت از حیات وحش افغانستان؛ خطر انقراض پلنگ برفی کم رنگ شده است. <https://youtu.be/a5slfqUU4hE>
- h. E. Honaryar, Director, واخان؛ دومین پارک ملی افغانستان. [Film]. Badakkshan, Afghanistan: BBC, 2017. <https://youtu.be/gtL62yJwjdG>

E. Webinars participated

- a. [Country Update: Snow Leopard Conservation in Wakhan](#), Afghanistan by Snow Leopard Network and WCS-Afghanistan
- b. [Tibetan brown bear and snow leopard research](#) and conservation in China with focus to how carnivores co-exist with humans and varying land use patterns- highlight key conservation messages and learnings launched by SLN.

Annex 8. List of people interviewed

People	Position	Affiliation	Date	Local Time	Status/Venue
International Experts					
Tom McCarthy	Consultant	Panthera (USA)	Mon 11 Jan	0900	Interviewed, Zoom
John Farrington	Conservation Science Consultant	USA	Sun 24 Jan	0900	Interviewed, Skype
Peter Zahler	Vice President	Conservation Seattle Zoo, USA	Tue 26 Jan	0900	Interviewed, Zoom
Koustubh Sharma	International Coordinator	Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program Bishkek	Tue 2 Feb	1500	Interviewed, Zoom
Muhammad Ali Nawaz	Director	Snow Leopard Foundation Pakistan	Wed 17 Feb	1400	Interviewed, Zoom
David Mallon	Associate Lecturer	Division of Biology and Conservation Ecology, Manchester Metropolitan University	Wed 3 Feb	1930	Interviewed, Zoom
John MacKinnon	Independent Conservation Adviser	China Snow Leopard Project	Wed 10 Feb	1930	Interviewed, Zoom
Wakhan representatives					
Juma Gul Amu	Governor	Wakhan District	Thurs. 28 Jan	1400	Interviewed, MH in person at WCS Office AL by Zoom
Abdul Hamid Deljo	Deputy	Wakhan Pamir Association	Thurs. 28 Jan	1400	
Noor Ahmad Noori	Representative	Wakhan Youths	Thurs. 28 Jan	1400	
Bulbul Gharibyar	Head	Abdarj Community Development Council	Thurs. 28 Jan	1400	
WCS New York Office					
Stephane Ostrowski	Senior Technical Advisor of Inner Asia Region & Associate Director of Wildlife Health Program (France)		Wed 3 Feb	1030	Interviewed, Zoom
Richard Paley	Inner Asia Director (UK)		Thu 4 Feb	1130	Interviewed, Zoom
International Development Agencies and NGOs					
Karin Janz	Project Leader	GIZ (Germany)	Thu 4 Feb	0900	Interviewed, MS TEAMS
Aziz Ali	EU Project Manager	Aga Khan Development Network (Tajikistan)	Thurs 18 Feb	1430	Interviewed, Zoom

Mahmood Khodaidad	Project Manager	European Union	Tue 16 Feb	1630	Interviewed, Zoom
Inayat Ali	Forestry Officer	RUPANI Foundation (Pakistan)	Thurs 18 Feb	1430	Interviewed, Zoom
Private Sector – Tourism					
Zanna Baker	Head of Travel	Ishkar Tourism Company (France)	Fri 5 Feb	0900	Interviewed, Zoom
Flor de Taisne	Founder				
United Nations Development Program Country Office (UNDP CO)					
Mohammad Salim	Programme Analyst		Mon 8 Feb	1330	Interviewed, Zoom
Sana Dawari	Technical Coordinator at Sustainability Unit				
Soraya Buruzokova	Deputy Representative for Program		Mon 8 Feb	1430	Interviewed, Zoom
Idrees Malyar	Assistant Resident Representative, Sustainability Unit		Mon 8 Feb	1430	
Edrees Bahadur	Finance Officer		Mon 8 Feb	1630	Interviewed, Zoom
Mohammad Baqir Timury	Grants Management Office		Mon 8 Feb	1630	
Aimal Khaurin	Coordinator, Small Grants Programme		Mon 8 Feb	1730	Interviewed, Zoom
Syed Haroon	Programme Analyst, Results Based Management		Tues 9 Feb	1600	Interviewed, Zoom
Abdul Wakeel Faizy	Monitoring and Evaluation Analyst		Tues 9 Feb	1600	Interviewed, Zoom
Ahmad Jamshed Khoshbeen	Programme Analyst		Wed 17 Feb	1600	Interviewed, Zoom
National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA)					
Ezatullah Sediqi	Technical Deputy Director General		Tue 9 Feb	1430	Interviewed, Zoom
Zohal Anwari	Biodiversity Expert				Interviewed, Zoom
Jalauddin Nasiri	Director, Natural Heritage Directorate		Thu 18 Feb	1530	Interviewed, Zoom
Mohib Fazli	Wildlife and Biodiversity Expert Natural Heritage Directorate,				
Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL)					
Sayed Khalid Sahibzada	Rangeland Management Director		Wed 10 Feb	1330	Interviewed, Zoom
Moh. Aman Amanyar	Director of Forestry				Interviewed, Zoom
Tamana Dawi	Director of Protected Areas				Interviewed, Zoom
Aziz Rahman Tahir	Head of Protected Area Division				Interviewed, Zoom

Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD)					
Najia Kharotti	Advisor and Project board member	MRRD	Wed 10 Feb	1600	Interviewed in person at MH's office, with AL attending by Zoom
Wildlife Conservation Society Afghanistan					
Sorosh Poya Faryabi	Conservation Science Manager		Wed 10 Feb Mon 8 March	1430 2000	Interviewed, Zoom,
Sweeta Qaderi	Outreach Officer		Thu 11 Feb	1300	Interviewed, Zoom, MH in Person
Zarifa Sabet	Gender and Environment Specialist		Thu 11 Feb	1330	Interviewed, Zoom, MH in Person
Qais Sahar	Operation Director		Thu 11 Feb	1400	Interviewed, Zoom, MH in Person
Mujtaba Bashari	Snow leopard Project Manager		Thu 11 Feb	1430	Interviewed, Zoom, MH in Person
Ayub Alavi	Reporting and M&E Officer		Thu 11 Feb	1530	Answered to the questionnaire
Zabihullah Ejiasi	Finance Director				Interviewed, Zoom, MH in Person
Mohammad Ibraim Abrar	Field Project Manager)		Thu 11 Feb	1600	Interviewed, Zoom, MH in Person
Kharoosh Sahel	Wakhan team leader				Interviewed, Zoom, MH in Person
Zalmai Moheb	Senior Ecologist				Interviewed, Zoom, MH in Person
Garry Shea	Country Director		Sat 6 Feb Wed 24 Feb	1600 1900	Interviewed, Zoom
Ministry of Justice					
Enayatullah Enayat	Director of Legislation	Ministry of Justice	Mon 15 Feb	1415	Interviewed, WhatsApp
Ministry of Information and Culture					
Sayeda Mojgan Mustafawi	Deputy Minister of Tourism, Admin and Finance	Ministry of Information and Culture	Wed 17 Feb	1630	Interviewed, Zoom
Ministry of Interior Affairs					
Parwiz Shamal	Head of Communication	Border Police	Mon 15 Feb	2000	Interviewed, WhatsApp
Kabul University					
Nesar Ahmad Kohestani	Head of Department	Forestry and Natural Resources Department	Mon 15 Feb	1630	Interviewed, Zoom
Hamidullah Zaheb	Professor	Engineering Faculty	Mon 15 Feb	1630	Interviewed, Zoom
Badakhshan University					

Shabir Ahmad Hozad	Dean	Agriculture Faculty	Tue 16 Feb	1300	Interviewed, Zoom
UNDP Bangkok					
Tashi Dorji	Regional Technical Adviser		Thu 18 Feb	1430	Interviewed, Zoom
Kaavya Varma	Finance for Nature Coordinator				
PRESENTATION OF INITIAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS					
WCS-Kabul Team	Garry Shea Ibrahim Abrar Mujtaba Bashari Zalmai Moheb Qais Sahar	WCS-Afghanistan	Mon 15 Mar	1600	Presented, Zoom
UNDP-Team	Mohammad Salim and Sana Dawari	UNDP	Tue 16 March	1400	Presented, Zoom
MAIL Team	Mohammad Rafi Qazizada Ahmad Massoud Maqsodi	NRM Team, MAIL	Sat 27 March	1330	Presented, Zoom
NEPA Team	Schah Zaman Maiwandi	Director General and GEF Focal Point	Thu 18 March	10:45	Presented, Zoom
	Jalaludin Nasiri	Natural Heritage Director, National Environmental Protection Agency			

Annex 9: UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Midterm Review Consultants¹

Evaluators/Consultants:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.
8. Must ensure that independence of judgement is maintained and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.
9. Must confirm that they have not been involved in designing, executing or advising on the project being evaluated.

MTR Consultant Agreement Form

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System:

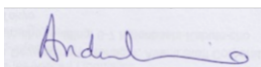
Name of Consultant: Andrew Laurie

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): _____

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at Cambridge, United Kingdom on 15 January 2021

Signature:



¹ www.undp.org/unegcodeofconduct

Evaluators/Consultants:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
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7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.
8. Must ensure that independence of judgement is maintained and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.
9. Must confirm that they have not been involved in designing, executing or advising on the project being evaluated.

MTR Consultant Agreement Form

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System:

Name of Consultant: Mustafa Hasani

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): Moore Afghanistan

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at Kabul, Afghanistan on 18 January 2021



Signature:

GEF/UNDP/Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Conservation of Snow Leopards and their Critical Ecosystems in Afghanistan
پرسشنامه بررسی میانی پروژه حفاظت پلنگ برفی و اکوسیستم‌های حیاتی آن‌ها

مهم:

اگر به سوالی جواب ندارید، لطفاً به ما بگویید. ما می‌فهمیم که برخی از سوالات نیاز به بلدیت با واخان یا جزئیات خاص از پالیسی‌ها و غیره دارند. اطلاعاتی که شما در این پرسشنامه ارائه می‌کنید از جانب مشاوران که این بررسی میانه را انجام می‌دهند به صورت محرمانه حفظ می‌شود. لطفاً این پرسشنامه را به ایمیل آدرس آقای مصطفی حسنی، مشاور بررسی میانی پروژه ارسال نمایید. لطفاً جواب‌های کوتاه‌اراییه کنید. نیاز به جملات کامل نیست. نظریات کوتاه درست است.

IMPORTANT:

- 1. If you are not able to answer some questions just say so. We realize that some questions require knowledge of Wakhan or specific details of policies etc.**
- 2. The information you provide in this questionnaire will be treated in confidence by the consultants undertaking the Mid-term Review. Please send your completed questionnaire directly to the MTR consultant, Mr Mustafa Hasani (mustafa.hasani21@gmail.com)**
- 3. Please keep your answers short. There is no need to make full sentences – short comments are fine**

از اهداف پروژه‌ای که تطبیق آن در سال ۲۰۱۹ شروع شد چه می‌دانید؟

1. What do you understand to be the objective of this Project, which began implementation in 2019?

از این پروژه چگونه خبر شدید؟

2. How did you hear about this project?

شما با این پروژه چه ارتباط دارید؟ مسوولیت شما در این پروژه چه است؟ و کارهای شما را چگونه متاثر ساخته است؟

3. What is your own connection with the project and how has it affected your work?

تهدیدات عمده به پلنگ برفی در واخان چیست؟

4. What are the main threats to Snow Leopards in the Wakhan Corridor?

5. پروژه تا هنوز در از بین بردن تهدیدات چه کمک کرده است؟

5. How has this Project contributed so far to removing those threats?

6. این پروژه در تغییر پالیسی و روش برنامه ریزی استفاده از زمین و تصمیم گیری شما چه همکاری کرده است؟

6. How has the project contributed to changing policy and practice in land use planning and land-use decision making?

این پروژه در کنترل تجارت غیر قانونی حیات وحش چه نقش داشته است؟

7. How has the project contributed to controlling international illegal wildlife trade?

چه بهبود در ظرفیت انسانی و زیربنا از طریق این پروژه بوجود آمده است؟ آیا پیشرفت‌ها دایمی خواهد بود یا موقتی. آیا فکر می‌کنید کار بیشتر در این زمینه ضرورت است؟

8. What capacity improvements - human and infrastructure - have been achieved by the project? Are these improvements firmly established, or are they temporary and likely to require further project type inputs to be maintained?

روحیه/ذهنیت مردم مالدار در رابطه به پلنگ برفی را میشه تشریح کنید و اگر ممکن باشد دلایل آن دیدگاه‌ها را نیز بگویید. یا مردم چه احساس دارند وقتی پلنگ برفی را می‌بینند؟ چرا؟ میشه دلایل تان را بگویید؟ آیا از وقتی که پروژه شروع شده در ذهنیت مردم تغییر آمده است؟

9. Describe the range of attitudes of Wakhan herders towards Snow Leopards, and if possible, give reasons for those attitudes. Have attitudes changed since the project began?

دیدگاه/ذهنیت مردم مالدار واکان از پروژه را میشه تشریح و اگر ممکن باشد میشه دلایل برای آن دیدگاه‌ها را واضح سازید

10. Describe the range of attitudes of Wakhan herders towards the Project, and if possible, give reasons for those attitudes.

چه فکر می کنید جنبه‌های موفق و مثبت ای پروژه پلنگ برفی تا هنوز چه بوده است؟

11. What do you think have been the most successful aspects of the GEF Snow Leopard project up to now?

آیا فکر می کنید پروژه به مشکل مواجه است که از رسیدن به هدف حفاظت پلنگ برفی و اکوسیستم مرتبط آن جلوگیری می کند؟ اگر بلی این مشکلات چیست؟

12. Do you think that the project is facing problems or barriers that will prevent it from achieving its objective¹, and if so, what are these problems?

مشکلات و موانع که خارج از کنترل شما و پروژه است کدام‌ها است؟

a) external problems/barriers that are not under the direct control of the project

مشکلات و موانع داخلی که مرتبط به مدیریت پروژه و ساختار اداری پروژه که به صورت مستقیم توسط پروژه قابل کنترل است، کدام‌ها اند؟
b) internal problems linked to project management or institutional setting that are directly controllable by the project)

شما چه فکر می کنید که پروژه از حالا تا ماه جولای/تابستان ۲۰۲۲ بیشتر به کدام بخش تمرکز کند؟

13. What do you think that the project should focus on mainly from now until it ends in July 2022?

¹ To strengthen conservation of the snow leopard and its critical ecosystem in Afghanistan through a holistic and sustainable landscape approach that addresses existing and emerging threats

پروژه‌ی در حال تطبیق آخرین پروژه‌ی برنامه ۱۵ ساله موسسه تحفظ حیات وحش است. چه فکر می‌کنید دست آورد عمده‌ی این پروگرام ۱۵ ساله چه بوده است؟

14. The project is just the latest in 15 yearlong conservation programme implemented with the support of the WCS? What do you think are the major achievements of this long programme?

در ۳۰ سال گذشته، در نتیجه‌ی تغییرات اقلیم جهانی، چه تغییرات را در واخان مشاهده نموده اید؟

15. What changes you have observed in Wakhan as a result of global climate change in the past 30 years?

با در نظر داشت تغییرات اقلیم، چه تغییرات در ۲۰ سال آینده در واخان خواهد آمد؟

16. What changes do you expect to see in Wakhan as a result of global climate change in the next 20 years?

آیا کدام نظر، پیشنهاد و سفارش دیگر برای تغییر فعالیت‌های پروژه یا روش مدیریت پروژه دارید؟

17. Do you have any other comments, suggestions or recommendations for changes in either project activities or project management approach?

Your organization نهاد شما

Your Name نام شما

Thank you for your support to the Mid-term Review
از همکاری تان در این بررسی میانه پروژه تشکر می‌کنیم.

Annex 11 Analysis of the responses to the Questionnaire in Annex 3

45 questionnaires were given out. Replies were received from 17 people. There is some duplication as one questionnaire was a joint response from four people, and two of the other questionnaires had almost identical replies. The figures below refer to numbers of people responding. In some cases, responses may have referred to other projects or programmes (see Section 4.2.1).

Question	Summarized responses Numbers of people (May add up to more than 17)
1. What do you understand to be the objective of this Project, which began implementation in 2019?	Understand correctly the actual objective (11) Added in Climate Change (1) Freshwater ecosystems and forest conservation (1) NA (1)
2. How were you informed of this project?	On WCS staff now or previously (9) Through official involvement as part of job (3) Direct approach/invited to meeting (2)
3. What is your own connection with the project and how has it affected your work?	WCS staff (8) UNDP staff (1) NEPA/Ministry staff/Project Board member (4) NGO working with project (1) Wakhan residents (4)
4. What are the main threats to Snow Leopards in the Wakhan Corridor?	Overgrazing/overstocking (6) Habitat loss (5), Climate change (5), Desertification (1) "HWC" (6) Hunting of wild prey (6) Border police and outsiders hunting (4) IWT (5) Limited cooperation - community and local govt (4) Gun ownership (2) Fuelwood collection (1) Low awareness (1) Human poverty (2) Population increase/ drive for econ development(1)
5. How has this Project contributed so far to removing those threats?	Increasing awareness (11) Teaching in schools (5) Engagement with community (10) Improving laws and law enforcement (6) Ranger training (2) IWT training (1) Building corrals (5) Planting trees (5) Vaccination programme (4) Support to WNP PAC, MP etc (7) Assistance with livelihoods (2). Research (2) Don't know (1)
6. How has the project contributed to changing policy and practice in land use planning and land-use decision making?	No (2) Don't know (3) Protected area management (4) Inclusion of climate change considerations (4) Rangeland/Forest Management Associations (2) IWT assessment (2) Alfalfa, greenhouses, tree planting (4)
7. How has the project contributed to controlling international illegal wildlife trade?	IWT Task Force (4) Support to NEPA re CITES (2) Raising awareness (5) Surveys (4) Ranger programme and SMART (4) Consultation workshops by region (4) Border police training (1). No answer (2)
8a. What capacity improvements - human and infrastructure - have been achieved by the project?	8a: NEPA (4) Communities through awareness (9) Rangers (8) WNP Manager/PAC (3) Local government (3) Diversification of livelihoods/tourism (2) Vaccination (1), Stoves (1) , Corrals (1)

Question	Summarized responses Numbers of people (May add up to more than 17)
8b. Are these improvements firmly established, or are they temporary and likely to require further project type inputs to be maintained?	WCS staff (1) IWT Task Force (1) AI for Snow Leopard Identification (1) 8b: No answer (10) Permanent (3) Temporary (4)
9a. Describe the range of attitudes of Wakhan herders towards Snow Leopards, and if possible, give reasons for those attitudes. 9b. Have attitudes changed since the project began?	9a: Positive - including potential source of income through tourism, part of healthy environment, no problem now that good corrals built (13) Negative - Want compensation for livestock kills (1) Don't know (4) 9b: Yes (8) No (3) No reply (7)
10. Describe the range of attitudes of Wakhan people towards the Project, and if possible, give reasons for those attitudes.	Positive - including livelihood assistance, reforestation and fruit trees, stoves, AKF involvement, EEP (13) Negative - nepotism/bias in giving communities/individuals contracts/assistance/employment, poor selection of sites for corrals (avalanche danger), not enough consultation on tree planting (but happy with the eventual result) (4) No answer (3)
11. What do you think have been the most successful aspects of the GEF Snow Leopard project up to now?	Changing attitudes/awareness (9) Livelihood benefits (incl corrals, reforestation, fruit gardens, vaccination) (8) Community engagement (4) Government involvement (1) WNP Management Plan/ PAC (6) No more retaliatory killing - only killing is by outsiders (2) Rangers (1) SMART for ranger patrols (4). Research (2) Tourism boosted (1) Control of IWT (1) No reply (1)
12. Do you think that the project is facing problems or barriers that will prevent it from achieving its objective, and if so, what are these problems? a) external problems/barriers that are not under the direct control of the project	12a. No (5) Security - slow progress with peace process (3) Remoteness of project site (1) Wakhan law enforcement officers are outsiders (1) No sustainable funding post project (2) Complexity of situation in which MAIL and NEPA share responsibilities (1) Poor coordination of provincial level agencies (1) Shortage of local qualified staff (2) No incentive for people doing IWT to cooperate (1)
b) internal problems linked to project management or institutional setting that are directly controllable by the project)	12b. No (11) Illegal hunting (1) Poverty (1). Energy requirements (1) Poor corral design, materials and choice of sites (4) Project monitoring system needs improvement (1) Perhaps relationship WCS staff and local people could be improved? (1) Need to share any problems with PB members (1)
13. What do you think that the project should focus on mainly from now until it ends in July 2022?	No change (3) Establish Conservation Trust Fund for Wakhan (1) WNP management and PAC (1) IWT Task Force (1) Community development (1)

Question	Summarized responses Numbers of people (May add up to more than 17)
	Ranger training (3) Poverty alleviation and rural development (2) Control of opium use and trade (1) Livelihood changes that reduce livestock numbers (1) Innovative afforestation/agroforestry (2) Women empowerment (2) Laws and policy (1) Expand to nearby districts/ increase delivery rate (2) Institutionalize Snow Leopard survey work (1) Irrigation canals for afforestation (1) Embankments to control erosion (1) Alfalfa planting and greenhouse construction (4) Increase ranger salaries (1) Thorough annual monitoring analyzing by SWOT (1)
14. The project is just the latest in 15 yearlong conservation programme implemented with the support of the WCS? What do you think are the major achievements of this long programme?	Awareness and education/EEP (10) Protected area system and new PAs (8) WPA/PAC/Rangers (9) Management plans for PAs (4) Research findings (3) Green tourism encouraged (6) Reduced wildlife killing and illegal trade (3) Reduced livestock disease (1) Reduced livestock predation (2) Built corrals (4) Built relationships with communities (2) Diversified livelihoods, eg tailoring (6) Facilitated laws (1) Established Afghanistan Wildlife Executive Committee (AWEC) No response (3)
15. What changes you have observed in Wakhan as a result of global climate change in the past 30 years?	Glaciers melting (5), More floods (4) Less snow (4) Warmer - grow more crops eg wheat, apples (4) Summer droughts, lower river levels (9) Forest increasing (3) (incl. impact of AKF (1)) All vegetation zones moving up (1) Livestock encroaching more on wild ungulates (1) No response (3)
16. What changes do you expect to see in Wakhan as a result of global climate change in the next 20 years?	Glaciers melting (7) Degraded rangeland (6) Increased floods + erosion (6) Increased human population (5) Droughts (7) Snow Leopards range shift to China (4) Less snow (2) Increased forest cover (1) Decreased biodiversity (1) Diversification of agriculture + double cropping (5) New insect pests for Wakhan (1) Reduced livestock (1) Increased livestock (1) Increased competition livestock / wild ungulates (1) No response (5)
17. Do you have any other comments, suggestions or recommendations for	Establish livestock insurance scheme (4) Build more corrals for poor herders (4) Engage more with CDCs (1)

Question	Summarized responses Numbers of people (May add up to more than 17)
changes in either project activities or project management approach?	<p>Increase transboundary communication/knowledge sharing and collaboration on SL conservation (1)</p> <p>Lobby to remove/modify the fences along international borders - they are killing wildlife (1)</p> <p>Conservation science scholarships for local people (1)</p> <p>Duplicate project activities across SL range including Wakhan NP Buffer Zone (2)</p> <p>Work more with marginal groups (incl. women, extremely poor, Kirgiz) (1)</p> <p>Do questionnaire survey to gauge public opinion (1)</p> <p>Extend project by 6 months until December 2022 (1)</p> <p>Encourage handicrafts and ecotourism as additional livelihoods (1)</p> <p>Build embankments to protect against erosion (1)</p> <p>Revise budget (3)</p> <p>Increase coordination (1)</p> <p>Increase monitoring (1)</p> <p>No response (5)</p>

Annex 12. Midterm Review Evaluative Matrix Template

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
How has the project combined biological, socio-economic, political, cultural and institutional realities, and how well has it included international best practice in design and later adaptive management?	<p>Level of cross-sectoral collaboration</p> <p>Level of expressed willingness by local residents to collaborate on snow leopard conservation</p> <p>Extent to which local people are consulted and listened to by the project</p>	Project reports, press reports, UNDP CO staff, Project Team, local residents, relevant government officials, NGOs and bilateral development organizations	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Conversations</p> <p>Films</p>
Progress Towards Results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?			
What threats to Snow Leopards have (a) been reduced through project action and (b) are expected to be reduced through project action	<p>Level of illegal wildlife trade recorded</p> <p>Level of retaliatory killing of snow leopards</p>	Project reports Government statistics Government officials Local residents NGOs	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Conversations</p> <p>Films</p>
With regard to land-use planning procedures in Wakhan: (a) what changes have been implemented and (b) what changes are expected to be implemented	<p>Extent of changes in procedure attributable to the project</p> <p>Extent of predicted changes in procedure attributable to the project</p>	Project reports Government statistics Government officials Local residents NGOs	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Conversations</p> <p>Media</p>

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
How have predictions of changes in climate been incorporated into land-use planning?	Extent to which changes in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> altitude of the tree line frequency of severe weather events, frequency of spring droughts frequency of spring snow policy on tree-planting have been incorporated into planning	Project reports Government reports Government officials Local residents NGOs Publications	Document review Interviews Conversations Media
Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the project been implemented efficiently, costeffectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project's implementation? To what extent has progress been made in the implementation of social and environmental management measures? Have there been changes to the overall project risk rating and/or the identified types of risks as outlined at the CEO Endorsement stage?			
What caused the project to begin implementation over one year late?	Clear explanation	Project team UNDP CO staff Other interlocutors Project Reports	Document Review, Interviews
What changes in circumstances relevant to the project objectives and outcomes have taken place since the Prodoc was written?	Clear account broken down by theme: biological, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ecological, socio-economic security, political, cultural, institutional, public health 	Project team UNDP CO staff Other interlocutors Project Reports Other reports	Document Review, Interviews
Were risks assessed adequately in the Prodoc?	Extent to which risks have held as predicted	UNDP Risk Log Project Reports Other reports Project team UNDP CO staff Other interlocutors	Document Review, Interviews

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
What steps have been taken to respond to any changes in, or miscalculations of risk, by making adjustments to the project design?	Clear account of any adaptive management changes	Minutes of Project Board meetings Inception Workshop Report Project Implementation Review (PIR) Project Quarterly Reports Project team UNDP CO staff Other interlocutors	Document Review, Interviews
How have monitoring and reporting helped with any adaptive management?	Level of importance of indicators in assessment of progress and decision making on adaptive management	Minutes of Project Board meetings Project Implementation Review (PIR) Project Quarterly Reports Project team UNDP CO staff Other interlocutors	Document Review, Interviews
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
Are the changes in management under the project sustainable? a) firewood plots, b) livestock vaccinations and animal health c) corral construction and maintenance d) land-use planning e) regimes for control of wildlife trade and illegal killing f) modified grazing regimes g) livelihood modifications such as ecotourism?	Level of progress for each of a) to e) in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding guaranteed (national or international) Required legal measures passed Institutional fabric confirmed where required Executive powers confirmed where required Training institutionalized Local residents convinced that they should invest time and effort in conserving snow leopards and their ecosystem 	Project reports Project team Other interlocutors	Document Review Interviews Conversations

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
What attention is the project paying to communication and collaboration across international borders with respect to Snow Leopards that range across those borders?	Extent of cross-border communication and collaboration with stakeholders in Pakistan, Tajikistan and China	Project reports Project team Other interlocutors	Document Review Interviews Conversations

Annex 13. Indicative interview questions

Project Objective, Components, Outcomes and Outputs	Indicative questions/themes to explore
<p>Project Objective: <i>To strengthen conservation of the snow leopard and its critical ecosystem in Afghanistan through a holistic and sustainable landscape approach that addresses existing and emerging threats</i></p>	<p>V.1 What capacity improvements - human and infrastructure - have been achieved? What additional improvements do you foresee before July 2022.</p> <p>V.2 Have there been changes in biodiversity management practices that are attributable to the project? If so, what are they? What additional changes do you foresee before July 2022.</p> <p>V.3 How have food security and livelihoods been affected by actions taken under the project? If so, how? What additional impacts do you foresee before July 2022.</p> <p>V.4 Are improvements in capacity likely to be permanent, i.e. self-renewing (through institutionalization for example), or are they temporary and likely to require further project type inputs to be sustained into the future?</p> <p>V.5 What is the extent and potential extent of influence of the general public on governance of biodiversity conservation and protected area management – and snow leopard conservation in particular</p> <p>V.6 Is there an intention to measure changes in public attitudes to protected areas and snow leopard conservation? If yes, how?</p> <p>V.7 Snow leopards range widely and do not respect international borders, so how is the project addressing the need for exchange of information and co-ordination of conservation action in neighbouring countries? What have been the links (direct or indirect) between the project and the Global Wildlife Programme and the GSLEP? (It seems here that WCS links with other countries well, but not reported on as a link to this project, and not emphasized in the project document)</p> <p>V.8 How is the project addressing the need to reduce numbers of livestock using the higher altitude areas? And will that involve reducing the numbers of livestock overall? If not, what are expected?</p>

	<p>V.9. Snow leopard conservation requires changes in behaviour for the local residents: how you have you worked in this regard and to what extent do they respond to a) economic b) non-financial arguments or incentives?</p> <p>V.10. How did the project assess the likely conservation benefits against potential side-effects and costs for its management interventions and research investigations? Is there a process of environmental and social assessment for interventions?</p> <p>V.11 Do you expect some changes attributable to the project to occur after project termination? Give time frames and mechanisms.</p> <p>V.12 Does the project intend to establish post facto monitoring to estimate long term impacts (Prodoc para 60)?</p> <p>V.13 Have there been improvements in institutional mechanisms that allow for incorporation of biodiversity and PA considerations into decision making and action that affects snow leopards and their habitat? If so, what are they, and if not, what are expected?</p> <p>V.14. What collaboration has there been with other donor or government funded projects (prodoc Table 4) and what have been the results?</p> <p>V15. What links with UNDP Livelihood Improvement in Tajik-Afghan Cross-border Areas – listed as cofinance of USD1.2 million?</p>
<p>Component 1: <i>Illegal take and trade of snow leopards and human-wildlife conflict reduced through greater community involvement</i></p> <p>Outcome 1: Strengthened conservation of Snow Leopards through reduced illegal wildlife trade and decreased incidences of human–wildlife conflict</p>	<p>C1.1 How many, if any, snow leopards are known to have been killed (a) in retaliation for livestock killing (b) specifically for trade in Wakhan each year (for as many years as data exist)? How many of those killed in retaliation were sold into the trade?</p> <p>C1.2. What proportion of livestock deaths are attributable to a) wolves b) snow leopards? What are the major causes of death and how much variation is there between areas? How much do differences in herding methods (extent to which herds accompanied or not; keeping herds out of high risk areas etc). explain differences in losses to snow leopard predation?</p> <p>C1.3. How do attitudes of local people to snow leopards vary between location and is there any correlation between negative attitudes and proven mortality rates from snow leopard predation?</p>

		<p>C1.4. Which wild ungulate species have been shown to contract which disease from livestock and what levels of mortality have been proven? In the absence of firm data, what is the evidence from the same species in similar habitats elsewhere? (See Prodoc para 41)</p> <p>C1.5 Apart from any ecological benefits, do vaccination/de-worming programmes create a solid feeling of cooperation with local communities and is this significant in reducing threats to snow leopards?</p> <p>C1.6. One-off training can be important, but what steps are being taken to ensure that training is institutionalized?</p> <p>C1.7 How has international best practice been reflected in this outcome's management interventions?</p>
	<p>Output 1.1: Illegal wildlife trade assessed and monitored.</p>	<p>O11.1. Is the project working with other partners to establish a national assessment framework? If so, what is the status of this framework?</p> <p>O11.2. How is wildlife trade being monitored under the project in the Wakhan? What partners are involved?</p> <p>O11.3 What recommendations have been made and if none yet, what recommendations are envisaged at this stage?</p> <p>O11.4 What is progress on formation and institutionalization of a wildlife trade taskforce, which is mentioned in the revised SRF (but not in the original prodoc).</p>
	<p>Output 1.2: Improved government capacity to combat illegal wildlife trade.</p>	<p>O12.1 Was the training based on a capacity needs analysis?</p> <p>O12.2 What capacity improvements in which agencies have been made so far?</p> <p>O12.3 A Training Management Package is mentioned (Prodoc para 71): is this expected to be adopted by MAIL and/or NEPA , MOI and PA? Are institutional changes foreseen that will include provision for such training in budgets in the future and are capacities being raised to ensure updating / upgrading of training as required?</p> <p>O12.4 How is the project balancing its national vs its Wakhan priorities in capacity development?</p>

	<p>Output 1.3: Human-Snow Leopard conflict assessed and mitigated.</p>	<p>O13.1 Are new teams such as the Snow Leopard Livestock Predation Team envisaged as single project teams or to outlive the project? If to outlive the project, how will any necessary funding be provided?</p> <p>O13.2. What cost-sharing arrangements have been established for provision and maintenance of predator-proof corrals?</p> <p>O13.3. What is the spectrum of local sentiment about snow leopards? Are there any local cultural taboos against killing them?</p> <p>O13.4. What are the major findings so far under the project on domestic animal-wildlife disease transmission?</p> <p>O13.5 Are arrangements being made to secure long term funding for veterinary services (including reporting network and extension) either from government or from external bodies?</p> <p>O13.6. What monitoring arrangements are there for tracking impacts of improved livestock health on a) grazing/browsing pressure of domestic ungulates – including stocking levels b) wild ungulate numbers c) snow leopard numbers?</p> <p>O13.7 Are there moves to link increased livestock health with herders reducing their herd sizes to as body condition and survival increase.</p> <p>O13.8. What is the view of project management of role of tourism and handicrafts sales as an incentivizing mechanism for reducing HWC (Understand that some work on this is being done in collaboration with EU and it would be good to have this reported on/referred to by the project so full picture is provided of relevant interventions and support.</p> <p>O13.9 What has been the experience with schemes that compensate people for livestock losses?</p> <p>O13.10 How firmly are activities in Wakhan under the project rooted in discussions with local people?</p>
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<p>Component 2: <i>Landscape approach to conservation of snow leopards and their ecosystem that takes into account drivers of forest loss, degradation and climate change impacts</i></p> <p>Outcome 2: Improved land use planning across critical Snow Leopard ecosystems to reduce the impacts of forest loss, land degradation and climate change impact</p>	<p>C2.1 What are the actual threats to prey species?</p> <p>C2.2 Where is the main competition for food between wild ungulates and livestock?</p> <p>C2.3 Are wild ungulates pushed higher up the mountains by livestock herding?</p> <p>C2.4. What are the predicted impacts of the 1.4 to 4 deg C rise in mean annual temperature for the Wakhan area by 2060 (Prodoc para 27) in terms of vegetation cover and local livelihoods?</p> <p>C2.5 Apart from any ecological benefits, do tree-planting programmes create a solid feeling of cooperation with local communities and is this significant in reducing threats to snow leopards?</p> <p>C2.6 Has the Wakhan Protected Area Management Plan been finalized and if so how are management actions funded?</p> <p>C2.7. Is carbon sequestration included as a side effect of action to save snow leopards or is it included as an aim in its own right? It could be an adaptation strategy as well. What community and nature based climate change adaptation strategies do you suggest for future of Wakhan people and livestock keeping, keeping in mind likely pressures on snow leopard habitat from global warming?</p> <p>C2.8 How has international best practice been reflected in this outcome's management interventions?</p> <p>C2.9 Was training based on a capacity needs analysis?</p>
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	<p>Output 2.1: Improved understanding of snow leopard ecology to inform landscape approach to conservation.</p>	<p>O21.1 Is the presence of a veterinarian required when collaring a snow leopard, and if so how do the rangers arrange for that?</p> <p>O21.2 How many snow leopards have been collared under the project, and what technology is used to track movements?</p> <p>O21.3. Will training on ecological data collection be institutionalized and if so, how?</p> <p>O21.4. Can some training be combined across Outcomes and Outputs? Will SMART be used here as well as in Outcome 1 (Prodoc para 73)</p> <p>O21.5. What attention is being given to cross-border movements of snow leopards and information and awareness of conditions on the other side of international borders, particularly in Tajikistan and Pakistan.</p> <p>O21.6. How well are the needs of snow leopards considered in planning of infrastructure projects</p>
	<p>Output 2.2: Unsustainable grazing and fuelwood collection reduced through sustainable land use plans that promote conservation-compatible land uses and livelihoods.</p>	<p>O22.1 What are the predicted fuelwood harvests in kg per ha from the plantations established under the project? Will it be sufficient to deter harvesting of woody shrubs (Prodoc para 83)?</p> <p>O22.2 A distinction is made in the Prodoc (para 82) between afforestation and reforestation. What is the natural vegetation cover in the areas proposed for afforestation?</p> <p>O22.3 What species of wood/forest are being used for plantations (1000 ha)?</p> <p>O22.4 What is the survival rate so far of the saplings planted?</p> <p>O22.5. What other organizations are engaged in fuel wood plantations in Afghanistan and where?</p> <p>O22.6. Has the project considered simple protection of degraded land (formerly covered by shrubs or trees) from livestock grazing, as a method of reforestation? It has proved superior to planting in similar environments elsewhere?</p> <p>O22.7 What is the evidence to date that plantations will enhance snow leopard conservation – through whatever pathway?</p> <p>O22.8 Do the carbon sequestration data take into account the burning of the fuelwood? I suppose that a whole system analysis would put the saved burning of shrubs into the equation, but it could be made clearer how the figure for carbon sequestration is reached.</p> <p>O22.9 Do you think that improved cookstove could be helpful for reducing energy consumption and land degradation?</p> <p>O22.10 What are the sources of energy in the Wakhan for cooking and space heating? What energy technologies do people use?</p>

	<p>Output 2.3: The impacts of climate change on snow leopards and their ecosystem addressed through land use planning.</p>	<p>O23.1 Is there overlap here on the training with parts of training in land use planning under Output 2.2?</p> <p>O23.2. What mitigation is likely to be required for long term conservation of snow leopards? How people are affected by climate change impacts so far? Is there any correlation between climate change impacts and snow leopard hunting?</p> <p>O23.3. What progress in development and institutionalization of monitoring system?</p> <p>O23.4. What arrangements for institutionalization of training?</p> <p>O23.5. What progress in incorporating implications of the climate crisis into the Wakhan Management Plan and other local plans (eg land use plans for two CDC clusters) ?</p>
<p>Component 3: <i>Knowledge management and M&E</i></p> <p>Outcome 3: Enhanced knowledge management through awareness raising, monitoring and evaluation</p>		<p>C3.1 What steps have been taken to improve national, provincial and local capacity to develop knowledge materials and to share knowledge effectively – ie making a difference? At different scales; district, provincial, regional or national levels?</p> <p>C3.2. What links here with neighbouring states and with GWP and GSLEP and other international bodies/forums</p> <p>C3.3 How has international best practice been reflected in this outcome's management interventions?</p> <p>C3.4 How has knowledge been shared with academia? How have local academic institutions been involved as stakeholders in this project?</p>
	<p>Output 3.1: Knowledge management, education and outreach conducted to promote snow leopard conservation and trade reduction</p>	<p>O31.1 Who is developing and distributing these materials?</p> <p>O31.2. Which target groups are being aimed at? Are there school programmes under the project or linked to the project?</p> <p>O31.3 Is there assessment of the impact of the knowledge materials on behaviour and working practices?</p> <p>O31.4 Are there staff positions in MAIL and NEPA that have duties to develop and distribute such materials as required?</p> <p>O31.5. Has the project office been viewed as a reliable source of information on snow leopards and the Wakhan environment and does it routinely approached for information by public/government agencies/press?</p> <p>O31.6. What is access to the internet like in the settlements in Wakhan?</p>

PROJECT DESIGN	<p>Will investigate (among other things):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Feasibility</i> <i>Sustainability</i> <i>Environmental assessment</i> <i>Quality of indicators</i> <i>Logical reasoning in the SRF</i> <i>Cost effectiveness</i> <i>Scope for incorporation of international best practice</i> <i>Attention to questions of gender parity and diversity and inclusiveness</i>
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	<p>Will investigate (among other things):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Smoothness of administrative and financial support</i> <i>Coordination between government agencies</i> <i>Level of disbursement of project funds</i> <i>Cofinance disbursement</i> <i>Risk assessment and management</i> <i>Reasons for delays</i> <i>Use of technical assistance</i> <i>International best practice incorporated</i> <i>Attention to questions of gender parity and diversity and inclusiveness</i> <i>Monitoring of pilot projects and research</i> <i>Strategic allocation of effort between components – and between local and national actions</i> <i>Attention to the need for sustainability of institutional changes</i> <i>Institutionalization of training where possible</i> <i>Concentration on the aims of the project and ensuring that prioritization of activities supports the immediate outputs and the ultimate objective – Adaptive management where indicated eg adjustments in activities if required to make progress towards achieving the outcomes and objective)</i> <i>Management of indicators, including tracking tools, changes to them, and progress on measurement</i>

Annex 14

Parallel European Union Climate Change Project under WCS programme

EN



ANNEX

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the Annual Action Plan 2017 in favour of
Afghanistan

Action Document for "Addressing Climate Change in Afghanistan through sustainable energy and ecosystem management"

INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL GRANT APPLICANTS

WORK PROGRAMME FOR GRANTS

This document constitutes the work programme for grants in the sense of Article 128(1) of the Financial Regulation (Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012) in the following sections concerning grants awarded directly without a call for proposals: 5.3.1. Grant: direct award to "Improve participatory management and efficiency of rangelands and watersheds" (direct management)

1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number	Addressing Climate Change in Afghanistan through sustainable energy and ecosystem management; CRIS number: ACA/2017/039-245 MA Part 1 and ACA/2018/040-649 MA Part 2 Financed under the Development Cooperation Instrument	
2. Zone benefiting from the action/location	Afghanistan The action shall be carried out at the following location: North Eastern region - Panj-Amu River basin	
3. Programming document	Multi-Annual Indicative Programme 2014 – 2020 for Afghanistan	
4. Sector of concentration/ thematic area	MIP - Sector 1: Agriculture and Rural Development and Cross cutting priorities	DEV. Aid: YES
5. Amounts concerned	Total estimated cost: EUR 39 500 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 36 000 000.	
6. Aid modality(ies) and implementation modality(ies)	Project Modality Direct management grants direct award: Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Aga Khan Foundation (AKF); procurement of services. Indirect management with German International Development Agency (GIZ).	
7 a) DAC code(s)	43040 – Rural Development 41010 – Environmental policy and administrative management 23210 – Energy generation, renewable sources– multiple technologies	
b) Main Delivery	GIZ – 11000 and other implementing partners	

Channel				
8. Markers (from CRIS DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
	Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade Development	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
	Biological diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
	Combat desertification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
	Climate change mitigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
	Climate change adaptation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
9. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagships	Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA+), Sustainable energy and B4Life.			
10. SDGs	<p>Main SDG 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.</p> <p>SDG 15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.</p> <p>SDG 7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.</p> <p>Secondary SDG 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.</p>			

SUMMARY

Afghanistan is internationally recognised as one of the most vulnerable countries to climate changes in urgent need for private-public investment and innovative actions aiming at increased climate resilience of communities across the country. In particular, the North-Eastern region is considered amongst the most vulnerable and a national priority for action by the relevant Government authorities as well as international specialised agencies. Environmental impact from the target area goes well beyond Afghanistan borders as the Panj-Amu is a major water provider to millions of people in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The area targeted by the proposed programme has suffered from long-lasting armed conflict and, with the Central Region, has registered the highest incidence of poverty in Afghanistan, with a negative growth in 2015 also due to the impact of climate related natural disasters.

The **main objective** of this programme is improved resilience to climate change of communities and the ecosystems in the Panj-Amu River Basin and the sustainability of their use for the benefit of rural communities.

The **specific objectives** are:

1. Conservation of biodiversity and increased ecosystems and community resilience through improved natural resources management and climate change adaptation measures in upper watersheds of the Panj-Amu River Basin;
2. Sustainable rural development and protection of ecosystems and biodiversity through increased renewable energy generation and distribution.

The proposed action follows an integrated approach, (i) reinforcing ongoing actions in support of integrated watershed management, including the development of economical viable value chains based on forestry and non-forest products, (ii) contributing to improved climate resilience, access to sustainable rural energy and local employment opportunities in line with the government priorities, thereby (iii) addressing also present root causes of migration. Sustainability will be ensured through support and capacity building of Community Development Councils (CDCs) for continued ecosystem protection and afforestation interventions and cost-covering management of energy generation and distribution. Work with the CDCs will also have a strong focus on gender.

This action will be implemented in direct management with Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and in indirect management with German International Development Agency (GIZ). The selected implementing partners have proven extensive experience in Afghanistan, having provided support to Government institutions in the field of intervention and implemented actions at local level in the region of proposed activities for more than two decades.

1 CONTEXT

1.1 Country/Regional context/Thematic area

Afghanistan remains a fragile state even after a decade of progress. The country ranks 171 of the 188 nations in UN Human development index. The underestimated security and economic impact of the 2014 international military drawdown and an intensified insurgency lead to large-scale displacement and record numbers of civilian casualties. The country suffers of high and widespread poverty, particularly in the North-Eastern region where the situation is worsened by remoteness, high frequency of natural disasters and harsh winters. In rural areas low productivity and recurrent climate-induced shocks perpetrate poverty, rendering these areas susceptible to high levels of migration, particularly among youth, recruitment by the insurgency and increased level of illicit economy. Moreover, Afghanistan ranks among the world's most vulnerable countries to the impact of climate change¹ in urgent need for investments addressing climate change threats (17th most vulnerable, and the 11th least ready country in the world to face challenges of climate changes). The incidence of extreme weather events - including heat waves, floods and droughts, reduced snow capping and subsequent glacial lake outflows - is likely to increase in frequency and intensity. Since the majority of the population relies directly or indirectly on natural resources for their livelihoods, these changes pose an unprecedented threat to the foundation of the country's fragile economy, stability and food security.

¹ [2016 Maplecroft Report](https://maplecroft.com/) - <https://maplecroft.com/>

The North-Eastern region already registers significant changes of water flow dynamics in the tributaries of the Amu Darya River which originates from the Wakhan District and forms much of the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. The melting of the glaciers in this region combined with the heavy rains during the 2014 spring and summer seasons directly resulted in that year's heavy flooding. Furthermore, this region has been particularly vulnerable to climate change, as indicated by a substantial increase in precipitation during the winter season of approximately 10%, whereas during the summer season precipitation showed a significant decrease up to 20%².

Agriculture, largely dependent upon irrigation, is essential in Afghanistan as it generates 50% of GDP and employs two-thirds of the population: climate change variability and risk will impact directly the sector. Variability in water supply for irrigation due to droughts and floods affects agricultural production; current lack of resources to prepare and adapt to climate change impacts and weak adaptive capacity of farmers using rain-fed arable farming increases their vulnerability. The reduction of cultivated land due to increased erosion and the deficiency of energy in rural areas are two of the major gaps that agriculture is experiencing. Due to the country's high population growth rate, agriculture needs to grow faster than its current ratio to improve rural incomes and standards of living. The Badakhshan District is consistently amongst the more food insecure according to the IPC (Integrated Phase Classification) methodology. In addition, between 1990 and 2000, Afghanistan lost an average of 29,400 hectares of forest per year.

As a result of these factors, environmentally induced conflicts about the distribution of natural resources, fertile lands, grazing grounds and water are likely to expand if measures are not taken. Actions in upper and lower catchments to reduce soil erosion, water runoff and to maintain and increase available land, vegetation cover, fodder and biodiversity are urgently required and will contribute to increased water availability for irrigation and renewable energy. Access to renewable energy will also reduce pressures on natural resources, especially fuelwood, actually representing the main source of energy in rural areas thus benefiting directly women and childhood who are in charge of harvesting. Intensifying the use of renewable energy in post-harvest production and storage (packing, dry and cold storage) and processing (drying of products, cereal milling, nuts value chain, edible oil extraction) will increase productivity, employment and food security in rural areas with a positive impact on livelihood and a potential reduction of internal displacement.

Government authorities as well as international specialised agencies consider the North-East region amongst the most vulnerable and a national priority for action as the connection between the threat to natural resources from climate changes and the impact on livelihood is already visible. These watersheds and rangelands are essential as the Panj-Amu impact on ecosystems, livelihood and economic opportunities for millions of people in Afghanistan and beyond as a major provider of water in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan all the way to Aral Sea. To sustain key ecosystem services and goods provided by these "Water towers", and build climate change resilience in these systems, urgent preventive measures need to be taken, protective and productive reforestation efforts, rangeland management and provision of renewable energy alternatives to reduce pressure on natural resources. Early warning systems focusing on the vulnerability of agro-pastoralist communities could be considered as a mitigation measure to contribute in building resilience.

² [Cordex Regional Climate model](https://rcmes.jpl.nasa.gov/content/cordex) - <https://rcmes.jpl.nasa.gov/content/cordex>

1.1.1 Public Policy Assessment and EU Policy Framework

Afghanistan has initiated a number of steps to promote sustainable development. This programme is relevant to the Agenda 2030. It contributes primarily to the achievement of SDG 13 "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts", SDG 15 "Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss", SDG 7 "Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all" and SDG 2 "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture".

National development policies, plans, and legal frameworks address environmental challenges, disaster risk reduction, food and water security, protection of forest and rangelands, and biodiversity conservation, all of which have clear relevance to climate change adaptation and/or mitigation. The Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) emphasizes i) the risks of natural resources degradation, climate change impact on snowpack melting and the need to expand agroforestry and reforestation to support environmental conservation and income generation for farmers (supported by Output 1, 2 of this Action); ii) the policy focus for rural areas through the expansion of services and explicitly rural energy and electricity especially through renewables that could contribute to improve cold and dry storage facilities for value chains in agriculture (supported by Output 3 of this Action). These elements are clearly stated in the National Priority Program 2 - Citizens' Charter, 5 - Comprehensive Agricultural Development Program and 8 - Energy.

The proposed interventions are fully consistent with major Afghanistan policies and plans, and represent a major contribution to the effective implementation of the country Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) both for adaptation (supported by Output 1, 2), i.e. promoting economic development and sustainable rural livelihoods through sustainable management of natural resources and increase access to modern forms of efficient and sustainable energy services and for mitigation (protecting and increasing forest, rangelands, afforestation and reforestation) and energy production (hydropower, solar, wind) (supported by Output 3).

The National Comprehensive Agriculture Development Priority Program includes climate-sensitive natural resources management in order to increase reforestation, conserve soil, water, protect rangeland and environment improving farmers' income generation and women economic empowerment. This programme will also contribute to the implementation of the National Natural Resource Management Strategy 2017-2021 and the Afghanistan National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (NBSAP) to improve biodiversity conservation (supported by Output 2).

Afghanistan's long-term climate change strategy supports the development of renewable energy sources having high potential to expand off-grid coverage providing electricity for economic activities in rural communities that could generate employment in post-harvest activities. In addition, the Strategy & Guidelines for Implementation of Afghanistan National Renewable Energy Policy (supported by Output 3), launched by Ministry of Energy and Water in 2015, confirms the Government decision to implement the NDC proposal to develop a low carbon energy sector. Government has just approved the strategy liberalising energy production, transport and marketing.

The Ministry of Energy and Water has developed the first Renewable Energy Policy for Afghanistan to mainstream renewable energy projects in the national development plans (supported by Output 3). Afghanistan intends to pursue this objective by harnessing power

from renewable resources such as hydropower. It needs to do so with the full participation and collaboration of government agencies, the donor community, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and, not least, the beneficiary communities themselves. The policy will provide an enabling environment for stakeholders and donors encouraging private sector investment to develop a rural energy technology.

This programme is aligned with the EU's Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2014-2020, focal sector (1) Agriculture and Rural Development, the MIP Cross cutting priorities and EU's commitments to support the SDGs: planet primarily but also prosperity and people.

This Action represents a concrete action following the European Parliament approval of the ratification of the Paris Agreement by the European Union and it will contribute to EU's commitment of spending at least 20% of its budget for 2014-2020 on climate-related activities. Environmental integration promoting sustainable development is an obligation under the EU Treaty. This Action is an opportunity for the EU to promote global efforts to combat climate change and environmental degradation in Afghanistan improving livelihood through better management of rangelands and watersheds, increased access to renewable energy and job creation. EU confirms long-standing support to the sustainable protection of water, soil and biodiversity in one of the major Central Asia's Water basins, the Panj-Amu.

This Action is an important EU contribution to the implementation of Afghanistan NDC and is consistent with the EU-GCCA+ priorities, namely mainstreaming climate change in national and local policy, building local climate change capacity and creating knowledge to support innovative and effective climate change adaptation and mitigation practices. The program will also contribute to the EU Climate Diplomacy Action Plan efforts and to the EU's Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 in cooperation with our Member States. Finally, robust gender and Rights-Based Approach (RBA) baselines and milestones will be refined during the inception phase.

1.1.2 Stakeholder analysis

The main national actors addressing climate change, natural resource management and rural energy development are the National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA), the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), the Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW) and the Ministry of Rural Development (MRRD). These national institutions have developed policy options and actions in the field. A real willingness exists to implement national strategies for adaptation and mitigation of climate change, despite of weaknesses in terms of capacities especially at the local level. These actors have been consulted extensively during the identification and formulation and a close collaboration amongst these institutions will be ensured during implementation.

The project will contribute to reinforce capacities and awareness of government officials from these institutions at the national level and at the local level. This will include capacity building of national and local level authorities on gender sensitivity, mainstreaming and the RBA approach. The National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA) will be supported to integrate climate change in forestry, watershed, rangeland and renewable energy interventions, increasing climate resilience of the national ecosystem management practice.

The direct target groups of the project are members of local communities in the Afghanistan North-Eastern rural areas, including smallholders, farmers and livestock herders and their families. The project will have a particular focus on needs of women, children and vulnerable groups. They will benefit from the transfer of knowledge and technology (agro-forestry, access to renewable energy), from the establishment and management of planted forests, nurseries, planting techniques; the harvesting and marketing of wood and Non-Wood Forest

Products (NWFPs) utilizing access to renewable energy at community level. Women and local youth will be direct beneficiaries as they bear most of the burden of harvesting of fuelwood and will be involved in afforestation, rangeland and energy scheme management. Involvement of stakeholders has started during the identification and formulation phases and the evaluation of the 10 years EU support to the Panj-Amu Integrated Water Resources Management. Support and capacity building of Community Development Councils (CDCs) will ensure continued ecosystem protection and afforestation interventions and cost-covering management of energy generation and distribution. Capacity building of CDCs and a strong focus on gender will contribute to the sustainability of the present action. The program will immediately support local development and, in the medium term, increase mitigation and adaptation, in the North-Eastern region.

1.1.3 Priority areas for support/problem analysis

Based upon recent climate change projections and observed trends, Afghanistan's environment will experience considerable changes over the remainder of this century. Projections under the Special Report on Emissions Scenarios (SRES) A2 scenario predict a strong increase in mean annual temperature for the Panj-Amu River Basin: by 2030s a warming of 2 degrees, by 2060s 4 degrees and by 2090s 6 degrees³. Since 1960 mean annual rainfall in Afghanistan has decreased by 2% per decade, with decreases of 6.6% per decade during spring. Under the SRES A2 scenario further decreases of precipitation in the Panj-Amu River Basin, compared to the mean of 1970-1999, of 3% by 2030s, 8% by 2060s and 12% by 2090s are predicted⁴. Much of this decrease is expected during the spring months when the main plant growth takes place. The decrease of precipitation combined with temperature increase and the related evapotranspiration will negatively affect the entire hydrological cycle from snow coverage and availability of irrigation water to moisture stored in the soil, resulting in reduced agricultural productivity and in changes of ecosystems. The ongoing and predicted climate change exacerbates the existing land-use and natural resources management problems in Afghanistan and the program region, causing ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss, reduced ecosystem services, income insecurity, less livelihood opportunities and higher disaster risk, resulting in poverty and migration pressure. The upper watersheds of the Panj-Amu Basin are the main "Water tower" to millions of people, thus climate change and unsustainable use of ecosystems heavily impact people beyond the region. In the Panj-Amu River Basin rangelands, mixed with shrub and woodlands, are the dominating ecosystem type. Biomass from these ecosystems is the main energy source for heating and cooking in rural households. Growing livestock numbers, in many areas beyond the carrying capacity, and unsustainable grazing practices prevent regeneration of harvested biomass and cause the degradation of vegetation, soil compaction, reduced ground water replenishment and increased erosion. Degraded rangelands and woodlands with deteriorated biodiversity are less resilient and lack the potential of adaptation of ecosystems and provide less land-use options under changing climate conditions. Furthermore in this region, the majority of arable lands are rain-fed (*la'imi*), often on sloping lands. Small plots in mountain valleys and larger areas in the lower parts are irrigated. Rain-fed farming is prone to climate change and with reduced spring rainfall and higher aridity cereal yields drop and become

³ Landell Mills 2016: Feasibility Study for the Panj-Amu River Basin Project (DCI-ASIE/2015/361-001) Draft Final Report Supplementary Document 13 - Climate Risk Assessment and Management Report, p. 5

⁴ Landell Mills 2016: Feasibility Study for the Panj-Amu River Basin Project (DCI-ASIE/2015/361-001) Draft Final Report Supplementary Document 13 - Climate Risk Assessment and Management Report, p. 7

unreliable. Changing precipitation patterns, accelerated melting of glaciers and ecosystem degradation in the upper watersheds affect larger irrigation schemes.

Unsustainable rural energy use is an important factor of ecosystem degradation. Harvested trees, shrubs and subshrubs include forage plants for livestock and wildlife. Burning of manure reduces the fertility of agricultural lands. Absence of renewable and sustainable electricity access is one of the main development barriers in rural areas. While electricity from small renewable sources is still insufficient to replace biomass as energy source for heating and cooking, it improves the rural standard of living, allows for social and educational activities and is a prerequisite for non-agricultural income generation and value chains.

The upper watersheds of the Panj-Amu River Basin due to climate position and naturally scarce vegetation cover are prone to natural disasters like flash floods and landslides. Degradation of rangelands and woodlands and their transformation into arable fields have accelerated these risks and climate change contributes to more frequent disastrous events.

These combined issues negatively impact agricultural production, food security, economic activity, health, and infrastructure while increasing migration. Destructive impacts on livelihoods particularly affect the vulnerable rural population, especially women and youth. Under conditions of food shortage women and children are most prone to malnutrition. They bear most of the burden of collecting fuel and have to walk longer and longer distances for this necessity. In cold winters acute shortage of heating energy forces poor people to cut fruit and nut trees from orchards, thus causing further shortage of valuable food. Lack of electricity seriously hampers education opportunities and access to information, which are key for the development of perspectives for the younger generation, especially for girls, for empowerment of women, for health care and finally for a balanced demographic trend.

Despite recognition by the Government, climate change adaptation tools such as climate data at various spatial and temporal scales, climatic data inventories and climate adaptive management plans remain at an infancy state and their implementation is very limited. The present program will therefore apply an integrated approach including i) climate change vulnerability assessment and climate change monitoring, planning, capacity development and knowledge management; ii) enhanced management of agriculture, ecosystems and associated biodiversity for conservation and use of their adaptation capacity to climate change, including the balancing of landscape water household and disaster prevention; iii) improved supply and increased efficiency of rural energy in form of renewable and sustainable electricity (hydropower, solar and wind); altogether contributing to income generation, sustainable improved livelihoods and reduced migration pressure from rural areas. This program intervention focus on the Panj-Amu River Basin based on environmental and socio-economic analysis of this area.

2 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risk	Risk Level H/M/L	Mitigating Measure
Low institutional capacity at national and local level hampering project progress.	M	Capacity building activities will support the gradual strengthening of technical and management skills of key institutional stakeholders.
Reluctance of land-users to accept and adopt new approaches and technologies for more sustainable use of ecosystems and conservation of biodiversity.	M	Communities will be involved in the development and implementation of interventions ensuring interest through practical demonstrations, thus ensuring the sustainable satisfaction of their livelihood interests in

Risk	Risk Level H/M/L	Mitigating Measure
		the frame of the capacity of the landscape; awareness on sustainability and limits of nature resource use as well as alternative income generation will be developed.
Insecurity hampering service delivery in part of the country.	M	A conflict sensitive approach has been applied, selecting a range of intervention areas with low current and predictable security risks, and involving experienced partners already working with farmers, communities, private sector and local authorities adopting a flexible approach in this complex environment.
Corruption may present a challenge for the implementation of the program interventions.	M	Implementing modality ensures a strong fiduciary management and guarantees financial integrity, technical oversight, maintaining community ownership and preventing “elite capture”.
Long-term sustainability of program activities- sustainable ecosystem management and installed energy infrastructure.	M	Communities and productive users will be involved from the early stages to facilitate awareness, uptake and sustainability of energy services. Sustainability risks will be addressed through design, economic mechanisms and governance. Reliance on goods and services from ecosystems and energy demand will stimulate the interest of communities in sustainability. The request for energy is considered a major limit to development in this "forgotten" area of the country.
The program’s interventions may one-sided benefit one gender or increase the burden on women.	L	The program applies a gender sensitive approach, considers impact gender disaggregated, aims at gender equality and at reducing related disadvantages and hardships.
ASSUMPTIONS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The main assumption is attention to climate change and to Afghanistan from donor countries following the Climate agreement adopted at COP 21 in Paris and the Brussels conference. – Government technical and financial (in-kind or cash) support to building climate change resilience, and commitment towards implementing NDCs priorities remains a priority. – National institutions and key stakeholders have human resources to support the project. – Local communities are willing to participate and collaborate with the project. – The institutions in charge of rangeland and forests understand the need for assigning rights and responsibilities to local communities and for integrating vulnerable groups. 		

3 LESSONS LEARNT, COMPLEMENTARITY AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

3.1 Lessons learnt

This programme will build on key lessons collected and analysed from past EU and other donors’ development efforts in Afghanistan in several relevant sectors (i.e. rural development, environmental and watershed management, rural electrification, and policy support). In particular, the present initiative will draw on lessons learnt from (i) projects addressing watershed management, such as the EU Panj-Amu River Basin Program, USAID Strengthening Watershed and Irrigation Management; (ii) natural resource management programs, like the WCS programs in Wakhan funded by USAID and UNDP/GEF, FAO Reducing Green House Gas Emissions through Community Forests and Sustainable Biomass

Energy, AKF community level afforestation and other projects; (iii) rural energy programs, such as GIZ implemented projects Energy Supply for Rural Areas and Institutional Development for Energy and UNDP Afghanistan Sustainable Energy for Rural Development and (iv) EU ECO-DRR project implemented by UNEP as pilot intervention in 7 villages/3 village clusters in the Bamyan Province.

Out of these past experiences, the Government and the EU Delegation have drawn the following lessons learnt to be used in the framework of this Initiative:

- Rural people are caught in a poverty trap or negative feedback, as their livelihood dependency on use of limited natural resources coupled with increasing ecosystem degradation, lack of value adding and poor market access together with population growth, contribute to widespread poverty increasing pressure on ecosystems.
- Building technical and management capacity of water user associations can lead to an improved integrated water resource management at the local level, decreasing potential natural resource conflict and building local resilience.
- Regulation of use of rangeland, woodland and biodiversity through community-based management and other means is insufficient; growing use intensity and unsustainable practices lead to large scale degradation while local pilot activities showed potentials and challenges of introducing more sustainable practices.
- Economic activities as livestock breeding, use of non-wood forest products and arable farming are severely hampered by inadequate technology, lack of sustainable management institutions and climate change impacts (more frequent unusual precipitation and temperature patterns).
- Dependence on biomass for heating and cooking and inefficient energy use increase pressure on ecosystems and cause widespread degradation. Lack of renewable and sustainable electricity hampers social and economic development in the region. Sustainability of installed micro-hydro schemes is unsatisfactory due to poor maintenance and natural disasters. Other renewable energy technology (solar and wind) are not available in rural areas.
- The significant degradation of ecosystem services in rural areas, exacerbated by climate change and coupled with insecurity, contribute to increasing migration mainly of youth towards the cities or abroad.
- Holistic approaches linking ecosystem services, forest restoration and conservation, new technologies, agriculture-based economic activities, renewable energy, energy efficiency and social development can empower rural communities to improve their livelihoods, decrease youth migration while sustainably managing natural resources.
- Women are most affected by degradation of natural resources, disasters and loss of ecosystem services as well as by insufficient energy supply and inefficient use of energy for cooking and heating. Therefore, they must be involved and are willing and able to play key roles in local natural resources management, renewable energy generation and development and application of energy efficient technologies.

3.2 Complementarity, synergy and donor coordination

The action builds upon and complements a ten-year EU support to rural and agriculture development and empowerment of rural communities in Afghanistan. Notably, since 2003 the EU has contributed towards: i) implementing the Integrated Water Resources Management model in the Panj-Amu River Basin; ii) promoting farm and off-farm activities through the Food Security Thematic Programme); and, iii) supporting long-term research, private sector

development and institutional support, improving services to Afghan farmers. The ADB/EU Panj-Amu program under DCI-ASIE/2012/023-449 (EUR 45 Million), and the "EU Support to Agriculture and Rural Development in Afghanistan" ACA/2014/37581 (EUR 102,5 Million) currently contribute to the nexus between agriculture and natural resources management and will be completed by this action. Intervention in forest and rangeland management will cover areas not accessible by the ADB/EU program and renewable energy intervention will represent a pilot that could be then up scaled in future actions.

The present initiative builds upon a long-standing EU contribution in the Rural Development and Sub-National Governance (SNG) sectors, with commitments worth EUR 90 Million (DCI-ASIE/2013/024-392) towards the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. These initiatives, including the National Rural Access Programme (NRAP), the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) and the Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Programme (AREDP), represent an effort to revitalize rural economy by constructing rural infrastructures, establishing small-scale community assets to improve living conditions and productivity and providing credit in rural areas.

The proposed programme will benefit from ongoing EU-funded research in Afghanistan, aimed at understanding the technical, social and economic aspects of integrated water management, rangeland management, access to rural electricity, and the complex dynamics of the relationship between pastoralists and farmers. Finally, links will be established with EU investment in public administration reforms targeting impact on service delivery at the provincial and district levels.

The programme complements several bilateral programmes developed by other donors:

- USAID's Regional Agricultural Development Program seeks to develop markets in important regional value chains;
- UK's Department for International Development (DFID)'s and Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)'s CARD-F programme support to Economic Development Plans and investments in agriculture in selected areas;
- GIZ programmes supporting i) the renewable energy policy implementation with increased sustainable electricity production in rural areas and ii) the development of agriculture value chains.

The added value of the present programme will be a stronger linkage between ecosystem management and renewable energy issues to address directly Climate change mitigation and adaptation developing sustainable economic opportunities for local communities in targeted rural areas.

Finally, donor coordination is substantial as EU Delegation chairs the Agriculture and Rural Development Working Group, and co-chairs with the Directorate General for Natural Resource Management (NRM), the NRM Working Group.

3.3 Cross-cutting issues

Environment, Biodiversity and Climate Change: As per the Rio marker definitions, climate change adaptation, climate change mitigation, biodiversity and combatting desertification are the principal objectives of the program. The program aims at maintaining and strengthening the adaptive potential of key ecosystems to climate change by preserving their natural biodiversity and preventing and reversing desertification through the development of sustainable management of rangelands, woodlands and arable agriculture and the reduction of biomass extraction for heating and cooking. Prevention of degradation and restoration of ecosystems and biodiversity will support the climate change adaptation of land-use, improve

water storage capacity of the landscape, reduce erosion and flooding and ensure the availability of ecosystem services for the society within the program region and beyond. This action will contribute to achieve the National NDC targets for adaptation (building capacity) and mitigation (reforestation and introduction of renewable energy sources).

Gender: Research and experience in Afghanistan provide evidence that gender consideration in planning and implementing environmental, economic and social interventions greatly increases the prospect of success. Environmental degradation impacts at local level are particularly felt by women. Without reliable access to energy in rural areas, women and children spend most of their day performing basic tasks including physically draining tasks of collecting biomass fuels. Gender issues will be incorporated through a participatory approach in the project inception phase promoting adequate representation of both men and women in all activities. Reporting will also be disaggregated by gender. It is expected that women will play an important role in project activities, including management, training and establishment of alternative livelihood-natural resources related options. Good practices developed by the project will be shared with Ministry of Women's Affairs and other national stakeholders. Finally, the project will ensure mainstreaming gender issues into advocacy and development of learning management system.

Good governance and Decentralization: Improving natural resource management through institutional and individual capacity development at central, district and community level, as well as supporting decentralisation of the Government's Natural resource management strategy will be pursued. Strengthening local governance, through community natural resource management associations, will increase local decision-making and local resilience to current and future climate change risks. The de-centralization process is planned by several Ministries, notably Agriculture and Energy. This is in line with the "bottom up" approach of this action and with the new provincial budgeting policy.

Counter-Narcotics: Poppy cultivation remains an economically relevant component of the current farming system. This programme will contribute to create effective alternatives to illicit crops through labour intensive practices in forestry and post-harvest production related to energy availability.

Job creation and Migration: Past NSP interventions have increased jobs opportunities in rural areas reducing out-migration from villages⁵. By addressing wide-spread scepticism on future prospects and providing practical tools to open up new opportunities for economic and environmental protection activities in the rural areas, it is also expected that this action will contribute towards reducing internal displacement.

Rights-based Approach (RBA): The choice of implementing partners will enable integration of RBA guiding principles in the programme implementation.

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

4.1 Objectives/results

This programme addresses environmental, economic and social challenges in the North-Eastern region by contributing to the solution of three key problems: i) increasing impact of climate change on ecosystems and rural communities, causing their reduced resilience; ii) unsustainable use and poor management of rangelands, woodlands and rain-fed arable lands leading to loss of biodiversity, ecosystem services and reduced resilience iii) inefficient use of

⁵ <http://www.nsp-ie.org/reports/finalreport.pdf>

energy and poor supply of renewable energy in rural areas causing serious pressure on ecosystems. This program's integrated approach reinforces EU and other donors' funded actions in support of climate change adaptation in vulnerable rural areas based on integrated watershed, ecosystem management and the development of sustainable and economically viable land and natural resources use. The proposed action, in line with the government priorities, will strengthen the communities' climate resilience, improve rural energy availability and efficiency and contribute to income generation and better livelihoods, thus in the medium term, reducing economic pressure causing outmigration from rural areas and contributing to facilitate absorption of incoming returnees.

The main objective of this programme is improved resilience to climate change of communities and the ecosystems in the Panj-Amu River Basin and the sustainability of their use for the benefit of rural communities.

The specific objectives are:

1. Conservation of biodiversity and increased ecosystems and community resilience through improved natural resources management and climate change adaptation measures in upper watersheds of the Panj-Amu River Basin;
2. Sustainable rural development and protection of ecosystems and biodiversity through increased renewable energy generation and distribution.

This program consists of **three main results**:

1. Improved knowledge on climate change impacts and adaptive capacity at the institutional, community and individual level;
2. Effective and holistic adaptation strategies to predicted climate change impact are available for the Panj-Amu River Basin and are implemented in selected intervention areas, improving the participatory management of ecosystems and biodiversity, resulting in increased community and individual resilience, income generation and sustainable livelihoods, and reducing pressure to out-migrate from rural areas;
3. In the intervention areas, rural community energy plans are available, small-scale energy generation infrastructure (micro-hydro schemes) is rehabilitated and established, new renewable energy technology (solar and wind) is tested and adopted, its sustainable maintenance is institutionalized, resulting in more sustainable use of ecosystems, rural development, higher available household incomes and improved livelihoods, while increasing community resilience to climate change impact.

4.2 Main Activities

This program's **main activities** are:

Result 1. *Indicative activities targeting the Amu-Panj River Basin as a whole*: (i) Conduct baseline climate change vulnerability assessment of ecosystems, biodiversity and communities in Panj-Amu River Basin, (ii) Develop and implement long-term monitoring programme for climate change impact and resilience indicators, (iii) Modelling of regional climate change and likely impacts for different scenarios, (iv) Elaboration of recommendations for integration of climate change risks in national and sub-national policy frameworks, (v) Capacity development of national and subnational government officials on climate change scenarios and modelling, climate change impact analysis, (vi) Generate and share project experience and best practices in watershed management, ecosystem-based adaptation and management of rangelands, woodlands/forest resources and arable lands.

Result 2. *Indicative activities in intervention areas*: (i) Mobilization of local communities in intervention areas through participatory assessments and planning exercises to become aware about climate change impacts and options for responses, (ii) Participatory planning and action approach to integrated watershed management and ecosystem-based climate change adaptation with focus on rangeland, woodland, forests and desertification-prone rain-fed arable lands, addressing biodiversity conservation and prevention of land degradation, (iii) Rehabilitation, expansion and preservation of woodland vegetation and forests by communities as well as activities leading to more sustainable use of rain-fed arable lands by transition to perennial crops, like drought resistant pistachio and other trees leading to soil rehabilitation and sustainable land use management to combat desertification.

Result 3. *Indicative activities*: (i) Integrated participatory assessments in intervention areas of energy needs, current supply and supply options under consideration of climate change impact on energy supply and consumption, (ii) Instalment, demonstration and monitoring of micro hydropower schemes up-to 150 kW, rehabilitation of existing micro-hydro schemes, and extension of selected rural electrification schemes in most climate vulnerable communities, and (iii) technical and management trainings for stakeholders including training in alternative micro-hydro technology, micro-hydro plant management and maintenance, finance/micro-hydro ownership structuring and revenue cycle management, and (iv) participatory and model-testing introduction of solar and wind technologies, considering successful experiences from similar activities by WCS, AKF, GIZ Tajikistan and others.

4.3 Intervention logic

The intervention logic of this program is based on the knowledge about the predicted climate change in the Panj-Amu River Basin, which will exacerbate existing pressure on ecosystems caused by unsustainable resource use practices putting at high risk the provision of ecosystem services, including provision of natural resources for vulnerable communities, protection from natural disasters and balancing of water flow in rivers and irrigation canals, arable land, biodiversity conservation contributing to increased poverty, conflict and migration.

The program supports climate change adaptation and mitigation in the river basin and in selected intervention areas. For the entire Panj-Amu River Basin the program will:

1. Create and make available analytic information on climate change (so far not available), establish a climate change monitoring system, which will allow adaptive planning and management and make knowledge available to improve climate change adaptive capacity while building increased ecological, institutional, community and individual resilience. This result will be used at national and subnational level by the government and its sector agencies to provide the best evidence and scientific basis to develop climate change policies and local adaptation plans;
2. Increased sustainability use and rehabilitation of key ecosystems and their biodiversity, to more sustainable land-use practices and management of upper watershed, through ecosystem-based adaptation;
3. Improved supply of energy from different renewable sources and increased efficiency of energy use, reducing pressure on natural resources and improving livelihoods of rural communities.

These three results will contribute to (i) improved sustainability of natural resources management leading to increased resilience and preserved functions of key ecosystems and biodiversity in upper watersheds of the Panj-Amu River Basin, (ii) increased renewable

energy access, generation and energy efficiency, contributing to the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity and to (iii) the creation of more income generation and livelihood opportunities, reducing migration pressure from rural areas.

In addition, these results will represent a significant contribution towards the overall objective for the Panj-Amu River Basin of improved resilience of communities and ecosystems and sustainability of their use under changing climate, ensuring the conservation of biodiversity and continuing availability of ecosystem services for the benefit of rural communities. These results will contribute to the efforts by the Government of Afghanistan and other donors to implement the country Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) through a tangible action up scalable at national level.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Financing agreement

In order to implement this action, it is foreseen to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country, referred to in Article 184(2)(b) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012.

5.2 Indicative implementation period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 4.1 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 48 months from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's authorizing officer responsible by amending this decision and the relevant contracts and agreements; such amendments to this decision constitute technical amendments in the sense of point (i) of Article 2(3)(c) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014.

5.3 Implementation Modality

Both in indirect and direct management, the Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures affecting the respective countries of operation⁶.

5.3.1. Grant: direct award to "Improve participatory management and efficiency of rangelands and watersheds focusing on Wakhan, Yakawlang, Kahmard, and Sayghan Districts" (direct management)

(a) This grant will improve participatory management and efficiency of rangelands and watersheds in North-Eastern region:

- Creating and making available knowledge about climate change, its impacts on ecosystems and socio-economic systems;
- Supporting NEPA to mainstream climate change impact and adaptation into national and subnational sector planning, building capacity to understand and address climate change impacts through adaptive policies planning and natural resources management;
- Focusing on Wakhan, Yakawlang, Kahmard, and Sayghan Districts (other districts could be added in the inception phase), for the importance of ecosystems, river basin water balance, biodiversity, socio-economic conditions and/or vulnerability;
- Addressing participatory assessments and planning at community level related to sustainable management and adaptation potential of major ecosystems, land-use types

⁶ https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/restrictive_measures-2017-04-26-clean.pdf

and biodiversity, leading to the implementation of management activities in upper watersheds, rangelands, woodlands, forests/fuel wood plantations and arable lands.

(b) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) because the country is in a crisis situation referred to in Article 190(2) RAP. In the current unsecure conditions, for the purpose of crisis management aid, WCS is considered the most suitable implementing partner, due to its technical competence in ecosystem and rangeland management with local communities and CDCs in the Panj-Amu River Basin and namely in the Wakhan corridor, despite security concerns over the last two decades, with an irreplaceable knowledge of people and ecosystems management in this region.

(c) Maximum rate of co-financing

The maximum possible rate of co-financing for this grant is 90% of the eligible costs of the action.

In accordance with Articles 192 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 if full funding is essential for the action to be carried out, the maximum possible rate of co-financing may be increased up to 100 %. The essentiality of full funding will be justified by the Commission's authorising officer responsible in the award decision, in respect of the principles of equal treatment and sound financial management.

(f) Indicative trimester to conclude the grant agreement

First trimester 2018.

5.3.2. Grant: direct award to "Improve participatory management and efficiency of rangelands and watersheds focusing on Darwaz-e Bala, Nusai, Shukai, Kuf Ab, Khwahan, Shahr-e Buzurg, Chah Ab, Ishkashem and Zebak Districts " (direct management)

(a) This grant will improve participatory management and efficiency of rangelands and watersheds in North-Eastern region:

- Creating and making available knowledge about climate change, its impacts on ecosystems and socio-economic systems;
- Supporting NEPA to mainstream climate change impact and adaptation into national and subnational sector planning, building capacity to understand and address climate change impacts through adaptive policies planning and natural resources management;
- Focusing on Darwaz-e Bala, Nusai, Shukai, Kuf Ab, Khwahan, Shahr-e Buzurg, Chah Ab, Ishkashem and Zebak Districts (other districts could be added in the inception phase) for the importance of ecosystems, river basin water balance, biodiversity, socio-economic conditions and/or vulnerability;
- Addressing participatory assessments and planning at community level related to sustainable management and adaptation potential of major ecosystems, land-use types and biodiversity, leading to the implementation of management activities in upper watersheds, rangelands, woodlands, forests/fuel wood plantations and arable lands.

(b) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) because the country is in a crisis situation referred to in Article 190(2) RAP. In the current unsecure conditions, for the purpose of crisis management aid, AKF is considered the most suitable implementing

partner, due to its technical competence in ecosystem and rangeland management with local communities and CDCs in the Panj-Amu River Basin, in particular in the districts listed above, despite security concerns over the last two decades, with an irreplaceable knowledge of people and ecosystems management in this region.

(c) Maximum rate of co-financing

The maximum possible rate of co-financing for this grant is 90% of the eligible costs of the action.

In accordance with Articles 192 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 if full funding is essential for the action to be carried out, the maximum possible rate of co-financing may be increased up to 100 %. The essentiality of full funding will be justified by the Commission's authorising officer responsible in the award decision, in respect of the principles of equal treatment and sound financial management.

(f) Indicative trimester to conclude the grant agreement

First trimester 2018.

5.3.3. Procurement (direct management)

Subject in generic terms, if possible	Type (works, supplies, services)	Indicative number of contracts	Indicative trimester of launch of the procedure
Communication, evaluation and audit	Services	5	Communication: 2 nd quarter 2018. Evaluation: 3 rd quarter 2020 and 3 rd quarter 2022. Audit: not specified.

5.3.4. Indirect management with international organizations.

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with German International Development Agency (GIZ) in accordance with Article 58(1)(c) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012. This implementation entails activities related to the technical and financial management of the Result 3, including administrative related tasks and coordination with the other partners. The selected entrusted entity has proven extensive experience in Afghanistan, having provided support to Government institutions in the field of intervention and implemented actions at local level in the region of proposed activities.

This implementation approach is also justified because (i) GIZ long-term country presence, the respective technical and management support to the Afghanistan institutions, and comparative technical advantage in rural energy sectors in this program intervention sites, (b) GIZ long-term experience in rural energy in Afghanistan, and at the headquarter level via a network of experts, (iii) GIZ logistical presence in the country, (iv) GIZ management capacity based on past project implementation, v) GIZ use of the Rights-based Approach (RBA) and (vi) GIZ neutrality as a core principle in its mandate.

The entrusted entity would carry out the following budget-implementation tasks: recruitment of Technical Assistance, procurement of supplies, launching calls to public institutions and NGOs, awarding, signing and managing contracts, doing payments and recoveries, and visibility activities.

5.4 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply subject to the following provisions.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility in accordance with Article 9(2)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of products and services in the markets of the countries concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult.

5.5 Indicative budget

An indicative budget for the program is given in the table below.

	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, (amount in EUR)
5.3.1. Results 1 and 2		
Direct grant WCS (direct management)	9,000,000	900,000 EUR
5.3.2. Results 1 and 2		
Direct grant AKF (direct management)	10,500,000	1,000,000 EUR
5.3.3. Results 3		
Indirect management with GIZ	16,000,000	1,600,000 EUR
5.7 – Evaluation, 5.8 – Audit	350,000	
5.9 – Communication and visibility	150,000	
Total	36,000,000	3,500,000 EUR

5.6 Organizational set-up and responsibilities

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be set up for the programme. The PSC will meet at least bi-annually (and more often if needed). The chair of the PSC will be the National Environment Protection Agency NEPA and members will include, the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), the Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW), the Ministry of Rural Development (MRRD) and Ministry of Finances (MoF), representative(s) of Local Government and of Civil Society (CSO) and the European Union Delegation to Afghanistan as an observer. The Steering Committee will be the body responsible for the general oversight, policy guidance and monitoring of the programme. Besides the PSC, technical working group meetings will be held regularly. WCS, GIZ and AKF will be responsible for the secretariat of the PSC.

A Project Management Unit (PMU) will be installed in NEPA offices mutualising resources from WCS, AKF and GIZ in order to reinforce coherence, coordination and national ownership. This will strengthen the links between the three results and their contribution to the Climate Change adaptation and mitigation under NEPA mandate fully associating MAIL, MEW and MRRD. It could consist, among others, of a Project Manager, Experts on Climate Change issues, Forestry and Rangeland Biodiversity, Rural Energy, Gender, Communication, Accounting and Administration. Partners are encouraged to use and support, whenever possible and relevant, staff recruited with NEPA and detached to the PMU.

5.7 Performance monitoring and reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the various results will be a continuous process and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. In order to increase national ownership and institutional sustainability the implementing partners, WCS, AKF and GIZ, shall support the permanent NEPA, MAIL and MEW internal, technical and financial monitoring system for this action. This will allow to elaborate regular progress reports (annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results. The report shall allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed and of the budget details for the action. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation. Furthermore, the implementing partners would be responsible to design and implement the project Monitoring Reporting and Verification (MRV) aspect in collaboration with NEPA. In particular, within the designed MRV, the implementing partners would be responsible to define and determine CO₂ emissions baseline and to enhance inventory and data collection on the carbon sequestration.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

5.8 Evaluation

Having regard to the importance of the action, a mid-term and a final evaluation will be carried out for this action via independent consultants contracted by the Commission. Mid-term evaluation will be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes. Final evaluation will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 30 days in advance of the dates foreseen for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyze the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

Indicatively, two contracts for evaluation services shall be concluded under a framework contract in the 3rd quarter 2020 and 3rd quarter 2022.

5.9 Audit

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

Indicatively, one or two contracts for audit services shall be concluded when needed following risk assessment.

5.10 Communication and visibility

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU.

This action shall contain communication and visibility measures which shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action, to be elaborated and approved by the contracting authority and the Commission at the start of implementation and supported with the budget indicated in section 5.4 above.

In terms of legal obligations on communication and visibility, the measures shall be implemented by the Commission, the partner country, contractors, grant beneficiaries and/or entrusted entities. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, the financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

The Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Action shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

APPENDIX - Indicative Logframe matrix (for project modality)⁷

The activities, the expected outputs and all the indicators, targets and baselines included in the logframe matrix are indicative and may be updated during the implementation of the action, no amendment being required to the financing decision. When it is not possible to determine the outputs of an action at formulation stage, intermediary outcomes should be presented and the outputs defined during inception of the overall programme and its components. The indicative logframe matrix will evolve during the lifetime of the action: new lines will be added for including the activities as well as new columns for intermediary targets (milestones) for the output and outcome indicators whenever it is relevant for monitoring and reporting purposes. Note also that indicators should be disaggregated by sex whenever relevant.

	Results chain	Indicators	Baselines	Targets	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Overall Objective	OO: Improved resilience to climate change of communities and the ecosystems in the Panj-Amu River Basin and the sustainability of their use for the benefit of rural communities.	1. No. of climate resilient, forest, watershed and rangeland management plans developed; (**EU RF L1 indicators ## 21, 23)	1. Not climate proof existing plans for forestry and rangeland system at watershed level.	1. Climate resilient forestry, rangeland management plans for targeted watershed.	Review of policy developed and analyzed.	
		2. No. of additional households (people disaggregated by gender)/SMEs in rural areas with access to basic electricity services. (** EU Results Framework Level 1 # 11)	0 in 2017	15,000 (50% female)/1,000 by end of project	Documentation by MRRD	
		3 Amount of avoided GHG emission and additional C sequestration	0 in 2017	Tons of CO2 equivalent, t.b.d. during inception phase	Climate change monitoring system, NEPA National Environmental Database	
		4. Number and percentage of community members economically benefiting from the program	0 in 2017	75% in target communities by 2021	Social surveys	
Specific	SO1: Conservation of biodiversity and increased ecosystems and community resilience through improved natural resources management and climate change adaptation measures in upper watersheds of the Panj-Amu River Basin.	1.1 Area (ha) of land reforested (** EU RF L2 ## 23 and 24)	0 in 2017	1. 5,000 ha reforested with climate resilient native species	GIS survey to assess reforested areas + calculation of planted and	The main assumption is attention to climate change and to

⁷ Mark indicators aligned with the relevant programming document mark with '*' and indicators aligned to the EU Results Framework with '**'.

					rehabilitated area.	Afghanistan from donor countries following the Climate agreement adopted at COP 21 in Paris and the Brussels conference. Government technical and financial (in-kind or cash) support to building climate change resilience, and commitment towards implementing NDCs priorities remains a priority. National institutions and key stakeholders have human resources to support the project. Local communities are willing to participate and collaborate with the project. The institutions in charge of rangeland and forests understand the need for assigning rights and responsibilities to
		1.2 Are (ha) of additional land rehabilitated and sustainably managed (** EU RF L2 ## 6 and 7)	0 in 2017	200,000 ha rehabilitated and sustainably managed (to be verified during the project first semester).	GIS survey to assess reforested areas + calculation of planted/rehabilitated area.	
		1.3. Percentage of communities with CC resilient and sustainable watershed/ecosystems management plans and the area out of total Panj-Amu River Basin area covered by these plans. (**EU RF L2 # 23 and 24)	0 in 2017	t.b.d. in the inception phase		

						local communities and for integrating vulnerable groups.
	SO2: Sustainable rural development and protection of ecosystems and biodiversity through increased renewable energy generation and distribution.	2.1. Annual energy generated in GWh by rehabilitated micro-hydropower (**EU RF L2 #12)	Degraded and limited functional micro-hydropower. kWh capacity t.b.d. in the inception phase.	Additional 15,000 kWh by end of the project	Documentation by MEW and MRRD	Climate agreement adopted at COP 21 in Paris and the Brussels conference. Government technical and financial (in-kind or cash) support to building climate change resilience, and commitment towards implementing NDCs priorities remains a priority. National institutions and key stakeholders have human resources to support the project. Local communities are willing to participate and collaborate with the project.
		2.2 No. of households/SMEs in rural areas with access to basic electricity services from renewable sources for household use (**EU RF L2 #11,12, 13)	0 in 2017	15,000/1,000 SMEs by end of project	Documentation by MEW and MRRD	
		2.3 No. of members of vulnerable groups benefiting from the programme. (**EU RF L2 # 11,12)	0 in 2017	75% of identified members of vulnerable groups in target communities.	Social surveys	
Outputs	Output 1: Improved knowledge on climate change impacts and adaptive capacity at the institutional, community and individual level. (WCS and AKF)	1.1 Status of operational monitoring system	0 in 2017	One operational monitoring system in place in 2020	Documentation of monitoring system and its use	Policy review not delayed by insufficient coordination between relevant Ministries; Communities are receptive and

						supportive of adaptation measures; MAIL and NEPA take a leading role in the promotion of co-management models for forest resources; Project stakeholders are willing to collaborate in analyzing their experience and lessons learnt.
		1.2 Status of data management system for collection, analysis, and dissemination	t.b.d. in inception phases of the project Existing national environmental database (managed by NEPA) without systematic climate change data management	Data management system is designed, institutionalized, integrated with the existing national environmental database (managed by NEPA) and functioning and climate change adaptation and mitigation data are available and accessed.	Documentation of data management system and its use	
		1.3 Status of models for the Panj-Amu River Basin on climate change and its impact under different scenarios	0 in 2017	3 for different scenarios in 2020	Documentation of models and their application in planning	
		1.4 No. of recommendation documents formally adopted and included in national/sub-national planning documents on watershed, rangeland, forestry,	0 in 2017	At least 4 in 2021	Relevant national policy documents.	

		agriculture, protected area management and rural energy.				
		1.5 No. of national and subnational government officials trained who are able to demonstrate measurable increase in climate change knowledge and apply it in their fields of responsibility	t.b.d. in inception phases of the project	At least 200 from local NEPA and MAIL delegations and other local gov't agencies by the end of the project	Yearly Activity Report by local delegations of MAIL and NEPA	
		1.6 High quality, relevant knowledge products (e.g. Best Practices manual/handbook, training materials, curricula for short term courses) generated, and disseminated among stakeholders and accessible via special knowledge management portal.	t.b.d. in inception phases of the project	At least five knowledge products available and disseminated	Knowledge management portal with documents produced during project activities.	
		1.7 No. of farmers and their family members receiving tailored knowledge products and participating in knowledge sharing activities. (** EU RF L2 #7)	0 in 2017	By the end of the project at least 6,000 households in selected villages receive knowledge products and participate in knowledge sharing activities.	Documentation of dissemination and use of knowledge products.	
	Output 2: Effective and holistic adaptation strategies to predicted climate change impact are available for the Panj-Amu River Basin and are implemented in selected intervention areas. (WCS and AKF)	2.1 No. of schools in the project intervention area integrating climate change information into curriculum and activities.	0 in 2017	30 by 2021	Training workshop reports (including signed lists of trainees)	MAIL and NEPA take a leading role in the promotion of co-management models for forest resources;

		2.2 No. of communities with participatory, CDC endorsed watershed management/ecosystem-based adaptation plans, addressing conservation of critical ecosystems and biodiversity.	10 in 2017	25 by 2021	Approved plans, Yearly Reports by local MAIL and NEPA Delegations.	Communities are receptive and supportive of adaptation measures.
		2.3 Size of area covered under participatory watershed management/ecosystem-based adaptation plans.	t.b.d. in inception phases of the project	2.3 By 2021: Absolute value t.b.d. in inception phases of the project.	Approved plans, Yearly Reports by local MAIL and NEPA Delegations.	
		2.4 Number and Percentage of communities in intervention areas with effectively working rangeland associations;	0 in 2017 t.b.d. in inception phases of the project	2.4 At least 10 communities in each intervention area by 2019; Percentage of communities t.b.d. in inception phases of the project	Yearly Activity Report by local Delegations of MAIL and NEPA.	
		2.5 Percentage of board members of rangeland association covered under indicator 2.4 (disaggregate by gender, under 30 years old);	t.b.d. in inception phases of the project	2.5 by 2021: i)25% female board members ii) 25% under 30 years old board members	Documentation of board membership of rangeland associations	
		2.6 Percentages of used pastures for which rangeland management plans are implemented, taking biodiversity conservation into consideration. (**EU RF L2 # 6)	0 in 2017 t.b.d. in inception phases of the project	2.6 By 2021: 80% of rangeland area used by 80% of communities with rangeland associations	Rangeland management plan implementation reports and rangeland assessments (GIS supported)	
		2.7 Percentage of communities in intervention areas with woodland and forest management plans (including integration in rangeland plans);	0 in 2017	2.7 By 2021: 75% in suitable areas	Yearly Activity Report by local Delegations of MAIL and	

				NEPA.	
		2.8 Percentage of area with woodlands and forests in communities under 2.7 managed sustainable according to forest management plans	0 in 2017	2.8 By 2021	
		2.9 Size of newly established woodland, forest and fuel wood plantations under community management; (**EU RF L2 ## 6)	0 by 2017	2.9 By 2021 5,000 ha with climate resilient native species	GIS survey to assess reforested areas + calculation of planted and rehabilitated area.
		2.10 Area of prone to climate change and degraded rain-fed arable lands transformed into plantations of perennial crops like pistachio and other drought resistant trees and shrubs. (**EU RF L2 ## 6)	0 by 2017	By 2021 3,000 ha with climate resilient native varieties.	GIS survey to assess areas transformed into perennial plantations + calculation of planted and rehabilitated area.
		2.11 Percentages of women and under 30 years old among those involved in community activities on woodland and forest management.	t.b.d. in inception phases of the project	2.11 By 2021 i) 25% women among individual forest users and/or among board members of associations ii) 25% under 30 years old among individual forest users and/or among board members of associations	Forest use agreements, documentation of board membership of rangeland associations

	Output 3: In the intervention areas, rural community energy plans are available, small-scale energy generation infrastructure (micro-hydro schemes) is rehabilitated and established, new renewable energy technology (solar and wind) is tested and adopted, its sustainable maintenance is institutionalized (GIZ)	3.1 No. of participatory assessments and action plans developed and implemented at community level/and Panj-Amu catchment (included other plans developed for pasture, forest, buffer zone/wetland management which will impact energy supply and use).	0 in 2017	5 assessment and action plans/ intervention area	EC Progress Reports. Reports and Evaluation of the projects. MoEW / MRRD reports /statistics. Line Ministries Annual Reports.	Build on existing ADB work in climate change in the energy sector with a focus on the Panj-Amu River Basin.
		3.2 No of identified impacts and adaptation potentials of energy systems; and No. and types of modalities for building resilience into energy systems.	0 in 2017	List of sites with high potential for disruption due to climate change (low/high rainfall, earthquakes, drought, etc.)80% of the Panj-Amu covered.	Documentation of energy projects in sites prone to climate change disturbances	
		3.3 No. of micro hydropower schemes installed and rehabilitated;	0 in 2017	100 hydropower systems (new / rehabilitated) operational in Panj-Amu River Valley.	Line Ministries Annual Reports. Project Documents	
		3.4 Proportion of beneficiaries with secure access to grid and off-grid electricity relative to the total population	Currently <10%	50% increase by 2021	Reports and statistics of MEW, MRRD	

		3.5 No. of graduates of vocational training, who are Certified renewable energy technicians, percentage of women among these;	Limited or no-existing training in rural renewable energy.	600 Certified Mini Hydro Power Technicians, 300 Certified PV technicians, 50% being women At least 250 people trained in the operation, maintenance and management of renewable energy systems. This will not be to certification level. These people will support the Certified Technicians.	Community feedback (interviews, surveys). List of all trainees who have received certification	
		3.6 No. of Micro hydropower management courses developed and delivered for Universities; and the number of University staff trained to deliver the course.	0 in 2017	University programs on micro-hydro management established. Ten University instructors trained on the delivery of these courses.	Training documents created.	
		3.7 Percentage of communities in the intervention areas with existing and planned micro hydropower schemes being served by local professionals;	<10%	75% increase by 2021	Registry set-up for all local certified technicians available in each community	

		3.8 No. of tested and adopted solar and wind technologies;	0 in 2017	At least 10 solar and 10 wind systems by the end of the project	Documentation produced during project activities.	
		3.9 No. of communities and households using new technologies;	0 in 2017	250 households	Signed management agreements.	
		3.10 No. of new electrical grids based on solar and wind technology functional.	0 in 2017	50 new electrical grids based on solar and wind technology functional.	Signed management agreements.	
		3.11 No of target group scoring high in surveys after public awareness campaigns supported by the project (impact)	NA – no surveys done	250 heads of households scoring high by 2019	Surveys and documents from interviews with head of households.	

Annex 15 MTR Ratings scales

Annex 15 MTR Ratings

Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (one rating for each outcome and for the objective)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets, and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.

Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of most of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only few that are subject to remedial action.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.

Ratings for Sustainability: (one overall rating)		
4	Likely (L)	Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project’s closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future
3	Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review
2	Moderately Unlikely (MU)	Significant risk that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on
1	Unlikely (U)	Severe risks that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained

Annex 16 Advisory Note - Lack of the Solution



UNDP GEF Biodiversity Advisory Note

Lack of the Solution is not the Problem



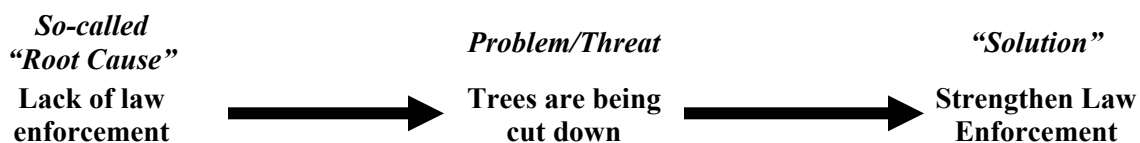
Normally it is easier to solve a problem if we know what the problem is.

Developing a coherent problem tree is one of the most difficult and time consuming parts of project development, yet it is often given little attention. Rather than starting with a clearly diagnosed problem, many proponents of biodiversity project proposals start with the solution, something they want to do – a set of “activities” – and then spend significant amounts of time and effort laying out a project that will carry out these activities. Only once they have done this do they turn to “retrofitting” a problem analysis. Not surprisingly, in most cases the so-called “root cause” of the problem turns out to be the “lack of the solution” they have so carefully designed. The consequence is generally a poorly designed project that does not effectively or efficiently solve a biodiversity problem. Instead it leaves parts of the problem unsolved and it includes activities that are not really necessary to solve the problem.

A key indicator of a “solution driven analysis” is that the identified problem or problems that the project is supposed to solve are articulated as something that there is a “lack of”, or is “inadequate” or “insufficient”. The “something” is normally the intended project “solution”.

The problem with a “solution driven analysis” is that it often obscures the true cause of the problem, and worse, potentially points to the wrong solution. For example, the statement “trees are being cut down because of a lack of enforcement,” is not a statement of cause and effect.

If the logic is laid out in a cause and effect chain the problems become clearer:



Obviously this is a circular argument. If the “root cause” is stated as a “lack of law enforcement” the only logical solution is to “strengthen law enforcement”. Consideration of alternative solutions is eliminated. The real “cause” of the problematic behaviour (cutting down trees) remains unknown. Instead, attention is focused on the proposed solution – increasing law enforcement. The real cause of tree cutting might be that people need trees in order to build houses, or cutting trees and selling the timber is perceived as the only way of generating cash income to pay school fees, and so on. The possibility of finding alternative ways for people to build houses, or finding alternative sources of trees or ways of getting children schooled, are not investigated. If the problem is actually that people have a fairly basic “need” for trees and have no real alternatives, strengthening law enforcement is only going to heighten conflict and not lead to a lasting solution of the problem.

While a “lack of something” argument is obviously circular, it is one of the most commonly used arguments in biodiversity projects. Similar common examples (and their solutions) include:

- lack of awareness (inform or educate people)
- poor land use planning (improve land use planning)
- insufficient financial resources (send more money / set up a trust fund)

Unfortunately much of the published log frame guidance, while providing step by step instructions for preparing a problem analysis, still uses the “lack of the solution” shorthand in its problem trees.

Avoiding “lack of” problem statements is much more likely to lead to an accurate diagnosis of the problem from which alternative solutions can be developed, feasible ones can be compared, and the “best” solutions chosen. The “best solution” may in fact be the one originally proposed, but if we get there by logical analysis rather than “assumption” we will have considered, and discarded, other alternatives and we will be confident that this is in fact the best solution. We will also be aware of the full extent of the problem and while the project itself may not be able to address all aspects of the problem, the parameters or assumptions within which the project operates will be clear.

Please send any comments or suggestions for improving this note to: john.hough@undp.org

Annex 17 Monitoring and Evaluation Plan from Inception Report, with MTR comments

GEF M&E requirements	Primary responsibility	Time frame	MTR COMMENTS
Inception Workshop	UNDP Country Office	Within two months of project document signature	Done 14 months after signature
Inception Report	Project Manager	Within two weeks of inception workshop	Done
Standard UNDP monitoring and reporting requirements as outlined in the UNDP POPP	UNDP Country Office	Quarterly, annually	No information
Monitoring of indicators in project results framework	Project Manager	Annually	Done, but see comments on indicators themselves (Annex 3)
GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR)	Project Manager and UNDP Country Office and UNDP-GEF team	Annually	Done in first year following the Inception Phase
NIM/NGO Audit as per UNDP audit policies	UNDP Country Office	Annually or other frequency as per UNDP Audit policies	No audit done yet, and MTR recommends done as soon as possible
Lessons learned and knowledge generation	Project Manager	Annually	Being done.
Monitoring of environmental and social risks, and corresponding management plans as relevant	Project Manager UNDP CO	Ongoing	Published in quarterly reports and in PIR
Addressing environmental and social grievances	Project Manager UNDP Country Office BPPS as needed	<i>As needed</i>	No grievances yet. Project team not familiar with requirements
Project Board meetings	Project Board UNDP Country Office Project Manager	At minimum annually	Done annually
Supervision missions	UNDP Country Office	Annually	Not yet done to Wakhan
Oversight missions	UNDP-GEF team	Troubleshooting as needed	Not yet done to Afghanistan
Knowledge management as outlined in Outcome 3	Project Manager	Ongoing	Ongoing but suggest increased international links with other GEF projects and GSLEP
GEF Secretariat learning missions/site visits	UNDP Country Office and Project Manager and UNDP-GEF team	To be determined	Not yet
Mid-term GEF Tracking Tool to be updated	Project Manager	Before mid-term review mission takes place.	Done METT and CD but application of the tools need review
Independent Mid-term Review (MTR) and management response	UNDP Country Office and Project team and UNDP-GEF team	Between 2 nd and 3 rd PIR.	In progress following first genuine PIR
Terminal GEF Tracking Tool to be updated	Project Manager	Before terminal evaluation mission takes place	<i>Not yet due</i>
Independent Terminal Evaluation (TE) included in UNDP evaluation plan, and management response	UNDP Country Office and Project team and UNDP-GEF team	At least three months before operational closure	<i>On current schedule this is April 2022</i>

Annex 18 UNDP GEF Biodiversity Advisory Note - Indicators

UNDP-GEF Biodiversity Advisory Note

INDICATORS

Summary

During GEF2 there was an increasing emphasis placed on monitoring for impact. OPS2 (Overall Performance Study 2) nevertheless concluded that most GEF projects had failed to establish an effective process of monitoring to demonstrate impact. Consequently, during GEF3 there will be a strong focus on “monitoring for results”, and the Council has already blocked projects that do not have adequate monitoring plans proposed. It is also important, in terms of demonstrating impact for future OPS that UNDP/GEF support a process of retrofitting appropriate indicators to those projects that lack them.

This note clarifies some key concepts to guide the design of monitoring systems in pipeline projects and the retrofitting of projects already in the portfolio, with the aim of establishing effective systems of monitoring within projects and being able to demonstrate results. The attached annex provides a “menu” of good indicators, almost all of which are real examples taken from existing project documents, which may help to guide identification of appropriate indicators.

1. Monitoring against the log-frame

The logical framework approach used in the design of all GEF projects incorporates a conceptual hierarchy of objectives. A complicating factor is that multiple terms have been used to refer to similar concepts, but the UNDP/GEF M&E recognizes four hierarchical levels:

- a) **Goal** (equivalent to “Development Objective”). The overall result to which the project will contribute, along with various other, external interventions.
- b) **Objective** (equivalent to “Immediate Objective”). The overall result that the project itself will achieve, independent of other interventions. There should be only one Objective per project
- c) **Outcomes**. The results of individual project components that achieve changes in conditions that affect the Objective.
- d) **Outputs**. The direct results of project **Inputs**, achieved through the completion of project activities.

In the past, most UNDP/GEF projects have monitored for Inputs (which is basically financial accounting) and Outputs. Output indicators, sometimes thought of as “process indicators”, are simply an accounting of the results of individual project activities. No further guidance is provided for Output monitoring since these only tell us what “has been done”. Not whether any impact has been achieved.

Monitoring for Outcomes, and against the Objective is less simple. At both levels, indicators can be thought of as “impact indicators”.

- As the Objective of GEF-funded projects in the biodiversity focal area is, by definition, related to globally significant biodiversity, indicators against the Objective are best expressed in terms of impact indicators affecting the state of biodiversity. Where such indicators are difficult to define, surrogate impact indicators focusing on changes in threats to biodiversity may substitute.

- Individual Outcomes rarely have a direct impact on biodiversity, since the Outcomes are usually defined in terms of the conditions necessary to conserve biodiversity. Therefore, impact indicators at the Outcome level will usually focus on impacts on responses or impacts on threats.

The distinction between impact indicators for these two different hierarchical levels in the logframe is reflected in the annex which gives specific examples.

UNDP/GEF projects do not generally monitor against the Goal, since this requires monitoring of external interventions over which neither the project team nor UNDP/GEF has control. However, noting that the successful completion of these external interventions are essentially "Assumptions" in the definition of the Goal, it may be possible in specific projects to identify indicators of these Assumptions, which can be monitored. However, no further guidance is provided on this issue.

2. What makes a good indicator?

An indicator is a quantitative or qualitative variable or parameter that provides a **simple** and **reliable** basis for assessing change or performance. It reduces data and information on a particular phenomenon to its simplest form while retaining their essential meaning. Indicators are used in different disciplines to measure a variety of issues such as country economic "health", company management effectiveness, regional social conditions, or project performance.

In the project management context, project indicators are used to measure project performance, i.e. "how" and "whether" an intervention is progressing towards its objectives. They also allow comparisons between actual and expected results. Defining indicators that include appropriate verifiers and qualifiers and also are complemented by targets and baselines ensures this performance measurement function. An effective indicator "package" should include:

➤ **Indicator**, including:

- **Verifier.** Variable or parameter that retains the essential meaning of the objective and that *can be measured on the ground.*
Qualifiers. Contribute to describe the verifier allowing to respond to: *what, when, where, who*

Targets/ Baseline- Values associated to the verifiers that define *how much* the objective is planned/expected to be achieved compared to the situation prior to project start. Intermediate targets (milestones) allow assessment of progress.

Project indicators therefore describe and translate the strategy objectives in the Project Planning Matrix (PPM) (Goal, Objective, Outcome) in terms of its concrete meaning, its quantity, quality, time frame, and location so that it can be measured and verified objectively.

An example of a good indicator is:

Objective: "Conservation of keystone species"
Indicator: At the end of the fifth year (**qualifier: when**)
the population sizes (**qualifier: what**)
of species A, B and C (**verifier**)
within the boundaries of the park (**qualifier: where**)
have remained constant (**target**)
compared to X number at project-start level (**baseline**)

For clarity of presentation the indicator, baseline and target are placed in three adjacent columns in the Project Planning Matrix (PPM).

Project Strategy	Key Impact Indicator	Baseline	Target	Sources of verification	Assumptions
Goal					
Objective					
Outcomes					
Outputs					

A good indicator should have the following characteristics. It:

- **Closely tracks** the objective/result that is intended to measure
- Must allow general agreement over interpretation of the results (assessment by different stakeholders will reach same conclusion). This means the indicator should be **operationally precise (qualifiers)** - no ambiguity about:
 - *What* is being measured. Avoid reference to “adequate partnerships” - what type of partnership, who with, what is adequate, and who decides what is adequate?;
 - The *extent* of change intended. Avoid reference to “significant increase”, “to strengthen”, “to improve” unless these terms are explicitly defined;
 - *Where* are we measuring
 - *Who* are the stakeholders/ beneficiaries
- Is **unidimensional** - measures only one phenomenon at a time. Example. Community has access to and use of a certain technology
- Is **dissaggregated**, where appropriate, by gender, location, or some other dimension important for managers.
- Is **quantitative**, where possible;
- Is **practical**. Data must be:
 - *Obtainable* in a timely way and at reasonable cost (both human and financial resources).
 - *Available* on a frequent enough basis to inform management decisions.
 - *Reasonable and appropriate* as compared to the utility of the data
- Should be **adequate**. As a group, the indicator should adequately measure the phenomenon in question. Do not repeat indicators. Do not use process/activities indicators to measure results.
- Must be **owned**. Stakeholders need to agree that the indicator is useful (need to reconcile different interests). Indicators created in government (or UNDP) offices are not appropriate.

How many indicators are needed? That depends on the complexity of the project strategy and level of resources available. Strike a balance between resources available and information

needed to make well-informed decisions. In general, **a few good indicators are more useful than many weak indicators.**

3. Process

Formulation of indicators is an iterative process that extends throughout project development and ought to begin **as early as possible**. Tentative indicators should be identified as part of the analysis and development of objectives stage during the planning phase. Thinking simultaneously about indicators and objectives at this early stage contributes to more precise and focused objectives. Moreover, this early attempt to define targets and milestones will result in a more realistic project strategy in terms of time frame and expected impact.

4. Implications for work-plans

Monitoring does not occur spontaneously, or at no cost. An effective monitoring system requires a specific and adequately costed monitoring plan. The plan needs to identify **what** data is available from existing reliable sources and which data will be collected. For the data to be collected, the plan will identify by **whom**, at **which** locations, at **what** times, using **which** methods. Similarly, the subsequent use of the data needs to be described – **who** will be responsible for analyzing and reporting, against **what** deadlines? The costs of data collection, analysis and reporting need to be accurately calculated, and subsequent budget revisions should not reduce these costs (for example, if other project components are over cost), unless there is clear evidence that the original costs were over-estimated.

The process of **retrofitting** indicators for projects already under implementation is not complete without an associated revision of the work plan and budget revisions that address the issues described in the preceding paragraph.

*Please send any comments or suggestions for improving this note to Tim Boyle –
tim.boyle@undp.org*

ANNEX: Menu of real indicators from existing projects (sometimes modified)

Overall Impact (Applies to the Objective level of the PPM)

Project Outcome	Impact on Biodiversity	Impact on Pressures	Impact on Response Measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Populations of indicator species native to project sites remain at viable levels – no decline compared with baseline surveys (6 species specified). ➤ Populations of rare and endangered fauna and flora remain at current levels (5 species specified). ➤ Biological monitoring in 2006 indicates that the integrity of the project site remains secure with no significant change in habitat block size ➤ Biological assessment in year 3 shows no decline in number of species collected per unit of collection effort in 8 transect plots (baseline to be determined following biological assessment in yr. 1, and verified through field surveys) ➤ 20% increase in the area of natural regeneration of [endangered plant species specified] within the project area, compared with baseline level, based on annual ground surveys ➤ Habitat monitoring in yr. 5 indicates that there has been no reduction in the total area of primary forest from 1999 baseline (lowland forest: 119, 248 ha; mossy forest: 1,650 ha) ➤ Connectivity maintained between 2 largest primary forest block with no net reduction in biological corridor beyond yr. 1999 baseline (distance between blocks 18 kilometers; corridor area 15,700 ha) ➤ No decrease in canopy cover of secondary forest beyond yr 2002 baseline ➤ By Dec. 2004 the [ecosystem] will show: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equal to 1998 or increased natural vegetation cover 2. Equal to 1998 or increased species diversity (plant and animals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ At the end of the project the number and extent of human-caused fires (not part of a fire management plan) will be reduced by 50% compared to the average from 1995-1999 ➤ No illegal new settlement occurs within project site beyond 1998 baseline ➤ No illegal resource extraction occurs in the project site after June 2003 ➤ Illegal activities (grazing, hunting, settling, plant collecting, etc.) in protected areas will be reduced by 50% by year 4, compared with baseline levels. ➤ Annual (or periodic) assessment using “Threats Reduction Analysis” (TRA) shows positive trends throughout life of project 	<p>Note: Impact indicators at the Objective level should ideally cover impact on biodiversity (2 and/or impact on threats (3rd responses is of limited value. However, the GEF has introduced some generalized indicators for obligatory use. These are:</p> <p>For SP1 projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Annual application of WB/WWF “tracking tool” shows increased scores throughout life of project <p>For SP2 projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Annual application of GEF “tracking tool” shows increased scores throughout life of project

Components of project strategy (Applies to the Outcomes level of the PPM)

1. Improved resource management outcomes

Project Outcome	Impact on Biodiversity	Impact on Pressures	Impact on Response Measures
Improvement of protected area management systems	Note: This column is largely empty because individual outcomes rarely have direct impacts on biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Area of new encroachment within the protected area declines to zero by year 4 ➤ Incidence of fires (number) spreading into protected area from surrounding farmland in years 3-5 declines by 50%, compared with annual average from 5 previous years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Legislative approval of PA status approved by yr. 2003 Q4 ➤ Full complement of PA staff recruited by 2003, Q4 ➤ PA boundaries fully delineated by 2004, Q4 ➤ Management plan produced by end of year 1 ➤ Endorsement of management zoning proposals by communities by end of year 2
Establishment of sustainable management systems		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Number of livestock grazing within the protected area boundary declines by 90% by the end of year 3, compared with average numbers recorded in two years before beginning of project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ By the end of year 5, all local fishermen are observing no-take zones ➤ By the end of year 3, at least 70% of all farmers within the project site have voluntarily adopted stall feeding.
Establishment of community management		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Number of incidents reported per unit monitoring effort declines by 50% by year 4, compared with year of initial monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community-based natural resource management program implemented in 50% of communities by 2004, Q4
Effective enforcement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Number of incidents reported per unit patrolling effort declines by 50% by year 4, compared with year of initial patrolling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community forestry guards designated by 2003, Q3 ➤

2. Economic and financial outcomes

Project Outcome	Impact on Biodiversity	Impact on Pressures	Impact on Response Measures
Improved livelihoods	➤ No net decrease in forest cover of local farmers' land holdings in years 3 and 5, compared with baseline levels	➤ Number of livestock grazing within the protected area boundary declines by 90% by the end of year 3, compared with average numbers recorded in two years before beginning of project.	➤ Provisional harvest quotas for sustainable use of NTFP's established by 2004, Q1 ➤ Livelihoods of beneficiaries of project's small grants programme improved over 1999 baseline, as measured by income levels
Alternative livelihoods		➤ Annual monitoring of regeneration of [4 important NTFP species] shows an increase of at least 30% in years 4-6 compared with the average for years 1 and 2 ➤ Frequency of incidents of hunting for bushmeat in project area declines by 70% by year 4, compared with baseline levels.	➤ At least [number] of examples of sustainable traditional resource use practices revived by yr. 4.5 ➤ Alternative income generation plans for all affected [sub-districts] produced by end of year 1 ➤ Specific alternative income initiatives under implementation in all affected [sub-districts] by end of year 2 ➤ Quantifiable changes in livelihoods of local communities, reducing the frequency of environmentally damaging activities, by year 5
Sustainable financing and financial instruments			➤ 50% of additional staff salaries absorbed into [Ministry of Environment] budget by 2004 ➤ Endowment Fund is fully capitalized and is providing funds for biodiversity by year 6 ➤ Annual recurrent costs for management of [project area] do not require additional donor support from year 5 onwards ➤ Park budget benefiting from income flows through ecotourism by year 5
Engagement of private sector in conservation goals		➤ By the end of year 4, monitoring of dive sites shows no new anchor or trampling damage	➤ Number of privately owned reserves established under national regulations reaches 4 within project area by year 4. ➤ Funding of community patrolling by local hotels supports at least 10 rangers by end of year 3

3. Capacity Development outcomes

Project Outcome	Impact on Biodiversity	Impact on Pressures	Impact on Response Measures
Strengthen institutions		➤ At least 80% of incidents of illegal logging successfully prosecuted from year 4 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The number of land-use requests per year, approved after 1999 that are inconsistent with the Project's biodiversity criteria will decrease to zero in the final year of the Project ➤ [PA Agency] staff equipped and able to enforce corridor regulations from year 3 onwards
Mobilization of communities for enforcement, monitoring, etc.		➤ Number of incidents reported per unit monitoring effort declines by 50% by year 4, compared with year of initial monitoring	➤ By the end of year 4, at least 10 villages within project area either voluntarily establish community monitoring, following model of pilot villages, or approach project for assistance in establishing community monitoring
Training & interpretation		➤ Incidence of fires spreading into protected area from surrounding farms decreases by 90% by year 4 (compared with baseline level)	➤ During the nesting season, at least 80% of all farmers avoid grazing livestock in areas used for nesting
Policies, legislation for conservation and sustainable livelihoods		➤ Three proposed protected areas and three proposed extensions to existing protected areas remain free from mining and other activities inconsistent with EIAs	➤ Game Law amended by 2003
Mainstreaming protected area management, including zoning			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Endorsement of management zoning proposals by communities by end of year 2 ➤ Corridor boundaries physically demarcated by end of year 3 ➤ All stakeholders, including local communities have clear understanding by year 5 of roles and responsibilities in land management of corridors

Project Outcome	Impact on Biodiversity	Impact on Pressures	Impact on Response Measures
Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in production sectors (agriculture, fisheries, forestry, tourism)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pesticide levels in water samples [from 3 specified stream locations] decrease by 90% by end of year 5, compared with levels in year 1 ➤ Incidents of turtle by-catch decline by 90% by end of year 3, compared with baseline levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No-takes zones endorsed by local fishermen by end of year 2 ➤ At least 75% of all farmers within project site utilizing IPM by the end of year 4 ➤ All forest enterprises operating in the buffer zone adopt revised logging regulations that incorporate biodiversity-friendly practices by end of year 3 ➤ Total road length constructed per 1000m by year 4, compared with year 1

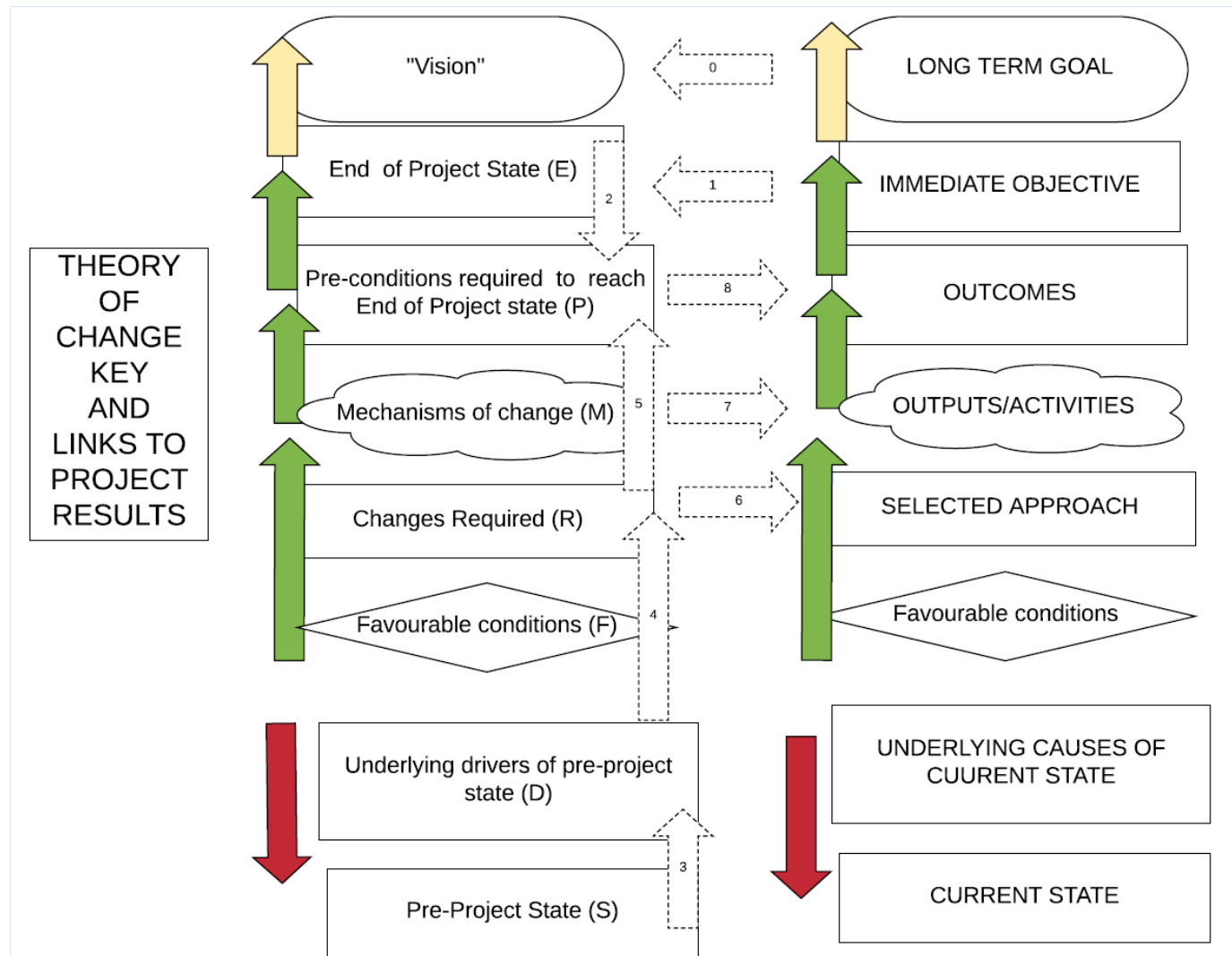
4. Management of Information and Knowledge outcomes

Project Outcome	Impact on Biodiversity	Impact on Pressures	Impact on Response Measures
Environmental education and awareness building		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support for commercial hunting among villagers within project site declines by at least 80%, based on targeted surveys conducted in year 1 and year 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased understanding and commitment of local authorities and communities to objectives of the Biosphere Reserve measured by tangible contributions (buildings, personnel, finances, administrative support) by year 3 ➤ Biodiversity conservation measures developed by the Project are included in the 2008 Central and local government's Four-year plans ➤ Awareness of park boundaries and regulations established in 100% of adult community members surveyed by year 5
Support for indigenous knowledge		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Incidents of grazing and fire in [specified areas where NTFP's are collected] decline to zero by year 4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Re-established traditional medicine clinics provide employment for at least 30 local farmers in sustainable harvesting (and processing) of NTFP's by end of year 4
Replication			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Management model extended to at least 1 other PA by 2004 ➤ The number of replicates within other national and regionally protected areas, of approaches demonstrated and lessons learned by the project ➤ Protected areas and buffer zone principles are applied to other protected areas and buffer zones in [target country], as indicated by reference to this Project

5. Scientific and Technical Outcomes

Project Outcome	Impact on Biodiversity	Impact on Pressures	Impact on Response Measures
Biological and socio-economic surveys			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Biological and socio-economic data for corridors input into existing [PA Agency] GIS unit by end of year 1 ➤ Most intensively utilized grazing lands identified by end of year 1 and ecological impacts of grazing documented
Ecological restoration, including species recovery plans		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sales of endangered animals or animal parts in local markets declines by 90% in year 5 compared with year 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Basal area of woody species within [specified degraded areas] shows a 20% increase in survey conducted in year 5, compared with year 1 ➤ Number of juveniles recorded by camera trapping in year 5 shows a 30% increase (per unit trapping effort) compared with year 1.
Research in support of conservation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adoption of alternative grazing systems reduces the number of livestock grazing in natural forest within project site by 70% by end of year 4, compared with baseline levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Viable IPM systems providing alternatives to chemical pesticides successfully tested in project area by end of year 4

Annex 19. Example of a flow diagram for a GEF Project Theory of Change analysis
Theory of Change is on the left and the translation into project components on the right



Annex 20: Safeguards Desk Review (2021) with MTR comments
Identified Safeguards Risks/Measures & Potential Gaps Therein PIMS 5844

E/S Risk Category	Moderate	Reconsider categorization level?	No	
Triggered SES Principles/Standards	Principle 1 Human Rights; Standard 1 Biodiversity & Standard 2 Climate Change; Standard 3 Community Health, Safety and Working Conditions; Standard 5 Displacement; Standard 6 Indigenous Peoples			
Potentially overlooked SES P/S	None			
Management Plans/Frameworks Prepared (with brief notes on quality)	None developed yet			
Key SESP risks (summarized High/Moderate risks but may include Low risks if warranted)				
Risks	Relevant Mgmt. Measures (in SESP etc.)	Concerns/Notes (if any)		MTR COMMENTS
Duty-bearers might not have the capacity to meet their obligations	The project design includes training and outreach activities related to the obligations of various government duty-bearers on biodiversity conservation, law enforcement and rural development.	Include management measures to ensure that the project manages risks related to/under engaging with law enforcement i.e., risks under Standard 3 Safety and working conditions and risks under Principle 1 Human Rights.		Should examine whether this risk should have been identified in the first place ¹ . It is unusual to have this triggered in a wildlife conservation project. Regardless of that, the project is working to increase capacity and this is a fundamental part of the project design.
Rights-holders might not have the capacity to claim their rights	The project design includes specific measures to enhance the capacities of rural communities including education and awareness-raising activities, as well as training on livelihood improvements (see the Stakeholder Engagement Plan in Annex J).	Adequate management measures		Should examine whether this risk should have been identified in the first place ¹ . It is unusual to have this triggered in a wildlife conservation project. Regardless of that, the project is working closely with local communities to empower them and this is a fundamental part of the project design.

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/faen.pdf>

<p>The project might limit women's ability to use, develop and protect natural resources</p>	<p>Implementing the Gender Action Plan (Annex K). Project activities are designed to expressly include gender considerations and priorities through participatory, community-based approaches to planning. The project will integrate the different priorities of men and women into community-level actions in a culturally-sensitive and gender-responsive manner</p>	<p>Adequate measures identified in the SESP and in the Gender Action Plan.</p>	<p>One of the aims of the project is to encourage women's participation and the project has performed well.</p>
<p>Project activities are proposed within critical habitats and environmentally sensitive areas, including legally protected areas</p>	<p>None listed in SESP? None so far.</p>	<p>This has been identified as a risk in the SESP but with no corresponding management measures and a comment that states that project activities have a primary focus on biodiversity conservation and environmental sustainability in protected area management. Further clarification is needed.</p>	<p>The project is involved in establishing a legally protected area.</p> <p>MTR Recommendation 2 (MTR Report Section 5.2.2) covers assessment of the impacts of all project activities, including negative side-effects. A procedure should be established showing how each project activity is screened.</p> <p>Project contributions to the WNPMP should be carefully considered for potential effects.</p>
<p>The project involves changes to the use of lands and resources that may have adverse impacts on habitats, ecosystems, and/or livelihoods</p>		<p>Further clarification and assessment are needed as the risk has been identified to be triggered under Standard 5 but with no further consideration to the risks related to how the use of land and resources will impact on communities and Indigenous Peoples living in/and around project areas i.e., no management measures identified.</p>	<p>MTR Recommendation 2 (MTR Report Section 5.2.2) covers assessment of the impacts of all project activities, including negative side-effects. A procedure should be established showing how each project activity is screened.</p> <p>Project contributions to the WNPMP should be carefully considered for potential effects.</p>

Project activities pose risks to endangered species		<p>Further clarification on whether this is an actual risk or not as there are no defined management measures except for a comment that states that <i>“No information will be provided on the location of these endangered species thereby precluding the possibility of project actions being used to target them for poaching.”</i></p> <p>According to PIR 2020: To promote PA management effectiveness, the project deployed 35 camera traps and supported patrolling operation by 30 community rangers to monitor wildlife and poaching/hunting, collect data, and create awareness on conservation to local communities.</p>	<p>MTR Recommendation 2 (MTR Report Section 5.2.2) covers assessment of the impacts of all project activities, including negative side-effects. A procedure should be established showing how each project activity is screened.</p> <p>The whole aim of the project is to conserve endangered species so the assessment will look at side-effects. Well established procedures are used to tranquilize Snow Leopards. Safety of the tranquilizing protocol nevertheless will form part of the screening procedure.</p> <p>Project contributions to the WNPMP should be carefully considered for potential effects.</p>
The project poses a risk of introducing invasive alien species		<p>Check/confirm whether the comment provided here is designed to be a management measure: <i>“Project activities will use indigenous and/or non- invasive species for all afforestation activities.”</i></p>	<p>This is indeed a management measure and one that is being followed in the tree planting activities.</p> <p>Like the other risks here, it can be dealt with formally under the screening procedure proposed under MTR Recommendation 2 (and the principle of using indigenous or non-invasive is already incorporated in the Prodoc - Prodoc para 119)</p>
The project involves harvesting of natural forests, plantation development, and reforestation		<p>Check/confirm whether the comment provided here is designed to be a management measure: <i>“Project activities will promote ecosystem functioning through sustainable land and natural resource management.”</i></p>	<p>Not worded as a risk.</p> <p>There are environmental risks associated with planting and these can be dealt with formally under the screening procedure proposed under MTR Recommendation 2.</p> <p>Project contributions to the WNPMP should be carefully considered for potential effects.</p>

The potential outcomes of the project are sensitive or vulnerable to potential impacts of climate change		Check/confirm whether the comment provided here is designed to be a management measure: includes design of climate- smart activities related to land-use planning and habitat conservation, based on downscaled climate change models for the area.	<p>This is really a statement to the effect that a major component of the project is to design ways of managing the Wakhan ecosystem that take into consideration the inevitable impacts of the global climate crisis.</p> <p>Should therefore examine whether this risk should have been identified in the first place.</p>
The proposed project is susceptible to or increased vulnerability to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme climatic conditions		Clarify/elaborate further on this risk and how it will be managed/mitigated i.e., how the project expects to include considerations of the impacts of disasters, design of climate smart-activities and identifying project activities outside of the hazard risk zones as explained in the SESP (corresponding comment).	<p>The project would have to deal with any such events as part of its approach to conservation so it does not actually pose a threat to the project itself - it would just change the project</p> <p>Should therefore examine whether this risk should have been identified in the first place.</p>
The project could possibly result in economic displacement		The project does not elaborate on specific management measures relevant for compliance with the SES Standard 5 regarding economic displacement. The PMU/CO to consider re-assessing risks under Standard 5 and establishing adequate management measures to follow the SES.	<p>Any economic displacement would not be as a result of project activities. Project contributions to the WNPMP should be carefully considered for potential effects.</p> <p>Should examine whether this risk should have been identified in the first place.</p> <p>Can be dealt with formally under the screening procedure proposed under MTR Recommendation 2</p>
The project could possibly affect customary rights to land and/or resources		Again, it is critical that the project clarifies and addresses this risk with adequate management measures complying with the SES Standard 5 on land acquisition with a particular focus on the impacts to indigenous peoples.	<p>Can be can be dealt with formally under the screening procedure proposed under MTR Recommendation 2. Project contributions to the WNPMP should be carefully considered for potential effects.</p>

Indigenous peoples in the project area may be impacted by project activities		<p>The comments below are derived from the comments related to Standard 6 in the SESP (pg.) and could be identified as management measures but are not:</p> <p>The Project design includes participatory, community-based approaches to planning (see the Stakeholder Engagement Plan in Annex J). The project will develop an Indigenous Peoples Plan (in the first year of implementation).</p>	<p>Yes, should combine the risks and treat together.</p> <p>A summary of the current situation, using established definitions of Indigenous Peoples and describing the impacts of the project on their livelihoods, should be prepared. An IPP may not be required in this project but it is recommended that further advice is taken.</p>
The project could potentially affect the lands, natural resources, and traditional livelihoods of indigenous peoples.		See comment and consider combining this risk with the one above to ensure a comprehensive approach to the impacts on Indigenous Peoples.	
<i>Serious risks that may have been overlooked (and thus require discussion with RTA/ Country Office / Project Team)</i>			
<i>Risks</i>	<i>Explanation of suspected gap</i>		
None			
<i>Safeguards plans/elements that must be prepared during implementation (first year especially), i.e., required for the project as noted in the SESP, ESMF (etc.), or based on desk review findings (indicate which in notes)</i>			
<i>Safeguard Plans</i>	<i>Date/timeframe expected</i>	<i>Status/notes</i>	
Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP)	Unknown	<p>The SESP identifies the development of an Indigenous Peoples Plan but does not state when this plan is expected. Relatedly, because of the engagement of Indigenous Peoples in project activities and the impact on their lands and rights, it is relevant that the project recognizes the need for an IPP complying with the SES.</p> <p>The project also needs to identify the activities can only begin after the IPP/FPIC are established and implemented for SES compliance</p>	<p>The SESP states that the IPP will be prepared in the first year of project implementation. A summary of the position regarding Indigenous Peoples, the AIMS of the project, and the expected and potential unplanned IMPACTS of the project should be prepared.</p>

ESMF	Recommended per this desk review but not identified in the project documents	After a review of the project documents, we recommend an ESMF to ensure a framework is established to ascertain the relevant assessments and management plans required for this project.	Once a sober review of how the numerous risks arose during the design (many of the SER Screening Checklist should perhaps have not been ticked YES) it will likely be decided that an ESMP which will basically take the form of a screening procedure for all project activities (see MTR Recommendation 2) will be sufficient. It is the opinion of the MTR that an ESMF is neither mandated nor desirable and will simply consume resources to no real benefit to project, environment or local people.
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Detailed Findings	Proposed Oversight Actions (for RTA & CO, with Deborah's support)	Recommended Procedures (for PMU as determined appropriate)	MTR COMMENTS
<p>- The project SESP was not done properly: out of the 14 identified risks, only three (3) risks have defined measures to manage the correlating risks.</p> <p>- Relatedly, the SESP is appears to be missing relevant assessments and management plans to mitigate risks under:</p> <p>a. SES Standard 5 and ensure that activities i.e., harvesting of natural forests, plantation development, and reforestation; economic displacement and impacts on livelihoods are carefully considered and managed according to the SES.</p> <p>b. Since the project involves changes to the use of lands and could possibly affect customary</p>	<p>- Discuss updating the SESP</p>	<p>- PMU to ensure that the SESP is updated to capture all the missing risks and ensure that adequate management measures are developed for SES compliance.</p>	<p>Yes, an updated SESP would go a long way to answering the questions posed in this Desk Review.</p> <p>This should be done starting from the SER Checklist and thinking carefully about whether questions should be answered YES or NO. (see suggestions in comments above to examine identification of risks in the first place)</p> <p>It should also include ensuring conformity of the finalized SE Risks with the UNDP Risk Log (prodoc Annex H, and each Project Quarterly Report).</p> <p>Environmental and Social Risks should be assessed for each and every project activity. In that way a, b, and c opposite can be incorporated into project plans.</p>

<p>rights to land; the PMU/CO must re-assess these risks and determine /establish the required management plans to mitigate these risks under Standard 5.</p> <p>c. Standard 3 safety and working conditions with regards to Component 1 on the project's engagement and support to law enforcement patrolling the PAs (ProDoc pg. 118) should be further assessed and managed.</p>			<p>With regard to (c) opposite, if this went back to a revision of the SESP it would require a positive answer to another one of the questions on the Checklist (eg 3.8 or 3.9).</p>
<p>The project is lacking a GRM and loosely states in the ProDoc that; 'the Project Board can take on the responsibility of ensuring grievances are addressed, which can be formalized through a project level grievance mechanism. As part of the stakeholder engagement process, project-affected people should be informed of processes for submitting concerns, including through a project level grievance mechanism (if available)'.</p>	<p>Discuss with the RTA the need for a functional GRM particularly for a project of this magnitude and character i.e., considering the impacts project activities have on lands, rights and livelihoods of the communities in/around the project areas.</p>	<p>PMU/CO to consider developing a function GRM separate from the Stakeholder engagement following the Guidelines set out in the SES Supplemental Guidance on GRMs</p>	<p>A simple GRM can be established using a standard flow diagram. It is unlikely that anyone will complete a form to file a grievance, so the project must be open to opinions communicated in any way. The MTR found that certain grievances were aired about the WCS overall programme which is often difficult to separate in the public mind into separate projects or funding streams.</p>
<p>An ESMF is required to ensure that the procedural elements for the required assessments and management plans are established for SES compliance.</p>	<p>Discuss the need for an ESMF</p>	<p>PMU/CO to establish and ESMF as soon as possible and ensure to identify the activities that should not be started without the required assessments and management plan sin place.</p>	<p>As stated above, MTR recommends a streamlined ESMP to act as a screening mechanism for all project activities (See MTR Report 5.2.2 and 5.2.15)</p>

Annex 23 MTR Report Clearance Form

ToR ANNEX F: MTR Report Clearance Form


(to be completed by the Commissioning Unit and RTA and included in the final document)

Midterm Review Report Reviewed and Cleared By:

Commissioning Unit (M&E Focal Point)

Syed Haroon Ahmadi

Name: _____

Signature:  _____

16-Jun-2021

Date:

Regional Technical Advisor (Nature, Climate and Energy)

Kaavya Varma

Name: _____

Signature:  _____

17-Jun-2021

Date: