

Terms of Reference (ToR)
For
Preparation of Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) Conservation Action Plan for Nepal

1. Background

The Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*), a unique and highly specialized freshwater crocodilian, is distinguished by its elongated snout and fish-eating habits. Once widely distributed across river systems of the Indian subcontinent, the gharial has faced drastic declines in population and range due to habitat loss, overfishing, river modification, and sand-mining pressures.

In Nepal, gharials are currently found in fragmented populations in major rivers including the Karnali, Narayani, Rapti, Babai and Koshi River systems. The species is legally protected under the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973 and is listed as *Critically Endangered* by the IUCN Red List. It is also included in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Nepal has a long history of Gharial Conservation both in in-situ and ex-situ environment. Since the establishment of Gharial Conservation and Breeding Centre in 1978, enormous efforts have put forth to recover the population in natural environment by releasing them in the wild. In Nepal, the ever-looming threats such as habitat loss and degradation owing to sand and gravel mining; construction of dams and barrages; encroachment of sand banks, prey depletion have made fairly difficult to restore the habitat and recover the population in the wild.

On the backdrop of having various threats and challenges, the Government of Nepal has produced the first Gharial Conservation Action Plan (2018-2022) which guides holistic efforts towards conserving the most threatened species in in-situ and ex-situ environments. The plan has adopted the priority actions guided by National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2014- 2020), Forest Policy (2015), and Protected Area (PA) management plans of Gharial bearing protected areas of Nepal. Besides, this plan has incorporated the actions included in "operational plan for managing Gharial Conservation and Breeding Center and conserving the gharials in natural environment" approved by MFSC in 2072 B.S.

Gharial Conservation Action Plan (2018-2022) aims to maintain and manage the viable population of Gharial in Nepal. This plan focuses on enhancing scientific knowledge through research on Gharial, its prey base and habitat. In addition, the plan focuses on strengthening in situ conservation of Gharials by reducing anthropogenic pressures and maintains ex-situ conservation to secure future breeding stock.

With the first plan period completed, it is essential to review its achievements, challenges, and gaps and develop a forward-looking, science-based plan (2026–2035) to ensure the long-term survival of the species.

The new action plan is expected to guide systematic conservation efforts from policy level to ground level implementation that would enhance the long-term survival of this species in Nepal.

2. Rationale

Nepal is a Party to major multilateral environmental agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), CITES, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), all of which emphasize the conservation of endangered species and the sustainable management of freshwater ecosystems. The gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) is a Critically Endangered species and a flagship of South Asian River systems.

Developing a comprehensive Gharial Conservation Action Plan (2026–2035) is a national priority under Nepal’s National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP 2014–2020) and contributes directly to achieving the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) targets, particularly those on preventing species extinctions, restoring ecosystems, and strengthening inclusive conservation. This Action Plan will provide a strategic framework for gharial conservation at the policy, program, and grassroots levels while fulfilling Nepal’s obligations to international agreements and national commitments.

3. Objectives

General objective

The overall objective is to prepare **Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) Conservation Action Plan for Nepal** that addresses current and emerging threats, reviews past conservation efforts, and lays out clear and practical actions for the long-term survival of the species in Nepal.

Specific objectives

- To review the implementation status, achievements, and gaps of the earlier Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) Conservation Action Plan (2018–2022).
- To assess the status, threats, opportunities, and conservation challenges for gharials and their habitats.
- To prepare an action plan incorporating lessons learned, new scientific knowledge, and stakeholder perspectives.

4. Methodology

The consultant is required to provide detailed methodology for each of the specific objectives mentioned above in their proposal. Consultants should also include but not limited to the following methods in their

proposal. Field level activities should be conducted with prior approval and after securing necessary permits from the department (Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation).

4.1 Work plan

The consultant team will submit an inception report with methodology, work schedule, and information sources to be used. The work plan should describe how the plan formulation process will be carried out; it should include a work schedule, methodology for each task as well as type and nature of information to be collected and analyzed. The plan must be finalized in consultation with DNPWC's Ecology Section and the Technical Task Force and Technical Committee before commencing field activities.

4.2 Literature Review

Several sources of published and unpublished literatures prove valuable in identifying issues and developing conservation actions, monitoring plans and international best practices related to gharial conservation. Therefore, the consultant should follow a comprehensive literature review to identify the gaps. This comprehensive literature review should include systematic and standard procedure of literature review.

4.3 Field level consultation workshops:

- Assess threats, ongoing conservation actions, and opportunities.
- Conduct site visits in priority gharial habitats (e.g., Narayani, Rapti, Babai, Karnali, Koshi rivers).
- Organize **one-day consultation workshops** at field sites (e.g., Chitwan National Park or Bardiya National Park) involving park managers, division forest offices, local communities, fishers, and NGOs.
- Organize **one-day validation workshops** at previous consultation sites.

4.4 Drafting the Action Plan:

Prepare a draft action plan outlining key strategies, activities, monitoring frameworks, and institutional arrangements.

4.5 Sharing with Technical Committee and Technical working Group:

Share draft plan in the technical committee and technical working Group meeting. Comments and suggestions from the meetings should be incorporated in the plan.

4.6 National workshop:

Conduct a **national-level consultation workshop** on draft Gharial Conservation Action Plan for Nepal in **Kathmandu** with central-level stakeholders, government agencies, academia, and conservation partners. The team should facilitate and share the draft plan and incorporate comments and suggestions in the plan.

4.7 Review

Once the draft is endorsed by technical working group and technical committee the final draft should be shared with the relevant authority and experts for final review. Comments and suggestions from the reviewers should be incorporated and final draft of the action plan should be submitted to the department for approval process.

5. Deliverables

- Inception report with methodology and work plan
- Maps and GIS shape files of key gharial habitats and hotspots
- Hard and digital copies of field data and consultation records
- Draft Gharial Conservation Action Plan
- Final Gharial Conservation Action Plan incorporating all feedback

6. Team composition:

The consultant team will include (but not be limited to):

Team leader (species conservation expert/wildlife biologist): at least Masters (Preferably PhD) in Forestry/Wildlife conservation science/Zoology with at least ten years' experience in similar field. Experience in drafting conservation action plans and species conservation and protected area systems.

Member (Sociologist/Anthropologist): at least Masters's degree in relevant discipline with at least 5 years' experience of similar work.

Member (GIS expert): at least Master's degree in relevant discipline with at least 5 years' experience in relevant work and protected area management system of Nepal.

7. Timeline

The assignment should be completed within **8 weeks** of contract signing.

8. Coordination and Supervision

The team will undertake the assignment under the direct supervision of Head of Freshwater Programs of WWF Nepal and coordinate regularly with technical experts from relevant government institutions (MoFE, DNPWC, and DoFSC) and other stakeholders.

The report, data collected, materials including photos related to project must be copyrighted to ©DNPWC/ DoFSC/ WWF Nepal.

S.N.	Activities	Time in Month	
		I	II
1	Preparation of inception report		
2	Literature review		
3	Field consultations & workshops		
4	Draft action plan preparation		
5	Technical committee review and National Workshop		
6	Submission of final action plan		

9. Proposal Submission Details

Interested VAT registered firms are requested to submit technical and financial proposals providing a detail breakdown of total budget in Nepali rupees, electronically to: proposals-freshwater@wwfnepal.org. Please mention “Proposal – Gharial CAP” as an email subject and submit the proposal by 5 p.m., 30 October 2025.

The proposal must include the following:

- Signed cover letter specifying the value of the proposal
- Technical proposal
- CV of expert
- Organization profile with experience (Not exceeding 2 pages)
- Financial proposal (see annex 1 for template)
- Organization registration and renewal certificates
- VAT registration certificate
- Latest tax clearance and audit report

Please refer to Annex 1 for Budget Template.

10. Mode of Payment

The payment will be made as per WWF Nepal norms and upon submissions of satisfactory deliverables.

Note that payments are subject to tax deduction as per prevailing government rules.

Annex 1: Budget Template

S.N.	Description	Unit	Qty.	Rate	Amount (NPR)
1	Fee (1.1+1.2+1.3+....VAT)				XXXX
1.1	Team Leader-Name	Days			XXXX
1.2	Team Member/Expert - Name	Days			XXXX
1.3					XXXX
	VAT 13% on Fee				XXXX
2	Other Expense (2.1+2.2+VAT)				XXXXX
2.1	Field Visit Cost				XXXXX
2.1.1	Transportation				XXXX
2.1.2	Food and Accommodation				XXXX
2.1.3					
2.2	Meeting and National Workshop				XXXXX
2.2.1	Food and Snacks	Person			XXXX
2.2.2	Stationaries	No			XXXX
2.3	Other Support Cost				XXXXX
2.3.1	Communication	Lumpsum			XXXX
2.3.2	Stationaries	Lumpsum			XXXX
	VAT 13% on Other Expense				XXXX
	GRAND TOTAL (1+2)				XXXX

Note: Kindly add/edit rows as required