

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	30-011
Project title	Living with large carnivores – Integrative coexistence through community empowerment
Country/ies	India & Nepal
Lead Organisation	North of England Zoological Society- Chester Zoo (NEZS)
Project partner(s)	National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) and Wildlife Trust of India (WTI)
Darwin Initiative grant value	£ 6,93,883.00
Start/end dates of project	April 2023 – March 2027
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2025 – Mar 2026) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	April 2025 – March 2026 Annual Report 3
Project Leader name	Mayukh Chatterjee
Project website / blog / social media	https://www.chesterzoo.org/news/living-with-large-carnivores/
Report author(s) and date	Meghna Bandhopadhyay, Rishi Subedi, Disha Sharma, Mayukh Chatterjee

1. Project summary

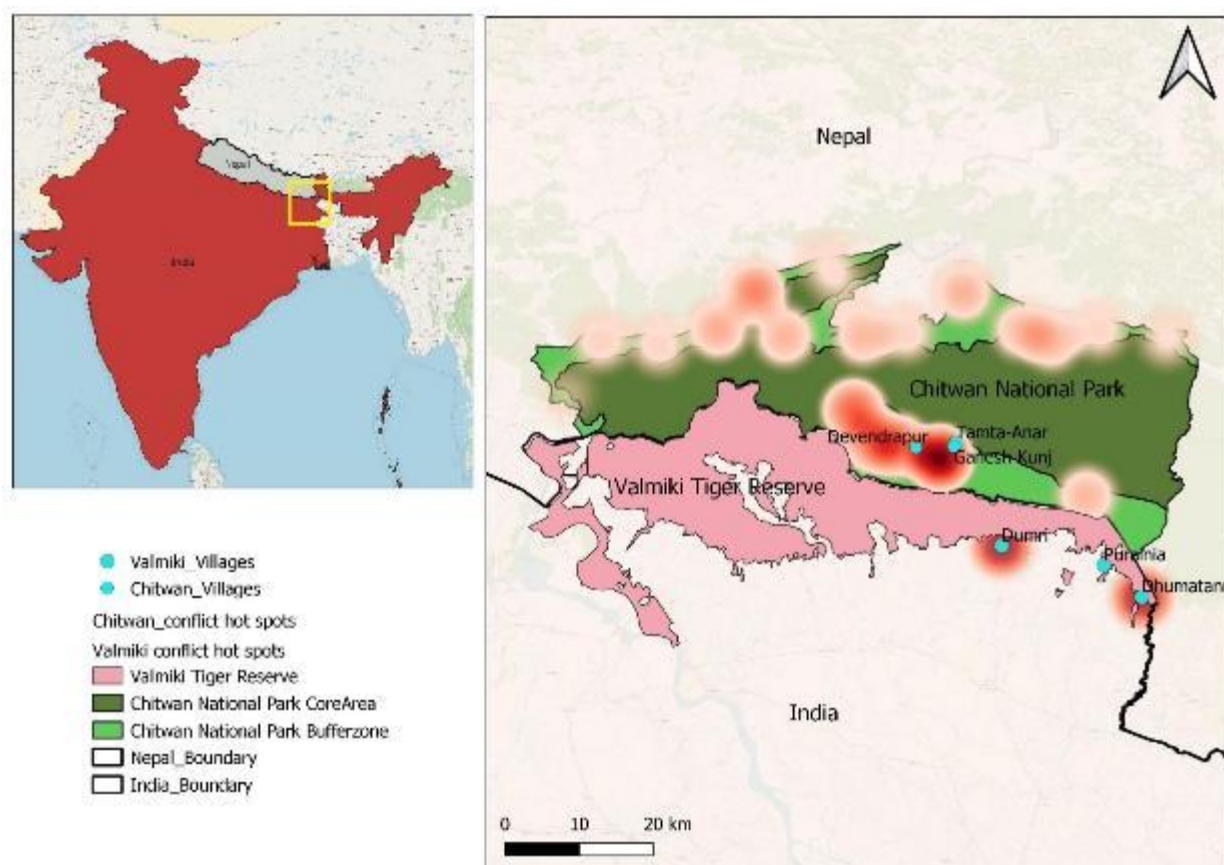
Increased risks of human-wildlife conflicts is highly relevant for biodiversity conservation, because such conflicts are recognised as a major driver of species decline and extinction, as well as habitat destruction, across the globe. Human wildlife conflicts are then not just relevant for conservationists and wildlife managers, but also local communities living alongside wildlife populations, as they are the immediate benefactors of these natural ecosystems which are maintained by the thriving biodiversity therein.

The key challenge related to human-large carnivore conflicts, are preventing the negative impacts such as livestock losses or human deaths and injuries, arising out of negative interactions between people and wild large carnivores. Although losses are generally not proportional to retaliation and conflicts, the challenge itself is relevant because persistent unmanaged losses, catalyse stronger retaliation by local people, jeopardising long-term conservation efforts. Furthermore, losses of property such as livestock, or human death and injuries can have severe consequences for people's socioeconomic situations, food security, as well as their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

In the project landscape many of these problems, such as increasing frequency of livestock losses, and its socioeconomic implications, were identified based on previous long-term work by NEZS, WTI and NTNC in this landscape.

Negative interactions between local people and large carnivore species are not a new phenomenon but have been visibly on the rise in many parts of the world. India and Nepal have both seen a significant increase -almost doubling their tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*) populations over the last decade. Harbours significant populations of tigers and co-predators, also expectedly increases negative interactions with local people. Despite such negative interactions today, a situation of co-existence persists in many parts of this landscape, although it is very rapidly eroding and increases the risks of turning it into a more volatile landscape of human-large carnivore conflicts, as in some other regions of the Terai.

There is ample literature that suggest the criticality of working with local communities who face the brunt of these negative interactions with wildlife, before their tolerance levels drop and their perceptions crystallise into negative ones, giving rise to a landscape of acute human-wildlife conflict. Such escalation then severely undermines and threatens all conservation efforts. It is with this understanding the project was formulated to begin working with local communities in a region where human-wildlife conflicts are only now beginning to arise, to prevent it from aggravating into a widespread situation of human-wildlife conflict. The project location is in the eastern most part of the Terai region of the Himalayan foothills, mainly in the state of Bihar in India and Chitwan region of Nepal. Here, The Chitwan National Park in Nepal and Valmiki Tiger Reserve in India constitute a large swathe of contiguous wildlife haven that is also protected by the respective national legislations. Both these parks also have a very large human population in and around it, which interact with wildlife species on a regular basis. The project focusses on six villages which have since the past experienced significantly high levels of negative interactions with large carnivores.



Map 1: Map of project area showing location of transboundary landscape on Indian subcontinent (inset), and the two contiguous Protected Areas in Nepal and India, along with prevalent conflict hotspots (circles with darker brown shades depict relatively higher conflict hotspots), and project villages.

2. Project stakeholders/partners

NEZS, NTNC and WTI co-developed this project to further support and bolster the work done as part of previous projects, such as Living with Tigers (Darwin Initiative grant no. 23-013) in Nepal and the Terai Tiger Project (supported by USFWS's and Chester Zoo) in India. A new organisation, Greenhoods Nepal was invited to become part of this consortium to take on certain key elements of the project in Nepal that NTNC did not have the capacity for, and they have been instrumental in shaping the follow-on phase of the project along with other partners.

NEZS has been instrumental in conceptualising this project and providing in-house expertise, spanning biological and social sciences, for designing various components of this project. Development was however in close collaboration and over multiple consultations with on-ground partners, local community members as well as other organisations. For instance, in October 2022, NEZS team undertook a series of follow up consultations with the local communities living around Chitwan National Park (CNP), which together with the project leader's previous extensive experience from the Indian Terai regions gave rise to the current concept, which was then discussed with different stakeholder groups and partner organisations to build upon.

On-ground implementation is carried out by NTNC & WTI teams, and NEZS manages the project teams' activities through its in-country project manager, who regularly interacts with in-country teams and undertakes field travels intermittently. The project team members convene every quarter (through hybrid meetings) to review project progress, and in other meetings and workshops to develop activity assessment frameworks or other needs of the project. The project leader also participates in all meetings and undertakes travel to field sites to further monitor and evaluate the projects' activities. Additionally, the project manager also carries out independent monitoring and evaluation through a random sample survey of beneficiaries of the project, interviewing them using a structured interview guide.

One of the challenges in the project has been to plan particular aspects of the project, such as mental health and wellbeing assessments, for which expertise within the project team was absent. To overcome this, the project garnered the expertise from three subject experts outside of the immediate project teams. Please see section 2 of year one annual report (2023-24) for details of advisors.

For capacity development of media personnel and forest department staff, this year the project brought on the expertise of well renowned and multi-award-winning journalists such as Ms Nidhi Jamwal who is an independent journalist with more than 27 years of experience reporting on environment, climate, gender and rural issues, in India and Mr Ramesh Bhusal who is an environmental journalist and has worked as principal environment correspondent for Nepal's largest-selling English daily, the Himalayan Times.

The project's improved cookstoves (ICS) and green-livelihood initiatives continue to be supported and guided by Mr. Rajendra Salunke of the M G Green Solutions, Mr. Paras Nath Singh, of *Yuva Chetna Kendra*, The Goat Trust, *Lucknow*, and Dr Sanjiv Ranjan, Veterinary officer at Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR) (Please see Activities 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7 for details).

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Output: 1. A network of community volunteers trained, equipped and functionalised as Primary Response Team in project areas of Valmiki-Chitwan-Parsa landscape.

1.1: Conduct Focused Group Discussions (FGD) and individual interviews (using snowball sampling) for past data on human-tiger & human-leopard conflicts in project region.

1.2: Conduct community consultations in project villages and other adjoining conflict prone villages to explain the need and function of Primary Response Teams and accrue volunteers.

1.3: Conduct an induction workshop for all volunteering PRTs in India and Nepal to introduce basics of the role and assess various competencies.

Activities 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3 were conducted and completed in Y1 and/or Y2 and have been reported on in AR1 and AR2, respectively.

1.4: Provide equipment to enlisted PRT members and conduct specialized training each year to develop capacity of PRTs

1.5: Inform and guide PRT members to successfully address conflict situations that are reported in and around their respective villages.

Activity 1.4, & 1.5 – Project teams in India and Nepal have continued to see active participation of the Primary Response Teams (PRTs). In India, there continue to be 33 (W – 8, M – 25) and in Nepal there are 22 (W – 7, M – 15) active PRT members. Fifty-eight PRT members were initially inducted and 54 PRT members are actively participating members. In this reporting period, PRTs in and around the project villages have reported and attended to 20 large carnivore related interactions, in addition to monitoring of rhinoceros, sloth bear and gaur movements near villages and the rescue and relocation of various snake species such as the Indian rock python, spectacled cobra, king cobra and also an Indian flapshell turtle,

totalling 80 wildlife related interactions being addressed by them directly. They reported two human (adult males) injuries caused by a leopard and a sloth bear, two human (adult males) deaths due to attacks by tigers - one inside the community forest and another in the agricultural fields, and two injuries and ten deaths of goats (free ranging) by tigers. They also reported to have actively assisted the park management staff in safe capture and translocation of seven leopards which had entered villages, back into the forests. PRT members offered additional support to the local forest department officials by patrolling the area to monitor movement of large carnivores and raising awareness amongst villagers to prevent further mishaps and supporting the bereaved to file applications for ex-gratia claims.

In India, the PRT members were provided field gear and equipment such as weatherproof wear, balaclavas/warm hats, headtorches, caution tapes and snake rescue kits. Eight PRT members undertook an exposure visit to Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary (KWLS) in the northern Terai landscape on 17th & 18th December '25, with an objective of learning and exchanging best practices from the KWLS PRT members who have been functioning independently here since 2012. Here they also observed a predator-proof house cluster in Lohra village constructed under a separate NEZS supported project. (Please see Evidence File: Activity 1.4 & 1.5)

1.6: Conduct annual evaluation workshop to assess functioning of PRTs, celebrate success, promote peer and community support and cohesion, and recognize and reward strongly performing members.

In Nepal, nine events were conducted on the 15th, 16th & 17th of June '25, the 4th, 5th & 6th of September '25 and the 23rd to 27th November '25, across nine schools in the Madi valley (Please see Evidence File: Activity 1.6). The PRTs of Ayodhyapuri and Panchpandav helped organise these and spoke to students and community members about their activities and role in mitigating negative human-wildlife interactions, information on behaviour and ecological importance key wild animals in the region such as tigers, leopards, rhinoceros, bears and elephants emphasising the precautionary measures while entering the forest or during a chance encounter. These workshops were attended by a total of 418 school students (G – 215, B – 203) and 346 villagers (W – 211, M – 135). Additionally, the PRT of Ayodhyapuri collaborated with Greenland Youth Club which performed street plays in various locations of Krishnanagar in the Madi Municipality, advocating human-wildlife co-existence and awareness towards the various wild animals of Chitwan National Park (Please see Evidence File: Activity 1.6). Witnessed by 110 residents, the youth club performed all day on 29th September, on the occasion of Vijaya Dashami – a religiously important day for the Nepali people.

In India, the project team organised an Annual PRT meeting in November '25, attended by 30 PRT members (W – 7, M – 23) and Mr Sunil Kumar Pathak, Range Forest Officer, Manguraha Range, Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR). During this meeting, PRT members shared their experiences and challenges they faced, discussed ways to improve response time and strengthening their coordination with local communities during an ongoing human-wildlife interaction. Eight (W – 1, M – 7) of the most active and strong performing PRT members were rewarded for their hard work and dedication (Please see Evidence File: Activity 1.6). Mr Pathak appreciated the PRT members and assured continued support from the forest department. The PRTs in India, also carried out village meetings in 6 villages on International Tiger Day which were collectively attended by 104 (W – 34, M – 70) villagers. The PRT members talked to the villagers about their experiences since they were inducted as members, their roles and responsibility and the importance of tiger conservation (Please see Evidence File: Activity 1.6).

1.7: Conduct two consultative meetings in each project region, with select PRT members and park authority/wildlife managers to discuss and develop a common framework of operation to ensure better coordination between them.

1.8: Develop a standard operating procedure for PRTs, based on a mutually agreed operational framework by PRTs and the park authorities

Activities 1.7 & 1.8 have been planned for Y4 of the project.

Output: 2. Livestock depredation in project villages significantly reduced through promotion of two tried and tested initiatives Predator Proof Pens (PPP) and promotion of stall-fed cattle, as well as a new experimental novel method, the eye-cow.

2.1: Conduct household surveys to assess livestock ownership, grazing preferences etc. in all project villages, to assess priority need for interventions and willingness to participate.

2.2: Organize consultative workshops in each project village to apprise potential beneficiaries of various techniques to reduce livestock depredation, record beneficiaries' choices and accrue formal consent.

2.3: Organize workshop using select previous Living with Tigers (LWT) project beneficiaries to train beneficiaries in manufacture and maintenance of Predator Proof Pens (PPP).

Activities 2.1,2.2 & 2.3 were conducted and completed in Y1 and/or Y2 and have been reported on in AR1 and/ or AR2.

2.4: Support the building of predator proof pens in all volunteering beneficiary households in villages by mid-year 2.

The distribution of material and construction of the budgeted 400 predator proof pens (PPPs) in Nepal were already completed in Y2. In India, owing to a steep increase in the market price for the materials required for construction of PPPs the project was unable to deliver materials for and construction of PPPs for 46 households, by mid-year 2, and decided to wait for the prices to drop. Construction of these remaining PPPs were completed in Y3, without compromising other operational costs. The project has now completed delivery of the budgeted targets of providing PPPs to 800 households, 400 each in Nepal and India.

2.5: Conduct annual assessment of PPPs built through random house visits in at least 30% of beneficiary households and through maintenance logs.

An assessment of approximately 40% (~319 units) randomly selected predator proof pens (PPPs) built under this project, was carried out by the project teams in India and Nepal. The beneficiaries responded to a short questionnaire to assess (*Please see Evidence file: Activity 2.5*), among other parameters, their satisfaction with and their ability to maintain the PPPs, and to report instances of predation by large carnivores. Around 111 beneficiaries have reported seeing leopards or their pug marks around their PPPs with unsuccessful predation of the goats within. These beneficiaries also claim peace of mind as they feel less stressed about the safety of their livestock especially at night. Livestock depredation by leopards has been reported from neighbouring areas where such interventions have not been implemented, although there was no indication that this had increased. A monitoring exercise independent of partner organisations was also carried out by the in-country project manager across 25 and 45 randomly selected households in India and Nepal, respectively. 95.7% of these respondents said they were 'very satisfied', while the remaining said they were 'little satisfied'. These latter respondents mostly wanted to have bigger PPPs. However, only 78.6% of these respondents said they could maintain their PPPs without any help, and 30% of respondents said they would appreciate some training to maintain their PPPs.

2.6. Prepare methodological framework for assessing eye-cow effectiveness in reducing livestock depredation and train field team.

2.7. Conduct workshop with volunteering livestock owners to apprise about the initiative, its need, the need for a systematic assessment, explain method of data logging, etc.

Activities 2.6 & 2.7 were completed in Y1 and Y2, and reported on in AR1 and AR2, respectively.

2.8: Carry out livestock 'eye-cow' camp for all beneficiaries enlisting in the eye-cow initiative to imprint 'eyes' on all their livestock.

2.9: Monitor and collect data logs from each beneficiary on livestock grazing frequency and time, location, livestock loss, etc., on a monthly basis.

Field teams visited each individual household of enlisted beneficiaries (people who agreed to have their cattle stamped as part of the experiment), where they gathered information about their livestock and carried out the stamping through the livestock owners (*Please see Evidence File: Activity 2.8*). This also allowed the beneficiaries to voice any concerns or ask further questions which the field teams addressed. Details of the stamping are as follows:

Country	Number of households	Number of cattle stamped*	Stamped (X)	Stamped (Eye)
India	34	75	41	34
Nepal	81	231	108	123

The eye-cow experiment is ongoing with the project teams in India and Nepal carrying out 'eye' and 'X' stamping on hindquarters of the livestock from participating households. Since the start of the experiment, 306 cattle received an initial or 1st stamping. The field teams have since repeated their initial stampings nine to twelve times across all participating households. While the field teams are dedicatedly carrying out stampings and are overcoming challenges posed especially in the monsoon period (June-September), they continue to monitor and collect data from each beneficiary on grazing frequency and livestock

health monthly. Some of the other challenges faced include the selling of livestock, or cattle owners who rescind permission for stamping due to poor health (skin ailments) of their cattle or fear of rejection to mounting by bulls at time of mating. No livestock deaths or injuries due to large carnivores have been reported in livestock which are participating in the experiment.

In view of the late start to the experiment, as previously reported and the recent selection of our project to receive the follow-up extension grant, the project teams will continue to stamp livestock in participating households in the upcoming year, and the data will be analysed and presented in AR4/ Final report. The results of the study are also expected to be published in a reputed peer-reviewed journal shortly after the completion of the project.

2.10. Conduct workshop to apprise volunteering cattle owners in project villages on breed improvement and benefits of stall feeding and accrue consent from at least 50% of cattle owners in each village.

Activity 2.10 has been completed in year 2 and has been reported on in AR 2.

In addition to the reported undertakings for this activity, to further promote benefits of stall feeding of livestock, the project teams having conducted workshops on nutrient-rich fodder last year, and this year have supported 15 households across the three project villages in India, to set up Azolla (mosquito fern) beds. The Azolla beds installed in April germinated successfully, and beneficiaries have started feeding their livestock along with mineral mixture for better reproductive health and milk production. An additional 119 beneficiaries have received good feeder stalls (Please see Evidence File: Activity 2.10).

2.11: Train local volunteers (select PRT members) in artificial insemination of cattle through state animal husbandry department or private agency and provide equipment to carry out artificial insemination of cattle in consenting households.

2.12: Carry out assessment of AI breeding improvement success and stall-feeding practice through a rapid survey at the end of project year.

Activity 2.11 & 2.12: In India, the volunteer trained as the artificial insemination (AI) technician received support for refilling of liquid nitrogen cannisters for appropriate storage of semen samples. During this reporting period he conducted artificial insemination of 20 livestock. As stated in the follow-on grant application, the uptake of this activity has been relatively slow in India, and the project will continue to support the trained A.I technician with further training and consultation workshops with potential beneficiaries. In Nepal, where the Madi veterinary centre was supported with AI equipment, the centre has reported 481 beneficiary households have availed the AI services. The project has recorded nearly 580 calves being born to different beneficiary households, the project will be able to assess survival of these calves over the course of next few months.

2.13: Identify at least 2 existing PPP beneficiaries or other capable community members in each project village, to be trained and equipped as a resource person to build and maintain PPPs in respective villages.

2.14: Conduct two training workshops each in the two project regions to train and equip selected 9-10 PPP beneficiaries/community members as a key PPP maintenance skilled workforce in the project region.

2.15: Conduct at least one additional consultative meeting in each project village with cattle owners to increase acceptance and uptake of AI initiative.

2.16: Design and install AI promotional signage at key locations in all project villages to encourage further uptake.

2.17: Facilitate skill development and further equipping and support to trained AI technicians to increase effectiveness of AI and calf births.

Activities 2.13, 2.14, 2.15, 2.16 & 2.17 have been planned for Y4.

Output: 3. At least 75% of targeted forest-dependent beneficiary communities in each of the 6 project villages benefit from 'green livelihoods (GL)', improved cookstoves, and/or sustainable cooking fuels, and significantly reduce their time spent in forest for natural resource collection.

3.1: Conduct household surveys to gather primary information to create baselines on forest resource dependency and identify potential beneficiaries for 'green' livelihood and cooking fuel adoption.

This activity was completed in Y1 and reported on in AR1.

3.2: Conduct Participatory Rural Appraisals with potential beneficiaries to finalize interventions for reduction of forest dependency and conflict incidences and accrue consent from them for different interventions.

This activity was completed in Y1 and reported on in AR1.

3.3: Train local women to manufacture and repair fuel efficient cookstoves and involve them in manufacturing and installing these in all consenting beneficiary homes in project villages.

This activity was completed in Y1 and reported on in AR1.

3.4: Carry out ICS installations in beneficiary households through trained women volunteers.

In Y3, LPG cylinders & cookstoves, gas connection pipes and cookstove lighters have been distributed to 155 beneficiary households (W – 98, M – 57) in the project villages in Nepal. (*Please see Evidence file: Activity 3.4*).

During this reporting period, the project supported the construction of one biogas unit, bringing the total to 6 beneficiary households in India having biogas units. In India, the 16 trained women beneficiaries, installed 200 standard sized and 70 large (*Please also see Activity 3.7*) improved cookstoves (ICS) in the project villages during this reporting period. Till date under the project, a total number of 601 households in Indian project villages received ICS units (including six biogas units), while the 592 households in Nepalese project villages have received LPG cookstoves and cylinders along with additional refills. This is more than what the project had originally planned for, and this was made possible mainly as the previous estimation of costs had incorporated a higher number of LPG cannisters for refills per household than what beneficiaries later reported would be required. This requirement was significantly less and was also duly communicated in annual reports and change request to BCF to allow for carry-forward of funds – £11,650 into the third year. This difference, along with the funds allocated for additional repairs and maintenance, were utilised to cater to the additional households, with only very needy beneficiaries being supported in repairs and maintenance. We therefore did not require any additional funds to cater to more beneficiaries than originally anticipated.

3.5: Conduct training on different alternative livelihood options selected by beneficiaries, using appropriate resource persons from allied government and private sector institutions.

Majority of this activity has already been completed in Y2 and has been reported in AR2. Additional support was however provided to develop beneficiaries' capacity for livestock care and management in project villages. In India three women and two men attended courses and trained at The Goat Trust, Lucknow, between the 26th and 29th May '25. They were trained in topics such as estimating and monitoring pregnancy in goats, preparing nutritional feed mixture, various ailments of goats and their treatment along with vaccinations required, and various other aspects of income generation from goat farming (*Please see Evidence file: Activity 3.5*). On 7th July '25, Dr Sanjiv Ranjan, Veterinary officer at Valmiki Tiger Reserve, conducted a workshop and refresher training for these newly trained Para-vets, delving further in commonly occurring ailments of goats in the region, veterinary medicines (*Please see Evidence file: Activity 3.5*). Similarly, 30 women attended an ICS making refresher training, conducted by Mr. Rajendra Salunke of the M G Green Solutions, Pune, Maharashtra, between the 25th to 27th June '25 farming (*Please see Evidence file: Activity 3.5*). Mr. Paras Nath Singh, mushroom farming expert of *Yuva Chetna Kendra* in Deoria, Uttar Pradesh have been supporting the mushroom farming initiative of the project, since Y1 (*Please see Evidence file: Activity 3.5*).

3.6: Provide technical and financial support to consenting beneficiaries to setup new 'green' livelihood options

In India, the project convened a meeting between mushroom farming experts Mr Paras Nath Singh and Mr Sanjay Kumar, and Mr Vivek Pandey, proprietor of mushroom house construction agency, along with twelve trained beneficiaries of mushroom farming in *Dumari* village to discuss the technical aspects of construction to maintain the environmental variables suitable for mushroom farming. The mushroom house was constructed by erecting bamboo walls plastered with mud by the beneficiaries (*Please see Evidence file: Activity 3.6*). Windows and storage racks have been installed along with a hand pump for water supply. In November '25, the mushroom farming group were supported with 30 kilograms of mushroom spawn which were seeded in 140 bags prepared with mulch/ medium. The project also continued its collaboration with the organisation *PashooPakshee* to train women beneficiaries in handicrafts making. Prior to training, locally available raw material such as grasses, viz. *Munj* (*Saccharum munj*), and *Kharaj* (likely, *Dichanthium annulatum*); bamboo containers, dyes and grass cutting equipment, were sent to PashooPakshee for pre-training tests of feasibility as raw materials, before planning the training (*Please see Evidence file: Activity 3.6*). The first handicrafts making training was conducted between 6th – 17th October '25 which was attended by 17 (all women) beneficiaries and a second training took place from 14th to 23rd February '26 which saw participation by 24 women beneficiaries. To conduct the trainings and provide a workspace for the interested beneficiaries, the project has acquired on rent a large space in

Purainia-Manpur and supported the installation of electrical wiring and lighting fixtures. The trainees learned and created 14 designs, as determined by PashooPakshee, across 5 different categories (*Please see Evidence file: Activity 3.6*). After successful completion of their training, the first handicrafts order was received, and 12 beneficiaries have received their first payment for completion of this order (*Please also see Activity 3.7*).

To support the nursery propagator who were trained earlier this year, the project has supported them by supplying and distributing 1000 Moringa saplings in project and adjacent villages where PRTs have been instated. Information leaflets on benefits of Moringa and Mulberry have been developed for distribution with samplings. As previously reported under Activity 2.10 the project has supported setting up of 15 Azolla fern beds as well in India.

In Nepal, after consultation with the Madi Municipality, the project has supported The *Fulbari Ama* Group, based in Madi-8, Ayodhya Marg, Chitwan, with a *Duna-Tapari* (leaf plate and bowl) making machine. With the recent ban on plastics by the municipality, the 35 women beneficiaries of the *Fulbari Ama* group are manufacturing plates and bowls from the dried *Sal* leaves which are collected from community forests. The project secured required permissions and no-objection certificates from all concerning administrative bodies. Similarly, the project has supported the *Devithan Ama* Group (35 women beneficiaries), located in Madi-1, Chainpur, Chitwan, with turmeric cultivation. (*Please see Evidence file: Activity 3.6*).

3.7: Establish a bi-annual self-reporting system with beneficiaries to monitor use ICS and different GLs adopted, as well as forest dependency, and collect self-reported data.

As reported in AR2, monitoring and evaluation surveys, and informal village meetings with various beneficiary groups are periodically carried out by project teams as well as the project manager who visited various project beneficiaries in September '25, January and February '26 (*Please see Evidence file: Monitoring, evaluation and learning*). The data collected from these surveys, along with that of the project manager's survey of field activities is collated. Some initial observations and findings are as in the table below.

Green livelihood activity (Indian project villages)	No. of Beneficiaries	Number of order/ kg/ households	Income per order /kg /household (Rs.)	Total income per activity (Rs.)	Total income per activity (~£)
Handicraft (order)	12	1	1000 - 1200	14932	135
Mushroom (kg)	12	53	200	10600	100
ICS installation small mould (households)	8	250	500	125000	1,126
ICS installation large mould (households)	6	70	700	49000	442
ICS maintenance (households)	2	52 40 37	@60 @70 @60	8140	74

In September '25 one bio-gas unit beneficiary reported reduced fuel generation. To address this, and for an inspection of all 5 bio-gas units, a visit by the bio-gas technician was arranged. The beneficiaries reported steady and uninterrupted bio-gas fuel flow during a three-week follow-up. During the surveys as well as in a meeting held on 11th December '25, 60 ICS beneficiaries (women) in *Dumari* village provided feedback on the use of ICS. Households with more than 5-6 family members felt the ICS was less efficient. The project teams consulted with Mr. Rajendra Salunke (*Please see Activity 3.5*) and a larger sized improved cookstove mould was developed. Seventy beneficiary households were selected for installation of the large sizes ICS. In Nepal, 48 beneficiary households (W – 25, M – 23), that required repair and maintenance of LPG cookstoves but were unable to do so either due to advanced age, poor health and/or financial difficulties, were identified by the field teams. Cookstove repair and servicing facility was made available to these beneficiaries (*Please see Evidence file: Activity 3.7*). Beneficiaries reported harvesting 86 kilograms of oyster mushrooms (*Please see Evidence file: Activity 3.7*) of which profits were made by sale of 53 kilograms and 33 kilograms were retained for personal consumption by the beneficiary families.

In Nepal, the 86 green-livelihood beneficiaries who received goats for farming, initially have reported births of goat kids, and therefore an increase of 103 goats till now. They also reported generating a cumulative income of approximately £ 8,221 (NRs. 13,15,000) after sales. Eleven of the 50 beneficiaries who received ducks for supporting an alternative livelihood, reported mortality of 55 ducks due to disease and predation by jackals. The remaining 39 beneficiaries reported a cumulative income of approximately £ 1,060 (NRs. 1,69,700) after sales. Beneficiaries engaged in wool-spinning reported spinning a total of 499.5kg of wool since receiving their training late last year resulting in cumulative earnings of £562 (NRs. 89,910). Individual monthly production ranged from 3kg to 15kg of wool per participant. *The Fulbari Ama* group consisting of 35 women beneficiaries have reported earnings of £ 250 (NRs. 40,000) from the sales of leaf plates and bowls.

Output: 4. Current narratives of human-large carnivore conflicts significantly altered to promote coexistence, through focussed capacity and knowledge building of local media personnel and wildlife managers.

4.1: Conduct media report analysis on past reportage covering human-large carnivore conflicts in the project region, to segregate dominant narratives and tailor training and subsequent awareness.

This activity was conducted in Y2 and reported on in AR2.

4.2: Survey of relevant forest department staff at various levels to assess knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions on human-wildlife conflicts in the region.

This activity was conducted in Y2 and reported on in AR2.

4.3: Create a master list of all print media personnel relevant to project region and contact them to apprise of the project and accrue consent for further engagement and capacity development.

This activity was completed in Y1 and reported on in AR1.

4.4: Conduct annual capacity development workshop for media personnel and selected Forest Department officers.

A day long media workshop on understanding and engaging with media for 'Effective wildlife conservation outreach' was conducted on 20th March 2026 at NTNC-BCC office premises for the park authorities, wildlife managers and rangers. The crucial role of effective communication in mitigating human-wildlife conflict and strengthening wildlife conservation efforts were highlighted and conveyed during the workshop. Twenty-three (M-15, W-8), various ranking officers from the Chitwan National Park and Parsa National Park including Division Forest Officer Chitwan were sensitized through the workshop. (Please see Evidence file: Activity 4.4).

Similarly, a two-day workshop on 'Impactful reporting on the dynamics of human-wildlife interactions and wildlife conservation' was conducted in Madi, Chitwan on 21st and 22nd March '26, with an opening session held on 20th March 2026. Twenty-four (W – 6, M – 18) journalists and media professionals from 22 local and national media houses and publications attended this training to further their understanding and reporting capacity on issues related to human-wildlife interactions through interactive learning and case studies. Both the workshops were conducted by Mr Ramesh Bhusal. (Please see Evidence file: Activity 4.4).

On 24th March '26, a workshop on 'Media Reporting Human Large Carnivores Coexistence' was organized, with a total of 20 media persons (all men) participating. During the workshop, Field Director VTR, Mr. Gaurav Ojha, released the training toolkit for grassroots media practitioners titled "BEYOND CONFLICT - Reporting & Raising Awareness on Human - Large Carnivore Coexistence in India", developed by this project. The workshop was conducted by senior journalist Nidhi Jamwal who highlighted the importance of sensitive, balanced, and factual media reporting. (Please see Evidence file: Activity 4.4).

On March 25, a sensitization workshop on Human-Large Carnivore Conflict Mitigation for frontline staff (rangers) was organized at VTR, Manguraha Range, with a total of 20 forest staff (W – 3, M – 17) attending this workshop (Please see Evidence file: Activity 4.4).

4.5: Organize a 'media for wildlife conservation' event to foster trained media personnel to pledge to voice issue pertaining to wildlife through fact-based reporting.

This activity has been postponed as the project realised that the engagement with media personnel has not been at par with our expectations and will foreseeably require additional workshops over greater period

to get media people to a certain level where they would be confident enough to commit to more fact-based reporting in the future.

During media workshops that were conducted, a common thread that emerged across regions was of political pressures undermining the will for fact-based reporting by media houses or personnel. With the follow-on project phase across 2026-27, the project has now geared to undertake more intensive workshops in the regions, before organising this workshop to urge media representatives to pledge.

4.6: Carry out post assessment of FD officers and media reports at the end of project period.

Consultants were recruited to carry out this activity, and in the reporting period 1699 print media articles were analysed, including 6 major newspapers focussing on the southern Terai region. Briefly, the analysis shows a clear shifting pattern from the start of the project, with more articles now focussed on wildlife conservation, wildlife sightings and tourism, compared to previous predominance on reporting of HWC issues. A detailed report has been drafted which will be communicated along with other publications on completion of the project (Please see Evidence File: Activity 4.6).

A post assessment of 20 park officials was also carried out by the consultants, using a pre-formatted questionnaire (Please see Evidence File: Activity 4.6). Compared to the pre-assessment carried out at the start of the project (see AR2, section 4.2) with 45 participants, where the average scores of participants were 46% (range 0 – 77%), the post survey showed an increase in the average by 16%, with participants scoring at least 62% on average and the minimum scores increased by 21% from zero in the pre-assessment.

4.7: Develop a media resource pack to guide park authorities in proactive media engagement.

4.8: Conduct final media consolidation workshop for previously trained media personnel and park authorities in Nepal, to reinforce change in knowledge and perceptions of HWC and to identify additional facets that need bolstering in the future to ensure gradual shift in the narrative.

While this activity 4.7 & 4.8 have been planned for Y4, a comprehensive media resource pack has already been developed for media personnel (Please see Evidence file: Activity 4.4), that was also successfully used in the most recent media workshops. The same will be enhanced to cover park authorities and other allied stakeholders to make the resource pack more comprehensive and widely usable.

Output: 5. A comprehensive understanding of mental health and wellbeing among the local communities established and a co-planned strategy to address impacts of HWC on mental health and wellbeing of people formulated for the project communities.

5.1: Formulate methodology to assess mental health and wellbeing across project villages, especially for most vulnerable groups and train survey consultants and field team.

This activity was completed in Y1 and reported on in AR1.

5.2: Survey project villages and adjoining ones to assess mental health and wellbeing of villagers and the impact of human-wildlife conflicts on it.

The mental health and wellbeing survey was successfully completed earlier this year with a total of 323 respondents from India and Nepal (Please see Evidence File: Activity 5.2). The survey involved a quantitative approach using the Warwick-Edinburgh scale (W-E Score) for measuring mental health and wellbeing of respondents along with several questions about their concerns with wildlife and how it impacts their mental health and wellbeing. Overall, the distribution of data is as below in the table.

	Village Names	Gender	No. of Respondents	W-E Score	SD
Project Villages (India)	<i>Dhumatand, Dumari, Purainia,</i>	M	53	56.1	8.33
		F	69	50.1	8.22
Control Villages (India)	<i>Ekwa, Parsauni, Pachrauta, Rupaulia</i>	M	49	56.5	8.89
		F	52	50.8	9.61
	Total Respondents		223	53.1	9.16
Project Villages (Nepal)	<i>Devendrapur, Ganeshkunj, Panchpandav</i>	M	19	36.7	7.11
		F	16	38.5	8.42
Control Villages (Nepal)	<i>Bankatta, Draupatinagar, Pandavnagar</i>	M	41	36.98	7.21
		F	24	36.17	5.71
	Total Respondents		100	36.97	7.00

While this data is being subjected to more rigorous analysis for a publication and development of an action plan, the brief insights gained from this survey are as below.

On the whole, majority of the respondents had near average or above W-E Scores, showing that despite the rising issues with large carnivores and other wildlife, people's mental health and wellbeing levels were not abysmal. Respondents from the project region in India had overall higher W-E scores compared to Nepalese respondents from the project region. This was an interesting and counter-intuitive finding as the Nepalese project region has had a long history of conservation interventions by the government and civil society organisations, compared to the project region in India which has very little conservation interventions involving the local communities in the region in the past. Furthermore, across sub-samples, men fared better than women in general in terms of their W-E Score, and project villages (where interventions have been carried out under this project) in general had higher scores than control villages where no work was carried out under this project.

5.3: Conduct consultative meetings with village elders, representatives of forest department, media agencies, local NGO's, and other government agencies to discuss results of the assessment and formulate strategies to address mental health and wellbeing.

Since the initial results show that majority of sampled respondents were near or above average W-E scores (average to good mental health and wellbeing), we decided to subject the data to more robust analyses, and so the project results have not been shared with different stakeholders yet. The advanced statistical tools we now intend to use will allow us to discern variables that may be at play in determining the observed W-E Scores and therefore help us identify facets that can be actioned in the field to further improve people's mental health and wellbeing.

5.4: Draft and disseminate strategic action plan to tackle mental health and wellbeing in relation to human-wildlife conflicts and wildlife conservation in the project region.

As stated above, due to the observed average to high scores for mental health and wellbeing, we are reconsidering the development of this action plan. This was planned based on our assumptions that mental health and wellbeing of people in these regions would be average and below. Also, since this is a cost neutral activity, we intend to carry it out during the fourth year once the data has been more robustly analysed and more sound interpretations can be drawn from the data.

Output: 6. A comprehensive roadmap for landscape-level scale up of the project is co-developed with all primary stakeholders, facilitated by trained resource persons from IUCN.

6.1: Carry out three consultative meetings between partners and IUCN trained facilitators and planners, to identify the core team, develop scale-up workshop strategy and process, and identify key stakeholder representatives to engage in the planning workshop.

6.2: Carry out additional surveys across all villages in the landscape potentially impacted negatively by large carnivore species and gather baseline information on demographics, level of conflict with large carnivores, tolerance levels and willingness to participate.

6.3: Conduct multistakeholder workshop through IUCN trained resource persons for preparing a comprehensive theory of change and an aligned logical framework for scaling up the current project across the landscape.

Activities 6.1, 6.2 & 6.3 have been planned for Y4.

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Output: 1. A network of community volunteers trained, equipped, and functionalised as Primary Response Team in project areas of Valmiki-Chitwan-Parsa landscape.

Prior to the project commencement, the project landscape in India did not have a community-based primary response mechanism in place to manage negative interactions between people and wildlife, and while the Community Based Anti-Poaching Units (CBAPU) exist in Nepal, their operations varied greatly from what the project set out to achieve. Fifty-eight PRT volunteers were trained and equipped of which 55 volunteers have continued to be active and have made active efforts in 80 cases of adverse human-wildlife interactions that occurred over this reporting period out of a total of 112 instances recorded since the formation of PRTs. This year the PRTs reported 20 cases involving the monitoring of movements of wild tigers in and

around the project villages, and 7 instances of assisting park authorities in safely relocating leopards which had entered villages, back into the forested habitats. The PRT members received additional trainings on their role and responsibilities, ways to tackle negative interactions with wildlife, and providing support to vulnerable families experiencing damages due to large carnivores. They have also been provided with additional field equipment and weather-appropriate gear. The mega-awareness events carried out saw the PRTs organising this event in which they imparted wildlife conservation and safety instructions to school students (n=418) as well as to fellow village people (n=346), while also interacting with PRTs and retired forest staff from other regions with high frequency of human-wildlife interactions.

Output: 2. Livestock depredation in project villages significantly reduced through promotion of two tried and tested initiatives Predator Proof Pens (PPP) and promotion of stall-fed cattle, as well as a new experimental novel method, the eye-cow.

The project has successfully supported 800 households to fully protect their medium to small sized livestock using predator proof pens, which constitutes about 79% of households who were reliant on goats as a primary source of livelihood in the six project villages. Although the end of year surveys were hampered due to the volatile political uprising in Nepal and the consequent government elections, monitoring and evaluation surveys were carried out across 40% (319 beneficiaries) of the beneficiary households. 78.6% of these sampled respondents have been maintaining their PPPs successfully without any further support, while 30% requested some training to be able to do so better. Of these beneficiaries, 111 households (35%) reported direct observation of failed depredation attempts by leopards due to the PPPs, and 97.5% respondents expressed great satisfaction and peace of mind since receiving support for PPPs.

Several households have already volunteered to adopt stall-fed cattle varieties with improved milk yield through Artificial Insemination (AI) of their cows, of whom 501 households have already been catered to by the AI technicians/veterinarians. While 580 calf births have been reported because of this initiative, the success of these measures will however be assessed after the project ends and beyond because of the time required to produce these new breeds and rear them to adulthood.

Furthermore, 115 households have volunteered around 306 cattle to be stamped as part of the eye-cow experiment and are currently being monitored. No predation attempts have been recorded on these cattle till now.

Output: 3. At least 75% of targeted forest-dependent beneficiary communities in each of the 6 project villages benefit from 'green livelihoods (GL)', improved cookstoves, and/or sustainable cooking fuels, and significantly reduce their time spent in forest for natural resource collection.

Details of project beneficiaries provided support to develop 'green' livelihoods under the project, and their average earnings per month, are provided in the table below. 90 of these 364 beneficiaries were trained in the current reporting period.

Type of Green Livelihood (Number of beneficiaries trained)	Number of beneficiaries currently continuing	Average Earnings Increase/ month/Beneficiary	Remarks
Mushroom Farming (37 women)	12		
Manufacture and maintenance of Improved Cookstoves (29 women)	16		
Para vets (13 women)	0		
Wool Spinning (50 women)	45		
Goat farming (86 households)	80		
Duck farming (50 households)	39		
Artificial Insemination technicians (2 Men trained. One technician engaged in AI)	1		
Nursery gardeners for indigenous fodder varieties for livestock (10 Men)	0		

Handicraft making (17 women trained)	12	
Leaf-plate and bowl making (35 women beneficiaries)	35	
Turmeric cultivation (35 women beneficiaries)	35	
Total Trained = 366	Total continuing 275 (~75%)	

In addition to the people trained to pursue supplementary income generation options, independent surveys were carried out across the beneficiary groups who received resources and benefits either directly from project teams or the trained people above, to understand how the various initiatives had impacted this output.

Out of beneficiaries receiving LPG support (n = 592), randomly sampled beneficiaries (n = 32) did not show a marked change in their reduction of forest usage for fuelwood. Only about 12.5% of sampled beneficiaries who received LPG connections reported to completely stop fuelwood use. However, 84.2% of beneficiary respondents who said they continue to use fuelwood alongside the LPG units, stated that they now source fuelwood occasionally or when their LPG cannisters run out, and almost always source it from the farmlands. They also reported significant reduction in their forest visits, from 16.8 trips / month on average before the project to 4.3/month on average now.

15.6% also expressed concerns on affordability of LPG refill cannisters after the project ceased support. In India, out of beneficiaries who received efficient fuelwood cookstoves or biogas units (n = 601), 31 were randomly sampled and interviewed independently. 77.4% of these sampled beneficiaries stated they have to go to the forests significantly less than before, while the remaining said no as their ICS were not being well maintained. These surveys also suggested that on average, a villager dependent on forest-based fuelwood undertakes 16.8 ± 11.2 trips per months for fuelwood collection from forests, but this has now been reduced to 3.6 ± 1.4 trips per month on average.

The results clearly indicate a marked shift in reduction of forest-based fuelwood use and therefore decreasing people's vulnerability to large carnivore attacks. Continued partial dependence on fuelwood is understandable as people also rely on fuelwood when they must cook for large number of guests or for heating water for bathing etc. In the reporting period in India 70 previous ICS beneficiaries were further provided custom built large sized fuel efficient cookstoves to further reduce this dependency.

With beneficiaries receiving 'green' livelihoods, 50.0% of sampled beneficiaries reported having significantly reduced their visits to the forests which is an increased reporting from 35.5% last year. While remaining beneficiaries reported not significantly reducing forest visit, this is again expected as it has only been only about two years into their new livelihood streams and the project needs to continue these measures to be assured that the trajectory is in the right direction as envisaged in the project plan.

Output: 4. Current narratives of human-large carnivore conflicts significantly altered to promote coexistence, through focussed capacity and knowledge building of local media personnel and wildlife managers.

Our pre and post surveys of media narratives shows a clear downward trend on sensationalised coverage of human-wildlife conflict issues, with more recent articles covering wider issues of positive conservation news and news on wildlife tourism and wildlife sightings in general. As shown in the table below, assessment of 1699 print media articles across the project period shows a gradual shift towards media personnel engaged through the project writing more positive stories and providing coverage related to general wildlife conservation work being carried out in the landscapes, and a more significant increase on reportage on wildlife tourism and wildlife sightings.

Period	HWC focus	Tourism focus	Wildlife sightings	Illegal activity	Wildlife conservation
Before Project	33.85%	5.65%	2.90%	7.15%	14.35%
Post Project	20.65%	11.40%	11.55%	6.80%	15.10%

Output: 5. A comprehensive understanding of mental health and wellbeing among the local communities established and a co-planned strategy to address impacts of HWC on mental health and wellbeing of people formulated for the project communities.

Based on the methodological framework developed in consultation with project advisors and partners, the study was implemented to successfully sample about hundred respondents in Nepal and 223 respondents in India. The data has now been clean and subject to preliminary analysis, although the richness of the data has called for deeper statistical analyses to ascertain drivers of mental health and wellbeing status of people in these regions. Based on preliminary analyses, the survey informs that most people across the two project regions have average to above average mental health and wellbeing score (average to good as measured on the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Health and Wellbeing Scale), which is counter to our expectations. Respondents in Nepal fared lower on average than respondents in India, which is also contrary to what we were expecting, as this region in Nepal has had a history of community-based conservation interventions, especially focussed on reducing HWC compared to the region in Valmiki TR in India where historically this issue has rarely been addressed. Respondents from our project villages on average reported higher scores for mental health and wellbeing compared to respondents from control villages where the project did not cater to. Currently, mainly due to preliminary observations being contrary to expectations, we are subjecting the data to more rigorous analyses using a robust modelling framework using additional other social, demographic and perception variables collected through the survey. We anticipate this will provide a clearer sunlight into what maybe leading to the observed differences in the scores and plan better. At present, since almost all respondents across regions, village types, genders and age groups reported a moderate to good mental health and wellbeing status, it leaves little room to remedy or work to better anything. We will however, based on insights gained from the more in-depth analyses produce a comprehensive report and action plan that will be discussed with community members and various representatives, during the follow-on phase at no additional cost to the project.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

The project outcome aims to reduce the negative impact of human-large carnivore interactions effectively in the project villages. In the reporting period 7 livestock depredation cases, three human deaths and two human injuries, were recorded in the project sites of India and Nepal. Two human deaths were caused by a tiger inside the forests, and another on the edge of a forest in the agricultural fields. The human injury case was caused by a leopard in an accidental attack in the agricultural fields. This marks a significant reduction from 45 average annual incidents of livestock depredation (29 in Nepal and 16 in India), and 12 human deaths and injuries in an average year from the project region.

The project also started a participatory approach of managing negative interactions between people and wildlife species by setting up Primary Response Teams, who today have actively started managing situations and preventing escalation of conflicts. For instance, the PRTs in India supported 20 separate instances of monitoring the movements of tigers and prevented negative interactions while allowing the animals safe passage. In addition to this, seven leopards that had entered villages were safely capture and immediately released back into the forest with support from PRTs.

Furthermore, the project supported the capacity development of 882 individuals from distinct beneficiary households (35 for improved cook stoves including biogas, 37 for mushroom farming, 10 for nursery management, 674 for goat and other livestock farming, 50 for wool spinning and 15 for para-veterinary services, 2 for livestock breed improvement services, 17 for handicrafts making, 35 for turmeric cultivation, 35 for leaf-plate & bowl making) to reduce their forest dependencies and therefore their vulnerability to large carnivore attacks.

Around 587 of these beneficiary households also received material/seed fund support through the project until now (35 for improved cookstoves including biogas, 37 for mushroom farming, 4 for nursery and bee keeping, 357 for goat and other livestock farming, 50 for wool spinning, 15 for para-veterinary services, 2 for livestock breed improvement services, 17 for handicrafts making, 35 for turmeric cultivation, 35 for leaf-plate & bowl making).

This constitutes around 22.37% of total households in the project villages and covers all households solely dependent on forests for their livelihoods based on NTFPs or grazing of livestock (n = 389). The project therefore significantly reduced their vulnerability to attacks by large carnivores as their new livelihood ventures affect significantly reduced time spent in forests for their traditional livelihoods.

Lastly, with all these beneficiaries being either economically and/or socially marginalised, the project has directly catered to them becoming more resilient to protect themselves from negative interactions with large carnivores, and to withstand any negative impacts that this may bring about. While the metrics suggest an apparent improvement in the project villages, they need to be continuously monitored over next few years

to allow for linking the change directly to project interventions more confidently. Also, in the given short duration of the project it is almost impossible to affect a landscape level change but does provide a tested template successful scale up to cater to more communities in the landscape, and to make a bigger visible impact on both people and wildlife.

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

Outcome

Assumption 1: Development driven change in community aspirations will not negatively impact the overall goal of increasing tolerance for losses amongst local communities and their willingness for continued participation.

Comments: While this has not been triggered at the moment, it is expected that over a long period of time this is likely to impact tolerance of people and therefore drive more conflicts to a more acute level. It is therefore crucial that this project continues to develop and expand its initiatives to reach out to a critical mass of people in the landscape, and bolster coexistence across a larger part of this landscape.

Assumption 2: Major policy changes in either of the countries will not render futile any or all of the project's outputs.

Comments: Not triggered at the moment. A policy change in Nepal has led to bettering of motorable roads in the project area, which may bring in a new dimension of human-wildlife interactions in the form of wildlife collisions with vehicles. Additionally, the newly elected government in Nepal now has HWC as a major aspect in their manifesto to support and resolve.

Output: 1.

Assumption 1: Majority of enlisting volunteers will all contribute their services throughout the project period and beyond and suitable succession/recruitment will ensure teams remain in capacity.

Comments: The true outcome of this assumption will be realised over time but the current engagement and participation levels from volunteers, has been encouraging as volunteers have enthusiastically carried interventions and mitigation measures towards resolution of human-wildlife conflict. This has increased in the third year significantly and is expected to be further enhanced in the last year of the project.

Assumption 2: Trained volunteers will have regular opportunities to address HWC situations as HWC incident hotspots can spatially shift over time, or momentarily cease at certain hotspots.

Comments: Assumption has not held as several PRT members are visibly making efforts to attend cases even when it is not in the vicinity of their villages.

Assumption 3: Volunteers are managed effectively to ensure continued engagement and enthusiasm about their roles and pro-active response, to report and attend to all cases within their respective areas.

Comments: Assumption is not triggered now, but project team continue to engage the PRT members actively.

Output: 2.

Assumption 1: Communities are willing to speak about livestock depredation freely before and after the project.

Comments: The baseline data suggests that community members have been freely speaking about livestock depredation and all aspects related to it even when they have not received any support from local authorities.

Assumption 2: Compensation records from government bodies will be shared for data analysis of livestock depredation.

Comments: This assumption has been triggered as the government, including NTNC, our partner in Nepal does not collate this information in a standardised manner, and have been reluctant in sharing this with project proponents. We however have carried out, door-to-door surveys in project villages, and thus have recorded more accurate estimates of livestock depredation over last three years. It also needs to be understood that some parts of the landscape were devoid of predators for a significant period (~30 years) of time and thus negative were almost non-existent as well and are only now beginning to emerge as large carnivores like tigers and leopards repopulate these landscapes.

Assumption 3: Communities will want PPPs and will maintain them.

Comments: Well in advance of collecting baseline data, local communities have actively been engaging with the project teams to gain insights into Predator-Proof Pens (PPPs) and request assistance for their construction. Moreover, our experience from the Living with Tigers project indicates a noteworthy

expansion in the adoption of PPPs in the project area of Nepal, extending well beyond the initial project beneficiaries. Even individuals from neighbouring villages, who could afford it, have embraced this practice.

Output 3.

Assumption 1: Communities are willing to speak to the project team about forest-based resource collection and income from it openly.

Comments: The baseline data suggests that community members have freely conveyed this information to surveyors including their forest resource dependencies, earnings from them, and all other aspects related to it even when they have not received any support from local authorities.

Assumption 2: Communities are willing to adopt the use of improved cookstoves as well as a 'green livelihood' option.

Comments: While the selected beneficiaries and volunteers for distribution of improved cookstoves and 'green livelihood' options have readily adopted these interventions, the feedback from the community at large is encouraging as more members of the community are keen to be included in the project's activities.

Assumption 3: After adopting improved cook stoves and non-forest-based fuels, beneficiaries will completely cease fuelwood collection for other purposes (additional cook stove, for heating water for bathing, etc.).

Comments: This is triggered currently, especially in Nepal where people have been provided LPG systems. A significant number of beneficiaries continue to utilise their fuelwood based cookstoves alongside their LPG systems. The usage of fuelwood based cookstoves however is largely for bulk heating purposes like heating of water for bathing. For day to day cooking however the LPG systems are primarily being used. In India, this assumption has been triggered since the beneficiaries continue to use open fire especially for cooking livestock feed and during winter months to heat water. However, the point to note is that even those people who reported continued use of fuelwood have also reported significant reduction (~74 – 78%) in their forest visits to collect fuelwood.

Assumption 4: Beneficiaries would significantly reduce their dependence on forest resources after adoption of sustainable 'green' livelihoods.

Comments: This assumption has been triggered partially for beneficiaries who have been provided support and training on goat rearing as a non-forest-based livelihood as this is now visibly making several of these beneficiaries forest dependent for fodder for the goats. While this has provided additional economic and food security it has increased their vulnerability to livestock depredation and attacks on themselves or family members. We have therefore decided to discontinue this option through a consultative process and going forward, present only those livelihood options to community beneficiaries that do not increase their vulnerabilities.

Assumption 5: Beneficiaries will be transparent in self-reporting on their forest visits post adoption of Improved cook stoves and GLs.

Comments: Assumption has not been triggered as the project has adopted a different approach for monitoring and evaluation and is not reliant on self-reporting by beneficiaries. In the M&E beneficiaries on the contrary have been very forthcoming and transparent in reporting factually, for e.g. people receiving cookstoves still openly reported their continued forest dependence.

Output 4.

Assumption 1: Media representatives are willing to take part in the workshops.

Comments: The media workshops held by project partners saw a total participation of 44 media representatives. The workshop was attended by representatives of both regional and national media houses. The media representatives actively participated in group exercises, mock interviews and writing exercises to assess the impact of knowledge sharing by the media specialist during the workshops.

Assumption 2: Media representatives despite engagement are free from pressures to negatively sensationalise news pieces, and will continue to publish fact-based, non-sensationalised stories.

Comments: It is too early to test this assumption, although past experiences have shown that continuous engagement and opening of communication channels significantly boost fact-based reporting. It must be acknowledged here that this change does require several years to become measurable, and therefore tested in a valid manner.

Assumption 3: Forest Department officials will be open to changed practices and behaviours and will be willing to partake in the workshops.

Comments: Workshops conducted by both partner organisations saw participation of 43 forest staff who are locally deployed in the VTR and CNP. It is also encouraging that the project is in-line with the prescriptive framework of the government's human-wildlife conflict mitigation strategy, and therefore is in

line with an already on-going change in practices and behaviours of Forest Department staff. The project initiatives engaging with this stakeholder group is thus complementing the national strategies and helping further them. Like, for, media however, visible and measurable change can only be expected after several years of continued engagement and capacity development, which this project has initiated in this landscape. It is worth mentioning here that the heads of local forest and wildlife divisions – Dr. Ganesh Pant, Chief Warden, Chitwan National Park, and Mr Gaurav Ojha, Field Director, Valmiki Tiger Reserve have both been aware of the project objectives and its various initiatives and have also been present at different workshops conducted under this project. *(Please see Evidence file: Activity 4.4).*

Output 5.

Assumption 1: Local communities are conscious and cognizant about poor mental health and wellbeing and are willing to talk about it freely.

Comments: Not triggered as initial impression from survey suggests people are quite willing to talk about mental health and wellbeing issues.

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

The project impact aims at ‘Successful conservation of large carnivore populations in the transboundary landscape of Nepal and India by bolstering human-large carnivore coexistence through community empowerment and wellbeing’.

The increased tiger and other large carnivore populations in the project regions of India and Nepal have inevitably led to increase in negative interactions with people leading to removal of animals from their natural population by authorities either by capture or by elimination. Such removal when carried out consistently over time can negatively impact the source populations. Moreover, retaliation by people because of incessant negative interactions and damages can lead to undermining of, and reduced support for, ongoing conservation initiatives. During the project period no animals were removed or eliminated from the project area, and the 7 leopards that were captured in 2025-26 were all immediately released back into the nearby forests. Constituted PRT members begun actively facilitating the resolution of negative interactions with wildlife species in a much more amicable way, which indicates that alternative ways of resolving problems have had a positive uptake by the beneficiary population. In the reporting period 54 PRT members have successfully resolved 80 incidents of human-wildlife negative interactions. Moreover, the other initiatives supported nearly 587 households equating to around 22.37% of total village households and more than 100% of the households directly dependent on forests for livelihood-based resources. This, while directly improving a significant proportion of the village populations’ financial and food security, it also impacts the reduction of their vulnerability to large carnivore attacks and thus enhances their health and wellbeing. All these interventions converge to create a broader landscape of coexistence, reduced multidimensional poverty and improved health and wellbeing, which expectedly will allow the increased population of large carnivores and other wildlife to thrive despite certain levels of negative interactions with people.

4. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

Activities/Outputs	Contributes to which national policies	Contributes to which international policies
1193 households provided with ICS to reduce forest-based fuelwood dependence and reduce exposure time to wild large carnivores	Goals 6 & 7 of the National Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan (2021-26), India Outputs 3.4 and 3.5 of the National Tiger Conservation Action Plan (2023 – 2032), Nepal	target 1.5 of SDG goal, to reduce poverty by building resilience of the poor. targets 2.1 & 2.3 of SDG Goal 2 to reduce hunger and increase food security target 3.9 of SDG goal 3 aiming to enhance healthy lifestyles and wellbeing of people. SDG goal 15 to foster sustainable land-use, management of forest and its resources leading to reduced land degradation.
587 households provided and supported with non-forest-based	Outputs 3.4 and 3.5 of the National Tiger Conservation Action Plan (2023 – 2032), Nepal	target 1.5 of SDG goal, to reduce poverty by building resilience of the poor. targets 2.1 & 2.3 of SDG Goal 2 to reduce hunger and increase food security

livelihood options to reduce vulnerability to wild large carnivore attacks and increase financial and food security,	Goals 6 & 7 of the National Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan (2021-26), India strategic action (1.3) to enhance human-wildlife coexistence under Nepal's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2025	target 3.9 of SDG goal 3 aiming to enhance healthy lifestyles and wellbeing of people. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 to foster partnerships in achieving its remaining goals.
Livestock protection (PPP) provided to 800 beneficiaries bolstering financial and food security	Outputs 3.4 and 3.5 of the National Tiger Conservation Action Plan (2023 – 2032), Nepal Goals 6, 7 & 8 of the National Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan (2021-26), India strategic action (1.3) to enhance human-wildlife coexistence under Nepal's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2025	target 1.5 of SDG goal, to reduce poverty by building resilience of the poor. targets 2.1 & 2.3 of SDG Goal 2 to reduce hunger and increase food security target 3.9 of SDG goal 3 aiming to enhance healthy lifestyles and wellbeing of people. Target 4 of the Global Biodiversity Framework (which itself supports the SDGs) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 to foster partnerships in achieving its remaining goals.
Livestock breed improvement avenues introduced to entire villages in project area catering to 501 households in total in both countries.		Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 to foster partnerships in achieving its remaining goals.
55 primary response team members enlisted, trained and operationalised, enhancing community participation in response	strategic action (1.3) to enhance human-wildlife coexistence under Nepal's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2025	Target 4 of the Global Biodiversity Framework (which itself supports the SDGs) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 to foster partnerships in achieving its remaining goals.
Zero retaliation in project villages due to reduced negative interactions with local communities	strategic action (1.3) to enhance human-wildlife coexistence under Nepal's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2025	CITES, by indirectly enhancing the protection of the Bengal tiger, Asiatic Leopard (<i>Panthera Pardus</i>), and the Sloth bear (<i>Melursus ursinus</i>), all of which are in schedule 1 of the convention

5. Project support for multidimensional poverty reduction

The project integrally focusses on poverty reduction besides biodiversity conservation, and the local communities in the project villages earn very meagre profits through multiple occupations. Wage labouring is the major occupation besides farming and livestock rearing, for most people in the project villages. The project beneficiaries are all residents of the project villages, and based on our baseline estimations, sections of them who are the poorest, the most vulnerable, and with experience of negative interactions with wild large carnivores have been prioritised to receive direct support through the project. Final selection of type of support received is based on actual need and their willingness to receive it. For instance, support towards predator proofing their livestock pens was provided to only those people who had small and medium livestock, had lowest of per-capita income and had experienced livestock depredation in the past. Livestock, equates to a financial instrument that can be liquidated in times of need in these villages. The project till date has provided resources and trainings to build and maintain PPPs in around 800 households in both project sites, amounting to around [REDACTED] in just materials. This provides safety from livestock predation and therefore financial losses. More importantly loss of livestock and therefore investments lead directly to poorer mental health and wellbeing. Being able to successfully protect livestock through predator proof pens, directly contributes to lowering of worries of losing livestock and bearing subsequent financial losses.

Furthermore, the project also works towards increasing the profitable household income for a significant proportion of the poorest and most needy sections of the community within the targeted project villages and also provides capacity development to several of these beneficiaries so they can support others in need, within their own as well as neighbouring villages. This also works towards improving their social standing in their villages. In the first year the project trained 79 people in different income generation avenues, investing around [REDACTED] in training and resources. Similarly, around [REDACTED] were invested in resources and training of 351 project beneficiaries during the second year. In the third year, the project provided trainings and capital investments for 257 beneficiaries amounting to [REDACTED]. As described in Section 3.2, Output 3, 240 beneficiaries have reported a cumulative income of [REDACTED].

The project also impacts the health and wellbeing of targeted community members, especially women, in yet other ways. The 1193 households to whom the project has catered improved cook stoves (LPG, ICS & biogas) till now, it has conferred a cleaner cooking environment reducing risks of respiratory diseases and other health problems, that can levy financial burdens as well as impair wellbeing. They also provide faster cooking times through efficient burning of fuels, thereby freeing up time for homemakers to undertake other household work or spending quality family time. Several of these women beneficiaries have therefor also taken up additional livelihood sources such as wool spinning through the project. Spinning wool in their free time now provides additional financial income to them, further bolstering their household economy and personal wellbeing.

As experienced from earlier field projects, proliferation of knowledge on various 'safer' and more lucrative income generation sources often have a ripple effect and spreads significantly beyond the scope of the project. For instance, in the earlier Darwin Initiative project, introduced practices such as predator proof pens, horticulture techniques etc have all proliferated beyond the project villages, with many people in adjoining villages adopting these to increase their income and improve their lives.

6. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
Not yet sensitive	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.	X
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	
Transformative	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	

- Rights:** In Nepal and India both, existing laws mandate any community-based conservation to be carried out through formal bodies constituted under these laws for the purpose. In Nepal, the Buffer Zone User Committees (BZUC) and in India the Eco-Development Committees (EDC) and Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMC) are administrative bodies constituted through democratic election processes under existing national laws. They exist today as agencies for community representation and facilitate inclusive decision making and implementation of all community based, community oriented and community driven conservation or development initiatives. All the work carried out under this project has been done so through the close involvement of these village-based bodies. In addition,

the project has also leveraged on close consultations with sub-groups of community members to ensure their inclusion in planning and implementation.

- **Practice:** In practice, despite legally constituted bodies being present local various levels of subtle discrimination persists, especially when it comes to caste or ethnic affiliations and gender. The project has from the outset has been cognisant of this and has approached it by consciously ensuring engagement of various stakeholder groups, especially those that may be marginalised. The project has also carried out focussed group discussions and several consultative meetings with these community groups before embarking on selection of beneficiaries and implementation. Women's group have been given selective preference throughout the various facets of the project, while a marginalised hamlet of 50 households has been engaged independently in Nepal to provide access to the project. In all aspects where beneficiaries had to be identified the project based this not on preferences of the elected body, but on data collected at the outset of the project which allowed us to quantitatively ascertain the households who needed support.
- **Environment:** In the project region, two major stressors are documented to have a considerable impact on people. The first is that of human-wildlife conflict, which is a year-round stressor and the project directly address on this stressor but with a focus on large carnivores. People in the region also experience conflicts with the Indian one horned rhinoceros, wild pigs and macaques. Although these species have not been the direct focus of the project, the PRT mechanism established by the project is also helping alleviate issues related to these other species when incidents occur within or near project villages. More importantly, the project places ownership and control in people's hands to resolve issues with these species. Additionally, the communities in this region face an additional stressor economically due to periodic monsoonal floods, which impairs life and livelihoods of people, mainly those how pursue agriculture and are most marginalised. Again, although the project does not
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Cultural norms in our project area also governs roles and responsibilities of people. For instance, the Hindu caste system outlines work that is sanctioned for certain caste groups, or in general the work women and men can undertake. While this is gradually denuding, in remote rural areas like our project landscape, much of these division of labour is very much prevalent, although with some variations, like, women in Nepal tend to be more open in undertaking roles and responsibilities traditionally undertaken by men. The project has generally been conscious of this, and has constantly used an inclusive approach to allow groups of potentially marginalised beneficiaries to decide on finer aspects such as type of livelihood options they would want to pursue. However, it also has had lessons learnt on some fronts. For instance, the project trained 12 women in three project villages to serve as para-vets for domestic livestock. While the women beneficiaries themselves chose this profession as it seemed interesting and also underwent trainings, they failed to action their newly acquired skills, simply because of societal norms against women undertaking work that is traditionally assigned to men.
- **Representation:** The most apparent differences in representation of people in the project areas is between women and men, although relatively lesser compared to many other parts of the two countries where gender-based segregation is more acute. Still, in most decision making and representation in direct benefits accrual women often are underrepresented. This is very apparent in women having an underrepresentation in governance structures, even in democratically elected agencies such as the Buffer Zone User Committees and Eco Development committees. However, the project has addressed this at the outset as described below.
- **Resources:** Gender bias in representation intuitively would lead towards restrictions to access to resources and services. As mentioned above the project considered this possibility and geared to tackle with any such instances arising during the course of the project. For instance, during the project it was learnt that the BZUC had not supported the representation of a marginalised hamlet in our Nepalese project area and this was subsequently included after active dialogue with the BZUC and community members of this hamlet.

As mentioned above the project has adopted a strong gender and social inclusion framework from the outset, ensuring equal participation through consultative meetings and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercises. These activities were designed to provide a platform for all—men, women, and marginalized communities—to voice their ideas and concerns. Women constituted most participants, and special efforts were made to elicit input from less outspoken individuals.

Beneficiary selection was based on unbiased baseline data, prioritizing underprivileged groups with low per capita income, limited resources like livestock, and a history of negative interactions with large carnivores. A significant portion of the project's material and financial aid was directed toward women, who often represented their entire household. For instance, 671 improved cookstoves were distributed to

women, with 30 of them receiving refresher training to produce and maintain the stoves, providing a new income stream. Similarly, 60.47% of LPG systems were received by women; for the rest, male recipients accepted them on behalf of the household, with women as primary users due to their roles in kitchen management.

Women also comprised 90.50% of recipients in alternative livelihood programs (out of 706 total beneficiaries), while even in the traditionally male-dominated Primary Response Teams (PRTs), the project was able to uplift female membership and participation to 27% (15 members) from 10.1%.

Most women beneficiaries are linked to Self-Help Groups under JEEViKA, and some are part of specialized women only groups. Their prior experience with community-based organizations has strengthened project implementation and sustainability. Many trained women are now extending services, such as ICS manufacturing, to nearby non-project villages, turning these into supplementary livelihoods.

All residents of project villages belong to indigenous groups, typically living in hamlets organized by caste or social group. The project has ensured equitable representation from all hamlets, with little evidence of marginalization. Even one of the secluded hamlets was independently included into the project through active dialogues with the BZUC, and finally catered project driven benefits to them.

Finally, women are also well-represented in partner organizations, occupying leadership roles such as trustees and department heads, thereby reinforcing gender equity internally and externally across project interventions.

7. Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)

The project's monitoring and evaluation framework is based on the log frame approved at Stage 2 and later revised following feedback from BCF (see Annexe 2 for indicators and measures). This includes clearly defined outcome and output indicators, alongside a project timeline developed by the project lead with inputs from technical advisors and partners.

Activities have been broken down into sub-activities, enabling quarterly assessments of progress. At the end of each quarter, online review meetings were convened where project partners presented updates on planned activities as per the log frame. These meetings also served as a platform for partners to discuss their implementation experiences, share challenges, and identify solutions.

In addition to quarterly reviews, the in-country project manager maintained regular communication via telephone and field visits to monitor implementation and gather updates. Field trips were also used to evaluate progress, resolve issues, and support planning. The project lead, along with Chester Zoo's in-country manager and project teams, also undertook visits to project villages for on-site evaluations and stakeholder engagement.

Responsibility for monitoring and evaluation was shared between in-country project leads and implementation coordinators. Coordinators were tasked with overseeing on-ground implementation and reporting progress monthly.

In response to reviewer feedback on annual report 1, a more systematic and independent evaluation process has been introduced. Using an interview guide, randomly selected beneficiaries are visited and interviewed by the in-country project manager (see Evidence File: Monitoring and Evaluation) every quarter. The interview guide covers discussion points on the type of support received, satisfaction levels, and perceived shortcomings. This longitudinal evaluation approach offers deeper insights into intervention success from beneficiaries' perspectives. Notably, the in-country project manager is a woman, which has encouraged open communication with predominantly female beneficiaries, contributing to a more balanced and transparent evaluation process, alongside the more methodical monitoring process using the frame and the timeline (workplan).

In this reporting period the project consultant Amy Fitzmaurice also visited the field sites in Nepal and India to oversee the work carried out under the eye-cow experiment, support with the data collection and collation and guide the team on other aspects of this study, along with organising and steering specific meetings with partners to further development of a conservation toolkit for stakeholders (see Evidence File: Monitoring and Evaluation).

Overarchingly however, the project repeatedly attempts at recording the aim of the project, which is a sustained or higher level of coexistence, which can be visibly fathomed in the notable reduction in the number of animals that are removed from the populations, or are eliminated through retaliatory action. Over the three years this clearly appears to have been positively impacted as can be witnessed in lowered

pressures on the wildlife authorities to deal with situations involving large carnivores, and higher engagement of local PRTs in managing numerous such situations.

8. Lessons learnt

Although the uptake of the project activities by the local communities and stakeholders, and the potential envisioned impact on the project region continues to be positive, the project over the last three years has learnt several lessons.

While most of the additional livelihood options worked well, the project brought out the learning about certain nuanced norms that inhibited women from pursuing specific work streams in a full-fledged manner. For instance, women trained as para-vets were unable to impactfully cater their services to beneficiary households as this type of occupation is largely considered a man's job. Similarly, it required extensive dialogue and convincing by project teams to onboard women into the PRT groups. On these fronts, we realised that change could be brought about to increase gender balance but required substantially longer time periods than what the project allowed.

Similarly, two of the livelihood options that women beneficiaries chose – leaf plate making in Nepal and Mushroom farming in India – while taking off well had relatively higher drop out rate. It was realised that the drop out largely was because of the perceived market constraints and the perception of their inability to cater to markets beyond their own villages. Although this issue was addressed and resolved through consultative meetings and part of the beneficiary groups continue to pursue this occupation today, we realised that these required more robust business planning. The fortuitously arriving follow-on extension to this project has now provided us the opportunity to have these inclusively developed business plans in place to allow these groups to expand their operations meaningfully, bringing in additional interested women beneficiaries and eventually evolving these into women run micro-enterprises.

Another learning in relation to a livelihood option has been that of goat farming. Goat farming is a popular practice across the project region and almost every other household has one or more goats. This led to a large section of beneficiaries opting for receiving goat farming trainings and goat kids as they had the space and inclination and did not have the resources to start. However, with the goal of reducing people's visits to the forest to collect resources, this initiative appeared to be counterproductive. While almost all beneficiaries of this initiative undoubtedly received profits from selling goats and therefore had an increased financial and food security, a large proportion of sampled beneficiaries who were interviewed nevertheless said that fodder requirement for their goats was now making them rely on the forest for fodder extraction. Some also said that the newly acquired goats were now attracting leopards to their homesteads. While this was not picked up in the regular monitoring by our partners, our independent M&E detected this consistently across beneficiaries who had received goats and goat rearing training. We addressed this to an extent by providing PPPs to many of these beneficiaries and also promoted at home stall feeding. However, we believe now that promoting goat farming on the long-run would induce more negative interactions with large carnivores, and the project therefore needs to cease its promotion and upscale the promotion of livestock protection and fodder development.

On protection of livestock, the project has now realised that although all people having medium to small sized livestock expressed their desire to have PPPs under the project, not all of them (30%) were adept at building and maintaining them. This was because of low skill levels and because several beneficiaries were elderly. The project has now geared to develop in-situ skill sets through beneficiaries with recognised skills at building and maintaining PPPs and their willingness to cater their skills and services to other needy people at a nominal cost.

Similarly, with the Artificial Insemination of cattle saw a slow uptake in India compared to Nepal. While this initially appeared to be a result of people's apprehension with this technique to improve cattle varieties, it was eventually learnt that it was mainly because the project had not carried out extensive knowledge sharing and sensitisation about it before approaching potential beneficiaries. With the follow-on extension now, the project aims to make greater efforts towards promoting this to increase uptake, while also working more with beneficiaries who adopt this and start rearing stall-fed varieties to impart techniques for preparing feed for tehri cattle without relying on forests for fodder.

Lastly, a learning regarding changing the popular media narrative through this project has been that, while the activities themselves have been impactful, it is essential to engage with senior correspondents and desk-editors of local print media dailies to change the trend of negative sensationalism. Currently the project has engaged senior on-ground reporters and has seen a visible impact in a short of focus in the media stories and coverage. But this change is likely to have a little lasting effect as senior correspondents and desk editors often have a greater say in how stories and media coverage need to be framed and sometimes these are politically steered as well. Moving forward therefore the project will aim to only engage with this subset of media stakeholders, while also working with park and wildlife authorities to gear them up to provide seamless fact-based information with sensitivity.

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

The reviewers' feedback to the previous annual report (AR2) required us to report on the following points in the subsequent annual reporting. Our response to the feedback comments are provided below to each corresponding point.

Reviewer feedback 1: Registration of existing groups with local municipal governments for access to funds and services

Response: In Nepal all beneficiaries are already linked with the existing BZUC of the villages which serves to channels funds to beneficiaries from various agencies including the government. The project has already tied up some of the beneficiary groups such as the women spinning wool, to existing enterprises to ensure that funds and services continue to be received beyond project period. In the follow-on phase that was recently awarded to the project, we aim to work with other beneficiary groups which are also registered, such as those that have adopted leaf plate making (*Phulbari Ama & Devithan Ama groups*) as a livelihood stream, to help them expand their marketing opportunities through comprehensively developed business plans. For these groups we will make efforts to tie them up with any eligible options for sustained fund and service flow. Similarly, in India the beneficiaries are linked to Eco-Development committees (EDC) and Joint forest management committees (JFMC) to ensure channelling of any funds that are directed towards development or conservation work in those villages. In addition, like in Nepal, the project has already tied up beneficiaries such as the women's group manufacturing handicrafts with private companies such as PashooPakshee for sustained support. In the follow-on phase the project will also aim to register another beneficiary group who have adopted mushroom farming with existing government finance schemes to sustain financial support.

Reviewer feedback 2: Disaggregate participants into training participants and those who actually implemented the activity afterwards. Possibly make small revision to log frame.

This is already being done, although we don't feel changing the Log frame at this stage would be relevant. For instance, in reporting on PRTs, we have clarified in section 3.1, Activity 1.4 & 1.5 that out of 58 PRT members trained and equipped in total, 54 have been actively working to address human-large carnivore interactions. While this has been mentioned across all relevant places, we have now also summarised this in a table on page 13 for report on Output 3.

Reviewer feedback 3: Include information on how materials for exceeded targets were obtained.

We have responded on this in our responses to the feedback for the follow-on project and have added the same below for the reviewers' reference as well.

Briefly, the total PPP beneficiaries that the project had set out to cater to originally was 800 (400 in India and 400 in Nepal), and the same was accordingly budgeted for. By the time of the last annual report, we had completed supporting 754 PPP beneficiaries as per the plan, but this was mistaken by the reviewer as an over achievement. The individual PPP support costs only accounted for the materials required such as roofing, wire mesh, and nails and transportation costs. All beneficiary households provided in-kind support in the form of wooden poles, ropes and labour. We have cleared this further in our upcoming annual report which will be submitted in due time. The project has however surpassed estimated beneficiaries of the improved cook stove initiative. Till date it has managed to support 595 households in India and 592 households in Nepal. This is 195 more than what we had budgeted for in India. This was possible due to our ultimate selection of a low-cost high-efficiency woodstove design, manufactured with locally sourced materials such as mud and hay. The major costs of these being incurred in procurement of metal moulds for manufacturing the ICSSs, and metal grates and chimneys. This lowered costing of individual units allowed us to cater to far more households than previously anticipated. In Nepal, the project has managed to exceed the number of beneficiary households by 192. This was possibly primarily because of our overestimation of number of refills required and projection of how many households would need support for cannister refills across the project period. This requirement was significantly less, and was also duly communicated in annual reports and change request to BCF to allow for carry-forward of funds ~ £11,650 into the third year. This, along with the funds allocated for additional repairs and maintenance, were utilised to cater to the additional households, with only very needy beneficiaries being supported in repairs and maintenance.

10. Risk Management

In the last 12 months two main new risks materialised and the same have been captured in the risk register as well. Firstly, a pending provisioning of LPG cannisters to 475 number of households in Nepal was stalled due to the breakout of the war between Iran and USA, leading to disruption in fuel supplies. While this itself has not impaired the activity, it led us to defer it until prices trickled down. These cannister refills would serve as additional stock for beneficiaries when they finished their existing cannisters and refills, and since this was not an immediate requirement the funds were moved through the BZUC to the beneficiary households for purchase when prices dropped.

Secondly, our partner NTNC reported in March 2026 that they would not be able to continue to implement the follow-on extension to the project due to other impending commitments. Owing to a new partner Greenhoods Nepal already included into this consortium, this risk has been mitigated as the new partner has stepped up to undertake all work that was planned to be originally implemented by NTNC. Owing the fact that the community-based initiatives are all driven through existing BZUCs, NTNC's decision to discontinue anticipatedly will not impact the extension phase of the project. This change has also been communicated to BCF and has been approved.

11. Scalability and durability

As mentioned in the exit plan, the project has been designed with long-term sustainability and scalability at its core, integrating livelihood-based solutions with conflict mitigation strategies to address the needs of over 100% of the targeted households in the project villages. Its broader aim to develop model 'brightspots' seeks not only to enable local people to withstand the impacts of human-large carnivore interactions but also to shift their perceptions and increase tolerance towards large carnivore species.

For 'green' livelihoods, the project has proactively tied up with existing local entrepreneurial endeavours. In Nepal, wool spinning beneficiaries have been linked with a local cottage industry that supplies raw materials, trains them, and buys the finished yarn at fair prices. The leaf-plate & bowl making *Fulbari Ama* group and the turmeric cultivating *Devithan Ama* group are both existing women's self-help groups in the project villages of Nepal. In India, women Self Help Groups have been linked to a local company that trains and markets locally produced handicrafts at fair value, ensuring sustainability beyond the project period. Similarly, for ICSSs, the project has developed skillsets in two Self Help Groups of 29 women, equipping them to produce and repair ICSSs across and beyond project villages. The project aims to develop the mushroom farming women's group into a registered co-operative once they are trained in and provided a business plan.

For livestock-related interventions, local youth and women have been trained and equipped in breed improvement and veterinary care to deliver services and generate income. LPG distribution has leveraged existing subsidies, while PPPs were developed with minimal costing and flexibility in design, encouraging long-term maintenance and replication.

To shift harmful conflict responses, the project established Primary Response Teams (PRTs) to promote non-lethal, community-level interventions. These have been integrated into Community-Based Anti-Poaching Units in Nepal and Eco-Development Committees in India.

A management committee comprising local community members and in-country partners is being formalised to continue initiatives for expansion and upscaling. The project has also reached out to other in-country organisations, who with select committee members are currently in the process of developing scale-up plan for broader implementation across the Chitwan-Valmiki-Parsa landscape.

In the fourth year of the follow-on extension the project also aims at bolstering some of these initiatives to further enhance their sustainability. In this extension the project will also delve into a multi-stakeholder planning to draw out a comprehensive plan for scaling the aspects of the project that have delivered successful impact, across a wider part of the landscape. This is important as the current project focussed on a relatively small scale (six villages) to quantitatively assess if the broader theory of change is reliable and can affect positive change. To extend this positive impact across the much larger landscape, robust planning involving multiple stakeholders including local community representatives, the local government departments and allied organisations, is crucial to develop a costed scale-up plan.

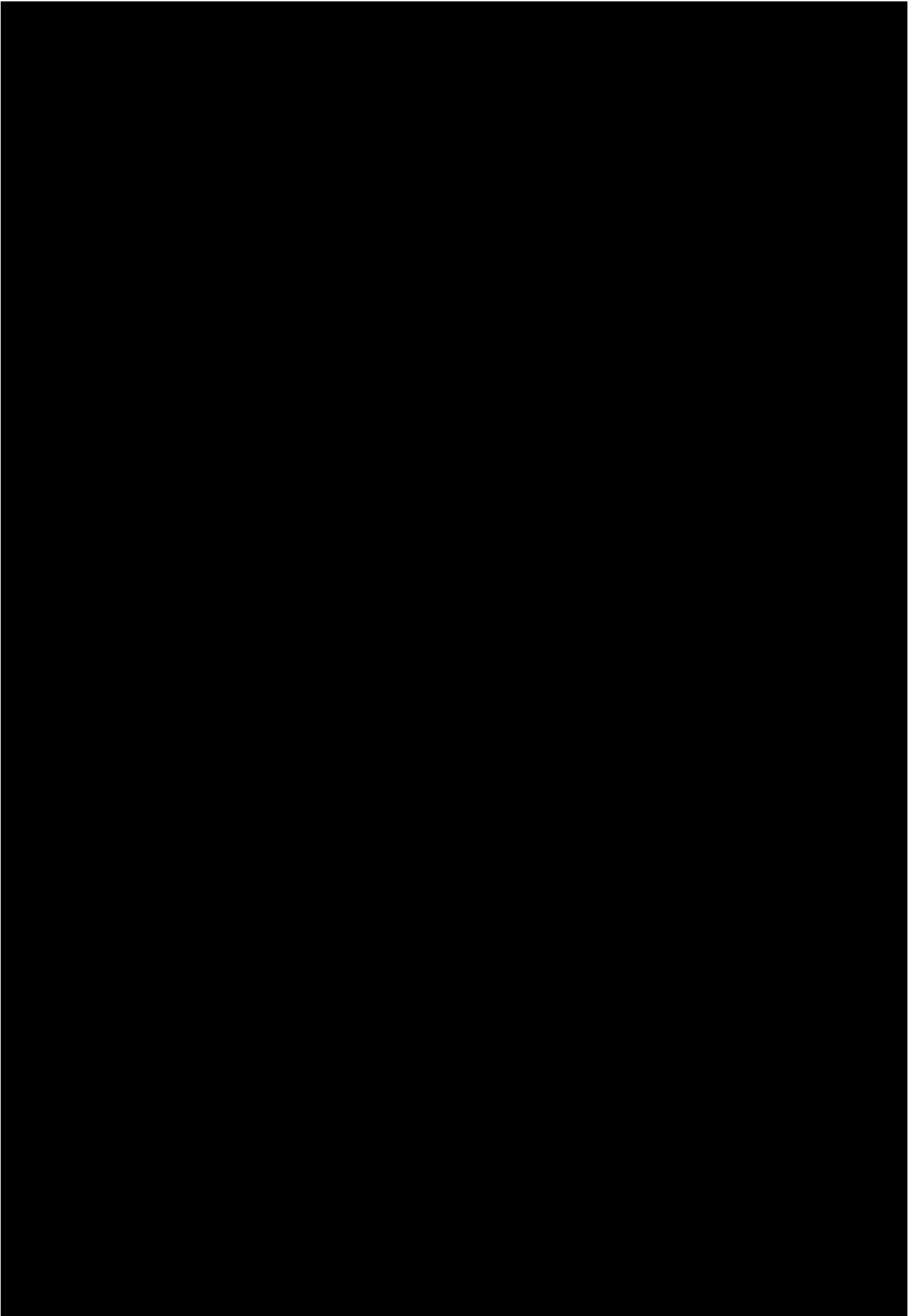
12. Darwin Initiative identity

The project has already been highlighted on NEZS's website as an independent project supported by DEFRA. Social media posts were also done around the start of the project tagging in relevant

embassies/consulates as well as the required tags/handles of Darwin Initiative / Biodiversity challenge funds, on X (Twitter)/LinkedIn/Meta (Facebook) and Instagram.

In addition to this, local newspapers have reported on the initiation of this project based on updates provided by the state forest departments. Darwin Initiative is well known in both India and Nepal, however in the more remote locations of the project sites it is not well known, and the current project is helping familiarise people through the project signage, wherein the Darwin Initiative logo is prominently placed (*Please see evidence file: Darwin Initiative Identity section*).

The support provided under the Darwin Initiative by DEFRA is also strongly emphasised in regular meetings with all stake holders and in day-to-day communications.





14. Project expenditure

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

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2025/26 Grant (£)	2025/26 Total Darwin Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)				
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items (see below)				
Others (see below)				
TOTAL		154,259.41	2.65%	

**The consultancy costs are significantly underspent by our partner NTNC because they carried out the last media workshop using in-house experts rather than inviting external resource people as in previous workshops.

*** This expense head is underspent as NEZS did not require the costs from printing and publication. Most of the publication and printing costs (e.g. for the media manual) were subsumed under operating costs and the main publication of the mental health and wellbeing action plan has been postponed and will be carried out on a no-cost basis.

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

None

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).

File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)	File Name or File Location	Caption including description, country and credit	Social media accounts and websites to be tagged (leave blank if none)	Consent of photographer and subjects received (delete as necessary)

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2025-2027

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2024 – March 2025	Actions required/planned for next period
Impact Large carnivore populations are successfully conserved in the transboundary landscape of Nepal and India by bolstering human-large carnivore coexistence through community empowerment and wellbeing	The project till date has developed a participatory framework for managing conflicts that may arise, by inducting and training 58 local community volunteers as Primary responders, 54 of whom already addressed 80 cases of wildlife emergencies, including 20 on the Indian side involving a tigers, preventing any negative interactions, and ensuring the tigers also were not killed or captured. The project also engaged with and supported 706 beneficiary households which are directly dependent on forests for livelihood-based resources, to improve their supplementary income thereby positively bettering their economic situation, while 476 beneficiaries were provided training on livestock practices and management to reduce their dependence on forest-based resources, thereby reducing both forest degradation and people's vulnerability to negative interactions with large carnivores in forests. All of this allows for the increased large carnivore populations to thrive, by preventing conflict driven removal of animals from the population.	
Outcome: Negative impacts of human-large carnivore interactions significantly reduced in six 'model' villages around Valmiki-Chitwan-Parsa landscape across India and Nepal, through participatory conflict management, poverty alleviation and behaviour change.		
Outcome indicator 0.1 By end of year 3 at least 40% cases addressed by Primary Response Team (PRT) members are resolved amicably preventing further loss of human lives and injuries; death/injury of the wild animal involved; or the need for the animal's removal into captivity.	Progress till date: A total of 192 incidents involving large carnivores were reported from the project villages of both India and Nepal since the formation of the PRTs. Of these, 44 incidents have been resolved by the PRT members preventing loss of human and livestock lives without capture or removal of animal into captivity with 14 other incidents were resolved by safe removal of large-carnivores from densely populated areas to relocation in national parks, which are around 31.8% of reported cases.	
Outcome indicator 0.2 By end of year 3 livestock depredation by large carnivores reduced by at least 75% in all model villages where targeted interventions are implemented. (DI-D15)	Progress till date: In the reporting period, there was an observed reduction in livestock depredation cases that were recorded. Compared to previous annual averages of 29 and 16 incidents per year in the same project villages in Nepal and India, respectively, this reporting period witnessed only 7	

	cases of livestock depredation by large carnivores. This suggests 82% decline in project villages in Nepal and 68.8% decline in project villages in India. The consistency of this reduction over time however will be stronger evidence of the impact of the projects' interventions affecting this change.										
Outcome indicator 0.3 By end of year 3, the average frequency of trips to forests by beneficiaries reduced by 60%. (DI-B09)	Progress Update: Among LPG beneficiaries (n=592), a sample (n=32) showed only 12.5% fully stopped fuelwood use, while 84.2% now use it occasionally, mainly from farmlands. Forest visits dropped from 16.8 to 4.3 trips/month. In India, 77.4% of ICS/biogas users (n=31) reported reduced forest visits, with averages declining to 3.6/month. Some (15.6%) cited LPG refill costs as a concern. Overall, fuelwood dependence and associated forest exposure have significantly decreased, though partial use persists for high-energy needs.										
Outcome indicator 0.4 By end of year 3, loss of income from reduced forest resource dependence amongst at least 75% of beneficiaries of the programme is offset 100% with the income generated from adopted 'green' livelihoods (DI-D16)	Progress Update: Baseline data showed 1,037 households relied on forests, with 414 being most critically dependent yet earning only about £73.3–£167.8 annually from various wild products. Introduced green livelihoods, such as goat rearing and mushroom farming, aim to provide higher, more stable incomes, while also keeping them occupied and therefore less dependent on forests. Among beneficiaries, 50% reported significantly reduced forest visits, up from 35.5% last year. Others reported no major change, likely due to the short two-year transition period, highlighting the need for continued support to ensure sustained progress.										
Outcome indicator 0.5 By end of year 3, at least 25% of local media reports by 60% of the media personnel engaged, covering human-large carnivore conflicts, are fact based and neutral (DI-C15)	Progress update: Till date the project has engaged with 136 media personnel (Y1 – 48, Y2 – 44, Y3 - 44), conducting workshops on impactful reporting and more than 60% have reported positively and in a fact-based manner post training. More importantly, year 3 assessment of media reports covering nearly 1600 individual reports over last three years shows a significant shift in focus on more positive aspects such as wildlife sightings and tourism. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th><th>Positive news</th><th>Negative news</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2023 and prior</td><td>7.63%</td><td>20.50%</td></tr> <tr> <td>2024 and after</td><td>12.68%</td><td>13.73%</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Positive news	Negative news	2023 and prior	7.63%	20.50%	2024 and after	12.68%	13.73%	
	Positive news	Negative news									
2023 and prior	7.63%	20.50%									
2024 and after	12.68%	13.73%									

Outcome indicator 0.6 At least 30% of cases addressed by the park and wildlife managers are resolved without capture and translocation of the large carnivore involved.	Progress Update: Despite improved understanding from trainings, park and wildlife managers continue to prioritize capture and relocation in conflict situations. However, the establishment and mobilisation of PRTs have reduced public pressure and the need for such interventions. During the reporting period, 20 large carnivore incidents were managed without capture, while only 7 leopard incursions required capture and relocation; all captured individuals were subsequently released back into the forest.	
Outcome indicator 0.7 By end of year 3, impacts of varying dimensions of human-wildlife conflicts on people's mental health and wellbeing in rural communities in the project area assessed, and a detailed strategic plan is produced and shared with all relevant stakeholders.	Progress Update: Using a co-developed methodology, surveys covered ~100 respondents in Nepal and 223 in India. Preliminary analysis (Warwick-Edinburgh scale) indicates generally average to above-average mental health and wellbeing, contrary to expectations. Nepalese respondents scored lower than India, and project villages outperformed controls. Given these unexpected patterns, further statistical modelling is underway to identify key drivers. While current findings suggest limited scope for intervention, deeper analysis will inform a detailed report and action plan have been deferred to the next phase of this project.	
Output 1: A network of community volunteers trained, equipped and functionalised as Primary Response Team in project areas of Valmiki-Chitwan-Parsa landscape.		
Output indicator 1.1 By end of year 1, at least 25 people each in Valmiki Tiger Reserve, Parsa NP and Chitwan NP inducted, trained and equipped as PRT members providing coverage across all project villages and adjoining areas (DI-A01)	Progress Update: 58 PRT volunteers have been trained and equipped. 17 PRT members additionally received First aid training (Please see report section 3.1, Activity 1.3,1.4 & 1.5 of AR1 & AR2).	
Output indicator 1.2 By end of year 3, at least 60% of all trained PRT members will actively respond and/or partake in efforts to mitigate human wildlife conflict (HWC) and resolve at least 40% of attended cases without capture of animals involved (DI-B05).	Progress Update: Till now, PRT members have already attended to 112 (across Y1, Y2 & Y3) incidents and helped resolve them successfully. Majority of these were in Y3 showing a significant increase in PRT members' engagement. In India, PRTs closely monitored 20 instances of tiger movement in and around project villages while regularly informing other villagers of tiger presence thereby preventing loss of human life, while PRT members in Chitwan in Nepal supported the park authorities in safe relocation of 7 leopards and carried out crowd control and educational workshops with	Continued capacity building and handholding at the time of ongoing and emergent HWC situations.

	school students and villagers. (Please see report section 3.1, Activity ,1.4, 1.5 and 1.6).	
Output 2: Livestock depredation in project villages significantly reduced through promotion of two tried and tested initiatives Predator Proof Pens (PPP) and promotion of stall-fed cattle, as well as a new experimental novel method, the eye-cow.		
Output indicator 2.1. Baselines for livestock ownership, grazing preferences amongst project village households completed, and potential beneficiaries identified, and consent accrued, by mid of year 1(DI-C16).	This activity was completed in Y1 and reported on in AR1.	
Output indicator 2.2. By mid-year 2, at least 25% of beneficiaries practicing livestock rearing actively build, maintain, and use PPPs (DI-A04).	Progress update: 800 PPPs have been built by the end of Y3 reducing the vulnerability of at least 79% households recorded to be reliant on goats as primary source of livelihood in the project villages.	Continued support to beneficiaries with technical advice.
Output indicator 2.3. By year 3 end, at least 90% of PPPs built still maintained and used.	Progress update: While all PPPs remain functional as of March 2026, nearly 95% of them are maintained very well. Around 5% required some external intervention to support the beneficiaries in repairing damages.	Inspection and reporting on PPP usage and maintenance by beneficiaries. 10 PPP carpenters will be trained and readied in Y4 to support maintenance of PPPs and expansion into neighbouring villages during scale-up project.
Output indicator 2.4 By end of Year 3, at least 25% of consenting beneficiaries begin stall feeding their improved cattle stocks (DI-D02).	Progress update: As of this period of project 501 households have been supported in developing improved breed livestock, via artificial insemination, with 580 calves being born this year and is yet to assess survival of these calves over the next one year before we can robustly assess this indicator. Currently however 15 of these households have been introduced to farming of mosquito fern beds around their homesteads to serve as supplementary feed.	
Output indicator 2.5 By end of year 3, eye-cow method of livestock protection tested rigorously with Bengal tigers and Asian leopards (DI-C01).	Progress update: 115 households have volunteered around 231 cattle to be stamped as part of the eye-cow experiment and are currently being monitored. The study is on-going and will be carrier though the follow-on extension phase before the data is subject to analyses for publishing.	Informing and accruing consent from selected beneficiary households for placing 'eye' and 'X' markings on their livestock as well as from beneficiaries whose

		livestock will be used as control i.e., with no markings. Putting in place and monitoring a reporting system with all participating households.
Output 3: At least 75% of targeted forest-dependent beneficiary communities in each of the 6 project villages benefit from 'green livelihoods (GL)', improved cookstoves, and/or sustainable cooking fuels, and significantly reduce their time spent in forest for natural resource collection.		
Output indicator 3.1 Baselines on forest dependence of households for extraction of forest resources including fuelwood assessed for all project villages, and shortlisting of beneficiaries and accrual of consents completed by mid-Year 1 (DI-C16).	This activity was completed in Y1 and reported on in AR1.	
Output indicator 3.2 By end of year 2, 75% of prioritised beneficiaries in all project villages adopt an alternative fuel source and adopt a 'green-livelihood' (GL) (DI-B10).	Progress update: This year beneficiaries have received training and support for adoption of 'green livelihoods' such as nursery raising, wool spinning, duck farming (Please see report section 3.1, Activity 3.4, 3.5 & 3.6). In Nepal 592 LPG cookstoves & cylinders were distributed while fuelwood efficient improved cookstoves and biogas units were adopted by 671 households in India.	
Output indicator 3.3 By end of year 3, average trips to collect forest resources are reduced to at least 60% amongst 75% of targeted beneficiaries.	Progress update: Among LPG beneficiaries (n=592), a sample showed only 12.5% fully stopped fuelwood use, while 84.2% now use it occasionally, but mainly from farmlands. Forest visits dropped from 16.8 to 4.3 trips/month. In India, 77.4% of ICS/biogas users reported reduced forest visits, with averages declining to 3.6/month.	
Output indicator 3.4 By end of year 3, 80% of beneficiaries engaged with a 'green' livelihoods', successfully sustain their new livelihood (DI-B10).	Progress Update: Till date, 75% of total beneficiaries engaged and trained are continuing their livelihoods. Please see Table for Output 3 on page 12 for more details.	
Output 4: Current narratives of human-large carnivore conflicts significantly altered to promote coexistence, through focussed capacity and knowledge building of local media personnel and wildlife managers.		
Output indicator 4.1 By end of Year 1, Baseline created of print media narrative on human-large carnivore conflicts, as well as of forest department's	Progress Update: This activity was completed and reported in AR1.	

knowledge and understanding of human-large carnivore conflicts, and mitigation measures employed by them (DI-C16).		
Output indicator 4.2 By end of Year 2, at least 70% of consented media personnel across all print dailies of region, and concerned wildlife managers and rangers of the Protected Areas (PA) attend workshops.	Progress Update: In this project period a total of four workshops were conducted for media personnel and wildlife managers, which were attended by a total of 44 media personnel and 43 wildlife managers and other staff (please see report section 3.1, Activity 4.4). In total across the project period 10 workshops have been conducted in total and was attended by 259 media and wildlife managers and rangers attended the workshops, all of whom had consented.	
Output indicator 4.3 By end of year 3, at least 60% of media personnel who have attended workshops pledge to act as the voice of both wildlife species and people and print fact-based reports non-sensationalized reports (DI-C15).	The 44 media personnel engaged under the project have not pledged in a formal manner for reasons stated in Section 3.1 under Activity 4.4 on page 10, but our data based on review of the articles published by their respective media houses and their associates have shown a marked decreased in sensationalised reportage on HWC issues. Although we have not been able to track each media personnel's reportage over time, we are aware that almost all of them are now writing more fact-based stories and reports than before. Quantitatively though we have seen at least 6% reduction in negatively sensational reportage across media dailies and around 5.5% increase in more positive coverage on conservation, tourism and wildlife sightings.	Continued engagement with media personnel in Y4. Workshops conducted for media personnel who print fact-based non-sensationalised reports, acting as voice of both people and wildlife.
Output indicator 4.4 By end of year 3, at least 50% of trained wildlife managers and rangers exhibit a clear understanding of human-large carnivore issues in their landscape and can tackle at least 30% of the situations they address without needing to capture and translocate the animals involved (DI-A07).	Our pre-engagement and post-engagement assessments across samples of wildlife managers and rangers that the project has engaged shows a significant increase in their understanding. Participants on average scored 62% (21-84%) on the assessments post engagement, compared to average scores of 46% (0 – 77%) before engagement through the project. This has been consistently across the board with the trainees, so it is more than the 50%, as even the minimum range has increased by 21%. We have been unable to map and assess individual trainees' involvement in HWC situations, although our data collected through PRTs suggest that this year itself only 8.75% of HWC cases were addressed through capture and removal, while 25% of cases were managed without capture and by providing the animals safe passage. Additionally, 66% of cases did not require any active	Continued engagement with wildlife managers and rangers via workshops.

	intervention to resolve, which collective indicates a marked improvement from before.	
Output 5: A comprehensive understanding of mental health and wellbeing among the local communities established and a co-planned strategy to address impacts of HWC on mental health and wellbeing of people formulated for the project communities.		
Output indicator 5.1 By end of year 2, baselines for mental health and wellbeing vis-à-vis its drivers established for people of project villages (DI-C16).	Project update: Baselines for mental health and wellbeing established for people of project villages. On average the Warwick-Edinburgh scores varied from medium to good, although the drivers are yet to be established through more robust analyses. (Please see update for activity 5.2 on page 10 for more details).	
Output indicator 5.2 By end of year 3, a co-planned and co-developed detailed strategic plan to foster better mental health and wellbeing is drafted and shared with all relevant stakeholders including peer communities.	Progress update: This has not been done for reasons stated in update for Activity 5.3, but will be done after the more robust analyses is carried out in Y4 of the project.	
Output 6: A comprehensive roadmap for landscape-level scale up of the project is co-developed with all primary stakeholders, facilitated by trained resource persons from IUCN.		
Output indicator 6.1: By mid-year 4, a comprehensive planning workshop with all identified primary stakeholder representatives completed in project region.	To be reported in Y4	
Output indicator 6.2: Landscape level scale-up Theory of Change and costed logical framework drafted, reviewed and finalised by end of year 4.	To be measured in Y4	

Project Summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
Impact (30 Words): Large carnivore populations are successfully conserved in the transboundary landscape of Nepal and India by bolstering human-large carnivore coexistence through community empowerment and wellbeing			
Outcome (30 Words): Negative impacts of human-large carnivore interactions significantly reduced in six 'model' villages around Valmiki-Chitwan-Parsa landscape across India and Nepal, through participatory conflict management, poverty alleviation and behaviour change. (DI-D04e)	0.1: By end of year 4 livestock depredation by large carnivores reduced by at least 75% in all model villages where targeted interventions are implemented. 0.2: By end of year 4, the average frequency of trips to forests by beneficiaries reduced by 60%. 0.3: By end of year 4, loss of income from reduced forest resource dependence amongst at least 75% of beneficiaries of the programme is offset 100% with the income generated from adopted 'green' livelihoods 0.5: By end of year 4, at least 25% of local media reports by 60% of the media personnel engaged, covering human-large carnivore conflicts, are fact based and neutral 0.6: At least 30% of cases addressed by the park and wildlife managers are resolved without capture and translocation of the large carnivore involved. 0.7: By end of year 3, impacts of varying dimensions of human-wildlife conflicts on people's mental health and wellbeing in rural communities in the project area assessed, and a detailed	01: Details of cases attended by PRTs in the landscape, as well as qualitative analyses of different interventions made vis-à-vis outcome of the intervention, and comparison with previous years' baseline of outcome of conflict situations. 0.2: Comparison with baselines on past 3 years' average livestock depredation numbers in the project villages, as well as control villages from survey results and compensation records. 0.3: Comparison of self-reported data collected annually, against baselines on fuelwood collection and use created through sample survey at beginning of project 0.4: Comparison against baselines collected at beginning of project on time-spent in forests and per-capita earnings from forest resources 0.5.1: Content analysis of targeted media reports over course of project compared against content analysed for past 2-3 years of reportage.	1. Development driven change in community aspirations will not negatively impact the overall goal of increasing tolerance for losses amongst local communities and their willingness for continued participation. 2. Major policy changes in either of the countries will not render futile any or all of the project's outputs.

	strategic plan is produced and shared with all relevant stakeholders.	0.5.2: Comparative analyses of post-survey results, with baselines on past decisions and mitigation techniques employed by Wildlife management in the Protected Areas. 0.6: Analysed survey results in published report and action plan.	
Outputs: 1. A network of community volunteers trained, equipped and functionalised as Primary Response Team in project areas of Valmiki-Chitwan-Parsa landscape. (DI-A01, DI-A04)	1.1: By end of year 4 at least 40% cases addressed by Primary Response Team (PRT) members are resolved amicably preventing further loss of human lives and injuries; death/injury of the wild animal involved; or the need for the animal's removal into captivity. 1.2: By end of year 1, at least 25 people each in Valmiki Tiger Reserve, Parsa NP and Chitwan NP inducted, trained and equipped as PRT members providing coverage across all project villages and adjoining areas 1.3: By end of year 3, at least 60% of all trained PRT members will actively respond and/or partake in efforts to mitigate human wildlife conflict (HWC) and resolve at least 40% of attended cases without capture of animals involved 1.4: By end of year 4, an operational framework and standard operating procedures for PRT operations, are co-developed in mutual agreement with park authorities of both regions.	1.1: Database on human-tiger and human leopard conflicts and interventions, in and around project villages 1.2: Training attendance and report. 1.3.1: Case registers maintained by PRT members and field project team 1.4.1: Attendance sheets of consultative meetings and minutes of meetings 1.4.2: PRT operational framework and standard operating procedures agreed upon by PRTs and park authorities.	1. Majority of enlisting volunteers will all contribute their services throughout the project period and beyond and suitable succession/recruitment will ensure teams remain in capacity. 2. Trained volunteers will have regular opportunities to address HWC situations as HWC incident hotspots can spatially shift over time, or momentarily cease at certain hotspots. 3. Volunteers are managed effectively to ensure continued engagement and enthusiasm about their roles and pro-active response, to report and attend to all cases within their respective areas.

2. Livestock depredation in project villages significantly reduced through promotion of two tried and tested initiatives Predator Proof Pens (PPP) and promotion of stall-fed cattle, as well as a new experimental novel method, the eye-cow. (DI-D03a)	2.1: Baselines for livestock ownership, grazing preferences amongst project village households completed, and potential beneficiaries identified, and consent accrued, by mid of year 1. 2.2. By mid-year 2, at least 25% of beneficiaries practicing livestock rearing actively build, maintain, and use PPPs 2.3. By year 4 end, at least 90% of PPPs built are still maintained and used. 2.4. By end of Year 4, at least 25% of consenting beneficiaries begin stall feeding their improved cattle stocks. 2.5. By end of year 4, eye-cow method of livestock protection tested rigorously with Bengal tigers and Asian leopards. 2.6. A core group of at least 10 PPP beneficiaries (2 in each project village) are trained, equipped and promoted to provide support to all PPP beneficiaries in repairing and maintaining their PPPs, and to build for new beneficiaries.	2.1.1. Raw and analysed baseline information on types and number of livestock owned by households in project villages. 2.1.2: Beneficiary lists and signed consent forms 2.2. Physical verification of PPPs built and used 2.3. All Physical verification and through beneficiary feedback. 2.4.1: Artificial insemination (AI) training course attendance and certificates 2.4.2. Consent forms from beneficiaries, data on stall-fed varieties of cattle birth and survival 2.5: Enumeration of livestock killed by tigers and leopards (especially of marked and unmarked livestock) through self-reporting by beneficiaries, government records and opportunistic in-field verification of kills. 2.6.1: Training workshop attendance, and records of number of PPPs repaired by trained beneficiaries after training.	1.Communities are willing to speak about livestock depredation freely before and after the project. 2.Compensation records from government bodies will be shared for data analysis of livestock depredation. 3.Communities will want PPPs and will maintain them. 4. The eye-cow methods tested successfully with African lions and African leopards will work with similar efficacy with Bengal tigers and Asian leopards. 5. There will be enough fodder supply available for all stall-fed cattle and will not lead to increased fodder collection from forests. 6.Communities will adhere to the designated eye-cow protocol so that results can be analyzed for effectiveness.
3. At least 75% of targeted forest-dependent beneficiary communities	3.1. Baselines on forest dependence of households for extraction of forest resources including fuelwood assessed	3.1.1: Raw and analyzed baseline data on forest resource extraction by households of	1.Communities are willing to speak to the project team about forest-based resource collection and income from it openly.

in each of the 6 project villages benefit from 'green livelihoods (GL)', improved cookstoves, and/or sustainable cooking fuels, and significantly reduce their time spent in forest for natural resource collection. (DI-A01, DI-A04, DI-D03a, DI-D03b)	for all project villages, and shortlisting of beneficiaries and accrual of consents completed by mid-Year 1. 3.2. By end of year 2, 75% of prioritised beneficiaries in all project villages adopt an alternative fuel source and adopt a 'green-livelihood' (GL). 3.3. By end of year 4, average trips to collect forest resources are reduced to at least 60% amongst 75% of targeted beneficiaries. 3.4: By end of year 4, 80% of beneficiaries engaged with a 'green' livelihoods', successfully sustain their new livelihood. 3.5: At least two of the 'green livelihood' options chosen by women's beneficiary groups are supported with a business plan and additional seed support to boost their sustainability.	project villages and their per capita income from various resources. 3.1.2: Beneficiary lists and written participation consents from all beneficiaries. 3.2: Implementation reports and data from self-reporting on use and maintenance of cookstoves, as well as of GLs and earnings from it. 3.3. Self-reporting by beneficiaries on income generated, as well as data from satisfaction survey across all beneficiaries in project villages. 3.4: Self reporting on income generated per unit time by beneficiaries. 3.5.1: Two micro-enterprise business plans developed and endorsed by respective beneficiary groups.	2.Communities are willing to adopt the use of improved cookstoves as well as a 'green-livelihood' option. 3. After adopting improved cook stoves and non-forest-based fuels, beneficiaries will completely cease fuelwood collection for other purposes (additional cook stove, for heating water for bathing, etc.). 4.Beneficiaries would significantly reduce their dependence on forest resources after adoption of sustainable 'green' livelihoods, 5. Beneficiaries will be transparent in self reporting on their forest visits post adoption of Improved cook stoves and GLs.
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4. Current narratives of human-large carnivore conflicts significantly altered to promote coexistence, through focussed capacity and knowledge building of local media personnel and wildlife managers. (DI-A01)	4.1: By end of Year 1, Baseline created of print media narrative on human-large carnivore conflicts, as well as of forest department's knowledge and understanding of human-large carnivore conflicts, and mitigation measures employed by them. 4.2: By end of Year 4, at least 70% of consented media personnel across all print dailies of region, and concerned wildlife managers and rangers of the Protected Areas (PA) attend workshops. 4.3: By end of year 4, at least 60% of media personnel who have attended workshops pledge to act as the voice of both wildlife species and people and print fact-based reports non-sensationalized reports. 4.4: By end of year 4, at least 50% of trained wildlife managers and rangers exhibit a clear understanding of human-large carnivore issues in their landscape and can tackle at least 30% of the situations they address without needing to capture and translocate the animals involved.	4.1.1 Analysed report on print media content from project region on HWC and other wildlife issues. 4.1.2: Survey results on knowledge and perceptions of Forest Department staff 4.2: Consent forms & Workshop attendance registers. 4.3: Signed pledge board/card and media posts on event. 4.4: Pre-and Post-test results and comparison of cases addressed and resolved before and after capacity development.	1. Media representatives are willing to take part in the workshops. 2. Media representatives despite engagement are free from pressures to negatively sensationalise news pieces, and will continue to publish fact-based, non-sensationalised stories. 3. Forest Department officials will be open to changed practices and behaviours and will be willing to partake in the workshops 4. Despite increased awareness Forest Department will be free from political and social pressures to take proactive decisions on the ground.
5. A comprehensive understanding of mental health and wellbeing among the local communities established and a co-planned strategy to address impacts of HWC on mental health and wellbeing of people formulated for the project communities.	5.1: By end of year 2, baselines for mental health and wellbeing vis-à-vis its drivers established for people of project villages. 5.2: By end of year 3, a co-planned and co-developed detailed strategic plan to foster better mental health and wellbeing is drafted and shared with all	5.1. Raw and analysed qualitative and quantitative data on mental health and wellbeing from systematic survey across project and adjoining villages 5.2. Strategy document	1. Local communities are conscious and cognizant about poor mental health and wellbeing and are willing to talk about it freely. 2. Local people share concerns of mental health issues being a pertinent problem that needs addressing and there are not already cultural mechanisms in place to address any issues, if any.

	relevant stakeholders including peer communities.		
6. A comprehensive roadmap for landscape-level scale up of the project is co-developed with all primary stakeholders, facilitated by trained resource persons from IUCN.	6.1: By mid-year 4, a comprehensive planning workshop with all identified primary stakeholder representatives completed in project region. 6.2: Landscape level scale-up Theory of Change and costed logical framework drafted, reviewed and finalised by end of year 4.	6.1: Detailed plan for stakeholder workshop, including stakeholder analyses and problem tree for project. 6.2a: Attendance lists and Workshop minutes and proceedings. 6.2b: Final theory of change and logical framework endorsed by all primary stakeholders.	
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. Each activity should start on a new line and be no more than approximately 25 words.) 1.1: Conduct Focused Group Discussions (FGD) and individual interviews (using snowball sampling) for past data on human-tiger & human-leopard conflicts in project region. 1.2: Conduct community consultations in project villages and other adjoining conflict prone villages to explain the need and function of Primary Response Teams and accrue volunteers 1.3: Conduct an induction workshop for all volunteering PRTs in India and Nepal to introduce basics of the role and assess various competencies. 1.4: Provide equipment to enlisted PRT members and conduct specialized training each year to develop capacity of PRTs 1.5: Inform and guide PRT members to successfully address conflict situations that are reported in and around their respective villages. 1.6: Conduct annual evaluation workshop to assess functioning of PRTs, celebrate success, promote peer and community support and cohesion, and recognize and reward strongly performing members. 1.7: Conduct two consultative meetings in each project region, with select PRT members and park authority/wildlife managers to discuss and develop a common framework of operation to ensure better coordination between them. 1.8: Develop a standard operating procedure for PRTs, based on a mutually agreed operational framework by PRTs and the park authorities. 2.1: Conduct household surveys to assess livestock ownership, grazing preferences etc. in all project villages, to assess priority need for interventions and willingness to participate. 2.2: Organize consultative workshops in each project village to apprise potential beneficiaries of various techniques to reduce livestock depredation, record beneficiaries' choices and accrue formal consent. 2.3. Organize workshop using select previous Living with Tigers (LWT) project beneficiaries to train beneficiaries in manufacture and maintenance of Predator Proof Pens (PPP). 2.4. Support the building of predator proof pens in all volunteering beneficiary households in villages by mid-year 2. 2.5. Conduct annual assessment of PPPs built through random house visits in at least 30% of beneficiary households and through maintenance logs.			

- 2.6. Prepare methodological framework for assessing eye-cow effectiveness in reducing livestock depredation and train field team
 - 2.7. Conduct workshop with volunteering livestock owners to apprise about the initiative, its need, the need for a systematic assessment, explain method of data logging, etc.
 - 2.8. Carry out livestock 'eye-cow' camp for all beneficiaries enlisting in the eye-cow initiative to imprint 'eyes' on all their livestock.
 - 2.9. Monitor and collect data logs from each beneficiary on livestock grazing frequency and time, location, livestock loss, etc, on a monthly basis.
 - 2.10. Conduct workshop to apprise volunteering cattle owners in project villages on breed improvement and benefits of stall feeding and accrue consent from at least 50% of cattle owners in each village.
 - 2.11: Train local volunteers (select PRT members) in artificial insemination of cattle through state animal husbandry department or private agency and provide equipment to carry out artificial insemination of cattle in consenting households.
 - 2.12: Carry out assessment of AI breeding improvement success and stall feeding practice through a rapid survey at the end of project year.
 - 2.13: Identify at least 2 existing PPP beneficiaries or other capable community members in each project village, to be trained and equipped as a resource person to build and maintain PPPs in respective villages.
 - 2.14: Conduct two training workshops each in the two project regions to train and equip selected 9-10 PPP beneficiaries/community members as a key PPP maintenance skilled workforce in the project region.
 - 2.15: Conduct at least one additional consultative meeting in each project village with cattle owners to increase acceptance and uptake of AI initiative.
 - 2.16: Design and install AI promotional signage at key locations in all project villages to encourage further uptake.
 - 2.17: Facilitate skill development and further equipping and support to trained AI technicians to increase effectiveness of AI and calf births.
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- 3.1: Conduct household surveys to gather primary information to create baselines on forest resource dependency and identify potential beneficiaries for 'green' livelihood and cooking fuel adoption
 - 3.2: Conduct Participatory Rural Appraisals with potential beneficiaries to finalize interventions for reduction of forest dependency and conflict incidences, and accrue consent from them for different interventions.
 - 3.3: Train local women to manufacture and repair fuel efficient cookstoves and involve them in manufacturing and installing these in all consenting beneficiary homes in project villages.
 - 3.4: Carry out ICS installations in beneficiary households through trained women volunteers.
 - 3.5: Conduct training on different alternative livelihood options selected by beneficiaries, using appropriate resource persons from allied government and private sector institutions.
 - 3.6: Provide technical and financial support to consenting beneficiaries to setup new 'green' livelihood options.
 - 3.7: Establish a bi-annual self-reporting system with beneficiaries to monitor use ICS and different GLs adopted, as well as forest dependency, and collect self-reported data.
 - 3.8: Co-develop business plans for two of the established 'green livelihoods' taken up by women's beneficiary groups in the project villages to help them transition into micro-enterprises.
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- 4.1: Conduct media report analysis on past reportage covering human-large carnivore conflicts in the project region, to segregate dominant narratives and tailor training and subsequent awareness.
 - 4.2: Survey of relevant forest department staff at various levels to assess knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions on human-wildlife conflicts in the region.
 - 4.3: Create a master list of all print media personnel relevant to project region and contact them to apprise of the project and accrue consent for further engagement and capacity development.
 - 4.4: Conduct annual capacity development workshop for media personnel and selected Forest Department officers.

4.5: Organize a 'media for wildlife conservation' event to foster trained media personnel to pledge to voice issues pertaining to wildlife through fact-based reporting.

4.6: Carry out post assessment of FD officers and media reports at the end of project period.

4.7: Develop a media resource pack to guide park authorities in proactive media engagement.

4.8: Conduct final media consolidation workshop for previously trained media personnel and park authorities in Nepal, to reinforce change in knowledge and perceptions of HWC and to identify additional facets that need bolstering in the future to ensure gradual shift in the narrative.

5.1: Formulate methodology to assess mental health and wellbeing across project villages, especially for most vulnerable groups and train survey consultants and field team.

5.2: Survey project villages and adjoining ones to assess mental health and wellbeing of villagers and the impact of human-wildlife conflicts on it.

5.3: Conduct consultative meetings with village elders, representatives of forest department, media agencies, local NGO's, and other government agencies to discuss results of the assessment and formulate strategies to address mental health and wellbeing.

5.4: Draft and disseminate strategic action plan to tackle mental health and wellbeing in relation to human-wildlife conflicts and wildlife conservation in the project region.

6.1: Carry out three consultative meetings between partners and IUCN trained facilitators and planners, to identify the core team, develop scale-up workshop strategy and process, and identify key stakeholder representatives to engage in the planning workshop.

6.2: Carry out additional surveys across all villages in the landscape potentially impacted negatively by large carnivore species and gather baseline information on demographics, level of conflict with large carnivores, tolerance levels and willingness to participate.

6.3: Conduct multistakeholder workshop through IUCN trained resource persons for preparing a comprehensive theory of change and an aligned logical framework for scaling up the current project across the landscape.

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?	Checked
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.	Yes
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.	Yes
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.	Yes
Have you provided an updated risk register? You should provide an updated version of your Risk Register alongside your report.	Yes
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see Section 16)?	No, on request
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	Yes
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	Yes
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	