Docusign Envelope ID: 88491F9B-D18A-4762-BE45-1CE52B53DEBB

PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD[1]: Jan 2025 to Dec 2025

Signed and endorsed by:

DocuSigned by:
Ashish Chaturvedi
FC837FD25D5E462...

Team Leader, Action for Climate and Environment

Project Summary Information	
Project Title	Conservation of Biodiversity, its Sustainable Use, Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits in India
Project ID	01003699
Project Duration	PPG Mar 2025 - Dec 2025
Location	Nagaland, Tripura and Uttarakhand
CPD Outcome and Outputs	Output 3.1. Institutional and policy frameworks developed and strengthened to address climate change, enhance green recovery, prevent environmental degradation and promote conservation and circular economy. 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.
Gender marker	GEN 2
Implementing Partner	UNDP India
Total Project Budget (USD)	300,000
Donors (funding sources)	GEF (GBFF)
Annual Budget (USD)	300,000
Funds received during the reporting period (USD & INR)	300,000
Expenditure recorded for the reporting period (USD)	120,416.43
Expenditure recorded for the total project (USD)	120,416.43
Project Manager name:	Satyan Chauhan

[1] Periodicity of this project progress report will be determined based on online input; it can be used quarterly, half-yearly, or annually. The minimum requirement for Project Board to meet at least once to review progress and risks is annual - per policy.

Docusign Envelope ID: 88491F9B-D18A-4762-BE45-1CE52B53DEBB

1. Executive Summary

- *Prepare a **standardized and concise project introduction** including the project objective, key outputs, and geographic landscapes **that can be reused** across all progress reports for the project in each reporting cycle.*
- *Provide a **1–2 paragraph summary of key achievements** during the reporting period.*
- *Briefly mention **any major challenges** encountered.*
- *Tip: Keep this section **crisp and high-level, and absolutely results-oriented (NOT activity oriented);** details will follow in later sections.*

India, one of the world's most megadiverse countries, is home to a vast array of biodiversity and traditional knowledge embedded within its diverse ecosystems. Despite occupying only 2.4% of the Earth's geographical area, the country harbors approximately 8% of the known global floral and faunal species. However, this rich biodiversity faces growing threats from unsustainable land use, overexploitation of natural resources, and insufficient recognition of its socio-economic and cultural significance.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been a longstanding partner of the Government of India in advancing national and international commitments related to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. This includes obligations under various multilateral environmental agreements. With the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in December 2022, India revised its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) in October 2024 to align with these global commitments.

To support the effective implementation of the updated NBSAP and the KMGBF, the CONSERVE project is being developed under the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The project is a joint initiative between UNDP India and World Bank with the components shared between the two agencies. This initiative is designed to bridge systemic gaps by:

- Integrating biodiversity into spatial planning to mitigate habitat fragmentation and enhance ecosystem connectivity.
- Improving the management of non-protected areas by incorporating conservation-focused approaches.
- Fostering inclusive community engagement to ensure participatory decision-making in biodiversity conservation.
- Strengthening biodiversity monitoring systems for data-driven conservation actions.
- Optimizing funding mechanisms to enhance financial sustainability for conservation efforts.

By focusing on biodiversity hotspots in Nagaland, Tripura, and Uttarakhand, the project aims to drive transformative biodiversity conservation outcomes through integrated spatial planning, a robust monitoring system, and sustainable financing strategies. These efforts directly support the Government of India's commitments under the Global Biodiversity Framework. This GBFF project will strategically also build on the investments of the World Bank's ELEMENT Project to

Docusign Envelope ID: 88491F9B-D18A-4762-BE45-1CE52B53DEBB

enhance the implementation of activities under Outcomes 2.2 (Innovative financing instruments deployed to support biodiversity management, monitoring, and community-level OECMs) and 4.1 (Effective management, monitoring and reporting that is responsive to gender, youth, IPs, and communities' actions related to project interventions, impacts and outcomes) in Nagaland and Tripura.

The project concept was formally submitted to the GEF Secretariat on 30 September 2024 and received approval on 10 December 2024. As this is a joint initiative between UNDP India and the World Bank, the PPG grant was initially allocated between both agencies. However, due to institutional constraints preventing the World Bank from directly utilizing PPG funds, the entire PPG amount of USD 150,000 was approved for transfer to UNDP by the GEF on 10 June 2025.

The project package was submitted to GEF on 10 Sep 2025. 2 rounds of clarifications were sought from GEF on 23 Sep and 10 Nov and the package was resubmitted with the queries addressed. The CEO Endorsement is awaited from GEF.

2. Progress Review

a) Narrative Reporting

- *Highlight concrete **output-wise (Outcome-wise in case of Vertical Funds) results** to maintain a logical flow. This should be linked to the indicators as outlined in the project results framework in the project document and as per the activities mentioned in the approved AWP.*
- *Include progress towards **gender equality and women's empowerment** in the reporting period. If applicable, highlight achievements in digitalization and innovation.*

To support the development of the ProDoc, a PPG team comprising national and international consultants has been engaged. This PPG team is responsible for conducting technical assessments, engaging with stakeholders, and drafting the ProDoc package, including all mandatory annexures, in line with GEF and UNDP requirements.

Throughout May and June 2025, the PPG team, in coordination with representatives from UNDP and the World Bank, carried out extensive field consultations in the three identified project states — Uttarakhand, Nagaland, and Tripura.

- Uttarakhand (5–9 May 2025): Consultations were held with state officials from the Forest Department and the State Biodiversity Board, as well as with landscape-level officers and local communities to gather insights on ecological priorities and implementation challenges.

Docusign Envelope ID: 88491F9B-D18A-4762-BE45-1CE52B53DEBB

- Nagaland (27–31 May 2025): Meetings were conducted with the Forest Department, State Biodiversity Board, and the Community Conservation Area Forum, along with local officials and community representatives, to capture site-specific perspectives and expectations.
- Tripura (3–6 June 2025): Discussions included interactions with officials from the Forest Department, State Biodiversity Board, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj departments, as well as village panchayats and landscape-level stakeholders, to identify needs and opportunities for intervention.

These consultations included meetings with state government departments, local communities, biodiversity boards, and other key stakeholders to understand local priorities, opportunities, and challenges. The insights gathered are being integrated into the project design to ensure the initiative is contextually relevant, inclusive, and implementable.

To synthesize the field findings and collaboratively advance the drafting process, a write-shop was organized from 12–14 May 2025. This workshop brought together consultants, technical experts, and UNDP and World Bank staff to review progress, deliberate on emerging themes, and refine the overall project structure and outcomes.

Additionally, a bilingual project brief (in English and Hindi) was developed and shared with stakeholders to provide a clear and accessible overview of the project's objectives, approach, and expected benefits. This has supported effective communication and enhanced engagement, particularly among government counterparts and field-level functionaries.

The project package was submitted to GEF on 10 Sep 2025. 2 rounds of clarifications were sought from GEF on 23 Sep and 10 Nov and the package was resubmitted with the queries addressed. The CEO Endorsement is awaited from GEF.

Overall, the project development process is well on track, with strong collaboration among partners and constructive engagement with stakeholders laying a solid foundation for successful submission and eventual implementation.

a) Indicator and Expenditure Reporting

Docusign Envelope ID: 88491F9B-D18A-4762-BE45-1CE52B53DEBB

Output statement	Indicator	Baseline Value	End of the project target	Actuals achieved against target for the indicator	Evidence[2]	Budget as per AWP (USD)	Actual Expenditure (USD)	Remarks (if any)
Comprehensive project document package, including all required annexures, developed and submitted to GBFF-GEF for clearance.	*Project document package, including all necessary annexures, developed and submitted to GBFF-GEF for clearance by 10 September 2025*	*No project document package available.*	*Project document package developed and submitted to GBFF-GEF.*	• The project package was submitted to GEF on 10 Sep 2025 and clarifications sought were addressed. • A validation workshop was conducted on 5 and 6 July 2025 to appraise and get inputs from various stakeholders including state and central government to finalize	*Draft ProDoc*	300,000	120,416.43	A write-shop was conducted from 12 to 14 May 2025 to review field mission findings and integrate relevant data and lessons from the World Bank's ELEMENT project. The session facilitated the structured drafting of the

[2] Means of verification will require evidence, links, reference, photos, transcripts from exit interviews, feedback surveys, call center reports, phone verification, etc. All methods and means used to collect and report on the results should be described, and links prepared for future reference, spot checking, and verification by independent teams when necessary. It also means that the same expectation will apply when third-party monitors are used.

If the data source involved meetings, then details of meeting participants and matters discussed and agreed actions should be documented as part of the evidence/data source.

Docusign Envelope ID: 88491F9B-D18A-4762-BE45-1CE52B53DEBB

				the project design.				Project Document (ProDoc) and its supporting annexes. • A validation workshop is planned for 5 and 6 July 2025 to finalize the project design and seek formal inputs and concurrence from key government departments and other stakeholders. This will help ensure align

Docusign Envelope ID: 88491F9B-D18A-4762-BE45-1CE52B53DEBB

								ment with institutional priorities and strengthen ownership of the proposed interventions.
Monitoring and Evaluation Cost							*NA*	
Project Management Cost							*NA*	
Total AWP Budget and and Actual Expenditure (USD)						*300,000*	120,416.43	
Co-financing Materialized for VFs (USD)								

3. Challenges encountered, project risks and mitigation measures

- *Define key challenges and risks noted/materialized, 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. Update the project risk register accordingly.*
- *Latest version of Offline* ***Project Risk register must be attached as an annex*** *to the report.*

1. Coordination issues with partner agencies

Cause: Since the project is a joint venture between UNDP India and World Bank, syncing with the priorities of both the agencies for making decisions might be complex

Impact: Can cause significant delays in arriving at the same page and moving forward with the assignment(s)

Mitigation measure: Constant engagement with the partner agency informing all decisions especially to the higher management to ensure that any issues / bottlenecks be cleared at early stage

2. Delay in approvals from Government

Docusign Envelope ID: 88491F9B-D18A-4762-BE45-1CE52B53DEBB

Cause: Frequent changes in the incumbent officers in the Government which causes lack of awareness and thereby delay in decision making
Impact: Delay in approvals
Mitigation measure: Constant engagement with the Government counterparts to keep them informed on the status of the project design process.

4. Social and Environmental Standards (SES) Reporting (Applicable for moderate, substantial, and high risk projects)

- *Describe the SES risks (existing and new) identified for the project via the SESP.*
- *Has the SESP been updated during the reporting period? If yes, provide a brief description of new risks added and proposed mitigation measures.*
- *Provide an update on the SES risk assessment and management plans recommended as per the SESP.*
- *Provide an update on the Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM) under the project*
- *Has any issue been reported under the project during the reporting period through GRM or any other reporting mechanism? Provide status update.*

The **Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP)** was conducted during the **Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase** as part of the **ProDoc package**, resulting in a **moderate social and environmental risk classification**. A total of **11 SES risks** were identified, spanning all **UNDP programming principles** and relevant **project-level Social and Environmental Standards**.

Based on the identified risks, several **SES risk management instruments** has been developed as part of the ProDoc package. These include a **Gender Action Plan (GAP)**, a **Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)** which incorporates the **project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) structure**, an **Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)**, and an **Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF)**. These instruments outline the mitigation measures, roles, and responsibilities required to manage identified risks during project implementation.

SES risk management measures will commence with project implementation. The **GRM will be operationalised during the implementation phase** to ensure accessible and transparent channels for beneficiaries and stakeholders to raise concerns and seek redress.

5. Communications and Visibility

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.

Project factsheet

- *English*
- *Hindi*

Docusign Envelope ID: 88491F9B-D18A-4762-BE45-1CE52B53DEBB

6. Partnerships

Provide details of new partnerships (financial/non-financial) realized during the reporting period.

Stakeholders have been consulted and potential partners have been identified for implementation. However, formal partnership will commence only when pro doc is signed.

7. Lessons Learned and Way Forward

Document any lessons that will be applied to address challenges or improve the implementation pace. Outline any good practices, as applicable. Based on the above, mention key issues which need to be addressed/prioritized for next reporting period

The project is a collaborative initiative between the UNDP India and World Bank. While the components and responsibilities were clearly delineated at the concept stage, the process of designing a full-sized project has required significant coordination due to the inherent interlinkages between components. Developing a cohesive project framework has involved iterative discussions and mutual consensus-building, which at times has resulted in delays in decision-making and document finalization. This underscores the importance of early and continuous coordination mechanisms, particularly in joint implementation arrangements.

On the positive side, the project benefits substantially from building upon the World Bank's ongoing ELEMENT project in the states of Tripura and Nagaland. This has proven advantageous in terms of landscape-level understanding, stakeholder familiarity, and availability of relevant baseline data and analyses. The existing groundwork from ELEMENT has enabled a more informed and contextualized approach to project design, helping to align proposed interventions with on-ground realities and state priorities.

Overall, the experience highlights both the challenges and opportunities of joint project development and emphasizes the value of leveraging existing initiatives to enhance efficiency and relevance.

Way Forward:

- Submission of safeguard documents for RBAP safeguard clearance
- Getting co-finance commitments from Central and State Governments
- LPAC to be conducted

8. Annexures

Docusign Envelope ID: 88491F9B-D18A-4762-BE45-1CE52B53DEBB

*Provide **CO SharePoint/public website links** to the sources of evidence.*