

Darwin Initiative Main & Extra Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the "Project Reporting Information Note":
(<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources/learning-and-evidence/>)

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 20 pages** in length, excluding annexes)

Submission Deadline: 30th April 2026

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Darwin Initiative Project Information

Scheme (Main or Extra)	Main
Project reference	30-005
Project title	Protection to Community Engagement: Managing Nepal's youngest transborder National Park
Country/ies	Nepal
Lead Organisation	Zoological society of London
Project partner(s)	Environment and Rural Development Centre (ENRUDEC), National Trust for Nature Conservation Nepal (NTNC), Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC, Government of Nepal) and Banke National Park
Darwin Initiative grant value	£ 547,180.00
Start/end dates of project	01 July 2023 - 31 March 2027
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2025 – Mar 2026) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	April 2025- March 2026
Project Leader name	Dr Bhagawan Raj Dahal
Project website / blog / social media	
Report author(s) and date	Maheshwor Basnet (ZSL), Pradip Sedhain (ZSL), Asmita Pandey (ZSL), Shyam Kumar Thapa (ZSL), Manish Ghimire (ENRUDEC), Ajit Tumbahangphe (NTNC)

1. Project summary

Banke National Park (BaNP) was established in 2010, providing formal protection to local flora and fauna for the first time. The park was created to aid tiger recovery, and tiger numbers have increased from 0 to 25 (*Annex 4.1.2a*). Similarly, prey species density has increased from 10.27 animals/km² in 2013, to 32.6 in 2022 (*Annex 4.1.2b*). There are clear similarities between Parsa NP and Banke NP. Parsa's tigers increased nearly six-fold from 2013 to 2022, and prey densities reached 75.1 animals/km² in 2022 from 25.32 in 2013 (*Annex 4.1.2c*). However, a 2019 ecological carrying capacity study in Chitwan and Parsa national parks shows that estimated tiger densities are still much lower than potential densities (*Annex 4.1.2d*), showing the park can hold more tigers if prey density is increased. The tiger carrying capacity depends primarily on prey availability, and regular habitat management is required to increase prey numbers.

However, the growing human population in the buffer zones surrounding BaNP has led to mounting pressure on both park and buffer zone resources. As communities expand, the demand for natural resources such as fuelwood, fodder, and grazing land continues to rise escalating Human wildlife Conflict (HWC). At the same time, the resurgence of wildlife populations, particularly large carnivores like tigers, further strains the delicate balance between human needs and ecological integrity. This dual growth of

human and wildlife populations has resulted in increased competition for space and resources. It affects

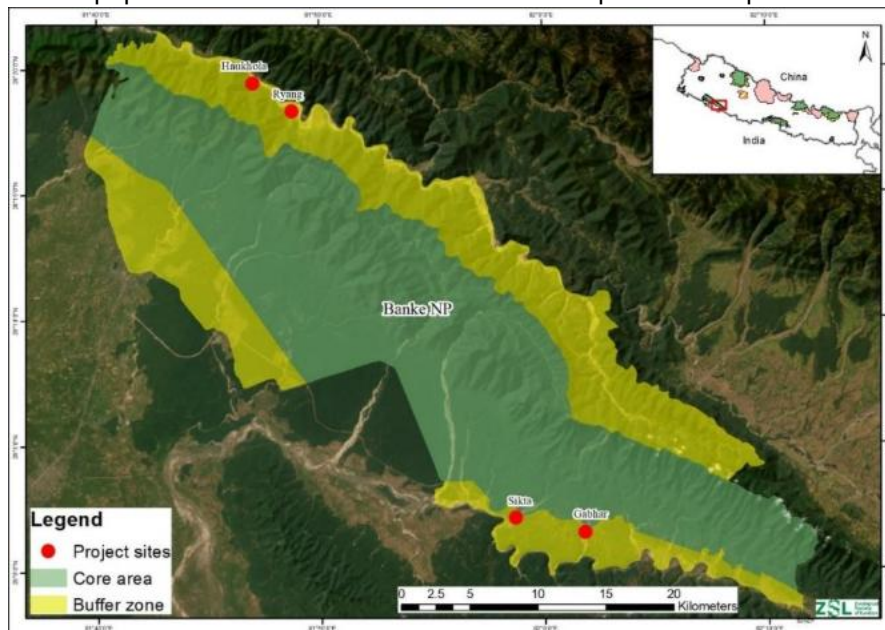


Figure 1: Map showing project sites in Banke National Park and Buffer Zone area

both people and wildlife: communities face escalating human-wildlife conflict, while wildlife experiences greater habitat encroachment and resource depletion. The situation presents a significant challenge, but also a potential opportunity. If managed strategically, with integrated planning and community-based conservation approaches, this shared landscape can support both sustainable livelihoods and thriving ecosystems. To this end, the project is working to strengthen the conservation status of tigers and their prey in BaNP, while simultaneously addressing the socio-economic needs of communities in two high-priority buffer zone areas. Key strategies include improving habitat management to boost prey densities, regular monitoring of tiger, reducing the incidence and impact of HWC, building conservation awareness, and encouraging community stewardship. In parallel, the project is supporting the development of alternative livelihoods such as nature-based tourism to reduce dependency on natural resources and increase economic resilience within buffer zone communities.

2. Project stakeholders/partners

The project is delivered through close collaboration between ZSL Nepal, DNPWC, Banke National Park, buffer zone institutions, and local government bodies, with each partner contributing in a coordinated and complementary way. DNPWC and BaNP provide overall technical leadership on protected area management, habitat restoration, fire control, and HWC response, working closely with field teams through the Project Coordination Committee (PCC) and Project Management Unit (PMU) to guide adaptive decision-making (*Annex 4.2.1, 4.12.1, 4.14.1*). At the community level, Buffer Zone User Committees, Community Forest User Groups, and Community-Based Anti-Poaching Units remain central to implementation and local ownership (*Act 4.7, 4.8*).

Coordination has become more structured over the year, with monthly meetings with implementing partners to review progress and align activities, alongside bi-monthly internal project team meetings to strengthen planning and problem-solving (*Annex 4.4.2*). Regular engagement with community banking groups and buffer zone institutions ensures continuous feedback from communities to park management. Joint review sessions, including the October 2025 workshop and the multi-stakeholder field visit in late 2025, provided space to reflect on progress and adjust implementation priorities (*Annex 4.3.1*).

Local governments and community leaders remain actively engaged in planning and monitoring, supporting alignment with local priorities. ENRUDEC continues to focus on community engagement and livelihood support, while NTNC leads conservation delivery within BaNP, including biodiversity monitoring and habitat management. Overall, the partnership has become more cohesive, adaptive, and grounded in shared responsibility for conservation and community wellbeing.

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Output 1 Livelihoods of 170 households in the project sites are improved (directly) through providing access to income strengthening opportunities, underpinned by support for mainstreaming nature-based tourism and strengthening of operation plans for buffer zone forests.

Output 1 focuses on tracking community bank progress through quarterly meeting with its members. In Year 3, project community people were trained on agro forestry training and provided with fruits and fodder seedlings to promote agro forestry. Similarly, tourism stakeholders meeting like previous year were also completed to promote eco-tourism at Banke National Park.

Activity 1.1-Set up two community banks within the project sites:

A total of 24 monthly meetings (12 per site) were held by the community bank members from April 2025 to March 2026 (*Annex 4.5.1*). Fulbari Jibikoparjan Samuha of Hattidamar-Ghuiyabari held meetings every 10th day of the Nepali month, engaging 699 participants, 100 % female and 91 % from disadvantaged groups. Milijuli Baikalpik Aayearjan Samuha of Rapti BZUC met every 3rd day of Nepali month, with 354 participants, 86 % female and 58 % from marginalised backgrounds. These meetings focused on group functioning, monthly savings, loan disbursement, progress sharing, and decision-making. They also strengthened governance, leadership, loan monitoring, and issue resolution within the groups. Of total members of CB, 82 members (71% of total members) have taken loan to perform locally appropriate livelihood activities, such as Goat rearing (67%), Buffalo farming (8%), initiate/expand small business (7%), Poultry farming (7%), Pig farming (6%) and agriculture (5%). This Year further 22 members were added in these two community banks (Fulbari:20, Milijuli:2, all female and 17 from indigenous and disadvantaged groups) make a total of 116 community members (Fulbari; 77 and Milijuli; 39), 95% female and 77% indigenous and disadvantaged groups.

Similar, both Community Banks were completed financial auditing of previous year with registered auditors to track the financial status of community banks (*Annex 4.5.3*). As of March 2026, Fulbari ALG have collected NPR 167,440 (£855) and Milijuli NPR 93,600 (£478). As of Year 3, the groups collectively hold NPR 2,103,520 (£10,740), reflecting a 14% increase over the project's total seed funding (18% for Fulbari, 10% for Milijuli) (*Source: Community bank record of ALG*). Additionally, institutional support such as, index file (2), Scale (1), Pen (2 packet), Stamp pad (1), Glue stick (6), Minute Register (2), Plain Register (2), Credit Register (2) and Saving Register (2) were provided to both CB (*Annex 4.5.2*).

Activity 1.4 - Establish education fund within two higher secondary schools to support wildlife victim and/or other vulnerable families for education:

With the primary objective of supporting children from the most vulnerable households affected by human-wildlife conflict (HWC), the project established an education fund at a Shree Nepal Rastriya Secondary School, Kalimati Rural Municipality-7, Ghuiyabari, Salyan in Hattidamar-Ghuiyabari BZUC, BaNP (*Annex 4.6.1, 4.6.3*). Later, the education fund mobilization guideline was approved by the School Management committee on 1 June 2025 (*Annex 4.6.1*). On 4 June 2025 education fund of £2655.07¹ (NPR 520,000) was handed over to Shree Nepal Rastriya Secondary School of Kalimati Rural Municipality-7, Ghuiyabari, Salyan having total 361 students (50 % female and 61 % indigenous and disadvantaged groups) (*Annex 4.6.2*). According to the approved fund mobilization guideline, only the interest generated from the fund may be used to provide scholarships for students or children from households impacted by human-wildlife conflict. These scholarships will be useful to cover essential educational expenses such as school fees, books, uniforms, and other necessary supplies.

Similarly, Shree Kusumeshwor Secondary School, located in Rapti Sonari Rural Municipality-1, Banke under Rapti BZUC, where the education fund was established in Year 2, has initiated the scholarship distribution process adhering to the timeline as mentioned in endorsed education fund mobilization guideline. Accordingly, the school has issued a 15-day public notice on the same date to invite applications (*Annex 4.6.4*) for a new academic session that begins from late April 2026. We are excited to see students benefitting from such initiative as this is the first kind of intervention of ZSL Nepal.

Activity 1.5 - Provide ecotourism support and facilitate tourism stakeholders to promote Banke NP as a tourist destination:

The Ecotourism Promotion Program was organized on 21 December 2025 to promote sustainable tourism of Banke National Park with active participation of diverse stakeholders. The program was successfully completed with engagement of park officials, local communities, tourism entrepreneurs, media representatives, and visiting guests from India through interaction sessions, awareness activities, cultural performances, and a safari showcasing the park's rich wildlife and ecotourism potential. Total 75 individuals including 40 visiting guests from India were participated in promotional event organized at Nepalgunj further to strengthened cross-border tourism promotion and explore the potential collaboration for tourism promotion (*Annex 4.7.1, 4.7.2*).

Activity 1.7- Promote agro forestry within the project sites:

To promote sustainable land use and reduce pressure on forest resources, two training events (one in each site) were conducted at project sites i.e. 31 August 2025 at Rapti BZUC and 2 September 2025 at

¹ £1=NPR 195.851

Hattidamar-Ghuiyabari BZUC. Total of 64 participants were participated in two training events in which 40 % were female participants and 45 % belonged to indigenous and disadvantaged group (*Annex 4.8.1-4.8.3*). The training employed interactive lectures, practical demonstrations, group discussions, and exercises to enhance participants' skills in agroforestry, process of stall feeding, and role of agro forestry on biodiversity conservation.

Analysis of the pre- and post-test results showed a significant improvement in participants' knowledge. In the training conducted at Rapti BZUC, the average knowledge score increased by 33%, rising from 13% in the pre-test to 46% in the post-test. Similarly, in the training conducted at Hattidamar-Ghuiyabari BZUC, the average knowledge score increased by 30%, improving from 18% in the pre-test to 48% in the post-test (*Annex 6*). Further, to promote agroforestry practices 1291 fodder and 820 fruits seedlings were distributed among the 243 HHs in project BZUC of BaNP (*Annex 4.9.1, 4.9.2*). Out of 243 HHs who received support from the project 44 % are female and 45 % are indigenous and disadvantaged group. This initiative aims to strengthen agroforestry practices and enhance fodder availability within premises.

Output 2: Improved management of grasslands and wetlands, and control of forest fires in priority areas within the core of the park, underpinned by strengthened understanding of the habitat requirements of key species (sambar deer, spotted deer) results in an increase in tiger prey species density.

Activity 2.1 Conduct tiger and prey hotspot monitoring in priority areas within Banke NP.

Under this activity, camera deployment on strategic priority areas, procured batteries for camera trap at strategic location and provided financial support for National Tiger survey 2026 (*Annex 4.11*). For the purpose of monitoring prey base in BaNP, 74 (Pathera and Cuddeback) cameras were at placed at water holes (natural-15, artificial-35), animals trail (10) and grasslands (13) to observe seasonal and spatial pattern of wildlife utilization of habitat in BaNP (*Annex 4.10.1, 4.10.2*). Those cameras were deployed from April 2025 to June 2025 for an average of 58 days. During the study it was found that wild animals like Rhesus Monkeys, Spotted Deer, Barking Deer, Sambar Deer, Tiger, Four-Horned Antelope and Wild Board spent more time in waterholes during dry season for hydration (*Annex 4.10.3*). Similarly, during camera trap, it was observed that grassland was mostly used by deer and porcupine. For the purpose of monitoring, 700 pairs of batteries (600 pairs Double A batteries and 100 pairs 1.5V Alkaline batteries) and 25 Pieces of 32 GB SD card required for camera deployment in strategic locations were procured under this activity.

In addition, as part of National Tiger and Prey-base Survey, 412 grids of 2x2 km have been surveyed with a pair of camera traps in each grid and 22 grids of 15x15 km have been surveyed with transect walk for occupancy analysis. Prior to the camera trap and occupancy survey, a two-day long training from 24 to 25 December 2025 (*Annex 4.11*) for 45 field technicians (6 female, 8 students) was conducted in Thakurdwara Bardia. During this reporting period, camera trap data and occupancy survey data is being sorted, cleaned, and categorized for further analysis. Further, prey-base survey and analysis of data is planned to commence from April 2026, and the government of Nepal has planned to publish the final report on 29 July 2026.

Activity 2.5 - Support the management of 15 ha grassland within the core of Banke NP

As per the decision of the Program Management Unit (PMU) meeting held on 10 October 2025, grassland management activities were implemented at Chaukaphanta (579811, 3117331) and Obharyphanta (581137, 3113067) within BaNP with project support (*Annex 4.12.1, 4.12.2*). A total of 15 ha of grassland was effectively managed to enhance habitat quality and maintain ecological integrity. Grassland management was carried out using both manual and mechanized approaches, including grass and bush cutting, controlled burning, and uprooting of invasive and woody vegetation. Such intervention included the management of 9 ha of 1.5 m tall grassland, 3 ha of tall grass patches, and the clearance of bushes and shrubs over an additional 3 ha. The objective of this activity was to maintain grass density and ensuring a mosaic of habitats that support diverse wildlife.

Activity 2.6 - Provide equipment for grassland, wetland and fire line maintenance to Banke:

In Year 3 as well, the project ensured continued operation of tractor that was handed over to BaNP in Year 1, a total of 2,300 litres of fuel was provided to support regular tractor operations from April 2025 to February 2026 (*Annex 4.13.1, 4.13.2*). This continuous operational support played a vital role in maintaining patrolling and surveillance routes, clearing invasive vegetation and species, transporting essential materials, assisting in the installation of signboards, and enabling rapid response during emergency situations. As per the park record, approximately 30 hectares of grassland were effectively managed through tractor, while the maintenance of artificial ponds further enhanced habitat quality and improved habitat conditions for wildlife.

Activity 2.7-Provide support to improve understanding of the dynamics of forest fire and manage it within the park:

In Year 3, fire line management activities were implemented to strengthen the capacity of BaNP in preventing and controlling forest fires. Regular maintenance of fire lines is essential for effective implementation of biodiversity conservation efforts and supports for tourism promotion by providing safe route for jungle safari within the core area of BaNP. Fireline are also important for routine patrols, particularly vulnerable areas to illegal poaching activities that threatens the wildlife. Therefore, as per the decision of the PMU meeting held on 10 October 2025, 11 Km long fire line was maintained at Khairi Fireline to Khairi Machan (No. 4) section, (starting 587368, 31112190 to ending 590212, 3105277) (*Annex 4.14.1*) which secured 150 hectares of forest land.

Activity 2.8 - Conduct exposure visit to Manas NP (India) for park staff to learn best practices in habitat management.

From 6-12 May 2025, ZSL Nepal organized a transboundary cross-learning exposure visit to Kaziranga and Manas National Parks in India. The visit was successfully completed with the participation of nine members from Nepal, including high-level officials such as the Joint Secretary from the Ministry of Forests and Environment and representatives from the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC). The objectives of the visit were to strengthen cross-border conservation collaboration and facilitate the exchange of best practices in protected area management system. Key learnings from the visit highlighted the importance of species-specific habitat management, hydrology-sensitive planning, community engagement, ethical tourism, and transboundary cooperation. The integration of indigenous communities and conservation-linked livelihood approaches was identified as an effective model for enhancing ecological resilience and promoting community stewardship in Nepal (*Annex 4.15.1, 4.15.2*).

Output 3: Reduced impact of human-wildlife conflict (HWC) in the project sites through investments in livestock and crop safeguarding, underpinned by improved measures for the safety of people.

Activity 3.3 - Support 4000 non-palatable crops to community to deter HWC incidents:

A total of 554 non-palatable crop seedlings/seeds were distributed to community households in human-wildlife conflict prone areas to deter wildlife intrusion into farmlands in Hattidamar Ghuiyabari BZUC, Rapti BZUC. Seedlings such as Lemon, mango and Litchi were distributed to 243 HHs (43% women HHs, 55 % indigenous and marginalised group) (*Annex 4.16.1*). This intervention not only contributes to minimizing economic losses for local farmers but also promotes alternative income generation. Ultimately, the initiative supports coexistence by lowering conflict risks while strengthening community resilience and sustainable land use practices.

Activity 3.4 - Support stall feeding through grass distribution of 3000 grass and training:

Two training events were conducted at Rapti BZUC on 31 August 2025 and at Hattidamar-Ghuiyabari BZUC on 2 September 2025 (*Annex 4.17.1, 4.17.2*). A Total of 64 participants were participated in 2 training events, 41 % were female and 47 % belonged to indigenous and disadvantaged group participated in the trainings. This kind of training contribute to the long-term strategies aimed at reducing the dependency on forest resources and minimizing the human wildlife encounter. Following the training activity, total of 1290 fodder seedlings were distributed to promote stall feeding practices in buffer zone communities (*Annex 4.17.2*).

Output 4 Relationships between the park management and local people is improved through meaningful outreach programmes, underpinned by increased participation of two focal communities in conservation dialogues, and evidenced by community participation in intelligence gathering and community-based anti-poaching patrols.

Activity 4.1 - Produce and broadcast a short documentary on the biodiversity, cultural uniqueness and problems of Banke National Park and adjoining buffer zones:

A short documentary produced during Year 1 of the project was broadcasted to promote tourism in BaNP and its buffer zone communities, an agreement was extended with Youth Media Hub, a local media outlet, this year as well, to broadcast the documentary once a week from July 2025 to December 2025 (*Annex 4.18.1*). During this period, total 9 minute 30 second length short documentary has been broadcasted 24 times through Avenues Television, National television. The documentary highlights the area's rich biodiversity, cultural heritage, and the conservation challenges faced, aiming to raise awareness and promote responsible tourism.

In addition to television broadcasts, the documentary was also shared across digital platforms such as Facebook page of Avenues Television and Youth Media Hub. It was featured on the Facebook page of Avenues Television [REDACTED] a national media outlet, where it gained 16K views. On YouTube [REDACTED] it received 270 views via the Avenues Khabar channel and as per the Television Rating Point (TRP) this documentary has reached of more than 6 Lakh viewers (*Annex 4.18.2*). BaNP is increasingly emerging as a promising eco-tourism destination, supporting local livelihoods while reinforcing conservation outcomes by creating incentives for the protection of

biodiversity. In FY 2082/83, total 1,030 tourist (domestic; 902 and international 128) visited BaNP (Source: BaNP, *Annex 4.18.3*).

Activity 4.2 - Produce and install information boards, develop and distribute mounted posters to enable awareness campaign to reach additional buffer zone communities in Banke NP:

A total of four information/sign boards were installed along the East–West Highway passing through BaNP. The content and placement of these boards were carefully selected to ensure high visibility, enabling both travellers and local communities to easily notice and understand the messages. These boards provide critical information on wildlife movement zones, safety precautions, and responsible driving behaviour, encouraging rider/driver to reduce speed and remain vigilant. This initiative contributes to minimizing accidental wildlife encounters, reducing risks to human life, and promoting safer coexistence between humans and wildlife in the highway (*Annex 4.19.1*). In addition, the conservation message was also aired via a three local FM radio stations across Banke, Dang, and Surkhet, specifically targeting buffer zone communities of BaNP. In total, the radio jingle was broadcasted 492 times, reaching an estimated audience of over 200,000 listeners. This initiative significantly contributed to enhancing awareness and reinforcing conservation messages among local communities (*Annex 4.19.2*).

Further, a mounted posters featuring 3 species of birds and 7 large mammal species that are found in BaNP, were distributed among the stakeholders such as the hoteliers, Nepalgunj cycling club, CBAPU, community managed homestays, Nature guide, BZUC, to promote tourism and raise awareness about species conservation (*Annex 4.20.1, 4.20.2, 4.20.3*).

Activity 4.3 - Conduct 4 school programmes, aimed at facilitating behavioural change for kids (3 each in Hattidamar Ghuiyabari BZUC, Rapti BZUC, Rajkot BZUC and other BZUCs):

To foster biodiversity conservation among youth and to build a foundation for long-term community-based conservation, school awareness sessions were carried out at different schools located at buffer zone of BaNP. Before starting the awareness campaign, one day orientation was organised on 6 August 2025 for eco-teachers and a school awareness programme was facilitated by the trained eco-teachers in respective schools. Out of a total of 43 school awareness sessions, 10 were conducted at Shree Nepal Rastriya Secondary School (Kohalpur BZUC), 6 at Shree Janata Secondary School (Dhakeri BZUC), 10 at Shree Janashakti Secondary School (Madhyabindu BZUC), 10 at Shree Deuti Secondary School (Furkesalli–Malai BZUC), and 7 at Shree B.P. Memorial Secondary School (Deurali-Hariyali BZUC). Altogether, 956 students were sensitised, out of which 59% of the participants were girls and 45% belonged to indigenous and disadvantaged groups. By targeting schools as entry points for outreach, these awareness efforts are helping to cultivate a more conservation conscious generation that is better prepared to support sustainable development and natural resource management in the region (*Annex 4.21.1- 4.21.3*).

Activity 4.4 - Conduct 4 community programmes, aimed at facilitating behavioural change for adults. (3 each in Hattidamar Ghuiyabari BZUC, Rapti BZUC, Rajkot BZUC and other BZUCs):

Recognising the importance of change agents in disseminating awareness messages to the community, nine change agents from nine BZUCs of Banke National Park were trained on 6 August 2025. They were subsequently mobilised to implement community awareness programs on human wildlife conflict mitigation and promoting positive behaviour among community members who lived in the fringe area of National Park. In Y3, designated change agents lead of 64 events; Rapti BZUC (8), Hattidamar-Ghuiyabari BZUC (8), Deurali-Hariyali BZUC (8), Dhakeri BZUC (8), Furkesalli Malai BZUC (8), Purandhara BZUC (8) and Kohalpur BZUC (8) across different BZUC of Banke National Park, engaging 2198 local community people, of whom 62% were female and 53% belonged to indigenous and disadvantaged group (*Annex 4.22.1- 4.22.3*).

Activity 4.5 - Engage communities and promote dialogues between them and the park in conservation during national and international conservation days:

Various conservation events such as Global Tiger Day, World Wetland Day, World Pangolin Day were celebrated in active participation of conservation stakeholders and local communities throughout Y3 of project implementation. These events recorded 189 participants (27% female) from community member (40% participants), Nepal army, conservation partners, stakeholders and park authority. Global Tiger Day (29 July 2025) was celebrated by organizing an art competition among buffer zone school students, centered on the theme of human-tiger coexistence, followed by a stakeholder interaction session (*Annex 4.23.1*). Total 73 participants from BaNP office, conservation partners, BZUC, CBAPU, Nature guide, teachers and students from different school were participated during program. The activity aimed to raise awareness from an early age and foster positive attitudes toward wildlife conservation among students and conservation stakeholders.

World Wetlands Day (2 February 2026), the program was featured with the release of five Gharial crocodiles in Rapti river passes through Rapti Sonari-1, Kusum, Banke buffer zone of BaNP (*Annex 4.23.2*). Total 48 individuals representing different organization were participated. The celebration

emphasized the importance of river species conservation and sustainable water resource management. Similarly, World Pangolin Day (21 February 2026) was marked through a stakeholder interaction program (*Annex 4.23.3*). Total 68 participants from BaNP office, conservation partners, BZUC, CBAPU, Nature guide were participated during program. During the session, a technical presentation was delivered focusing on the global status of pangolins, their ecological importance, key conservation challenges, and issues related to illegal trade, to raise awareness about the conservation of pangolins and other small mammals.

Activity 4.6 - Conduct exposure visits for community members to promote the uptake of best practices in HWC mitigation, livelihood improvement and forest management:

Exposure visits for community members are a crucial cross learning approach for promoting the adoption of best practices in HWC mitigation and sustainable livelihoods. These visits enable participants to observe successful approach firsthand, gain practical knowledge, and build the confidence needed to replicate similar initiatives within their own communities. Thus, a three-day exposure visit was conducted from 4-6 December 2025 in the buffer zone areas of Shuklaphanta and Bardiya National Park. A total of 31 participants took part in the visit, of whom 71% were female and 69% belonged to Indigenous and disadvantaged groups, representing Milijuli ALG of Rapti BZUC and Fulbari ALG of Hattidamar Ghuiyabari BZUC (*Annex 4.24.1, 4.24.2*). The initiative served as a well-structured cross learning platform aimed at strengthening knowledge exchange, motivation, and networking among participants. During the cross-learning visit, participants observed successful livelihood and conservation practices through site visits to Shree Ram Fish and Goat Farming and Trishakti Unnat Dairy Farm in Shuklaphanta National Park, as well as Satgharuwa ALG in Bardia National Park. Different livelihood interventions such as vegetable farming as well as pig farming where visiting team interacted directly with group members to learn about enterprise management, income generation, and cooperative functioning.

Activity 4.7 - Strengthen Community Based Anti-Poaching Units and support mobilisation:s

Community-Based Anti-Poaching (CBAPU) units serve as volunteering platform of wildlife conservation, fostering local engagement and ownership in conservation efforts while mitigating poaching threats to biodiversity. Hence, a training in relation to anti-poaching activities was organized for 29 June and 20 November 2025 to 13 CBAPU members (54% female, 69% belonged to Indigenous and disadvantaged groups) of Rapti BZUC and 18 CBAPU members of Hattidamar-Ghuiyabari BZUC (28% female and 72% belonged to Indigenous and disadvantaged groups) respectively (*Annex 4.25.1, 4.25.2*). The trainings session was focused on strengthening the role of CBAPUs in conservation, reporting illegal activities, and conducting awareness activities, while also enhancing coordination and collaboration with park authorities to improve overall effectiveness in controlling poaching and illegal wildlife trade.

Analysis of the pre and post-test results showed a significant improvement in participants knowledge. In the training conducted at Rapti BZUC, the average knowledge score increased by 56%, rising from 27% in the pre-test to 83% in the post-test. Similarly, in the training conducted at Hattidamar-Ghuiyabari BZUC, the average knowledge score increased by 50%, improving from 17% in the pre-test to 67% in the post-test (*Annex 6*).

Activity 4.8 - Support CBAPUs to monitor illegal activities within buffer zone forests:

For effectively address illegal activities in buffer zone areas, maintaining the active engagement of CBAPUs is essential. In Year 3, the project supported CBAPUs of both BZUC in conducting regular patrols within the buffer zone and facilitated meetings for information sharing to combat illegal activities. A total of 15 patrols, 4 patrols in Hattidamar-Ghuiyabari BZUC and 11 patrols in Rapti BZUC from April 2025 to February 2026 (*Annex 4.26.1, 4.26.2*). The CBAPU records the number of members in patrolling, GPS coordinates if they see animals (directly or indirectly) or any illegal activity. In an average, the team carried out 5.13 km long foot-based patrolling per patrolling engaging 148 CBAPU members (78% female and 82% belonged to Indigenous and disadvantaged groups (*Annex 4.26.3*).

Further to strengthen the coordination between BZUC and CBAPU, the project supported CBAPU meetings that facilitated the interaction between CBAPU and BZUC for planning and flow of information from CBAPU to the stakeholders. A total of eleven such meetings were conducted in between May 2025 to February 2026. A total of 87 CBAPU members attended the meeting, of which 89% were female and 51 % indigenous and disadvantage group (*Annex 4.27.1, 4.27.2*). In addition to this regular monitoring, CBAPU of Hattidamar-Ghuiyabari BZUC conducted three community level awareness programs focusing on HWC mitigation and promoting co-existence 55 participants (67 % female and 89% of the participants belonged to indigenous and disadvantaged group.

Activity 4.9 - Conduct buffer zone forest management trainings in the project sites:

A three-day Buffer Zone Forest management training was conducted at Kalimati R.M.-7, Ryang, Salyan from 29 to 31 May 2025 with participation from the ward chairperson, representatives from Banke National Park, and representatives of six BZCFUGs under Hattidamar-Ghuiyabari BZUC, with the objective to

enhance the knowledge of Buffer zone community forest (BZCF) representatives to manage forest resources, reduce risks of forest fires. Additionally, 1 day refresher training was organised at Rapti Sonari R.M-1, Kusum, Banke on 26 February 2026 for BZCF members under Rapti BZUC. Total 18 participants (56% female and 78% participants belonged to indigenous and disadvantage group) attended the training at Hattidamar-Ghuiyabari BZUC, while 17 participants (18% female and 52% participants belonged to indigenous and disadvantage group) were participated in the refresher training at Rapti BZUC (*Annex 4.28.1, 4.28.2, 4.28.4*). Fire management toolkits such as Helmet, Fireproof gloves, Fire man Axe, Bucket, Spade, Shovel, Pruning saw, Rack, Hammer and Hooks to 12 BZCF (*Annex 4.28.2, 4.28.3*).

The training focused on strengthening forest management practices, highlighting the roles and responsibilities of committee members, and emphasizing the need for effective planning, especially for forest fire management. Sessions included discussions on hazards, vulnerabilities, and disaster risks, along with practical guidance on fire-fighting tools and their operation, and the role of local government in disaster risk reduction and management (*Annex 4.28.5*). Analysis of the pre- and post-test results showed a significant improvement in participants knowledge. In the training conducted at Rapti BZUC, the average knowledge score increased by 57%, rising from 14% in the pre-test to 17% in the post-test. Similarly, in the training conducted at Hattidamar-Ghuiyabari BZUC, the average knowledge score increased by 37%, improving from 17% in the pre-test to 54% in the post-test (*Annex 6*).

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Output 1: Livelihoods of 170 households in the project sites are improved (directly) through providing access to income strengthening opportunities, underpinned by support for mainstreaming nature-based tourism and strengthening of operation plans for buffer zone forests.

Under Output Indicators 1.1.1 and 1.1.3, the project has progressed from a baseline of 0 community banks established and 0 households accessing soft loans to a well-functioning community banking system supporting livelihood activities. Two community banks (CB) i.e., Fulbari Jibikoparjan Samuha and Milijuli Baikalpik Aayearjan Samuha established in Year 1, continue to strengthen governance and financial management practices. In Year 3, a total of 24 monthly meetings (12 per site) were conducted between April 2025 and March 2026 (*Act 1.1, Annex 4.5.1*), with both CBs holding regular meetings to review savings, loan disbursement, loan repayment, loan utilization, and group performance therefore strengthening financial discipline, transparency, and participatory decision-making within the group. In addition, both community banks completed annual financial audits through registered auditors (*Annex 4.5.3*), providing verified evidence of improved financial accountability and strengthening internal governance.

During Year 3, an additional 22 members (Fulbari: 20; Milijuli: 2, all female and 17 belonged to indigenous and disadvantaged group) were enrolled, bringing total membership to 116 (Fulbari: 77; Milijuli: 39), of which 95% are women and 77% are from indigenous and disadvantaged groups, thereby surpassing the target under Indicator 1.1.1. As of Year 3, the groups collectively now hold NPR 2,103,520 (£10,740), reflecting a 14% increase over the project's total seed funding (18% for Fulbari, 10% for Milijuli) (*Source: Community bank record of ALG*). This demonstrates strong uptake of financial services and effective utilization of loans for enterprise development. Furthermore, 71% of members (82 out of 116) accessed soft loans for livelihood activities (Indicator 1.1.3), primarily women (95%) and indigenous and marginalised group (72%), significantly exceeding the target of 35% by Y3. A total of NPR 3,904,000 (£19,934) was disbursed as a loan among these members, primarily for goat farming (67%), followed by buffalo farming (8%), small business development (7%), poultry farming (7%), pig farming (6%), and agriculture (5%) (*Source: Community bank records, Annex 4.5.1*).

Contributing to output 1.3, agroforestry interventions were implemented, including two training events with 64 participants (40% female, 45% from indigenous and disadvantaged groups) (*Act 1.7, Annex 4.8.1-4.8.3*), alongside the distribution of 1,291 fodder seedlings and 820 fruit seedlings to 243 households (*Act 1.7, Annex 4.9.1, 4.9.2*). Similarly, in relation to Indicator 1.4, tourism visitation has increased from a baseline of 271 visitors (Banke National Park, Annual Report 2079/80) to 1030 visitors, already surpassing the target of 365. Continued progress is supported through stakeholder engagement activities, including an Ecotourism Promotion Program conducted in Nepalgunj with 75 participants, including international visitors (*Act 1.5, Annex 4.7.1, 4.7.2*).

Additionally, an education fund was established at Shree Nepal Rastriya Secondary School with an investment of £2655.07 (NPR 520,000) (*Act 1.4, Annex 4.6.1-4.6.3*), aimed to support children from households affected by HWC. Likewise, the education fund established in Year 2 at Shree Kusumeshwor Secondary School (Rapti Sonari Rural Municipality-1, Banke) has initiated the scholarship distribution process. Adhering to the timeline and process as stated in endorsed fund mobilization guideline, School Management Committee has issued a 15-day public notice inviting applications from students affected by HWC (*Annex 4.6.4*). Scholarship distribution is expected to commence in the new academic session

starting late April 2026. This represents a significant milestone as one of the first such targeted interventions implemented by ZSL Nepal, contributing to household resilience and social inclusion.

Progress toward Output 1 is measured through community bank records (membership, savings, loan disbursement, and audits), training attendance, seedling distribution logs, field monitoring reports, tourism records from park authorities, and baseline and follow-up surveys. Overall, the project demonstrates strong progress from baseline across all indicators, with key targets not only achieved but exceeded, particularly in community banking participation and loan utilization.

Output 2. Improved management of grasslands and wetlands, and control of forest fires in priority areas within the core of the park, underpinned by strengthened understanding of the habitat requirements of key species (sambar deer, spotted deer) results in an increase in tiger prey species density.

In the case of Indicator 2.1, significant indication has been achieved towards enhancing the knowledge and control of the essential habitats of the ungulate species. In relation to indicator 2.1.2, the water source use and predator-prey monitoring have been well established and has been actively pursued up to Year 3. 74 camera traps installed in waterholes, animal tracks and grasslands has given a comprehensive view of how different animals use various habitats throughout the seasons (*Act 2.1, Annex 4.6.1*). There are indications that in the dry season, waterholes are important congregation areas with species like sambar deer, spotted deer, barking deer, wild boar and predators like tigers being recorded regularly to drink and other related activity (*Annex 2.6.3*). Trails of animals have always been used to record patterns of movement, and their significance as ecological corridors, and the use of grassland locations by grazing animals like deer and smaller mammals like porcupines (*Act 2.1, Annex 2.6.2*).

Under Indicator 2.1.3, a total of 15 hectares of grassland has been managed during Year 3 (*Act 2.5, Annex 2.8.1, 2.8.2*) with an additional approximately 30 hectares supported through mechanized operations such as tractor use (*Act 2.6, Annex 2.9.1, 2.9.2*). These interventions, implemented in priority locations such as Chauhaphanta and Obharyphanta, have focused on improving forage availability and maintaining appropriate habitat structure for prey species. Cumulatively, project-years 128-hectare grasslands have been managed (Y1: 5 hectares; Y2: 78 hectares; Y3: 45 hectares) which demonstrates that the project has already exceeded its overall target in terms of grassland management. Similarly, with regard to Indicator 2.2, fireline maintenance has been carried out since Y1. In Year 3, an 11 km section from Khairi Fireline to Khairi Machan (No. 4) was maintained (*Act 2.7, Annex 2.10.1*), contributing to cumulative progress of 20.9 km by Y3 (Y1: 3.5 km; Y2: 6.4 km; Y3: 11 km) and surpassing the 15 km target by Year 4 (*Ind 2.2.1*). Such fire line cumulatively secured 628 hectares of forest land (Y1:400ha, Y2:78 ha, Y3:150ha). These fire lines are not only significant in terms of fire prevention and control but also in enhancing patrolling of the park and better operational access by the park management. Further, fire response capacity has been strengthened through training of 33 frontline staff and provision of necessary tools (*Ind 2.2.2*). Progress towards Indicator 2.3, which targets a 10% increase in prey species density, will be formally assessed through the National Tiger Survey 2026 (*Act 2.1, Annex 4.11*). While the analysis is ongoing and scheduled for publication on Global Tiger Day, July 29, 2026, preliminary observational data from camera traps indicate increased use of managed habitats and key resource areas. These patterns suggest early positive trends in prey species response.

Indicators under this output are measured through camera trap observations, field surveys, and habitat assessments, ensuring that monitoring is grounded in empirical data. Early findings from these methods indicate that Output 2 is largely on track to achieve its targeted outcomes.

Output 3. Reduced impact of human-wildlife conflict (HWC) in the project sites (total 1112 HHs/5170 people) through investments in livestock and crop safeguarding, underpinned by improved measures for the safety of people

By the end of Year 2, much of the groundwork for Indicator 3.1 had already been put in place, with a total of 125 Predator Proof Corrals (PPCs) constructed across the project sites surpassing the target. Community feedback suggests that it has made a noticeable difference, particularly in reducing livestock losses during night-time when predation risks are highest. For example, one beneficiary, Uma Bhakta Kesh, reported: “*Since the predator-proof corral was built in our village, we have not lost a single animal inside it*” (*Annex 4.3.4a*). This reflects the immediate and practical protection the intervention is providing to households. Such continued use and local appreciation indicate that the project is well positioned to achieve the targeted 20% reduction in livestock depredation.

A similar trend can be observed under Indicator 3.2, where early investments in physical barriers have delivered tangible benefits. By the end of Year 3, 39.83 hectares of agricultural land (Y1:10.83 ha, Y2:29 ha) had been secured through the installation of 2,450 meters of mesh wire fencing (Y1: 650meter, Y2: 1800meter) reaching the indicator 3.2.1. Local leader Dambar Bahadur Pun shared: “*Earlier we used to file 60-80 compensation cases every year, but now there are almost none.*” Similarly, another community member, Jas Bahadur Nepali, noted: “*We are no longer troubled by wild boar and spotted deer like before*”

(Annex 4.3.4a). These fenced areas remain functional, and the communities in these areas report greater confidence in cultivating their land, suggesting that the project is well positioned to achieve the target.

Moreover, the distribution of 255 non-palatable crop seedlings to 243 households has provided an additional layer of protection, while also offering future income opportunities (Act 3.3, Annex 3.1.1). At the same time, stall feeding has been promoted through two training events held in Rapti BZUC and Hattidamar-Ghuiyabari BZUC, with 64 participants (41% female; 47% from indigenous and disadvantaged groups) (Act 3.4, Annex 2.4.1, 2.4.2). Following the training, 1,290 fodder seedlings were distributed to encourage stall feeding practices to reduce forest dependence and lower the likelihood of encounters with wildlife (Act 3.4, Annex 3.2.1, 3.2.2).

Progress against Indicator 3.3, which focuses on reducing human injuries and fatalities, will be measured in Year 4 through the end-line survey. In the meantime, the combined effect of improved livestock protection, secured farmland, and reduced reliance on forest-based activities is already contributing to safer day-to-day practices within communities, suggesting positive movement towards the intended output.

To further reinforce these achievements, additional interventions have been planned under follow-on funding for implementation in Year 4. With most major interventions already in place and functioning, the project is well positioned to consolidate results and demonstrate measurable reductions in human-wildlife conflict by the end of the project period.

Output 4. Relationships between the park management and local people is improved through meaningful outreach programmes, underpinned by increased participation of two focal communities in conservation dialogues, and evidenced by community participation in intelligence gathering and community-based anti-poaching patrols.

In line with Indicator 4.1, the project has made strong progress in expanding its reach through a mix of local engagement and wider media-based communication. Under Indicator 4.1.1, school and community awareness programmes were scaled up significantly during Year 3 as well. A total of 43 school sessions reached 956 students (59% female; 45% from indigenous and disadvantaged groups), while 64 community awareness events engaged 2,198 participants (62% female; 53% from indigenous and disadvantaged groups) achieving the indicator. These figures represent a substantial contribution towards outreach targets and reflect strong participation at the local level (Act 4.3 & 4.4, Annex 4.21.1-4.21.3 & Annex 4.22.1-4.22.3).

Progress in Indicator 4.1.2 is reflected in strengthened information dissemination through the installation of signboards along key highway sections and the distribution of mounted posters to local stakeholders, improving both the visibility and accessibility of conservation messaging (Act 4.2, Annex 4.19.1 & Annex 4.20.1-4.20.3). Beyond direct engagement, the project has also expanded its reach through mass media. A documentary highlighting biodiversity, conservation challenges, and local context was broadcasted across national television and digital platforms, reaching an estimated audience of over 600,000 people (Act 4.1, Annex 4.18.1, 4.18.2). Complementing this, a radio jingle aired across three districts reached an estimated 200,000 listeners, further strengthening outreach to buffer zone communities (Act 4.2, Annex 4.19.2).

Similarly, progress against Indicator 4.2 reflects continued strengthening of CBAPUs established earlier in years. With Indicator 4.2.1, two CBAPUs remain active and operational across the project sites. In Year 3, refresher and targeted training was conducted, with post-training assessments showing notable improvements in knowledge (Act 4.7, Annex 4.25.1, 4.25.2 & Annex 6). Under Indicator 4.2.2, CBAPUs carried out 15 patrols during the reporting period (Act 4.8, Annex 4.26.1-4.26.3, contributing to a cumulative total of 34 patrols (Y1: 6; Y2: 13; Y3: 15), indicating steady progress towards the endline target. Regular coordination has also been maintained through 11 meetings, strengthening information flow between CBAPUs, Buffer Zone User Committees, and park authorities (Act 4.8, Annex 4.27.1, 4.27.2).

Encouraging qualitative progress is also evident in Indicator 4.3, with multiple engagement platforms contributing to gradual shifts in attitudes towards biodiversity conservation such as awareness campaigns (Act 4.2, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4), exposure visits (Act 4.6, Annex 4.24.1, 4.24.2), and participation in conservation events (Act 4.5, Annex 4.23.1-4.23.3).

Additional capacity-building efforts, particularly through buffer zone forest management trainings, have further strengthened community capacity in natural resource management. This training led to measurable improvements in participants' knowledge (Act 4.9, Annex 6). Further, the provision of fire management toolkits to 12 Buffer Zone Community Forests has enhanced local preparedness and capacity for response (Act 4.9, Annex 4.28.2, 4.28.3).

Overall, by the end of Year 3, progress across Indicators 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 reflects a strengthening relationship between communities and park management. Indicators 4.1.3 and 4.3 will be formally measured in Year 4 through the endline survey. However, current levels of participation, engagement, and

feedback from communities suggest positive movement towards achieving these targets, contributing to improved collaboration and a shared sense of responsibility for conservation outcomes.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Although formal assessment of outcome indicators will take place during year four, by the end of year three, significant progress has been made regarding all four output areas, and this demonstrates the ability of the Project to deliver the outcomes it set out to achieve. Output 1 has experienced the addition of new members to both community banks, and as a result, total membership is currently 116 (Fulbari: 77; Milijuli:39) of which approximately 95% are women and 77% from indigenous and marginalised social groups (Sec 3.2; *Ind 1.1.1*). These members have also actively participated in small enterprise income-generating activities whilst 71% of them secured soft loans (95% women, 72% belonging to indigenous and marginalised social groups) totaling NPR 39,04,000 (£19934), primarily to fund goat raising, buffalo raising, chicken raising, pig raising, and developing small businesses in agriculture (Sec 3.1; *Act 1.1 and Sec 3.2; Ind 1.1.3*). As of Year 3, the groups collectively now hold NPR 2,103,520 (£10,740), reflecting a 14% increase over the project's total seed funding (18% for Fulbari, 10% for Milijuli). Skills-based livelihood training and agroforestry interventions reached 243 households, including 64 participants in trainings (40% female; 45% indigenous/disadvantaged), with 1,291 fodder seedlings and 820 fruit seedlings distributed (Sec 3.2, *Ind 1.3; Sec 3.1, Act 1.7, Annex 4.8, Annex 4.9*). Tourism engagement increased from a baseline of 271 visitors to 1,030 visitors (Sec 3.2, *Ind 1.4, Annex 4.1.3*), supported by an Ecotourism promotion program with 75 participants (Sec 3.1, *Act 1.5, Annex 4.7.1, 4.7.2*). Education funds at Shree Nepal Rastriya Secondary School and Shree Kusumeshwor Secondary School have been established and scholarship distribution is commencing from the new academic session beginning late April 2026, targeting children from HWC-affected households (Sec 3.2, *Act 1.4, Annex 4.6*). Collectively, these interventions directly support Outcome Indicator 0.1, with a clear trajectory toward improved household well-being.

In Output 2, restoration and habitat management efforts are contributing to strengthening prey populations and tiger habitat in Banke National Park, supporting Outcome Indicator 0.2. By Year 3, 128 hectares of grasslands have been managed cumulatively (Y1: 5; Y2: 78; Y3: 45) (Sec 3.2, *Ind 2.1.3; Sec 3.1, Act 2.5 & 2.6, Annex 4.12 & Annex 4.13*), and 74 camera traps deployed at waterholes, along animal trails and grasslands have documented increased use of key habitats by sambar deer, spotted deer, and other prey species (Sec 3.2, *Ind 2.1.2; Sec 3.1, Act 2.1, Annex 4.10*). Fireline maintenance reached 20.9 km cumulatively (Y1: 3.5 km; Y2: 6.4 km; Y3: 11 km), protecting nearly 628 hectares of forest and biodiversity within BaNP and enhancing patrolling capacity (Sec 3.2, *Ind 2.2.1; Sec 3.1, Act 2.7, Annex 4.14, 4.26, 4.27*). Fire response capacity has been strengthened through training of 33 frontline staff and provision of necessary tools (Sec 3.2, *Ind 2.2.2*), laying a solid foundation for continued progress toward prey density and tiger conservation outcomes. Formal assessment through the National Tiger Survey 2026 will validate these early trends.

Output 3 interventions addressing HWC are significantly posed to reduce risks to households, contributing to Outcome Indicator 0.3. By Year 3, 125 Predator Proof Corrals have been constructed, and 2,450 meters of mesh fencing have secured 39.83 hectares of farmland (Sec 3.2, *Ind 3.2.1*) in Year 2. Complementary measures included the distribution of 1,290 fodder seedlings to support stall feeding, 255 non-palatable crop seedlings to 243 households, and two stall-feeding training sessions reaching 64 participants (41% female; 47% indigenous/disadvantaged) (Sec 3.2, *Ind 1.3, Act 1.7, Annex 4.8; Sec 3.1, Act 3.3 & 3.4, Annex 4.16 & Annex 4.17*). Additionally, eight solar lights were installed in HWC hotspots in Year 2 to improve night-time visibility. These integrated interventions are already contributing to safer agricultural and livestock practices and reduced economic losses from HWC. Following two deeply tragic tiger attacks that resulted in the loss of two lives at the project sites, the quick relief fund (QRF) established in previous years was promptly mobilized to provide immediate support of NPR 50,000 (£255) to each affected family (Annex 10). The incident in Rapti Sonari occurred while the victim was grazing cattle near the community, while the Kalimati incident took place as the victim was cutting grass near their home. These unfortunate events underscore the risks faced by local communities, and the QRF support aimed to offer timely assistance to the bereaved families during their time of loss.

Under Output 4, outreach and education initiatives have expanded the reach and influence of conservation messaging, supporting Outcome Indicator 0.4. In Year 3, 43 school sessions and 64 community awareness events reached 3,154 participants (60% female; 49% indigenous/disadvantaged) (Sec 3.2, *Ind 4.1.1, Act 4.3 & 4.4, Annex 4.21, 4.22*). To enhance the visibility of conservation messages, signage was strategically placed to provide constant reminder to the local community (Sec 3.2, *Ind 4.1.2; Sec 3.1, Act 4.2, Annex 4.19*), while media campaigns including a national documentary and radio jingle covered wider audience reaching over 800,000 people (Sec 3.1, *Act 4.1, Annex 4.18 & Annex 4.19*). CBAPUs conducted 15 patrols in Year 3, bringing the cumulative total to 34 patrols over three years, and coordination meetings with Buffer Zone User Committees strengthened operational collaboration (Sec 3.2, *Ind 4.2.1 & 4.2.2; Sec 3.1, Act 4.7 & 4.8, Annex 4.25 & Annex 4.27*). Buffer zone forest management trainings improved participant

knowledge from 14 to 17% pre-test to 71% from 54% post-test, complemented by fire management toolkits in 12 BZCFs (Sec 3.2, Ind 4.9.1; Sec 3.1, Act 4.9, Annex 4.28).

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

Outcome: Improved status of tiger and prey species, reduced HWC, reduced poverty, and an improved relationship between park and people ensures a viable future for wildlife and people in Banke NP

Assumption 1: Banke National Park remains a priority area in the Western Terai Landscape for biodiversity conservation for the Government of Nepal.

Comments: Still holds true. However, new Terai Arc Landscape Strategic and Action Plan is under progress.

Assumption 2: The park is willing to shift from protection-centric approach to management-centric approach to address various nuances arising in the park and its buffer zones.

Comments: Still holds true.

Assumption 3: Communities living in the project sites are willing to participate in project activities.

Comments: Still holds true.

Assumption 4: Meaningful engagement of communities remains an important tool to promote positive relationship between park and people.

Comments: Still holds true.

Assumption 5: Mitigation of human-wildlife conflict continues to be the primary concern for buffer zone communities.

Comments: Despite ongoing project efforts, human-wildlife conflict remains a serious concern for buffer zone communities. Following two deeply tragic tiger attacks that resulted in the loss of two lives at the project sites, the Quick Relief Fund (QRF) established in previous years was promptly mobilized to provide immediate support of NPR 50,000 (£255) to each affected family. The incident in Rapti Sonari occurred while the victim was grazing cattle near the community, while the Kalimati incident took place as the victim was cutting grass near their home. In response, community members expressed both sorrow and frustration, calling for stronger and more immediate measures, including the capture of the problematic tiger. They also emphasized the need for timely relief and longer-term support, such as employment for affected families. Rescue teams were promptly deployed but faced technical and geographical challenges that limited success. These incidents underscore that, despite interventions, communities continue to face significant risks and require strengthened and more responsive mitigation efforts

Assumption 6: The park is willing to provide its staff to participate in project activities.

Comments: Still holds true.

Output 1:

Assumption 7: Project site residents are willing and able to engage in livelihood strengthening activities.

Comments: Still holds true.

Assumption 8: Community banks can be managed in a way that minimizes risks and meets all regulatory requirements.

Comments: Still holds true.

Assumption 9: Authorities are receptive to revision of forest plans.

Comments: Still holds true.

Assumption 10: Improving livelihoods results in reduced forest dependency.

Comments: Still holds true.

Assumption 11: Tourists find Banke NP an attractive destination and 'spread the word'.

Comments: Still holds true.

Assumption 12: Significant proportion of revenue from tourism goes to local communities: the set-up, e.g. homestays, community-run rafting trips, is designed to ensure that.

Comments: Still holds true.

Output 2:

Assumption 13: Habitat requirements are a limiting factor for the growth of wildlife species in Banke NP.

Comments: Still holds true.

Assumption 14: Management and/or creation of key habitats within the park is a priority for improved tiger prey numbers.

Comments: Still holds true.

Assumption 15: Forest fires are a critical challenge within the park and its buffer zones.

Comments: Still holds true.

Output 3:

Assumption 16: Human-Wildlife Conflict will continue to be a major problem in the buffer zones of Banke NP if mitigation methods are not implemented.

Comments: Still holds true.

Assumption 17: Community members are willing to offer in kind support (labour, materials) to construct PPCs.

Comments: Still holds true.

Assumption 18: Costs of livestock and crop depredations can be calculated from HWC rates and typical market values.

Comments: Still holds true.

Assumption 19: Funds from local government towards the construction of mesh wire fencing can be leveraged.

Comments: Still holds true.

Output 4:

Assumption 20: Laying the foundations for biodiversity-friendly production forests now will ensure the community-forest corridor is supported to provide connectivity into the future as timber harvests are made. Information boards and mounted posters help reinforce and extend the message promoted during the school and community programmes.

Comments: Still holds true.

Assumption 21: Education and outreach programmes motivate youths in BZUC to participate in monitoring activities.

Comments: Still holds true.

Assumption 22: Outreach work and community participation in dialogues and community-based anti-poaching units results in improved attitudes to the park and its wildlife.

Comments: Still holds true.

Assumption 23: The reduction in HWC (Output 3) will also contribute to improved attitudes to the park and its wildlife.

Comments: Still holds true.

3.5 Impact: achievement of positive impact on biodiversity and multidimensional poverty reduction

Impact: The future of globally significant species (tiger, tiger prey species, leopard) in Banke National Park is secured, multi-dimensional poverty reduced, and human-wildlife coexistence improved for buffer zones communities

Impact on Biodiversity

Changes in biodiversity status in Banke National Park are being driven by a combination of improved habitat management, reduced human pressures, and stronger, more inclusive community engagement in conservation. By Year 3, the project has supported the management of 128 hectares of grassland, leading to improved forage availability and habitat conditions for key prey species, alongside 20.9 km of fire line maintenance which is helping to reduce the risk of forest fires around 628 hectares and protect critical habitats. In parallel, 74 camera traps have generated valuable ecological insights, with increasing records of prey species and predators using waterholes and managed grasslands providing encouraging early signs of ecological recovery and enabling more targeted, evidence-based park management. Together, these changes are contributing to improved habitat use, reduced risk to wildlife, and stronger long-term prospects for key species such as tigers and prey species.

Impact on Multidimensional Poverty Reduction

The project is contributing to multidimensional poverty reduction by addressing financial exclusion, livelihood vulnerability, and social wellbeing in buffer zone communities. From a baseline of no access to formal financial services, two community banks are now operating effectively, serving 116 members 95% of whom are women and 77% from indigenous and disadvantaged groups. By Year 3, 71% of members have accessed loans totaling NPR 3,904,000 (£19930) to invest in income-generating activities, while total savings have reached NPR 2,103,520 (£10,740), reflecting a 14% increase over the initial seed funding.

Beyond financial benefits, the community banking structure has also created an important regular social platform for interaction and collective decision-making. Monthly meetings provide a consistent space where members share updates on their livelihoods, discuss household and community challenges, and

collectively review savings, loans, and repayment performance. Over time, these interactions have contributed to stronger social cohesion, with members increasingly supporting one another in times of need and collaborating on livelihood decisions. As a result, the community banks are not only functioning as financial institutions, but also as social networks that reinforce solidarity, confidence, and collective agency within the community. At the same time, the project is reducing interconnectedness vulnerability linked to HWC that has impact on overall wellbeing. Agroforestry interventions reaching 243 households are helping to shift resource use away from forests, while investments in livestock and crop safeguarding including 125 predator-proof corals and protection of 39.83 hectares of farmland through mesh wire fencing in Y2, are helping to reduce negative interactions between people and wildlife and so reducing economic shocks. Quick relief fund, Education support for children affected by wildlife conflict, are further contributing to social inclusion and helping to create positive attitude towards conservation and long-term human capital development.

4. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

National Tiger Conservation Action Plan (NTCAP): The project is contributing to all five Strategic Objectives (SO) of NTCAP through integrated, evidence-based interventions. Habitat management activities, including 128 ha of grassland and 20.9 km of fire lines securing 628 hectares of forest area (*Ind 2.1.3, 2.2, Sec 3.1-Act 2.5, 2.7, Annex 4.12, 4.13, 4.14*), support *SO1: Secure tiger habitats and corridors* by improving prey availability and reducing habitat degradation. Community-based anti-poaching efforts, including 34 patrols (*Ind 4.2.2, Sec 3.1-Act 4.8, Annex 4.26, 4.27*) and coordination meetings (*Act 4.8*), contribute to *SO2: Combat poaching and illegal trade*. Interventions addressing human-wildlife conflict such as 125 predator-proof corrals and protection of 39.83 ha farmland, combined with livelihood support through community banks (116 members; 71% accessing NPR 3,904,000 loans (£19,930); *Ind 1.1.3, Annex 4.5* support *SO3: Reduce conflict and enhance livelihoods*. Stakeholder coordination platforms (*Annex 4.1, 4.2, 4.34.4*) contribute to *SO4: Strengthen collaboration*, while 74 camera traps and contribution to the National Tiger Survey 2026 (*Ind 2.1.2, Act 2.1, Annex 4.10, 4.11*) support *SO5: Monitoring and research*.

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP): The project contributes to NBSAP priorities through measurable progress in habitat restoration, community forestry, and inclusive conservation. Management of 128 ha grassland and 20.9 km fire lines (*Ind 2.1.3, 2.2, Act 2.5.1, 2.7.3*) supports “improvement in protected area habitats and connectivity (PA-C).” Community engagement and capacity-building (*Act 4.9.1*) contribute to “biodiversity conservation in community-managed forests (FB-C).” CBAPU patrols (*Ind 4.2.2, Act 4.8*) align with “community-based conservation (CE-A),” while strong inclusion of women (95%) and indigenous groups (77%) in financial systems (*Ind 1.1.3*) supports “GSI-B3: empowerment for equitable benefit sharing.”

Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) Strategy and Action Plan (2015-2025): The project is contributing to TAL priorities through a balanced approach that links habitat restoration, species monitoring, and community livelihoods. Ongoing monitoring of tigers and their prey base (*Ind 0.2, 2.1.2, 2.3, Sec 3.1, Act 2.1, 2.1*) support *Strategy 2 to manage the rare and endangered mammals as meta-populations* together with grassland and fire management activities (*Act 2.5, 2.6, 2.7*) help to strengthen habitat quality, secure from forest fire, aligning with *Strategy 3 (protect and restore critical habitats)* and *Strategy 4 (manage grasslands and wetlands)*. Efforts to reduce human-wildlife conflict, including community support measures and safer livelihood practices (*Sec 3.1, Act 1.4, 3.3, 3.4*), contribute to *Strategy 7: Mitigate human-wildlife conflicts*, while agroforestry interventions (*Act 1.7*) support *Strategy 9 on agro-biodiversity conservation*. Capacity-building activities with community forest groups (*Sec 3.1, Act 4.9*) and ongoing engagement with Buffer Zone institutions (*Act 4.4*) are strengthening local forest governance, contributing to *Strategy 10 on sustainable forest management*. Lastly, the establishment and strengthening of community banks (*Act 1.1*) are creating practical, locally driven economic opportunities, supporting *Strategy 16 to provide local communities with innovative, sustainable economic incentives linked to forest conservation*.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The project contributes to *SDG 1 (No Poverty)* through livelihood financing (NPR 3,904,000 loans (£19,930) disbursed; *Ind 1.1.3*), *SDG 5 (Gender Equality)* through 95% women participation, *SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)* through inclusion of marginalised groups (77%), and *SDG 15 (Life on Land)* through habitat restoration and ecological monitoring (*Ind 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.2*).

CITES: The project contributes indirectly to CITES by strengthening protection of listed species through camera trap monitoring (*Ind 2.1.2, Act 2.1, Annex 2.1*) and anti-poaching patrols (*Ind 4.2.2*), supporting national enforcement systems.

Other National Policies and Plans: The project supports the National Forest Policy 2019 through strengthened community forest governance (*Act 4.9*) and contributes to the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) through habitat restoration and connectivity (*Ind 2.1.3, 2.2*). All activities align with the Banke National Park and Buffer Zone Management Plan (2023).

5. Project support for multidimensional poverty reduction

The project is contributing to poverty reduction by addressing key drivers of vulnerability in buffer zone communities around Banke National Park, particularly financial exclusion, livelihood insecurity, and risks linked to HWC.

Direct poverty impacts are clearly visible. Two community banks have been established and strengthened (Ind 1.1.1), now serving 116 members, of which 71% have accessed loans totalling NPR 3,904,000 (£19,930) (Ind 1.1.3) to support income-generating activities such as livestock rearing and small businesses. Total savings in these community banks have reached NPR 2,103,520 (£10,740), reflecting growing financial confidence and resilience to support their members for the longer term. In addition, under Indicator 1.1.2, till date 45 youths have been trained in market-relevant vocational skills, including CTEVT-certified Level 2 courses in electrical work, mobile phone repair, plumbing and advanced nature guide training, opening the opportunities linked to emerging ecotourism.

At the same time, the project has improved economic security and wellbeing for households through HWC mitigation interventions across the project period. By the end of Y3, a total of 125 predator-proof corals (Ind 3.1.1) and protection of 39.83 hectares of farmland (Ind 3.2.1) have reduced livestock and crop losses, allowing households to invest with greater confidence. These corrals are currently protecting approximately 942 goats, representing a secured household asset valued at around NPR 10,362,000 (£52907). Complementary agroforestry and crop-based interventions are further strengthening resilience, helping families meet fodder and fuel needs, reducing pressure on forest resources and minimizing the encounter with wildlife. A total of 1,291 fodder and 820 fruit seedlings were distributed to 243 households (44% women; 45% indigenous and disadvantaged groups) to promote agroforestry practices and improve on-farm resource availability (Ind 1.3) in Y3. In addition, 554 non-palatable crop seedlings, including lemon, mango, and litchi, were distributed to households in HWC-prone areas (Act 3.3), helping to deter wildlife intrusion while also creating opportunities for alternative income generation. These interventions reduce exposure to shocks such as crop damage and livestock depredation, while stabilizing and diversifying household income streams.

Beyond these economic benefits, the project is also strengthening social capital, which is an important dimension of multidimensional poverty reduction. Through regular monthly meetings of community banks (Act 1.1), members come together not only to manage savings and loans but also to discuss wider community issues and support one another. These interactions are gradually building trust, cooperation, and collective responsibility showcasing growing social currency that enhances resilience and reduce vulnerability beyond income alone.

6. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
Not sensitive yet	The GESI context may have been considered but the project isn't quite meeting the requirements of a 'sensitive' approach	
Sensitive	The GESI context has been considered and project activities take this into account in their design and implementation. The project addresses basic needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups and the project will not contribute to or create further inequalities.	
Empowering	The project has all the characteristics of a 'sensitive' approach whilst also increasing equal access to assets, resources and capabilities for women and marginalised groups	X
Transformative	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	

Building on the groundwork laid in earlier years, the project has continued to place inclusion at the centre of how it works with communities. By Year 3, this is reflected in the steady growth and strengthening of Alternative Livelihood Groups (ALGs)/community banks, which now include 116 members, 95% of whom are women and 77% from indigenous and disadvantaged groups (Sec 3.2, Ind 1.1.1). What is particularly encouraging is not just the growth in numbers, but the level of active engagement within these groups. Access to financial services has widened, with 71% of members (95% women and 72% indigenous and

marginalised group) using soft loans to start or expand income-generating activities (Sec 3.2, Ind 1.1.3), showing that these platforms are becoming practical tools for improving livelihoods for marginalised group within the community. Overall, the project has maintained a strong focus on inclusive participation across all activities this year, with more than 61% of participants in trainings, meetings, and workshops being women, and 54% from Indigenous communities.

The project has made a conscious effort to reach those who are often left out of such opportunities, ensuring that participation goes beyond attendance to real involvement in decision-making and benefit sharing. At the household level, these efforts are beginning to show meaningful change. Women involved in the groups are increasingly taking a more active role in managing finances and contributing to household decisions. As one participant shared, “Now I can manage small expenses without borrowing at high interest, and I contribute directly to my family income.” Experiences like this point to a gradual but important shift where access to resources is also translating into greater confidence, independence, and a stronger voice within the household (*Annex 4.3.4a*). The project’s approach this year in relation to the six GESI principles are outlined below:

Rights:

Particular emphasis has been placed on engaging women and Indigenous communities, who have been sensitised on their rights to participate in conservation and livelihood initiatives within a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment.

Practice: The project has ensured that over 61% and 54% of participants in trainings, meetings, and workshops are women and individuals from Indigenous communities. This reflects a deliberate commitment to inclusive participation, ensuring that engagement is meaningful and goes beyond symbolic representation in both routine activities and decision-making processes. This practice is further strengthened through the way community banking groups operate. These groups are largely led by women and are structured to reflect GESI principles in their membership.

Environment: Through regular community interactions, targeted capacity-building initiatives, and inclusive facilitation methods, safe spaces have been created where women and Indigenous participants feel confident to express their perspectives and contribute to discussions.

Roles and Responsibilities: Women and Indigenous participants are increasingly assuming leadership and organisational roles within alternative livelihood groups. They are actively engaged in facilitating meetings, managing group operations, and contributing to decision-making processes.

Representation: The project has ensured that over 61% and 54% of participants in trainings, meetings, and workshops are women and individuals from Indigenous communities. Women are taking on key responsibilities such as managing savings, handling loan disbursement and repayments, maintaining records, and ensuring transparency in how funds are used.

Resources: Access to financial and livelihood resources has been significantly enhanced for women and Indigenous participants, particularly through their involvement in alternative livelihood groups. These groups have facilitated access to soft loans and financial services, enabling members to initiate and expand income-generating activities.

Consideration of Social Inclusion and Intersectionality: While there remains scope to further strengthen disability-inclusive approaches, the project has prioritized prioritising women and Indigenous communities who often face compounded forms of marginalisation.

7. Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)

Engagement remained active and practical throughout the year. Field-based monitoring was carried out closely with Banke National Park, buffer zone representatives, and local communities. Two PMU meetings also helped refine implementation decisions, including the selection of habitat intervention zones inside BaNP (*Annex 4.2.1, 4.12.1, 4.14.1*). In addition, a multi-stakeholder monitoring visit on 31 December 2025 to 1 January 2026 brought together partners to jointly review progress on the ground (*Annex 4.3.1*). The team regularly participated in monthly community bank group meetings, monitored wildlife use of waterholes through continuous camera trapping, and maintained coordination with local government stakeholders to ensure alignment with local priorities. Key reflection sessions held on 16-17 October 2025 with partners, provided space to openly discuss progress and challenges and adjust plans for the remaining period, particularly in light of the wider national context (*Annex 4.4.2*). To better understand a community perception regarding HWC mitigation measures, ZSL conducted study (*Annex 4.3.4, 4.3.4a*). The findings were strongly positive and grounded in lived experience. For instance, participants shared that since receiving a predator-proof corral, he has not lost any livestock, describing it as a simple but highly effective solution. In Salyan, community members reported that mesh wire fencing has significantly reduced crop losses, with local leaders noting a clear drop in compensation claims compared to previous years. Follow-up post-training monitoring discussions with participants of the CTEVT-certified vocational training highlighted early but important livelihood gains (*Annex 9*). Youth trained in electrical work, mobile phone

repair, plumbing, and nature guide reported that they are already beginning to generate income locally through small jobs, service provision, and seasonal employment opportunities. These findings from post-training follow-up provide early evidence that skills acquired are being applied in practice and improving employability. Progress tracking was strengthened through improved data systems, ongoing support from the Results Monitoring Officer (RMO), and regular coordination meetings with partners to keep activities aligned with Year 3 targets (*Annex 4.4.1*). Regular use of disaggregated data has helped the team stay responsive, adjusting approaches where needed to make participation more inclusive and relevant. Further, technical specialists have strengthened evidence-based management through ecological monitoring, including camera trap data and habitat assessments, which are regularly shared with park authorities to guide grassland, waterhole, and protection interventions (*Act 2.1, Annex 4.10.1, 4.10.2, 4.10.3*).

8. Lessons learnt

Field evidence strongly indicates that livelihood interventions are most effective when they are aligned with local cultural practices, preferences, and socio-economic context. In the indigenous Tamang community of Gabhar, pig farming was highly successful and well adopted. In contrast, in the mixed hill-origin community of Sikta, goat farming emerged as the preferred and more viable livelihood option. This demonstrates that community-led selection of livelihood activities leads to stronger ownership, uptake, and sustainability compared to a standardised or “one-size-fits-all” approach.

A key gap identified during implementation was the absence of a dedicated budget line for PSEAH activities. This gap was partially addressed through support from other projects, including the IWT CF Project (Ref: 135), which enabled the implementation of key PSEAH activities such as staff training and orientation.

Despite notable progress, challenges persist in addressing deeply rooted social norms that limit women's leadership in certain contexts, sustaining participation particularly for women balancing household responsibilities alongside project involvement requires ongoing consideration.

9. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

With this report, ZSL has reflected on and responded to the feedback received from the donor following the Year 2 Annual Report, as well as the comments provided during the follow-on funding process. This has been treated as an opportunity to strengthen the quality, clarity, and effectiveness of both project delivery and reporting. A detailed account of how the feedback has been considered and addressed is provided in the annex (*Annex 8*).

10. Risk Management

No risk has evolved in the last 12 months.

11. Scalability and durability

In considering the sustainability and long-term legacy of the project, deliberate emphasis has been placed on both the scalability of successful approaches and the durability of achieved outcomes. Key stakeholders particularly those critical to future uptake and replication have been actively engaged through structured consultations, targeted capacity-building initiatives, and demonstration activities. These efforts will be documented via exit strategy during FoF that clearly communicates pathways for adoption.

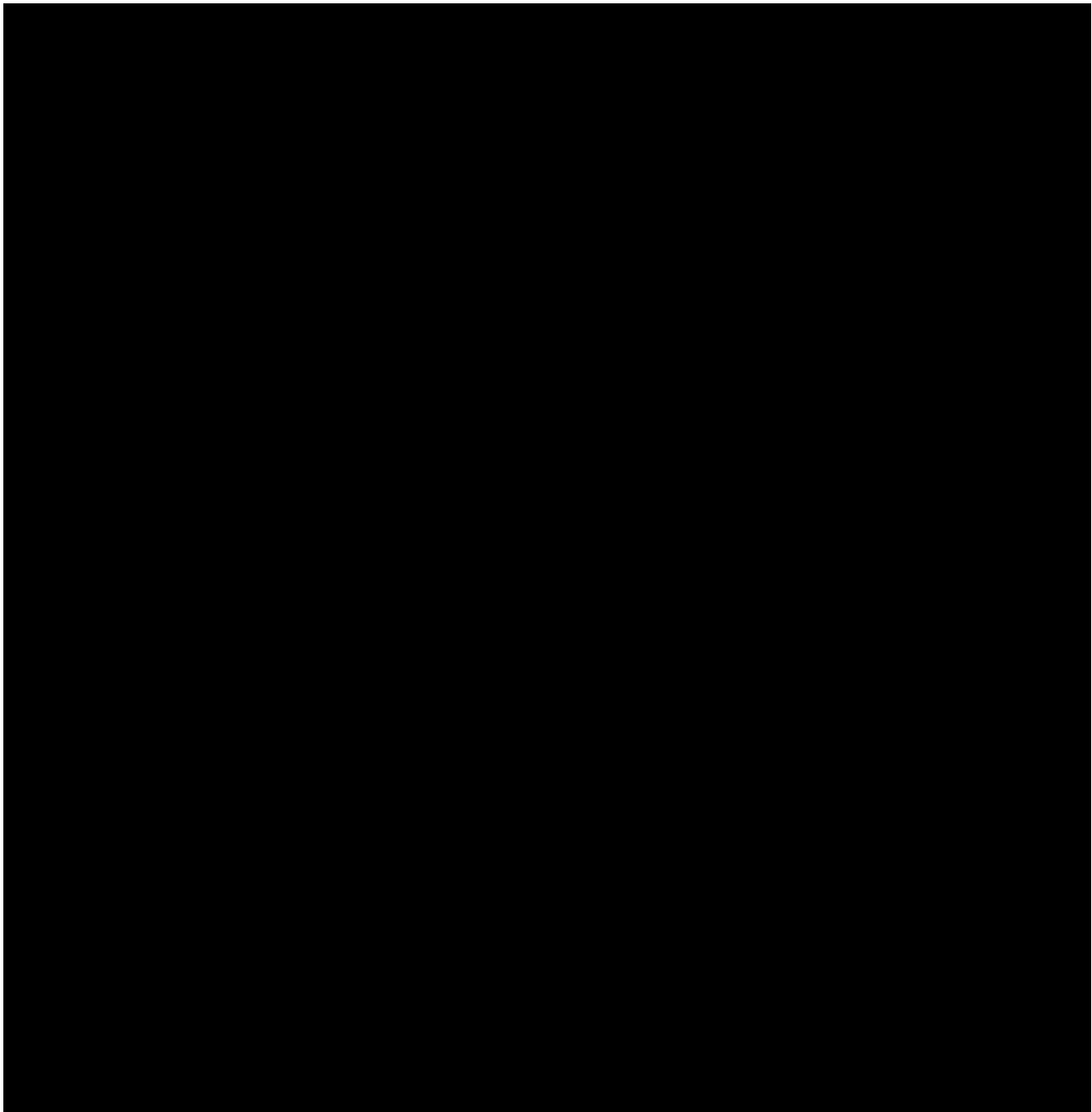
There is increasing evidence that the project approach is attractive to potential adopters. This is reflected in growing participation in community-led mechanisms, including the expansion of alternative livelihood groups supported by strengthening seed funds, as well as a rising number of members accessing soft loans. Complementary financial resilience mechanisms such as quick relief funds and school-level education funds have further reinforced community buy-in by demonstrating tangible and immediate value to beneficiaries. Importantly, these financial instruments remain accessible and trusted among communities, as their design and mobilization guidelines were developed through extensive community consultation and endorsement. To support sustained engagement and ownership, the project has aligned incentives across key stakeholder groups, including government agencies, civil society actors, and local communities. A notable example is the establishment of tripartite agreements between local government bodies and community stakeholders to share responsibility for the operation and electricity costs of installed street lighting systems in the project sites in Y2. This approach has strengthened local ownership while promoting long-term maintenance and functionality. In addition, follow-up consultations with beneficiaries of technical and vocational training delivered through the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training have generated valuable insights into post-training outcomes, including employment pathways, challenges, and constraints. These insights have informed adaptive support measures, ensuring continued relevance and effectiveness of interventions.

Importantly, the award of follow-on funding has created a significant opportunity to consolidate and scale the project's achievements. This opportunity is being actively advanced by the Zoological Society of London, which is building on the project's foundations to expand implementation, deepen impact, and strengthen long-term sustainability. This additional investment is expected to further enhance the project's legacy by enabling continued engagement, replication, and institutionalization of successful approaches.

12. Darwin Initiative identity

The project has been implemented with a clear and distinct identity as a Darwin Initiative-funded intervention. Throughout the reporting period, the project has taken a systematic and proactive approach to ensuring appropriate visibility of the Darwin Initiative's support. The Darwin Initiative logo has been consistently and prominently featured across key communication and outreach materials, including workshop banners and community awareness resources, reinforcing recognition among stakeholders and beneficiaries. In addition, all major public engagements such as stakeholder consultations, capacity-building workshops, and dissemination events have incorporated both verbal and visual acknowledgment of the Darwin Initiative's contribution. Within Nepal, awareness of the Darwin Initiative is most evident among government agencies, conservation practitioners and non-governmental organizations working in biodiversity and environmental management. Recognition is strongest among direct project partners, stakeholders and the project community and effort continues through ongoing outreach efforts. Supporting evidence of the project upholding Darwin Initiative identity is provided in *Annex 4.19, 4.20 & 7*.

13. Safeguarding



14. Project expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026)

Project (indicative) Annual Report	spend since last	2025/26 Grant (£)	2025/26 Total Darwin Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs					
Consultancy costs					
Overhead Costs					
Travel and subsistence					
Operating Costs					
Capital items					
Others					
TOTAL			£128,585.00		

Table 2: Project mobilised or matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026)

	Secured to date	Expected by end of project	Sources
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project (£)			
Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project (£)			

15. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

A one-day workshop was conducted with trained youth to assess their post-training engagement (Annex 9). A total of 30 youth participated in the workshop, of which 58% reported that the training was effective. In terms of positive outcomes, 48% of participants indicated that the training increased their confidence, while 52% reported that it contributed to their livelihoods through income diversification.

Further, we observed variation in the year of achievement of target in the log frame such as indicator 1.3, 3.1, 3.3 where the decrease in forest dependency, livestock predation, injury by wildlife is to be measured by Y3 while it should have been Y4 as we have shifted endline survey to Y4 in FoF. We will communicate with BCF and if needed we will revise such error and update during next half yearly report in 2026.

16. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements or progress of your project so far (300 - 400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes.

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds to edit and use the following for various promotional purposes (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

For Krishna [REDACTED], a 50-year-old mother from [REDACTED], daily life once meant long, exhausting hours in the forest. Her family relied on goat farming, which required her to walk deep into nearby forest areas to collect grass and graze animals. These were not just time-consuming trips rather every visit carried the fear of encountering wildlife.

"I used to spend most of my day in the forest cutting grass and grazing goats. It was tiring, household chores remain undone and there was always fear," she recalls.

Despite the risks, there were few alternatives. Goat rearing was what she knew, and like many others in her community, her livelihood depended on the forest.

A turning point came in 2024 when Krishna Maya joined the Milijuli Alternative Livelihood Group (ALG), a community group formed by the project to support vulnerable households in exploring safer income options. Through the group, she accessed a loan of [REDACTED] at minimal interest rate of 6%, that allowed her to rethink her livelihood.

"I decided to stop going to the forest every day. I wanted something safer that I could manage from home," she says.

Thus, with this support, she made a bold but practical decision: shifting from goat farming to pig farming.

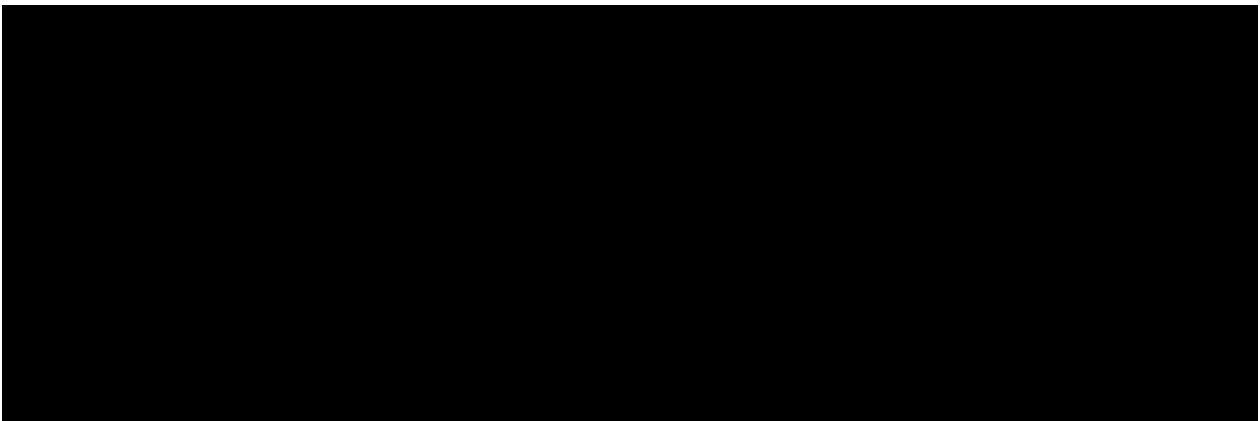
She invested in piglets, feed, and improved her pig shed, gradually building a small but growing source of income for her family. Unlike goats, pigs can be raised in a controlled space which meant she no longer had to depend on the forest for fodder. The change was immediate and meaningful. The long hours in the forest were replaced with work closer to home. The constant fear of wildlife encounters eased. And the time she saved could now be used for household responsibilities and caring for her family.

Today, Krishna Maya raises more than 10 piglets and has already earned [REDACTED] from their sale. Pig farming has become a steady source of income, helping her meet daily expenses, including food, healthcare, and her children's needs.

"Now I feel safer. Pig farming has given us income and peace of mind," she shares.

Krishna Maya's journey is a clear example of how a shift in livelihood supported by community-based finance can do more than increase income. It can restore a sense of security, reduce dependence on forests, and help families like hers live with greater confidence alongside wildlife.

Image, Video or Graphic Information:



Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2025-2026

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2025 - March 2026	Actions required/planned for next period
Impact The future of globally significant species (tiger, tiger prey species, leopard) in Banke National Park is secured, multi-dimensional poverty reduced, and human-wildlife coexistence improved for buffer zones communities.	The project is making strong and measurable progress towards its intended impact of securing key species such as tigers, their prey, and leopards, while reducing multidimensional poverty and improving human-wildlife coexistence in Banke National Park buffer zones. Ecologically, habitat management interventions including grassland restoration (45ha) and 20.9 km of fire line maintenance are improving conditions for prey species by securing 628 ha of forest area, with camera trap data confirming regular use of these areas by both prey and predators. On the socio-economic side, 116 households are now engaged in community banking, with 71% accessing loans for livelihood activities, strengthening income security. Human-wildlife conflict mitigation measures have reached over 1,100 households, including 125 PPC and protection of nearly 50 hectares of farmland, directly reducing economic losses and risks. In Year 3 alone, outreach and awareness activities directly engaged 3,154 individuals through school and community programmes, while broader communication efforts including television broadcasts and radio jingles reached an estimated 800,000 people, representing a substantial proportion of the target population across the buffer zone landscape. Overall, the project has maintained a strong focus on inclusive participation across all activities this year, with more than 61% of participants in trainings, meetings, and workshops being women, and 54% from Indigenous communities.	
Outcome indicator 0.1: Improvement in the well-being index of the participating households 170 households (HHs) by 30% by the end of the project Baseline: 0.55 wellbeing index (Source: Baseline Survey, 2024) Target: 0.71 wellbeing index	During Year 3, an additional 22 members (Fulbari: 20; Milijuli: 2, all were female and 17 from Indigenous and disadvantaged groups) were enrolled, bringing total membership to 116 (Fulbari: 77; Milijuli: 39), of which 95% are women and 77% are from indigenous and disadvantaged groups, thereby surpassing the target under Indicator 1.1.1. Furthermore, 71% of members (82 out of 116) accessed soft loans for livelihood activities (Indicator 1.1.3), primarily women (95%) and indigenous and marginalised group (72%), significantly exceeding the target of 35% by Y3. A total of [REDACTED] was disbursed as a loan among these members,	

	primarily for goat farming (67%), followed by buffalo farming (8%), small business development (7%), poultry farming (7%), pig farming (6%), and agriculture (5%) (Source: Community bank records).	
Outcome indicator 0.2: 10% increase in tiger number and density of prey species (sambar deer, spotted deer) by the end of the project (baseline from 2022 tiger survey data). Baseline: 25 tigers and prey density 32.6 animals/km² (source. National Tiger Survey report, Nepal, 2022). Target: 28 tigers and prey density 35.86 /animals km².	A total of 15 ha of grassland was effectively managed at Chaukaphanta and Obharyphanta to enhance habitat quality and maintain ecological integrity (Act 2.5, Annex 4.12.1, 4.12.2). Similarly, financial and technical support has been provided to DNPWC for National Tiger Survey, 2026 through project. Approximately, 30 hectares of grassland were effectively managed through tractor purchased in Y1 and operation support provided in Y3 (Act 2.6, Annex 4.13.1, 4.13.2).	
Outcome indicator 0.3: Economic costs from Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) decreased by 35% in the participating households (120 HH from Predator Proof Corrals and 1172 HH from other HWC reduction measures; note the 1172 HHs includes the 120 HHs) (Baseline: Total NRs. 50122.58 per HH; with NRs.18787.1(Crop loss per HH); NRs. 31335.48 (Livestock loss per HHs, end of Y4 target 1172 HHs representing 5779 people – including 43 % IPs, 49 % female) [DI-D05a²] Baseline: NRs. 50,122.58 per HH NRs.18787.1(Crop loss per HH) NRs. 31335.48 (Livestock loss per HH) Target: NRs. 32,579.67 per HH NRs.12,211.61(Crop loss per HH) NRs. 20,367.98 (Livestock loss per HH)	By the end of Y3, a total of 125 predator-proof corals (Ind 3.1.1) and protection of 39.83 hectares of farmland (Ind 3.2.1) have reduced livestock and crop losses, allowing households to invest with greater confidence. These corrals are currently protecting approximately 942 goats, representing a secured household asset valued at around [REDACTED].	
Outcome indicator 0.4: 60% increase in positive attitude of buffer zone communities in the project sites towards conservation by the end of the project.	Video documentary to promote wildlife tourism has been broadcasted through different platform such as YouTube, Facebook and Television platform with more than 16,000 views (16K views on Avenues Television's Facebook page, 270	

² We use DI-D05a here because reducing the economic burden of human-wildlife conflict also helps households withstand climate-related shocks (as well as more generally improving their resilience).When reporting against this indicator we will convert the number of households (HHs) into the number of people based on the typical number of people per HHs for the area and disaggregate by gender, age class, ethnicity, and IPLC status.

Baseline: Positive attitude (Low-98.7, Moderate-1.3 and High-0.0) (Source: Baseline Survey, 2024) Target: Positive attitude (Low-39.48, Moderate-2.08 and High-60)	views on the Avenues Khabar YouTube channel) (Act 4.1, Annex 4.18.1, 4.18.2) Total of 43 school awareness session were carried out to orient 956 students through trained eco-teachers of the project community. Similarly, community based anti-poaching unit members (change agent) carried out a total of 64 community awareness reached to 2198 buffer zone community people (Ind 4.1, Act 4.3 & 4.4, Annex 4.21.1-4.21.3 & Annex 4.22.1-4.22.3). Four information boards were installed at East-West passing through BaNP, with information of wildlife movement zones, safety precautions, and responsible behaviour, encourage driver/rider to reduced speed and remain vigilant. Aligning this indicator, radio jingle for HWC mitigation broadcasted 492 times through 3 different FM stations of Banke, Dang and Salyan reaching an estimated audience of 200,000 audience (Act 4.2.1, Annex 4.19.2). Moreover, 28 mounted posters of 24*36 inch were developed and distributed to promote conservation awareness and to promote the tourism in BaNP (Ind 4.1.2, Act 4.2.1, Act 4.2.2, Annex 4.19.1-4.19.2, Annex 4.20.1-4.20.3).Community dialogue was reinforced through participation in major conservation days (e.g., Global Tiger Day, Wetland Day, World Pangolin Day), attended by 189 stakeholders including government officials, park staff, army personnel, and local residents (Ind 4.3, Act 4.5, Annex 4.23.1-4.23.3) promoting collaboration for biodiversity conservation among BaNP, Local government, BZUCs, CBAPU and conservation partners. Furthermore, two anti-poaching related training were conducted reaching to 31 CBAPU and local youths. CBAPU carried out 15 patrols and 11 meeting were carried between CBAPU, BZUC and BaNP for coordination, information flow and enhanced combined efforts to curb illegal activities in buffer zone (Ind 4.2, Act 4.7.1, Annex 4.25.1,4.25.2, Act 4.8.1, Annex 4.26.1-4.26.3, Act 4.8.2, Annex 4.27.1, 4.27.2).	
Output 1: Livelihoods of 155 households in the project sites are improved (directly) through providing access to income strengthening opportunities, underpinned by support for mainstreaming nature-based tourism and strengthening of operation plans for buffer zone forests.		
Output indicator 1.1: 170 HHs (disaggregated by gender and ethnicity) benefit from livelihood interventions by the end of Y4 (70% female, 66% IPs)	1.1 116 members out of which 95% are women and 77% indigenous and disadvantage group) (Act 1.1) are engaged in community banks. Total 22 members added to the CB (Milijuli	• Additional 15 HHs (youths - 35% female, 70% IPs) trained in skill development and

1.1.1: Two community banks (CB) established with 100 HHs by the end of Y1, growing to 115 HHs by the end of Y3 [DI-A03³] Baseline: 0 Target: 115 HHs by Year 3 1.1.2: Additional 55 HHs (youths - 35% female, 70% IPs) trained in skill development and hospitality training by the end of Y4. [DI-A01] Baseline: 0 Target: 55 youths trained on skill development 1.1.3: At least 35% of the participating HHs operate enterprises through soft loans by the end of Y3 Baseline: 0 Target: 35% (55 individuals) of the participating HHs operate enterprises through soft loans by the end of Y3.	:2, Fulbari: 20); all were female and 17 belonged to Indigenous and disadvantaged group. 1.1.1 Two community bank established in Y1 i.e., Fulbari Jibikoparjan Samuha at Hattidamar BZUC, Ryang and Milijuli Baikalpik Aayearjan Samuha in Rapti BZUC, Gabar-Sikta, with increased members 116 by the end of Y3, out of which 95% are women and 77% indigenous and disadvantage group) (Sec 3.1, Act 1.1). Both CB have [REDACTED] 1.1.2 In Y2, a total of 45 youths (36% women, 71% from indigenous and marginalised communities) with market-relevant skills to enhance livelihood opportunities. In Y3, a one-day workshop was conducted with trained youth to assess their post-training engagement. A total of 30 youth participated in the workshop, of which 58% reported that the training was effective. In terms of positive outcomes, 48% of participants indicated that the training increased their confidence, while 52% reported that it contributed to their livelihoods through income diversification. 1.1.3 71% of the total member engaged in ALG by Y3) i.e., 82 members (Ind 1.1.3), primarily women (95%) and indigenous and marginalised group (72%) accessed soft loans totalling [REDACTED] used predominantly for operating enterprise such as goat farming (67%), followed by Buffalo Farming (8%), initiate/expand small business (7%), poultry farming (7%) pig farming (6%), and agriculture (5%).	hospitality training by the end of Y4 (FoF) • Higher level skill development trainings to community members for upscaling of established enterprise (FoF).
Output indicator 1.2: Six BZUC/BZCF operation plans within the two project sites updated to improve conservation and governance by the end of Y2. Baseline: 0 Target: Six BZUC/CF operation plan updated	Activity was completed in Y2.	

³ Where relevant, we have added Standard Indicator (SI) reference numbers from the “Darwin Initiative Standard Indicators 2.1 Guidance” document of September 2024 even though our original logframe predated the use of SIs. We did this to bring us into compliance with the instructions on page 7 of the “Supplementary Guidance Notes for Applicants: Follow-on Funding 2025 – 2026” document, i.e. “Our requirement is that your project must report against at least three Standard Indicators, and ideally at least one of the biodiversity and one of the ‘people’ indicators listed below. If you can report against more than three Standard Indicators, this is strongly encouraged”.

Output indicator 1.3: 12% reduction in forest resource dependency (baseline to be established in Y1) of the project beneficiaries by the end of Y3. Baseline: 95.5 % (Source: Baseline Survey, 2024) Target: 84%.	1.3 The progress towards the activities aligned to achieving the indicator has been in progress, such as; - Two stall-feeding and agro-forestry training events were conducted at both BZUC reaching 64 participants-41 % female and 47 % belonged to indigenous and disadvantaged group. This kind of training contribute to the long-term strategies aimed at reducing the dependency on forest resources and minimizing the human wildlife encounter (Act 1.7, Annex 4.8.1-4.8.3 & Act 3.4, Annex 4.17.1, 4.17.2). - To promote agroforestry practices 1290 fodder and 593 fruits seedlings were distributed among the 243 households (HHs) (Act 1.7, Annex 4.9.1, 4.9.2). Out of 243 HHs who received support from the project 67% are female and 71 % are indigenous and disadvantaged group. These seedlings will be helpful to initiate agroforestry practices and contributing to livestock fodder availability in project sites. - Total of 64 community awareness reached to 2198 (62% female and 53% indigenous and disadvantaged group) individuals residing at buffer zone communities (Ind 4.1, Act 4.4, Annex 4.22.1-4.22.3).	Conduct water source management and channelisation of a local stream, Khappare Khola supporting 74HHs to adapt to changing climate and safeguard 34ha of farmland (FoF).
Output indicator 1.4: 1.4 At least 50% increase in tourists (domestic and international) visiting the park and its buffer zone (baseline to be established in Y1) by the end of Y4. Baseline: 271 Tourists (Source: DNPWC AR 2079/80). Target: 406 Tourists	1.4 in FY 2082/83, total 1,030 tourist (domestic; 902 and international 128 visited BaNP (Source: BaNP) and following activities has been conducted to achieve indicator; - Video documentary to promote wildlife tourism has been broadcasted through different platform such as YouTube, Facebook and Television platform with more than 16,000 views (16K views on Avenues Television's Facebook page, 270 views on the Avenues Khabar YouTube channel) (Act 4.1.2, Annex 4.18.1, 4.18.2). - Workshop was organized with relevant stakeholders of Bank district and visiting guests from India to promote eco-tourism in BaNP (Sec 3.1, Act 1.5.3). Total of a total of 75 individuals; including 40 visiting guests were participated the event (Annex 4.7.1, 4.7.2)	- Prepare a Nature guide handbook and mobilisation guideline, Provide Basic language training to all nature guides, 2-day training to all licensed nature guides on promoting BaNP through social media (FoF). - Training exchange visit for exposure and learning in adjoining NPs with experienced NP like Chitwan and Bardia (FoF). - Conduct a local and provincial level workshop with key stakeholders promoting BaNP and rising

		wildlife tourist destination encouraging coordination and collaboration to collectively promote BaNP (FoF). Equip the revived nature guide association with basic equipment
Output 2. Improved management of grasslands and wetlands, and control of forest fires in priority areas within the core of the park, underpinned by strengthened understanding of the habitat requirements of key species (sambar deer, spotted deer) results in an increase in tiger prey species density.		
Output indicator 2.1 Key habitat for ungulate species within Banke NP improved by end of Y4, with 2.1.1: Site-specific grassland and wetland conditions assessed with guidelines produced based on expert consultations about plant and animal species dynamics by the end of Y2. 2.1.2: Monitoring underway for water source use and predator/prey dynamics related to management at two water sources within core of the park by end of Y2. 2.1.3: 50ha of grassland managed within core of the park by end of Y4. [DI-D01a] Baseline: 0 Target: 50 ha of grassland	2.1.1 Camera trapping survey conducted in managed grassland and wetland areas to understand wildlife use of the managed area. Ongoing national tiger and prey-base survey data will also be used to assess habitat and animal dynamics in next reporting period. 2.1.2 Under this activity, 74 (Pathera and Cuddeback) cameras were at placed at water holes (natural-15, artificial-35), animals trail (10) and grasslands (13) to observe seasonal and spatial pattern of wildlife utilization of habitat in BaNP. Camera traps were deployed from April 2025 to June 2025 for an average of 58 days. During the study it was found that wild animals like Rhesus Monkeys, Spotted Deer, Barking Deer, Sambar Deer, Tiger, Four-Horned Antelope and Wild Board spent more time in waterholes during dry season for hydration (Act 2.1.2, Annex 4.10.1-4.10.3). 2.1.3 Total of 15 hectare (Chaukaphanta and Obhary Phanta) has been managed through project support (Act 2.5, Annex 4.12.1, 4.12.2). 2.1.4 approximately 30 hectares of grassland were effectively managed through tractor purchased in Y1 and operation support provided in Y3 (Act 2.6, Annex 4.13.1).	Operational support for habitat management ensuring management of further 35ha of grassland (FoF).
Output indicator 2.2: At least 500 ha of forest directly secured from forest fire in fire prone areas, selected through consultation with park authorities, by the end of Y4 [DI-D01a], with 2.2.1: 15 Km of fire line managed by the end of Y4. [DI-D01a]	2.2 Approximately 150 ha of forest was secured from forest fire with the maintenance of fire line (Sec 3.1, Act 2.7, Annex 4.14.1). 2.2.1 Total of 11 Km fire line section at Khairi Fireline to Khairi Machan (No. 4) was maintained directly securing around 150 ha of forest area from forest fire (Sec 3.1, Act 2.7, Annex 4.14.1).	Support BaNP in maintaining an additional 5km of fire line securing key habitats from prolonged droughts, increased fire frequency and intensity (FoF).

Baseline: 0 Target: 15 km fire line managed 2.2.2: Fire-fighting unit including 20 ranger posts across the park trained and equipped by the end of Y4.	2.2.2 A three-day Buffer Zone Forest management training was conducted at Kalimati R.M.-7, Ryang, Salyan from 29 to 31 May 2025 with participation from the ward chairperson, representatives from Banke National Park, and representatives of six BZCFUGs under Hattidamar-Ghuiyabari BZUC, with the objective to enhance the knowledge of Buffer zone community forest (BZCF) representatives to manage forest resources, reduce risks of forest fires. Additionally, 1 day refresher training was organized at Rapti Sonari R.M-1, Kusum, Banke on 26 February 2026 for BZCF members under Rapti BZUC. Total 18 participants (56% female and 78% participants belonged to indigenous and disadvantage group) attended the training at Hattidamar-Ghuiyabari BZUC, while 17 participants (18% female and 52% participants belonged to indigenous and disadvantage group) were participated in the refresher training at Rapti BZUC (<i>Annex 4.28.1, 4.28.2, 4.28.4</i>). Fire management toolkits such as Helmet, Fireproof gloves, Fire man Axe, Bucket, Spade, Shovel, Pruning saw, Rack, Hammer and Hooks to 12 BZCF (<i>Annex 4.28.2, 4.28.3</i>).	• Provide support to improve understanding of the dynamics of forest fire and manage it within the park inclusive of capacity building and basic equipment support (FoF).
Output indicator 2.3: 10% increase in density of key prey species (sambar deer, spotted deer) within the park by the end of Y3 (Baseline: 32.6 prey animals/km²) [DI-D07⁴] Baseline: 32.6 animals/km²an density of prey (Source: National Tiger Survey, Nepal, 2022). Target: 35.86 animals/km² prey density	2.3 % increase in prey density will be measured during National Tiger survey,2026 by Y3. 2.3.1 Provided support to DNPWC for National Tiger Survey, 2026 through project (<i>Annex 4.11</i>). Analysis is underway and will be publicized during Global Tiger Day, 2026.	• Prey density will be calculated and reported in Y4 annual report.
Output 3: Reduced impact of human-wildlife conflict (HWC) in the project sites (total 1112 HHs/5170 people) through investments in livestock and crop safeguarding, underpinned by improved measures for the safety of people.		
Output indicator 3.1: 20% decrease in livestock depredation by tiger/leopard in the project sites (baseline to be established in Y1) by the end of Y3, with Baseline: 47.7 % (Source: Baseline Survey, 2024) Target: 38.16% 3.1.1 120 Predator Proof Corrals distributed by the end of Y2. Baseline: 0	3.1 This indicator will be measured in Y4 via endline survey 3.1.1 Activity was completed in Y2 with construction of 125 predator-proof corals and are currently protecting approximately 942 goats, representing a secured household asset valued at around NPR 10,362,000 (£52907).	• Endline survey will be done in Y4 (FoF).

⁴ The indicator DI-D07 is here being used to track site-level changes in prey species status.

Target: 120 Predator Proof Coral		
Output indicator 3.2: 28% decrease in crop raiding by wild boar/nilgai in the project sites (Baseline: 83.9 %) by the end of Y4, Baseline: 83.9 % (Source: Baseline Survey,2024) Target: 60.40% 3.2.1 50 ha of crop land secured with 2900 m mesh wire fencing by the end of Y4. Baseline: 0 Target: 50 hectares of crop land secured	3.2 This indicator will be measured in Y4 via endline survey 3.2.1 In Y2, 39 hectares of agricultural land secured through installation of 2,450-meter mesh wire in Y1 (650 meter in Hattidamar-Ghuiyabari BZUC) and Y2 (1000 meter in Rapti BZUC and 800 meter in Hattidamar-Ghuiyabari BZUC).	Support additional 900m of mesh wire fencing safeguarding 200HH and 34ha of farmland from crop raiding (FoF).
Output indicator 3.3: 25% decrease in deaths/injuries from tiger/leopard and other wildlife species in the project site (Baseline: 40.6 %) by the end of Y3. Baseline: 40.6 % Source: Baseline Survey,2024) Target: 30.45%	3.3 40.6 % deaths/injuries from tiger/leopard and other wildlife species in the project site has been reported in baseline and final result will be measured by Y4 in endline survey	- Endline survey will be done in Y4 (FoF). - Install additional 8 solar lights in Strategic HWC hotspot benefitting additional 30 HHs (FoF).
Output 4: Relationships between the park management and local people is improved through meaningful outreach programmes, underpinned by increased participation of two focal communities in conservation dialogues, and evidenced by community participation in intelligence gathering and community-based anti-poaching patrols.		
Output indicator 4.1: At least 280,000 people (53% women, 49% IPs) exposed to outreach programmes in buffer zone by the end of Y4, with 4.1.1: 20 school and 20 community education programmes conducted by the end of Y4 (4 in each year), sharing cases from other Nepal park buffer zones reaching to 959 students and 5,000 community members (55% female, 60% IPs). 4.1.2: 6 information boards installed in the project landscape visible at major sites (park entry points, roadside, major market) by the end of Y2. Baseline: 0. Target: 6 information boards	4.1 Video documentary to promote wildlife tourism has been broadcasted through different platform such as YouTube, Facebook and Television platform with more than 16,000 views (16K views on Avenues Television's Facebook page, 270 views on the Avenues Khabar YouTube channel) (Act 4.1.2, Annex 4.18.1, 4.18.2). 4.1.1 Total of 43 school awareness session were carried out reaching to 956 students through trained eco-teachers of the project community (Sec 3.1, Act 4.3, Annex 4.21.1-4.21.3). Similarly, 64 community awareness conducted reached to 2198 buffer zone community people (Sec, Act 4.4, Annex 4.22.1-4.22.3). 4.1.2 Four information boards were installed at East-West passing through BaNP. 28 mounted posters were developed and distributed to promote awareness on biodiversity	- Continue successful mass awareness campaigns through radio jingles and broadcasting of project produced BaNP short documentary (FoF). - Conduct 8 practical sessions with school children and community members visit to the park facilitated by licensed Nature Guides (FoF).

4.1.3: At least 75% of focal community HHs are represented in local conservation dialogue meetings/fora Baseline: 0. Target: 75%	conservation and promote tourism in BaNP (Ind 4.1.2, Act 4.2.1, Act 4.2.2, <i>Annex 4.19.1 & Annex 4.20.1-4.20.3</i>). 4.1.3 Radio jingle for HWC mitigation broadcasted 492 times through 3 different FM stations of Banke, Dang and Salyan reaching an estimated audience of 200,000 audience (Sec 3.1, Act 4.2.1, <i>Annex 4.19.2</i>). 4.1.4 Different conservation days such as; Global Tiger Day, Wetland Day, World Pangolin Day, attended by 189 stakeholders including government officials, park staff, army personnel, and local residents (Sec 3.1, Act 4.5, <i>Annex 4.23.1-4.23.3</i>). 4.1.5 % increment in community HH representing in local conservation dialogue will be measured by Y4.	
Output indicator 4.2: 25% increase in intelligence re illegal activities received by the park (Baseline: 0) from the two project BZUCs by the end of Y3, with 4.2.1: Two 10-membered Community Based Anti-Poaching Units operational (trained and equipped) in the two project sites by Y1 4.2.2: CBAPU conducting a total of 45 monitoring missions in their respective buffer zones by the end of Y4	4.2 % increase in intelligence regarding illegal activities received by park will be measured by Y4. 4.2.1 CBAPU members were trained and equipped in Y1 and Y3 (Sec 3.1, Act 4.7.1, <i>Annex 4.25.1, 4.25.2</i>). 4.2.2 Total of 34 patrolling (Y1-6, Y2-13, Y-15) patrolling events carried out (<i>Act 4.8.1, Annex 4.26.1-4.26.3</i>) by CBAPU members on buffer zone.	• Support CBAPU in conducting additional 15 patrolling missions (FoF).
Output Indicator 4.3: 60% of direct participants of the awareness programmes reporting improved positive attitude towards biodiversity conservation by the end of Y3.	4.3 Out of 155 HH's survey, 66.5 % surveyed household had low positive attitude towards biodiversity conservation. % improved in attitude towards biodiversity will be measured by Y4.	

Annex 2: Project's full current logframe as presented in the application form (unless changes have been agreed)

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: The future of globally significant species (tiger, tiger prey species, leopard) in Banke National Park is secured, multi-dimensional poverty reduced and human-wildlife coexistence improved for buffer zones communities			
Outcome: Improved status of tiger and prey species, reduced HWC, reduced poverty, and an improved relationship between park and people ensures a viable future for wildlife and people in Banke NP	0.1 Improvement in the well-being index of the participating households 170 households (70% female, 66% IPs) by 30% by the end of the project (baseline: 0.55 wellbeing index 2024 Baseline Survey) [DI-D03a] 0.2 10% increase in tiger number and density of prey species (sambar deer, spotted deer) by the end of the project (baseline: 25 tigers and prey density 32.6 animals/km2, 2022 National Tiger Survey report, Nepal) 0.3 Economic costs from Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) decreased by 35% in the participating households (120 HH from Predator Proof Corrals and 1172 HH from other HWC reduction measures; note the 1172 HHs includes the 120 HHs) (Baseline: Total NRs. 50122.58 per HH; with NRs.18787.1(Crop loss per HH); NRs. 31335.48 (Livestock loss per HHs, end of Y4 target 1172 HHs representing 5779 people-including 43 % IPs, 49 % female) [DI-D05a⁵] 0.4 60% increase in positive attitude of buffer zone communities in the project sites towards conservation by the end of the project. (Baseline:	0.1 Pre and post project well-being surveys. 0.2 Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) records, annual reports from the park, pre and post project biodiversity surveys, national tiger survey data 0.3 Annual reports from the park, buffer zone user committee (BZUC) records, project reports, pre and post social surveys, market value analyses for crop and livestock losses 0.4 Pre and post project attitude surveys	- Banke National Park remains a priority area in the Western Terai Landscape for biodiversity conservation for the Government of Nepal. - The park is willing to shift from protection-centric approach to management-centric approach to address various nuances arising in the park and its buffer zones. - Communities living in the project sites are willing to participate in project activities. - Meaningful engagement of communities remains an important tool to promote positive relationship between park and people. - Mitigation of human-wildlife conflict continues to be the primary concern for buffer zone communities. - The park is willing to provide its staff to participate in project activities.

⁵ We use DI-D05a here because reducing the economic burden of human-wildlife conflict also helps households withstand climate-related shocks (as well as more generally improving their resilience).When reporting against this indicator we will convert the number of households (HHs) into the number of people based on the typical number of people per HHs for the area and disaggregate by gender, age class, ethnicity, and IPLC status.

	Positive attitude 98.7-Low, 1.3-Moderate and 0.0-High.		
Output 1 Livelihoods of 170 households in the project sites are improved (directly) through providing access to income strengthening opportunities, underpinned by support for mainstreaming nature-based tourism and strengthening of operation plans for buffer zone forests.	1.1 170 HHs (disaggregated by gender and ethnicity) benefit from livelihood interventions by the end of Y4 (70% female, 66% IPs) 1.1.1 Two community banks (CB) established with 100 HHs by the end of Y1, growing to 115 HHs by the end of Y3 [DI-A03]⁶. 1.1.2 Additional 55 HHs (youths-35% female, 70% IPs) trained in skill development and hospitality training by the end of Y4. [DI-A01]. 1.1.3 At least 35% of the participating HHs operate enterprises through soft loans by the end of Y3. 1.2 Six BZUC/BZCF operation plans within the two project sites updated to improve conservation and governance by the end of Y2. [DI-B07] 1.3 12% reduction in forest resource dependency (Baseline: 95.5 %) of the project beneficiaries by the end of Y3 1.4 At least 50% increase in tourists (domestic and international) visiting	1.1 BZUC records, bylaws and constitution of CBs, pre and post project social survey reports, photographs, project reports, skill development training minutes and photographs. 1.2 BZUC records, park records, BZUC/BZCF operation plans, meeting minutes and photographs. 1.3 BZUC records, park records, pre and post project social surveys. 1.4 Park records, district tourism board records, project reports, workshop minutes, photographs.	- Project site residents are willing and able to engage in livelihood - strengthening activities Community banks can be managed in a way that minimizes risks and meets all regulatory requirements Authorities are receptive to revision of forest plans. - Improving livelihoods results in reduced forest dependency - Tourists find Banke NP an attractive destination and 'spread the word' Significant proportion of revenue from tourism goes to local communities: the set-up, e.g. homestays, community-run rafting trips, is designed to ensure that

⁶ Where relevant, we have added Standard Indicator (SI) reference numbers from the "Darwin Initiative Standard Indicators 2.1 Guidance" document of September 2024 even though our original log frame predated the use of SIs. We did this to bring us into compliance with the instructions on page 7 of the "Supplementary Guidance Notes for Applicants: Follow-on Funding 2025 – 2026" document, i.e. "Our requirement is that your project must report against at least three Standard Indicators, and ideally at least one of the biodiversity and one of the 'people' indicators listed below. If you can report against more than three Standard Indicators, this is strongly encouraged".

	the park and its buffer zone (Baseline 271 tourists) by the end of Y4.		
Output 2 Improved management of grasslands and wetlands, and control of forest fires in priority areas within the core of the park, underpinned by strengthened understanding of the habitat requirements of key species (sambar deer, spotted deer) results in an increase in tiger prey species density.	2.1 Key habitat for ungulate species within Banke NP improved by end of Y4, with 2.1.1 Site-specific grassland and wetland conditions assessed with guidelines produced based on expert consultations about plant and animal species dynamics by the end of Y2. 2.1.2 Monitoring underway for water source use and predator/prey dynamics related to management at two water sources within core of the park by end of Y2. 2.1.3 50ha of grassland managed within core of the park by end of Y4. [DI-D01a] 2.2 At least 500 ha of forest directly secured from forest fire in fire prone areas, selected through consultation with park authorities, by the end of Y4 [DI-D01a], with 2.2.1 15 of fire line managed by the end of Y4. [DI-D01a]. 2.2.2 Fire-fighting unit including 20 ranger posts across the park trained and equipped by the end of Y4. 2.3 10% increase in density of key prey species (sambar deer, spotted deer) within the park by the end of Y3	2.1 Park records, park annual reports, project reports, training reports, pre and post project biological survey reports, pre and post project photographs, guidelines 2.2 Park records, park annual reports, project reports, training reports, pre and post project photographs, water source camera trap data, inventory list and receipt from park for firefighting equipment. 2.3 Park records, park annual reports, pre and post project biological surveys, project reports.	- Habitat requirements are a limiting factor for the growth of wildlife species in Banke NP. - Management and/or creation of key habitats within the park is a priority for improved tiger prey numbers - Forest fires are a critical challenge within the park and its buffer zones.

	(Baseline: 32.6 prey animals/km2) [DI-D07 ⁷]		
Output 3 Reduced impact of human wildlife conflict (HWC) in the project sites (total 1112 HHs/5170 people) through investments in livestock and crop safeguarding, underpinned by improved measures for the safety of people	3.1 20% decrease in livestock depredation by tiger/leopard in the project sites (baseline to be established in Y1) by the end of Y3, with 3.1.1 120 Predator Proof Corrals distributed by the end of Y2. 3.2 28% decrease in crop raiding by wild boar/nilgai in the project sites (Baseline: 83.9 %) by the end of Y4. 3.2.1 50 ha of crop land secured with 2900 m mesh wire fencing by the end of Y4. 3.3 25% decrease in deaths/injuries from tiger/leopard and other wildlife species in the project site (Baseline: 40.6 %) by the end of Y3	3.1 BZUC records, pre and post project social survey reports, photographs, project reports. 3.2 BZUC records, pre and post project social survey reports, photographs, project reports. 3.3 Park records, incident reporting, BZUC record	- Human-Wildlife Conflict will continue to be a major problem in the buffer zones of Banke NP if mitigation methods are not implemented. - Community members are willing to offer in kind support (labour, materials) to construct PPCs. Costs of livestock and crop depredations can be calculated from HWC rates and typical market values. - Funds from local government towards the construction of mesh wire fencing can be leveraged.
Output 4 Relationships between the park management and local people is improved through meaningful outreach programmes, underpinned by increased participation of two focal communities in conservation dialogues, and evidenced by community participation in intelligence gathering and community-based anti-poaching patrols	4.1 At least 280,000 people (53% women, 49% IPs) exposed to outreach programmes in buffer zone by the end of Y4, with 4.1.1 20 school and 20 community education programmes conducted by the end of Y4 (4 in each year), sharing cases from other Nepal park buffer zones reaching to 959 students and 5,000 community members (55% female, 60% IPs). 4.1.2 6 information boards installed in the project landscape visible at major sites (park entry	4.1 Pre and post programme survey reports, project reports, photographs. 4.2 Park records, CBAPU reports, training minutes, photographs, monitoring mission reports. 4.3 Pre and post project attitude survey, project report.	- Information boards and mounted posters help reinforce and extend the message promoted during the school and community programmes. Education and outreach programmes motivate youths in BZUC to participate in monitoring activities. - Outreach work and community participation in dialogues and community-based anti-poaching units results in improved attitudes to the park and its wildlife.

⁷ The indicator DI-D07 is here being used to track site-level changes in prey species status.

	points, roadside, major market) by the end of Y2. 4.1.3 At least 75% of focal community HHs are represented in local conservation dialogue meetings/fora 4.2 25% increase in intelligence re illegal activities received by the park (Baseline: 0) from the two project BZUCs by the end of Y3, with 4.2.1 Two 10-membered Community Based Anti-Poaching Units operational (trained and equipped) in the two project sites by Y1. 4.2.2 CBAPU conducting a total of 45 monitoring missions in their respective buffer zones by the end of Y4. 4.3 60% of direct participants of the awareness programmes reporting improved positive attitude towards biodiversity conservation by the end of Y3.		- The reduction in HWC (Output 3) will also contribute to improved attitudes to the park and its wildlife
Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1) Output 1 1.1 Set up two community banks within the project sites. 1.2 Conduct skill development trainings for community members from the project sites. 1.2a) Higher level skill development trainings to community members for upscaling of established enterprise. 1.3 Provide tools for beneficiaries of Activity 1.2 to facilitate uptake of the livelihood skills. 1.3a) Conduct water source management and channelisation of a local stream, Khappare Khola supporting 74HHs to adapt to changing climate and safeguard 34ha of farmland. 1.4 Establish education fund within two higher secondary schools to support wildlife victim and/or other vulnerable families for education. 1.5 Provide ecotourism support and facilitate tourism stakeholders to promote Banke NP as a tourist destination. 1.5a) Prepare a Nature guide handbook and mobilisation guideline (including protocols, park resource maps with routes, wildlife distribution, key species information, cultural and religious sites)			

- 1.5b) Basic English language training to all nature guides to adapt to the newly flowing international visitors to BaNP
- 1.5c) Equip the revived nature guide association with basic equipment (such as first aid kits, torches, literature in wildlife, handbook and mobilisation guideline)
- 1.5d) 2-day training to all licensed nature guides on promoting BaNP through social media.
- 1.5e) Training exchange visit for exposure and learning in adjoining NPs with experienced NP like Chitwan and Bardia.
- 1.6 Strengthen operation plans of Buffer Zone Community Forest and Buffer Zone User Committees to encourage good governance and commitment to conservation.
- 1.7 Promote agro forestry within the project sites.

Output 2

- 2.1 Conduct tiger and prey hotspot monitoring in priority areas within Banke NP.
- 2.2 Conduct site specific wetland and grassland mapping and profiling.
- 2.3 Conduct workshop for result sharing and expert consultations to produce guidelines for habitat management.
- 2.1 Support the management of two waterholes within the core of Banke NP.
- 2.5 Support the management of 15 ha grassland within the core of Banke NP.
- 2.5a) Operational support for habitat management ensuring management of further 35ha of grassland
- 2.6 Provide equipment for grassland, wetland and fire line maintenance to Banke NP.
- 2.6a) Support BaNP in maintaining an additional 5km of fire line securing key habitats from prolonged droughts, increased fire frequency and intensity
- 2.7 Provide support to improve understanding of the dynamics of forest fire and manage it within the park inclusive of capacity building and basic equipment support.
- 2.7a) Conduct 2 capacity building trainings on fire management including preventive and mitigative measures across all range posts of BaNP
- 2.7b) Provide basic fire management tools across all range posts of BaNP
- 2.8 Conduct exposure visit to Manas NP (India) for park staff to learn best practices in habitat management.

Output 3

- 3.1 Support Predator Proof Corrals to buffer zone communities.
- 3.2 Support mesh wire fencing.
- 3.2a) Support additional 900m of mesh wire fencing safeguarding 200HH and 34ha of farmland from crop raiding
- 3.3 Support non-palatable crops.
- 3.4 Support stall feeding (grass distribution).
- 3.5 Support solar outdoor lamps.
- 3.5b) Install additional 8 solar lights in strategic HWC spots benefitting additional 30 HHs
- 3.6 Quick relief fund.

Output 4

- 4.1 Produce and broadcast a short documentary on the biodiversity, cultural uniqueness and problems of Banke National Park and adjoining buffer zones.
- 4.1a) Continue successful mass awareness campaigns through radio jingles and broadcasting of project produced BaNP short documentary.
- 4.2 Produce and install six information boards, develop and distribute 20 mounted posters to enable awareness campaign to reach additional buffer zone communities in Banke NP.
- 4.3 Conduct 12 school programmes, aimed at facilitating behavioural change for children.

- 4.3a) Conduct additional 8 practical sessions with school children's visit to the park facilitated by licensed Nature Guides.
- 4.4 Conduct 12 community programmes, aimed at facilitating behavioural change for adults.
- 4.4a) Conduct additional 8 practical sessions with community members visit to the park facilitated by licensed Nature Guides.
- 4.5 Engage communities and promote dialogues between them and the park in conservation during national and international conservation days.
- 4.5a) Conduct a local and provincial level workshop with key stakeholders promoting BaNP as an up and rising wildlife tourist destination encouraging coordination and collaboration to collectively promote BaNP.
- 4.6 Conduct exposure visits for community members to promote the uptake of best practices in HWC mitigation, livelihood improvement and forest management.
- 4.7 Strengthen Community Based Anti-Poaching Units and support mobilisation.
- 4.7a) Continued support to CBAPU with operational support and provision of basic equipment for patrolling.
- 4.8 Support CBAPUs to monitor illegal activities within buffer zone forests.
- 4.8a) Support CBAPU in conducting additional 15 patrolling missions.
- 4.9 Conduct buffer zone forest management trainings in the project sites.
- Cross cutting follow on activities:
- 5.1 Conduct leadership training to 20 community members from marginalised and vulnerable groups (focusing on women, disabled) laying a foundation with the goal of strengthen their participation in leadership and decision making
- 5.2 An exit strategy document prepared and endorsed by all key stakeholders of the project outlining key successful and effective interventions of the project with continuity plan and responsibility division ensuring sustainability of the interventions made through the project.

Annex 3: Standard Indicators Table 1 Standard Indicators

Please see the Standard Indicator guidance for more information on how to report in this section, including appropriate disaggregation.

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	If this links directly to a project indicator(s), please note the indicator number(s) here	Units	Disaggregation	Year Total 1	Year Total 2	Year Total 3	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DI-A01	Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training	1.1.2 Additional 55 HHs (youths) trained in skill development and hospitality training by the end of Y4.	People	Gender (men, women) IPLC status (IPLC)		45 Youths M: 27 F: 18 IPLC: 30		45 Youths M:37 F:28 IPLC: 40	55 youths
DI-A03	Number of local or national organisations with enhanced capability and capacity	1.1.1 Two community banks (CB) established with 100 HHs by the end of Y1, growing to 115 HHs by the end of Y3.	Number of organisations	Country (Nepal) Organisation Type (public)	2 Community Banks, 72 members, 92% are women and 75% indigenous and disadvantage group	2 Community Banks, 22 members, 98% are women and 76% indigenous and disadvantage group	2 Community Banks, 22 members, all are women and 77% indigenous and disadvantage group	2 Community Banks, 116 members, 95% are women and 77% indigenous and disadvantage group	2 community banks, 115 members
DI-B07	Number of policies with biodiversity provisions that have been enacted or amended	1.2 Six BZUC/BZCF operation plans within the two project sites updated to improve conservation and governance by the end of Y2.	Number of instruments	Country (Nepal) Type (amended policies)	4 Operational Plan of BZCF	4 by laws of BZUC		8	6
DI-C01	Number of best practice guides and knowledge products published and endorsed		Number	Country (Nepal) Language (English/Nepali)		1		1	1
DI-D01a	Area under Sustainable Management Practices	2.1.3 50 ha of grassland managed within core of the park by end of Y4.	Number of hectares	Country (Nepal) Biome (Tropical-subtropical forests)	5 (Nepal, Tropical-subtropical forests, Vegetation management)	78 (Nepal, Tropical-subtropical forests, Vegetation management)	45 (Nepal, Tropical-subtropical forests, Vegetation management)	128 (Nepal, Tropical-subtropical forests, Vegetation management)	50

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	If this links directly to a project indicator(s), please note the indicator number(s) here	Units	Disaggregation	Year Total 1	Year Total 2	Year Total 3	Total to date	Total planned during the project
				Management type (Vegetation management)					
DI-D01a	Area under Sustainable Management Practices	2.2 At least 500 ha of forest directly secured from forest fire in fire prone areas, selected through consultation with park authorities, by the end of Y4, with	Number of hectares	Country (Nepal) Biome (Tropical-subtropical forests) Management type (Vegetation management)	400 (Nepal, Tropical-subtropical forests, Vegetation management)	78 (Nepal, Tropical-subtropical forests, Vegetation management)	150 (Nepal, Tropical-subtropical forests, Vegetation management)	628	500
DI-D01a	Area under Sustainable Management Practices	2.2.1 15 km of fire line managed by the end of Y4.	Number of kilometres	Country (Nepal) Biome (Tropical-subtropical forests) Management type (Vegetation management)	3.5 (Nepal, Tropical-subtropical forests, Slashing, Burning, Uprooting, mechanical)	6.44 (Nepal, Tropical-subtropical forests, Slashing, Burning, Uprooting, mechanical)	11 (Nepal, Tropical-subtropical forests, Slashing, Burning, Uprooting, mechanical)	20.9 (Nepal, Tropical-subtropical forests, Slashing, Burning, Uprooting, mechanical)	15 (Nepal, Tropical-subtropical forests, Slashing, Burning, Uprooting, mechanical)

Table 2 Publications

Title	Type (e.g. journals, best practice manual, blog post, online videos, podcasts, CDs)	Detail (authors, year)	Gender of Lead Author	Nationality of Lead Author	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (e.g. weblink or publisher if not available online)

Checklist for submission

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the correct template (checking fund, scheme, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and deleted the blue guidance text before submission?	x
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line and indicating where any link to other material can be found.	
Is your report and supporting material more than 10MB? If so, please consider the best way to submit. One zipped file, or a download option, is recommended. We can work with most online options and will be in touch if we have a problem accessing material. If unsure, please discuss with BCF-Reports@niras.com about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	x
Have you included means of verification? You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	x
Have you provided an updated risk register? You should provide an updated version of your Risk Register alongside your report.	x
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see Section 16)?	x
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	x
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	x
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	