



TERMS OF REFERENCE

For

Mapping and Monitoring Rangelands in Bhijer (Mukporong) and Saldang (Buddha) Areas Shey Phoksundo National Park, Upper Dolpa.

1. Background

WWF is the world's leading independent conservation organization originated in Switzerland in 1961 and currently running in more than 100 countries across 6 continents. WWF initiated work in Nepal with a rhino conservation program in Chitwan in 1967 while the WWF Nepal set up its office formally on 19 May 1993. Currently, WWF Nepal works in five thematic areas- Wildlife, Freshwater, Forests, Climate and Energy and Governance. WWF Nepal's focus has progressed from its localized efforts in conservation of a single species in the 1960s, to integrated conservation and development approach in 1990s, to a new horizon of landscape-level conservation encompassing national, regional, and global scales of complexity since the early 2000s.

Communities of upper Dolpa region are traditionally dependent on livestock, and thereby high altitude-rangelands for sustenance and livelihood in remote mountains. These communities developed complex governance mechanisms over time, through common sense, logic and cumulative experience to refine their survival strategy with sustainable use and management of resources in their natural surroundings (Parajuli, 1988). With the external governance system reaching this remote mountain, over the past century, their internal governance mechanism was gradually overwhelmed.

Nepal's government rangeland management policy, 2012 informs the extent of rangeland spread across 22.6 % of the country's area; of this 80% is in the high mountains and high hills. It recognizes the criticality of securing these habitats for the wellbeing of a country and its people (GoN 2012). The socio-economic values include supporting agro-pastoralist livelihoods, sources to valuable MAPs/NTFPs, as tourism destinations, etc. and ecological services include carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation as well as supporting biodiversity including rare and charismatic megafauna like the snow leopard. The policy recognizes the threats posed by increasing population, encroachment, overgrazing, invasive weeds, climate change, and acknowledges the erosion of valuable traditional ecological knowledge, skills and practices used in rangeland management historically.

As a solution to preserve these critical ecosystems, the policy stress on traditional knowledge, leadership role of communities as well as strategic use of new and modern technologies, providing a clear vision for rangeland management.

Aligned to WWF's wider agreements with the Social Welfare Council and the (former) Ministry of Forests and Environment, WWF operates in partnership with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (and the Department of Forests and Soil Conservation) through a joint management modality – **Terai Arc Landscape and Conservation Programs (TAL CP)** to support common priorities of various Protected Areas (including Shey Phoksundo National Park), Divisional Forest Offices and community-based organizations (including the Buffer Zone User Committees, Community Forest User Groups, etc) among others.

Shey Phoksundo National Park (SPNP), with WWF's support, has built the foundation for community-led rangeland co-management, based on years of consultations with communities. In 2023, representatives of SPNP-WWF, Shey Phoksundo Rural Municipality, faith leaders and BZUC members, a joint agreement was made to work towards TEK integrated habitat co-management. SPNP's five-year Management Plan 2080-85, Nepal Government's Snow Leopard Conservation Action Plan 2025-2029, the Karnali Province Rangeland Management Strategy and Action Plan (RMSAP) stress on working towards joint habitat management strategies, ensuring nature preservation and community wellbeing as foundation, integrating traditional knowledge systems and community beliefs (such as sacred sites, monastery-zones etc) and modern scientific knowledge, acknowledging risks from both internal and external sources, and facilitating close coordination between stakeholders for successful implementation.

In late 2025, with the support of the UK Government's Darwin Initiative, a joint project was launched to support this initiative by WWF, which focuses on creating a rangeland co-management model targeting the two remotest Buffer Zones (BZ) in SPNP – Mukporong (Bhijer) and Buddha (Saldang). Through initial efforts, BZ-level Rangeland Management Strategies are being drafted.

Likewise in line with GoN policy, specific sub-committees for rangeland co-management – currently named Rangeland Management Sub-committees (RMSc) - were established in the second quarter of calendar year 2026 in Buddha and Mukporong BZUCs - comprising local community representatives (herders, women, faith leader, youth, etc). In Mukporong BZUC, 21 local community members have been identified and nominated as RMSc members; in Buddha, considering the wider distribution, 39 local community members have been nominated as RMSc members.

WWF calls for support of expert institutions to support SPNP to capacitate and mobilize the RMScs for mapping critical rangelands and sacred sites and designing and rolling out scientific monitoring to guide the RMS implementation in Mukporong and Buddha BZUCs. The proposal needs to include an outline of the methodologies for this assignment, and finances planned accordingly.

2. Scope of Work

1. Map existing rangelands and sacred sites within in two Buffer Zone User Committees – Mukporong and Buddha - of Shey Phoksundo National Parks following a robust and replicable protocol.
2. Design a monitoring protocol to measure anthropogenic impacts on rangelands (incorporating the practicality of seasonal and multiple use of rangelands by local communities and outsiders).
3. Capacitate and train RMSc present in two buffer zone user committees for overall rangeland monitoring and data collection for long term rangeland health monitoring.
4. Quantify baseline values for anthropogenic impacts on rangeland and establish a clear protocol and schedule for long term monitoring.
5. Assess and quantify livestock carrying capacity of mapped rangelands.

3. Expected Outcome

1. Rangelands and sacred sites mapped in Mukporong and Buddha BZUCs
2. Baseline anthropogenic pressures on rangelands understood for Mukporong and Buddha BZUCs
3. RMSc members capacitated for long-term rangeland monitoring and data recording to document changes in habitat quality

4. Expected outputs

1. A detailed technical report on - rangeland and sacred site mapping, livestock carrying capacity (based on rangeland productivity) and anthropogenic pressures baseline, including quantitative indices to help measure change in long-term - from the two BZUCs of SPNP.
2. All data, images, and maps produced as part of this assessment from the two BZUCs of SPNP.
The photos taken a part of this consultancy will be copyright to DNPWC/ WWF Nepal.
3. A standard monitoring protocol with data collection formats/templates for conducting repeated productivity and anthropogenic impact assessments of rangelands by RMScs (in view of seasonality and multiple uses of rangelands by local communities and outsiders).
4. Training content, modules developed and delivered for training RMSc for rangeland monitoring and data collection.

5. Team expertise:

The proponents are advised to propose a team (comprising a group leader with expertise in high altitude rangeland research - preferably with a strong GIS background, to guide design the assessment, and research assistant/s with relevant experience to support field trainings, data collection and analysis) related to this exercise. Preference will be given to institutions:

- a. Who showcase prior experience in similar efforts in research and conservation of high-altitude rangelands.
- b. With ability to showcase leverage 'expertise' and/or 'equipment' and/or 'other resources' and showcase innovation for financial optimization.
- c. With ability to align to GoN's wider policy and commitment priorities.
- d. With ability to independently ensure alignment to GoN's compliance requirements for such studies.

6. Tentative duration of assignment

July 2026 – December 2026

7. Workplan

S.N.	Activities	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26	Oct-26	Nov-26	Dec-26
	Inception report and detailed plan finalization						
	Field visit and RMSc capacity building and mobilization (training logistics funded separately by WWF and not to be included in budget)						
	Field data collection by RMSc (field costs for RMSc mobilization funded separately by WWF and not to be included in budget; however, consultant team need to be in communication with the trained RMSc members to ensure data quality)						

Data analysis and submission of preliminary findings							
Submission of final technical and financial deliverables							

8. Supervision and Coordination

The recipient will closely be technically supervised and supported by a Technical Director for this assignment.

The proponents will note the following system of WWF’s operation while preparing the proposal and financial plan for this call.

WWF operates in partnership with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (and the Department of Forests and Soil Conservation) through a unique modality of joint management – **Terai Arc Landscape and Conservation Programs (TAL CP)**.

Through this modality, the funds for capacity building and mobilization of the RMSc members for this assignment’s field activities will be allocated by TAL CP through sub-grant to the respective Buffer Zone User Committees (BZUCs) –Mukporong and Buddha, aligned to the study design finalized jointly with the selected consultants. This, however, will not include the selected consultant team’s necessary expenses, which must be embedded in the financial plan proposed for this assignment.

The field staff of the TAL CP - based in Dunai, Dolpa, guided by the Technical Director - will support the selected consultants to aid necessary coordination and planning with the BZ/RMScs. The consultant team will however need to continue independent communication (noting challenges within these landscapes) with the capacitated/mobilized RMSc members for field data collection. Noting that the necessary data will be collected by the RMSc members, the proponent can propose measures and incorporate appropriate costs to assure data integrity.

9. Key deliverables

Final financial and technical reports.

10. Proposal Submission Details

Interested VAT registered organizations in Nepal are requested to submit technical and financial proposals providing a detailed breakdown of total budget in Nepali rupees, electronically to proposals-wildlife@wwfnepal.org

Please mention “**Proposal- Mapping and monitoring rangelands of Upper Dolpa**” as an email subject and submit the proposal by, **5 pm, July 8, 2026**.

The proposal must include:

- Signed cover letter
- Technical proposal
- Financial proposal (Please refer annex 1 for template)
- CV of Expert/s
- Organization registration certificate
- VAT registration certificate
- Tax clearance for 2081-82

Only organizations selected for further consideration will be contacted. Telephone inquiries are not entertained.

11. Mode of Payment

The payment will be made based on the existing norms of WWF Nepal. Fund disbursement will be done in two steps. Other expenses (field costs including travel and accommodation and expenses associated with workshops and consultations) not exceeding the consultancy fee will be provided as advance upon the signing of the contract. The second and final installment will be released after the final acceptance of the report by WWF.

Annex 1: Budget Template

S.N.	Description	Unit	Qty.	Rate	Amount (NPR)
1	Fee (1.1+.... VAT)				XXXX
1.1	Expert 1 - Name	Days			XXXX
1.2	Expert 2- Name	Days			XXXX
1.3				
	VAT 13% on Fee				XXXX
2	Other Expense (2.1+2.2+VAT)				XXXXX
2.1	Field Expenses				XXXXX
2.1.1	Transportation				XXXX
2.1.2	Food & Accommodation				XXXX
2.1.3				
2.2	Other Costs				XXXXX
2.2.1	Communication	Lumpsum			XXXX
2.2.3	Stationaries	Lumpsum			XXXX
2.2.4				
	VAT 13% on Other Expense				XXXX
	GRAND TOTAL (1+2)				XXXXXX

**Note: please add/edit rows as required*