

Applicant: **Lanchbury, Kate**
Organisation: **WWF-UK**
Funding Sought: **£730,007.00**

DIR31S2\1008

Reviving faith leadership for high mountains rangeland conservation in Nepal

Alpine rangelands support rich biodiversity and serve as lifelines for people and economies. Traditionally managed through indigenous systems, including those led by Buddhist healers (Amchis), lacking clarity around governance has resulted in rangeland degradation. Traditional community healthcare provided by Amchis is also under threat due to unsustainable plant and animal ingredients. This project creates an innovative rangeland co-management model reviving Amchi and community stewardship in Dolpa, phasing out wildlife in Traditional Medicine and supporting income generation from sustainable medicinal plants.

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Section 2 - Title, Ecosystems, Approaches & Summary

Q3. Project title

Reviving faith leadership for high mountains rangeland conservation in Nepal

Please upload a cover letter as a PDF document.

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 29/11/2024

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 pdf 197.64 KB

What was your Stage 1 reference number? e.g. DIR31S1\1123

DIR31S1\1325

Q4. Response to Stage 1 feedback

You must explicitly set out how and where you have addressed all the comments/feedback in the application form: briefly restating the feedback point, then clearly setting out how you have responded to it in the application.

Design lead:

WWF-Nepal is leading in close collaboration with Indigenous communities and Shey Phoksundo National Park (SPNP). This initiative draws on the Livestock Insurance Scheme, a model developed by WWF through community consultations and later approved by SPNP. Replicating this model aims to ensure long-term sustainability and community cohesion, particularly supporting the operationalisation of Rangeland Management Sub-committees (RMScs) and compliance with rangeland management practices after project completion. (Q15)

Revenue:

Revenue for the project will primarily come from small contributions made by community members, based on their livestock holdings. This approach, suggested by communities during earlier consultations, ensures the contributions remain affordable, especially for vulnerable households. Additionally, it will provide an endowment held in fixed deposits to generate interest to sustain the RMScs beyond the project. Other potential funding sources may include contributions from Shey Phoksundo Rural Municipality and SPNP, both of whom are part of the 2023 rangeland co-management agreement. (Q20)

Project Fund Allocation:

Approximately 70% of project funds will be allocated directly to landscape-level activities, benefiting indigenous communities. This includes funding for local governance, capacity building, and the establishment of RMSc. 30% will cover project management - oversight, coordination, MEL activities and financial auditing, ensuring efficiency and effectiveness. Given the project is targeting hard to reach communities in a very remote location, WWF-Nepal is establishing a co-management unit in Dolpa to minimise management costs, in partnership with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC). This unit will oversee all project activities, improving accountability and performance tracking, and by pooling resources, effectively scale efforts, ensuring broader impact and sustainability. (Q28)

Partnership with Amchis and Faith Leaders:

Since the 1990s, WWF-Nepal has partnered with faith institutions, recognising the critical role of faith leaders and Amchis (traditional healers) in conservation, collaborating to document medicinal plants and strengthen traditional Sowa Rigpa. It has Memoranda of Understandings with key Buddhist institutions like the Nepal Buddhist Federation (NBF) and the Sowa Rigpa Association Nepal (SRAN), to promote environmental consciousness and preserve traditional knowledge. WWF also supported the development of the Nepal Buddhists' Faith Plan for Environment (2024-34), which aims to mobilise the Buddhist community of Nepal toward conservation goals, including conservation of mountain ecosystems and the use of traditional knowledge in addressing environmental challenges and community wellbeing.

The collaboration with SRAN explores adapting the Sowa Rigpa traditional medicine practice to a modern context, with a focus on the use of sustainable alternatives to threatened wildlife parts in traditional medicines(TM). (Q15)

Leadership role of Amchis in Rangeland management and Buddhist-based healing:

The leadership of Amchis in rangeland management is essential, as these local healers historically governed natural resource use. Their deep understanding of the landscape and sustainable practices is central to this project's success. It will integrate traditional knowledge with modern rangeland co-management strategies, ensuring that the leadership of Amchis is preserved within the legal framework for rangeland management. SPNP will provide local authority and legal backing to RMScs, led by Amchis and supported by local herders and citizen scientists, ensuring compliance with rangeland management practices.

Local community health heavily relies on Amchis for holistic wellbeing, including spiritual and physical health, even today. The practice is under strain due to financial limitations and the growing scarcity of threatened

wildlife used in Sowa Rigpa. To address these challenges, the project supports Amchis in aligning their practices with Buddhist values, emphasising non-violence and finding sustainable alternatives, ensuring that Sowa Rigpa can evolve without relying on threatened wildlife. (Q13)

Engagement with park authorities leading to the new approach:

SPNP, established in 1984, is Nepal's largest national park, covering an area of 4500 sq.km. Due to the park's vast, remote terrain and limited resources, engaging with Indigenous communities has been challenging. This led to mistrust and conflict over resource use. However, recent initiatives have helped build stronger relationships between park authorities and Indigenous communities, particularly through efforts to resolve human-wildlife conflict, wildlife research, and improved livelihoods. These efforts have laid the groundwork for rangeland co-management.

Rangelands are crucial resources for both SPNP and Indigenous communities. While SPNP sees rangelands as key biodiversity habitats and a sustainable revenue source, communities rely on them for livelihoods. The project will consolidate the improved park-people relationship through joint resource management. By recognising and preserving traditional knowledge, it will help maintain cultural integrity and enhance tourism prospects, benefiting communities in the long-term. (Q13)

Prevention of illegal resource use vs focus on sustainability:

Regarding the use of endangered wildlife parts in TM, the project acknowledges the legal and ethical challenges. The use of wildlife parts, particularly from endangered species like tigers, is illegal under national and international laws. While there is ongoing debate about sustainable sourcing, the project will promote sustainable plant-based alternatives for Sowa Rigpa practitioners, to ensure long term sustainability of this practice and its continued benefits to community health. Moreover, there are indications from certain Amchis that Sowa Rigpa Practice, having emerged from Buddhist values, was largely plant-based traditionally, but later adopted animal parts due to cultural infusions. (Q13)

Wider markets for herbs vs sustainable management:

The project aims to ensure sustainable harvesting practices. Rather than create new markets, it instead focuses on regulating harvests and improving existing markets by reducing post-harvest losses and exploring value-addition. ANSAB will support sustainable harvesting practices, ensuring that resource extraction is regulated through stock assessments and harvest limits for key medicinal plants. (Q18)

Active engagement vs number of partners:

To ensure community participation and ownership of this new approach, the project involves regular consultations and training with both the Dolpopa Indigenous communities and park authorities. Clear communication channels and well-defined roles and responsibilities of partners (specifically DNPWC/SPNP and Indigenous community institutions-BZUCs) will help foster collaboration for implementation of this new approach. Other partners (ANSAB and SRAN) provide technical expertise for specific activities that help strengthen collaboration for effective implementation. The project emphasises inclusivity, ensuring marginalised groups have a voice in decision-making, which helps build a sense of shared responsibility and commitment to long-term sustainability. (Q15)

Q5. Key Ecosystems, Approaches and Threats

Select up to 3 biomes that are of focus, up to 3 conservation actions that characterise your approach, and up to 3 threats to biodiversity you intend to address, from dropdown lists.

Biome 1

Savannas and grasslands

Biome 2

Polar-alpine

Biome 3

Intensive land-use systems

Conservation Action 1

Land / Water Management

Conservation Action2

Livelihood, Economic & Moral Incentives

Conservation Action 3

Conservation Designation & Planning

Threat 1

Agriculture & aquaculture (incl. plantations)

Threat 2

Biological resource use (hunting, gathering, logging, fishing)

Threat 3

Pollution (domestic, commercial, agricultural)

Q6. Summary of project

Please provide a brief non-technical summary of your project: the problem/need it is trying to address, its aims, and the key activities you plan on undertaking.

Alpine rangelands support rich biodiversity and serve as lifelines for people and economies. Traditionally managed through indigenous systems, including those led by Buddhist healers (Amchis), lacking clarity around governance has resulted in rangeland degradation. Traditional community healthcare provided by Amchis is also under threat due to unsustainable plant and animal ingredients. This project creates an innovative rangeland co-management model reviving Amchi and community stewardship in Dolpa, phasing out wildlife in Traditional Medicine and supporting income generation from sustainable medicinal plants.

Section 3 - Countries, Dates & Budget Summary

Q7. Country(ies)

Which eligible host country(ies) will your project be working in?

Country 1	Nepal	Country 2	No Response
Country 3	No Response	Country 4	No Response

Do you require more fields?

☒ No

If you are proposing to work in an Upper Middle Income Country (see Annex A), please demonstrate your case for support with reference to one or more of the criteria in Section 2.8.

N/A

Q8. Project dates

Start date:	End date:	Duration (e.g. 2 years, 3 months):
01 April 2025	31 March 2029	4 years

Q9. Budget summary

Year:	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Total request £
Amount:	£82,433.00	£207,841.00	£209,279.00	£230,454.00	£0.00	£ 730,007.00

Q10. Do you have matched funding arrangements?

☒ Yes

Please ensure you clearly outline your matched funding arrangement in the budget.

Q11. If you have a significant amount of unconfirmed matched funding, please clarify how you will deliver the project if you don't manage to secure this?

N/A

Q12. Have you received, applied for, or plan to apply for any other UK Government funding for your proposed project or similar project?

☒ No

Section 4 - Problem statement

Q13. Problem the project is trying to address

Please describe the problem your project is trying to address in terms of biodiversity and its relationship with multi-dimensional poverty.

Alpine rangelands in Nepal support diverse wildlife, including vulnerable snow leopards [1,2,3], and provide vital ecosystem services, such as water supply and carbon sequestration [5,6,7,8]. These habitats are essential for the livelihoods of Indigenous mountain communities, who depend on animal husbandry and Non-Timber Forest

Products (NTFPs) [4]. However, these rangelands are facing degradation due to overgrazing, overharvesting, and pollution [1,4,7,9], further exacerbated by climate change and infrastructure development [11,12,13,14,15].

The Dolpopa indigenous Buddhist communities have traditionally managed these resources through practices like rotational grazing, their knowledge with sustainable use. However, changes in governance have led to unclear jurisdiction and management challenges. In 2012, Nepal introduced a Rangeland Policy, but its implementation faltered, and it became irrelevant after federal restructuring in 2015 [10].

In Shey Phoksundo National Park (SPNP), which hosts a high density of snow leopards resulting in high human snow-leopard conflict, these issues are compounded by limited livelihood opportunities and the dependence of pastoral communities on rangelands [16,17,18].

Rangeland use in Dolpa, including the collection of valuable NTFPs and medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs), supports local livelihoods. However, the exploitation of these resources, combined with external pressures, threatens both the park's sustainability and the community's well-being. Traditional rangeland governance, which included the role of Amchis (Buddhist faith healers) [21], has inadvertently weakened after the park's establishment in 1984, and shifted management responsibility. This has caused declining application of indigenous knowledge and practices, despite being vital for sustainable resource use. Simultaneously, resource constraints in this extreme landscape (where settlements are a 7 days' trek from SPNP headquarters) have hindered SPNP's oversight, eroding trust between the community and the park authorities [19,20]. The resulting decline in rangeland productivity and quality due to these governance challenges jeopardises both sustainability of SPNP and local indigenous communities' livelihoods. Additionally, limited knowledge on post-harvest handling of NTFPs prevents local harvesters from earning higher profits from these resources [58].

Amchi authority has been further weakened by laws restricting use of threatened wild animal and plant parts[22] in their medicines. Limited knowledge on sustainable alternative ingredients has impacted provision of TM, unintentionally weakening Amchis and limiting healthcare access for indigenous communities. Deeply ingrained cultural beliefs that uphold the use of traditional remedies make it challenging for practitioners and patients to transition to alternative solutions.

Traditional knowledge documentation [23], assessment [24], and consultations with communities as part of ongoing conservation efforts in SPNP have helped better understand these challenges. Communities acknowledge overharvesting and overgrazing as key causes of rangeland degradation and identify climate unpredictability as a challenge to livelihood security.

Sharing this information has culminated in agreement by government, local communities, and faith leaders to work together towards integrated rangeland co-management [25,26]. This aligns with recommendations of Nepal Government (GoN) and global bodies - WHO, UNESCO, CITES, UNFCCC on TM systems [27,28,29,30], working with Amchis [31] and integrating community knowledge for environmental policies and actions [1,3,4,32].

Section 5 - Darwin Objectives and Conventions

Q14. Biodiversity Conventions, Treaties and Agreements

Q14a. Your project must support the commitments of one or more of the agreements listed below. Please indicate which agreement(s) will be supported.

- ☒ Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- ☒ Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)
- ☒ Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar)
- ☒ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Q14b. National and International Policy Alignment

Using evidence where available, please detail how your project will contribute to national policy (including NBSAPs, NDCs, NAP etc.) and in turn international biodiversity and development conventions, treaties and agreements that the country is a signatory of.

The importance of rangeland ecosystems and integrating indigenous knowledge systems to address management challenges is recognised by the Nepal Government (GoN) [1,3,4,13]. A high level stakeholders' policy and institutional gaps review in 2023 reiterated ecosystem and economic values, and identified prioritisation, institutional setup gaps, poor coordination, as among the challenges for rangeland management.

This project will establish an alpine rangeland co-management framework bringing together diverse stakeholders, building on foundations of traditional knowledge systems led by faith leaders (Amchis), and integrating opportunities from modern science to overcome current governance challenges. By supporting Amchi-led rangeland co-management, this project promotes sustainable natural resource (NR) governance, innovatively preserves indigenous knowledge, and promotes well-being (livelihood and health) to enhance community resilience and conservation stewardship as recommended by Nepal's NBSAP, NDC, NAP, Snow leopard Conservation Action Plan (SLCAP) and Rangeland Policy for rangeland conservation and management engaging Indigenous communities.

Specifically, this project rolls out recommendations of Nepal's NBSAP to improve knowledge and understanding of rangeland ecology and biodiversity, and development and implementation of integrated management plans for conservation and enhancing herders' livelihood. NBSAP also stresses on the values of high altitude rangelands for supporting 63% of Nepal's endemic flowering plants, and 34% of the country's medicinal herbs.

The NBSAP identifies unclear management responsibilities and inadequate technical, economic and institutional capacities as underlying factors causing excessive human pressure and continued rangeland degradation [1], which are among the key components being addressed by this project. While this project focuses in a limited area, this co-management modality will provide a framework for replication to safeguard high altitude rangelands across the Himalayas.

Second NDC recommends updating Rangeland Policy to drive sustainable management [33], while NAP recommends developing climate-resilient rangeland strategies [13]. SLCAP prioritises integrating community knowledge and participation for alpine rangeland co-management [3]. Aligned to these, the SPNP five year plan also acknowledges this challenge and identifies co-management integrating traditional knowledge and modern science as a viable solution for rangeland management.

The project contributes directly to targets 2, 3, 9, 21, 22 and 23 and indirectly to 1, 4, 6, 7 of the CBD-GBF[34], ensuring inclusive and integrated co-management of alpine rangelands, securing indigenous communities' livelihoods and ensuring safe refuge for biodiversity. The project also aligns with WHO's recognition of TM for assuring universal health coverage[28], especially in extreme remote areas such as our project site where other forms of medical coverage have not yet been able to cater to peoples' needs. Moreover, global conservation community increasingly recognizes the need to work with TM practitioners to achieve conservation goals, as represented in CITES resolution [31].

The project also contributes to Article 7, commitment 5 of Paris Agreement[32] by integrating adaptation into environmental actions, guided by best available science and traditional knowledge systems. The project supports SDG Goals 8, 11, 13, 15, 16 and 17 by reviving TM practitioners as sustainability leaders, engaging communities in NR governance and sustainable use, and their resilience . It also contributes to Nepal's global commitments on SL conservation [35].

Section 6 - Method, Change Expected, GESI & Exit Strategy

Q15. Methodology

Describe the methods and approach you will use to achieve your intended Outcome and contribute towards your Impact. Provide information on:

- how you have reflected on and incorporated **evidence and lessons learnt** from past and present similar activities and projects in the design of this project.
- the specific approach you are using, supported by **evidence** that it will be effective, and **justifying why you expect it will be successful** in this context.
- how you will undertake the work (activities, materials and methods)
- what will be the **main activities** and where will these take place.
- how you will **manage the work** (governance, roles and responsibilities, project management tools, risks etc.).

Since the 1990s, the DNPWC, SPNP and WWF have led holistic conservation in SPNP[26,36,37]. Guided by research, monitoring, and adaptive management, a scalable model for wildlife conflict co-management was successfully demonstrated [26,38,39,40], to help remote mountain households access GoN conflict relief. This project adapts and builds on this approach to tackle rangeland degradation.

Traditional knowledge assessments with ~410 participants (160 women) identified rangeland management as an opportunity for collaborative inclusive conservation[23,24], with agreement reached through multi-stakeholder discussions to explore this approach for integrated rangeland co-management[4,25,26].

Wider collaboration and knowledge documentation with Amchis and faith leaders has gained commitments for adaptive application of traditional knowledge to benefit nature and people[37,41]. WWF supported development of the national Buddhist 'Faith Plan for the Environment (2024-2034)'[42] and has an MOU with the Sowa Rigpa Association Nepal, on replacing wildlife with sustainable plant ingredients in TM. TRAFFIC/ANSAB add expertise in sustainable NTFPs for livelihoods, including learnings from their Darwin-funded project[43].

Rangeland co-management: Informed by traditional and modern scientific approaches[44-56], rangeland co-management strategies (RMS) will be implemented at two pilot sites (Bhijer/Saldang). Providing a framework for sustainable rangeland management practices and inclusive decision-making, for wider adoption in high mountain protected areas. Activities facilitated by WWF-Nepal in collaboration with SPNP and Buddha and Mukporong BZs include:

- Finalise RMS through multi-stakeholder engagement.
- Identify, declare and develop regulations on sacred sites through community engagement and multi-stakeholder collaboration.
- Establish rangeland management sub-committees (RMSc) led by Amchis and citizen scientists (including women and herders) to lead and monitor RMS implementation including grazing management, sustainable harvesting, pollution control, climate adaptation, monitoring, institutional operation, and financial management.
- Raise awareness among Indigenous communities and visitors about the RMS through targeted sensitization efforts, including informative boards at strategic locations.
- Coordinate RMS implementation, generate mass awareness among users including youth, local and external harvesters, and support for compliance monitoring by Indigenous communities and external users.
- Support RMScs to monitor progress, document challenges, and incorporate adaptive management to improve RMS.
- Co-develop community-based rangeland management funds incorporating nominal contributions by local households, decided by community but guided by principles of inclusion, for ownership and sustainability of RMSc.

Sustainable Healthcare: Targeting all 20 Amchis in the project area to commit to legal and sustainable Sowa Rigpa, we will support Indigenous communities to choose sustainable medicines, providing a scalable model for phasing out threatened wildlife and plant ingredients from TM in Nepal and across the Himalayas. Activities led by Sowa Rigpa Association Nepal include:

- Train Amchis and women health assistants in sustainable prescriptions (ingredients, dosage, processes replacing endangered wildlife parts) and modern diagnostics, leading to a declaration on phasing out wildlife parts.
- Engage Buddhist leaders in a co-designed behaviour change campaign to promote acceptance of sustainable alternatives.
- Monitor and document use of sustainable alternatives by trained Amchis, providing evidence and potential roadmap for wider replication.
- Share learning between elderly and new generation Amchis to adapt and sustain Sowa Rigpa to encourage use of sustainable alternatives.
- Showcase sustainable Sowa Rigpa through an international conference of Amchis and conservationists for wider replication.
- Incorporate wildlife conservation education and sustainable alternatives to wildlife parts in Sowa Rigpa curriculum.

Diversifying and improved livelihoods: At pilot sites, demonstrate viable livelihood options related to high-value, sustainably harvested medicinal herbs linked with existing markets and establishment of traditional healing and wellness centres (THWC), benefitting 300 hhs and 5 Amchis. Activities led by ANSAB and TRAFFIC include:

- Prepare sustainable harvest plan of high value NTFPs/MAPs through stock assessment, guiding sustainable harvest practices for RMS.
- Train 600 local harvesters and sensitise at least 1000 external harvesters on sustainable harvesting techniques and post-harvest handling.
- Support infrastructure at 5 harvesting sites for preliminary drying (wilting) and temporarily storing NTFPs.
- Establish two community-led NTFP aggregation centres with drying facilities, and train 20 local aggregators on preliminary processing to minimise post-harvest losses and improve quality.
- Integrate sustainably harvested herbs into existing value chains through meetings of local aggregators and district-level traders with identified buyers.
- Explore market linkages through market assessments of project site-based products (Amchi medicine) for potential local value addition.
- Pilot two herb gardens - exploring linking Amchis' needs with sustainable sourcing in the mountains.
- Support establishment of at least two THWCs for tourists and locals based on THWC Customer Survey findings and business model development.

A project coordination team (PCT), with representatives from WWF-UK, WWF-Nepal, SRAN and ANSAB will guide results-based management, monitor assumptions, address adaptive management needs, and oversee budgets through regular check-ins and bi-annual reflections sessions.

Q16. Capability and Capacity

How will the project support the strengthening of capability and capacity of identified local and national partners, and stakeholders during its lifetime at organisational or individual levels? Please provide details of what form this will take, who will benefit (noting GESI considerations), and the post-project value to the country.

The project will strengthen the capacity of local CBOs both at organisational and individual levels, focusing on sustainable rangeland practices, healthcare, and economic benefits that extend beyond its duration.

Strengthening Local Institutional Capacity: The creation of RMSc will empower local leadership in sustainable

rangeland management. Training 60 RMSc members in grazing management, sustainable harvesting, pollution control, climate adaptation, and financial management will provide them with essential skills for long-term resource management. Additionally, 40 youth will be trained to support the RMSc, ensuring continuation of sustainable practices and awareness within the community.

Enhanced Healthcare Capacity: The project will integrate traditional healthcare practices with modern diagnostics, improving local healthcare systems. Training 20 Amchis and 20 women health assistants on sustainable prescriptions and modern diagnostic tools will enhance treatment capabilities, benefiting community health, and improving women's healthcare as most Amchis are males. Additionally, 100 Amchis from snow leopard range countries will be sensitised to the phasing-out of wildlife-based products, fostering conservation and ethical practices in TM.

Community Adoption of Sustainable Harvesting Practices: Indigenous communities will be trained in sustainable harvesting and processing for NTFPs/MAPs, improving their economic opportunities and leadership in resource management. 40 RMSc members will be trained under Amchis leadership and mobilised to assess NTFP/MAP stocks. This will build local capacity for monitoring and managing NTFPs. 600 local harvesters will receive training and ~1000 external harvesters sensitised on sustainable harvesting methods and post-harvest handling. Furthermore, 20 local aggregators will gain skills to reduce post-harvest losses of NTFP and optimise earning.

The RMSc, adoption of sustainable healthcare and sustainable NTFP value chains will leave a lasting impact by promoting conservation, improving health, and creating income-generating opportunities. This framework will provide a replicable model for sustainable rangeland management and income generation in high-mountain areas, ensuring ecological stewardship and long-term community resilience.

Q17. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

All applicants must consider whether and how their project will contribute to promoting equality between persons of different gender and social characteristics. Please include reference to the GESI context in which your project seeks to work. Explain your understanding of how individuals may be disadvantaged or excluded from equal participation within the context of your project, and how you seek to address this. You should consider how your project will proactively contribute to ensuring individuals achieve equitable outcomes and how you will ensure meaningful participation for all those engaged.

Women and men play essential, differing roles in using, conserving, and managing NR, including livestock herding through rotational grazing systems. Women in Saldang and Bhijer, as primary herders, manage livestock and household duties, forming small groups to care for herds. Men assist with moving cattle and manage longer-distance travel for household supplies and financial tasks. Hence, women and men have complementary local knowledge on rangeland use. This project will promote greater inclusion and engagement of Indigenous Dolpopa community representatives in rangeland governance. FAO recognizes livestock development as entry points for women's empowerment and gender equality [57]. Accordingly, this project will ensure that women and vulnerable groups do not lack voice, and have meaningful participation and recognition in local systems, by:

a) Ensuring active participation (women, youth, elderly, people with disabilities) in RMSc. Ensuring at least 40% female participation, the project will directly address gender imbalances and promote women's empowerment.

b) Women will be directly engaged in all stages of the project, from leadership roles in the RMSc to training on NTFP governance and processing. Women will receive training in institutional governance (committee formation, enterprise management plan, benefit sharing mechanism, operational management), financial management, technical know-how of the facility and record keeping of the harvested NTFP/MAPs. Furthermore women group leaders will be trained on post-harvest handling of NTFPs/MAPs.

c) Youth engagement will be a key element, with training focused on developing future leaders who will continue driving sustainable practices in rangeland and resource management.

d)Amchis will benefit through having their traditional knowledge recognized and integrated with modern practices, preserving their culture while ensuring sustainability.

e)Acknowledging that elderly Amchis are predominantly male, the project will help capacitate women health assistants to improve women's healthcare.

Continuous feedback from IP&LCs and GESI-focussed analysis will monitor participation and outcomes for different gender and social groups.

Q18. Change expected

Detail the expected changes and benefits to both biodiversity and multi-dimensional poverty reduction, and links between them, that this work will deliver. You should identify what will change and who exactly will benefit a) in the short-term (i.e. during the life of the project) and b) in the long-term (after the project has ended).

When talking about how people will benefit, please remember to give details of who will benefit, differences in benefits by gender or other layers of diversity within stakeholders, and the number of beneficiaries expected. The number of communities is insufficient detail – number of households should be the largest unit used.

Biodiversity: In the short-term, the project will create a co-management framework to address governance gaps in alpine rangelands and pilot its application, improving the management of 50,000 Ha. This will enhance the relationship and coordination between park authorities and Indigenous communities, and reduce conflicts over rangeland use. By fostering collaborative management, the project will help mitigate anthropogenic pressures such as overharvesting, overgrazing and pollution, thereby improving rangeland quality. Additionally, working with Amchis, the use of wildlife parts and threatened plant species in traditional medicine will be phased out within the project area.

Over the long-term, noting that this region is identified as a potential climate refugia for snow leopards, creating this co-management governance model supports the long-term conservation of the species. Additionally, this framework can be scaled up to approximately 500,000 hectares in SPNP, and other mountainous protected areas across Nepal. This will enhance rangeland quality, delivering multiple long-term benefits, including secure habitats for flagship species like snow leopards, their prey species and other wildlife. Moreover, the strategy to phase out the use of wildlife parts in traditional medicine will address a significant global threat to wildlife.

People: In the short-term, inclusive co-management will enhance the community's role and capacity in NR governance, benefiting over 600 hhs in the project area. Most importantly, this will enable sustenance of the lives and livelihoods of these indigenous communities relying on rangeland services, and aid in exploring new avenues of earning from opportunities such as tourism, while preserving their traditional knowledge and practices. This approach will also preserve valuable traditional knowledge and leadership in rangeland management, and support resilience of these communities to climate change impacts.

Increased awareness and capacity for sustainable harvesting along with improved practices and storage to minimise wastage of harvested NTFPs and improving supply chain efficiencies to benefit communities will secure sustained economic returns from rangelands for at least 300 hhs.

Behaviour change and capacity enhancement regarding sustainable TM provision and acceptance, along with the creation of traditional wellness and healing centres, will allow the phasing out of wildlife ingredients, enabling more sustained healthcare access for local communities, while also tapping into newer economic opportunities including tourism. The project will also help improve institutional capacity of these remote communities and their cohesion for better integration and utilisation of livelihood opportunities.

In the long-term, healthier, better-managed ecosystems will improve food, water and economic security for remote mountain communities, reliant on rangelands. Replicating the co-management model will benefit over 2,500 households across SPNP and provide opportunities for scaling out in other mountain protected areas in Nepal. Given that mountain communities still rely on TM, the sustainable Sowa Rigpa model will be adaptable throughout the Himalayan region of Nepal. This also has a potential to create a model for sustainable development wherein communities value their traditions and traditional ways, adapted to modern values.

Q19. Pathway to change

Please outline your project's expected pathway to change.

This project will:

Engage communities and SPNP to build a co-management model, based on indigenous knowledge and belief systems, and integrating modern science and inclusive decision-making processes, which strengthens governance and sustainable management to address key threats and enhance rangelands for sustained community livelihood benefits (Output 1).

Aid phasing out threatened wildlife (animals and plants) ingredients from TM by improving the capacity of Amchis to offer sustainable alternatives and increasing community acceptance for these– to ensure viability of Sowa Rigpa practices and lay foundations for sustained healthcare access for remote communities (Output 2).

Showcase how improved rangeland co-management can support community livelihood improvement and security, and demonstrate viable livelihood diversification opportunities for Amchis, linked to traditional healing (Output 3).

Revive traditional Amchi leadership for rangeland management which will help preserve traditional knowledge systems, mobilise greater community support and sustain Amchis' essential role in healthcare for remote communities. Through enhanced stewardship and inclusive governance, high altitude rangelands will be better managed, ensuring the longer-term sustainability of resources which are essential for the wellbeing of remote indigenous Dolpa communities (Outcome).

In the longer-term, this will result in restored high mountain rangeland ecosystems with rich biodiversity, and long-term resilience of indigenous communities (Impact).

Q20. Sustainable benefits and scaling potential

Q20a. How will the project reach a point where benefits can be sustained post-funding? How will the required knowledge and skills remain available to sustain the benefits? How will you ensure your data and evidence will be accessible to others?

The project will create a working model for rangeland co-management engaging two key stakeholder groups (SPNP and communities). Being mutually beneficial, once the system is established, sustainability chances are high, as co-developed RMS embeds priorities of both stakeholders. Capacitated communities and the coordination framework will sustain the activities on ground.

For continued RMS implementation by RMScs post-funding, the project will establish community rangeland management funds (CRMF), whose use and management will be guided by co-developed guidelines.

The project approach will be showcased through outreach (conference, project communications etc) for adaptive replication, with policy makers and institutions like ICIMOD engaged in supporting Nepal's rangeland policy.

Showcasing use of sustainable alternatives for TM, capability building of Amchis, and embedding wildlife conservation and sustainable alternatives in Sowa Rigpa curriculum will ensure broader adoption and

sustenance. Partnerships with Nepal Buddhist Federation (NBF) and SRAN ensure continued knowledge sharing, replication and scaling.

Q20b. If your approach works, what potential is there for scaling the approach further? Refer to Scalable Approaches (Landscape, Replication, System Change, Capacitation) in the guidance. What might prevent scaling, and how could this be addressed?

Landscape: Immediate scaling opportunities for rangeland co-management exist in Dho and Phoksundo within SPNP, and Chharka, Dolpo Buddha areas outside SPNP, through WWF's landscape approach and exploration of OECMs.

Replication:Traditional integrated rangeland management is identified as a priority in Nepal's SLCAP 2024-30 and Rangeland policy, and this project provides a solution for wider adaptive replication across Nepal's Himalayas.

Systems: Engaging Buddhist healers, who have vast influence in the region, provides a unique approach to shifting traditional medicine away from wildlife use, while government-community partnerships in rangeland co-management provides a solution for a problem which has been recognized as a key priority and a gap by Nepal's government.

Capacitation:Capacity-building efforts focus on enhancing governance and Amchi knowledge of sustainable substitutes. Lessons learned will be shared through international conferences and the SoRig roadmap, highlighting the Amchi's critical role in environmental conservation and public health.

If necessary, please provide supporting documentation e.g. maps, diagrams, references etc., as a PDF using the File Upload below.

 [Annex material](#)

 02/12/2024

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Section 7 - Risk Management

Q21. Risk Management

Please outline the 7 key risks to achievement of your Project Outcome and how these risks will be managed and mitigated, referring to the Risk Guidance. This should include at least one Fiduciary, two Safeguarding, and one Delivery Chain Risk.

Risk Description	Impact	Prob.	Gross Risk	Mitigation Header	Residual Risk
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Fiduciary (financial): funds not used for intended purposes or not accounted for (fraud, corruption, mishandling or misappropriated).	Funds are lost or not accounted for through mishandling or fraud, or not spent as per agreed budget. Any fraud or misuse of money could lead to failure to complete agreed project activities, reputational risk and donor withdrawal.	Major	Unlikely	Major	WWF has robust procurement, sub-granting and financial management processes, and zero tolerance on fraud/ corruption. Due diligence processes are followed when hiring staff/onboarding partners; Minor fraud and corruption training is also provided. There will be quarterly financial reporting in place with evidence of procurement, transaction lists, spot checks and audits.
Safeguarding: risk of sexual exploitation abuse and harassment (SEAH), or unintended harm to beneficiaries, the public, implementing partners, and staff.	Instances of sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment (SEAH) occur within the project, either perpetrated by or committed against WWF,our partners, community members, other project actors.	Major	Unlikely	Major	All of our project staff will undergo mandatory safeguarding training, including on organisational policies and processes covering who we need to safeguard, what is abuse, reporting and investigating mechanisms. Moderate
Safeguarding: risks to health, safety and security (HSS) of beneficiaries, the public. Implementing partners, and staff.	RMSc members involved in research, RMS implementation and monitoring and local harvesters engaged in harvesting NTFPs/medicinal herbs in remote rangelands might be exposed to injuries due to harsh weather and terrain or threats from wildlife.	Minor	Rare	Minor	RMSc members and local harvesters will be sensitised on possible risks, provided with basic safety training and insurance (for RMSc members). Furthermore, an initial project inception meeting will be conducted among relevant stakeholders and communities to inform them of the project objective and its benefits to the community Minor

Delivery Chain: the overall risk associated with your delivery model				WWF-Nepal has good individual working relationships with partners in this project. This project strategically embeds each partner's priorities into actions and strategies that benefit nature and meet conservation needs. Regular meetings and monitoring will be done to provide necessary support to partners, or for timely adaptive management, for effective delivery.	
The delivery model is through multiple delivery partners. Ineffective partnership working is a risk in this delivery model.	Moderate	Unlikely	Moderate		Minor
Risk 5				Through stock assessments new sites for sustainable NTFP collection could be identified. Likewise, through proper post-harvest processing techniques, wastage of collected NTFPs will be minimized to optimize community earning.	
Risk of reduced incomes from sustainable harvesting practices and restricted areas	Moderate	Unlikely	Moderate		Minor
Risk 6				WWF-Nepal has identified, and nurtured partnerships with key individuals/institutions who can help drive the project's success. In such landscapes, communities must prioritise their lives in specific seasons to meet their needs; the project design aligns to community timelines - ensuring that engaging in this project provides positive returns financially.	
Lack of participation and ownership of the project approach by the key primary stakeholders (Indigenous communities/government/Amchi) lead to poor implementation and outcomes.	Major	Unlikely	Moderate		Moderate

Risk 7

Amchis (traditional healers) and local communities may be reluctant to alter long-standing practices, particularly if sustainable alternatives are perceived as less effective or culturally less authentic.

Moderate Possible Moderate

Modern conservation laws have pushed Amchis into a corner. This project hopes to help preserve this practice and its knowledge. Some respected Amchis contend that Sowa Rigpa, being a Buddhist practice, was traditionally plant-based, allowing use of Buddhism values of non-violence to drive behaviour change, understanding and acceptance.

Minor

Q22. Project sensitivities

Please indicate whether there are sensitivities associated with this project that need to be considered if details are published (detailed species location data that would increase threats, political sensitivities, prosecutions for illegal activities, security of staff etc.).

☒ No

Section 8 - Workplan

Q23. Workplan

Provide a project implementation timetable that shows the key milestones in project activities.

-  [Darwin Nepal Rangelands Workplan](#)
-  29/11/2024
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-  pdf 253.11 KB

Section 9 - Monitoring and Evaluation

Q24. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Describe how the performance of the project will be monitored and evaluated, making reference to who is responsible for the project’s M&E.

Darwin Initiative projects are expected to be adaptive and you should detail how the monitoring and evaluation will feed into the delivery of the project including its management. M&E is expected to be built into the project and not an ‘add’ on. It is as important to measure for negative impacts as it is for positive impact. Additionally, please indicate an approximate budget and level of effort (person days) to be spent on M&E.

We will collaboratively develop a comprehensive monitoring plan aligned with the existing logframe. This plan will outline indicator-specific methodologies, roles & responsibilities, and timelines for data collection to ensure tracking of progress against indicators. Training will be provided to partners as needed, emphasising GESI-sensitive approaches to data collection and analysis, disaggregating data by gender, age, socioeconomic status,

and marginalised groups.

M&E Responsibility: M&E activities will be led by the MEL Manager, overseeing monitoring tools, data collection, and reporting, ensuring GESI elements are incorporated. The Manager will collaborate with field staff, local partners, and community stakeholders, including representatives from underrepresented groups, to gather perspectives and feedback. A dedicated field team (Co-management unit based in Dolpa) will support data collection and quarterly monitoring, ensuring all community voices are heard.

Baseline Assessments: Missing baseline values will be established by Q1 to establish benchmarks for tracking progress. This includes:

- Community/household surveys will capture gender-differentiated and marginalised group perspectives on rangeland governance, livelihood opportunities and access to healthcare (outcome indicator 0.2) and reduction in post harvest losses of sustainably harvested medicinal herbs benefiting communities (indicator 3.2)
- Stakeholder and community KAP (Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice) surveys on the acceptance of sustainable medicines in Amchi practices (indicator 2.4), ensuring responses include insights from women, youth, and marginalised communities.
- Pre and post training surveys will monitor changes in knowledge and capacity, with a specific focus on whether training reaches and benefits diverse groups.
- Income surveys to assess if Amchis have gained profits through enhanced income from traditional wellness centres. (indicator 3.3).

Regular Monitoring and Adaptive Management: Community-led monitoring will collect data on habitat quality, anthropogenic pressures, prey populations, and RMS implementation. WWF Nepal's online database will store project data entered by partners, tracking activity performance. Two-way approaches ensure data quality: field verification through data quality assurance tools (periodically) and project quarterly reports which document achievements, challenges, and lessons learned. Adaptive management decisions will be informed by this inclusive data, ensuring the project responds to the unique needs of different groups. Quarterly review sessions will assess performance.

Learning and Knowledge Sharing: Evidence and lessons learned will be documented and shared through capacity-building sessions, a roadmap on sustainable alternatives to threatened wildlife parts, and an international conference. This approach ensures that insights contribute to long-term improvements in sustainable rangeland practices and the sharing of knowledge on sustainable alternatives to wildlife and plant ingredients used in Sowa Rigpa practices.

Impact Measurement: The project's M&E system will prioritise tracking any unintended impacts on communities and rangeland management (both positive and negative). This dual approach will help identify and mitigate risks and support adaptive management.

Evaluation Strategy: An end-of-project assessment will determine if the expected outcomes were achieved, the effectiveness of each output, and the influence of contextual factors on the results. The evaluation will identify both positive and negative impacts, focusing on sustainability, community engagement, and long-term benefits.

Total project budget for M&E (£)



(this may include Staff and Travel and Subsistence Costs)

Total project budget for M&E (%)	10
(this may include Staff and Travel and Subsistence Costs)	
Number of days planned for M&E	230

Section 10 - Logical Framework & Standard Indicators

Q25a. Logical Framework (logframe)

Darwin Initiative projects will be required to monitor and report against their progress towards their Outputs and Outcome. This section sets out the expected Outputs and Outcome of your project, how you will measure progress against these and how we can verify this.

 [Darwin Nepal Rangelands Logframe](#)

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Impact:

Alpine rangelands in Nepal are sustained through integrated co-management governance systems, guided by traditional knowledge and science, restoring alpine ecosystems and ensuring long-term wellbeing of indigenous communities.

Outcome:

By 2029, an integrated co-management governance model reviving faith leadership improves management across 50,000 ha in SPNP including important alpine rangelands and enhances well-being of 600 remote indigenous households.

Project Outputs

Output 1:

Improved rangeland management

By 2029, rangeland co-management plans and guidelines, informed by traditional and modern scientific approaches, are adopted and implemented at two pilot sites (Bhijer/Saldang), enhancing sustainable rangeland management practices and inclusive decision-making processes.

Output 2:

Sustainable healthcare

By 2029, all Amchis (~ 20) in the project area have committed to legal and sustainable Sowa Rigpa practices, and local communities accept using sustainable medicines, providing a scalable model for phasing out threatened wildlife and plant ingredients from traditional medicines across the Himalayas

Output 3:

Diversifying and improved livelihoods:

By 2029, high value, sustainably harvested medicinal herbs and establishment of traditional healing centres (at pilot sites) are successfully demonstrated as viable livelihood diversification options, benefitting 300 hhs and 5 Amchis linked with existing market opportunities, for wider adoption by mountain communities

Output 4:

No Response

Output 5:

No Response

Do you require more Output fields?

☒ No

Activities

Each activity is numbered according to the Output that it will contribute towards, for example, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 are contributing to Output 1.

Improved rangeland management:

Output 1. By 2029, rangeland co-management plans and guidelines, informed by traditional and modern scientific approaches, are adopted and implemented at two pilot sites (Bhijer/Saldang), enhancing sustainable rangeland management practices and inclusive decision-making processes.

Activities:

1.1. Development of Rangeland co-management strategy: Finalise and gain endorsement for the rangeland co-management strategy (RMS) and implementation framework through multi-stakeholder engagement (21 words)

1.2. Sacred sites: Identify, declare and develop regulations on sacred sites through community engagement and multi-stakeholder collaborations.

1.3. Capacity building: Establish, capacitate and equip rangeland management sub-committees (RMSc) led by Amchis and citizen scientists for RMS implementation including grazing management, sustainable harvesting practices, pollution control, monitoring, institutional operation, and financial management.

1.4. Implementation: Support RMS implementation and adaptive management through capacity building, awareness raising among rangeland users (internal and external) on RMS provisions, rangeland management interventions, and documenting learning for RMS improvement.

1.5. Monitoring: Facilitate community-led monitoring of RMS implementation, support habitat quality and prey population assessments, and conduct rangeland health evaluations using satellite imagery (SAVI) to track improvements and ensure effective management of the rangeland ecosystem.

1.6. Sustainability: Develop community-based rangeland management funds to ensure local contributions for ownership and sustainability of RMSc.

Sustainable Healthcare:

Output 2. By 2029, all Amchis (~ 20) in the project area have committed to legal and sustainable Sowa Rigpa practices, and local communities accept using sustainable medicines, providing a scalable model for phasing out

threatened wildlife and plant ingredients from traditional medicines across the Himalayas

Activities:

- 2.1. Train and equip Amchis and women health assistants in the use of sustainable prescriptions and modern diagnostics, ensuring sustainable healthcare provisions and Amchis leading to declaration on phasing out threatened wildlife parts
- 2.2. Co-design and implement 'behaviour change campaign', engaging influential Buddhist leaders for community acceptance of sustainable alternatives to threatened wildlife parts in traditional medicines
- 2.3. Monitor and document the use of sustainable alternatives to threatened wildlife parts following Amchi capacity building, providing evidence and potential roadmap for replication
- 2.4. Share learning between elderly and new generation Amchis from the project sites to adapt and sustain Sowa Rigpa practice to encourage use of sustainable alternatives
- 2.5. Showcase sustainable Sowa Rigpa through an international conference of Amchis and conservationists for wider replication in Nepal and beyond
- 2.6. Organize meetings to integrate wildlife conservation, sustainable medicines and dosage in modern Sowa Rigpa and support curriculum development

Diversifying and Improved livelihoods:

Output 3: By 2029, high value, sustainably harvested medicinal herbs and establishment of traditional healing centres (at pilot sites) are successfully demonstrated as viable livelihood diversification options, benefitting 300 hhs and 5 Amchis, linked with existing market opportunities for wider adoption by mountain communities

- 3.1. Prepare sustainable harvest plan of high value NTFPs/medicinal herbs through stock assessment, for guiding sustainable harvest practices to be integrated into RMS
- 3.2. Train 600 local harvesters and stakeholders on the advantages and techniques of sustainable harvesting and post harvest handling of medicinal herbs, and socialise these practices with over 1,000 external harvesters
- 3.3. Provide equipment and help to establish safer storage facilities at harvesting sites for local harvesters for preliminary drying and temporary storage of the harvested NTFPs.
- 3.4. Provide institutional and capacity building support to establish community led NTFP/medicinal herbs aggregation centres equipped with drying facilities and train 20 local aggregators on preliminary processing to minimise post harvest losses and quality improvement.
- 3.5. Integrate sustainably harvested NTFPs/medicinal herbs into existing value chains through meetings/exhibitions between local aggregators /district level traders and identified buyers to create resilient income sources for the target community.
- 3.6. Explore opportunities for market linkages through market assessments of project site-based products (Amchi medicines) for potential value addition locally.
- 3.7. Piloting two herbs gardens (ex-situ conservation) exploring opportunities linking with Amchi's needs with sustainable sourcing in the mountains
- 3.8. Support the establishment of at least (2) traditional healing and wellness centres (THWC) for tourists and locals based on the findings of the THWC Customer Survey and development of a business model.

Q25b. Standard Indicators

Standard Indicator Ref & Wording	Project Output or Outcome this links to	Target number by project end	Provide disaggregated targets here
DI-D01a: Area under Sustainable Management Practices	Outcome indicator 0.1	50,000	TBC at start of project
DI-C02: Number of new conservation or species stock assessments published	Outcome indicator 0.1	1	1 assessment of occupancy estimates of wild ungulates (using double observer surveys)
DI-D04: Number of people with enhanced wellbeing	Outcome indicator 0.2	600	At least 40% women, all IPLC
DI-B05: Number of people with increased participation in governance	Outcome indicator 0.2	600	At least 40% women, all IPLC
DI-B01: Number of new or improved habitat management plans available and endorsed	Output indicator 1.1	1	1 new plan
DI-A03: Number of local or national organisations with enhanced capability and capacity	Output indicator 1.2	2	2 local community organisations
DI-A04: Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities 6+ months after training	Output indicator 1.5 and output indicator 2.2	320	At least 40% women, all IPLC
DI-A01: Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training	Output indicator 2.3 and output indicator 3.1	600	At least 40% women, all IPLC
DI-D03b: Number of people with improved income	Output indicator Indicator 3.3	5	Gender disaggregation of Amchis, all IPLC
No Response	No Response	No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response	No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response	No Response	No Response
No Response	No Response	No Response	No Response

No Response

No Response

No Response

No Response

If you cannot identify three Standard Indicators you can report against, please justify this here.

N/A

Section 11 - Budget and Funding

Q26. Budget

Please complete the appropriate Excel spreadsheet, which provides the Budget for this application and ensure the Summary page is fully completed. Some of the questions earlier and below refer to the information in this spreadsheet.

 [BCF Budget over £100k MASTER 25.07.24 unlocked \(Nepal 01-12-2024\)](#)

 02/12/2024

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Q27. Alignment with other funding and activities

This question aims to help us understand how familiar you are with other work in the geographic/thematic area, and how this proposed project will build on or align with this to avoid any risks of duplicating or conflicting activities.

Q27a. Is this new work or does it build on existing/past activities (delivered by anyone and funded through any source)?

- ☒ Development of existing/past activities

Please provide details:

The project builds on WWF's long engagement with Indigenous communities as well as government and faith partners. WWF has supported SPNP and communities in their priorities for rangelands by strengthening capacity of community institutions and individuals and improving coordination. The foundational approach for this project is based on successful human-snow leopard conflict co-management, by SPNP and capacitated citizen scientists through community-run (Livestock Insurance Scheme) funds to aid remote victim households claim relief. Specifically for rangeland co-management, priorities, opportunities, aspirations and community knowledge were documented through consultations involving over 400 local individuals. This culminated in the joint declaration by SPNP, local government, community and faith leaders for rangeland co-management. These series of activities and discussions provide the foundation for development of co-management strategies.

This project will benefit from, and strengthen, other long-term wellbeing interventions being supported in SPNP, including waste management strategy preparation and strengthening livelihoods linked to tourism, among others. This also builds on WWF's engagement with national faith-based institutions - particularly Sowa Rigpa Association Nepal on efforts to phase out wildlife parts in traditional medicine using sustainable alternatives, and with Buddhist leaders through a 10-year Faith Plan for Environment, launched by the Nepal Buddhist Federation in 2024.

Q27b. Are you aware of any current or future plans for work in the geographic/thematic area to the proposed project that may duplicate or cut across this proposed project?

- ☒ Yes

Please give details explaining similarities and differences, and explaining how your work will be additional, avoiding duplicating and conflicting activities and what attempts have been/will be made to co-operate with and share lessons learnt for mutual benefit.

We believe there are no existing or planned projects which would duplicate or cut across this proposed project and site. Our project will create a practical rangeland co-governance model where none currently exists, embedding and enshrining traditional leadership and community knowledge in addressing SPNP's natural resource management priorities. This will build on foundations for collaborative conservation between SPNP and local communities, and strengthen relationships for mutual benefit.

However there are complementary efforts and projects underway. Nationally, ICIMOD is helping to revisit the National Rangeland Policy and working with stakeholders - including WWF - to address gaps and improve implementation. Likewise, SRAN, in partnership with WWF, is working towards phasing out wildlife parts in traditional medicines, and this project provides the grounds for piloting, learning and scaling for wider replication. This project also capitalises on the learning of TRAFFIC/ANSAB's Darwin-supported work on NTFP sustainable harvest and trade, outside Protected Area in the west of Nepal, now being expanded to other areas across Nepal's Himalayas. Our project creates opportunities for these learnings to be applied within national parks, enhancing conservation efforts.

Q28. Value for Money

Please demonstrate why your project is good value for money in terms of impact and cost-effectiveness of each pound spend (economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity). Why is it the best feasible project for the amount of money to be spent?

Economy is achieved through WWF's Finance and Operations Standards, competitive procurement, local sourcing, and match funding of [REDACTED]. Costs are considerably higher in hard to reach, remote, mountainous locations, accessible only by seven days' foot travel due to geographical, logistical, and environmental challenges. The budgeting process identifies required inputs for each activity, assigning known or estimated costs based on previous experience of working with these hard to reach communities.

Efficiency is ensured through regular monitoring and adaptive management, designing sustainable and scalable interventions to strengthen local capacity for project delivery and long-term benefits. Partnerships with established NGOs and trained local community members further enhance capacity, promoting cost-efficiency.

Effectiveness is achieved by incorporating lessons from prior projects and aligning activities with community needs, ensuring impactful results. Capacity building maximises knowledge application, while research dissemination shares best practices for replication. To reduce management costs, a WWF-DNPWC co-management unit in Dolpa will oversee project activities, fostering shared M&E protocols to improve accountability and performance. By pooling resources, the co-management unit strengthens the efforts of both WWF and the government, ensuring broader impact and sustainability.

Equity is central, with resources and opportunities equitably distributed among IP&LCs. Tailored training and inclusive rangeland management decision-making empower underrepresented groups, fostering fairness and shared benefits.

Estimated input costs relative to outputs are [REDACTED] sustainably managed although project interventions will yield broader environmental, economic and social benefits. Increased household income boosts well-being and economic growth through local multiplier effects, beyond these estimates.

Q29. Capital items

If you plan to purchase capital items with Darwin Initiative funding, please indicate what you anticipate will happen to the items following project end. If you are requesting more than 10% capital costs, please provide your justification here.

Items procured for two NTFP post-harvest processing sites (drying equipment & power generators) and traditional healing and wellness centers will be provided to community groups and Amchis, and retained by RMScs.

Handheld two way radios, laptops and printers will be procured for use by the RMScs and will be retained by the community and project partners after the project ends.

Section 12 - Safeguarding and Ethics

Q30. Safeguarding

All projects funded under the Biodiversity Challenge Funds must ensure proactive action is taken to promote the welfare and protect all individuals involved in the project (staff, implementing partners, the public and beneficiaries) from harm. In order to provide assurance of this, projects are required to have specific procedures and policies in operation.

Please outline how your project will ensure:

- (a) beneficiaries, the public, implementing partners, and staff are made aware of your safeguarding commitment and how they can confidentially raise a concern,**
- (b) safeguarding issues are investigated, recorded and what disciplinary procedures are in place when allegations and complaints are upheld,**
- (c) you will ensure project partners also meet these standards and policies.**

Indicate which minimum standard protocol your project follows and how you meet those minimum standards, i.e. CAPSEAH, CHS, IASC MOS-PSEA. If your approach is currently limited or in the early stages of development, please clearly set out your plans to address this.

WWF is committed to ensuring the safety of everyone connected to our work, including beneficiaries, the public, partners, and staff. We actively inform all stakeholders about our safeguarding commitments, code of conduct, and confidential reporting channels. This is achieved through clear communication of policies, regular training, and accessible reporting mechanisms. All stakeholders are equipped with the knowledge and training needed to identify and report concerns, and this information is available on our website.

Any safeguarding issues raised are thoroughly investigated, documented, and addressed. Each WWF office follows a dedicated response policy with impartial investigation procedures overseen by WWF's ombudsperson. When allegations are confirmed, appropriate disciplinary actions are taken in line with legal and organisational guidelines, which may include warnings, suspension, termination, or legal action.

WWF requires project partners to uphold safeguarding standards, embedding these into partnership agreements. We provide guidance, training, and actively monitor compliance through established reporting mechanisms. Non-compliance may result in withdrawal of funding or termination of the partnership.

In October 2024, WWF-UK adopted the IASC Minimum Operating Standards for the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (MOS-PSEA), ratified at board level. To align with this standard, we have strengthened our policies and contractual obligations to explicitly address Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH). This will be communicated to all staff and partners through annual training. Relevant job descriptions now include PSEAH responsibilities, and support materials for partners are planned for release next year. While our current processes meet MOS-PSEA standards, WWF remains committed to continuous improvement.

Defra recommend you appoint a safeguarding focal point to ensure the project's PSEAH work is taken forward. This can be a separate member of staff or a current member of staff who spends a proportionate amount of time for safeguarding and PSEAH activities. Please name this individual here - this person should also be included in your overall staff list at Q33 and in your budget.

[Redacted]

Q31. Ethics

Outline your approach to meeting the key principles of good ethical practice, as outlined in the guidance.

WWF applies its Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework to identify, avoid and mitigate negative social and environmental impacts, including:

Access and benefit sharing: Through inclusive community planning and decision making processes any change to access rights will be clearly discussed with rights holders and decisions only made with agreement of right holders.

Participation: Indigenous communities in Dolpa and stakeholders were consulted meaningfully, this will continue with an emphasis on women, rights-holders and vulnerable groups. Locally appropriate grievance mechanisms will respond to complaints raised by stakeholders who may be affected by our work.

Consent: FPIC is one of our mandatory Standards, the principles of which underpin all our stakeholder engagement. This process will contribute to ensuring rights of indigenous people to give or withhold their consent to proposed activities/actions that will/may affect their traditional lands, territories and natural resources they customarily own, occupy or otherwise use.

WWF Code of Ethics & Health and Safety policies: Our staff, partners and consultants are bound by these.

Human Rights: Potential human rights risks are mitigated through proper analysis with stake/rights holders, and by ensuring government support is subject to capacity assessments, appropriate training and conditionalities on respect for human rights.

Section 13 - British Embassy or High Commission Engagement

Q32. British embassy or high commission engagement

It is important for UK Government representatives to understand if UK funding might be spent in the project country/ies.

Please indicate if you have contacted the relevant British embassy or high commission to discuss the project and attach details of any advice you have received from them. Please note that some embassies or high commissions may not be able to respond to you but your project will not be penalised for a lack of response.

☒ Yes

Please attach evidence of request or advice if received.

Section 14 - Project Staff

Q33. Project staff

Please identify the core staff (identified in the budget), their role and what % of their time they will be working on the project.

Name (First name, Surname)	Role	% time on project	1 page CV or job description attached?
Nicola Loweth	Project Leader	10	Checked
Sheren Shrestha	WWF-Nepal project leader - overall project implementation, especially in delivery of output 1, and oversight	30	Checked
Samundra Subba	Senior research officer, WWF-Nepal, supporting research and monitoring and strengthening RMSc in the delivery of output 1	15	Checked
Shambhavi Poudel	Education and campaign specialist, WWF-Nepal, supporting behavior change especially in delivery of outputs 1 and 2	7	Checked

Do you require more fields?

☒ Yes

Name (First name, Surname)	Role	% time on project	1 page CV or job description attached?
Doma Tshering Sherpa	WWF-Nepal, Inclusive Conservation,  oversight in project activities and delivery.	9	Checked
Sobhana Bista	WWF-Nepal, Accounts and Finance Specialist, supporting preparation of financial reports	5	Checked
Ang Dawa Lama	WWF-Nepal, Facilitates coordination with BZUCs, SPNP for project implementation, based in Dolpa	30	Checked

Temba Gurung	WWF-Nepal, Community engagement and mobilization, supporting the implementation of outputs 1 and 2, based in Dolpa	50	Checked
Dipesh Pyakurel	ANSAB Project manager, overseeing sustainable harvest planning and capacity building, and in charge of overall delivery of output 3	32	Checked
Puspa Lal Ghimire	ANSAB Enterprise development specialist supporting and capacitating in value addition and market linkage - delivery of output 3	13	Checked
To be hired	ANSAB Field and community engagement in sustainable harvest planning and implementation, related to delivery of output 3	69	Checked
Dr. Tenjing Dharke Gurung	SRAN Project manager/Aiding in overall guidance, management and supporting delivery output 2	28	Checked

Please provide 1 page CVs (or job description if yet to be recruited) for the project staff listed above as a combined PDF.

 [Darwin Nepal Rangelands Combined CVs](#)

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 pdf 1.8 MB

Have you attached all project staff CVs?

☒ Yes

Section 15 - Project Partners

Q34. Project Partners

Please list all the Project Partners (including the Lead Organisation who will administer the grant and coordinate delivery of the project), clearly setting out their roles and responsibilities in the project including the extent of their engagement so far.

This section should demonstrate the capability and capacity of the Project Partners to successfully deliver the project. Please provide Letters of Support for all project partners or explain why this has not been included. The order of the letters must be the same as the order they are presented in below.

Lead Organisation name: WWF-UK

Website address: www.wwf.org.uk/

Why is this organisation the Lead Organisation, and what value to they bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):

WWF-UK is leading UK government grant proposals for WWF-Nepal when it cannot receive funding directly. As the lead administrator, responsibilities include programme oversight, financial and quality assurance, monitoring, evaluation, and safeguarding. WWF-UK commits staff resources to deliver project outputs effectively. Key roles include a Senior Programme Advisor (10%), a Faith & Beliefs Advisor (4%), a Grants Specialist (10%), and a Design & Impact Advisor (5%). These positions ensure projects are completed on time, within budget, and to a high standard.

WWF-UK's capabilities include programme management and robust financial systems overseeing [REDACTED] in UK government funding through 25 grants, with experience in complex budgets and regular audits.

International/In-country Partner: ☒ International

Allocated budget (proportion or value): [REDACTED]

Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure): ☒ Yes

Have you included a Letter of Support from the Lead Organisation? ☒ Yes

Do you have partners involved in the Project?

☒ Yes

1. Partner Name: WWF-Nepal

Website address: www.wwfnepal.org/

What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):	WWF-Nepal is one of the leading organisations working in the field of biodiversity conservation and has supported SPNP in Nepal through various conservation and community-based initiatives aimed at preserving its unique ecosystems and promoting sustainable development. Role & responsibilities: WWF-Nepal, the primary in-country partner, will coordinate with DNPWC to obtain programme approvals and oversee project implementation to achieve the project outputs. WWF Nepal will manage the distribution of funds to local CBOs (Buffer zone user committees -Buddha BZ and Mukporong BZ) and NGO partners in collaboration with DNPWC through a shared co-management unit, based in Dolpa. In addition WWF Nepal will lead and facilitate the implementation of Output 1. Capabilities: WWF-Nepal has considerable expertise and experience working in Nepal's mountainous regions, in partnership with local communities, government agencies and faith partners. Capacity: WWF-Nepal commits staff resources to deliver project outputs effectively. Key roles include a Project lead, Senior Research Officer, community engagement associates. Additionally, technical experts - Livelihoods, GESI, Safeguards, communications, Education and Campaigns specialist, Financial compliance and M&E - will provide their expertise. These positions ensure projects are completed on time, within budget, and to a high standard.
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International/In-country Partner:	☒ In-country
Allocated budget:	
Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure):	☒ Yes
Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner?	☒ Yes

2. Partner Name:	Buffer zone user committees (Buddha BZ and Mukporong BZ)
Website address:	N/A

What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):	Buffer Zone User Committees (BZUCs) - Buddha BZ and Mukporong BZ are two of 17 community-based institutions in SPNP. BZUCs empower local communities to actively participate in the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources within buffer zones. These zones act as transitional areas between protected ecosystems and human settlements. BZUCs serve as a bridge between government and local community, advocating for community needs and facilitating discussions on policy issues related to buffer zone management. Role: Leading partner for on-ground implementation of all three project outputs, specifically rangeland co-management (output 1), behaviour change (output 2), and sustainable harvest planning (output 3). RMScs are sub-committees of these institutions - making them the key stakeholders alongside DNPWC-SPNP in rangeland co-management. Capabilities: They are the representative institutions for local communities, recognized by, and supporting DNPWC/SPNP in nature conservation and management. They aid community livelihoods and other development projects, especially those funded through conservation programmes or NP's revenue-sharing mechanism. Representing and comprising local individuals, they are both duty bearers and right holders, and are the primary target for capacity enhancement of this project, making them the key institutions to sustain the project outcomes post-funding.
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International/In-country Partner:	☒ In-country
Allocated budget:	
Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure):	☒ Yes
Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner?	☒ Yes

3. Partner Name:	Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB)
Website address:	https://ansab.org.np

What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):

ANSAB (Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources) is a civil society organization dedicated to biodiversity conservation and livelihood improvement across South Asia. It brings a wealth of expertise, capacity, and proven experience to the project, particularly in enterprise development, value-chain enhancement, and market linkages for non-timber forest products (NTFPs).

Roles and Responsibilities: ANSAB will lead the implementation of Output 3, focusing on strengthening sustainable harvesting of NTFPs supporting planning and building local capacity and value-chain integration.

Capabilities: ANSAB has a proven track record of implementing impactful projects and has extensive expertise in working with NTFP collector groups and producer enterprises, ensuring compliance with FairWild standards. It successfully supported the implementation of TRAFFIC's projects (25-018/28-026)

Capacity: Four experienced ANSAB staff (Project Manager, field coordinator, Enterprise development specialist and Finance & Administration Manager) will be directly involved in delivering Output 3.

International/In-country Partner: ☒ In-country

Allocated budget:



Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure) ☒ Yes

Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner? ☒ Yes

4. Partner Name: Sowa Rigpa Association Nepal (SRAN)

Website address: <https://www.sowarigpainstitute.org/kathmandu>

The Sowa Rigpa Association Nepal (SRAN) brings significant value to this project through its expertise in the preservation, promotion, and practice of Sowa Rigpa, a traditional system of medicine rooted in ancient texts and herbal remedies. As a key faith partner of WWF, SRAN has been instrumental in advancing the recognition of traditional healers (Amchis), including securing government certification for their practice.

Roles and Responsibilities: SRAN will lead the implementation of Output 2 and contribute to Output 3 by building the capacity of Amchis to adopt sustainable alternatives

What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):

Capabilities:

- Education: SRAN operates the only college in Nepal offering a formal degree in Sowa Rigpa and runs educational programmes for elderly Amchis.
- Expertise in Sustainable Practices: They were key partners of WWF in documenting and producing publications on medicinal plants and legal alternatives to wildlife parts in Sowa Rigpa practice, providing a strong foundation for phasing out wildlife parts.
- Scaling and Outreach: With board members representing prominent Sowa Rigpa institutes across Nepal, SRAN is uniquely positioned to scale project outcomes nationally and has the capacity for international collaboration.

Capacity: Three experienced SRAN staff will be directly involved in delivering Output 2, ensuring effective and timely execution.

International/In-country Partner: ☒ In-country

Allocated budget:



Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure): ☒ Yes

Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner? ☒ Yes

5. Partner Name: Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC)/Shey Phoksundo National Park (SPNP)

Website address: <https://dnpwc.gov.np/en/>

What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):	DNPWC/SPNP is the lead government authority for wildlife conservation and management within the SPNP-BZ, working alongside local BZUCs, which are the civil society extension of SPNP. This collaboration positions DNPWC/SPNP as a key stakeholder in rangeland co-management, alongside local communities. They have the authority to issue permits for rangeland use and support community wellbeing through federal revenue-sharing. Roles and Responsibilities: DNPWC/SPNP will oversee and guide the project, focusing on Output 1 (rangeland co-management) and Output 3 (sustainable harvesting). They will assist in formulating and endorsing RMS, providing legal backing for their implementation, and ensuring compliance by internal and external rangeland users. Capabilities and capacity: DNPWC/SPNP can help provide legal counsel, guide preparation and endorse the RMS. They can recognize, capacitate and mobilize RMScs as sub-units of BZUCs for RMS implementation, and support them to ensure compliance to approved provisions by both internal and external users. They also play a key role in ensuring the sustainability of the project's outcome after funding ends by contributing to the RMS either in cash or in-kind. They also have the capacity to scale the rangeland co-management model across SPNP, extending lessons learned to other areas in the region.
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International/In-country Partner:	☒ In-country
Allocated budget:	
Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure):	☒ Yes
Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner?	☒ Yes

6. Partner Name:	N/A
Website address:	N/A
What value does this Partner bring to the project? (including roles, responsibilities and capabilities and capacity):	N/A
International/In-country Partner:	☒ International
Allocated budget:	No Response
Representation on the Project Board (or other management structure):	☐ Yes ☐ No
Have you included a Letter of Support from this partner?	☒ Yes

If you require more space to enter details regarding Partners involved in the project, please use the text field below.

N/A

Please provide a **combined PDF** of all letters of support.

 [Darwin Nepal Rangelands Combined Letters of Support](#)

 01/12/2024

 19:05:01

 pdf 8.1 MB

Section 16 - Lead Partner Capability and Capacity

Q35. Lead Organisation Capability and Capacity

Has your organisation been awarded Biodiversity Challenge Funds (Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus or Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund) funding before (for the purposes of this question, being a partner does not count)?

☒ Yes

If yes, please provide details of the most recent awards (up to 6 examples).

Reference No	Project Leader	Title
31-004	WWF-UK	Effectively tackling Human-Carnivore Conflicts through Systematic Approaches in Uganda
IWT131	WWF-UK	Countering Jaguar Conflict and IWT in the Bolivian Amazon
IWT139	WWF-UK	Towards Zero Poaching in the Greater Virunga Landscape
DARNV018	WWF-UK	Wildlife Credits: Launching a Conservation Performance Payments Scheme in Tanzania
30-017	WWF-UK	Strengthening communities' livelihood and stewardship to conserve Otters in Karnali
30-018	WWF-UK	Reviving Trans-Himalayan Rangelands: A community-led vision for people and nature

Have you provided the requested signed audited/independently examined accounts?

☒ Yes

Section 17 - Certification

Certification

If this section is incomplete the entire application will be rejected.

Please note if you do not upload the relevant materials below your application may be made ineligible.

On behalf of the

Trustees

of

WWF-UK

I apply for a grant of

£730,007.00

I certify that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, the statements made by us in this application are true and the information provided is correct. I am aware that this application form will form the basis of the project schedule should this application be successful.

(This form should be signed by an individual authorised by the applicant institution to submit applications and sign contracts on their behalf.)

- I have enclosed CVs for key project personnel, cover letter, letters of support, a budget, logframe, Safeguarding and associated policies, and project workplan.
- Our last two sets of signed audited/independently verified accounts and annual report (covering three years) are also enclosed.

Checked

Name	Kate Akhtar
Position in the organisation	Director of Public Sector Partnerships
Signature (please upload e-signature)	 Kate A - Signature  02/12/2024  16:27:11  pdf 9.4 KB
Date	02 December 2024

Please attach the requested signed audited/independently examined accounts.

 WWF-UK-Annual-Report-and-Financial-Statements-2022-23  26/11/2024  12:33:43  pdf 4.94 MB	 WWF-UK-Annual-Report-and-Financial-Statements-2021-22  26/11/2024  12:33:32  pdf 5.86 MB
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Please upload the Lead Partner's Safeguarding Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Code of Conduct as a PDF. Optionally you can also upload your Health, Safety and/or Security policy or Security Plan here.

 [WWF-UK-Safeguarding-Code-of-Conduct-Nov24](#)
 28/11/2024
 12:04:42
 pdf 167.41 KB

 [H&S signed policy_240322-133451-b-1](#)
 26/11/2024
 12:46:31
 pdf 1.84 MB

 [WWF-UK Travel Safety and Security Policy V2 - Audit Committee Approved - Feb 2023-1](#)
 26/11/2024
 12:46:31
 pdf 216.06 KB

 [WWF UK Safeguarding Policy September 2024](#)
 26/11/2024
 12:46:30
 pdf 159.16 KB

 [Whistleblowing Policy-2](#)
 26/11/2024
 12:46:30
 pdf 118.04 KB

Section 18 - Submission Checklist

Checklist for submission

	Check
I have read the Guidance, including the “Darwin Initiative Guidance”, “Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Guidance”, “Standard Indicator Guidance”, “Risk Guidance”, and “Finance Guidance”.	Checked
I have read, and can meet, the current Terms and Conditions for this fund.	Checked
I have provided actual start and end dates for the project.	Checked
I have provided the budget based on UK government financial years i.e. 1 April – 31 March and in GBP.	Checked
I have checked that our budget is complete, correctly adds up and I have included the correct final total at the start of the application.	Checked
The application been signed by a suitably authorised individual (clear electronic or scanned signatures are acceptable).	Checked
I have attached the below documents to my application: • a cover letter from the Lead Organisation	Checked
• a completed logframe as a PDF using the template provided and using “Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Guidance” and “Standard Indicator Guidance”.	Checked
• a budget (which meets the requirements above) using the template provided.	Checked
• a signed copy of the last 2 annual report and accounts (covering three years) for the Lead Organisation, or provided an explanation if not.	Checked
• a completed workplan as a PDF using the template provided.	Checked

• a copy of the Lead Organisation's Safeguarding Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Code of Conduct (Question 30).	Checked
• a copy of the Lead Organisation's Health, Safety and/or Security policy or Security Plan (Question 30)	Checked
• 1 page CV or job description for all the Project Staff identified at Question 33, including the Project Leader, or provided an explanation of why not, combined into a single PDF.	Checked
• a letter of support from the Lead Organisation and partner(s) identified at Question 34, or an explanation of why not, as a single PDF.	Checked
I have been in contact with the FCDO in the project country/ies and have included any evidence of this. If not, I have provided an explanation of why not.	Checked
The additional supporting evidence is in line with the requested evidence, amounts to a maximum of 5 sides of A4, and is combined as a single PDF.	Checked
(If copying and pasting into Flexi-Grant) I have checked that all my responses have been successfully copied into the online application form.	Checked
I have checked the Darwin Initiative website immediately prior to submission to ensure there are no late updates.	Checked
I have read and understood the Privacy Notice on the Darwin Initiative website.	Checked

We would like to keep in touch!

Please check this box if you would be happy for the lead applicant (Flexi-Grant Account Holder) and project leader (if different) to be added to our mailing list. Through our mailing list we share updates on upcoming and current application rounds under the Biodiversity Challenge Funds. We also provide occasional updates on other UK Government activities related to biodiversity conservation and share our regular newsletter. You are free to unsubscribe at any time.

Checked

Data protection and use of personal data

Information supplied in the application form, including personal data, will be used by Defra as set out in the **Privacy Notice**, available from the [Forms and Guidance Portal](#).

This **Privacy Notice must be provided to all individuals** whose personal data is supplied in the application form. Some information may be used when publicising the Darwin Initiative including project details (usually title, lead organisation, project leader, location, and total grant value).

Project Title: Reviving faith leadership for high mountains rangelands co-management in Nepal

Project Summary	SMART Indicators (including disaggregated targets)	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: Alpine rangelands in Nepal are sustained through integrated co-management governance systems, guided by traditional knowledge and science, restoring alpine ecosystems and ensuring long-term wellbeing of indigenous communities.			
Outcome: By 2029, an integrated co-management governance model reviving faith leadership improves management across 50,000 ha in SPNP including important alpine rangelands, and enhances well-being of 600 remote indigenous households.	<u>Improved Rangelands management</u> 0.1 By 2029, 50,000 ha of habitat including high mountain rangelands will be placed under sustainable co-management practices (Baseline 2024: 0) 0.1a. D1-D01a: Area under Sustainable Management Practices (ha) 0.1.1 Soil Adjusted Vegetation Index (SAVI) increased by 10% (Baseline to be generated in Year 0) 0.1.2 Occupancy estimates of wild carnivores (using occupancy surveys) sustained against baseline (Baseline 2023: 2.21/100 sq km; SPNP) 0.1.3 wild ungulates (using double observer surveys) stabilises compared to 2023	0.1. Rangeland co-management strategies; Reports on rangeland health indicator assessments, at the start and end of the project, measuring: 0.1.1 Soil Adjusted Vegetation Index (SAVI) using Landsat and Sentinel Imagery (compared to a 2024 assessment) 0.1.2 Occupancy estimates of wild carnivores (using occupancy surveys) 0.1.3 occupancy estimates of wild ungulates (using double observer surveys).	Introduction of the governance model integrating faith leadership will benefit the two key stakeholders mutually- local communities will be better included on decisions around rangeland management while the national park will have partners to assure compliance of regulations on ground. Integration of traditional and modern scientific knowledge into the rangeland co-management model will provide the most effective means to guide sustainable management Making Sowa Rigpa practices more sustainable over the longer term, along with strengthening the traditional leadership role of Amchis in rangeland management will secure the continuation of traditional medicines, enabling continued

Project Title: Reviving faith leadership for high mountains rangelands co-management in Nepal

	baseline.[Baseline: 3037; SPNP, 2023] 0.1.3a. DI-C02: Number of new conservation or species stock assessments published <u>Improved Human wellbeing</u> 0.2 By 2029, 600 indigenous hhs (at least 40% women) in Bhijer and Saldang report an improvement in overall well-being (through enhanced participation in inclusive rangelands governance, improved sense of livelihood security, and healthcare access) (disaggregated by gender, age). (Baseline - to be established in year 0) 0.2a. DI-D04: Number of people with enhanced wellbeing 0.2b. DI-B05: Number of people with increased participation in governance.	0.2 Community survey report using WWF's human wellbeing tool measuring community perceptions and scores related to rangeland governance, perceptions of livelihood security, and access to healthcare (comparing scores from data in year 0/1 and year 4)	access of remote communities to healthcare.
<u>Improved rangeland management</u> Output 1. By 2029, rangeland co-management plans and guidelines, informed by traditional and modern scientific approaches, are adopted and	1.1 By year 2, two rangeland co-management strategies (integrating knowledge from traditional and modern sciences for sustainable rangeland use, climate adaptation, and participatory management) are finalised and endorsed by key	1.1 Rangeland co-management strategy documents endorsed by key stakeholders	Communities and National Park find common grounds for mutual benefits on rangeland co-management strategy

Project Title: Reviving faith leadership for high mountains rangelands co-management in Nepal

implemented at two pilot sites (Bhijer/Saldang), enhancing sustainable rangeland management practices and inclusive decision-making processes.	stakeholders (Baseline 2024: no habitat management strategies in project site) 1.1a. DI-B01: Number of new/improved habitat management plans available and endorsed 1.2 By year 2, two local organisations - rangeland management sub-committees (RMSc) are created for co-management of rangelands under leadership of Amchis, with at least 40 % women members (Baseline 2024: no rangeland management institutions in place) 1.2a. DI-A03 Number of local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity 1.3 By year 4, 60 indigenous community members (at least 40% women) of the two RMSc are capacitated to sensitise rangeland users on RMS and monitor compliance (disaggregated by gender, age). (Baseline 2024: zero) 1.4 By year 2, two community-based rangeland management	1.2 Sub-committee formation meeting minutes with endorsement of key stakeholders 1.3. Pre- and post training reports 1.4 Fund operation guidelines endorsed by park.	Rangeland management sub-committees formed for co-management of rangelands are significantly inclusive and capacitated to deliver expected results. Increased knowledge and understanding among RMSc members will encourage them as well as help them motivate users to adopt practices recommended by RMS guidelines Community contributions will aid to generate ownership and help sustain community-based rangeland management fund beyond project period. Establishment of strong and effective governance of the community will enable long term benefits to the communities.
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Project Title: Reviving faith leadership for high mountains rangelands co-management in Nepal

	funds are established for sustainable operation of RMSc (Baseline 2024: no rangeland co-management funds) 1.5 By year 4, 50 % of local community members of Bhijer and Saldang (300 hhs) report applying sustainable practices recommended by RMS guidelines. (disaggregated by gender, age). (Baseline 2024: 0, as currently there is no RMS) 1.5a. DI-A04: Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training.	1.5 KAP survey	
<u>Sustainable healthcare</u> Output 2: By 2029, all Amchis (~20) in the project area have committed to legal and sustainable Sowa Rigpa practices, and local communities accept using sustainable medicines, providing a scalable model for phasing out threatened wildlife and plant ingredients from traditional medicines across the Himalayas	2.1 By year 2, declaration by 20 <i>Amchis</i> of Dolpa (33% Amchis in Dolpa or 100% Amchis in project site) to phase out use of endangered wildlife parts and ensure sustainable sourcing of medicinal plants (Baseline 2024: No declaration on phasing of wildlife parts signed) 2.2 By end of year 4, 20 Amchis report applying legal and sustainable alternatives (ingredients, dosage, processes etc) and modern diagnostics to	2.1 Declaration document 2.2 KAP survey	Once provided with sustainable alternatives, Amchis in Dolpa will be able to phase out threatened wildlife and plant parts while providing their services. With increased understanding of the benefits of sustainable practices, communities will positively perceive the use of alternatives for healthcare.

Project Title: Reviving faith leadership for high mountains rangelands co-management in Nepal

	treat illness (disaggregated by gender, age). (Baseline 2024: 0) 2.2a. DI-A04: Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training. 2.3 By end of year 4, 20 women's health assistants have received training to support Amchis on women's healthcare (disaggregated by gender, age). (Baseline 2024: 0) 2.3a. DI-A01: Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training 2.4 By year 4, at least 100 <i>Amchis</i> from snow leopard range countries sensitised on the roadmap for zero wildlife use and phase out process in Sowa <i>Rigpa</i> in Nepal (Baseline 2024: 0). 2.5 By year 4, 50% hhs in project area report acceptance of sustainable medicines in <i>Amchi</i> medicines (disaggregated by gender, age). (Baseline: to be assessed in year 0)	2.3 Pre and post training reports 2.4 Conference proceedings and attendance records 2.5 KAP survey reports 2.6 Sowa Rigpa curriculum	
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Project Title: Reviving faith leadership for high mountains rangelands co-management in Nepal

	2.6 By year 4, wildlife conservation, sustainable medicines and dosage has been integrated in modern <i>Sowa Rigpa</i> curriculum (Baseline 2021: Documentation of alternatives to endangered wildlife parts in <i>Sowa Rigpa</i> (Ghimire et al., 2021)).		
<u>Diversifying and improved livelihoods:</u> Output 3: By 2029, high value, sustainably harvested medicinal herbs and establishment of traditional healing centres (at pilot sites) are successfully demonstrated as viable livelihood diversification options, benefitting 300 hhs and 5 Amchis linked with existing market opportunities, for wider adoption by mountain communities	3.1. By Year 4, at least 600 hhs (at least 40% women) have improved skills on sustainable harvesting and post harvest handling of medicinal herbs and have been supported to link with existing market opportunities (disaggregated by gender, age). (Baseline: to be created in year 1). 3.1a. DI-A01: Number of people in eligible countries who have completed structured and relevant training 3.2 By Year 4, at least 300 hhs are benefitting from a reduction in post harvest losses of sustainably harvested medicinal herbs (disaggregated by gender,	3.1 Pre- and post training reports 3.2 Household surveys	By reducing post-harvest losses of NTFPs, the project will increase income of 300 HHs through sustainably harvested high value medicinal herbs, and provided there is no decline in income from existing major sources (e.g. livestock and NTFP). There will be demand from tourists for wellness services offered by Amchis

Project Title: Reviving faith leadership for high mountains rangelands co-management in Nepal

	age). (Baseline: to be created in year 1) 3.3 By year 3, at least 5 Amchis have established 2 profitable traditional wellness centres demonstrating their potential as viable livelihood options (disaggregated by gender, age). (Baseline 2024: zero) 3.3a. DI-D03b: Number of people with improved income	3.3 Income reports, Registration documents; Minutes incorporating benefit sharing mechanism of wellness centres.	
<u>Activities:</u> <u>Improved rangeland management</u> Output 1. By 2029, rangeland co-management plans and guidelines, informed by traditional and modern scientific approaches, are adopted and implemented at two pilot sites (Bhijer/Saldang), enhancing sustainable rangeland management practices and inclusive decision-making processes. Activities: 1.1. <u>Development of Rangeland co-management strategy:</u> Finalise and gain endorsement for the rangeland co-management strategy (RMS) and implementation framework through multi-stakeholder engagement (21 words) 1.2. <u>Sacred sites:</u> Identify, declare and develop regulations on sacred sites through community engagement and multi-stakeholder collaborations. 1.3. <u>Capacity building:</u> Establish, capacitate and equip rangeland management sub-committees (RMSc) led by Amchis and citizen scientists for RMS implementation including grazing management, sustainable harvesting practices, pollution control, monitoring, institutional operation, and financial management.			

Project Title: Reviving faith leadership for high mountains rangelands co-management in Nepal

1.4. Implementation: Support RMS implementation and adaptive management through capacity building, awareness raising among rangeland users (internal and external) on RMS provisions, rangeland management interventions, and documenting learning for RMS improvement.

1.5. Monitoring: Facilitate community-led monitoring of RMS implementation, support habitat quality and prey population assessments, and conduct rangeland health evaluations using satellite imagery (SAVI) to track improvements and ensure effective management of the rangeland ecosystem.

1.6. Sustainability: Develop community-based rangeland management funds to ensure local contributions for ownership and sustainability of RMSc.

Sustainable Healthcare

Output 2. By 2029, all Amchis (~ 20) in the project area have committed to legal and sustainable Sowa Rigpa practices, and local communities accept using sustainable medicines, providing a scalable model for phasing out threatened wildlife and plant ingredients from traditional medicines across the Himalayas

Activities:

2.1. Train and equip Amchis and women health assistants in the use of sustainable prescriptions and modern diagnostics, ensuring sustainable healthcare provisions and Amchis leading to declaration on phasing out threatened wildlife parts

2.2. Co-design and implement 'behaviour change campaign', engaging influential Buddhist leaders for community acceptance of sustainable alternatives to threatened wildlife parts in traditional medicines

2.3. Monitor and document the use of sustainable alternatives to threatened wildlife parts following Amchi capacity building, providing evidence and potential roadmap for replication

2.4. Share learning between elderly and new generation Amchis from the project sites to adapt and sustain Sowa Rigpa practice to encourage use of sustainable alternatives

2.5. Showcase sustainable Sowa Rigpa through an international conference of Amchis and conservationists for wider replication in Nepal and beyond

2.6. Organize meetings to integrate wildlife conservation, sustainable medicines and dosage in modern Sowa Rigpa and support curriculum development

Project Title: Reviving faith leadership for high mountains rangelands co-management in Nepal

Diversifying and Improved livelihoods

Output 3: By 2029, high value, sustainably harvested medicinal herbs and establishment of traditional healing centres (at pilot sites) are successfully demonstrated as viable livelihood diversification options, benefitting 300 hhs and 5 Amchis, linked with existing market opportunities for wider adoption by mountain communities

- 3.1. Prepare sustainable harvest plan of high value NTFPs/medicinal herbs through stock assessment, for guiding sustainable harvest practices to be integrated into RMS
- 3.2. Train 600 local harvesters and stakeholders on the advantages and techniques of sustainable harvesting and post harvest handling of medicinal herbs, and socialise these practices with over 1,000 external harvesters
- 3.3. Provide equipment and help to establish safer storage facilities at harvesting sites for local harvesters for preliminary drying and temporary storage of the harvested NTFPs.
- 3.4. Provide institutional and capacity building support to establish community led NTFP/medicinal herbs aggregation centres equipped with drying facilities and train 20 local aggregators on preliminary processing to minimise post harvest losses and quality improvement.
- 3.5. Integrate sustainably harvested NTFPs/medicinal herbs into existing value chains through meetings/exhibitions between local aggregators /district level traders and identified buyers to create resilient income sources for the target community.
- 3.6. Explore opportunities for market linkages through market assessments of project site-based products (Amchi medicines) for potential value addition locally.
- 3.7. Piloting two herbs gardens (ex-situ conservation) exploring opportunities linking with Amchi's needs with sustainable sourcing in the mountains
- 3.8. Support the establishment of at least (2) traditional healing and wellness centres (THWC) for tourists and locals based on the findings of the THWC Customer Survey and development of a business model.