

**PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENT (PID)
APPRAISAL STAGE**

Report No.: AB6069

Project Name	Adaptable Program Loan (APL) On Strengthening Regional Cooperation For Wildlife Protection In Asia
Region	SOUTH ASIA
Sector	General agriculture, fishing and forestry sector (70%); general public administration sector (30%)
Project ID	P121210
Borrower(s)	Peoples Republic of Bangladesh and Government of Nepal
Implementing Agency	Bangladesh: Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF), Bangladesh Forests Department (BFD) Nepal: Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation
Environment Category	<input type="checkbox"/> A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> FI <input type="checkbox"/> TBD (to be determined)
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I. Country Context

1. South Asia is home to 13-15% of the world's biodiversity and hosts some of the most charismatic and endangered species on Earth. India's Gir forests are the last refuge of the world's remaining 250-300 Asiatic wild lions. Habitats across Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal are home to over 65% of the 3,000 or so remaining wild tigers and the Himalayas are the last redoubt of the critically endangered snow leopard whose numbers are unknown. India is classified as a mega-diverse country and the Eastern Himalayas (encompassing numerous countries) a biodiversity hotspot.¹ Reflecting its rich natural heritage, a conservation ethos is deeply engrained in the culture and history of South Asia. The first recorded conservation edicts in South Asia date to the 4th century BC when the emperor Ashoka issued royal decrees to protect elephants from hunting and capture.

2. The charismatic appeal of many species can generate additional economic benefits from conservation. Ecotourism is globally the fastest growing and most profitable segment of the tourist industry.² Estimates suggest that the tourism revenues from habitats rich in biodiversity – though still under-priced and far below potential – run into significant sums and contribute significantly to livelihoods of the poorest. A recent valuation study finds that, on average, each

¹ The mega-diverse countries are a group of countries in which less than the 10% of the global land surface has more than the 70% of the land's biodiversity. Most of these countries are located in the tropics. A biodiversity hotspot is a bio-region with a significant reservoir of diversity that is under threat from humans. It was first defined by Norman Myers in an article in "The Environmentalist" (1988) based on clearly specified criteria.

²<http://www.ecotourism.org/atf/cf/%7B82a87c8d-0b56-4149-8b0a-c4aaced1cd38%7D/TIES%20GLOBAL%20ECOTOURISM%20FACT%20SHEET.PDF>

hectare of dense forest in India generates a net present value from ecotourism of about INR 65,192 (US\$1,350). With an estimated 390,000 hectares of dense forest remaining in India, studies suggest that this constitutes a total economic contribution of approximately US\$636 million.³ This figure underestimates the potential value of undisturbed natural habitats because it excludes the other benefits that forests bring – such as timber, fodder, traditional medicines, bio-prospectivity (e.g. new medicines), non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and watershed benefits, among others – as well as the non-use (preservation) values. The distributional impacts are, perhaps, even more significant. Aside from timber, most of the benefits from forest resources accrue to the poor and account for more than 50% of their (implied) consumption.⁴ It is estimated that including these benefits would bring the total economic benefits into the high billions of dollars although more refined calculations are still in progress.⁵

3. Nepal's biodiversity is also extremely important for the country's economy as well as the well-being of its people. Forests which comprise 29% of Nepal's land area contribute to about 10% of Nepal's GDP.⁶ Forests represent the daily source of fuel wood, food, fodder, timber, and medicinal plants for about 80% of the country's population. Some rural populations help to sustain and manage forests in many parts of Nepal. Appropriate and sustainable forest management (including community management) has led to an increased supply of forest products with obvious livelihood benefits. Perhaps the best known example is the Tarai Arc Landscape project in Nepal which has demonstrated considerable success in the past through approaches that harmonize livelihoods, sustainable development and conservation.

4. Bangladesh too is rich in floral and faunal biodiversity. Due to immense population pressures, over-exploitation of natural resources, deforestation, degradation, habitat loss, pollution, indiscriminate killing, hunting and poaching of wild animals, Bangladesh's environmental and ecological balance is under severe threat. Studies indicate that 4-5% of faunal species and about 10% of floral diversity have become extinct in the last century. As an example, tigers once widespread in Bangladesh and, in the 1930s, were reported in 11 of 17 districts have dwindled in range and numbers.⁷ Today, the largest remaining population of tigers is in the Sundarbans. There is little known about the national demand for tiger parts although a 1997 survey reported substantial trade in tiger skins, teeth and claws.⁸ What is known is that there is high regional demand and established international trade for tiger products so it is unlikely that Bangladesh is overlooked as a source of tiger parts. The geographical position of Bangladesh between India and Myanmar – countries that experience widespread poaching – may further increase the vulnerability of the Sundarban tigers.⁹

³ Gundimenda H, S. Sanyal, R Sinha and P Sukhdev, 2009, *The Value of Biodiversity in India's Forests*, Deutsche Bank

⁴ See for example Gundimenda *et al (op cit)* and also Gundimenda H, S. Sanyal, R Sinha and P Sukhdev, 2009, *The Value of Timber and Non Timber Forest Products in India's Forests*, Deutsche Bank

⁵ These include livelihood benefits as well as the benefits that accrue from conservation (which is a pure public good). A pure public good is one that is non rival in consumption implying that the consumption by one person does not detract from its use by another. It is non-excludable in that its benefits cannot be restricted without cost (e.g. clean air, extinction are examples of a public good and a public bad respectively).

⁶ Luintel, H. et al, 2009. *Community Forestry in Nepal: Promoting Livelihoods, Community Development and the Environment*, Forest Action. Kathmandu.

⁷ Mitra, S. N. 1957. *Animals for Hunting in Bengal*. Government of West Bengal, Calcutta.

⁸ Nowell, K. 2000. *Far From A Cure: The Tiger Trade Revisited*. TRAFFIC International, Washington, DC.

⁹ Nowell, K, Xu Ling. 2007. *Taming The Tiger Trade*. TRAFFIC East Asia Report.

5. South East Asia also covers a remarkable portion of the earth's biodiversity with the habitats in the region being among the most diverse in the world. Indonesia, for example, is the world's most biologically diverse country. Laos and Vietnam are among the biodiversity rich countries in the world. Laos has the highest number of large mammals in the region and possibly the largest Asian elephant population in Indochina. Laos benefits from wildlife assets due mainly to its low population density, mountainous terrain, and high forest cover (41.5%).¹⁰ With 37% of forest cover, Vietnam enjoys rich and diverse natural ecosystems that support nearly 10% of the earth's mammal and bird species.¹¹ In both countries, the rural poor – especially those living in and near protected areas (PAs) – are highly reliant on forest resources. They depend on NTFPs to sustain their livelihoods and act as food security net (55% of family income for Laos and 20% for Vietnam). Like the South Asia region, South East Asia is experiencing a major loss of biodiversity. Its primary forest cover is declining by 95% and individual countries are losing 70-90% of their original wilderness. The key threats to wildlife are shifting cultivation within and on the edges of PAs, overhunting of prey species to supply domestic trade, international illegal wildlife trade for food, medicines and ornaments smuggled through porous borders to neighboring markets (China, Vietnam), weak wildlife law enforcement capacity, etc.

6. A top global priority regarding species conservation is that of the wild tiger. Recognizing the urgency and need to bolster commitment to tiger conservation, the World Bank, in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution, established the Global Tiger Initiative (GTI) in 2009. Given the appeal and ecological role of tigers, their effective conservation is vital to the conservation of many other rare and threatened species as well as to sustaining essential ecosystem services. Despite their significance, tiger populations are in decline. Tigers occupy only 7% of their historic range, and in the last decade their habitats have shrunk significantly. Most tiger populations are isolated and small (numbering fewer than 30 individuals) and are found in 13 Tiger Range Countries (TRCs) – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal in South Asia; Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam in East Asia; and Russia. TRCs are participating in the tiger recovery efforts spearheaded through GTI and the Global Tiger Recovery Program (GTRP) adopted at the International Tiger Forum in St. Petersburg, Russia in November 2010.

II. Sectoral and Institutional Context

7. Governments in Asia are keenly aware of the benefits from biodiversity and the risks of biodiversity loss. Asian countries have been among the world's leaders in adopting legislation and ratifying international conventions for biodiversity conservation. South Asia – especially India – is a center of cutting-edge research on natural resource management and habitat conservation. Asian countries have adopted legislation for protection of endangered species and their habitats. They have devoted substantial resources to habitat conservation and, more recently, to enforcement of anti-poaching legislation. For example, India has more than doubled the budget available for wildlife protection from about US\$15.3 million in 2008-09 to about

¹⁰ Laos Environment Monitor. 2005. The World Bank.

¹¹ Vietnam Environment Monitor. 2005. The World Bank.

US\$38 million in 2009-2010.¹² Laos increased its budget for protected area activities to US\$300,000 in FY2009/2010 from a mere US\$10,000 in earlier years. Despite the investments, Asia faces daunting challenges that are growing more severe. Habitat fragmentation and poaching for illegal wildlife trade are the most significant threats to biodiversity.

8. Not only do many of the high profile endangered species (such as the top predators and elephants) require large amounts of land, but their habitats need to be connected as well to assure long-term genetic survival. Through much of South Asia, the forest frontier has largely stabilized as a result of past large scale conversions of habitats (though there are notable exceptions in the conflict-prone and forested mineral and plantation belts). Approximately 4% of the region's land area has been granted Protected Area (PA) status which confers varying degrees of legal and actual sanctuary to wildlife.¹³ At times, the legal sanction of PA status does not offer the sanctuary needed from intrusive activities and developments. The forest corridors linking these PAs are under constant and unrelenting pressure from intrusive structures, such as new roads and expanding settlements. As a result, many endangered species subsist in isolated population clusters. Small, fragmented breeding populations are especially fragile and at risk of genetic bottlenecks, a condition that reduces the capacity to adapt to changing conditions.¹⁴

9. While habitat fragmentation is a severe problem, it remains a medium-term threat. The most serious and immediate risk to many species is poaching for wildlife trade. Poaching techniques can be extremely gruesome. The most egregious and cruel methods include skinning or de-horning of live animals and transporting live creatures in inhumane conditions. Wildlife are killed for the flourishing illegal international trade in their skins, bones, flesh, fur used for decoration, clothing, medicine, and unconventional exotic food. The primary market for many of these products is outside South Asia – often in East Asia – for items of presumed pharmacological utility.

10. The wildlife trade is big business. But due to the clandestine nature of the enterprise, reliable estimates of the composition, volume and value of the trade remain elusive. The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) suggests that the global value of the illegal wildlife related trade exceeds US\$20 billion per year and probably ranks third after narcotics and the illegal weapons trade. These estimates are acknowledged as imprecise¹⁵

11. With South Asia's rich biodiversity, wildlife is a lucrative target of the trade. Victims of the trade are many and varied and include the iconic tiger and elephant, snow leopard, common leopard, one-horn rhino, pangolin, brown bear, several species of deer and reptiles, seahorses, star tortoises, butterflies, peacocks, hornbills, parrots, parakeets and birds of prey, and corals.

¹² India Today, July 6, 2009

¹³ The level of protection accorded legally and in practice varies considerably. In Bhutan, large tracts of land in PAs contain farms, houses a growing number of roads, logging and small industry. In India, however, the land under PA management is small (about 4.8%) and most forms of anthropogenic interference and commerce are legally discouraged from these areas.

¹⁴ Science suggests: "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one most adaptable to change." Charles Darwin, 1859, *The Origin of Species*.

¹⁵ S. Sinha, 2010, *Handbook on Wildlife Law Enforcement in India*, TRAFFIC India/WWF India, New Delhi. Natraj Publisher.

12. Particularly damaging is the banned trade in tiger parts much of which is used for its presumed pharmaceutical benefits. The World Chinese Medicine Society has declared that tiger parts are not necessary in traditional medicines and that alternatives are available and effective. Yet the illegal trade still flourishes. Poaching has become so intense that tigers have disappeared from many parks throughout Asia. Nowhere has the impact been greater than in India and Nepal which remain the bastions of tiger conservation. Nepal has emerged as the transit hub for the trade in illegal wildlife commodities destined for consumption in East China. Laos is recognized as both a source and transit country while Vietnam is a transit hub for illegal wildlife trade.

13. The economic value of the illegal wildlife trade is determined primarily by cross-border factors. Wildlife are poached in one country, stockpiled in another, and then traded beyond the South Asia region. The trade is controlled by criminal organizations with considerable power over the market and the prices paid to poachers and carriers render the control of the trade even more challenging.¹⁶ The UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) suggest that wildlife traders have links to other organized criminal activities (e.g. narcotics), presumably a reflection of the increasing returns to cross-border illegal activities. By contrast, poaching is often carried out by local or forest dwelling populations who receive only a fraction of the final price of the product. The magnitude and complexity of the problems are such that they frequently transcend national boundaries and thus call for knowledge sharing and compatible policies with renewed energy across the wildlife “supply” chain.

14. Lack of consistency in the enforcement of controls remains one of the greatest problems in the region. For example, Nepal has emerged as the staging post for wildlife trafficking, so success in tackling the problem will remain elusive unless more effective controls are established in Nepal with corresponding efforts in India. Bhutan has porous borders with both India and China, facilitating the transport of wildlife parts and products across borders. At present, there is no legislation in Bhutan to allow law enforcement agencies to check and apprehend foreign traders. The problem is compounded by the lack of trained staff across the entire spectrum of the trade chain from a shortage of effective anti-poaching patrolling to a dearth of legal, investigative and interdiction capacity at borders and within countries. Attempts to plug the gaps and to deliver assistance tend to be ad hoc, and often are not harmonized or well-structured, nor properly evaluated. And even where cross-border protocols have been established, they are typically not observed.

15. It is clear that no single country – acting alone – can eliminate the perils to South Asia's wildlife resources. Improved and more effective patrolling of protected areas (PAs) is one approach for addressing the poaching threat. However, tackling the challenge calls for a regional approach. Close collaboration is needed among nations and regions along the trade route, as

¹⁶ Technically, this market structure is complex and poses regulatory challenges. The market resembles an inverted wine glass. A large number of potential poachers (forest dwellers) operate under quasi open access conditions. The poached commodity is then sold to traders – the organized gangs – who are few in number and thus operate under oligopolistic conditions (i.e. have market control) and the product is sold via retailers to a large number of consumers. Where controls are optimally applied to cause the greatest disruption is not obvious – given the imperfectly competitive “middle”. See Bulte E. H. and R. Damania, 2006, “The Wildlife Trade”, *Ecological Economics*.

well as the centers of consumption (e.g., East Asia and North America).¹⁷ In this context, an opportunity has arisen for South East Asia to link or collaborate with neighboring South Asia on common national and regional goals as well as strategies of wildlife protection.

16. Countries in South and Southeast Asia are committed to the pursuit of collaborative responses to the effects of trade on endangered species. A number of regional initiatives have emerged, such as the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP), South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Cooperation on Environment and the Association of South East Asian Nations Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN). However, these organizations have not been resourced adequately to implement activities. Most recently, in recognition of the grave threats to wildlife from illegal trade, all countries in South Asia agreed at the First Meeting on Illegal Wildlife Trade in South Asia – convened by the Government of Nepal in Kathmandu in May 2010 – to develop institutional mechanisms for harmonizing and collaborating against common threats, including the creation of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN).

III. Project Development Objectives

17. The project development objective (PDO) is **to assist the participating governments to build or enhance shared capacity, institutions, knowledge and incentives to collaborate in tackling illegal wildlife trade and other select regional conservation threats to habitats in border areas**. The project will focus on a selected set of country-specific initiatives as well as key mutually agreed regional activities that are crucial to attaining the regional strategic goals.

IV. Project Description

18. The project would apply a two-pronged approach: (i) capacity building to address the illegal wildlife trade through regional cooperation; and (ii) habitat protection and management to generate regional conservation benefits and address the human-wildlife conflict, thereby ensuring the conservation of flagship species such as the tiger, snow leopard, rhinoceros and elephant in increasingly fragmented habitats. The interventions would enhance the capacity of the relevant agencies in the participating countries to carry out conservation based on a landscape approach and also to address wildlife trafficking. The landscape approach would lead to improved management of the national PA networks¹⁸ – that are essential to the long-term conservation of the tiger and other charismatic flagship species – and would control against the adverse impacts of the illegal trade. Flagship species require vast habitats for effective, long-term conservation yet many of them – e.g., tiger, rhinoceros, snow leopard and elephant – are confined to small, isolated and fragmented PAs which threaten their survival. It is critical that flagship species are managed effectively not only in the designated PAs within the participating countries but also along the wildlife corridors to ensure connectivity between PAs and contiguous ecosystems. Conservation of Asia's flagship species would lead to improved natural

¹⁷ Numerous NGOs focus on demand side management and, through the GTI, the Bank is engaging on this issue. The communications component of this project offers an opportunity to address some of these complex issues.

¹⁸ National protected area (PA) networks consist of national parks and forests as well as forest reserves.

habitats for *all species* and, ultimately, healthy ecosystems for South and South East Asia.

Project Components

Component 1: Capacity building and cooperation for addressing the illegal trans-boundary wildlife trade

19. Component 1 aims to bring about regional harmonization and collaboration in combating wildlife crime through strengthened legislative and regulatory frameworks, well equipped specialized agencies and systems, as well as relevant training and awareness programs for staff across the range of agencies that contribute to the enforcement of wildlife laws and regulations. It is anticipated that the activities collectively would generate well coordinated frameworks, systems, technology, infrastructure and expertise at compatible or near compatible levels across the countries participating in the project.

20. *Sub-component 1.1 Institutional strengthening in wildlife conservation and illegal wildlife trade control* would support: (i) technical advisory/assistance (TA) services to establish, upgrade or strengthen the different units under Bangladesh's Wildlife Circle and Wildlife Center to undertake training, research, education and awareness and monitoring and evaluation (M&E); (ii) TA services to establish Bangladesh's Wildlife Crime Control Unit (WCCU) and Nepal's Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) responsible for forensics, quarantine, legal support and assisting in the discharge of country responsibilities as signatories to CITES; (iii) TA services for the development of analytical and operational protocols to meet CITES requirements; (iv) provision of operational support and training for field-level rapid response cells; (v) TA services for the review and revision of Nepal's legislative framework and strengthening of relevant institutions; and (vi) operational support for the establishment of the Secretariat for Nepal's National Tiger Conservation Committee within the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation.

21. Bangladesh is in the midst of revising the country's Wildlife Conservation Act that would grant more powers to the Wildlife Circle (WC) within the Bangladesh Forest Department (FD) and create a better enabling environment for wildlife management. The project would support technical and management consultancies to enable BFD to effectively discharge its enhanced mandate under the new Act. The consultancies would evaluate BFD's roles and responsibilities under the new Act and assist BFD in developing an effective institutional structure and in building capacity to carry out its mandate. Nepal, on the other hand, has a long history of wildlife conservation as demonstrated by the enactment of various policies, legislation and regulations. However, weak institutional capacity and inadequate financial resources have resulted in lapses in enforcement of regulations and poor PA management.¹⁹

22. *Sub-component 1.2 Staff capacity building and training toward regional collaboration* would support: (i) training and re-orientation for the benefit of support staff, including regional knowledge sharing; (ii) establishment or strengthening of the Wildlife Center; and (iii) training to the staff of the Wildlife Center in M&E techniques.

¹⁹ Winrock International, 2006, *Environmental Policy and Institutional Assessment*.

23. The development of Sub-component 1.2 benefited from TRAFFIC's recommendations (See Annex 8). As part of TRAFFIC's mission to deliver innovative and practical conservation solutions, it develops and organizes training and other capacity-building initiatives for officials involved in the regulation of wildlife trade. As recommended by TRAFFIC, the project would highlight new ways for enhancing the ability of agencies within Bangladesh and Nepal to combat illegal wildlife trade and strengthen conservation.²⁰

Component 2: Promoting wildlife conservation in South Asia

24. *Sub-component 2.1: Virtual Regional Center for Excellence (VRCE) for wildlife conservation* seeks to fill crucial knowledge and information gaps in addressing the many regional threats to conservation. It entails the creation of the VRCE that would include a network of scientists and practitioners in wildlife conservation whose mission would be to expand the scope and quality of research in wildlife conservation needed to develop a common response against illegal wildlife trade in and outside the region and to address other regional conservation issues to be agreed by the participating countries.²¹ Specifically, this sub-component would support the provision of TA services and equipment for VRCE's establishment and operations.

25. VRCE would provide the first (and only) coordinated, institutional response for research and knowledge dissemination on wildlife conservation in South Asia.²² The exclusive focus will be on either promoting a conservation-related regional public good or addressing a regional public bad. Given the existence of national institutions with expertise in this area already, it is critical for VRCE to bring value-added and not duplicate existing efforts. By playing the role of coordinator and facilitator of knowledge and expertise, VRCE could become a vehicle for promoting dialogue and good practices as well as disseminating knowledge.

26. VRCE would build on existing regional and global environmental initiatives and benefit from established experience, mechanisms and protocols. It would draw on strategic partnerships with renowned wildlife conservation institutions in the region and elsewhere. It would develop an active *knowledge dissemination program* that would include: (i) publication of research and pilot project results; (ii) sponsorship of workshops, lectures and seminars; (iii) special seminars aimed at decision makers in the participating governments (legislators, administrators and policy makers); (iv) training modules and teaching materials for wildlife managers; and (v) development of protocols for informing policy and wildlife managers in the field.

27. *Sub-component 2.2: PA, Forest Reserve (FR) and National Forest (NF) management with regional conservation benefits.* The client countries recognize that conservation of wildlife resources, in general, and of charismatic flagship species, in particular, would not succeed without prudent investments in PAs, FRs and NFs aimed at ensuring a haven for wildlife.

²⁰ These may include establishing a focal point within each agency or national multi-agency task forces as well as conducting cross-country, multiple agency training to bolster intra-agency cooperation.

²¹ Knowledge generation and research within the VRCE would focus primarily on conservation and species management research. Better management of PAs, species and stronger conservation would enable the establishment and maintenance of systems and mechanisms to address the threats to wildlife due to poaching and illegal trade.

²² Laos and Vietnam may join the VRCE at a later stage.

Hence, this sub-component would support the establishment and operation of two competitive funding windows for the management of PAs, FRs and NFs with regional conservation benefits and for innovative pilot projects in wildlife conservation. Sub-component 2.2 would focus on investments that result in regional conservation benefits.

28. Window 1 of Sub-component 2.2 would support the following typical activities: rehabilitation and development of water resources in PAs and FRs; control of invasive species; rehabilitation of existing roads; improvements in existing park infrastructure; species monitoring and recovery programs; preparation and implementation of endangered species recovery plans; implementation of real-time field based monitoring systems; development of landscape scale imaging platforms and strengthening enforcement. Window 2 would support innovative research projects in wildlife conservation, pilot programs in conservation of endangered species, piloting of human wildlife coexistence models and incentive schemes, such as payments for environmental services for those affected by the conflict; development of ecotourism plans with regional conservation benefits; or implementation of priority activities under such plans.

29. The project will support activities under both windows in Bangladesh. However, Window 1 will not be implemented in Nepal. The Government of Nepal will allocate funds amounting to US\$6 million over five years from its national budget to support activities on conservation, protection and management of PAs and NFs for long-term, regional conservation benefits. The Government's support and the specific activities will be carried out separately and will not be part of the proposed project. Window 2, however will be implemented in Nepal.

30. A competitive, demand-driven approach to reward innovation and efficiency of the managers of the PAs, FRs and NFs would be applied in selecting the activities that would receive support under Windows 1 and 2. A transparent review and approval process for both windows will be developed and implemented. The eligibility criteria (including a negative list of activities) will be specified in the operational manuals that will be finalized prior to disbursement for Windows 1 and 2.

Component 3: Project coordination and communications

31. Component 3 would provide services, TA and incremental costs for project staff as well as operating costs for the management and coordination of the project. *Sub-component 3.1* would support project coordination arrangements for national and regional activities.

32. *Sub-component 3.2: Communications.* The project will adopt a multi-pronged approach to communications in order to meet regional and local challenges. A wide range of consultations with various stakeholder groups will be conducted at the national and local levels. It is expected that rolling consultations will continue throughout the project cycle. To ensure that all stakeholders have a clear understanding about this project, mass communication tools will be used to simplify and explain the basic concept and principles. The tools will include multimedia audio/video products, dramas in local languages, brochures, and website(s). These products will be tailored to meet local conditions and languages.

33. Sub-component 3.3 would represent the Government of Bangladesh's commitment to

cover the salaries and overheads of existing government staff and the cost of land purchases to build wildlife recovery and rehabilitation centers²³.

V. Financing

<i>Source:</i>	(\$m.)
BORROWER/RECIPIENT	0.0
International Development Association (IDA)	39.0
Total	39.0

VI. Implementation

34. **Regional.** The participating countries have agreed that a strong regional coordination mechanism would need to be in place to ensure the achievement of the PDO. Regional coordination would be exercised at two levels: (i) the policy level; and (ii) the operational level. At the policy level, a Regional Policy Steering Committee (RPSC) would be established. The RPSC would comprise the Secretaries of the Ministries responsible for wildlife and forestry in the participating countries and the heads of the project implementing agencies. The RPSC's main responsibility is to ensure collaboration and coordination in regional wildlife conservation and wildlife protection policies. It would be the forum for resolving operational issues with regional implications that arise during implementation. Its chairmanship would be assigned to the ministerial Secretary of a participating country for one year and would be rotated among the participating countries. IDA may be invited to participate in the RPSC meetings as an observer. The RPSC would meet once a year in the country chairing the committee.

35. At the operational level, an Operational Steering Committee for Regional Coordination (OSCRC) of the project would be established. Membership in the OSCRC would include the heads of the agencies responsible for wildlife and forestry (i.e., the project implementing agencies) of the participating countries, project managers from each country and one non-government technical expert in the field of wildlife conservation nominated by each participating country. The OSCRC's main responsibility is to ensure effective coordination of project activities that have regional implications and develop dialogue between the participating countries on wildlife conservation issues. Any contentious issues that cannot be resolved by the OSCRC may be elevated to the RPSC for recourse. The OSCRC would be chaired by the head of the agency responsible for wildlife conservation and management in each participating country for one year and chairmanship would be rotated among the countries. IDA may be invited to participate in the OSCRC meetings as an observer. The OSCRC would meet every six months in the country chairing the committee.

36. The project management/implementing units (PMU/PIU) in the participating countries chairing the RPSC and the OSCRC will serve as the secretariats to both committees.

37. **Bangladesh.** The project will be implemented by the Bangladesh Forests Department

²³ Government of Bangladesh will contribute around US\$3 million to the project to cover the salaries of existing government staff who will work on the project and their overheads and to purchase land to build the four wildlife recovery and rehabilitation centers. IDA funds allocated for operating costs will not cover these overhead costs.

(BFD) under the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF). MOEF will create a Project Steering Committee (PSC) responsible for overall project oversight at the country level. The PSC will be chaired by the Secretary of MOEF and will include members from the relevant ministries, government departments/agencies, relevant civil societies and research organizations dealing with wildlife conservation and research. The PSC would meet semi-annually to review project progress and provide policy directions and guidance.

38. The CCF will have the overall responsibility for the project's smooth implementation. The Deputy CCF of the Wildlife Circle (within BFD) would be appointed as Project Director (PD) and will report to the CCF. The PD will be responsible for the implementation and coordination of all project activities through the Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs). BFD would establish a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) headed by a Project Manager. The PIU will provide necessary support to the PD during implementation. The PIU's technical and administrative activities will be coordinated by the Project Manager on behalf of the PD.

39. *Nepal.* The main agency responsible for implementation will be the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MOFSC). MOFSC will direct the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and the Department of Forest (DOF) to implement their respective project components. The Directors General (DGs) of DNPWC and DOF will report to the Secretary of MOFSC. MOFSC will create a National Steering Committee (NSC) responsible for overall project oversight. The NSC will be chaired by the Secretary of MOFSC and will include members from the two implementing agencies, Ministry of Finance, Planning Commission, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and IDA (the latter as observer). Secretariat support will be provided by the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) in its capacity as the Project Management Unit (PMU). The NSC will be responsible for meeting on a semi-annual basis, reviewing project implementation and providing oversight, policy guidance, and approving the annual work plan and budget.

40. The PMU will be responsible for day-to-day implementation of the various components which will include both technical and fiduciary aspects. The PMU will be located in NTNC which was established in 1982 by a legislative act as an autonomous and not-for-profit organization and mandated to work in the field of nature conservation in Nepal. NTNC, under a working agreement with MOFSC, will provide the necessary staff and services to the PMU for the effective implementation of the project.

VII. Sustainability

41. Project sustainability will depend ultimately on the commitment and ownership of the participating countries to continue to tackle illegal wildlife trade through collaboration and regional harmonization, adopt landscape based conservation and adequately fund the program activities. At the project level, sustainability will depend on the technical and institutional capacity to maintain the initiatives after project completion. It is important to recognize that sustainability of the efforts under the project, particularly for enhanced regional collaboration, cannot be achieved through this single operation. It is likely to be a long-term process requiring continued engagement by conservation and development partners, including IDA.

42. Countries in Asia are committed to protecting endangered wildlife species and their habitats as evidenced by the legislation they have adopted, significant resources they have allocated to wildlife protection, agreements signed with CITES and the number of regional initiatives and partnerships – including the proposed SA-WEN – they have joined. IDA will maintain continuous dialogue on wildlife conservation with the participating governments and regular consultations with NGOs to help sustain the commitment. To address the funding risks after project completion, the project will pursue the following: (i) maintaining the dialogue with governments on future budget allocations to implementing agencies; (ii) enabling future partnerships with international NGOs and global initiatives by ensuring that they are part of the mandates of the implementing agencies; and (iii) exploring the possible use of ecotourism revenues to finance a portion of the conservation and enforcement costs.

43. To sustain the enhanced integrity mechanisms and regional harmonization, the project incorporates actions to mobilize internal and external integrity mechanisms (e.g., internal control mechanisms, citizens' oversight, and third party monitoring), and will monitor participating countries' adherence to their commitments under the relevant international treaties (e.g., CITES and other customs integrity initiatives). At the project level, the project includes extensive TA to help build capacity of the implementing agencies in project implementation and M&E. The project would support activities for strengthened governance within the ministries and other public project implementing institutions, and within SA-WEN (when the body becomes operational). To the extent possible, PIU/PMUs would be embedded in existing institutions with emphasis on mainstreaming practices and standards during implementation.

VIII. Safeguard Policies (including public consultation)

Safeguard Policies Triggered by the Project	Yes	No
Environmental Assessment (OP/BP 4.01)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Natural Habitats (OP/BP 4.04)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pest Management (OP 4.09)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Indigenous Peoples (OP/BP 4.10)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical Cultural Resources (OP/BP 4.11)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Involuntary Resettlement (OP/BP 4.12)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forests (OP/BP 4.36)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Safety of Dams (OP/BP 4.37)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Projects on International Waterways (OP/BP 7.50)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Projects in Disputed Areas (OP/BP 7.60)*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

44. *Social.* The Governments of Bangladesh and Nepal prepared country-specific Environmental and Social Management Frameworks (ESMFs) in lieu of project-specific social impact assessments (SIAs) since details of specific sub-project activities and interventions that may have social impacts are not yet available. The ESMFs include an assessment of generic

* By supporting the proposed project, the Bank does not intend to prejudice the final determination of the parties' claims on the disputed areas

issues that may arise during implementation, including measures for social risk mitigation and institutional arrangements for conducting SIAs, implementation and monitoring. All activities financed under the project in general, and the pilot projects in Sub-component 2.2 in particular, will require specific SIAs and social mitigation measures. The project will not fund any activity without a completed SIA. The ESMFs will serve as guidance on the level of social analysis and mitigation required for all interventions that may trigger negative social impacts.

45. While no land acquisition or resettlement in Bangladesh or Nepal would be carried out under the project, livelihood impacts may be felt by communities who traditionally rely on the PAs for their livelihoods. Therefore, community consultations are an integral part of sub-project preparation and implementation under Sub-component 2.2 and will be an ongoing feature in the project. Since indigenous peoples (IPs) are known to reside around virtually all PAs in Nepal, a framework for the preparation of an Indigenous Peoples Development Plan (IPDP) was prepared as an annex to Nepal's ESMF. This will serve as a template for the preparation of an IPDP in areas where project activities may impact the indigenous communities. Thus, OP/BP 4.12: Involuntary Resettlement and OP/BP 4.10: Indigenous Peoples will be triggered.

46. *Environment.* With support for the conservation and management of critical terrestrial, marine and wetland ecosystems and the protection of their wildlife and habitats as its centerpiece, the project is expected to produce positive environmental impacts in the long term. For safeguard purposes, the project has been classified as "Category B" since it is anticipated that some activities would involve minor civil works in areas of high ecological sensitivity and vulnerability; hence, certain short term negative environmental impacts may occur during the implementation phase. These negative impacts are expected to be largely on-site and easily mitigated with proper planning and sound environmental practices. The project will not support the construction of any major new infrastructure within the PA network. Considering the sensitive nature of protected areas, forest reserves and national forests, the following environmental safeguard polices are triggered: OP/BP 4.01 Environmental Assessment; OP/BP 4.04 Natural Habitats; and OP/BP 4.36 Forests.

47. As details of specific sub-project activities and interventions that may have environmental and impacts are not yet available, the Governments of Bangladesh and Nepal undertook the preparation of country-specific Environmental and Social Management Frameworks (ESMFs) in lieu of project-specific Environmental Assessments (EAs). The ESMFs primarily include: (i) an assessment of generic issues typically associated with the proposed interventions; (ii) measures for environmental risk mitigation; and (iii) institutional arrangements for conducting EAs as well as Environmental Management Plan (EMP) preparation, implementation and monitoring. The ESMFs will serve as templates to guide the environmental analysis required for all interventions that could trigger negative environmental impacts.

IX. Contact points

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