

PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD¹: January – December 2024

Signed and endorsed by:

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Environment

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Project Summary Information	
Project Title	Securing livelihoods, Conservation, Sustainable Use and Restoration of high range Himalayan Ecosystems (SECURE Himalayas)
Project ID	00096606
Project Duration	2017 - 2024
Location	India - Changthang, Union Territory of Ladakh - Lahaul - Pangi & Kinnaur, State of Himachal Pradesh - Gangotri - Govind & Darma – Byans, State of Uttarakhand - Khangchendzonga–Upper Teesta, State of Sikkim
CPD/UNSDCF/RPD/SP Outputs	CPD Output 3.2 Innovative solutions developed, demonstrated and upscaled at national and subnational levels for vulnerable communities and businesses to benefit from sustainable management of natural resources (land, water, air), chemicals and circular economy. Indicator 3.2.1: Number of people directly benefiting from initiatives to protect the environment and promote sustainable use of resources. Baseline(2022):0;Target (2027):12,500 Indicator 3.2.3: Terrestrial, coastal, marine, pasturelands and agricultural lands protected and / or restored through improved management practices (hectares) Baseline (2022): 0; Target (2027): 1,600,000 Ha
Gender marker	GEN 2

¹ Periodicity of this project progress report will be determined based on online input; it can be used quarterly, half-yearly, or annually. Once the data from this tool is input into Quantum, one can generate multi-year, annual, or quarterly reports, as the system should be able to aggregate various periods as long as they have been reported. The minimum requirement for Project Board to meet at least once to review progress and risks is annual - per policy.

Digitalization Marker²	Digital Technology: Output partially enabled through digital technology Digital Results: Contributing to digital transformation of society and inclusive digital ecosystems
Implementing Partner	Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC)
Total budget	USD 11,544,192
Donors (funding sources)	GEF Trust Fund
Budget (annual budget)	USD 554,180.63
Expenditure recorded for the reporting period	USD 774,780
Expenditure recorded for the total project	USD 10,802,697
Project Manager name:	Subrato Paul

1. Executive Summary

A brief analysis of key project results, achievements, and challenges, highlighting their contribution to the relevant CPD/RPD outcome/output. This could also be activity verification, beneficiaries' feedback, changes brought about by capacity development interventions, etc., depending on the type of intervention and guided by the objectives as per [monitoring policy](#) (track performance, analyze evidence, report on performance and lessons)

The project objective is to promote the sustainable management of alpine pastures and forests in the high range Himalayan ecosystems that secures conservation of globally significant wildlife, including endangered snow leopard and their habitats, ensures sustainable livelihoods and community socioeconomic benefits.

The focus landscape covers the Himalayan high altitudes in four states and UTs- Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Sikkim, and the UT of Ladakh. This is to be achieved by (i) generating scientific knowledge of ecology and society across the Indian high altitudes, (ii) striking partnerships with the local communities to design and implement local biodiversity conservation initiatives, including mitigation strategies for human-wildlife conflicts, (iii) promoting capacity-development amongst local communities, the state forest departments, and young conservationists, to monitor and conserve high altitude biodiversity, (iv) work with the Government, NGOs and other partners to develop and implement a scientifically well informed, and socially responsible Project Snow Leopard, and (vi) spread awareness of India's high altitude biodiversity at local and national levels through conservation education.

During the reporting period, the project concluded its activities within the landscapes. The process of terminal evaluation was completed by two independent experts and the final report was submitted in November 2024. The focus was on ensuring the institutionalization of project

² Detailed Digital Marker Guidance Note is found [here](#).

initiatives, particularly through strategic convergences, to guarantee their sustainability and smooth handover to the respective State Forest/Wildlife Departments. The project, based on the market linkages forged, ensured income generation and continued skills enhancement in the context of value chains such as seabuckthorn and wool fibres. Additionally, the management plans of MPCDAs were finalized during the reporting period and ratified by the State Forest Departments. A consolidated project information report has been submitted to the GEF highlighting the achievements against all mandatory biological and other indicators.

2. Progress Review

a) Key results achieved

Highlight concrete results achieved/underachieved in the reported period, including progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment in the reporting period. If applicable, highlight achievements in digitalization and innovation. What implementation issues were highlighted in the previous reporting period, and how were they managed?

1. Darma Byas landscape of Uttarakhand, a 50-ha area of alpine meadows have been restored by removing invasive species called polygonum polystachyum. Weeds have been removed in selected patches of the area along with community consultation for 3 years from grazing and other anthropogenic activities. While in the state of Sikkim the activities have been undertaken to reduce pressure and prevent degradation of alpine meadows and sub-alpine forests. To reduce extraction of fuelwood for cooking and space heating from the temperate and sub-alpine forests in the Lachen-Thangu area, 80 nos of Himalayan Rocket Stove (energy efficient cooking stoves for cooking and heating have been procured and distributed amongst 50 Dokpa (yak herder) families at Thangu and 30 other beneficiaries at Lachen.
2. Solid waste at fragile high-altitude locations, 3 nos of solid waste biodigesters have been procured and installed. One biodigester has been installed at the Army camp at Zuluk, Gangtok district since it is located at the fringes of vital transboundary snow leopard habitats. The remaining two are scheduled to be installed at the ITBP camp in Chhaten near Lachen at Mangan district. High amount of food waste is dumped nearby the camp resulting in an increase of feral dogs nearby camps. In Himachal Pradesh, reduced pressure prevented degradation of alpine meadows and sub-alpine forests. Reduced grazing pressure on 163,714 Ha of Alpine pastures/subalpine forests by 10%
3. In Gangotri Landscape of Uttarakhand State and Changthang Landscape of Ladakh, UT MPCDA plan have been formulated along with BHS management plans and submitted by Forest Department in Ladakh and NMPB in Uttarakhand state. The activity covers around 540 ha of land in conservation regimes. The Uttarakhand Forest Department has received the budget for development of MPCA in Gangotri landscape while in Ladakh the establishment of seedbank is initiated. The HCV'a and MPCDA proposal has been prepared with the help of CSIR IHBT and community consultations have been done in the state of Himachal Pradesh.

4. In Gangotri Landscape the seabuckthorn processing center has been established with the support of NMPB. The community currently processes the raw material available in the landscape for their own consumption. After establishing the processing center, approx 300 households are associated with the activities and are processing it for the marketing of the byproducts. The activities are contributing to generating benefits from NTFP and enhancing their income.
5. Under the sheep and yak wool activity of the project, sales of products (natural and dyed yarn, processed wool) amounting to INR 2,35,367 were made by beneficiary groups through participation at fairs and festivals, procurement by designers, etc. This translates to up to a 60x increase in the value of wool fibers
6. The 2024 edition of Asian Waterbird Census was organized by the project in collaboration with the Department of Wildlife Protection, Ladakh Biodiversity Council, Local Biodiversity Management Committees, and Civil Society Organisations (Wetlands International South Asia (WI-SA), Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), Wildlife Conservation & Birds Club Ladakh (WCBCL), Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust (SLC IT), & World Wildlife Fund (WWF)) between 16th and 22nd January 2024. The survey was conducted across various wetlands of Ladakh: Chumathang Hot Spring, Puga Hot Spring, Tsokar wetland complex, Tsomoriri Lake, Hanle Marshes, Chuchot marshes, Shey Pond, Sindhu Ghat, Spituk marshes, Phey junction, Panamik Hot Spring, Yerab Tso, Sumoor marshes, Diskit wetland, Shey Sindhu Ghat and Shey Pond. A total of 24 people participated in the surveys; 4 groups sighted and documented 53 species, of which 18 species were waterbirds.
7. Landscape level meetings were conducted in all the landscapes of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. The meetings have been conducted to coordinate with different departments for handing over the natural resource management and livelihood initiatives for their sustainability and continuations.
8. Project has implemented several initiatives to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, contributing to both economic resilience and environmental conservation. Women's active participation in planning, decision-making, and implementation led to an average 25% income increase across all states, with notable success in the sheep and yak wool value chain, seeing a 3000% increase in sheep wool and a 6000% increase in Pashmina wool after processing. Women involved in the sea-buckthorn value chain through the Khondoma Women SHG also experienced income growth, and 50 more women expressed interest in joining the SHG, highlighting its economic success. Out of 3,471 beneficiaries trained (against a target of 2,500), 49% (1,707) were women, many of whom received specialized training in various project interventions. The project has also established grassroots networks to spread awareness and share knowledge, ensuring sustainability. Women have become "Agents of Change" due to their increased involvement in economic decision-making at both household and community levels. Through project interventions, women have participated in income-generating activities, such as the sheep and yak wool value chain, where they gained skills in wool shearing, processing, colouring, branding, and marketing. Other successful initiatives include sea-buckthorn enterprises, hazelnut

promotion, cookie making, organic mushroom cultivation, and apiculture. Additionally, young women have pursued roles as para taxonomists, mountaineering assistants, nature guides, finance and marketing managers, and social media handlers, following skill development under the project. This shift in traditional gender roles has improved their confidence, social status, and community respect.

b) Output progress

Progress reported against each output. Link to the last report submitted, and please mention the status of previously delayed outputs.

Output statement	Indicators	Baselines Value	Annual Targets	End of the project target	Status: On-track/ off-track / complete (actuals achieved)	Narrative/Description of status	Means of verifications and comment to substantiate the selected response
Project objective: To promote the sustainable management of alpine pastures and forests in the high range Himalayan ecosystems that secures conservation of globally significant wildlife, including endangered snow leopard and their habitats, ensure sustainable livelihoods and community socio-economic benefits.							
	Mandatory Indicator 1.3.1 Area of sustainable management solutions at sub-national for conservation of snow leopard, wild prey and associated species and habitats, sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem services	Approximately 30,000 – 40,000 hectares (parts of Kanchenjunga National Park and Gangotri National Park) managed effect	Same as End term Target	At least 1,600,000 hectares effectively managed through participatory approaches	Completed A total of 3,425,451 hectares managed	The mandatory indicator, initially deemed "questionable of achievability" during the Mid-Term Review, was overachieved by 114.1%, with 3,425,451 hectares now under participatory management. The project successfully enhanced multi-stakeholder coordination, scientific research, and conservation strategies across Himachal	Terminal Evaluation Report Secure Himachal TE Report signed.pdf

						<i>Pradesh, Ladakh, Sikkim, and Uttarakhand, integrating sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity conservation. Key achievements include habitat restoration through rotational grazing, native plantations, fodder banks, and wetland management; establishment of Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHSs) and Medicinal Plants Conservation Areas (MPCDAs); and mitigation of human-wildlife conflict using early warning systems (ANIDERS). The project also strengthened Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs), promoted sustainable livelihoods through ecotourism and non-timber forest products (NTFPs), and implemented waste management and organic farming</i>	
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						<i>initiatives. These efforts have not only restored critical landscapes but also fostered long-term ecological sustainability and community empowerment.</i>	
	Mandatory Indicator 1.3.2 Number of additional people benefiting from strengthened livelihoods through solutions for management of natural resources and ecosystem services	0	Same as End target	At least 2,500 households directly benefit through improved livelihoods and incomes (50% of the beneficiaries would be women)	Completed 2502 households directly benefitted	The project successfully benefited 2,502 households across Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Sikkim , with 50.5% of beneficiaries being women , through sustainable livelihood initiatives integrated into SHGs, FPOs, cooperative societies, and PPGs . It strengthened five key value chains: community-led ecotourism, NTFP and medicinal plants, handloom and handicrafts, dairy development, and renewable energy solutions , leading to income generation, biodiversity conservation, and	Terminal Evaluation Report Secure Himachalaya TE Report signed.pdf

						reduced resource dependency. Specific highlights include 628 households benefiting from sheep and yak wool-based livelihoods, 858 households engaged in eco-tourism, and 343 households involved in NTFP harvesting. A notable achievement is the women-led Sea-buckthorn enterprise in Himachal Pradesh, initially benefiting 51 women and expanding to 100, fostering ecological restoration and income growth. The project also facilitated India's first Dark Sky Reserve in Hanle (1,073 sq. km.), promoting astro-tourism through telescope training and light pollution reduction. Additional initiatives such as renewable energy adoption (301 households), agriculture and horticulture support (272	
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						households), and strategic partnerships (e.g., MoU with the State Rural Livelihood Mission in Sikkim) have further strengthened community resilience. The active participation of State Project Steering Committees ensured effective policy decisions, co-financing, and project convergence with governmental and non-governmental entities. Overall, the project's holistic approach has enhanced economic resilience, environmental stewardship, and the preservation of traditional knowledge, laying a strong foundation for long-term sustainability and community empowerment.	
	Mandatory indicator 2.5.1 Extent	0	Same as end term target	All four multiple use	Completed	The project successfully established and	Terminal Evaluation Report

	to which Institutional frameworks are in place for conservation, sustainable use, access and benefit sharing of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems and improved livelihoods			landscapes have official multi-stakeholder, multi-sector coordination and governance mechanisms that facilitate convergence of planning, manpower and financial resources for conservation, sustainable use and improved livelihood benefits	State and landscape-level inter-departmental coordination committees established in all four project states and union territories.	strengthened institutions for conservation, sustainable resource use, and biodiversity benefit-sharing , while improving livelihoods. State and landscape-level inter-departmental coordination committees were formed in all four project states, ensuring policy decisions, progress reviews, and co-financing. At the national level, the project contributed to the reconstitution of the National Project Snow Leopard Steering Committee , facilitating landscape-level planning and funding under CSS-IDWH . Additionally, 65 Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) were established to enhance biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource management across project landscapes.	Secure_Himalaya_TERRA_report_signed.pdf
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	<i>Biological Indicator. Status of snow leopard populations in four project states</i>	<i>Estimated at 474 individuals</i>	<i>Same as end term target</i>	<i>Stable or increase snow leopard populations in the four project states</i>	<i>Completed 718 snow leopard estimated</i>	<i>The project supported India's first comprehensive snow leopard population survey (2021–2023) using the SPAI methodology, estimating 718 snow leopards across 120,000 sq. km. Ladakh had the highest population (477), followed by Uttarakhand (124), Himachal Pradesh (51), and Sikkim (21). Rural youth trained under the project assisted WII and WWF-India in conducting these assessments, contributing to snow leopard conservation efforts.</i>	<i>Terminal Evaluation Report Secure Himalaya TE Report signed.pdf</i>
1.1 Landscape level management strategies that integrates biodiversity, ecosystem services, climate mitigation, sustainable community resource use and socio-economic considerations	1.1 Improved management effectiveness of protected areas and biological rich areas in alpine and sub-alpine landscape	Changtang WLS (22) Govind Pasu WLS (25) Gangotri NP (35) Khangchen junga NP (29) Seichi Tuan WLS (13) Shingba Rhododen	Same as End term Target	Average increase by at least 30 points in METT from current PAs baselines	Complete 30 points Increase	Project activities have contributed to the overall improved management of PAs across project landscapes. The end-term METT scores have been calculated at the end term and it has been validated during the terminal evaluation process.	https://essenceofhimal.com/secure.mis/viewmett.php GEF7-BD-TrackingTool-Mid Term.xlsx

<i>are developed, discussed with stakeholders and supported.</i>		<i>dron WLS (16)</i>				<i>9,64,727.0 hectares of terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management.</i> <i>1,41,771.3 hectares area of landscapes under improved practices.</i>	
1.2 Site specific participatory management plans for Protected Areas, and other Key Biodiversity Areas, including High Conservation Value Forests, Biodiversity Heritage Sites and biological corridors, and sustainable natural resource use areas designed and tested under community governance, management and enforcement regimes	<i>1.2 Improved institutional capacities for planning, implementation and monitoring of multiuse landscape level plans as measured by UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard</i>	<i>Limited institutional capacities for planning, implementation and monitoring of multiple use landscapes . UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard baseline score of 18</i>	<i>Same as End term Target</i>	<i>Increase of institutional capacity as measured by a 50% increase in UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard baseline value</i>	<i>Complete 100% increase in UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard baseline value</i>	<i>Project activities related to augmentation of capacities of frontline staff, line departments, and community groups have contributed against this output indicator. The UNDP Capacity Development scorecard has been calculated at the end term and validated and reported in the terminal evaluation. a total of 2,069 individuals (1,764 men –85%, 302 women – 15%) have been benefited from training, capacity enhancement and exposure visits of front line, mid-level and senior level officials, chairpersons,</i>	<i>Terminal Evaluation Report</i> Secure Him alaya TE R eport signed.pdf

						<i>secretaries and members of the Biodiversity Management Committees across all the project states and UT.</i>	
1.3 Alpine meadows and sub-alpine forest restoration plans are developed and introduced to local communities to improve biological connectivity and habitat productivity	1.3 (a) <i>Reduced pressure and prevented degradation of alpine meadows and sub-alpine forests</i>	<i>Approximately 700,000 ha of alpine meadows under unsustainable grazing with average 75 livestock units/km² and forests around villages lack sustainable management arrangements</i>	<i>Same as End term Target</i>	<i>Reduced grazing pressure on 700,000 ha of alpine meadows by at least 20% (from 75 to 60 livestock units/km²) and prevented degradation in around 10,000 ha of sub-alpine forest under community-based management resulting in projected 0.46-0.50 and 0.31-0.36 m tCO₂ /30 year period sequestered and avoided</i>	<i>Complete alpine and sub-alpine forests were brought under community management over 8,013.76 hectares</i>	<i>In Gangotri Landscape Kedar Tal trek routes and visitors management system strengthening has been improved. Solid waste Management collection and transportation improved by installing dustbins, repairing trek routes, Repairing camping sites and installation of informative signages. Currently 1600 ha area of the forest is under sustainably manageable regime. 50 ha area of alpine meadows have been restored by removing invasive species called polygonum polystachyum.</i>	Evidence: 1.3.2 1.3.3 1.3.4

				<i>respectivel y.</i>		<i>The removal of weeds has been undertaken in selected patches of the area along with community consultation for protecting the area for 3 years from grazing and other anthropogenic activities.</i> <i>In Ladakh, under the project's work on sheep and yak wool value chain across two villages in Rupshu area (Angkung and Samad) in the Changthang landscape, the first sale of produce with improved value was made (upto 60x increase in value recorded). The increased incomes through improvement in processes and market linkages is expected to lead to reduced or stabilised livestock numbers in the region and improved ratio of livestock composition To reduce fuelwood extraction in Lachen-Thangu,</i>	
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						80 Himalayan Rocket Stoves have been procured for 50 Dokpa families and 30 others. Distribution is delayed due to road issues from last year's flash floods, with stoves stored in Mangan. Three solid waste biodigesters were also procured, one installed at an Army camp in Zuluk and two stored in Chungthang awaiting installation at an ITBP camp in Chhaten. Installation delays are due to similar road connectivity problems from the floods 74,682.9 hectares area of land and ecosystem under restoration.	
1.4 Biodiversity participatory monitoring for Snow leopard and associated species is developed and tested	1.4 Extent of degraded alpine pastures/rangelands and sub-alpine forests under sustainable management regimes	Approximately 40,000 ha of alpine pastures and 2,000 ha of sub-alpine forests under continued degradation	Same as End term Target	40,000 hectares alpine pastures and 2,000 hectares sub-alpine forests under sustainable regeneration	Complete 75,813.74 hectares of alpine pastures and sub-alpine forests under sustainable regime.	In Ladakh, Peoples Biodiversity Registers (PBRs) prepared/updated in Changthang landscape developed for Hemya, Samad, Chumathang and Hanle BMCs through community	Evidence: 1.4.1

		<i>n through overuse</i>		<i>regimes resulting in projected 0.16 - 0.18 and 0.42 – 0.05 m tCO2 /30-year period sequestrated and avoided respectively</i>		<i>consultation and the same was ground truthed.</i>	
1.5 Lessons learned on biodiversity and multiple use landscape management approaches are developed	<i>Area of High Conservation Value Forests under improved management</i>	<i>High Conservation Value Forests (dispersal corridors, biodiversity rich areas and buffer areas) lack appropriate management regimes</i>	<i>Same as End term Target</i>	<i>(a) Reduced direct pressure on at least 60,000 ha covering at least 18 newly designated and managed key biodiversity areas, including 30,000 ha of HCVFs to ensure connectivity and species conservation resulting in projected avoided 1.38-1.47 m tCO2 over 30-year period</i>	<i>Complete 112.06% more than the goal in terms of improving the management of 73 High Conservation Value Forests (HCVFs) covering 127,238.32 hectares across all project landscapes</i>	<i>One MPCA (Medicinal Plant Conservation area) project is under implementation in Gangotri Landscape of Uttarkashi. The project focuses on 8 medicinal species conservation covering an area of 200 ha. The plan was developed in coordination with the forest department and community and was accepted by NMPB. Management Plans for two Medicinal Plants Conservation and Development</i>	<i>Evidence: 1.5.2</i>

				<i>(b) Reduced direct pressure on at least 20,000 ha of moist and dry alpine areas and sub-alpine forests managed as Biodiversity Heritage Sites resulting in projected avoided 0.46 – 0.49 m tCO2 over 30-year period</i>		<i>Areas (MPCDAs) and Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHSs) in and around two high-altitude passes in Changthang landscape (Taglang La - ~190 ha and Wari La - ~150 ha) prepared and accepted by the Forest/Wildlife Department. This management plan was prepared through a consultative process, including meetings and workshops held with local community members. Procurements made for setting up of seed banks and herbaria in vicinity of both the sites.</i> <i>1,27,238.32 hectares of area of high conservation value forest or other forest loss avoided</i>	
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2.1 Participatory community-based village plans for enhancing and diversifying livelihoods and improving natural resources management are developed	2.1 Extent under sustainable natural resources management practices	0 (Currently sustainable land management natural resources practices at the village level are absent or limited)	Same as End term Target	At least 10,000 ha under sustainable natural resources management practices	Complete 13,939 hectares of land under sustainable management	<i>In Gangotri Landscape, the Seabuckthorn processing centre in convergence with NMPB funded project has been established. Currently, the community domestically processes the raw material available in the landscape for their own consumption. After establishment of the processing centre, approximately 300 HHs are associated with the activities and processing it for marketing of the byproducts. The activities are contributing to generating benefits from NTFP and enhancing their income.</i>	Evidence: 2.1.1
2.2 Pilot projects on sustainable community based natural	2.2 (a) Average percentage increase in community	Baseline to be established in YR1 during	Same as End term Target	30% increase in average incomes from	Complete 30% increase in	In the Gangotri-Govind Landscape, income enhancement	2.2.1 1.3.3

resources management, and sustainable livelihood activities are supported	<i>incomes from sustainable livelihood, natural resource management and business activities (calculated for each community)</i>	<i>village micro-planning</i>		<i>sustainable livelihoods , natural resource management and business activities (At least 40% of beneficiaries are women)</i>	<i>average incomes</i>	<i>initiatives are benefiting local communities. Local youths have been trained in snow leopard-based tourism and are currently practicing these activities. Households involved in handloom and handicrafts have received packaging, grading, and knitting machines, with 25 women and cooperative members selling their products locally. Additionally, apple-based product initiatives have been strengthened with new machinery for quality improvement and mechanized production. These efforts collectively contribute to the community's livelihood enhancement. Under the sheep and yak wool activity of the project, the sale of produce (natural and dyed yarn, processed wool) amounting</i>	
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						to Rs. 2,35,367 by beneficiary groups was made through participation at fairs and festivals, procurement by designers, etc. This amounts to upto 60x increase in the value of wool fibres.	
2.3 New and enhanced value chain products and services providing ecologically sustainable livelihoods are developed and implemented by local communities	2.3 Number of community members trained, adopting community-based agricultural, agro-pastoral, natural resource management and livelihood activities.	0 (currently training at the community level is limited and sector specific.) and limited effort at comprehensive training that integrates the multiple dimensions of managing resources across the different sectors and for multiple use.	Same as End term Target	At least 2,500 community members trained and adopting community-based sustainable resource use, agro-pastoral, agricultural and other sustainable livelihood activities and receiving detectable conservation and livelihood benefits	Complete (3,471 community members, including 49% women trained)	The Secure Himalaya project successfully trained 3,471 community members (49% women), surpassing its target of 2,500, focusing on sustainable livelihoods, resource management, and improved agricultural practices. Key training initiatives included eco-tourism and home-stay management across Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Sikkim, and Uttarakhand, equipping locals—especially women—with skills in	1.3.3 2.3.1

						hospitality, waste management, wildlife spotting, and cultural tourism. Specialized programs, such as astro-tourism training in Ladakh and birding workshops in Sikkim, further diversified local income sources. In the handicrafts and handloom sector, training in weaving, knitting, branding, and marketing empowered artisans, leading to increased sales and direct market linkages, with women in Ladakh breaking traditional gender roles in wool processing. The project also strengthened on-farm and off-farm livelihoods, providing technical skills in medicinal plant cultivation, sea-buckthorn processing, oyster mushroom farming,	
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					beekeeping, and dairy processing, alongside infrastructure support such as polyhouses, wool processing centers, and juice extractors. Training in waste management, paper recycling, and governance skills enhanced sustainability and entrepreneurship, particularly through Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs). These capacity-building efforts have significantly contributed to economic resilience, gender inclusion, and conservation-driven community development across the Himalayan landscape. <i>12,510 people benefitting from GEF-financed investments.</i>	
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3.1 Wildlife Agencies have information on hotspots and pathways of illegal trade to organize targeted operations against wildlife crime.	3.1 Number of community members actively volunteering in security monitoring and surveillance	0 (There is no coordinated program for community participation in surveillance and monitoring of wildlife crime)	Same as End term Target	200 community members actively engaged in wildlife crime monitoring and surveillance in community battalions (At least 20% women) to serve as deterrent to wildlife crime	Complete More than 200 community members (mostly youths, besides involvement of Sarpanches of Panchayats as Honorary Wildlife Wardens) trained	Long Range Patrolling (LRP) and Short Range Patrollings (SRP) have been conducted in Gangotri Landscape for protection of wildlife and other resources of the area. A total of 6 LRPs and 6 SRPs have been organized in protected area of GNP and Gangotri Range. In mountainous regions like Sikkim, swift responses to wildlife emergencies are challenging due to remoteness, logistics, and lack of training among forest department staff. Human-wildlife conflicts, especially with Himalayan black bears, often lead to serious injuries and require significant efforts for animal capture and translocation.	Evidences: 3.1.1 3.1.2
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						Injured wildlife straying into human areas also need quick veterinary attention. To address these issues, 28 frontline staff members, including Head Forest Guards, Block Officers, Range Officers, Environment Assistants, and Himal Rakshaks, received a 5-day training on wildlife rescue and rehabilitation at Manas National Park, Assam, conducted by the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI).	
3.2 Law enforcement agencies are provided with technical support and training to increase capacity for combating wildlife crime	3.2 Number of international agreements for enhancing trans-boundary cooperation between	0 (a number of trans-boundary plans exists, but coordination is limited)	Same as End term Target	At least 3 trans-boundary agreements effective and collaborative implementation	Complete 3 regional/ bilateral agreements were facilitated	The SECURE Himalaya project supported the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) in setting up a Cyber Unit for curbing internet-based wildlife crime and illegal trade. This	3.2

	<i>China, Nepal, Bhutan and India</i>					<i>unit will help the WCCB in the Collection of Cyber Intelligence for Investigation, digital forensics and evidence collection, OSINT investigations, and social media monitoring. The Cyber – Unit will bridge the gap existing between wildlife enforcement officials and the internet-enabled wildlife crime and illegal trade. It will offer robust cybersecurity measures for combating wildlife crime and illegal trade in cyberspace. The cyber–unit aims to create a responsive intel–sharing mechanism aiding in controlling wildlife crime and illegal trade and to support investigations through advanced cyber techniques. The approach would include a methodical approach as below a. Pre-Search (Lead Generation)</i>	
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						The first snow leopard population survey under SPAI was conducted in 2023 and report released in January 2024 which indicated that India is home to 718 individuals spanning across 120,000 sq. km. of potential habitat. India is now known to have a sizeable 10-15% of global population supported by 5% of global habitat. 2. The project has also supported the establishment of the Secretariat of the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA), an initiative of the Government of India, headquartered at N. Delhi. The SECURE Himalaya Project has implemented several wildlife conservation strategies and landscape restoration activities for long-term sustainability and change adaptation with focus on the	
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						conservation of Snow Leopard in six landscapes. Learning from the Project through its good practices and knowledge products are being used/replicated by the IBCA member countries (currently 16: Armenia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brazil, Cambodia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ecuador, Kenya, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Nigeria, Peru, Suriname and Uganda: but open to 97 countries). in other similar high-altitude ecosystem for wildlife species conservation projects, as well as, in projects aiming at balancing biodiversity conservation with sustainable livelihoods. EvO42 3. 'Management Of High-Altitude Wetlands: A Guidebook for Wetland Managers and Practitioners' has been developed. It has been	
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						accepted by the Wetland Division of MoEF&CC and uploaded on the India Wetland Portal. It has also been circulated among all relevant State Wetland Authorities	
4.2 Communication and gender strategies and awareness campaigns to increase awareness on conservation, sustainable resource use and reduction of wildlife crime, and mainstream gender in promotion of community-based conservation developed and implemented at national, state and local levels	<i>4.2 Number of project best practices used in development and implementation of other conservation initiatives</i>	<i>0 (A few best practice publications etc., but the project will make efforts for additional project specific lessons to be documented)</i>	<i>Same as End term Target</i>	<i>10 best practices documented, disseminated and up scaled in non-project areas</i>	<i>Complete 10 best practices documented, disseminated and up scaled</i>	The Secure Himalaya project has successfully documented and disseminated best practices at international and national levels, leading to scaling and replication of conservation, livelihood, and governance models. Internationally, key achievements include the release of a knowledge product at the Global Wildlife Program (GWP) Conference, recognition of India's wildlife crime enforcement model in Kenya (2022), and the establishment of the International Big Cat Alliance for snow	4.2.1 4.2.2 4.2.3

						leopard conservation. Nationally, the Kangla Basket Initiative won Prime Minister’s Award for Excellence, while women-led SHGs in Uttarakhand received government recognition for sustainable wool-based enterprises. Conservation efforts expanded with GI registrations for traditional crafts, eco-restoration of alpine meadows, mapping of Medicinal & Aromatic Plants (MAPs), and the 2024 Asian Waterbird Census (Ladakh). India’s first Dark Sky Reserve (Ladakh) was established to promote astro-tourism, with replication efforts underway in Spiti, Himachal Pradesh. Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) mitigation was advanced with ANIDERS systems in HP, Ladakh, and	
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						Uttarakhand, while organic waste management models were installed in army and BRO camps. Additionally, a Gurudongmar Wetland Management Plan was developed, and sustainable livelihood strategies in Sikkim were strengthened through partnerships with WWF India. These initiatives have fostered community-driven conservation, enhanced biodiversity governance, and set scalable models for future projects.	
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3. Communications, visibility, and partnerships

Please provide URLs specific to this project (for example, project websites, social media sites, media coverage, etc.) as far as this is applicable. Note that some of these links would be the evidence and data sources for point no. 3 above.

On partnerships, record if new co-financing (cash contribution, parallel co-financing, or in-kind) has been generated as committed in the project (applies to Vertical Funds projects)

YouTube link –
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzJbHpK_u0
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDwrYYnILxU>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkkLgNbeGMQ>
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KxtPBkr2AKA>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DA8LCuTND5c>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFqYAoiidI>
<https://twitter.com/UNBiodiversity/status/1678766090313146368?s=20>

E-portal-

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www.essenceofhimal.com
<https://uttarkashi.nic.in/secure-himalaya/>
<https://hpforest.nic.in/pages/display/NjVzZDRjhnlkZmE1Ng==secure-himalaya>

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<https://www.undp.org/india/blog/feral-dogs-threat-wildlife-sikkim>
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<https://undp-biodiversity.exposure.co/weaving-a-better-future>

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<https://theCSRjournal.in/community-based-tourism-protecting-nature-conserving-traditions-snow-leopard-undp-india>
<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/dehradun/hill-tribes-that-once-hunted-elusive-snow-leopards-now-turn-protectors/articleshow/97932331.cms?from=mdr>
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<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/dehradun/hill-tribes-that-once-hunted-elusive-snow-leopards-now-turn-protectors/articleshow/97932331.cms?from=mdr>
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4. Project risks and mitigation measures

Define key challenges and issues noted, whether new/recurrent/persistent. Describe new risks identified and propose ways to correct a course of action and agreed with responsible members to address these and the timelines. Describe if escalation is required for Project Board or other mechanisms

Risk Register attached as annex

Project activities have been culminated in March 2024 But the reimbursement figures have not been received from two states i.e. Ladakh and Uttrakhand . Letters have been sent to Ministry and Ministry has further sent the letters to the States, but no response has been received.

Risk register must be attached as an annex to the report.

5. Lessons Learned

Document any lessons that will be applied to address challenges or improve the implementation pace. Outline any good practices, as applicable.

A crucial aspect of any conservation project is ensuring the long-term viability of its activities; several project activities had a sustainability element built in. This was ensured by working closely with the State Governments/ Administration and its various line departments, CSOs and research institutions with strong on-ground presence, and institutionalization of several aspects of the activities. By involving the local communities in landscape conservation intricately, the project has ensured a sense of ownership to facilitate lasting positive influence on biodiversity and its conservation. Several activities that require further support are being linked to various government schemes and initiatives.

6. Way Forward

Based on the above, following key issues which need to be addressed/prioritized for next reporting period

*The project is operationally closed, and the financial closure will be done by 5th June 2025. The Terminal Evaluation of the project has been done and the recommendations shall be taken forward.
The activities initiated by the project have already been institutionalized.
A dissemination workshop on the project is planned to be held in Q1 2025*

Priority actions for the project and other teams before the next reporting cycle.

Issue/observation	Action to be taken	Responsible	Timeline
1. Preparation for financial closure	Submission of closure checklist on Quantum	UNDP	June 2025
2. Address the recommendations provided in the Terminal Evaluation	Implementation of the key actions provided as part of the management response.	UNDP	Dec 2025
3. Dissemination workshop	Conducting dissemination workshop with relevant Stakeholders, Project Partners and Implementing agencies.	UNDP	June 2025

7. Annexures

Provide links to the sources of evidence. [Evidence](#)

ANNEX 2: OFFLINE PROJECT RISK REGISTER TEMPLATE

<i>Project Title: Securing livelihoods, conservation, sustainable use and restoration of high range Himalayan ecosystems (SECURE Himalaya)</i>	<i>Project Number :</i>	<i>Date: 14-Jan-24</i>
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Event	Cause	Impact(s)	Risk Category and Sub-category (including Risk Appetite)	Impact, Likelihood & Risk Level (see Annex 3 Risk Matrix)	Risk Valid From/To	Risk Owner (individual accountable for managing the risk)	Risk Treatment and Treatment Owner	
There is a risk that inefficient volumes of products for commercialization jeopardizes commercial potential	Lack of awareness of market trends and efficient use of resources	Inefficient volumes of products which fails to meet market demands	1.SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL (1.11. Pollution prevention and resource efficiency) - UNDP Risk Appetite: CAUTIOUS	Likelihood: 3 - Moderately likely Impact: 3 - Intermediate Risk level: MODERATE (equates to a risk appetite of EXPLORATORY)	From:28-Jan-19 To:31-Dec-19	Head NRM & Biodiversity	Risk Treatment 1.1: To ensure that products/services can meet market demand, the project will focus on high value products and services that have moderate demand. Overtime, efforts will be made to increase the capacity of the communities through capacity building and resource mobilization so as to expand to products/services that have greater demand or are specific niche products. Risk Treatment Owner: Project Manager	
2.1. There is a risk that Natural disasters and	As a result of Natural disasters and climate change	Which will impact in Implementation and results of the project	1. SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL (1.5. Climate	Likelihood: 3 - Moderately likely Impact:	From:18 May-21 To:01-May-22	Head NRM & Biodiversity	Risk Treatment 2.1. The project will address the anticipated negative impacts of climate change	

climate change may affect the implementation and results of project initiatives		initiatives affected leading to non-achievement of mid and final targets.	change and disaster risks) - UNDP Risk Appetite: CAUTIOUS	3 - Intermediate Risk level: MODERATE (equates to a risk appetite of EXPLORATORY)			by increasing resilience of fragile mountain ecosystems and communities by: improving the management of fragile Himalayan landscapes to ensure ecosystem resilience under differing climate change conditions, to secure a continued sustainable flow of ecosystem services; supporting diversification and improvement of community livelihoods; and enhancing community disaster risk reduction capacity. Risk Treatment Owner: Project Manager
2.2. Restrictions imposed due to COVID-19 pandemic in the project states	Extreme rise in cases of COVID-19 across the country	Delay in project activities leading to further delay in achieving project objectives within the stipulated time	1. SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL (1.5. Climate change and disaster risks) - UNDP Risk	Likelihood: 3 - Moderately likely Impact: 3 - Intermediate Risk level: MODERATE (equates to a risk	From: 18 May-21 To: 31 March-22	Head NRM & Biodiversity	Risk Treatment 2.2: Virtual consultations and missions are being held to streamline activities and devise action plans for implementation of project

<i>and landscapes</i>			Appetite: CAUTIOUS	appetite of EXPLORATORY)			<i>components in a timely manner.</i> <i>Risk Treatment Owner: Project Manager</i>
<i>There is a risk that the Project may involve utilization of genetic resources (e.g. collection and/or harvesting of NTFP, value addition commercial product development, etc.)</i>	<i>No standard protocol for extracting and use of natural resources and ecologically irresponsible behavior</i>	<i>Which will impact unsustainable use of natural resources impacting the degradation of ecologically important habitats and irresponsible harvests.</i>	1. SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL (1.4. Biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management) - UNDP Risk Appetite: CAUTIOUS	<i>Likelihood: 3 - Moderately likely</i> <i>Impact: 3 - Intermediate</i> <i>Risk level: MODERATE (equates to a risk appetite of EXPLORATORY)</i>	<i>From: 18-May-21</i> <i>To: 01-May-22</i>	<i>Head NRM & Biodiversity</i>	<i>Risk Treatment 3.1: The project will ensure that existing harvest of NTFPs are undertaken in an ecologically sustainable manner, by defining areas for different uses on the basis of internationally acceptable criteria, ensuring that harvest is undertaken in a sustainable manner based on scientific information in relation to annual sustainable yields, and closely monitoring for collection and harvest of non-timber products from the ecosystem.</i> <i>Risk Treatment Owner: Project Manager</i>
<i>There is a risk that conflicts between public</i>	<i>As a result of restrictions on access and use of</i>	<i>Which will impact in disharmony between the local communities and</i>	3. OPERATIONAL (3.7. Occupational safety, health	<i>Likelihood: 3 - Moderately likely</i> <i>Impact: 3 - Intermediate</i>	<i>From: 18-May-21</i> <i>To: 01-</i>	<i>Head NRM & Biodiversity</i>	<i>Risk Treatment 4.1: Restrictions, if any, on access and use of resources would not be imposed on communities, but evolve</i>

<i>institutions and local communities regarding access to natural resources, including pasture resources.</i>	<i>resources</i>	<i>public institutions leading to impedances and slow progress of the project</i>	and well-being) - UNDP Risk Appetite: EXPLORATORY TO OPEN	<i>Risk level: PLEASE SELECT</i>	<i>May-22</i>		<i>through a collective decision-making process and complemented by alternative livelihoods and resources measures to compensate for such losses. A grievance redress system will also ensure that any conflicts are addressed and amicably settled (refer Section (IV) Part (iii) Stakeholder Engagement of UNDP Project Document regarding grievance redress procedures. Risk Treatment Owner: Project Manager</i>
<i>Failure to commercialize value chain products and services could undermine its effectiveness</i>	<i>As a result of Lack of systematic and timely needs assessment mechanism and capacity building / upskilling of government and local</i>	<i>Lack of market based or demand driven approach to identify value chains and ensure that there is existing or potential demand before starting activities.</i>	3. OPERATIONAL (3.3. Flexibility and opportunity management) - UNDP Risk Appetite: EXPLORATORY TO OPEN	<i>Likelihood: 3 - Moderately likely</i> <i>Impact: 3 - Intermediate</i> <i>Risk level: MODERATE (equates to a risk appetite of EXPLORATORY)</i>	<i>From: 28-Jan-19</i> <i>To: 31-Jan-19</i>	<i>Head NRM & Biodiversity</i>	<i>Risk Treatment 5.1: A market based, or demand driven approach will be taken to identify value chains to ensure there is existing or potential demand before starting activities. The project will make use of a demand-based approach to understand the market / consumer needs and develop an</i>

	<i>communities</i>						<i>economically sustainable supply chain for these products. This will ensure that there is demand for the new value chains. Risk Treatment Owner:</i>
<i>There is a risk that lack of capacity in government and communities to meet obligations related to project</i>	<i>As a result of Lack of systematic and timely assessment mechanism and capacity building / upskilling of government and local communities.</i>	<i>Which will impact in Obligations related to project not met.</i>	3. OPERATIONAL (3.8. Capacities of the partners) - UNDP Risk Appetite: EXPLORATORY TO OPEN	<i>Likelihood: 3 - Moderately likely</i> <i>Impact: 3 - Intermediate</i> <i>Risk level: MODERATE (equates to a risk appetite of EXPLORATORY)</i>	<i>From: 18-May-21</i> <i>To: 01-May-22</i>	<i>Head NRM & Biodiversity</i>	<i>Risk Treatment 6.1: Need assessment of capacity of government and local communities will inform project on training and capacity building needs. Training activities will be tailored to meet specific requirements of the different stakeholders to ensure that they have the skills to participate in relevant aspects of the project. Communities participating in the livelihood, sustainable natural resource management and wildlife monitoring activities will be provided on-the-ground training, and training programs would be evaluated for their effectiveness and adjusted as</i>

							appropriate to ensure their effectiveness. Risk Treatment Owner: Project Manager
There is a risk that long gestation periods for alternative livelihoods, value chain activities and restoration of pasture resources can undermine community participation	Lack of clear linkages between various existing schemes and temporal planning for diversifying livelihood activities.	Diminished community participation for activities pertaining to generating alternative livelihood strategies and ecological restoration	3. OPERATIONAL (3.1. Responsiveness to audit and evaluations (Delays in the conduct of and implementation of recommendations)) - UNDP Risk Appetite: EXPLORATORY TO OPEN	Likelihood: 3 - Moderately likely Impact: 3 - Intermediate Risk level: MODERATE (equates to a risk appetite of EXPLORATORY)	From: 28-Jan-19 To: 31-Jan-19	Head NRM & Biodiversity	Risk Treatment 7.1: Micro-plan activities will entail a menu of options (including activities with short-term gestation periods as buffer until longer-term investments generate sustainable benefits) to help diversify the livelihood and resource base, including linkage with on-going governmental and NGO programs to supplement and complement project activities. Risk Treatment Owner: Project Manager
Indigenous people and vulnerable groups may be excluded from participation in project planning	Lack of any participatory process in place to involve the local communities and relevant stakeholders in design	Exclusion of indigenous people and vulnerable groups from participation in project planning and investments related	7. STRATEGIC (7.3. Stakeholder relations and partnerships) - UNDP Risk Appetite: OPEN TO SEEKING	Likelihood: 3 - Moderately likely Impact: 3 - Intermediate Risk level: MODERATE (equates to a risk appetite of EXPLORATORY)	From: 18-May-21 To: 01-May-22	Head NRM & Biodiversity	Risk Treatment 8.1 Participatory process (outlined in the project in Annex 7 of UNDP Project Document) would ensure that all households in village (including indigenous and vulnerable people) would be part of the investment

<i>g and investments related to livelihoods and sustainable use practices</i>	<i>g and implementing the project.</i>	<i>to livelihoods and sustainable use practices</i>		EXPLORATORY)			<i>planning, be trained and have capacity for implementation of livelihood activities and benefit directly from project activities. Risk Treatment Owner: Project Manager</i>
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