

## Safeguards Compliance Memorandum

### Landscape Information

<b>Name of Landscape/Seascape:</b> Terai Arc Landscape (TAL)	<b>Date:</b> 2/28/22
<b>Implementing Office(s)</b> WWF-Nepal	<b>Date of Cat Memo:</b> 11/27/19
<b>Landscape Categorization on E&amp;S Risks:</b>  <b>High Risk - (A) ___ and/or (Special Consideration) ___</b> <b>/Medium Risk (B) <u>X</u> / Low Risk (C) ___</b>	<b>Conservation Project Management (CPM) No.</b>

### Landscape Description

The Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) is among the most biologically important regions on earth, where the world's tallest grasslands and adjacent riverine forests support the world's highest densities of tigers, and the second largest population of greater one-horned rhinoceros. The TAL is a unique transboundary conservation landscape covering over 5 million hectares across Nepal and India, extending from Nepal's Bagmati River in the east to India's Yamuna River in the west. It covers an area of 24,710 sq. km in Nepal with a network of six protected areas, forests, agricultural lands, and wetlands. The TAL is Nepal's first conservation landscape and was initially established for the conservation of tigers in the early 2000's due to escalating habitat loss and fragmentation in the 1990s. Forced into isolated patches, the tiger population was rapidly declining. The TAL was conceptualized to provide a contiguous habitat for tigers and facilitate connectivity across 15 protected areas on either side of this transboundary landscape. The introduction of the landscape level approach to conservation in Nepal in 2001 marked a paradigm shift in conservation programming to evolve from a single species and protected area focus to one that brought together connected landscapes, local communities and integrated conservation approaches to benefit people, nature, and wildlife.

The current strategic plan for TAL Nepal, sets out a vision for "A globally unique landscape where biodiversity is conserved, ecological integrity safeguarded, and socio-economic well-being of people secured, in a dynamic environment of land, water, and resource use stresses and climate change." The key objective of the current strategic plan is to conserve the ecosystems of the Terai and Churia hills to ensure integrity of ecological, economic, and socio-cultural systems and communities. The TAL strategy focuses on three core themes - Species and Ecosystem Conservation, Forest and other Land use, and Socioeconomic Wellbeing. These are supported by eight cross cutting themes - Institutional Coordination and Collaboration, Policy and Governance, Local Capacity Building, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, Infrastructure Development, Climate Change, Research, Documentation and Dissemination, Awareness and Education, and Sustainable Financing.

## Safeguard Analysis

<b>Substantive Safeguard Standards Triggered:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Natural Habitats</b>		X
<b>Pest Management</b>		X
<b>Indigenous Peoples</b>	X	
<b>Restriction of Access &amp; Resettlement</b>	X	
<b>Community Health, Safety and Security</b>	X	
<b>Physical and Cultural Resources</b>		X

## Summary of Safeguards Issues

<p><b>Summary of Cross Cutting Issues:</b></p> <p>Two cross-cutting risks have surfaced through the screening process: 1) the potential for climate impacts to undermine project activities, and 2) the potential for someone employed by the project to engage in sexual harassment or gender-based violence.</p> <p>WWF-Nepal has carried out significant work in assessing the potential impacts of climate. Given the breadth of climate considerations WWF incorporates in project and program design, no further assessment is required.</p> <p>Gender considerations and addressing the threat of gender-based violence and harassment have also been given significant thought both through governmental tools that address this issue and as part of project design. No specific assessment is required at this time.</p> <p>In conclusion, WWF-Nepal has integrated climate adaptation and thorough mechanisms for addressing gender-related issues into their project portfolio in the Terai Arc Landscape. That said, WWF-Nepal should make sure that they employ full due diligence to ensure the presence and implementation of sexual harassment and gender-based violence policies. .</p>
<p><b>Summary of Key Safeguards Issues:</b></p> <p><u>Restriction of Access</u></p> <p>WWF-Nepal supports project activities carried out through an inclusive and consultative forest management framework managed by the communities. As part of these activities parcels of land can have the established permissions for usage changed and, in some cases, temporary fencing may be put in place to stop people from entering these sensitive areas. These decisions are made by the community itself through its community forest management framework. While the framework itself is likely an effective mechanism to prevent true restriction of access, it is essential that WWF-Nepal both documents how the community forest management framework does this and provides for effective review and monitoring to ensure there is no means for restriction of access that negatively impacts the</p>

communities and vulnerable parts of the community. There is further need to identify and account for the inclusion of groups that may fall outside of the community management structures, like landless peasants.

### Indigenous Peoples

There are indigenous peoples living in the areas of WWF's work and in the communities WWF engages. Diligent efforts around sensitivity and respect for these and other vulnerable communities is essential in moving ahead with this work. Per the above description of potential restriction of access, WWF would need to take additional steps to document how consultation and consent from these communities is integrated into the existing community forest management framework processes and requirements.

### Community Health and Security

There are three sets of risk present under this standard. First, increasing wildlife populations particularly those of large wildlife and predators increases the risk of human wildlife conflict. Second, provision of training and support to rangers does increase the potential risk for abuse or dangerous actions by those engaged in law enforcement. Third, careful review that support for established third party informant mechanisms is consistent with both local law and WWF guidelines, while ensuring the safety of informants and not creating conflict in the community, is necessary to avoid potential risks.

### **Describe measures taken by the Landscape Team to address safeguard issues.**

WWF-US has put in place:

- An Environmental and Social Risk Management Framework that includes plans on:
  - a) Community Health, Safety, and Security: covering support for law enforcement, support for informants, and human wildlife conflict
  - b) Restriction of Access: covering how WWF will build upon the community management framework to avoid or mitigate the potential for economic displacement
  - c) Indigenous Peoples: establishes measures for the equitable participation of Indigenous Peoples in WWF's activities and identify the circumstance, should the arise, that WWF should pursue FPIC
- Stakeholder Engagement Plan that lays out WWF-Nepal's strategy for continuous ongoing engagement with key stakeholders and rightsholders
- Grievance mechanism: WWF-Nepal established a national level grievance mechanism at the national level prior to the implementation of ESSF, this grievance mechanism has been enhanced and additional measures have been taken to ensure that local communities in places where WWF works can easily raise grievances.

### **Identify the key stakeholders and describe the mechanisms for consultation and disclosure on safeguard policies, with an emphasis on potentially affected people.**

WWF Nepal has engaged a broad set of stakeholders in the development and completion of its safeguard measures including Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, civil society organizations, and government. These engagements include in person engagements both by WWF and a consultant who supported the development of these documents. They have also publicly disclosed material about their safeguarding efforts through their website.

## **Monitoring and Compliance**

Have satisfactory calendar, budget and clear institutional responsibilities been prepared for the implementation of measures related to ESSF? Yes  No  NA

Have costs related to safeguard standard measures been included in relevant project costs? Yes  No  NA

Does the Monitoring and Evaluation system of the landscape include the monitoring of safeguard impacts and measures related to safeguard policies? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA <input type="checkbox"/>
Have relevant safeguard documents been prepared and approved? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA <input type="checkbox"/>
Have relevant documents been disclosed in-country in a public place in a form and language that are understandable and accessible to project-affected groups and local NGOs? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA <input type="checkbox"/>

### Disclosure Requirements

Environment and Social Management Framework	
Date received by WWF Office	May 17, 2021
Date Disclosed by WWF	TBD
Date Disclosed on WWF website	TBD

### Approvals

Safeguards Reviewer:	Brent Nordstrom	Date
Landscape/Seascape Lead in implementing office	Shiv Raj Bhatta	Date