

Mid-Term Evaluation of UNDP-Supported GEF-Financed Project

Strengthening conservation and resilience of globally significant wild cat landscapes through a focus on small cat and leopard conservation

India – UNDP GEF PIMS # 6355 ; GEF ID # 10235

MTR time frame:	27th September to 26th December, 2024
Region and countries included in the project:	Asia and Pacific Region, India
GEF Operational Focal Area/ Strategic Program:	Biodiversity
Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and other project partners:	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Climate Change
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The MTR also acknowledges the many stakeholders consulted who freely shared their knowledge and experience regarding small wild cat conservation, providing important insights that informed the recommendations provided in the MTR report.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

APR	Annual Progress Reports
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ESZ	Environmentally Sensitive Zones
FACE	Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GEF	Global Environment Facility (source of grant fund)
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
HWC	Human Wildlife Conflict
IPPF	Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (WWF)
IWT	Illegal Wildlife Trade
KII	Key Informant Interviews
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MoEFCC	Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NPMU	National Project Management Unit
OECD	Organization of the Economic Cooperation Development
PA	Protected Area
PVTG	Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups
PWD	Persons with Disability
PEB	Project Executive Board
PIR	Project Implementation Report
ProDoc	Project Document
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PPR	Project Progress Report
PRF	Project Results Framework
PSU	Program Support Unit
SESP	Social and Environmental Screening Procedure
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely
SPMU	State Project Management Unit
TCP	Tiger Conservation Plans
ToC	Theory of Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP CO	UNDP Country Office (India)
Wild Cats	Project Title <i>Strengthening conservation and resilience of globally significant wild cat landscapes through a focus on small cat and leopard conservation</i>
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Project Summary Table

Project Title:	Strengthening conservation and resilience of globally significant wild cat landscapes through a focus on small cat and leopard conservation		
UNDP PIMS#:	6355	GEF project ID#:	10235
PIF Approval Date:	Jun 13, 2019	CEO Endorsement:	Jun 8, 2021
Quantum Award # Quantum Project ID	00110188.1 00110188	Project Document Signature Date (date project officially began):	May 12, 2022
Country:	India	Date project manager hired:	Aug 12, 2022
Region:	Asia and the Pacific	Inception Workshop:	Nov 16, 2022
UNDP Outcome and Output:	Outcome: Energy, environment and resilience. Output 3.2: Effective solutions developed at national and subnational levels for sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems, ozone-depleting substances, chemicals and wastes.	Mid-Term Review Completion:	Dec 2024
GEF Focal Area Strategic Objectives:	GEF-7 Global Wildlife Program	Planned Project Closing:	May 12, 2027
Trust Fund (Indicate GEF TF, LDCF, SCCF, NPIF)	GEF Trust Fund	Revised closing date:	
GEF Implementing Agency:	UNDP		
Executing Agency:	Ministry of Environment Forests and Climate Change		
Executing Partners:	Global Tiger Forum		
UNDP-GEF Technical Team:	Ecosystems and Biodiversity		
Project Financing:	At CEO Endorsement US\$	At MTR US\$	
(1) GEF financing:	\$4,500,000	\$237,808	
(2) UNDP contribution:	\$1,894,000	0	
(3) Government:	\$55,826,733	\$47,8820	
(4) Other partners:			
(5) Total co-financing [2+3+4]:	57,720,733	\$47,882	
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS [1+5]:	62,220,733	\$285,690	

1.2 Project Description

The Wild Cats project has adopted a landscape conservation approach to secure the conservation of the globally significant wild cat landscapes of **Dudhwa in the northern Indian State of Uttar Pradesh, Pakke-Eaglenest in Arunachal Pradesh** in the north-east, and **Ranthambhore in Rajasthan** in line with the National Wildlife Action Plan 2017-31, that integrates conservation programs for individual species (such as tiger, elephant) into area-based planning, connects stakeholders and empowers communities to participate in conservation-related activities, and operates across Protected Areas (PAs), identified tiger corridors and in buffer zones surrounding and connecting these areas. In addition, it will complement the existing World Wildlife Fund (WWF) led landscape conservation programme at Dudhwa as part of the Terai Arc Landscape, at Pakke-Eaglenest as part of the Brahmaputra Landscape and Ranthambhore in Rajasthan as part of the Western India Tiger Landscape, through co-developed field initiatives.

1.3 Project Progress Summary

The Wild Cats project has not progressed as planned, with no progress on activities for Outcomes 2 and 3 and limited progress on activities for Outcomes 1 and 4. The lack of project progress is due to operational and financial challenges as discussed in report **Sections 4.2 and 4.3**. In summary, the key issues responsible for limited progress for Outcomes 1 and 4 are a six-month delay in the governments release of the funding tranche for year 1 of project implementation and at the time of the MTR there had been no government release of a second tranche of funding to support project activities in years 2 and 3 of project implementation. The key issue responsible for no progress for Outcomes 2 and 3 was the loss of the World Wildlife Fund US as the implementing agency and the transfer of project Components 2 and 3 to UNDP which is now providing project assurance for all four project Components. With UNDP leading all four project components, restructuring of the Wild Cats project is currently underway, including preparation of a revised Project Document (ProDoc).

The MTR has assessed the progress towards mid-term and end of project targets for each of Wild Cats project's 17 indicators to determine the likelihood of achieving end of project targets (see **Annex 3** for a complete assessment of each indicator). The MTR was limited by the available data, including no numeric data to assess mid-term targets for PRF indicator #'s 1, 2, 3, 6, 14, 15, 15, and 17 (draft PIR June 2024) and no scores available for the six indicators associated with Outcomes 2 and 3 for which no activities have been initiated. The MTR assessment of indicators is based on the current project timeline (2022-2027) and the likely achievement of end of project targets. The results are as follows:

End of project achieved	0
Partially achieved, on target to achieve end of project target	9
At high risk of not achieving end of project target	8

1.4 MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table

Measure	MTR Rating*	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating: U (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Wild Cats project objective is at risk of not being achieved at the end of the project. The substantial number of activities under Outcomes 2 and 3 which make important contributions to achieving the project objective are yet to commence. Limited progress has been made on activities under Outcomes 1 and 4, as evidenced by the small amount (5%) of the total budget utilized.
	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: MU (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been limited progress on Outcome 1 activities. Consultation workshops have been conducted, however the MTR is recommending these be repeated due to lag in the initiation of follow up activities that will likely begin in the first quarter of 2025. Work on the development of Landscape Master Plans has produced a content page outlining a table of contents. Other activities under Outcome 1 have not been undertaken due to operational and financial delays.
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: HU (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The activities to achieve this Outcome are yet to commence due to operation reasons
	Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: HU (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The activities to achieve this Outcome are yet to commence due to operation reasons
	Outcome 4 Achievement Rating: MS (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress towards awareness raising has been satisfactory, however, delays in the initiation of follow up activities will require awareness raising activities be repeated as the project undergoes a second start up. The NPSC has conducted regular annual meetings. There have been delays in constituting and hosting meetings for steering and advisory committees at the state and landscape levels to review the project. Because activities under project Outcomes 2 and 3 are yet to commence, the compilation of best practices is yet to begin.

Measure	MTR Rating*	Achievement Description
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	Achievement Rating: U (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Wild Cats project has failed to make progress as outlined in original work plan, with limited progress of Outcomes 1 and 4 largely to due to inadequate financial flows and no progress on Outcomes 2 and 3 due to a loss of WWF-US as the joint Executing Agency Adaptive management has been slow to resolve both the financial flow issue and transfer of Outcomes 2 and 3 to UNDP The MTR has made several recommendations directed at improving project implementation and adaptive management
Sustainability	Achievement Rating: MU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sustainability of project outcomes is at significant risk after project closure, with some outputs likely sustainable under Outcomes 1 and 4 and sustainability unlikely for outputs under Outcomes 2 and 3

* Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). **Sustainability Ratings:** Likely (L), Moderately Likely (ML), Moderately Unlikely (MU), Unlikely (U) (For a more complete description of the ratings used see **Annex 4**)

1.5 Concise summary of conclusions

During MTR consultations, government and environmental NGO stakeholders acknowledged the unique and critical role of the Wild Cats project to address traditional focus on large cats which has left a large gap in the understanding of small wild cat populations, their numbers, their habitat use and the threats impacting them. There is also a lack of management actions targeting the conservation of small wild cat populations and the habitats which sustain them. The Wild Cats project logical framework includes activities intended to address these gaps and to develop management strategies that will be added to existing Tiger Management Plans for the project landscapes.

Government and environmental NGO stakeholders also acknowledged that there is a limited knowledge of small wild cats habitat use within the larger landscape outside protected areas where they may face multiple threats of hunting, trapping, poisoning, habitat loss, roadkill, and encounters with domestic dogs. Again, the Wild Cats Project Results Framework (PRF) includes activities working with communities and other government agencies to raise awareness of small wild cats and to engage communities in citizen science to build greater understanding of small wild cats which is hoped to lead to a reduction of threats and improved habitat conditions for wild cats in the larger landscape outside protected areas.

MTR discussions with government staff at all levels revealed a strong commitment to participate in the design, planning and implementation of project activities directed at improving the scientific understanding of small wild cats habitat use and threats and their management needs. And the potential to incorporate management actions into the existing work of landscape level government institutions. Government staff also demonstrated good knowledge and experience working with communities based on existing HWC programs that could benefit Wild Cats project.

Wild Cats project stakeholders such as Global Tiger Forum (GTF), Wildlife Institute of India (WII), World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF), and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) interviewed by the MTR team all had highly skilled technical staff with the experience needed to participate in the design, planning and implementation of the science-based research that is included in the Wild Cats project activities. All were also keenly interested in

contributing their skills to achieve the Wild Cats project objective. WWF in particular is already working on small wild cats in the project landscapes and has strong community engagement skills important successful implementation of the community activities that are included in the Wild Cats project.

The MTR concluded the skills, experience, and commitment demonstrated by government and other stakeholders provides a solid foundation for the potential success of the Wild Cats project. There are, however, significant barriers to the successful achievement of the Wild Cats project objective as noted in MTR report **Sections 4.2.2, 4.3.1, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3**. These barriers fall into two categories: financial flows to fund project activities, and the coordination of government and non-government stakeholders to implement project activities. MTR recommendations are therefore directed at:

1. The need for MoEFCC and UNDP to develop viable financial flow strategies that will ensure the timely transfer of project funds to implementing partners based on NPSC approved AWP project budgets; and
2. The immediate need for improved coordination and communication among project stakeholders supported by a fully functioning PMU.

Finally, an 18 month project extension is required to provide sufficient time for the implementation of the key activities under Wild Cats Outcomes 2 and 3 which have not yet started, and which can only be initiated after a fully functioning PMU is established. Funding delays have also impeded progress on activities under Wild Cats Outcomes 1 and 4, further justifying the need for an 18 month project extension.

The MTR team has concluded that the implementation of management recommendations and approval of a project extension will result in the successful and sustainable achievement of the SPRF end of project targets and the project objective.

1.6 Recommendation Summary Table

Recommendation	Key Entity Responsible	Priority Timing	Justification
Corrective actions for effective and efficient project implementation			
<p>1. Conduct an implementation planning workshop with MoEFCC, GTF, UNDP, WII, and WWF. Agenda to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review and approve revised timeline b. Establish roles and responsibilities to identify activities each partner will be implementing c. Establish regular, transparent communication among partners d. Establish financial transfer processes and potential contingency plans e. Establish financial and activity reporting requirements 	<p>MoEFCC GTF UNDP</p>	<p>Immediate Priority Complete 15/11/2024</p>	<p>Section 4.3.5</p>
<p>2. The Wild Cats project to acknowledge the need to apply for a project extension (18 months recommended) when appropriate. This is to ensure sustainable implementation of project activities, particularly activities working with communities that should not be fast-tracked.. A project extension request is justified by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A revised project implementation framework with UNDP managing all four components was not yet completed at the time of the MTR b. Project components 1 and 4 are one year behind schedule due to an election year in India which prevented the flow of project funding to MoEFCC c. Project components 2 and 3 had not been started at the time of the MTR, with planned start date in the first quarter of 2025. 	<p>MoEFCC GTF UNDP</p>	<p>First Priority Complete 31/01/2025</p>	<p>Section 4.3.2</p>

Recommendation	Key Entity Responsible	Priority Timing	Justification
<p>3. Initiate hiring process to fully staff & enable a fully functioning National Project Management Unit (NPMU)</p> <p>a. Develop ToR for NPMU staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Project Manager o Technical Specialist / Assistant PM o Finance Officer o M&E / Safeguards Officer o GESI Officer <p>b. Establish salary range to ensure staff positions attract well qualified candidates</p> <p>c. Confirm funding mechanism for each position</p> <p>d. Advertise all positions</p> <p>e. Establish hiring interview team</p> <p>f. Confirm office space within MoEFCC and procure required furnishings, computers, etc.</p> <p>g. Conduct training of PMU to meet UNDP / GEF financial and activity reporting requirements</p>	<p>GTF in consultation with MoEFCC and UNDP</p>	<p>First Priority Complete 31/03/2025</p>	<p>Section 4.3.1</p>
<p>4. Host landscape-level planning workshop(s) for each project landscape (this may be a combined workshop in one landscape) (MoEFCC, GTF, UNDP, WII, WWF and State and District level stakeholders attending)</p> <p>a. Review the approved revised timeline</p> <p>b. Establish roles and responsibilities to identify activities each partner will be implementing</p> <p>c. Establish regular, transparent communication among partners</p> <p>d. Establish financial transfer processes and potential contingency plans</p> <p>e. Establish financial and activity reporting requirements</p>	<p>MoEFCC and PMU</p>	<p>First Priority Complete by 28/02/2025</p>	<p>Section 4.3.5</p>
<p>5. The Wild Cats project should update the SESP as proposed in the PIR 2024, including undertaking the required assessments, before initiating on-the-ground activities with communities in the two project landscapes.</p>	<p>PMU and UNDP</p>	<p>First Priority Complete by 31/03/2025</p>	<p>Section 4.3.5</p>
<p>6. Initiate hiring process for LPMU staff</p> <p>a. Develop ToR for LPMU staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Project Officer o Technical Specialist <p>b. Establish salary range to ensure staff positions attract well qualified candidates.</p> <p>c. Confirm funding mechanism for each position.</p> <p>d. Advertise all positions.</p> <p>e. Establish hiring interview team.</p> <p>f. Confirm office space and procure required furnishings, computers, etc.</p>	<p>MoEFCC GTF LPMU</p>	<p>Second Priority Complete 30/04/2025</p>	<p>Section 4.3.1</p>

Recommendation	Key Entity Responsible	Priority Timing	Justification
7. Review and amend co-financing agreements with project partners as required	MoEFCC UNDP	Second Priority Complete 31/03/2025	Section 4.3.3
8. Initiate re-engagement of Wild Cats stakeholders in each project landscape: a. Host awareness raising sessions with implementing partners in each landscape. b. Host awareness raising sessions with participating communities in each landscape.	PMU and LPMU	Second Priority Complete 30/04/2025	Section 4.3.5
9. Amend the GEN1 designation of the Wild Cats project to GEN2 in recognition of the community work under Outcomes 2 and 3, where individual women and women's groups will be participating in project activities leading to greater gender equality and potentially contributing to women's empowerment.	MoEFCC UNDP	Second Priority Complete 31/12/2024	Section 4.3.5
10. Review and amend the GTF MoU with MoEFCC to remove references to WWF-US due to the fact that a grant agreement between the Ministry of Finance and WWF-US was not signed. To avoid the lengthy process of developing a new MoU, it is recommended any necessary changes be made through an addendum to the existing MoU.	MoEFCC GTF UNDP	Second Priority Complete 30/04/2025	Section 4.3.1
11. The UNDP CO (GEF Implementing Agency) and the MoEFCC (Executing Agency) work with the Ministry of Finance to improve the timely release of the approved project funding for approved Wild Cats Annual Work Plans. Funding should be made available in Q1 of each fiscal year to ensure effective and efficient implementation of Wild Cats project activities. UNDP and MoEFCC should also explore alternative mechanisms to finance project activities, such as direct payments from UNDP. The Wild Cats project may also consider developing contingency plans that allow the continuous implementation of project activities when the release of funds is delayed.	MoEFCC Ministry of Finance UNDP	Second Priority Complete 30/04/2025	Section 4.3.1
Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project.			
12. As defined in the National Project Steering Committee (NPSC) terms of reference the NPSC should meet at least twice each year to provide regular monitoring and evaluation of project progress and guidance to the Wild Cats project when it encounters problems implementing activities in a timely fashion as outlined in the approved Annual Work Plans.	MoEFCC	Second Priority Complete semi-annually	Section 4.3.4

Recommendation	Key Entity Responsible	Priority Timing	Justification
13. The PMU to improve the organization of Wild Cats project files through the creation of easily identifiable folders (e.g., Annual Work Plans; NPSC Minutes, etc.) and the use of consistent file naming protocols (e.g., 2022 AWP; 2023 AWP; etc. and 1 NPSC Meeting Minutes 20 July 2022; 2 NPSC Meeting Minutes 31 October 2023; etc.)	PMU	Second Priority Complete 31/12/2024	Section 4.3.6
14. To improve project communication among stakeholders the MoEFCC and UNDP should meet at least once each month. The PMU should be updating the MoEFCC and UNDP monthly on project progress and should maintain regular, open communication with all project stakeholders including state and landscape implementing partners, NGOs and participating project communities.	MoEFCC UNDP PMU	Second Priority Complete 31/12/2024	Section 4.3.6
15. To ensure effective and efficient use of the Wild Cats monitoring and evaluation budget, it is recommended financial tracking be conducted based on the budget defined in the ProDoc.	MoEFCC PMU	Second Priority Complete quarterly	Section 4.3.4

2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose of the MTR and objectives

The purpose of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) is to assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes, as specified in the Project Document (ProDoc) and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made to set the project on track to achieve its intended results (MTR Terms of Reference **Annex 1**).

2.2 Scope & Methodology

The MTR was an evidence-based assessment, relying on feedback from individuals who have been involved in the design, implementation, and supervision of the project, and a review of available documents and findings made during field visits. The overall methodology of the evaluation was based on participatory approach and followed the guidelines outlined in the UNDP Guidance for Conducting midterm reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects.

Stakeholder interviews included project beneficiaries, government representatives, civil society organizations, research institution, NGOs, CSOs, local government officials, and national agency officials of UNDP. Field visits were made to two states for respective landscapes. Virtual meetings and interviews were conducted in three cases. Field visits were used specially to interact with state and landscape level stakeholders. The sampling for interviewing the stakeholders was based on stratified random technique. The stratification was based on the categories of the stakeholders and their roles in the project. The randomness was in case of the community members who came for the interaction meeting with the MTR team.

The MTR mission was carried out over the period of 15th to 25th October 2024. The mission itinerary is compiled in **Annex 6**, and key project stakeholders interviewed for their feedback are listed in **Annex 7**.

Interactions and interviews were carried out covering government officials at the national, state and district levels. At the state level the MTR team interviewed officers from other relevant line departments who were involved in the project implementation. Issues related to policy and sustainability were delt with senior officials of the government. Interviews also considered the design and governance issues at the higher levels in the MOEF&CC, New Delhi and with seniormost officers at the state levels.

The MTR team completed a desk review of relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project progress reports, financial reports, and key project deliverables. A complete list of documents reviewed is compiled in **Annex 8**.

As a data collection and analysis tool, an evaluation matrix (**see Annex 2**) was developed to guide the review process. Evidence gathered during the fact-finding phase of the MTR was cross-checked between as many sources as practicable, to validate the findings

The PMU had provided a self-assessment of progress towards results through 2nd PIR. The information / data from this coupled with the findings from the interviews with the stakeholders was synthesized to present the project progress. The project results framework was used as an evaluation tool, in assessing attainment of project objective and outcomes (**see Annex 3**).

Most of the information available and collected during the MTR mission was qualitative. The reflections from independent interviews with diverse stakeholders and the information from documents were triangulated for validation to arrive at the final outcomes and conclusions.

Co-financing details were provided by the Project Management Unity (PMU) and co-financing partners and are summarized in the co-financing tables in report **Section 4.3.3**.

The MTR team summarized and presented the initial findings and recommendations of the MTR at the end of the field mission in a debriefing meeting.

As there have been significant challenges to implementing project activities, with no funding provided to support the second or third annual work plans (at third quarter of year 3) and no progress made on project Components 2 and 3 due to the loss of WWF-US as a GEF Implementing Agency, the MTR has made a careful assessment of project management and work planning to provide recommendations to the Implementing and Executing Agencies to make the necessary adaptive management changes required for the successful and sustainable achievement the project objective.

2.3 Structure of the MTR report

This MTR report presents introductory information in **Section 2** (this section) wherein the purpose, scope and methods for undertaking MTR are briefly described.

The **Section 3** presents the development context and the environmental, socio-political contexts in India, the threats, pressures and root causes affecting target species and their habitats and the barriers that this project seeks to address. Project strategy, objectives, expected outcomes and results, brief description of the field sites, implementation arrangements, timings and milestones, and main stakeholders are provided in subsections.

Section 4 presents the findings based on the review of documents and discussion with the stakeholders. Project design, result framework, progress made towards achievement of results. Since work has not progressed in field, the observations from field are not included in the review. It identifies the challenges and proposes additional measures to support more efficient and effective implementation of the project based on the review of management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, communications, risks to sustainability of the project.

In **Section 5** of this MTR report, conclusions in light of the findings from the MTR are presented. The conclusions highlight the strengths, weaknesses and results of the project. Recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions and efforts are made to provide practical, feasible recommendations to the project management and relevant stakeholders.

3 Project Description and Background Context

This project will secure the conservation of globally significant wild cat landscapes in northern, north-eastern and western India through a landscape conservation approach for wild cats that brings together species conservation programs, connects stakeholders and empowers communities, and operates across Protected Areas (PA), tiger corridors and buffer zones. It will aim to integrate small cat needs into existing large cat conservation initiatives so that all wild cats are considered together.

The project focuses on three landscapes in wild cat hotspots in northern, north-eastern and western India that contain multiple species of small cats as well as tiger and leopard. Each demonstration landscape is built around a key PA for wild cat conservation and surrounding buffer zones that contain important habitats for small cats. The project landscapes are: Dudhwa landscape in Uttar Pradesh and Pakke-Eaglenest landscape in Arunachal Pradesh, with further limited intervention in Ranthambhore landscape in Rajasthan. The location and significance of each landscape for small cat conservation is shown in Figure 1.

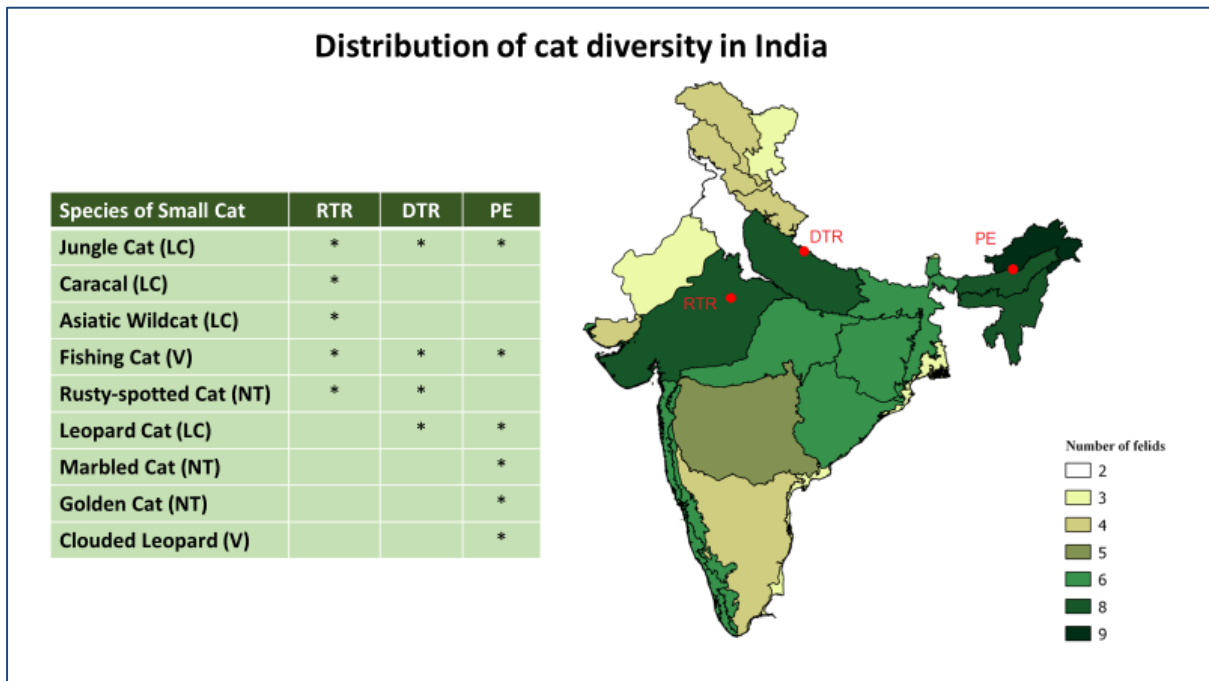


Figure 1. Distribution of wild cats in India, location of project landscapes and presence of small cats in each landscape Key: RTR - Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve (Rajasthan); DTR - Dudhwa Tiger Reserve (Uttar Pradesh); PE - Pakke Tiger Reserve – Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary (Arunachal Pradesh). IUCN Red List status: LC – Least Concern; NT – Near-threatened; V – Vulnerable. (Source: Shomita Mukherjee, Senior Principal Scientist, Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History.)

3.1 Development context

Environmental Context

Small cats are keystone species, providing crucial economic and ecosystem services such as pest and disease control, and their conservation is essential to underpin the integrity of big cat conservation efforts and maintain large natural ecosystems across India. While India’s network of tiger reserves provides a safe refuge to many cat species, a substantial part of the distribution of small cats occurs outside the PA network, making protection, restoration and connectivity of habitats at a landscape scale essential for their long-term conservation.

Of the 41 wild cat species occurring globally, fifteen are native to India. These include the large cat species, viz., tiger, Asiatic lion, snow leopard and leopard, and eleven small cat species. While much attention has been given to the large cats the small cats are little known and their conservation needs poorly understood. Most of India's wild cats do not yet feature as a conservation priority and almost all small cats plus leopards have decreasing populations and many are approaching vulnerable status globally. A higher level of threat is considered to apply to many at national level (e.g. caracal is thought to be endangered within India).

Habitats for small wild cats are the scrub and open forest of the semi-arid and arid regions in western India, the humid tropical forests, grasslands and wetlands of the north, and the diverse forest types of the north-east. Some of these species are unique to the regions they occur in, like the caracal and Asian wildcat from the semi-arid province and the marbled cat, golden cat and clouded leopard from the Eastern Himalayas. Of the nine small cat species covered by this project, six are on CITES Appendix I and three are on CITES Appendix II.

Socio-Political Context

The project areas are rich socio-culturally as the ethnicity is high and their cultural richness provides opportunities for meeting the contemporary challenges. The people are more vulnerable because poverty is high. Issues like energy needs, food insecurity, malnutrition, health problems, smaller land holding size, unclear land tenure, limited education facilities, access to resources and information hinder development.

Illegal wildlife trade (IWT) is a concern for certain species, especially near border areas. The project seeks to strengthen CITES implementation in relation to the identification of small wild cats and their parts in trade, and transboundary collaboration on combatting IWT. Overall, the project will aim to integrate small cat needs into existing large cat conservation so that all wild cats are considered together.

Many policies and acts are formulated towards use of natural resources in India. Of these, the most prevalent acts are the Indian Forest Act (1878) and Indian Forest Policy (1894) with a view to regulate access to various forest resources and also generate revenue for the Governments. After independence, a number of acts and policies related to agriculture, livestock husbandry, water and environmental protection and biodiversity conservation were enacted. Notable among them are Wildlife (Protection) Act (1972), Forest Conservation Act (1980), the Environment (Protection) Act (1986), National Forest Policy (1988) and National Environmental Policy (2006) to name a few. Simultaneously several other policies came into being at the national level, such as National Land use Policy (1988) Panchayati Raj Act 1992 (73rd amendment), National Biodiversity Act (2002), Schedule Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers Act (2006) and National Policy for Farmers (2007).

3.2 Problems that the project sought to address

3.2.1 Threats, Pressures and Root Causes

These landscapes are subject to varying degrees of habitat degradation and fragmentation, and small wild cats are threatened by poaching and human-wildlife conflict (HWC) – threats that are increasing in extent and frequency as ongoing development and land use changes extend the human-wild cat interface and increase the potential for local-level conflicts. The wild cats are also directly impacted by free-ranging dog populations and road kills. The increasing human populations and economic development that insufficiently integrates environmental and social safeguards are also key drivers of the threats to wild cats.

The nature of the threats facing small cats and their habitats is, in many cases, specific to each landscape. These threats vary in their intensity and extent, which have been combined according to a guiding threat impact matrix in order to determine those threats that are likely

to have the greatest impact, summarized for the three landscapes in **Table 2** based on the threat impact matrix shown in **Table 3**. The main threats are described below.

Table 2. Estimated threat and pressures ratings for the project landscapes (*Localized / episodic, **Locally high/severe)

Threats	Dudhwa	Ranthambhore	Pakke - Eaglenest
Poaching / illegal wildlife trade	Medium**	Low*	Critical
Human-wildlife conflict (various species)	Medium**	Low*	Medium**
Free-ranging dog presence	Medium**	Medium**	Low
Unsustainable grazing	Medium**	High	
Unsustainable use of fuelwood and NTFPs		High	High
Disturbance from excessive tourism		Medium**	
Illegal logging			Medium**
Forest encroachment for agriculture, settlements			Medium**
Ravine in-filling (encroachment)		Medium**	
Sand, gravel and stone mining		High	
Encroachment / degradation of riverbank habitats		Medium**	Low*
Changing hydrology and siltation of water-bodies	Medium		
Hydro-electric power plant / dam on river	Medium**		Medium**
Invasive alien species impacting natural habitats	Medium	Medium	
Risks from pesticides, rodenticides etc in agriculture		Low	
Habitat fragmentation by roads	Medium		Medium**
Road kills	Low	Medium	Medium
Forest and grassland fires			Medium

Table 3. Threat Impact Matrix [see ProDoc Landscape Profiles (Annexes 16A, 16B, 16C), Baseline Report for Small Wild Cats (Annex 18) and Capacity Development Scorecard for Landscape Conservation (Annex 19) for further information]

Extent	Intensity			
	High	Moderate	Low	Negligible
Pervasive	Critical	High	Medium	Negligible
Widespread	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Localized	Medium	Low	Low	Negligible
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

3.2.2 Barriers

The government has made significant efforts to reduce threats to small wild cats and their habitats through existing tiger conservation initiative and the associated protected area systems. Nonetheless, the efforts made on tiger conservation have left a number of barriers for small wild cat conservation which the Wild Cats project proposes to address. The barriers are as follows:

- Barrier 1:** Gaps in the policy, planning and procedural framework for landscape conservation.
- Barrier 2:** Limited capacity for wild cat conservation at landscape level
- Barrier 3:** Lack of community engagement in wild cat conservation
- Barrier 4:** Insufficient partnerships, regional coordination and outreach

3.3 Project Description and Strategy

3.3.1 Strategy

The Wild Cats project has adopted a landscape conservation approach to secure the conservation of the globally significant wild cat landscapes of Dudhwa in the northern Indian State of Uttar Pradesh and Pakke-Eaglenest in Arunachal Pradesh in the north-east in line with the National Wildlife Action Plan 2017-31, that integrates conservation programs for individual species (such as tiger, elephant) into area-based planning, connects stakeholders and empowers communities to participate in conservation-related activities, and operates across PAs, identified tiger corridors and in buffer zones surrounding and connecting these areas. In addition, it will complement the existing WWF-led landscape conservation programme at Dudhwa as part of the Terai Arc Landscape, at Pakke-Eaglenest as part of the Brahmaputra Landscape and Ranthambhore in Rajasthan as part of the Western India Tiger Landscape, through co-developed field initiatives.

The landscape conservation approach necessitates working across multiple scales and stakeholders in the natural resource management sector, including local communities, local forest user groups, small-scale agriculture users and the private sector. This recognizes that a sustainably managed landscape and provision of ecosystem services is critical for local livelihood provision, and likewise, sustainable and biodiversity-friendly community land use options are key to landscape conservation. The landscape conservation approach recognizes emerging threats to each of the project landscapes, particularly in the form of habitat fragmentation driven by economic development and increasing human populations, and includes coordination with production sectors, towards reducing threats to biodiversity, increasing sector engagement in landscape conservation, and facilitating local – state - national dialogue. The project will also seek to embed Global Wildlife Program threat-reduction priorities regarding combating human-wildlife conflict, poaching and illegal wildlife trade.

3.3.2 Objective

The project objective is:

To secure populations and habitats of wild cats subject to habitat encroachment, human-wildlife conflict, poaching and illegal trade in priority landscapes of northern, north-eastern and western India.

The Project Objective is to be achieved through four complementary components that aim to build the required enabling policy framework and institutional capacity (**Component 1**); strengthen government management of wild cats and habitats (**Component 2**); build

community stewardship (**Component 3**) at landscape level; and enhance corporate sector partnerships, regional collaboration, and knowledge transfer and learning (**Component 4**).

3.3.3 *Expected Outcomes*

The project is a child project of the GEF-7 Global Wildlife Program with the four following expected outcomes:

- Outcome 1.** Strengthened policy, planning and institutional framework for wild cat conservation in accordance with the National Wildlife Action Plan 2017-2031.
- Outcome 2.** Improved protection and management of wild cats and habitats in target PAs, corridors and buffer zones in wild cat landscapes.
- Outcome 3.** Enhanced community-based management of wild cats and habitats, with threat reduction including HWC and improved local livelihoods.
- Outcome 4.** Effective partnerships, communications, knowledge management and M&E for wild cat conservation

3.3.4 *Expected Results*

The long-term solution of the project, namely, to put in place an integrated model for wild cat conservation at landscape scale that can be upscaled and replicated nationally and in wild cat landscapes of other range states, will be realized through the achievement of the Project Objective.

The reduction of threats to wild cats and their habitats as well as enhanced benefits to project stakeholders showing the number of direct project beneficiaries are major results expected from the project. These are expected to be achieved through increased areas of terrestrial PAs under improved management for conservation and sustainable use; and larger area in the landscapes (excluding PAs) under improved practices benefiting biodiversity.

3.3.5 *Description of the Field Sites*

Dudhwa Landscape: Located in the State of Uttar Pradesh bordering Nepal, the landscape falls within the Upper Gangetic Plains on the outer range of the lower Himalayas. The region is characterised by natural vegetation comprising of tall grass, Sal forests, wetlands and swamps, interspersed with large tracts of irrigated sugarcane fields and a few other crops. The complex ecosystem of wetlands, marshes, grassland and forests is maintained by periodic natural flooding since it falls within the catchment areas of the Ghagra, Saryu and Sharada Rivers. The landscape identified for the project includes Dudhwa TR and surrounding areas. Dudhwa TR covers an area of 2201.77 km² and includes Dudhwa NP, Kishanpur WLS, Katerniaghat WLS, North and South Kheri Forest Divisions and Shahjahanpur Forest Division (Singh and Prasad 2015). The Katerniaghat WLS is connected to Bardia NP in Nepal via the Khata Corridor. Four species of small wild cats, viz. Fishing Cat, Jungle Cat, Leopard Cat and Rusty-spotted Cat occur in this landscape.

Pakke-Eaglenest Landscape: Located in the State of Arunachal Pradesh, the most striking feature of this landscape is the range of elevations it offers, from the lower elevations (150 m) of Pakke TR (area: 862 km²) to the high elevations (>3000 m) of Eaglenest WLS (area: 217 km²). This is perhaps the reason for the high biodiversity in general and specifically of cats in the region. The elevational range provides a variety of habitats that the different cat species are adapted to, including the wetlands and open areas of Pakke TR for Jungle Cat and Fishing Cat, the dense rain forests of Pakke TR and Eaglenest WLS for Marbled Cat and Clouded Leopard and the high elevation areas of Eaglenest WLS for Golden Cat (Mukherjee et al.

2016c, Mukherjee et al. 2019). The Leopard Cat occurs throughout the landscape.

Ranthambhore Landscape: The landscape is part of the semi-arid biotic province of India spread over the mountain ranges of Aravalis and Vindhyas. It includes the Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve (1334 km²) which encompasses the Ranthambhore NP, Sawai Mansingh WLS and the Keladevi WLS. The areas selected in the landscape for the project include the Karauli Territorial Division and Keladevi WLS. Narrow corridors link the sanctuaries to the National Park. The landscape typifies the semi-arid region with scrub, grasses and scattered trees with the vegetation classified as tropical dry deciduous and tropical thorn forests (Champion and Seth 1968). Despite the semi-arid nature of the landscape several waterbodies (lakes, ponds, streams and canals) occur in the region. These water sources contribute to the rich diversity of fauna found here. Characteristic features in this landscape are the ravines and rugged terrain. Five species of small wild cats, viz., Fishing Cat, Jungle Cat, Caracal, Asian Wildcat and Rusty-spotted Cat occur in this landscape.

3.4 Project Implementation Arrangements

The project is being implemented under a national implementation modality (NIM), with UNDP as the GEF implementing agency. The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change is the executing agency. Other partners in the states and landscapes are: State Forest Departments Uttar Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Rajasthan; relevant line departments and, NGOs and CSOs at national and state levels. GTF and WWF were the responsible parties to implement different project components, of which only GTF continued as per the ProDoc and WWF withdrew due to administrative issues.

The project organization chart included in the project document is presented below in **Figure 2**. There are three tiers in the organogram – first National Project Management Unit (NPMU), second State Project Management Unit (SPMU) and third, the Landscape Planning and Management Units in Uttar Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh.

The Project Board/ National Project Steering Committee (NPSC) is the highest strategic decision-making body headed by Additional Director General of Forest (Wildlife) with members from other relevant ministries, National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), UNDP, project landscape officials, local partners, NGOs and technical institutions. Compositions of the State Steering Committee are senior officials from Forest Departments, other relevant state government departments and institutions. There are Landscape level Advisory Committees, headed by District Collector in both the states. Functioning of landscape project units will be coordinated by the NPMU.

As responsible parties, SPMUs prepare annual work plans and all reports and the NPMU will consolidate these documents at the national level for approval of the National Steering Committee. State level plans and reports are approved by State Steering Committees first before sending to NPMU. Annual Project Implementation Reports (PIR) and project expenditures are finally approved at the NPSC.

Implementing Partner: The Implementing Partner for this project is the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

Project assurance is provided by the UNDP Country Office (UNDP CO) India and the UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub.

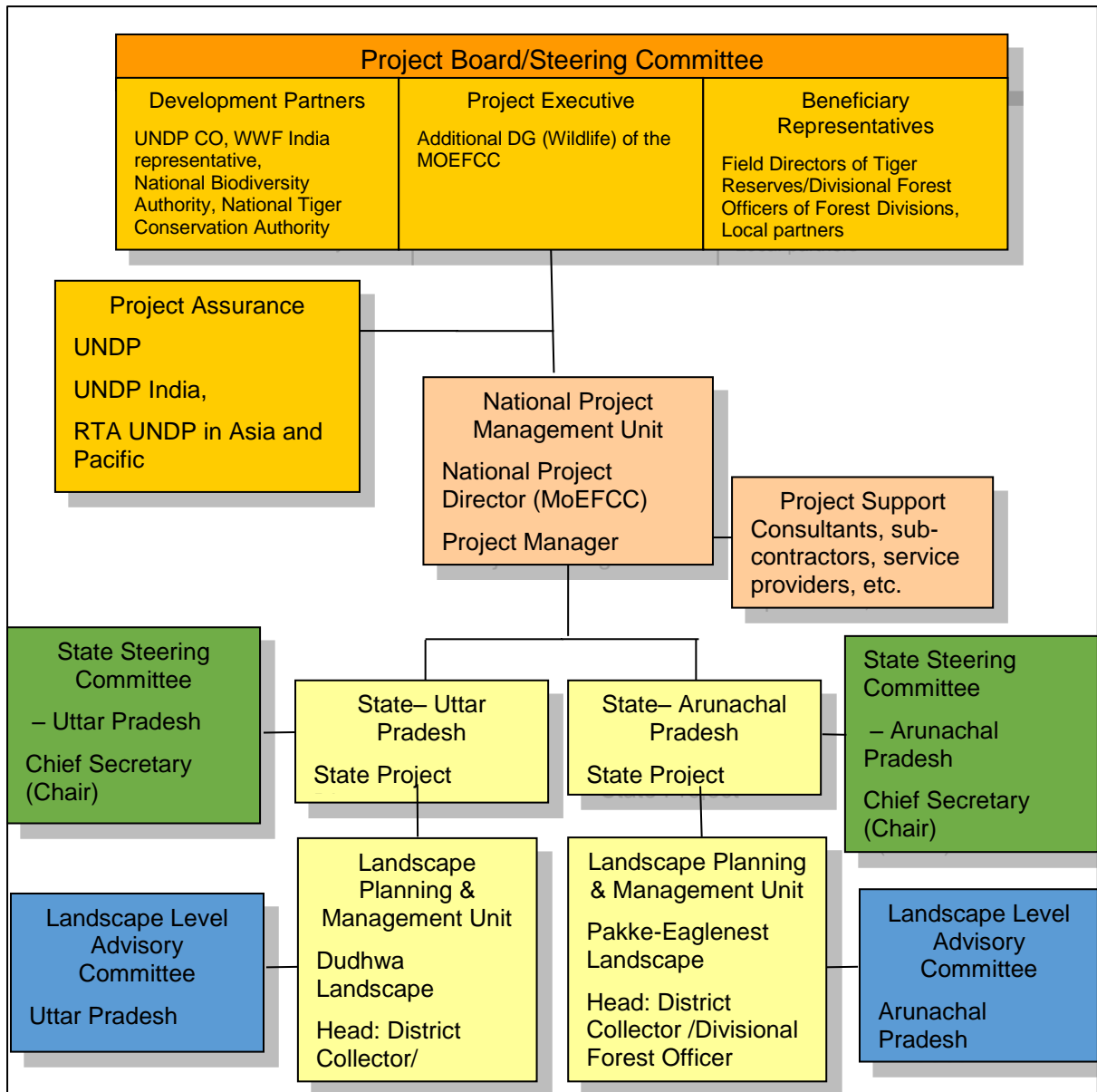


Figure 2. Governance Structure of the Small Wild Cats Project (source ProDoc)

3.5 Project timing and milestones

The following are the key project milestones as per the signed ProDoc.

Milestone	Date
Preparation Grant Approved (PIF approved)	13 June 2019
Project Approved for Implementation	12 May 2022
Project Inception Workshops	Uttar Pradesh (16 Nov. 2022) Arunachal Pradesh (20 Dec. 2022) Rajasthan (23-24 Mar. 2023)
Project Start Date (project document signed by Government of India)	8 July 2022
Midterm Review	8 June 2024 (as in ProDoc) Actual MTR review date 12 Nov 2024
Planned Project End Date	12 May 2027

3.6 Main stakeholders: summary list

The main stakeholders for the project and their expected roles and responsibilities are outlined in the stakeholder analysis included in the Project Document and augmented during the stakeholder consultations and during the project inception workshops during November 2022 – March 2023. The main project stakeholders are listed below

Stakeholder	Description
Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MOEF&CC) and its Wildlife Division	MOEFCC is the focal point for implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in India. Responsible for wildlife, forestry and climate change policy in the country and for coordination across State Governments in these areas. The project is anchored in the Wildlife Division of MoEF&CC. The ADG is the chair of NPSC and the JD is focal point for the project and fund disbursement.
National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)	A statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change strengthening tiger conservation and Addressing livelihood interests of local people in areas surrounding Tiger Reserves. NTCA is the project partner who will help in scaling up the relevant project outcomes by issuing the directives to the tiger reserves.
National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)	A statutory, autonomous body that facilitates regulatory and advisory function for the Government of India on issues of conservation, sustainable use of biological resources and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of biological resources. NBA is project partner whose help can be sought to highlight the conservation of small wild cats in Biodiversity Management Committees (BMC) at village levels,
Global Tiger Forum (GTF), Delhi	An international intergovernmental body exclusively set up for the conservation of tigers in the wild in the range countries. Developing policies and plans for tiger conservation. GTF is a sub-level responsible party under this project, acting in accordance with the Implementing Partner's rules and regulations, through agreement with MoEFCC.
Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), Delhi	A statutory body established by the Government of India under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to combat organized wildlife crime. It will be helpful in controlling the killing of target species for illegal trade.
State Forest and Wildlife Departments (SF&WD)	The State Forest and Wildlife departments are responsible for all forest and wildlife protection related activities and the interface between National and State level programs. The project is anchored in the Wildlife Division of State Forest and Wildlife Departments of project states. These are mainly responsible to implementing the activities under Components 2 and 3 of the project and facilitating components 1 and 4.

Stakeholder	Description
Government line departments: Animal Husbandry, Tourism, Public Health, Agriculture, Rural Development, State Rural Livelihood Missions, etc.)	State level departments responsible to implement relevant government schemes. These departments are key to reduce the pressures and threats in the landscape outside the PAs, by agreeing to use BMPs in their sectors and directing the required schemes to the target communities.
District Administrations	The district administrations are critical links between the national, state and local levels for implementation of projects, especially looking at community engagement as well as specifics of the local landscape. District Collectors are the Chair of the Advisory committees at landscape levels and can play important role in supporting conservation balanced development.
Wildlife Institute of India (WII)	A premier institute for wildlife research, studies and conservation planning. WII can help in providing technical support, developing plans, SOPs and species recovery plans.
NGOs across Uttar Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh (e.g. WWF India, NCF, WTI, Gora Abhay Society)	NGOs in this region are working for conservation and wildlife, livelihood and climate change mitigation, renewable energy, education and awareness, traditional knowledge and social enterprise. Their strengths of these NGOs can be used in policy and plans, capacity building of forest staff and communities in this project
Local communities in Uttar Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh; women and youth	Primary users of the landscape and key target groups for all components of the project. Communities living in the fringe villages can make or mar this project and are therefore crucial stakeholder of the project. They are beneficiaries of capacity building, awareness generation and livelihood improvement activities and key in protecting target species in their villages.
Technical Experts	Have knowledge and experience of working in the project areas on the social and wildlife issues. Experts can provide useful inputs for conservation of the target species when they are involved in developing plans, SOPs, capacity building and in creating awareness.

4 Findings

4.1 Project Strategy

4.1.1 Project Design

The project has adopted a strategy based on landscape conservation approach to secure the conservation of the globally significant wild cat landscapes. The strategy has correctly identified the relevant stakeholders that will be included to achieve the objectives. However, it needs to be ensured that the stakeholders are enrolled for this effort with a sense of belongingness and solidarity and a plan needs to be developed for this with all the partners.

The project is well aligned with the country policies and plans for wildlife protection and conservation, such as the National Forestry Policy 1988, the National Environment Policy 2006, and the National Agroforestry Policy 2014, National Wildlife Action Plan 2017-31, National Biodiversity Action Plan 2008, and contribution towards the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The MoEFCC and the state Forest Departments are steering the project at national and state levels. During interaction with the official it was evident that they are keenly interested to implement this project for conservation of small wild cats.

The project has duly incorporated the strengths of other relevant projects in the target landscapes and proposed to gain from learnings projects. Some of these are: WWF's landscape conservation programmes in the target landscapes of this project that include, *inter alia*, policy advocacy, generating awareness among communities, enhancing capacity of the relevant government departments, research; GEF sponsored SECURE Himalaya Project's microplanning at village levels and the landscape level approach; GTF's experience in planning and policy from IUCN, and GEF sponsored projects.

Eighteen threats and problems with varying degrees of scope and intensity affecting target species and habitats have been listed. Since the list is large and it would not be possible to address each threat, prioritising the threats keeping mind the time and resources availability should have been undertaken. While prioritising the threats, the feasibility of removing or minimizing these during the project time should also be assessed. This would help in channelising the resources to address the problems that need interventions on urgent basis.

Risks that could impede the project progress have been identified under operational, strategic, financial, social and environmental categories in the Annex 5: UNDP Atlas Risk Register, as per the UNDP Environmental and Social screening procedure. The environmental and social risks for the project components 1 and 4 supported by UNDP as GEF Agency have been assessed and identified following UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES) and Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP). A total of 10 risks have been identified for components 1 and 4 that could have potential negative impacts in the absence of safeguards. All are rated as Moderate. Mitigation measures such as implementation of the stakeholder engagement plan; implementation of the gender action plan; establishment of grievance redress mechanism and its communication to project stakeholders and incorporation of a SES approach into policy/planning/procedural activities with potential upstream impacts have been proposed and are being followed during project execution. The mitigation measures for delays in fund flow needs to be revisited because the existing measures have not been effective.

The project is based on seven assumptions: 1) The landscape conservation approach will benefit the conservation status of small wild cat populations and their habitats; 2) There is political will to support the inter-sectoral cooperation needed for landscape conservation; 3) the State, District and village level government institutions have capacity to implement

integrated natural resource planning and management; 4) Communities are motivated to participate in sustainable livelihood activities that support landscape conservation; 5) Livelihood and HWC mitigation interventions will contribute towards resilient community livelihoods; 6) HWC response, livelihood improvement and other activities reduce the threats to wildlife /habitats; and 7) Improved knowledge management will increase capacity for more effective conservation management and threat reduction. Of these, assumptions 2 and 3 are not correct as there is weak political will and capacity of the government institutions. One of the expected results from the project is enhanced capacity of these institutions for integrated natural resource management.

During the planning phase attempts were made to address gender equality in the meetings and workshops and activities and indicators have been included for equitable gender participation. Communities, relevant government departments and national and state levels, experts, were consulted during project design. Activities have also been proposed to increase awareness and capacity to achieve the objective of this project. The project has given importance to gender inclusion based on the Gender Analysis and Action Plan (GAP). One of the indicators for the objective is about women participation (60%) by the end of the project Output 4.5 and activities 2.2.2, 4.5.7, 4.5.8 and 4.5.9 specifically are about gender mainstreaming and capacity building towards this. Gender mainstreaming has been included in most of the approaches for achieving the outcomes. A section on the gender equality and women empowerment has been included in the project design. Efforts need to be made to increase the participation of the women in the project activities.

The theory of change is well articulated with outcomes contributing to achieve objective and the activities designed in a manner to contribute towards outcomes (**Figure 3**). Many of the outputs under components 2, 3, and 4 are stated as outcomes. The landscape conservation approach for conservation of small wild cats is a step in right direction because the cats are also observed in good numbers outside the PAs, necessitating involvement of communities and the relevant line departments. The assumptions made for success of the project will be mostly valid after the implementation of the activities. Since most of the activities under components 1 and 4 could not progress as planned due to delayed fund flow, and those under components 2 and 3 could not be initiated due to WWF not being the implementing partner as initially planned, it is difficult to assess whether the approach adopted has worked and if the assumptions are valid.

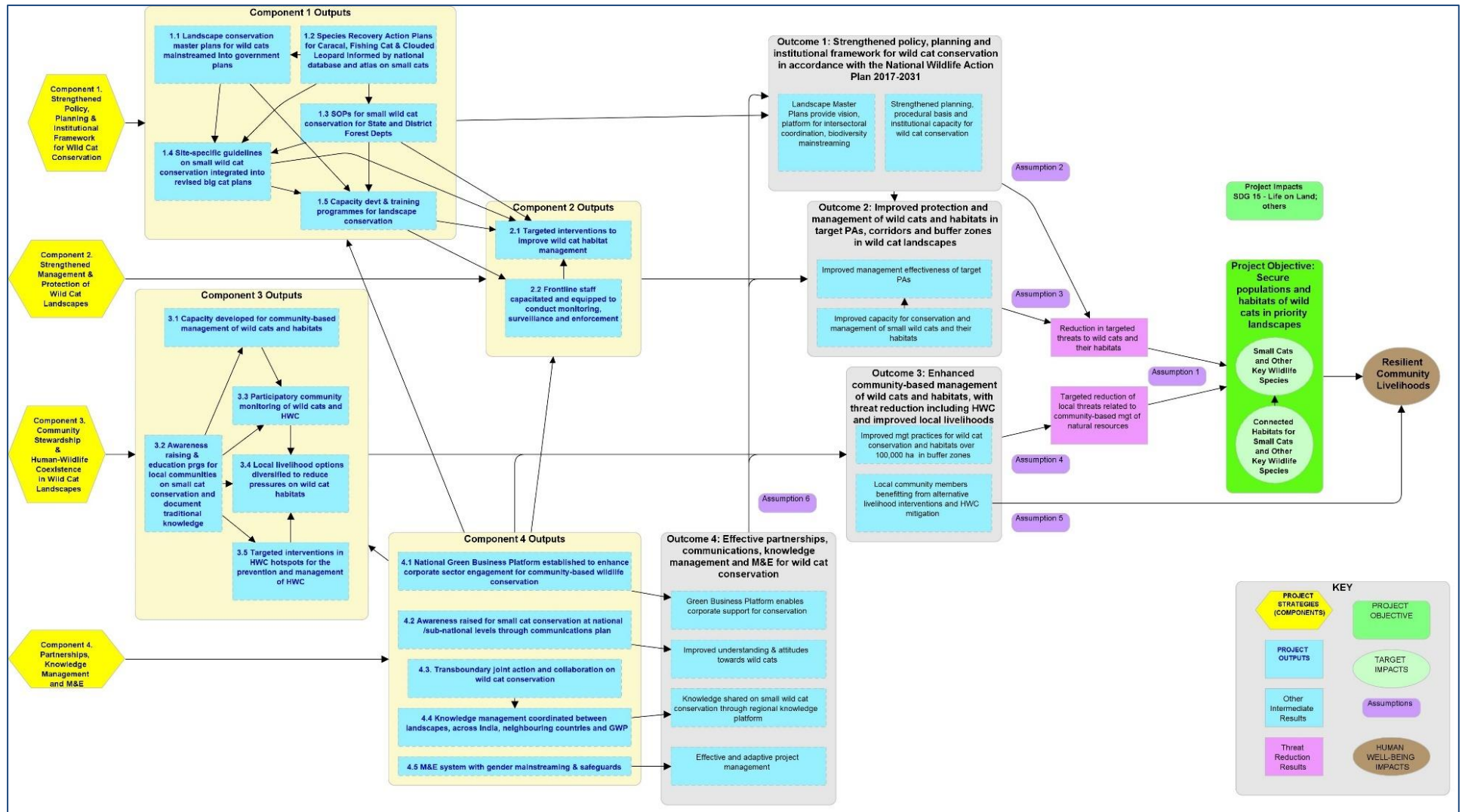


Figure 3. Theory of change for Small Wild Cats Project (Source Project Document).

4.1.2 Project Results Framework/Logframe

The Wild Cats Project Results Framework (PRF) was reviewed against “SMART” criteria, to evaluate whether the indicators and targets were sufficiently specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound. For the time-bound criterion, all indicators are assumed compliant, as they are set for end-of-project duration, i.e., 2027 (**Table 4**).

Table 4. SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) Review of Project Results Framework Indicators. (Colour code: Green - SMART criteria compliant; Yellow - questionably compliant with SMART criteria; Red - not compliant with SMART criteria)

Project Objective / Outcome Indicators	Baseline	End of Project target	MTR Review					MTR Review Comments
			S	M	A	R	T	
Project Objective: Secure populations and habitats of wild cats subject to habitat encroachment, human-wildlife conflict, poaching and illegal trade in priority landscapes of northern, north-eastern and western India								
Mandatory Indicator 1: (GEF Core Indicator #11): # direct project beneficiaries disaggregated by gender (individual people)	• 0	• 6,300 (3,690 women, 2,610 men)	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Indicator meets SMART criteria
Mandatory Indicator 2: (GEF Core Indicator #1): Terrestrial PAs under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (Hectares) as measured by METT: A. Dudhwa Tiger Reserve* (220,177 ha) B. Pakke Tiger Reserve* (137,695 ha) C. Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary* (21,700 ha) D. Sessa Orchid Sanctuary (10,000 ha) *Includes Core and Buffer Areas, but not ESZ	Area: 0 Baseline METT Scores: A - 41 B - 52 C - 54 D - 55	Area: 389,572 ha Completion METT Scores for: A - 81 B - 81 C - 81 D - 82	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	The target seems too ambitious and will need extra efforts and time to achieve because work in components 2 and 3 is yet to commence..

Project Objective / Outcome Indicators	Baseline	End of Project target	MTR Review					MTR Review Comments
			S	M	A	R	T	
Mandatory Indicator 3: (GEF Core Indicator #4): Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding PAs) (Hectares)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100,000 ha under improved practices, including: sustainable grazing management; improved arable cropping practices (e.g. reduced chemical use); community-based natural resource management; etc. 						The target is too ambitious to be achieved and need to be revisited with the ground realities.
Project Component 1: Enabling policy, planning and institutional framework for wild cat conservation								
Outcome1. Strengthened policy, planning and institutional framework for wild cat conservation in accordance with the National Wildlife Action Plan 2017-2031								
Indicator 4: Landscape conservation master plans developed for globally-significant wild cat landscapes and institutionalized into government plans and programs with implementation supported by multi-sector partnerships	Conservation efforts focus on PAs and dispersed efforts led by diverse parties outside the PAs, with no overall vision or coordination at landscape level	Landscape conservation master plans for Dudhwa and Pakke-Eaglenest Landscapes adopted by the respective State Governments and implementation supported by State Government plans and budgets and multi-sector partnerships						Indicator meets SMART criteria
Indicator 5: Tiger Conservation Plans within project landscapes incorporate specific requirements for small wild cat conservation based on project landscape master plans, Species Recovery Action Plans, SoPs and site specific guidelines	Tiger Conservation Plans do not include measures for small wild cats	Tiger Conservation Plans within project landscapes revised to incorporate specific requirements for small wild cat conservation, and recommendations for upscaling endorsed by NTCA						Indicator meets SMART criteria

Project Objective / Outcome Indicators	Baseline	End of Project target	MTR Review					MTR Review Comments
			S	M	A	R	T	
Indicator 6: Improved institutional capacity of relevant government agencies for landscape conservation incorporating wild cat needs, as measured by Capacity Development Scorecard, for MoEFCC, Uttar Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh State, District and Municipal Agencies including Forestry, Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Medicinal Plants, Tourism, etc).	Baseline Score: 34.2	Completion Score: 48						Indicator meets SMART criteria
Project Component 2 Strengthened management and protection of wild cat landscapes								
Outcome 2. Improved protection and management of wild cats and habitats in target PAs, corridors and buffer zones in wild cat landscapes								
Indicator 7: Targeted reduction in threats to wild cat populations and their habitats, as measured by patrol reporting/MSTRIPES: A. Dudhwa Landscape - i)# HWC incidences reported/year - ii)# poaching/IWT cases reported/year -iii) # wildlife killed on monitored road stretches/year B. Pakke-Eaglenest Landscape - i)# HWC incidences reported/year -ii) # poaching/IWT cases reported/year - iii)# wildlife killed on monitored road stretches/year	Baseline levels of threats reported: A. Dudhwa Landscape To be determined using systematic reporting procedures in Year 1 B.Pakke-Eaglenest Landscape To be determined using systematic reporting procedures in Year 1	Completion target levels of threats reported: A. Dudhwa Landscape i)increased No. reports of HWC incidents due to improved reporting; ii)50% reduction over baseline iii)20% reduction over baseline B.Pakke-Eaglenest Landscape i)increased No. reports of HWC incidents due to improved reporting; ii)50% reduction over baseline iii)20% reduction over baseline						Without baseline data it is not advisable to assign target values. In case of poaching and IWT, it is not possible to measure whether the reported reduction is due to inadequate patrolling or due to legitimate reduction.

Project Objective / Outcome Indicators	Baseline	End of Project target	MTR Review					MTR Review Comments
			S	M	A	R	T	
<p>Indicator 8: Increased wild cat occupancy status in landscape areas targeted for improved habitat management, as measured by camera trap grid and scat collection data</p> <p>A. Dudhwa Landscape: Fishing cat occupancy in targeted area of grassland and wetland habitats</p> <p>B. Pakke-Eaglenest: Wild cat species occupancy of targeted corridor and degraded forest habitats</p>	<p>Baselines to be determined through monitoring surveys when targeted areas for habitat management are defined, and detailed monitoring methods established through expert review</p>	<p>A. Dudhwa Landscape: Fishing cat occupancy for the targeted area shows a stable population trend.</p> <p>B. Pakke-Eaglenest: Wild cat species occupancy for targeted corridor and degraded forest habitats shows a stable and/or increasing trend over baseline</p>						<p>The baseline and target area under occupancy is not specified.</p>
<p>Indicator 9: Improved frontline capacity for conservation and management of small wild cats and their habitats, as measured by Small Cats Capacity Development Scorecard (see Scorecard baselines) for:</p> <p>A. Dudhwa Landscape</p> <p>B. Pakke-Eaglenest Landscape</p>	<p>Baseline frontline capacity scores for:</p> <p>A. 25%</p> <p>B. 44%</p>	<p>Completion frontline capacity scores for:</p> <p>A. 77%</p> <p>B. 85%</p>						<p>The target is ambitious and may be difficult to achieve, particularly given the high turnover rates of officials and staff.</p>

Project Objective / Outcome Indicators	Baseline	End of Project target	MTR Review					MTR Review Comments
			S	M	A	R	T	
Project Component 3 Community stewardship and human-wildlife coexistence in wild cat landscapes								
Outcome 3. Enhanced community-based management of wild cats and habitats, with threat reduction including HWC and improved local livelihoods								
Indicator 10: No. of villages actively monitoring small wild cat species and their habitats in support of community-based conservation efforts A. Dudhwa Landscape B. Pakke-Eaglenest Landscape	Baseline to be established at targeted localities in Year 1 A. No current monitoring of small cats by communities B. No current monitoring of small cats by communities, although Singchung Bugun conducting community conservation efforts	A. At least 10 villages B. At least 10 villages All with at least 30% participation of women					Difficult to assume if the target could be achieved when baseline is not available.	

Project Objective / Outcome Indicators	Baseline	End of Project target	MTR Review					MTR Review Comments
			S	M	A	R	T	
<p>Indicator 11: Targeted percentage reduction of locally-specific threats related to community-based management of natural resources:</p> <p>A. Dudhwa Landscape</p> <p>i) Percentage reduction in quantity of firewood collected by targeted communities</p> <p>ii) Percentage of free-ranging dogs neutered at targeted sites</p> <p>iii) Percentage reduction in density of free-ranging livestock at targeted sites</p> <p>B. Pakke-Eaglenest Landscape</p> <p>i) Percentage reduction in annual deforestation rate in targeted areas</p> <p>ii) Percentage reduction in number of illegal hunting incidents reported at targeted sites</p>	<p>A</p> <p>Baseline to be established at targeted localities in Year 1</p> <p>i) quantity of firewood collected by targeted communities</p> <p>ii) Percentage of free-ranging dogs that are neutered</p> <p>iii) density of free-ranging livestock</p> <p>B</p> <p>i) 1.2%/annum in Papum RF (Pakke Buffer Area, 2013-17); and >4% in lower elevation accessible areas (2011-19) (see METT threats table, Annex 10)</p> <p>ii) Baseline to be established at targeted localities in Year 1</p>	<p>A.</p> <p>i) 20% reduction over baseline</p> <p>ii) 80% of free-ranging dogs</p> <p>iii) 50% reduction in livestock density over baseline</p> <p>B.</p> <p>i) 50% reduction of annual deforestation rate</p> <p>ii) 50% reduction over baseline</p>						<p>Difficult to assume if the target could be achieved when baseline is not available.</p> <p>Most of the target are highly ambitious.</p>

Project Objective / Outcome Indicators	Baseline	End of Project target	MTR Review					MTR Review Comments
			S	M	A	R	T	
Indicator 12: Percentage reduction in annual incidence of HWC impacting crops, livestock and people in four targeted communities	Baseline HWC statistics to be collected for targeted communities starting in Year 1. Significant efforts by government and NGOs to combat HWC in project landscapes; yet HWC problems remain locally severe; absence of systematic strategy that considers wildlife corridors, habitat connectivity, land use and livelihood options.	At least 60% reduction in annual HWC incidence over baseline in four targeted communities						Difficult to assume if the target could be achieved when baseline is not available. The target is very ambitious.
Project Component 4 Partnerships, knowledge management and M&E								
Outcome 4. Effective partnerships, communications, knowledge management and M&E for wild cat conservation								
Indicator 13: National-level green business platform operationalized with Terms of Reference, broad membership and investment through partnership in project-related activities	Indian Wildlife Business Council no longer operational despite GTI, WB and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) establishing it in 2012	National-level green business platform operational with TOR, membership of at least 20 corporate bodies, and actively investing through at least one partnership activity in each project landscape						Given the previous experience and other such initiatives not effectively operational, difficult to ascertain if this could be achieved.

Project Objective / Outcome Indicators	Baseline	End of Project target	MTR Review					MTR Review Comments
			S	M	A	R	T	
Indicator 14: Improved understanding of values of wild cats and more positive attitudes towards small wild cat conservation among target audiences including national and state government line agencies (Forest and Wildlife, Environment, Agriculture, Revenue, Rural Development, etc) and concerned NGOs, as measured by KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices) score. See Annex 21 for KAP assessment methodology	KAP baseline scores (to be conducted in Year 1)	KAP completion targets (to be determined in Y1)						No specific values given for targets. Difficult to measure the change in levels of understanding. At best it could be conjecture or perception.
Indicator 15: Annual number of PAs and institutions sharing knowledge on small wild cat conservation through regional knowledge platform	No regional platform for sharing of knowledge on small wild cat conservation	20/year						The practical aspects will make it difficult to achieve.
Indicator 16: Number of project best practices developed, disseminated and used, targeting: integrated management of ESZs to benefit wildlife, management of targeted Wasteland habitats, small wild cat – friendly agriculture practices, HWC management in targeted communities, community-based monitoring of small wild cats, gender mainstreaming and traditional knowledge relevant to wild cats / habitats.	0	6						Indicator meets SMART criteria

Project Objective / Outcome Indicators	Baseline	End of Project target	MTR Review					MTR Review Comments
			S	M	A	R	T	
Indicator 17: Number of annual reflection meetings to review M&E and other data for adaptive management, linked to preparation of progress reports and development of annual workplans	0	6						Indicator meets SMART criteria

Of the seventeen indicators to measure the project progress, most fulfill the SMART criteria. The target for indicator #3 is highly ambitious and will be difficult to achieve due to required participation of the various government agencies in the landscape. The targets under eight of the seventeen indicators will face challenges as these are linked to components 2 and 3 where work is yet to be initiated. Furthermore, others face challenges due to delayed release of the funds. Two indicators are not specific and therefore, it will be difficult to measure the progress.

4.2 Progress Towards Results

4.2.1 Progress towards outcomes analysis

The MTR has assessed the progress towards mid-term and end of project targets for each of Wild Cats project’s 17 indicators to determine the likelihood of achieving end of project targets (see **Annex 3** for a complete assessment of each indicator). The MTR was limited by the available data, including no numeric data to assess mid-term targets for PRF indicator #'s 1, 2, 3, 6, 14, 15, 15, and 17 (draft PIR June 2024) and no scores available for the six indicators associated with Outcomes 2 and 3 for which no activities have been initiated. The MTR assessment is based on the narration the actions underway to achieve project outputs. The MTR assessment of indicators is based on the current project timeline (2022-2027) and the likely achievement of end of project targets. The results are as follows:

End of project achieved	0
Partially achieved, on target to achieve end of project target	9
At high risk of not achieving end of project target	8

The assessment of project indicators (**Annex 3**) has been used to provide a narrative summary of MTR ratings for progress towards the achievement of the Project Objective and Outcomes 1 to 4 (**Table 5**). The results of findings presented in **Sections 4.3** and **4.4** are used to provide a narrative MTR rating for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management and Sustainability (**Table 5**).

Table 5. MTR Ratings and Achievement Summary Table for the Wild Cats project

Measure	MTR Rating*	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating: U (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Wild Cats project objective is at risk of not being achieved at the end of the project. The substantial number of activities under Outcomes 2 and 3 which make important contributions to achieving the project objective are yet to commence. Limited progress has been made on activities under Outcomes 1 and 4, as evidenced by the small amount (5%) of the total budget utilized.
	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: MU (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been limited progress on Outcome 1 activities. Consultation workshops have been conducted; however the MTR is recommending these be repeated due to lag in the initiation of follow up activities that will likely begin in the first quarter of 2025. Work on the development of Landscape Master Plans has produced a content page outlining a table of contents. Other activities under Outcome 1 have not been undertaken due to operational and financial delays.
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: HU (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The activities to achieve this Outcome are yet to commence due to operation reasons

Measure	MTR Rating*	Achievement Description
	Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: HU (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The activities to achieve this Outcome are yet to commence due to operation reasons
	Outcome 4 Achievement Rating: MS (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress towards awareness raising has been satisfactory, however, delays in the initiation of follow up activities will require awareness raising activities be repeated as the project undergoes a second start up. The NPSC has conducted regular annual meetings. There have been delays in constituting and hosting meetings for steering and advisory committees at the state and landscape levels to review the project. Because activities under project Outcomes 2 and 3 are yet to commence, the compilation of best practices is yet to begin.
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	Achievement Rating: U (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Wild Cats project has failed to make progress as outlined in original work plan, with limited progress of Outcomes 1 and 4 largely to due to inadequate financial flows and not progress on Outcomes 2 and 3 due to a loss of WWF-US as the joint Executing Agency Adaptive management has been slow to resolve both the financial flow issue and transfer of Outcomes 2 and 3 to UNDP The MTR has made several recommendations directed at improving project implementation and adaptive management
Sustainability	Achievement Rating: MU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sustainability of project outcomes is at significant risk after project closure, with some outputs likely sustainable under Outcomes 1 and 4 and sustainability unlikely for outputs under Outcomes 2 and 3

* Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). **Sustainability Ratings:** Likely (L), Moderately Likely (ML), Moderately Unlikely (MU), Unlikely (U) (For a more complete description of the ratings used see **Annex 4**)

Though the progress so far has been poor, making it difficult to assess the changes it would have made towards the conservation of the target species and capacity development of the target communities, the project has the potential to catalyse beneficial development effects such as income generation, gender equality and women’s empowerment, improved governance. This would be possible only if the time of the project is extended meaningfully.

4.2.2 Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective

The Wild Cats project has not progressed as planned, with no progress on activities for Outcomes 2 and 3 and limited progress on activities for Outcomes 1 and 2. This has affected action needed to address the barriers identified in the ProDoc. MTR observations on the ProDoc barriers are:

- Gaps in the policy, planning and procedural framework for landscape conservation: Initial steps were taken by way of conducting consultations and developing preliminary framework. This has been affected due to delays in the fund release and much work needs to be done to address this barrier.

- Limited capacity for wild cat conservation at landscape level: Initial steps such as need assessment and one workshop towards overcoming this barrier are taken. This is too little given the time that has elapsed. This barrier can be addressed mostly under component 2, that is yet to take off.
- Lack of community engagement in wild cat conservation: Some steps have been taken to generate awareness among the community, but others such as livelihood generation and managing HWC are yet to begin. This barrier is largely linked with component 3 of the project and is therefore, is yet to be achieved.
- Insufficient partnerships, regional coordination and outreach: Initial consultations have been conducted to remove this barrier that is partial progress affected due to delays in fund receipts.

To ensure the project objective and outcomes are sustainably achieved, the MTR has made several recommendations intended to address the institutional, financial, communication and coordination barriers identified. Addressing MTR recommendations will permit the Wild Cats project to begin implementing activities intended to overcome the original barriers identified in the ProDoc, leading to securing the populations and habitats of small wild cats.

4.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

4.3.1 Management Arrangements

The management structure of the Wild Cats project has undergone two significant changes from what was originally outlined in the original ProDoc. These include:

1. Project assurance was previously shared, with UNDP responsible for project Components 1 and 4, and WWF-US responsible for project Components 2 and 3. This has now changed with UNDP providing project assurance for all four project Components.
2. The NPMU was previously to be based in the office of GTF utilizing their staff. The NPMU will now be based within the offices of MoEFCC with new staff to be hired.

Other aspects of the management structure remain the same, including oversight by the National Project Steering Committee (NPSC) and the implementation of activities in two project landscapes, Dudhwa Landscape in Uttar Pradesh State and Pakke-Eaglenest Landscape in Arunachal State (see **Figure 4**).

The management structure as shown in **Figure 4** is logical based on MTR team discussions with project stakeholders and based on achieving effective oversight of project implementation nationally and within each of the project's state landscapes. The Wild Cats project has proceeded with the establishment of the NPSC, State Project Steering Committees (SPSC) and Landscape Level Advisory Committees (LLAC). The NPSC has held three meetings, the most recent meeting was on October 24th, 2024.

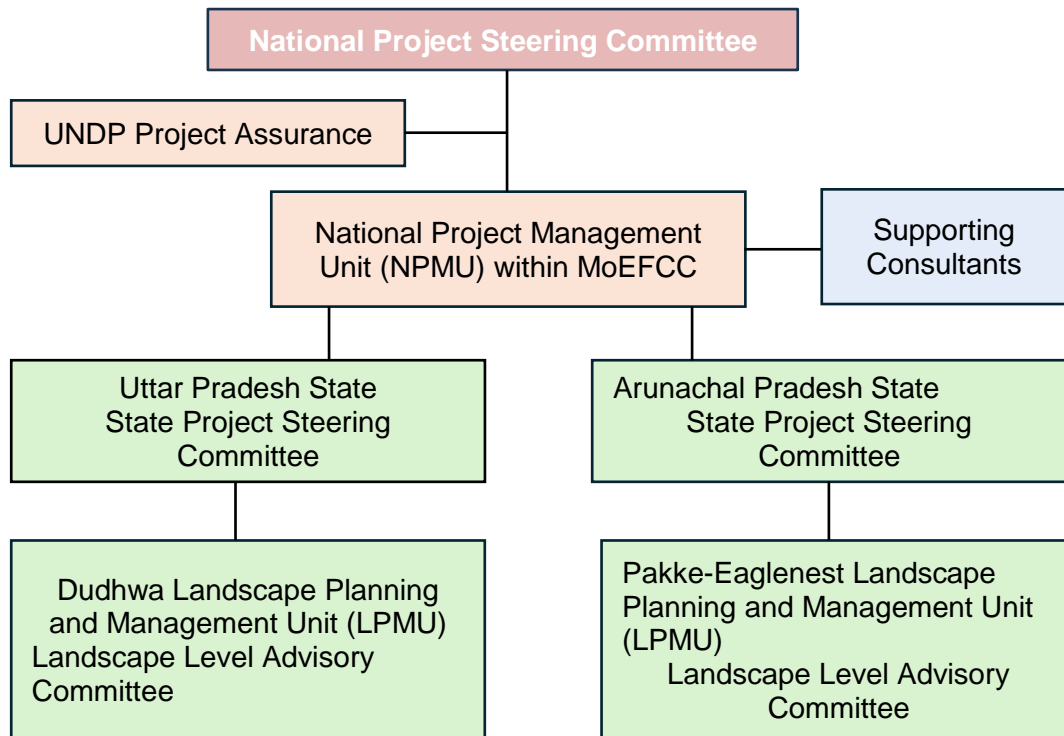


Figure 4. Revised Management Structure for Wild Cats project

During the first two years of project implementation the NPMU was established within the offices of GTF, with the Secretary-General of GTF, Dr. Rajesh Gopal, the Wild Cats Project Manager, a Project Director (post now vacant), and financial management by the existing GTF staff. At the October 2024 meeting of the NPSC the restructuring and adequate staffing of the NPMU was recommended to be prioritized to ensure effective execution of the project at the national, state and landscape levels. This included the placement of the NPMU within the Wildlife Division of the MoEFCC to improve coordination between the project states, UNDP and other key stakeholders. The MTR strongly supports the NPSC recommendation and identifies this as a key recommendation with a high priority for immediate action.

MTR Recommendation Initiate the hiring process to fully staff and enable a fully functioning National Project Management Unit (NPMU) located within the Wildlife Division of MoEFCC. The NPMU should include the following full-time staff dedicated solely to the Wild Cats project: National Project Manager; Technical Specialist / Assistant Project Manager; Finance Officer; M&E / Safeguards Officer; and GESI Officer.

In addition to the establishment of the NPMU there is also a need for the Wild Cats project to establish Landscape Planning and Management Units (LPMU) in each of the two project landscapes with staffing to include a Project Officer and Technical Specialist. The LPMU provides a link to the NPMU and oversees project activities working with State and Landscape level government and NGO/CSO implementing partners in PAs and communities.

MTR Recommendation Initiate the hiring process to fully staff and enable a fully functioning Landscape Planning and Management Units (LPMU) in each of the Wild Cats project landscapes located within the local District Forest Office. The LPMU should include the following full-time staff dedicated solely to the Wild Cats project: Project Officer and Technical Specialist.

The GTF is identified as a responsible party / executing agency for the Wild Cats project. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) commencing on August 12th, 2022, was established between the MoEFCC and the GTF. The MoU includes two annexes that provide a budget summary for the release of funds to GTF for the following:

- The “UNDP component”, including activities under Components 1 and 4 (MoU Annex I. Part A) and the associated engagement of technical consultants (MoU Annex II. Part A); and
- The “WWF component”, including activities under Components 2 and 3 (MoU Annex I. Part B) and the associated engagement of technical consultants (MoU Annex II. Part B).

The UNDP component was subject to the signing of the ProDoc which has occurred. The WWF component was subject to the signing of a grant agreement between the Ministry of Finance and WWF-US which has not occurred.

GTF was engaged as a responsible party for two primary reasons:

1. The GTF has considerable expertise working on the conservation of wild cats and they have been engaged to complete tasks as identified in MoU Annex III; and
2. The recognized capability of MoEFCC to directly transfer project funds to GTF as defined in MoU Annexes I and II. Because GTF is not a government agency, it has the capability to more easily facilitate the efficient flow of project funds to the hiring of project staff and technical consultants and the procurement of equipment and supplies required for the Wild Cats project.

Because a grant agreement was not signed with WWF-US as required by the MoU there is a need to review and revise the GTF MoU in line with the new project management arrangements. The most expedient method to complete this may be through an addendum to the existing MoU.

MTR Recommendation Review and revise the GTF MoU to account for the fact that a grant agreement between the Ministry of Finance and WWF-US was not signed. To avoid the lengthy process of developing a new MoU, it is recommended any necessary changes be made through an addendum to the existing MoU.

The Wild Cats ProDoc identified the following operational risk as “substantial”:

- government mechanisms for the receipt, disbursement and accounting of international funds are bureaucratic and inefficient, carrying the risk of substantial delays and possible failures in implementation.

The proposed risk treatment management measures identified for this risk were:

- Project Fund Flow has been arranged through GTF to facilitate efficient transfer. Project Steering Committee (i.e. NPSC) to promptly review and propose solutions to any significant problems or delays impacting disbursement and progress of planned activities.

While GTF can facilitate an efficient flow of project funds, there is still a requirement for project funds to be available within the MoEFCC and for MoEFCC to transfer these funds to GTF. As discussed in **Section 4.3.3** GTF received a tranche of funds supporting the Annual Work Plan (AWP) for 2022-2023, GTF received no funds for AWP 2023-2024 (though the AWP was approved by the NPSC), and funds were approved for release to GTF for the AWP 2024-2025 in October 2024, which is Q3 of the third year of the five-year project cycle. At the time of MTR report preparation, GTF had not received the approved funds.

MTR Recommendation. The UNDP CO (GEF Implementing Agency) and the MoEFCC (Executing Agency) work with the Ministry of Finance to improve the timely release of the approved project funding for approved Wild Cats Annual Work Plans. Funding should be made available in Q1 of each fiscal year to ensure effective and efficient implementation of Wild Cats project activities. UNDP and MoEFCC should also explore alternative mechanisms to finance project activities, such as direct payments from UNDP. The Wild Cats project may also consider developing contingency plans that allow the continuous implementation of project activities when the release of funds is delayed.

GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) execution

The UNDP CO has been working with the MoEFCC over a two-year period to resolve the two key issues impeding project performance. The first issue was the loss of WWF-US as a partner agency working with UNDP to provide project assurance for project Components 2 and 3. This issue has been resolved by the UNDP taking on the responsibility of providing project assurance for all four project Components. This action by UNDP demonstrates a significant commitment and focus of the UNDP CO to ensuring successful implementation of the Wild Cats project.

Regarding the second issue related to delays and a lack of cash flow from government to support project activities, as a National Implementation Modality (NIM) project, UNDP has limited control to resolve this issue. The UNDP CO has been providing adequate support to MoEFCC to explore options to resolve and/or mitigate the cash flow challenges the Wild Cats project is experiencing. The MTR has made a recommendation (see above) specific to this issue.

The UNDP CO Programme Support Unit (PSU) has provided training and capacity development of the NPMU to ensure they have the ability to conduct the financial and project activity monitoring and reporting which is required.

The UNDP Co has prepared two PIRs that are well written and organized and which have summarized the challenges and outlined the involvement of UNDP in attempts to resolve issues. The assessment of the development objective progress and implementation progress ratings as "unsatisfactory" is in line with ratings provided by the MTR team (see **Table 5 Section 4.2.1**).

With the transfer of project Components 2 and 3 to UNDP there is a need to update the SES plan as part of the revisions being made to the project document. The 2024 PIR stated the SES would be updated in August 2024; however, this remains to be completed at the time of the MTR.

Despite the slow progress in Components 1 and 2, and no progress in Components 2 and 3, there is no discussion in PIR of the likely need for a project extension. MTR report **Section 4.3.2** provides a discussion of work planning and a recommendation for a two-year project extension.

Executing Agency/Implementing Partner's execution

Government participation in project startup requires official review and signing of documents by relevant government ministries which generally require six to twelve months or more. For the Wild Cats project, CEO endorsement of the project occurred on June 8th, 2021, and the official signing of the ProDoc to initiate the project occurred eleven months later, on May 12th, 2022. This was followed by the first NPSC meeting on July 20th, 2022, to approve a 2022-2023 work plan and budget which was disbursed on November 14th, 2022, allowing the

implementation of project activities to begin including the Inception Workshop which was held on November 16th, 2022.

As a part of project startup in the first year (2022-2023), there was good engagement and participation of government and community stakeholders in project inception and awareness raising workshops that were organized by GTF in each of the project landscapes. In the second year of the project (2022-2023) the government did not release funds to support the NPSC approved AWP and budget severely hampering the continued implementation of the activities GTF had started. This situation continued in the third year of the project (2024-2025), with the NPSC again approving an AWP and budget, which up to November 2024 had not received funds (eight months into the project's fiscal year which starts on April 1).

The reason for the government's lack of funding to support the Wild Cats project is unknown. Given project funds approved by the NPSC which are to be provided by the government will be reimbursed from the GEF grant, it may be government financial agencies are not prioritizing internationally funded projects due to the administrative duties these projects impose. The MTR has made a recommendation for MoEFCC and UNDP to work with the Ministry of Finance to address this issue (see above).

The quarterly reporting provided by GTF and the MoEFCC is adequate. The reporting of project progress was rated as "slightly off track", which does not reflect the serious delay of project implementation observed by the MTR team and the risk of not achieving the project objective (see project recommendation **Section 5.2**).

4.3.2 Work planning

The Wild Cats project has not achieved the work planning schedule originally envisioned for the project. Activities under Outcomes 2 and 3 have not yet been initiated and activities under Outcomes 1 and 4 have not achieved mid-term targets. The delays affecting work planning include:

- CEO Endorsement was on June 08, 2021, but project signing was delayed due to the second wave of Covid-19 with the ProDoc signed on May 12, 2022 by all partners;
- The NPSC held its first meeting on July 20th, 2022, and approved the first AWP 2022-2023; (calendar year April 1st, 2022 to March 31st, 2023). The first disbursement of project funds to the Responsible Party, GTF, was done on November 14th, 2022, supporting the implementation of activities for Components 1 and 4 (only);
- The NPSC approved the AWP and release of funds for the second year of the project (2023-2024), however no funds were released to GTF to implement project activities in year 2 of the project due to government financial flow issues associated with the election year;
- In October 2024 the NPSC approved the AWP and release of funds for the third year of the project (2024-2025). As of November 2024, GTF had not received project funds for project implementation.
- Up November 2024 there has been no operationalization of Wild Cats project activities for Outcomes 2 and 3, due to the loss of WWF-US as joint Executing Agency and the transfer of responsibility to UNDP;
- There is no fully functioning PMU to oversee and manage a work plan for activities for all four project Outcomes;

The MTR has reviewed the original work plan to prepare a revised work plan. The revised work plan considered an orderly scheduling of activities to ensure foundational activities are completed first. For some activities the work plan has been shortened, however, the MTR

recognizes many of Outcome 2 and 3 activities working with communities in the project landscapes cannot be shortened. Community engagement, awareness raising, training, alternative income generating activities and the associated attitude and behavioral changes towards small wild cat conservation the project hopes to achieve cannot be fast tracked.

The revised work plan prepared by the MTR is provided in **Annex 5**. The revised work plan is based on the submission and approval of a two-year project extension.

MTR Recommendation. The Wild Cats project to acknowledge the need to apply for a project extension (18 months recommended) when appropriate. This is to ensure sustainable implementation of project activities, particularly activities working with communities that should not be fast-tracked. A project extension request is justified by:

- a. A revised project implementation framework with UNDP managing all four components was not yet completed at the time of the MTR
- b. Project components 1 and 4 are one year behind schedule due to an election year in India which prevented the flow of project funding to MoEFCC
- c. Project components 2 and 3 had not been started at the time of the MTR, with planned start date in the first quarter of 2025.

4.3.3 Finance and co-finance

The Wild Cats project has a modest GEF grant of US \$4.5M and a time frame of five years for implementation. The efficient use of funds is therefore a necessary priority to ensure the effective use of funds for timely and sustainable completion of project activities.

The ProDoc originally relied on two Implementing Agencies (MoEFCC and WWF) and this had some inherent inefficiencies with the duplication of staff implementing and reporting on project activities and finance. With the loss of WWF as an Implementing Agency, a single PMU under MoEFCC will be created for the implementation and reporting of all four project Components. The establishment of a fully functioning NPMU should contribute to improved efficiency. The establishment of a PMU is identified as a high priority recommendation by the MTR with a completion date of March 31st, 2025.

There is evidence of strong financial controls in place to allow project management to make informed decisions regarding budget utilization. The financial reporting prepared by the GTF Chief Financial Officer, co-signed by the Secretary General of GTF, provides detailed quarterly accounting reports of expenditures against approved budgets for project activities according to AWP. GTF quarterly reports, including Face Forms and Utilization Certificates, are reviewed and approved by the MoEFCC Wildlife Division. MoEFCC then submits the financial reporting prepared by GTF to the Deputy Controller of Aid Accounts and Audit, Ministry of Finance for final review and to request reimbursement from UNDP GEF grant.

Over the past two years of the project the GTF has received one tranche of funds in the amount of Rs 1,85,89,720 (USD \$236,000) on November 14th, 2022, for the Annual Work Plan (AWP) associated with the fiscal year 2022-2023 (calendar year April 1st, 2022 to March 31st, 2023). In a letter dated November 6th, 2023, the GTF requested a second tranche of Rs 1,24,85,045 (USD \$158,500) for the 2023-2024 AWP (calendar year April 1st, 2023 to March 31st, 2024). At the time of the MTR the second tranche had not been received by GTF.

At the October 2024 meeting of the NPSC the second tranche for GTF was approved for release and an amount of Rs 89,55,361 (USD \$113,690) was approved for Wild Cat project

activities in the State of Arunachal. These releases were earmarked for the 2024-2025 fiscal year (calendar year April 1st, 2024 to March 31st, 2025). As such, there was no release of funds by MoEFCC for the second fiscal year of the Wild Cats project. To date the total release of the approved funds is USD \$236,000 (5% of the \$4.5M GEF grant).

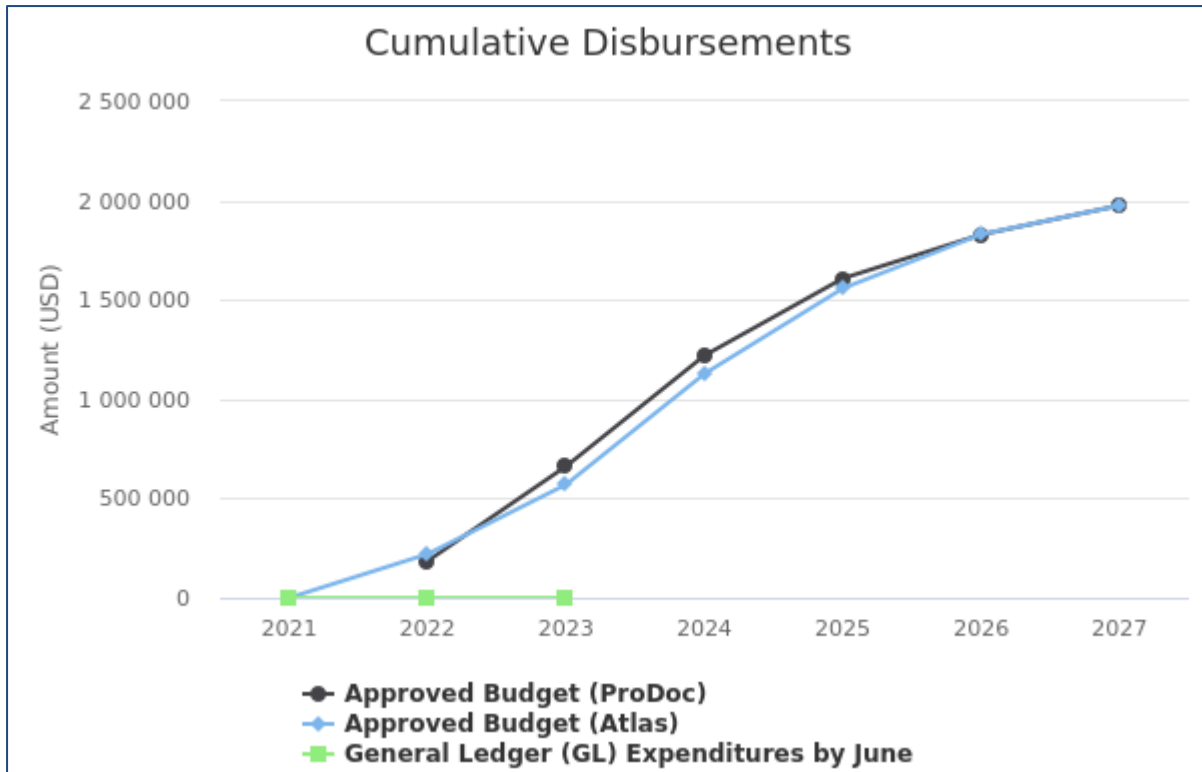


Figure 5. General ledger of actual expenditures as of June 30, 2024

The Wild Cats project is now halfway through the five year project cycle and the project spending data provided by GTF illustrates there has been no budget allocated to implement activities for Outcomes 2 and 3 and 11% and 12% of the ProDoc budget has been utilized to implement activities for Outcomes 1 and 2 respectively (see **Figure 5** and **Table 6**), resulting in the utilization of 5% of the total project budget. To permit an efficient, effective and sustainable use of the remaining project budget the MTR is recommending the Wild Cats initiate the process of a request for a two-year project extension (see **Section 4.3.2**).

Table 6. Wild Cats GEF grant project spending (data provided by PMU)

Financial data on the GEF grant spending							
Activity	ProDoc Budget		Revised Budget		Project Spending at MTR		Project Spending (%)
	(INR)	(USD)	(INR)	(USD)	(INR)	(USD)	
Outcome 1	69,396,370	881,000	69,396,370	881,000	7,354,220	93,363	11%
Outcome 2	63,189,294	802,200	63,189,294	802,200	0	0	0%
Outcome 3	130,364,350	1,655,000	130,364,350	1,655,000	0	0	0%
Outcome 4	74,658,206	947,800	74,658,206	947,800	8,857,290	112,445	12%
Project Management	16,856,780	214,000	16,856,780	214,000	2,520,640	32,000	15%
Totals	354,465,000	4,500,000	354,465,000	4,500,000	18,732,150	237,808	5%

Note: 1. Forex Rate used: USD 01 = INR 78.77

The Wild Cats ProDoc identifies a substantial amount of co-financing USD \$55,826,733.00 (**Table 7**). Limited data has been provided to the MTR team to review co-financing. GTF has

reported contributing USD \$47,882 of in-kind co-financing which is 40% of the original co-financing committed at CEO endorsement. This amount would be consistent with mid-term point of the project.

As the Wild Cats project is undergoing restructuring, the original ProDoc co-finance information may no longer be accurate. It is unclear what co-financing may be provided by WWF-US and WWF-India under the new project implementation arrangement. Similarly, the co-financing provided by GTF may change, given the PMU is now proposed to sit within the offices of MoEFCC. There is a need therefore to contact all of the original stakeholders to determine what co-financing will be made to the Wild Cats project over the remaining 2.5 year of the project and whether additional co-financing can be anticipated if the Wild Cats project requests and receives a two-year project extension.

MTR Recommendation UNDP to review and update all original co-financing agreements as necessary, taking into consideration the remaining project period of 2.5 years and the potential project extension of two years.

Table 7. Wild Cats co-financing contributed reported by PMU at time of MTR, co-financing confirmed at CEO Endorsement from PMU (data to March 31st, 2024)

Information on Wild Cats project co-financing				
Sources of Co-financing	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement	Actual Amount Contributed at stage of Midterm Review	Actual % of Expected Amount
		(USD)	(USD)	%
GTF	In-Kind	\$120,250	\$47,882	40%
	Investment Mobilized	\$310,750	0	
MoEFCC	In-kind	\$400,000	0	
	Public Investment Mobilized	\$20,363,591	0	
State Government of Arunachal Pradesh	In-kind	\$5,440,487	0	
	Public Investment Mobilized	\$327,166	0	
State Government of Uttar Pradesh	In-kind	\$17,467,840	0	
	Public Investment Mobilized	\$9,933,649	0	
WWF -US	In-kind	\$303,000	0	
WWF-India	In-kind	\$90,000	0	
	Investment Mobilized	\$270,000	0	
UNDP	In-kind	\$250,000	0	
	Investment mobilized	\$550,000	0	
Totals		\$55,826,733.00	\$47,882	0.09%

4.3.4 Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems

The project design includes a comprehensive, costed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to monitor project progress at multiple levels, with the UNDP CO providing overall assurance for project implementation. M&E includes the NPSC meeting minutes, tour reports from field visits, Quarterly and Annual Project Progress Reports (PPR) prepared by GTF, Project Implementation Reports (PIR) prepared by UNDP with supporting evidence files as well as a mid-term review and terminal evaluation. The total cost for M&E identified in the ProDoc is USD \$221,000, which is 4.9% of the GEF grant and within the 5% cap for projects under \$5M.

The Wild Cats project also has the following tools to both inform project activities and measure success. Updates of the tools were not available at the time the MTR was conducted. The Wild Cats M&E tools include:

- Atlas Risk Register to track risks identified in the ProDoc;
- GEF Biodiversity Tracking tool for protected areas which includes a Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT);
- Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey to establish a baseline of existing KAP regarding the ecological needs, threats and conservation of small wild cat populations which can be repeated at the end of the project;
- Capacity Development Scorecard for Landscape Conservation; and
- Gender Action Plan (GAP) with 15 indicators covering all four project components, with many indicators including both a mid-term and end-of-project target.

At the national level the NPSC was constituted shortly after project commencement, on June 10th, 2022, with 21 members representing national and state level stakeholders. The NPSC ToR outlines the responsibility to provide overall guidance, approval of critical project components such as project inception report, AWP and their associated budgets, the MTR, and the Terminal Evaluation. The NPSC is to provide quality assurance and accountability through regular project monitoring and evaluation. The NPSC is required to meet at least twice each year, as of October 2024 the NPSC had met three times.

MTR Recommendation The National Project Steering Committee to meet at least twice each year to provide regular monitoring and evaluation of project progress and guidance to the Wild Cats project when it encounters problems implementing activities in a timely fashion as outlined in the approved Annual Work Plans.

The GTF has prepared and submitted Project Progress Reports (PPR) for submission to UNDP and UNDP has prepared Project Implementation Reports (PIR), with both reports following the required formats to provide regular updates on project progress. The MTR team was provided one GTF PPR covering the period January 1st to June 30th, 2024. The quality of report writing was good and the assessment of risks accurate. The PPR identified work progress for project Outcomes 1 and 4 as “on-track” and Outcomes 2 and 3 as “off-track”. The MTR assessment has determined project progress for all Outcomes in “off-track” having not met mid-term targets and many indicators are at risk of not meeting end of project targets.

The MTR team was provided two PIR, one dated 2023 covering the entire 2023 calendar year and a PIR dated 2024, aligned with the GTF PPR covering the first six months of 2024. The quality of report writing and assessment of risks were accurate. The assessment of cumulative progress towards mid-term targets did not provide data that could be used to assess targets

and based on the MTR assessment the PIR did not provide a realistic assessment of progress having identified progress as “on-track” for Outcomes 1 and 4. The PIR’s overall assessment of project as “unsatisfactory” in line with the MTR assessment.

Based on the financial data provided to the MTR team, including Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures (FACE) forms, Utilization Certificates, and Financial Statements of Expenditure as well as financial report in PIR, data on spending specific to M&E activities is not available.

MTR Recommendation To ensure effective and efficient use of the Wild Cats monitoring and evaluation budget, it is recommended financial tracking be conducted based on the budget defined in the ProDoc.

4.3.5 Stakeholder engagement

The Wild Cats project started in 2022 with meetings and workshops to engage and sensitize implementing partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries about the Wild Cats project. This included consultation workshops with national, state and district level stakeholders in all three project landscapes to scope project implementation and site-specific requirements to initiate project activities. Based on MTR team discussion with stakeholders, the project initially engaged government and NGO stakeholders that have the required skills, capacity and mandate to meaningfully partner with the Wild Cats project for effective implementation of the intended project activities. Government and NGO stakeholders currently working in the project landscapes expressed an excellent understanding of small wild cats issues to be addressed by the project and a desire and commitment to participate in the development and implementation of long-term solutions. With the delays that have occurred in project implementation and the current re-structuring of the Wild Cats project taking place there is a need to engage implementing partners in a discussion of roles and responsibilities and a review of the project’s proposed revisions to the work plan.

MTR Recommendation Conduct an implementation planning workshop with MoEFCC, GTF, UNDP, WII, and WWF. Agenda to include::

- a. Review and approve revised timeline
- b. Establish roles and responsibilities to identify activities each partner will be implementing
- c. Establish regular, transparent communication among partners
- d. Establish financial transfer processes and potential contingency plans
- e. Establish financial and activity reporting requirements

After completing start-up meetings and workshops, the Wild Cats project was unable to release further funds to undertake activities building on the foundation established during startup. Given the time that has lapsed since the initial startup some of those who participated in meetings and workshops have since changed their posts, new staff have been hired and others no longer have a good understanding of the Wild Cats project. The MTR has therefore identified a need to re-engage and sensitize implementing partners, stakeholders and

MTR Recommendation Initiate re-engagement of Wild Cats stakeholders in each project landscape by hosting awareness raising sessions with implementing partners in each landscape and hosting awareness raising sessions with participating communities in each landscape.

beneficiaries. It must be acknowledged that this represents an inefficient, but necessary use of project funds. There is a need to revise the project budget to cover the additional cost of re-starting the Wild Cats project.

Considerations of gender equality have been initiated through gender disaggregated mapping of project beneficiaries in the project landscapes and development of associated baseline data on existing livelihoods, natural resource use, and awareness of small wild cats presence in their vicinity. The Wild Cats project has encouraged the participation of women project workshops and consultation meetings organized within the project landscapes, data reported in the PIR (2024) shows 46 women (26%) and 173 men (74%) attending the events organized. The Wild Cats project should take steps to improve gender equality in project consultations. In addition, given the awareness raising, community planning and income generating activities planned under Outcomes 2 and 3 the Wild Cats project must make a greater effort to target women for inclusion in the project, including hosting women only events and activities that will guarantee gender equality is achieved.

MTR Recommendation Amend the Wild Cats project's current GEN1 designation to GEN2 in recognition of the extensive community work to be conducted under Outcomes 2 and 3 where individual women and women's groups will be participating in project activities leading to greater gender equality and potentially contributing to women's empowerment.

The Wild Cats SESP has identified ten risks relevant to the project activities in the project landscapes. Risks 1 to 6 are related to community engagement activities under project Components 2 and 3 which are yet to begin. The MTR team supports the 'moderate' risk designations and the management actions of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and WWF's Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) to be followed when engaging indigenous/tribal communities and other vulnerable groups known to inhabit areas in and around PAs that the project proposes to be designated Environmentally Sensitive Zones (ESZ). The ProDoc Annex 7a and 7b also provides a stakeholder engagement plan that provides important information about project communities to inform implementation activities. Communities will also have access to a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) should issues arise.

Risks 7 and 8 are related to private sector engagement which negatively impact project communities. The MTR team supports the use of SES to screen corporate partners and GRM as management actions address these risks.

Risk 9 identifies climate change variability and natural disasters as a risk to wildlife that will be considered in the development of small wild cat conservation plans. This risk should also consider how climate change variability and natural disasters may impact the project communities and the management actions required to address these.

Risk 10 acknowledges greater involvement of law enforcement to address transboundary issues will require capacity development and law enforcement approaches that reduce risks that can impact law enforcement staff.

The PIR 2024 states that due to the transfer of project Components 2 and 3 to UNDP the SES plan will be updated in accordance with the revised ProDoc. At the time of the MTR an updated SES was not available.

MTR Recommendation The Wild Cats project should update the SESP as proposed in the PIR 2024, including undertaking the required assessments, before initiating on-the-ground activities with communities in the two project landscapes.

4.3.6 Reporting

The overall quality of Wild Cats project reporting is good, as noted in **Section 4.3.4** with GTF preparing PPR and UNDP preparing PIR, with both reports following the required formats to provide regular updates on project progress. There is evidence of PPR shared with the NPSC, the NPSC minutes do not document the sharing of PIR. The PIR are documenting the Wild Cats adaptive management, particularly in regard to the transfer of Components 2 and 3 to UNDP, the revision of the ProDoc, restructuring of the NPMU within the office of MoEFCC and the exploration of the GEF funds for project implementation being routed through the UNDP to the implementing partner using cash transfer modalities such as Direct Cash transfers, Reimbursement and Direct Payments based on the request from the IP.

The files provided to the MTR team were not organized into easily identifiable folders and individual files did not use consistent naming making it difficult to determine file contents and the completeness of files. PIR reports provided numbered evidence files that were out of sync with the numbering used in the report, making it difficult for the MTR team to track evidence. Efficient organization of project files can contribute to more effective and transparent dissemination and utilization of the information documented by the project for all project stakeholders. This in turn will ensure effective monitoring and oversight and help to inform adaptive management and the documentation of lessons learned.

MTR Recommendation The PMU to improve the organization of Wild Cats project files through the creation of easily identifiable folders (e.g., Annual Work Plans; NPSC Minutes, etc.) and the use of consistent file naming protocols (e.g., 2022 AWP; 2023 AWP; etc. and 1 NPSC Meeting Minutes 20 July 2022; 2 NPSC Meeting Minutes 31 October 2023; etc.)

The Wild Cats project has shared AWP and PPR with NPSC members keeping them up to date on project progress and obtaining their input and approval of AWP and their associated budgets. The NPSC minutes show the steering committee members actively engage in meaningful discussion of PPR reporting, including providing key decisions to direct and adapt project activities as required.

4.3.7 Communications

The project start-up included good communication with stakeholders as evidenced by reports prepared documenting consultation workshops held in each of the three project landscapes. As discussed in **Section 4.3.5** there has been a gap in communication with stakeholders as no funding has followed the first tranche received. Some of the stakeholders who participated in the startup workshops were met by the MTR team and their memory of the project was weak, they indicated some participants were no longer present and new individuals were

present. All were awaiting news about if, and when the Wild Cats project would restart and what activities would be conducted. The MTR has made a recommendation to repeat the consultation workshops as part of restarting the project.

The Wild Cats should support more regular feedback with stakeholders as project Components 2 and 3 activities with communities are implemented and the project's SESP refers to a GRM which as yet has not been communicated to stakeholders.

The project has designed some excellent communication and promotion materials including bags, coffee mugs, book cover, fact sheets, and a poster (see extract from poster in **Figure 6**). These communication products remain in a digital format only. When activities working with communities re-commence, there will be opportunities to utilize the communication tools produced, including outreach and awareness raising with youth attending school in the project landscapes.

The MTR team received feedback that indicates there is a lack of communication among project stakeholders. This includes a lack of understanding of project delays, project financial flows, activities being implemented, and adaptive management strategies. Staff turnover was cited as one cause of poor communication, and a lack of trust and transparency were negative outcomes observed by the MTR team.

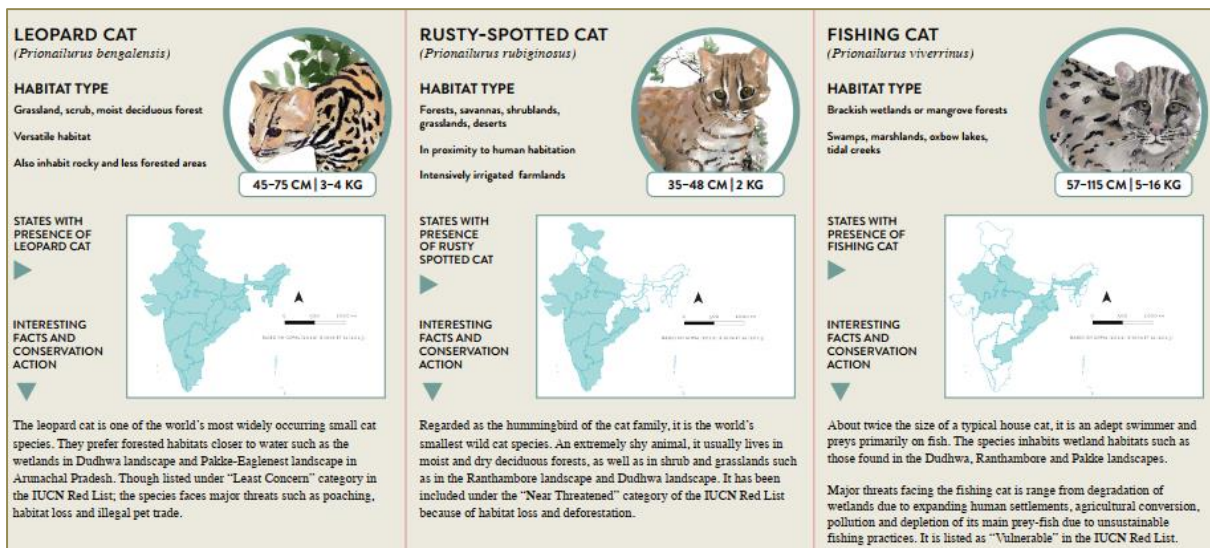


Figure 6. Extract from Wild Cats project poster

Overall Rating of Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

The MTR team’s overall rating of project implementation and adaptive management is “**unsatisfactory**” (U). The MTR has identified the need to improve the current management arrangements, work planning and project finance and co-finance. As a result of the unsatisfactory project implementation and adaptive management the Wild Cats project has failed to make progress as outlined in original work plan, with limited progress of Outcomes 1 and 4 largely to due to inadequate financial flows and no progress on Outcomes 2 and 3 due to a loss of WWF-US as the joint Executing Agency. Adaptive management has been slow to resolve both the financial flow issue and transfer of Outcomes 2 and 3 to UNDP. The MTR has made several recommendations directed at improving project implementation and adaptive management

4.4 Sustainability

4.4.1 Financial risks to sustainability

The repeated delay in the transfer of project funds to MoEFCC required to support Wild Cats project activities prevents effective and sustainable completion of project activities. The MTR includes a recommendation to improve the flow of project funds and to develop contingency strategies to support continuous implementation of project activities.

HWC is reported as a factor contributing to retaliatory killing and hunting of wild cats. Whereas a financial compensation mechanism exists, the transfer of compensation funds for HWC events is considered too bureaucratic and slow to be effective in deterring retaliatory threats to wild cats. The ability of the Wild Cats project to improve the speed and efficiency of the HWC compensation process is an important factor contributing to the sustainability of the project.

The management strategies developed by the project for small wild cats conservation are to be embedded within the existing Tiger Conservation Plans (TCP). While this strategy is intended to contribute to financial sustainability by utilizing existing budgeting mechanisms, there is a risk of there being insufficient staff and financial resources to implement all of management activities identified within the TCP.

State Forest and Wildlife Departments staff engaged during the MTR field mission indicated they face constraints in terms of staff, financial resources and infrastructure to implement the existing TCP. This suggests implementation of small wild cats conservation strategies embedded in TCP may not receive the full support needed for their implementation. Given the high international profile of tiger conservation and the ongoing work of WWF securing funding from international sources the implementation of TCP should seek to secure funding from multiple sources, including government, the private sector in India and international donors.

Financial Sustainability - Moderately Unlikely (MU)

4.4.2 Socio-economic risks to sustainability

Small wild cats habitat use includes areas within and outside PA. Protecting the habitats small wild cats use outside PA is dependent, in part, on the effective engagement of communities living in areas adjacent to PA. Community participation in the development and implementation of sustainable land use strategies that provide long term protection of areas to be completed through project Component 2 and 3 activities, will be extremely important to sustaining small wild cats habitat outside PA and is essential part of the sustainable achievement of the project objective.

The success of local community implementation of sustainable land use strategies for wild cats relies in part on effective engagement with communities to develop:

- substantive alternate income generating activities in the project landscapes; and
- an effective compensation mechanism for individuals and farms impacted by human wildlife conflict.

The knowledge gained by the project, including local knowledge gained through community participation in Component 2 and 3 activities will be organized by the Wild Cats project to document lessons learned for ongoing use in project landscapes and for upscaling to other small cats conservation strategies as follows:

- A database of secondary literature from research done on small wild cats across India

and South Asia will be available through a national database.

- For the project landscapes, local information will map critical areas for conservation and identify human-wildlife interaction hotspots.
- Questionnaire surveys data from the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase is being used to understand the gaps in capacity needs to be addressed by Wild Cats training activities.
- A Wild Cats project website is under development to capture the field stories and best practices.
- The Wild Cats project will incorporate information gathered from community consultation workshops into site-specific best practices for project activities.

As there have been significant delays in project implementation, there may be a desire to fast track the implementation of project activities. The MTR has recommended a two-year project extension to avoid the fast tracking of project activities, particularly those involving community engagement which require sufficient time and multiple engagement events to sustain project outcomes.

The MTR team noted a strong commitment and capacity of government and implementing partner stakeholders to support small wild cat conservation, thereby making an important contribution to sustain project benefits. The MTR team was unable to determine commitment and capacity of local communities to sustain project benefits, given the limited community engagement of the Wild Cats project up to the time of MTR field mission. Within the current timeframe of the project there is insufficient time to effectively engage local communities in socio-economic project activities to ensure their sustainability.

Socio-economic Sustainability - Moderately Unlikely (MU)

4.4.3 Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability

The Wild Cats project strategy for institutional sustainability is the incorporation of small wild cat conservation plans developed by the project into the existing Tiger Conservation Plans (TCP). While this step is yet to be completed, the Wild Cats project should engage with government to identify and include priority activities into approved AWP for TCP, and ensure budgets are allocated for relevant conservation activities for small wild cats. By demonstrating the inclusion of small wild cats conservation in government AWP and budgets prior to project closure the Wild Cats project can demonstrate institutional and governance sustainability.

There are other ministries and departments working in the larger landscape outside PAs. A lack of engagement of these government stakeholders by the Wild Cats project may risk unsustainable land use practices that negatively impact small wild cats habitats. For example, there are areas referred to as “waste lands” that do not recognize the valuable role of these lands as habitat supporting small wild cats. It is recommended that the Wild Cats project engages with relevant government agencies working in the larger landscape to increase their awareness of and participation in small wild cats conservation.

The MTR team notes the Wild Cats project intends to build institutional frameworks and capacity to enhance the conservation of small wild cats. Some activities have been initiated, while there are others yet to be started. Successful completion of the following is an important part of achieving sustainable institutional and governance support of small wild cats conservation. Including:

- Improved frontline capacity for conservation and management of small wild cats and their habitats, by MoEFCC, Uttar Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh State District and

Municipal Agencies including Forestry, Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, and Tourism.

- Development and institutionalization of Landscape Conservation Master Plans for globally significant wild cat landscapes into government plans and programs with implementation supported by multi-sector partnerships.
- Incorporation of small wild cat conservation strategies into Tiger Conservation Plans within project landscapes that include, Species Recovery Action Plans, Standard Operating Procedures and site-specific guidelines.
- Development and operationalized national-level green business platform with broad membership and investment in project-related activities.
- Engagement of communities in the monitoring small wild cat species and their habitats in support of community-based conservation efforts.

Institutional Framework and Governance Sustainability - Moderately Unlikely (MU)

4.4.4 Environmental risks to sustainability

Small wild cats habitats are threatened by land use change in the larger landscape outside PAs, presenting an environmental risk to sustainability. To mitigate this risk the Wild Cats project intends to work with communities and responsible government departments in larger landscape to raise awareness of small wild cats and their conservation needs. This work is defined under project Components 2 and 3 which have not yet been implemented. The MTR team has noted sufficient time must be allocated to work with communities on small wild cat conservation issues and all government agencies responsible for sustainable land use in the larger landscape should be engaged in the project. Within the current timeframe of the project there is insufficient time to effectively engage local communities in conservation activities which would make the environmental sustainability *unlikely*.

Environmental Sustainability - Moderately Unlikely (MU)

Overall Rating of Sustainability

The MTR has determined the overall rating of sustainability is “***moderately unlikely***”. The assessment is based on the lack of progress made by the project up to the time of the MTR and the inability of the project to complete all activities within the current project deadline. While some outputs under Outcomes 1 and 4 may be completed within the current schedule, sustainable small wild cats conservation is dependent on the completion of activities under Outcomes 2 and 3 that engages and develops capacity and ownership among communities living adjacent to PA.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

During MTR consultations, government and environmental NGO stakeholders acknowledged the unique and critical role of the Wild Cats project, to address traditional focus on large cats which has left a large gap in the understanding of small wild cat populations, their numbers, their habitat use and the threats impacting them. There is also a lack of management actions targeting the conservation of small wild cat populations and the habitats which sustain them. The Wild Cats PRF includes activities intended to address these gaps and to develop management strategies that will be added to existing Tiger Management Plans for the project landscapes.

Government and environmental NGO stakeholders also acknowledged that there is a limited knowledge of small wild cats habitat use within the larger landscape outside protected areas where they may face multiple threats of hunting, trapping, poisoning, habitat loss, road kill, and encounters with domestic dogs. Again, the Wild Cats project logical framework includes activities working with communities and other government agencies to raise awareness of small wild cats, engagement of communities in citizen science to build greater understanding of small wild cats which is hoped to lead to a reduction of threats and improved habitat conditions for wild cats in the larger landscape outside protected areas.

MTR discussions with government staff at all levels revealed a strong commitment to participate in the design, planning and implementation of project activities directed at improving the scientific understanding of small wild cats habitat use and threats and their management needs. And the potential to incorporate management actions into the existing work of landscape level government institutions. Government staff also demonstrated good knowledge and experience working with communities based on existing HWC programs that could benefit Wild Cats project.

Wild Cats project stakeholders such as GTF, WII, WWF, and IUCN interviewed by the MTR team all had highly skilled technical staff with the experience needed to participate in the design, planning and implementation of the science-based research that is included in the Wild Cats project activities. All were also keenly interested in contributing their skills to achieve the Wild Cats project objective. WWF in particular is already working on small wild cats in the project landscapes and has strong community engagement skills important successful implementation of the community activities that are included in the Wild Cats project.

Key Conclusions

The MTR concluded the skills, experience, and commitment demonstrated by government and other stakeholders provides a solid foundation for the potential success of the Wild Cats project. There are, however, significant barriers to the successful achievement of the Wild Cats project objective as noted in MTR report **Sections 4.2.2, 4.3.1, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3**. These barriers fall into two categories, financial flows to fund project activities and the coordination of government and non-government stakeholders to implement project activities. MTR recommendations are therefore directed at:

1. The need for MoEFCC and UNDP to develop viable financial flow strategies that will ensure the timely transfer of project funds to implementing partners based on NPSC approved AWP project budgets; and
2. The immediate need for improved coordination and communication among project stakeholders supported by a fully functioning PMU.

Finally, an 18 month project extension is required to provide sufficient time for the

implementation of the key activities under Wild Cats Outcomes 2 and 3 which have not yet started, and which can only be initiated after a fully functions PMU is established. Funding delays have also impeded progress on activities under Wild Cats Outcomes 1 and 4, further justifying the need for an 18 month project extension.

The MTR team has concluded the implementation of management recommendations and approval of a project extension will result in the successful and sustainable achievement of the SRF end of project targets and the project objective.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendation	Key Entity Responsible	Priority Timing	Justification
Corrective actions for effective and efficient project implementation			
1. Conduct an implementation planning workshop with MoEFCC, GTF, UNDP, WII, WWF. Agenda to include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review and approve revised timeline b. Establish roles and responsibilities to identify activities each partner will be implementing c. Establish regular, transparent communication among partners d. Establish financial transfer processes and potential contingency plans e. Establish financial and activity reporting requirements 	MoEFCC GTF UNDP	Immediate Priority Complete 15/11/2024	Section 4.3.5
2. The Wild Cats project to acknowledge the need to apply for a project extension (18 months recommended) when appropriate. This is to ensure sustainable implementation of project activities, particularly activities working with communities that should not be fast-tracked. A project extension request is justified by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A revised project implementation framework with UNDP managing all four components was not yet completed at the time of the MTR b. Project components 1 and 4 are one year behind schedule due to an election year in India which prevented the flow of project funding to MoEFCC c. Project components 2 and 3 had not been started at the time of the MTR, with planned start date in the first quarter of 2025. 	MoEFCC GTF UNDP	First Priority Complete 31/01/2025	Section 4.3.2

Recommendation	Key Entity Responsible	Priority Timing	Justification
<p>3. Initiate hiring process to fully staff & enable a fully functioning National Project Management Unit (NPMU)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop ToR for NPMU staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Project Manager o Technical Specialist / Assistant PM o Finance Officer o M&E / Safeguards Officer o GESI Officer b. Establish salary range to ensure staff positions attract well qualified candidates c. Confirm funding mechanism for each position d. Advertise all positions e. Establish hiring interview team f. Confirm office space within MoEFCC and procure required furnishings, computers, etc. g. Conduct training of PMU to meet UNDP / GEF financial and activity reporting requirements 	<p>GTF in consultation with MoEFCC and UNDP</p>	<p>First Priority Complete 31/03/2025</p>	<p>Section 4.3.1</p>
<p>4. Host landscape-level planning workshop(s) for each project landscape (this may be a combined workshop in one landscape) (MoEFCC, GTF, UNDP, WII, WWF and State and District level stakeholders attending)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review the approved revised timeline b. Establish roles and responsibilities to identify activities each partner will be implementing c. Establish regular, transparent communication among partners d. Establish financial transfer processes and potential contingency plans e. Establish financial and activity reporting requirements 	<p>MoEFCC and PMU</p>	<p>First Priority Complete by 28/02/2025</p>	<p>Section 4.3.5</p>
<p>5. The Wild Cats project should update the SESP as proposed in the PIR 2024, including undertaking the required assessments, before initiating on-the-ground activities with communities in the two project landscapes.</p>	<p>PMU and UNDP</p>	<p>First Priority Complete by 31/03/2025</p>	<p>Section 4.3.5</p>
<p>6. Initiate hiring process for LPMU staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop ToR for LPMU staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Project Officer o Technical Specialist b. Establish salary range to ensure staff positions attract well qualified candidates. c. Confirm funding mechanism for each position. d. Advertise all positions. e. Establish hiring interview team. f. Confirm office space and procure required furnishings, computers, etc. 	<p>MoEFCC GTF LPMU</p>	<p>Second Priority Complete 30/04/2025</p>	<p>Section 4.3.1</p>

Recommendation	Key Entity Responsible	Priority Timing	Justification
7. Review and amend co-financing agreements with project partners as required	MoEFCC UNDP	Second Priority Complete 31/03/2025	Section 4.3.3
8. Initiate re-engagement of Wild Cats stakeholders in each project landscape: a. Host awareness raising sessions with implementing partners in each landscape. b. Host awareness raising sessions with participating communities in each landscape.	PMU and LPMU	Second Priority Complete 30/04/2025	Section 4.3.5
9. Amend the GEN1 designation of the Wild Cats project to GEN2 in recognition of the community work under Outcomes 2 and 3, where individual women and women's groups will be participating in project activities leading to greater gender equality and potentially contributing to women's empowerment.	MoEFCC UNDP	Second Priority Complete 31/12/2024	Section 4.3.5
10. Review and amend the GTF MoU with MoEFCC to remove references to WWF-US due to the fact that a grant agreement between the Ministry of Finance and WWF-US was not signed. To avoid the lengthy process of developing a new MoU, it is recommended any necessary changes be made through an addendum to the existing MoU.	MoEFCC GTF UNDP	Second Priority Complete 30/04/2025	Section 4.3.1
11. The UNDP CO (GEF Implementing Agency) and the MoEFCC (Executing Agency) work with the Ministry of Finance to improve the timely release of the approved project funding for approved Wild Cats Annual Work Plans. Funding should be made available in Q1 of each fiscal year to ensure effective and efficient implementation of Wild Cats project activities. UNDP and MoEFCC should also explore alternative mechanisms to finance project activities, such as direct payments from UNDP. The Wild Cats project may also consider developing contingency plans that allow the continuous implementation of project activities when the release of funds is delayed.	MoEFCC Ministry of Finance UNDP	Second Priority Complete 30/04/2025	Section 4.3.1
Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project.			
12. As defined in the National Project Steering Committee (NPSC) terms of reference the NPSC should meet at least twice each year to provide regular monitoring and evaluation of project progress and guidance to the Wild Cats project when it encounters problems implementing activities in a timely fashion as outlined in the approved Annual Work Plans.	MoEFCC	Second Priority Complete semi-annually	Section 4.3.4

Recommendation	Key Entity Responsible	Priority Timing	Justification
13. The PMU to improve the organization of Wild Cats project files through the creation of easily identifiable folders (e.g., Annual Work Plans; NPSC Minutes, etc.) and the use of consistent file naming protocols (e.g., 2022 AWP; 2023 AWP; etc. and 1 NPSC Meeting Minutes 20 July 2022; 2 NPSC Meeting Minutes 31 October 2023; etc.)	PMU	Second Priority Complete 31/12/2024	Section 4.3.6
14. To improve project communication among stakeholders the MoEFCC and UNDP should meet at least once each month. The PMU should be updating the MoEFCC and UNDP monthly on project progress and should maintain regular, open communication with all project stakeholders including state and landscape implementing partners, NGOs and participating project communities.	MoEFCC UNDP PMU	Second Priority Complete 31/12/2024	Section 4.3.6
15. To ensure effective and efficient use of the Wild Cats monitoring and evaluation budget, it is recommended financial tracking be conducted based on the budget defined in the ProDoc.	MoEFCC PMU	Second Priority Complete quarterly	Section 4.3.4

Annex 1. MTR Terms of Reference

INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT - INTERNATIONAL

Location:	Home based with possibility of travel to project landscape(s), if required
Type of Contract:	Individual Contract (International)
Post Level:	Mid-Term Review of 'Strengthening conservation and resilience of globally significant wild cat landscapes through a focus on small cat and leopard conservation'
Languages Required:	English
Starting Date:	05 June, 2024
Duration of Initial Contract:	36 days spread over 05 months

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the Terms of Reference (ToR) for - the Midterm Review (MTR) of the GEF-financed project titled 'Strengthening conservation and resilience of globally significant wild cat landscapes through a focus on small cat and leopard conservation' (PIMS 6355) implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, with support of UNDP which is to be undertaken in 2024. The project started on 8 July 2022 and is in its third year of implementation. This ToR sets out the expectations for the MTR. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document [Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects](#)

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This project will secure the conservation of globally significant wild cat landscapes in northern, north-eastern and western India through a landscape conservation approach for wild cats that brings together species conservation programs, connects stakeholders and empowers communities, and operates across PAs, tiger corridors and buffer zones. It will aim to integrate small cat needs into existing large cat conservation initiatives so that all wild cats are considered together. The project will focus on the Dudhwa landscape in Uttar Pradesh and Pakke-Eaglenest landscape in Arunachal Pradesh, with further limited intervention in the Ranthambhore landscape in Rajasthan. Barriers to achieving wild cat conservation at the landscape level include: 1) gaps in the policy, planning and procedural framework, 2) limited capacity at State, landscape and site levels, 3) lack of understanding and incentives to support community engagement in wild cat conservation, and 4) insufficient partnerships, regional coordination and outreach to engage the corporate sector, strengthen transboundary collaboration and support knowledge exchange.

To address the above-mentioned barriers, the proposed project will support the Government of India to put in place an integrated model for wild cat conservation at landscape scale that can be replicated nationally and in other range states. The project objective is to secure populations and habitats of wild cats subject to habitat encroachment, human-wildlife conflict, poaching and illegal trade in priority landscapes of northern, northeastern and western India. This will be achieved through four complementary components that aim to build the required enabling policy framework and institutional capacity (Component 1); strengthen government management of wild cats and habitats (Component 2) and build community stewardship (Component 3) at the landscape level; and enhance corporate sector partnerships, regional collaboration, and knowledge transfer and learning (Component 4). The project is a child project of the GEF-7 Global Wildlife Program.

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 to set the project on track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project's strategy, its risks to sustainability and its contribution to gender equality.

MTRs will identify challenges and outline corrective actions to ensure that the project is on track to achieve maximum results by its completion. The results and recommendations from the MTR will be used by UNDP and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, to design and implement a strategy and action plan for achieving the desired outcomes under the project. The process will also help identify potential challenges and risks that will affect the project delivery. The MTR will also lay the foundation for a strong Terminal Evaluation (TE). MTR will also assess the viability of the interventions *vis-à-vis* the project outcomes and expected results, identify the challenges related to the same and suggest appropriate measures.

4. MTR APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The MTR report must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The MTR shall be conducted by one International Consultant supported by one National Consultant.

The International Consultant will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, 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 (ANNEX A for list of documents to be reviewed). The International Consultant 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 mission begins.

The International Consultant is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory

approach¹ ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR.² Stakeholder involvement should include interviews (virtual if required) with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, State Forest and Wildlife Departments, executing agencies, senior officials and task team/ component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, local government and CSOs, etc. The National Consultant is expected to conduct field missions to Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh (India) in consultation with the State Forest and Wildlife Departments.

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. The consultant must ensure that they capture gender equality and women's empowerment results through their methodologies and tools. Cross-cutting issues and SDGs, including but not limited to, 'gender equality' and 'reduced inequalities' are incorporated in 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 upon 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.

If a data collection/field mission is not possible then remote interviews may be undertaken through telephone or online (skype, zoom etc.). The International Consultant will work remotely with the national consultant who will conduct field visits.

5. DETAILED SCOPE OF THE MTR

The International Consultant will assess the following four categories of project progress with appropriate input and support from the two national consultants. 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

¹ For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

² 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.

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 Annex 9 of *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/Log-frame

- 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.

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 ³	Baseline Level ⁴	Level in 1 st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target ⁵	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment ⁶	Achievement Rating ⁷	Justification for Rating
Objective :	Indicator (if applicable):							
Outcome 1:	Indicator 1:							
	Indicator 2:							
Outcome 2:	Indicator 3:							
	Indicator 4:							
	Etc.							
Etc.								

Indicator Assessment Key

Green= Achieved	Yellow= On target to be achieved	Red= Not on target to be achieved
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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.

³ Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards

⁴ Populate with data from the Project Document

⁵ If available

⁶ Colour code this column only

⁷ Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

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/ log frame 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

		TOTAL			

- 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. (This template will be annexed as a separate file.)

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 Annex 9 of *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 the 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 risks⁸ (in the SESP).
- 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).

⁸ Risks are to be labeled with both the UNDP SES Principles and Standards, and the GEF's "types of risks and potential impacts": Climate Change and Disaster; Disadvantaged 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; 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.

iv. Sustainability

- Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the 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 outcomes)?

Socio-economic risks to sustainability

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

Conclusions & Recommendations (including recommendations for exit strategy)

Evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings, should be a part of the MTR report.

Additionally, the International Consultant is expected to make recommendations to the Project Team. Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. Recommendations should also be proposed for exit strategy for the project. 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.

There should be no more than 15 recommendations in total.

Ratings

The ratings of the project’s results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements should be included 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 SECURE Himalaya Project

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)	
	Outcome 4 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 assignment will be approximately 36 working days over 05 months 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 days	20 June 2024
Review and finalization of Inception Report based on the comments received from the Commissioning unit	1 day	10 July 2024

MTR mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews *Note: In case the International consultant is not willing to travel for the field mission, the number of working days allocated here will not be considered in the contract	10 day	10 August 2024
Presentation of initial findings- last day of the MTR mission	1 days	25 August 2024
Preparing draft report (due within 2 weeks of the MTR mission) *Note: In case the National Consultant is leading the preparation of the draft MTR report, 05 working days will be allotted to the International consultant here.	15 days	20 September 2024
Finalization of MTR report/ Incorporating audit trail from feedback on draft report (due within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on the draft)	4 days	25 October 2024

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 two weeks before the MTR virtual mission	MTR team submits to the Commissioning Unit and project management
2	Presentation	Initial Findings	End of MTR mission	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 two weeks of the MTR mission	Sent to the Commissioning Unit, reviewed by RTA, Project Coordinating Unit, GEF OFF
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	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 UNDP India Country Office.

The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the International Consultant to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

The MTR lead (International Consultant) will be responsible to conduct the MTR with the support of the National Consultant. This will include designing an appropriate methodology and strategy for carrying out this MTR. The lead will finalise the questionnaires for interviews with the stakeholders in close coordination with the national consultants. The National Consultant shall travel to location(s) in the project landscapes and conduct field visits and support the lead. The locations for field visits shall be finalized by the MTR team in consultation with the Commissioning Unit. The project teams shall facilitate the visit missions of national consultants.

9. ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

The MTR team will be composed of two consultants including 01 team leader (International Consultant) and 01 National Consultant who shall have prior experience in evaluating similar projects. The National Consultants will be expected to conduct field missions in the select locations of Arunachal Pradesh (Pakke-Eaglenest Landscape), Rajasthan (Ranthambore Landscape), and Uttar Pradesh (Dudhwa Landscape). The MTR team leader (International Consultant) will be designated team leader and shall be responsible for the overall design and writing of the MTR report and the overall quality of the final report submitted to UNDP. The National Consultant and a lead MTR consultant will be recruited separately; however, all three consultants shall form a team carrying out this MTR, under the overall guidance of the team leader and overall management of the Commissioning Unit.

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 the project's related activities.

This TOR is for the MTR team leader who is required to have the following qualifications and experience:

Education (20% weightage)

A master's degree or higher in environmental sciences, Biodiversity conservation, Natural Resource Management, Sustainable Land and Forest Management or any other related field

Experience (50% weightage)

- Minimum 15 years of relevant experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies; (10%)
- Minimum 15 years of experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios. Competence in adaptive management, as applied to Biodiversity focal area, Land Degradation and Sustainable Forest Management. (15%)
- Minimum 10 years of experience in evaluating GEF projects in Asia, demonstrated understanding of UNDP social and environmental standards and framework for application to project development and implementation is required. (10%)
- Experience of working in technical areas related to biodiversity and its conservation, livelihood, and wildlife crime in the context of South Asia, preferably the Indian subcontinent for at least ten years with a deep understanding of the related concepts.

(10%)

- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender, biodiversity, land degradation and sustainable forest management; experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis in at least 2 prior reviews/evaluations. (5%)
- 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.
- Experience with coordinating an evaluation or MTR team of consultants is desirable.
- Fluency in written and spoken English.

10. ETHICS

The International Consultant will be held to the highest ethical standards and is required to sign a code of conduct upon acceptance of the assignment ([ANNEX D](#)). This MTR will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The International Consultant 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 International Consultant 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%⁹:

- The final MTR report includes all requirements outlined in the MTR TOR and is in

⁹ 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.

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.

12. APPLICATION PROCESS¹⁰

Recommended Presentation of Proposal:

- Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability** using the [template](#)¹¹ provided by UNDP;
- CV and a Personal History Form** ([P11 form](#)¹²);
- 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)
- 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.

All application materials should be submitted to the address (fill address) in a sealed envelope indicating the following reference “Consultant for (*project title*) Midterm Review” or by email at the following address ONLY: (fill email) by (**time and date**). 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.

[ToR ANNEX A: List of Documents to be reviewed by the MTR Team](#)

[ToR ANNEX D: UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Midterm Review Consultants](#)

¹⁰ 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>

¹¹

<https://intranet.undp.org/unit/bom/psa/Support%20documents%20on%20IC%20Guidelines/Template%20for%20Confirmation%20of%20Interest%20and%20Submission%20of%20Financial%20Proposal.docx>

¹² http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11_Personal_history_form.doc

[ToR ANNEX E: MTR Ratings](#)

[ToR ANNEX F: MTR Report Clearance Form](#)

[ToR ANNEX G: Audit Trail Template](#)

INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT - NATIONAL

(Open to Indian Nationals only)

Location:	Home based with travel to project landscape(s)
Type of Contract:	Individual Contract (National)
Post Level:	Mid-Term Review of 'Strengthening conservation and resilience of globally significant wild cat landscapes through a focus on small cat and leopard conservation'
Languages Required:	English
Starting Date:	05 June 2024
Duration of Initial Contract:	60 days spread over 05 months

2. INTRODUCTION

This is the Terms of Reference (ToR) for - the Midterm Review (MTR) of the GEF-financed project titled 'Strengthening conservation and resilience of globally significant wild cat landscapes through a focus on small cat and leopard conservation' (PIMS 6355) implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, with support of UNDP which is to be undertaken in 2024. The project started on 8 July 2022 and is in its third year of implementation. This ToR sets out the expectations for the MTR. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document [Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects](#)

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This project will secure the conservation of globally significant wild cat landscapes in northern, north-eastern and western India through a landscape conservation approach for wild cats that brings together species conservation programs, connects stakeholders and empowers communities, and operates across PAs, tiger corridors and buffer zones. It will aim to integrate small cat needs into existing large cat conservation initiatives so that all wild cats are considered together. The project will focus on the Dudhwa landscape in Uttar Pradesh and Pakke-Eaglenest landscape in Arunachal Pradesh, with further limited intervention in the Ranthambhore landscape in Rajasthan. Barriers to achieving wild cat conservation at the landscape level include: 1) gaps in the policy, planning and procedural framework, 2) limited capacity at State, landscape and site levels, 3) lack of understanding and incentives to support community engagement in wild cat conservation, and 4) insufficient partnerships, regional coordination and outreach to engage the corporate sector, strengthen transboundary collaboration and support knowledge exchange.

To address the above-mentioned barriers, the proposed project will support the Government of India to put in place an integrated model for wild cat conservation at landscape scale that can be replicated nationally and in other range states. The project objective is to secure populations and habitats of wild cats subject to habitat encroachment, human-wildlife conflict, poaching and illegal trade in priority landscapes of northern, northeastern, and western India. This will be achieved through four complementary components that aim to

build the required enabling policy framework and institutional capacity (Component 1); strengthen government management of wild cats and habitats (Component 2) and build community stewardship (Component 3) at the landscape level; and enhance corporate sector partnerships, regional collaboration, and knowledge transfer and learning (Component 4). The project is a child project of the GEF-7 Global Wildlife Program.

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, its risks to sustainability and its contribution to gender equality.

MTR will identify challenges and outline corrective actions to ensure that the project is on track to achieve maximum results by its completion. The results and recommendations from the MTR will be used by UNDP and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, to design and implement a strategy and action plan for achieving the desired outcomes under the project. The process will also help identify potential challenges and risks that will affect the project delivery. The MTR will also lay the foundation for a strong Terminal Evaluation (TE). MTR will also assess the viability of the interventions *vis-à-vis* the project outcomes and expected results, identify the challenges related to the same and suggest appropriate measures.

4. MTR APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The MTR report must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable, and useful. The MTR shall be conducted by one International Consultant supported by one National Consultant.

The National Consultant will support the Lead (International Consultant) in reviewing all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, 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 (ANNEX A for list of documents to be reviewed). The National Consultant 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 mission begins.

The National Consultant is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach¹³ ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR.¹⁴ Stakeholder involvement should

¹³ For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

¹⁴ 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.

include interviews (virtual if required) with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, State Forest and Wildlife Departments, executing agencies, senior officials and task team/component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, local government and CSOs, etc. The National Consultant is expected to conduct field missions to Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh (India) in consultation with the State Forest and Wildlife Departments.

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. The consultant must ensure that they capture gender equality and women's empowerment results through their methodologies and tools. Cross-cutting issues and SDGs, including but not limited to, 'gender equality' and 'reduced inequalities' are incorporated in 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.

If a data collection/field mission is not possible then remote interviews may be undertaken through telephone or online (skype, zoom etc.). The National Consultant is expected to travel to project landscapes to conduct field visits.

5. DETAILED SCOPE OF THE MTR

The National Consultant will assess the following four categories of project progress with appropriate input and support from the two national consultants. 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 Annex 9 of *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/Log-frame

- 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.

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 ¹⁵	Baseline Level ¹⁶	Level in 1 st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target ¹⁷	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment ¹⁸	Achievement Rating ¹⁹	Justification for Rating
Objective :	Indicator (if applicable):							
Outcome 1:	Indicator 1:							
	Indicator 2:							
Outcome 2:	Indicator 3:							
	Indicator 4:							
	Etc.							
Etc.								

Indicator Assessment Key

Green= Achieved	Yellow= On target to be achieved	Red= Not on target to be achieved
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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.

¹⁵ Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards

¹⁶ Populate with data from the Project Document

¹⁷ If available

¹⁸ Colour code this column only

¹⁹ Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

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
		TOTAL			

- 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’. (This template will be annexed as a separate file.)

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 Annex 9 of *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 the 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 risks²⁰ (in the SESP).

²⁰ Risks are to be labeled with both the UNDP SES Principles and Standards, and the GEF’s “types of risks and potential impacts”: Climate Change and Disaster; Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups; Disability Inclusion; Adverse Gender-Related impact, including Gender-based Violence

- 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:

and Sexual Exploitation; Biodiversity Conservation and the Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources; 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.

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 outcomes)?

Socio-economic risks to sustainability

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

Conclusions & Recommendations (including recommendations for exit strategy)

Evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings, should be a part of the MTR report.

Additionally, the National Consultant (as a part of the MTR 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. Recommendations should also be proposed for an exit strategy for the project. 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.

There should be no more than 15 recommendations in total.

Ratings

The ratings of the project's results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements should be included in a *MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table* in the Executive Summary of the MTR report. See [Annex E](#) for rating scales. No rating on Project Strategy and no overall project rating is required.

Table. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for SECURE Himalaya Project

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)	
	Outcome 4 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Etc.	
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
Sustainability	(rate 4 pt. scale)	

13. TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the assignment will be approximately 60 working days over a time of 05 months 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 days	20 June 2024
Review and finalization of Inception Report based on the comments received from the Commissioning unit	10 days	10 July 2024
MTR mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews	20 days	10 August 2024
Presentation of initial findings- last day of the MTR mission	5 days	25 August 2024
Preparing draft report (due within 2 weeks of the MTR mission)	15 days	20 September 2024
Finalization of MTR report/ Incorporating audit trail from feedback on draft report (due within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on the draft)	5 days	30 November 2024

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

14. MIDTERM REVIEW DELIVERABLES

#	Deliverable	Description	Timing	Responsibilities
1	MTR Inception Report	MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of Midterm Review	No later than two weeks before the MTR virtual mission	MTR team submits to the Commissioning Unit and project management
2	Presentation	Initial Findings	End of MTR mission	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 two weeks of the MTR mission	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	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.

15. MTR ARRANGEMENTS

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

The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the National Consultant to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

The MTR lead (International Consultant) will be responsible to conduct the MTR with the support of the National Consultant. This will include designing an appropriate methodology and strategy for carrying out this MTR. The National Consultant will design the questionnaires for interviews with the stakeholders in close coordination with the national consultants. The National Consultant shall travel to location(s) in the project landscapes and conduct field visits and support the lead. The locations for field visits shall be finalized by the MTR team in consultation with the Commissioning Unit. The project teams shall facilitate the visit missions of national consultants.

16. ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

The MTR team will be composed of two consultants including 01 team leader (International Consultant) and 01 National Consultant who shall have prior experience in evaluating similar projects. The National Consultants will be expected to conduct field missions in the select locations of Arunachal Pradesh (Pakke-Eaglenest Landscape), Rajasthan (Ranthambore Landscape), and Uttar Pradesh (Dudhwa Landscape). The MTR team leader (International Consultant) will be designated team leader and shall be responsible for the overall design and writing of the MTR report and the overall quality of the final report submitted to UNDP. However, the National Consultant will support the Lead in drafting the report including all the data gathered from the field missions and interviews. The National Consultant and a lead MTR consultant will be recruited separately; however, all three consultants shall form a team

carrying out this MTR, under the overall guidance of the team leader and overall management of the Commissioning Unit.

The consultant 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 the project's related activities.

This TOR is for the National Consultant who is required to have the following qualifications and experience:

Education (20% weightage)

A Master's degree or higher in Environment Sciences, Biodiversity conservation, Natural Resource Management, Sustainable Land and Forest Management or any other related field

Experience (50% weightage)

- Minimum 10 years of relevant experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies; (15%)
- Minimum 10 years of experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios; Competence in adaptive management, as applied to Biodiversity focal area, Land Degradation and Sustainable Forest Management (10%)
- Minimum 7 years of experience in evaluating GEF projects in Asia; and demonstrated understanding of UNDP social and environmental standards and framework for application to project development and implementation. (10%)
- Experience of working in technical areas related to biodiversity and its conservation, livelihood and wildlife crime in the context of South Asia, preferably the Indian subcontinent for at least ten years with a deep understanding of the related concepts. (10%)
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender, biodiversity, land degradation and sustainable forest management; experience in gender-sensitive evaluation and analysis in at least 2 prior reviews/evaluations. (5%)
- Excellent communication skills.
- Demonstrable analytical skills and project evaluation/review experiences within the United Nations system will be considered an asset.
- Experience with implementing evaluations remotely will be considered an asset. Experience with coordinating an evaluation or MTR team of consultants is desirable.
- Fluency in written and spoken English.

17. ETHICS

The National Consultant will be held to the highest ethical standards and is required to sign a code of conduct upon acceptance of the assignment ([ANNEX D](#)). This MTR will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The National Consultant must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing the collection of data and reporting of data. The National Consultant must also ensure the 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.

18. 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%²¹:

- 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.

19. APPLICATION PROCESS²²

Recommended Presentation of Proposal:

- e) **Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability** using the [template](#)²³ provided by UNDP;
- f) **CV** and a **Personal History Form** ([P11 form](#)²⁴);
- g) **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)
- h) **Financial Proposal** that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price and all other

²¹ 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.

²² 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>

²³ <https://intranet.undp.org/unit/bom/psu/Support%20documents%20on%20IC%20Guidelines/Template%20for%20Confirmation%20of%20Interest%20and%20Submission%20of%20Financial%20Proposal.docx>

²⁴ http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11_Personal_history_form.doc

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.

All application materials should be submitted to the address (fill address) in a sealed envelope indicating the following reference “Consultant for (*project title*) Midterm Review” or by email at the following address ONLY: (fill email) by **(time and date)**. 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.

[ToR ANNEX A: List of Documents to be reviewed by the MTR Team](#)

[ToR ANNEX D: UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Midterm Review Consultants](#)

[ToR ANNEX E: MTR Ratings](#)

[ToR ANNEX F: MTR Report Clearance Form](#)

[ToR ANNEX G: Audit Trail Template](#)

Annex 2. MTR Evaluation Matrix

Table 2.1 below provides a MTR evaluative matrix, specifying the main review criteria, and the indicators against which the criteria will be assessed.

Table 2.1. MTR Evaluation Question Matrix

Evaluation Category, Questions & Review Criteria	Indicators	Data Sources	Methodology
Project Strategy			
Project Design			
1. 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.	Achievement of project results is on track based on project targets and schedule	ProDoc PIR	Document Review
2. To what extent is the project strategy relevant, and does it represent the most effective pathway towards achieving the expected or intended results? Were lessons learned from other relevant projects appropriately integrated into the project design?	Achievement of project results is on track based on project targets and schedule Discussion and incorporation of relevant projects in the ProDoc	ProDoc PIR Appendix 2 Question 2a	Document Review Key Informant Interviews (KII)
3. Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?	Clear and practical project objective, outputs and activities Achievement of project results is on track based on project targets and schedule	ProDoc	Document review
4. 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)?	Alignment of GEF project objective with UNDP Country Program and with India's national policies and strategies	UNDP Country programme document	Document Review

Evaluation Category, Questions & Review Criteria	Indicators	Data Sources	Methodology
<p>5. 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?</p>	<p>Documentation of consultation in project design Confirmation of stakeholder consultations</p>	<p>ProDoc</p>	<p>Document review</p>
<p>6. Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design.</p>	<p>Gender issues addressed in ProDoc, SESP and Gender Action Plan</p>	<p>ProDoc SESP Report</p>	<p>Document review</p>
<p>Project Logical Framework</p>			
<p>7. Undertake a critical analysis of the project's results framework 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.</p>	<p>SMART analysis results Ability of project to establish baselines Annual reporting in LogFrame indicators</p>	<p>Project Results Framework Indicators Baselines PIR</p>	<p>Document review</p>
<p>8. 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.</p>	<p>Income generating activities adopted by beneficiaries Participation of women in project activities Data included in current project monitoring</p>	<p>PIR</p>	<p>Document review</p>
<p>9. To what extent are the broader development and gender aspects of the project being effectively monitored and integrated into the project's overall implementation and outcomes?.</p>	<p>Gender disaggregated data included in current project monitoring</p>	<p>PIR</p>	<p>Project review</p>

Evaluation Category, Questions & Review Criteria	Indicators	Data Sources	Methodology
10. How does the Theory of Change (ToC) proposed during the project's inception and design phases compare to the current approach, relevance, actions, and interventions? Are the assumptions and pathways still practical in the present context, and what adjustments, if any, are necessary to ensure the project's continued effectiveness and relevance moving forward?	Inclusion of relevant impact drivers and assumptions in ToC	ProDoc	Document Review Review of ToC
Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency			
11. Were the context, problem, needs and priorities well analyzed and reviewed during project initiation?	Documentation of analysis of context, problem and priorities	ProDoc Project Implementation Plan	Document Review
12. Are the planned project objectives and outcomes relevant and realistic to the situation on the ground?	Correlation of project objective, output and activities with national, regional and local development policies and strategies Feedback received from project beneficiaries	ProDoc	Document Review
13. Is the project Theory of Change (ToC) and intervention logic coherent and realistic? Does the ToC and intervention logic hold or does it need to be adjusted?	Inclusion of relevant impact drivers and assumptions in ToC	ProDoc	Document Review Review of ToC KII
14. Do outputs link to intended outcomes which link to broader paradigm shift objectives of the project?	Project ToC, Objective, Outputs and Activities	ProDoc	Document Review Review o ToC
15. Are the planned inputs and strategies identified realistic, appropriate and adequate to achieve the results? Were they sequenced sufficiently to efficiently deliver the expected results?	Project Activities Project Timetable of Activities	ProDoc Project Annual Work Plans (AWP) PIR	Document Review
16. Are the outputs being achieved in a timely manner? Is this achievement supportive of the ToC and pathways identified?	Project Timetable of Activities Project Outputs Implementation Status	PIR ProDoc	Document Review

Evaluation Category, Questions & Review Criteria	Indicators	Data Sources	Methodology
17. What and how much progress has been made towards achieving the overall outputs and outcomes of the project (including contributing factors and constraints)?	Project Outputs Implementation Status	PIR ProDoc	Document Review
18. How realistic are the risks and assumptions of the project?	Documentation of risks and assumptions	ProDoc	Document Review
19. How did the project deal with issues and risks in implementation?	Documentation of project actions to address risks and issues identified and encountered	ProDoc PIP PIR Project Borad (PB) meeting minutes	Document Review
20. To what extent did the project's M&E data and mechanism(s) contribute to achieving project results?	Documentation of adaptive management	PIR PB meeting minutes	Document Review KII
21. Have project resources been utilized in the most economical, effective and equitable ways possible (considering value for money; absorption rate; commitments versus disbursements and projected commitments; co-financing; etc.)?	Project Results Framework indicators and targets Budget expenditure / budget adjustment to complete project activities	PIR AWP Financial reports Financial staff	Document Review KII
22. Are the project's governance mechanisms functioning efficiently?	Documentation of project management in PB meeting minutes	PB meeting minutes PB members	Document Review KII
23. To what extent did the design of the project help or hinder achieving its own goals?	Project Results Framework indicators and targets Budget expenditure / budget adjustment to complete project activities Project Timetable of Activities Project Outputs Implementation Status	ProDoc PIP PIR	Document Review
24. Were there clear baselines indicators and/or benchmark for performance measurements? How were these used in project management? To what extent and how the project applies adaptive management?	Documentation of project baseline Documentation of project progress	PIR Project Baseline Survey(s)	Document Review

Evaluation Category, Questions & Review Criteria	Indicators	Data Sources	Methodology
25. What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project objectives?	Alternative Strategies	PIR PB meeting minutes	Document Review KII
Progress Towards Results			
26. How do the Project Results Framework indicators align with the progress made towards mid-term and end-of-project targets? Using the Progress Towards Results Matrix and a “traffic light system,” what is the level of progress achieved for each outcome? What rating should be assigned for each outcome, and what recommendations can be made for areas marked as “Not on target to be achieved” (red)?	Progress Towards Indicators	ProDoc PIR	Document review KII
27. Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project.	Barriers to implementation of project activities Sustainability of project activities completed	ProDoc PIR	Document Review KII
28. By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.	Documentation of successful project progress	PIR	Document Review
Project Implementation and Adaptive Management			
Management Arrangements:			
29. 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.	Project management arrangements among the Accredited Entity (UNDP), the Executing Entity, and implementing partners	ProDoc PIR PB meeting minutes	Document Review KII
30. Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.	Project Results Framework indicators and targets Level of engagement of beneficiaries	PIR PB meeting minutes	Document Review

Evaluation Category, Questions & Review Criteria	Indicators	Data Sources	Methodology
31. Review the quality of support provided by UNDP and recommend areas for improvement.	Evidence provided by Executing Agencies Evidence provided by Implementing Partners	Accredited Entity (UNDP) Executing Entity Implementing partners	KII
Work Planning:			
32. Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.	Documentation of delays and adaptive management strategies	ProDoc PIR PIP PB meeting minutes	Document Review
33. Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?	Linkage of AWP to PIP and PIR Results-based project management reflected in PB meeting minutes	ProDoc PIP PIR AWP PB meeting minutes	Document Review
34. Examine the use of the project's results framework as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.	Project Results Framework indicators and targets	ProDoc PIP PIR	Document Review
Finance and co-finance:			
35. Review of the fund flow mechanisms of the project in terms of efficiency under the project	Timely release of project funds required to support implementation of project activities	Accredited Entity (UNDP) Executing Entity Implementing partners	KII
36. How effective has the financial management of the project been, particularly in terms of the cost-effectiveness of the interventions implemented?	Level of utilization of proposed annual budgets for completion of project activities Value of project activities implemented	Annual budgets Annual financial reports PIR	Document review KII
37. Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.	Budget allocation for project activities Documentation of justification of budget revisions	ProDoc PIP PIR AWP PB meeting minutes	Document review KII

Evaluation Category, Questions & Review Criteria	Indicators	Data Sources	Methodology
38. 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?	Detailed, timely financial tracking of project budget by project outputs and activities	PIR AWP PB meeting minutes	Document review KII
How strategically is co-financing being utilized to support the project’s objectives? Are regular meetings held with co-financing partners to align financing priorities and annual work plans? Analyze the materialized co-financing and assess its implications for the project’s scope and results.	Level of contribution of proposed co-finance Financial Progress Details	PIR PB meeting minutes	Document Review KII
Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems			
39. Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? 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?	Sufficiency of data informing reporting on PRF indicators Stakeholders engaged in M&E Participatory M&E implementation	M&E Plan PIR Project Baseline Survey(s)	Document Review KII
40. 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?	Financial reporting on budget allocated for M&E Plan implementation Sufficiency of budget to collect data required for reporting on PRF indicators	M&E Plan PIR Financial Progress Details	Document Review KII
Stakeholder Engagement:			
41. Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?	Level of engagement of Executing Entities and implementing partners	ProDoc PIP PIR	Document Review

Evaluation Category, Questions & Review Criteria	Indicators	Data Sources	Methodology
42. Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?	Level of engagement and participation of Executing Entities Level of engagement and participation of local government stakeholders	PIR PB meeting minutes	Document Review KII
43. Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?	Level of stakeholder engagement Community understanding of and support to project objective, outputs and activities	PIR	Document Review KII
Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)			
44. Validate the risks identified in the project's most current SESP and those risks' ratings; are any revisions needed?	Evaluation of risk ratings in PIR	ProDoc SESP PIR PB meeting minutes	Document Review KII
45. Summarize and assess the revisions made to risks	Revisions to SESP risk ratings	SESP PIR PB meeting minutes	Document Review KII
46. Describe and assess progress made in the implementation of the project's social and environmental management measures as outlined in the SESP and the GRM.	Implementation of mitigation measures identified in SESP Implementation of GRM	SESP GRM PIR PB meeting minutes	Document Review KII
Reporting:			
47. Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board.	Documentation of and reporting on adaptive management	PIR PB meeting minutes	Document Review KII
48. Assess how well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfil UNDP/GEF reporting requirements	Quality of reporting in PIR	PIR	Document Review

Evaluation Category, Questions & Review Criteria	Indicators	Data Sources	Methodology
49. Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.	Documentation of and reporting on adaptive management Level of understanding and implementation of adaptive management actions by Executing Entities, implementing partners and local government stakeholders	PIR PB meeting minutes	Document Review KII
50. Assess the efficiency, timeliness, and adequacy of reporting requirements	Efficiency, timeliness, and adequacy of PIR and financial reporting and PB meeting minutes	PIR Financial reporting PB meeting minutes	Document Review
Communications:			
51. 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?	Level of understanding of project objective, outputs and activities by Executing Entities, implementing partners and local government stakeholders Level of understanding of any modifications to implementation of project activities (e.g. adaptive management, timing, etc.)	Executing entity Implementing partners Local government stakeholders	KII
52. 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?)	Evidence of implementation of project Communication Plan Project website Communication media Communication documents	Project Communication plan Project website Communication media Communication documents	Document Review KII
Sustainability			
53. Were relevant sustainability issues adequately addressed at project design?	Project approach to ensuring sustainability	ProDoc	Document review
54. Is there evidence that project stakeholders will continue their activities beyond project termination?	Engagement and commitment of government stakeholders and beneficiaries	Project Stakeholder	KII

Evaluation Category, Questions & Review Criteria	Indicators	Data Sources	Methodology
55. Which are the main risks to the continuation of actions initiated by the project (financial, institutional, socioeconomic, environmental)?	Ongoing documentation of risks	ProDoc PIR	Document review
56. Are project actions and results being scaled up or replicated?	Scaling-up and replication of project activities	PIR Government and Implementing staff	Document review KII
57. Did the project adequately address institutional and financial sustainability issues?	Capacity and commitment of government stakeholders	Project Stakeholder	KII
Financial risks to sustainability:			
58. 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)?	Financial requirement to sustain project intervention(s) Funding commitments from relevant government stakeholders Funding available from beneficiaries (where applicable)	ProDoc PIR Government budgets Government stakeholders	Document Review KII
Socio-economic risks to sustainability:			
59. 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 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?	Level of engagement and commitment shown by relevant government sectors Level of engagement and commitment shown by beneficiaries	PIR Project stakeholders	Document Review KII

Evaluation Category, Questions & Review Criteria	Indicators	Data Sources	Methodology
Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:			
60. 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.	Supporting government policies, strategies, implementation structures and capacity relevant to sustaining project activities	PIR Government policies, strategies and structures	Document Review
Environmental risks to sustainability:			
61. Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?	Implementation of appropriate mitigation measures to address environmental risks	ProDoc PIR SESP Project Stakeholders	Document Review KII
Country Ownership			
62. To what extent is the project aligned with national development plans, national plans of action on climate change, or sub-national policy as well as projects and priorities of the national partners?	Alignment of GEF project objective, outputs and activities with India's national and sub-national policies and strategies	National strategies, policies and plans	Document Review
63. How well is country ownership reflected in the project governance, coordination and consultation mechanisms or other consultations?	Level of engagement and participation of Executing Entities Level of engagement and participation of local government stakeholders	PIR PB meeting minutes	Document Review KII
64. Were the modes of deliveries of the outputs appropriate to build essential/necessary capacities, promote national ownership and ensure sustainability of the result achieved?	Level of engagement and participation of Executing Entities Level of engagement and participation of local government stakeholders	PIR PB meeting minutes	Document Review KII
Gender Equity			
65. Does the project collect sex-disaggregated data	Gender disaggregated M&E	PIR M&E reporting	Document review
66. Are financial resources/project activities explicitly allocated to enable women to benefit from project interventions?	Budget allocation for activities directed at women beneficiaries	Annual budgets PIR	Document review KII

Evaluation Category, Questions & Review Criteria	Indicators	Data Sources	Methodology
67. Does the project account in activities and planning for local gender dynamics and how project interventions affect women as beneficiaries?	Implementation of Gender Action Plan Level of engagement of women in project planning and implementation	Gender Action Plan SESP PIR PB meeting minutes	Document Review KII
68. Do women as beneficiaries know their rights and/or benefits from project activities/interventions?	Level of understanding of rights and benefits by women	Project stakeholders	KII
69. Is the decision-making process transparent and inclusive of both women and men?	Level of engagement of women and men in project planning and implementation	PIR PB meeting minutes	Document Review KII
70. To what extent are female stakeholders or beneficiaries satisfied with the project gender equality results?	Level of satisfaction of women with how GCA project has addressed gender issues	Project stakeholders	KII
71. Did the project sufficiently address cross cutting issues?	Inclusion of young girls, women-headed households, elderly, Persons with Disability (PWD), ethnic minorities, disadvantaged groups	ProDoc PIR Gender Action Plan	Document Review
72. How does the project incorporate gender in its governance or staffing?	Requirements for gender balanced governance and staffing	Guidelines for membership in project committees and working groups	Document Review

Annex 3. Progress Towards Results Matrix

A 6-point scale to rate the project’s progress towards the objective and each project outcome: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), or Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). See **Annex 4** for an interpretation of the rating scales.

Table 3.1: Progress Towards Results Matrix - Assessment of the progress made towards end of the project targets under Small Wild Cats project. Data from PIR June 2024 used to assess targets.

Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Target	End of Project Target	MTR Assessment	Rating	Justification for Rating
Project Objective: Secure populations and habitats of wild cats subject to habitat encroachment, human-wildlife conflict, poaching and illegal trade in priority landscapes of northern, north-eastern and western India						
Mandatory Indicator 1: (GEF Core Indicator #11): # direct project beneficiaries disaggregated by gender (individual people)	0	3,200 (1,860 women, 1,340 men)	6,300 (3,690 women, 2,610 men)	Partially achieved & on target to achieve end of project target	MU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited activities under Outcomes 1 and 4 contributing to this target have been undertaken. No activities under Outcomes 2 and 3 contributing to this target have been undertaken. Data on the number of direct beneficiaries has not been reported.

Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Target	End of Project Target	MTR Assessment	Rating	Justification for Rating
<p>Mandatory Indicator 2: (GEF Core Indicator #1): Terrestrial PAs under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (Hectares) as measured by METT (Annex 10):</p> <p>A. Dudhwa Tiger Reserve* (220,177 ha)</p> <p>B. Pakke Tiger Reserve* (137,695 ha)</p> <p>C. Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary* (21,700 ha)</p> <p>D. Sessa Orchid Sanctuary (10,000 ha)</p> <p>*Includes Core and Buffer Areas, but not ESZ</p>	<p>Area: 0</p> <p>Baseline METT Scores:</p> <p>A - 41</p> <p>B - 52</p> <p>C - 54</p> <p>D - 55</p>	<p>Area: 389,572 ha</p> <p>Mid-term METT Scores for:</p> <p>A -57</p> <p>B - 63</p> <p>C - 64</p> <p>D - 67</p>	<p>Area: 389,572 ha</p> <p>Completion</p> <p>METT Scores for:</p> <p>A - 81</p> <p>B - 81</p> <p>C - 81</p> <p>D - 82</p>	<p>At risk of not being achieved</p>	<p>HU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities under Outcomes 2 and 3 are yet to commence. • The 2nd PIR (June 2024) does not provide information on Area under improved management • METT Scores have not been updated

<p>Mandatory Indicator 3: (GEF Core Indicator #4): Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding PAs) (Hectares)</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>40,000 ha under improved practices, including: sustainable grazing management; improved arable cropping practices (e.g. reduced chemical use); community-based natural resource management; etc.</p>	<p>100,000 ha under improved practices, including: sustainable grazing management; improved arable cropping practices (e.g. reduced chemical use); community-based natural resource management; etc.</p>	<p>At risk of not being achieved</p>	<p>HU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMART analysis of indicator noted the targets are highly ambitious and likely not achievable. • This indicator is strongly linked to project Outcomes 2 and 3 which have not yet commenced • No activities contributing to the targets have been initiated.
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Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Target	End of Project Target	MTR Assessment	Rating	Justification for Rating
Project Component 1: Enabling policy, planning and institutional framework for wild cat conservation						
Project Outcome 1: Strengthened policy, planning and institutional framework for wild cat conservation in accordance with the National Wildlife Action Plan 2017-2031						
Indicator 4: Landscape conservation master plans developed for globally-significant wild cat landscapes and institutionalized into government plans and programs with implementation supported by multi-sector partnerships	Conservation efforts focus on PAs and dispersed efforts led by diverse parties outside the PAs, with no overall vision or coordination at landscape level	Landscape conservation master plans developed for Dudhwa and Pakke-Eaglenest Landscapes and multi-sector partnerships defined for their implementation	Landscape conservation master plans for Dudhwa and Pakke-Eaglenest Landscapes adopted by the respective State Governments and implementation supported by State Government plans and budgets and multi-sector partnerships	Partially achieved & on target to achieve end of project target	MS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation workshops conducted with relevant stakeholders at the national and state levels. • Content page drafted for the Landscape Conservation Master Plan.

Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Target	End of Project Target	MTR Assessment	Rating	Justification for Rating
<p>Indicator 5: Tiger Conservation Plans within project landscapes incorporate specific requirements for small wild cat conservation based on project landscape master plans, Species Recovery Action Plans, SoPs and site specific guidelines</p>	<p>Tiger Conservation Plans do not include measures for small wild cats</p>	<p>One set of recommendations for each project landscape delivered to NTCA for uptake in Tiger Conservation Plans, based on project landscape Master Plans, Species Recovery Action Plans, SoPs and site specific guidelines</p>	<p>Tiger Conservation Plans within project landscapes revised to incorporate specific requirements for small wild cat conservation, and recommendations for upscaling endorsed by NTCA</p>	<p>Partially achieved & on target to achieve end of project target</p>	<p>MU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This activities towards this indicator are yet initiated because the activity under indicator 4 above is yet to be completed.

Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Target	End of Project Target	MTR Assessment	Rating	Justification for Rating
<p>Indicator 6: Improved institutional capacity of relevant government agencies for landscape conservation incorporating wild cat needs, as measured by Capacity Development Scorecard (Annex 19), for MoEFCC, Uttar Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh State, District and Municipal Agencies including Forestry, Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Medicinal Plants, Tourism, etc).</p>	<p>Baseline Score: 34.2</p>	<p>Mid-term Score: 39</p>	<p>Completion Score: 48</p>	<p>Partially achieved & on target to achieve end of project target</p>	<p>MU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A capacity-building programme for 40 frontline staff organized in Pakke-Eagle nest landscape, Arunachal Pradesh on 18-19 Dec 2022. • Other project activities contributing to this indicator are yet to commence. • Capacity Development Scorecard not updated at time of MTR.
<p>Project Component 2 Strengthened management and protection of wild cat landscapes</p>						
<p>Outcome 2: Improved protection and management of wild cats and habitats in target PAs, corridors and buffer zones in wild cat landscapes</p>						

<p>Indicator 7: Targeted reduction in threats to wild cat populations and their habitats, as measured by patrol reporting/MSTRIPES:</p> <p>A. Dudhwa Landscape - i)# HWC incidences reported/year - ii)# poaching/IWT cases reported/year -iii) # wildlife killed on monitored road stretches/year</p> <p>B. Pakke-Eaglenest Landscape - i)# HWC incidences reported/year -ii) # poaching/IWT cases reported/year - iii)# wildlife killed on monitored road stretches/year</p>	<p>Baseline levels of threats reported:</p> <p>A. Dudhwa Landscape To be determined using systematic reporting procedures in Year 1</p> <p>B.Pakke-Eaglenest Landscape To be determined using systematic reporting procedures in Year 1</p>	<p>Mid-term target levels of threats reported:</p> <p>A. Dudhwa Landscape All: Improved rate of reporting over baseline; i)Increased No. reports of HWC incidents due to improved reporting ii)Increased No. reports of poaching/IWT cases due to improved reporting iii) No increase over baseline</p> <p>B.Pakke-Eaglenest Landscape All: Improved rate of reporting over baseline; i)Increased No. reports of HWC incidents</p>	<p>Completion target levels of threats reported:</p> <p>A. Dudhwa Landscape i)increased No. reports of HWC incidents due to improved reporting; ii)50% reduction over baseline iii)20% reduction over baseline</p> <p>B.Pakke-Eaglenest Landscape i)increased No. reports of HWC incidents due to improved reporting; ii)50% reduction over baseline iii)20% reduction over baseline</p>	<p>At risk of not being achieved</p>	<p>HU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 2 activities contributing to this indicator have not yet commenced.
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Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Target	End of Project Target	MTR Assessment	Rating	Justification for Rating
		due to improved reporting ii) Increased No. reports of poaching/IWT cases due to improved reporting iii) No increase over baseline				

Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Target	End of Project Target	MTR Assessment	Rating	Justification for Rating
<p>Indicator 8: Increased wild cat occupancy status in landscape areas targeted for improved habitat management, as measured by camera trap grid and scat collection data</p> <p>A. Dudhwa Landscape: Fishing cat occupancy in targeted area of grassland and wetland habitats</p> <p>B. Pakke-Eaglenest: Wild cat species occupancy of targeted corridor and degraded forest habitats</p>	<p>Baselines to be determined through monitoring surveys when targeted areas for habitat management are defined, and detailed monitoring methods established through expert review</p>	<p>A. Dudhwa Landscape: Fishing cat occupancy determined for the targeted area – at least stable over baseline</p> <p>B. Pakke-Eaglenest: Wild cat species occupancy determined for targeted corridor and degraded forest habitats – at least stable over baseline</p>	<p>A. Dudhwa Landscape: Fishing cat occupancy for the targeted area shows a stable population trend.</p> <p>B. Pakke-Eaglenest: Wild cat species occupancy for targeted corridor and degraded forest habitats shows a stable and/or increasing trend over baseline</p>	<p>At risk of not being achieved</p>	<p>HU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome 2 activities contributing to this indicator have not yet commenced.

Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Target	End of Project Target	MTR Assessment	Rating	Justification for Rating
<p>Indicator 9: Improved frontline capacity for conservation and management of small wild cats and their habitats, as measured by Small Cats Capacity Development Scorecard (see Annex 18 for Scorecard baselines) for: A. Dudhwa Landscape B. Pakke-Eaglenest Landscape</p>	<p>Baseline frontline capacity scores for: A. 25% B. 44%</p>	<p>Mid-term frontline capacity scores for: A. 50% B. 60%</p>	<p>Completion frontline capacity scores for: A. 77% B. 85%</p>	<p>At risk of not being achieved</p>	<p>HU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 2 activities contributing to this indicator have not yet commenced. • A capacity-building programme under Outcome 1 was undertaken for 40 frontline staff in Pakke-Eagle nest landscape, Arunachal Pradesh on 18-19 Dec 2022 which contributes to this target. • Capacity Development Scorecard not updated at time of MTR.

Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Target	End of Project Target	MTR Assessment	Rating	Justification for Rating
Project Component 3 Community stewardship and human-wildlife coexistence in wild cat landscapes						
Outcome 3: Enhanced community-based management of wild cats and habitats, with threat reduction including HWC and improved local livelihoods						
<p>Indicator 10: No. of villages actively monitoring small wild cat species and their habitats in support of community-based conservation efforts</p> <p>A. Dudhwa Landscape B. Pakke-Eaglenest Landscape</p>	<p>Baseline to be established at targeted localities in Year 1</p> <p>A. No current monitoring of small cats by communities B. No current monitoring of small cats by communities, although Singchung Bugun conducting community conservation efforts</p>	<p>A. At least 5 villages B. At least 5 villages</p> <p>All with at least 30% participation of women</p>	<p>A. At least 10 villages B. At least 10 villages</p> <p>All with at least 30% participation of women</p>	<p>At risk of not being achieved</p>	<p>HU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome 3 activities contributing to this indicator have not yet commenced.

<p>Indicator 11: Targeted percentage reduction of locally-specific threats related to community-based management of natural resources:</p> <p>A. Dudhwa Landscape</p> <p>i) Percentage reduction in quantity of firewood collected by targeted communities</p> <p>ii) Percentage of free-ranging dogs neutered at targeted sites</p> <p>iii) Percentage reduction in density of free-ranging livestock at targeted sites</p> <p>B. Pakke-Eaglenest Landscape</p> <p>i) Percentage reduction in annual deforestation rate in targeted areas</p> <p>ii) Percentage reduction in number of illegal hunting incidents reported at targeted sites</p>	<p>A Baseline to be established at targeted localities in Year 1</p> <p>i) quantity of firewood collected by targeted communities</p> <p>ii) Percentage of free-ranging dogs that are neutered</p> <p>iii) density of free-ranging livestock</p> <p>B</p> <p>i) 1.2%/annum in Papum RF (Pakke Buffer Area, 2013-17); and >4% in lower elevation accessible areas (2011-19) (see METT threats table, Annex 10)</p> <p>ii) Baseline to be established at targeted localities in Year 1</p>	<p>A.</p> <p>i) 10% reduction over baseline</p> <p>ii) 50% of free-ranging dogs</p> <p>iii) 25% reduction in livestock density over baseline</p> <p>B.</p> <p>i) 20% reduction in annual deforestation rate</p> <p>ii) As baseline (allowing for increased reporting rate)</p>	<p>A.</p> <p>i) 20% reduction over baseline</p> <p>ii) 80% of free-ranging dogs</p> <p>iii) 50% reduction in livestock density over baseline</p> <p>B.</p> <p>i) 50% reduction of annual deforestation rate</p> <p>ii) 50% reduction over baseline</p>	<p>At risk of not being achieved</p>	<p>HU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome 3 activities contributing to this indicator have not yet commenced.
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<p>Indicator 12: Percentage reduction in annual incidence of HWC impacting crops, livestock and people in four targeted communities</p>	<p>Baseline HWC statistics to be collected for targeted communities starting in Year 1. Significant efforts by government and NGOs to combat HWC in project landscapes; yet HWC problems remain locally severe; absence of systematic strategy that considers wildlife corridors, habitat connectivity, land use and livelihood options.</p>	<p>At least 20% reduction in annual HWC incidence over baseline in four targeted communities</p>	<p>At least 60% reduction in annual HWC incidence over baseline in four targeted communities</p>	<p>At risk of not being achieved</p>	<p>HU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 3 activities contributing to this indicator have not yet commenced.
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Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Target	End of Project Target	MTR Assessment	Rating	Justification for Rating
Project Component 4 Partnerships, knowledge management and M&E						
Outcome 4: Effective partnerships, communications, knowledge management and M&E for wild cat conservation						
Indicator 13: National-level green business platform operationalized with Terms of Reference, broad membership and investment through partnership in project-related activities	Indian Wildlife Business Council no longer operational despite GTI, WB and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) establishing it in 2012	National-level green business platform established with Terms of Reference and membership including at least 10 corporate bodies	National-level green business platform operational with TOR, membership of at least 20 corporate bodies, and actively investing through at least one partnership activity in each project landscape	Partially achieved & on target to achieve end of project target	MU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contours/ Outline of strategy for collaboration with business groups” prepared for operationalization of National Green Business Platform Initial meetings were conducted.

Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Target	End of Project Target	MTR Assessment	Rating	Justification for Rating
<p>Indicator 14: Improved understanding of values of wild cats and more positive attitudes towards small wild cat conservation among target audiences including national and state government line agencies (Forest and Wildlife, Environment, Agriculture, Revenue, Rural Development, etc) and concerned NGOs, as measured by KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices) score. See Annex 21 for KAP assessment methodology</p>	<p>KAP baseline scores (to be conducted in Year 1)</p>	<p>KAP midterm targets (to be determined in Y1)</p>	<p>KAP completion targets (to be determined in Y1)</p>	<p>Partially achieved & on target to achieve end of project target</p>	<p>MU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A capacity-building programme for 40 frontline staff organized in Pakke-Eagle nest landscape, Arunachal Pradesh on 18-19 Dec 2022. KAP surveys initiated. • Relevant knowledge materials and products such as brochures, posters, and, small wild cat-themed collectibles developed, and sports organized, and sessions conducted. • KAP mid-term targets not determined • Mid-term KAP assessment not conducted
<p>Indicator 15: Annual number of PAs and institutions sharing knowledge on small wild cat conservation through regional knowledge platform</p>	<p>No regional platform for sharing of knowledge on small wild cat conservation</p>	<p>Platform established and operational - 10/year</p>	<p>20/year</p>	<p>Partially achieved & on target to achieve end of project target</p>	<p>MU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A white paper detailing the outlay of the database and citizen science application has been prepared in this regard.

Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Target	End of Project Target	MTR Assessment	Rating	Justification for Rating
<p>Indicator 16: Number of project best practices developed, disseminated and used, targeting: integrated management of ESZs to benefit wildlife, management of targeted Wasteland habitats, small wild cat – friendly agriculture practices, HWC management in targeted communities, community-based monitoring of small wild cats, gender mainstreaming and traditional knowledge relevant to wild cats / habitats.</p>	0	3	6	Partially achieved & on target to achieve end of project target	U	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No project activities have been conducted which could contribute to this target.
<p>Indicator 17: Number of annual reflection meetings to review M&E and other data for adaptive management, linked to preparation of progress reports and development of annual workplans</p>	0	3	6	Partially achieved & on target to achieve end of project target	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three annual meetings of NPSC conducted 20th July 2022 19th Oct 2023 and 15th October 2024 and project review meeting on 6th Sept 2023. In the Pakke-Eaglenest landscape one LLAC meeting conducted on 21st June 2023, and one SPSC meeting held on 25th August 2023 to finalize the AWP.

Annex 4. MTR Ratings Scales

Table 4.1 MTR Rating Scales used for assessment of the Project Strategy and Progress Towards Results

Rating Scale	Guidance on application of rating scale
1. 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”.
2. Satisfactory (S)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
3. Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
4. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
5. Unsatisfactory (U)	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
6. 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.





Table 4.2 MTR Rating Scales used for an assessment of Project Implementation & Adaptive Management Rating Scale

Rating Scale	Guidance on application of rating scale
1. 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”.
2. 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
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
6. Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.

Table 4.3 MTR Rating Scales used for an assessment of sustainability

Rating Scale	Guidance on application of rating scale
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
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
Moderately Unlikely (MU)	Significant risk that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on
Unlikely (U)	Severe risks that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained

Annex 5. MTR revised Wild Cats project work plan

Legend for color codes and hatching used in table	
	Activities planned in ProDoc but not initiated shown by cross-hatch up to Q3 FY2024
	Suggested additions to ProDoc workplan timeline
	Suggested reduction of ProDoc workplan timeline
	Original ProDoc workplan as revised by MTR from Q4 FY2024

Activities	Initial Work Plan up to Q3 of FY2024												MTR Recommended Work Plan from Q4 of FY2024																			
	Project Year 1				Project Year 2				Project Year 3				Project Year 4				Project Year 5				EXTN Year 1				EXTN Year 2							
	CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029		CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029	
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.1.1 Site-level stakeholder assessment workshops - identification and appraisal of stakeholders in the targeted landscapes of Dudhwa and Pakke-Eaglenest, and establishment of the “coordination committee” for each landscape																																
1.1.2 District/State level consultations/workshops for master planning in each landscape including Eco-Sensitive Zones																																
1.1.3 Master plan preparation for each landscape through Technical Agency/Consultant/Department inputs																																

Activities	Initial Work Plan up to Q3 of FY2024												MTR Recommended Work Plan from Q4 of FY2024																		
	Project Year 1				Project Year 2				Project Year 3				Project Year 4				Project Year 5				EXTN Year 1				EXTN Year 2						
	CY2022			CY2023			CY2024				CY2025				CY2026				CY2027				CY2028				CY2029				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
1.1.4 Editing, designing, printing and dissemination of the master plans																															
1.1.5 Facilitate the integration of recommendations from master planning process and activities in Components 2&3 into Tiger Conservation Plans																															
1.1.6 Facilitate the integration of inputs from the master planning process into State and District-level development and land use planning processes																															
1.2.1 National and State Consultations/Workshops (5) for inputs from stakeholders and conservation partners																															
1.2.2 Consultant/Technical agency/consortium for database establishment, data collection, analysis and compilation																															
1.2.3 Travel and field work for macro surveys and species distribution assessment of targeted regions																															
1.2.4 Compilation, design, printing and electronic publication of a national wild cat distribution atlas																															
1.2.5 Consultation workshops (3) to determine recovery actions focused on the targeted species																															

Activities	Initial Work Plan up to Q3 of FY2024												MTR Recommended Work Plan from Q4 of FY2024																							
	Project Year 1				Project Year 2				Project Year 3				Project Year 4				Project Year 5				EXTN Year 1				EXTN Year 2											
	CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029		CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.2.6 Development of draft national recovery action plans and national strategy for small wild cat conservation including climate change adaptation measures																																				
1.2.7 Stakeholder review and input to drafts																																				
1.2.8 Editing, designing, printing, release and dissemination of action plans																																				
1.3.1 Convene workshops with scientific institutes and Government agencies to develop a Protocol for population assessment and monitoring status for small wild cats, their habitat and prey																																				
1.3.2 Technical agency/consultant inputs for drafting of Protocol																																				
1.3.3 Editing, designing, printing and dissemination of Protocol																																				
1.3.4 Convene workshops and consultations with stakeholders and partners for customization of existing SoP for human-wildlife conflict (HWC) mitigation																																				

		Initial Work Plan up to Q3 of FY2024												MTR Recommended Work Plan from Q4 of FY2024															
Activities		Project Year 1				Project Year 2				Project Year 3				Project Year 4				Project Year 5				EXTN Year 1				EXTN Year 2			
		CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029													
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.3.5	Technical agency/consultant/department to customize the SoP on HWC, draft SoP on human-rights approach to site-based law enforcement and other priority SoPs																												
1.3.6	Editing, Designing and Printing of SoPs																												
1.3.7	Convene evaluation workshops to confirm best practices and disseminate results																												
1.4.1	convene a national expert workshop and consultations to determine the priority subjects for guidelines for small wild cat conservation																												
1.4.2	For each landscape, confirm priority subjects based on the national framework and local consultations, and draft site-specific guidelines focused on key issues																												
1.4.3	Convene workshops for each project landscape to review the draft guidelines and the process for incorporating them into relevant plans																												
1.4.4	Finalize the guidelines and socialize them with staff of the relevant agencies through seminars / training																												

		Initial Work Plan up to Q3 of FY2024												MTR Recommended Work Plan from Q4 of FY2024														
Activities	Project Year 1				Project Year 2				Project Year 3				Project Year 4				Project Year 5				EXTN Year 1				EXTN Year 2			
	CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029													
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.4.5 Coordinate with the Forest Dept, NTCA and other relevant agencies to support the incorporation of the guidelines into relevant work plans																												
1.5.1 Validate and update baseline capacity scorecard assessments and training needs analyses conducted during project preparation																												
1.5.2 Prepare capacity development, training and sensitization plans with related State and District agencies on key issues																												
1.5.3 Develop training materials appropriate for the targeted trainee groups																												
1.5.4 Conduct targeted training workshops, refresher courses and sensitization activities																												
1.5.5 Conduct evaluations of all training activities using post-training questionnaires for all participants																												
2.1.1 Collect available baseline data and plans with Forest Dept and other agencies and establish baseline for current management practices for grassland and wetland habitats																												

Activities	Initial Work Plan up to Q3 of FY2024												MTR Recommended Work Plan from Q4 of FY2024																							
	Project Year 1				Project Year 2				Project Year 3				Project Year 4				Project Year 5				EXTN Year 1				EXTN Year 2											
	CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029		CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2.1.2 Expert consultation & capacity building of forest staff on grassland and wetland management																																				
2.1.3 Preparation of grassland and wetland management plans through consultation with experts and managers																																				
2.1.4 Facilitate implementation of habitat management under expert supervision																																				
2.1.5 Conduct monitoring of habitat management interventions and fishing cat occupancy																																				
2.1.6 Satellite image analysis to map key forest corridor bottlenecks at landscape level																																				
2.1.7 Develop site-specific plans for forest management and rehabilitation to strengthen forest corridors																																				
2.1.8 Implement forest corridor improvements for critical bottlenecks according to the agreed plans																																				
2.1.9 Support participatory monitoring by communities and District Forestry Office																																				
2.2.1 Develop an implementation plan for training provision based on local needs																																				

Activities	Initial Work Plan up to Q3 of FY2024												MTR Recommended Work Plan from Q4 of FY2024																							
	Project Year 1				Project Year 2				Project Year 3				Project Year 4				Project Year 5				EXTN Year 1				EXTN Year 2											
	CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029		CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.1.2 Develop community engagement processes for high conservation value (HCV) habitats in Dudhwa as well as Pakke & Eaglenest buffer zones																																				
3.1.3 Develop a capacity development / training programme plan for each landscape based on the training needs analysis																																				
3.1.4 Develop training modules for the main subject areas at an appropriate level for local communities																																				
3.1.5 Provide training to the targeted community groups																																				
3.1.6 Formation and strengthening of community institutions (e.g. EDCs, CBOs, village committees) to support community-based conservation approaches																																				
3.1.7 Strengthening of Pakke Tiger Foundation Office																																				
3.1.8 Evaluate training courses after delivery																																				
3.1.9 Support implementation of financial incentives																																				
3.2.1 Develop an awareness awareness-raising plan for each landscape together with partners																																				

Activities	Initial Work Plan up to Q3 of FY2024												MTR Recommended Work Plan from Q4 of FY2024																							
	Project Year 1				Project Year 2				Project Year 3				Project Year 4				Project Year 5				EXTN Year 1				EXTN Year 2											
	CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029		CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.2.2 Convene workshops with the targeted communities to confirm needs and locally appropriate delivery mechanisms for awareness raising activities																																				
3.2.3 Prepare education and awareness materials on small cat																																				
3.2.4 Conduct awareness raising and education activities with local partners																																				
3.2.5 Conduct baseline and repeat KAP assessments at the start and completion of each awareness raising programme to measure changes and evaluate its effectiveness																																				
3.2.6 Conduct workshops in targeted areas/communities in Dudhwa and Pakke-Eaglenest to document traditional knowledge and practices with specific reference to small cats and their habitats																																				
3.3.1 Conduct an initial round of consultations with local stakeholders to update the baseline and confirm the approach to establish a Participatory Community-based Monitoring System																																				

Activities	Initial Work Plan up to Q3 of FY2024												MTR Recommended Work Plan from Q4 of FY2024																			
	Project Year 1				Project Year 2				Project Year 3				Project Year 4				Project Year 5				EXTN Year 1				EXTN Year 2							
	CY2022			CY2023			CY2024			CY2025			CY2026			CY2027			CY2028			CY2029										
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.3.2 Establish regular patrolling and monitoring teams in targeted communities, involving local youth where possible																																
3.3.3 Provide training to the teams (coordinated with Output 3.1 above) for each landscape																																
3.3.4 Provide site-specific Community-Based Monitoring Equipment																																
3.3.5 Develop a financial incentive program for community volunteers																																
3.3.6 Establish a community based open data source through supporting the development of bio-cultural heritage interpretation centres																																
3.3.7 Develop and review the effectiveness of data and photo sharing from the community teams (including use of mobile apps linked to the database in Output 1.2)																																
3.3.8 Support community volunteers to conduct small wild cat, prey and other wildlife monitoring, anti-poaching patrolling, roadkill monitoring, and fire-watching																																

Activities	Initial Work Plan up to Q3 of FY2024												MTR Recommended Work Plan from Q4 of FY2024																		
	Project Year 1				Project Year 2				Project Year 3				Project Year 4				Project Year 5				EXTN Year 1				EXTN Year 2						
	CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029		CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.4.1 Conduct advocacy to facilitate convergence of project goals with government schemes and to resolve issues with local uptake and effectiveness of such schemes																															
3.4.2 Provide sub-grants to support livelihood diversification that are based on the assessment of local needs and well aligned with government priorities																															
3.4.3 Training on better agricultural and livestock management practices for farmers to improve their income (Dudhwa landscape)																															
3.4.4 Coordinate and engage with district development authorities for leveraging government schemes like toilets, homes, solar lights, safe potable water supply, animal husbandry including cattle vaccination & gaushala management, livelihood support, public health, etc (Dudhwa)																															
3.4.5 Ecotourism promotion with interested beneficiaries - exposure visits, training and support for 10 household-led ecotourism initiatives in Katerniaghat on a pilot basis (Dudhwa)																															

Activities		Initial Work Plan up to Q3 of FY2024												MTR Recommended Work Plan from Q4 of FY2024																							
		Project Year 1				Project Year 2				Project Year 3				Project Year 4				Project Year 5				EXTN Year 1				EXTN Year 2											
		CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029		CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029					
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.4.6 Conduct a review of existing community-based ecotourism development in the Pakke-Eaglenest landscape, including planning and institutional support from the government																																					
3.4.7 Build local capacity for community-based ecotourism development (Pakke)																																					
3.4.8 Conduct stakeholder consultations to review existing traditional practices and constraints, determine locations, participants (with full GESI considerations) and crop selections to demonstrate; compile implementation plans for each target location; negotiate community conservation agreements (Pakke)																																					
3.4.9 Provide training and technical support for participating communities in collaboration with agriculture, horticulture departments and other related government agencies (Pakke)																																					
3.4.10 Continuous monitoring and follow up with adaptive response mechanisms through village level volunteers/point persons (Pakke)																																					

Activities	Initial Work Plan up to Q3 of FY2024												MTR Recommended Work Plan from Q4 of FY2024																							
	Project Year 1				Project Year 2				Project Year 3				Project Year 4				Project Year 5				EXTN Year 1				EXTN Year 2											
	CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029		CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.5.1 Confirm the targeted areas and communities impacted by HWC that were identified during the baseline assessment and update the situation assessment for each site																																				
3.5.2 Convene SAFE workshops for two targeted areas in each landscape																																				
3.5.3 Provide project sub-grants to support the implementation of the local HWC plans																																				
3.5.4 Develop and pilot community-based reporting of HWC led by village volunteers and facilitate continuous follow up with adaptive response mechanisms																																				
3.5.5 Facilitate monitoring and reporting of strayed small cats and assist forest dept in rescue operations																																				
3.5.6 Provide systemic support towards improving access to and simplifying government compensation procedures through advocacy, para-legal assistance to affected communities, awareness raising																																				

Activities	Initial Work Plan up to Q3 of FY2024												MTR Recommended Work Plan from Q4 of FY2024																											
	Project Year 1				Project Year 2				Project Year 3				Project Year 4				Project Year 5				EXTN Year 1				EXTN Year 2															
	CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029		CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029									
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
3.5.7 Evaluate the response for each target area and share the lessons learned through project supported knowledge management mechanisms (Output 4.4).																																								
4.1.1 Work with GTF, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and State authorities to approach heads of business and industry, including corporate bodies																																								
4.1.2 Provide technical assistance for the development of a feasibility strategy for a Corporate Sector Conservation Fund/Financial Instrument to be managed by the green business platform																																								
4.1.3 Facilitate the development of a scheme for the generation and disbursement of small community grants																																								
4.1.4 Conduct an advocacy programme to mobilize corporate partnerships and CSR funds, and facilitate the development of business partnerships																																								
4.1.5 Publicize the benefits of the active business partnerships through local, national and international channels																																								
4.1.6 no activity mentioned here.																																								

Activities	Initial Work Plan up to Q3 of FY2024												MTR Recommended Work Plan from Q4 of FY2024																							
	Project Year 1				Project Year 2				Project Year 3				Project Year 4				Project Year 5				EXTN Year 1				EXTN Year 2											
	CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029		CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
4.2.1 Establish a communications Task Force including WWF, UNDP, GTF and other experts to convene communications planning meetings																																				
4.2.2 Conduct national- and landscape-level campaigns towards the conservation of small cats																																				
4.2.3 Develop educational and awareness materials that address the targeted audiences and messaging																																				
4.2.4 Monitor changes in awareness of targeted groups through use of KAP assessments, where appropriate																																				
4.3.1 Conduct consultations with experts and country representatives to identify areas of common concern and possible joint actions for monitoring																																				
4.3.2 Conduct advocacy in India to integrate small wild cats into bilateral agreements for tiger conservation																																				
4.3.3 invite staff from neighbouring PAs in Nepal and Bhutan																																				
4.3.4 facilitate local level transboundary coordination meetings on HWC, poaching and IWT between PA management staff, SSB and local administration leaders																																				

Activities	Initial Work Plan up to Q3 of FY2024												MTR Recommended Work Plan from Q4 of FY2024																							
	Project Year 1				Project Year 2				Project Year 3				Project Year 4				Project Year 5				EXTN Year 1				EXTN Year 2											
	CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029		CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
4.3.5 coordinate with Nepalese Govt /WWF to allow Dudhwa landscape staff to participate in annual TAL stakeholder forums, conduct study visits to Nepal TAL																																				
4.4.1 Develop a project knowledge management plan to ensure that project news and results are shared with project stakeholders																																				
4.4.2 Collaborate with and support small cat interest groups for networking and knowledge-sharing																																				
4.4.3 Develop a project website / regional knowledge platform to share project news, results and information																																				
4.4.4 Share technical reports, news articles and awareness materials arising from project activities with stakeholders at all levels																																				
4.4.5 Develop case studies on key issues relating to landscape conservation for wild cats																																				
4.4.6 Hold annual project meetings for updating and consulting with stakeholders																																				
4.4.7 Project participates in GWP virtual and face-to-face knowledge management events																																				

Activities	Initial Work Plan up to Q3 of FY2024												MTR Recommended Work Plan from Q4 of FY2024																							
	Project Year 1				Project Year 2				Project Year 3				Project Year 4				Project Year 5				EXTN Year 1				EXTN Year 2											
	CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029		CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026		CY2027		CY2028		CY2029					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
4.4.8 Present project results at national/ international conferences																																				
4.4.9 Publish and disseminate the project terminal report																																				
4.5.1 Review and update M&E plan including results framework baselines during project inception phase																																				
4.5.2 Training for project staff, clarification of stakeholder roles and planning processes at the project Inception workshop																																				
4.5.3 Coordinate the development, implementation and monitoring of UNDP-related safeguards assessments, plans and reports, and coordinate safeguards approaches between the two GEF Agencies																																				
4.5.4 Conduct annual review/adaptive management sessions to review M&E data and prepare for each coming year																																				
4.5.5 Periodic and joint monitoring visits to field sites																																				
4.5.6 Conduct Mid Term Review and Terminal Evaluation in line with UNDP/GEF requirements																																				
4.5.7 Project Manager to oversee implementation of the Gender Action Plan																																				

		Initial Work Plan up to Q3 of FY2024												MTR Recommended Work Plan from Q4 of FY2024																			
Activities			Project Year 1				Project Year 2				Project Year 3				Project Year 4				Project Year 5				EXTN Year 1				EXTN Year 2						
	CY2022		CY2023				CY2024				CY2025				CY2026				CY2027				CY2028				CY2029						
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
4.5.8 Gender Expert to advise on implementation and monitoring of the Gender Action Plan, train project management staff																																	
4.5.9 Project Manager to develop the protocol for collecting detailed gender information/data																																	

Annex 6. MTR Field Mission Itinerary

Itinerary for Pakke-Nameri-Eagle Nest landscape

Date	Particulars
15.10.2024	Meeting with UNDP Team at UN House
16.10.2024	Arrival at Itanagar (14:10), Arunachal Pradesh Meeting with the HoFF and the CWLW, Arunachal Pradesh Travel to Sejusha (Pakke),
17.10.2024	Meeting with the Field Director, Pakke Tiger Reserve, DFO, Pakke Tiger Reserve, RFOs, Pakke Tiger Reserve Meeting with Community representatives
18.10.2024	Meeting with DFO Eagle Nest WLS, RFOs, Eagle Nest WLS and Community representatives,
19.10.2024	Travel to Guwahati (3.45 hrs) Leave to Delhi by 18:50 (Air India Express) flight

Itinerary for Dudhwa-Katerniaghat landscape Field Visit

Date	Particulars
21.10.2024	Meeting with MoEFCC Officials (ADG-WL, IG-WL), UNDP and GTF
22.10.2024	Arrival at Lucknow (08:55) Meeting with the HoFF and the CWLW, Uttar Pradesh Travel to Dudhwa Tiger Reserve (Palia Kalan),
23.10.2024	Meeting with the Field Director, Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, DFOs, Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, RFOs, Dudhwa Tiger Reserve Travel to Katerniaghat WLS
24.10.2024	Meeting with the DFO Katerniaghat WLS, RFOs, Katerniaghat WLS NGOs/CSOs and Community Representatives, Travel Back to Lucknow
25.10.2024	Returning to New Delhi (Via Morning Flight), Wrap-up meeting with at UN House.

Annex 7. List of Persons Interviewed

UNDP, New Delhi: 17th September; 15th, 18th and 25th October 2024

Name	Designation	Gender
Mr. Ashish Chaturvedi	Head ACE Unit.	M
Dr. Ruchi Pant	Programme Manager-Climate Change, Energy, Biodiversity and Resilience	F
Mr. Subrato Paul	Programme Manager – GEF projects in NRM Team	M
Mr. Jishu Chakraborty	National Livelihoods Officer, Action for Climate and Environment	M
Ms. Anusha Sharma	Head, PMSU, UNDP	F
Ms. Pratha Garkoti	Technical Consultant - Gender and Programme	F

Pakke-Eagle Nest Landscape, Arunachal Pradesh: 16th -17th October 2024

Name	Designation	Gender
Mr. N. Tam	Chief Wildlife Warden, Arunachal Pradesh	M
Mr. Tazum Yomcha	Research Officer, Office of the Chief Wildlife Warden, Arunachal Pradesh	M
Mr. Satyaprakash	Field Director, Pakke Tiger Reserve	M
Mr. Chandan Ri	Field Biologist, Pakke Tiger Reserve	M

Wildlife Institute of India-SACON: 18th October

Name	Designation	Gender
Dr. Shomita Mukherjee	Principal Scientist	M

Dudhwa-Katerniaghat Landscape, Uttar Pradesh: 22nd -23rd October

Name	Designation	Gender
Mr. Sanjay Srivastava	Chief Wildlife Warden, Uttar Pradesh	M
Mr. Lalit Kumar Verma	Field director, Dudhwa Tiger Reserve and APCCF, Project Tiger	M
Mr. Sunil Choudhary	APCCF, Forest Corporation, Uttar Pradesh	M
Mr. Shiva Shankar	DFO, Katerniaghat WLS	M

Global Tiger Forum (GTF), New Delhi – 21st, 25th and 29th October 2024

Name	Designation	Gender
Dr. Rajesh Gopal	Director General, GTF and Project Manager	M
Mr. Mohnish Kapoor	Head-Programme and Partnerships, GTF	M
Ms. Shreyashi Roy	Project Associate, GTF	F
Mr. Arun Kumar	Sr. Coordinator, GTF	M
Ms. Arundhati Mohanti (Ex)	National Project Office	F

Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), New Delhi, 25th October 2024

Name	Designation	Gender
Mr. Raghu Prasad	Inspector General of Forests (Wildlife), MoEFCC	M
Mr. Sunil Sharma	Joint Director (Wildlife), MoEFCC	M

NGOs and CSOs

Date	Name	Designation	Gender
17.10.2024	Mr. Takum Nabum	Ghora Abhay Society	M
17.10.2024	Dr. Anupam Sarmah	Team Leader, Brahmaputra Landscape, WWF-India, Tezpur	M
17.10.2024	Mr. Aniruddha Dhamorikar	WWF-India, Tezpur	M
21.10.2024	Dr. Yash Veer Bhatnagar	Country Representative, IUCN	M
22.10.2024	Dr. Dipankar Ghosh	Senior Director, Biodiversity, WWF-India	M
22.10.2024	Dr. Mudit Gupta	Landscape Coordinator, WWF-India	M
25.10.2024	Mr. Dabeer Hasan	Senior Project Officer, WWF India	M

Beneficiaries

Date	Name	Designation	Gender
17.10.2024	Sejusha Village Community		2 F 6 M
23.10.2024	Norah and Azamgarh villages community		7 F 35 M

Annex 8. List of documents reviewed

Items#	Documents
1	PIF
2	UNDP Initiation Plan
3	Final Revised UNDP Project Document for CEO Endorsement
4	UNDP Environmental and Social Screening results
5	Progress reports (quarterly, semi-annual, or annual) with associated project work plans and financial reports
6	Project Inception Report
7	All Project Implementation Reports (PIRs)
8	Audit reports, if available
9	Relevant GEF tracking tools
10	Oversight mission reports
11	Minutes of Project Board meetings
12	Maps of location sites, as available
13	Other management related documents: adaptive management reports, management memos, etc.
14	Electronic copies of project outputs – newsletters, booklets, manuals, technical reports, articles, etc.
15	Summary list of formal meetings, workshops, etc. held, with date, location, topic, and number of participants
16	Any available information on relevant environmental monitoring data (species indicators, etc.), beyond what is available on indicators in logframe in PIRs
17	Any relevant socio-economic monitoring data, such as average incomes / employment levels of stakeholders in the target area, change in revenue related to project activities
18	Actual expenditures by project outcome, including management costs, and including documentation of any significant budget revisions
19	List of contracts and procurement items over ~\$5,000 USD
20	Co-financing table with expected and actual totals broken out by cash and in-kind, and by source, if available
21	Data on project website activity if available – e.g. number of unique visitors per month, number of page views, etc. over relevant time period
22	UNDP country/countries programme document(s)

Annex 9. UNEG Code of Conduct Forms

Pledge of Ethical Conduct in Evaluation

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.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

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

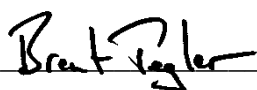
Name of Consultant: **Brent Tegler**

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): Mid-Term Review of Strengthening conservation and resilience of globally significant wild cat landscapes through a focus on small cat and leopard conservation

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

Signed at **Fergus, Canada** (Place) on **27th September, 2024** (Date)

Signature: _____



Pledge of Ethical Conduct in Evaluation

Evaluators/Consultants:

10. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. 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.
16. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.
17. Must ensure that independence of judgement is maintained and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.
18. Must confirm that they have not been involved in designing, executing or advising on the project being evaluated.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

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

Name of Consultant: **Diwakar Sharma**

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): Mid-Term Review of Strengthening conservation and resilience of globally significant wild cat landscapes through a focus on small cat and leopard conservation

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

Signed at **New Delhi, India** (Place) on **27th September, 2024** Date)

Signature: _____

Annex 10. Signed MTR final report clearance form

MTR Report Clearance Form

Mid-Term Review Report for:

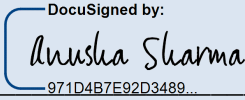
Strengthening conservation and resilience of globally significant wild cat landscapes through a focus on small cat and leopard conservation India – UNDP GEF PIMS # 6355

Reviewed and Cleared By:

Commissioning Unit (M&E Focal Point)

Anusha Sharma

Name: _____


Signature:  _____
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Date: 11-Dec-2024

Regional Technical Advisor (Nature, Climate and Energy)

Tashi Dorji

Name: _____

Signature:  _____
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Date: 12-Dec-2024

Annex 11. Audit Trail for Comments Received on Draft MTR Report

Annexed in a separate file