Design & Appraisal Stage Quality Assurance Report

Overall Project Rating: **Highly Satisfactory**

Decision: Approve: The project is of sufficient quality to continue as planned. Any management actions must be addressed in a timely manner.

Project Number: 00091297

Project Title: Securing livelihoods, Conservation, Sustainable Use and Restoration of high range Himalayan Ecosystems (SECURE-Himalaya)

Project Date: 01-Jan-2017

Strategic	Quality Rating: Exemplary

1. Does the project's Theory of Change specify how it will contribute to higher level change? (Select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

⦿ *3: The project has a theory of change with explicit assumptions and clear change pathway describing how the project will contribute to outcome level change as specified in the programme/CPD, backed by credible evidence of what works effectively in this context. The project document clearly describes why the project's strategy is the best approach at this point in time.*

◯ 2: The project has a theory of change. It has an explicit change pathway that explains how the project intends to contribute to outcome-level change and why the project strategy is the best approach at this point in time, but is backed by limited evidence.

◯ 1: The project does not have a theory of change, but the project document may describe in generic terms how the project will contribute to development results, without specifying the key assumptions. It does not make an explicit link to the programme/CPD's theory of change.

Evidence	Management Response

Evidence

Theory of change has been developed for the project with clear pathway describing outcome level change.

A landscape level planning is proposed for effective management of high range Himalayan landscapes for conservation of snow leopard and other endangered species and their habitats and sustaining critical ecosystem services. The landscape level planning and strengthening the management planning of the landscapes through preparation of site-specific participatory natural resource management plans especially for buffer zones of the high altitude Protected Areas will be undertaken through promotion of sustainable agro-pastoral and resource use practices.

The project will also focus on developing strategies financial resources for effective implementation of village micro-plans and facilitation of convergence of programs and resources from existing central and state government in support of integrated approaches in the implementation of these micro plans. Strategies for diversification and alternative livelihood improvement (agriculture, horticulture, livestock, handloom, handicrafts, ecotourism, NTFP, etc.), including new and improved value chain products and services have also been proposed

The limited coverage of Protected Areas and inadequate capacities and understanding of status of wildlife crime, constrains the application of effective and integrated wildlife crime detection, monitoring and prosecution measures. To address these issues, it is proposed that the project will facilitate the assessment of the status of wildlife crime including poaching of wildlife, smuggling of timber and illegal trade in wildlife parts and identification of key hotspots thereof. The project will also support strengthening of intelligence and information gathering system within the landscapes by involving the local communities and developing close liaison with police, customs and security

personnel for regular review and enforcement; Mapping of hotspots and pathways of illegal trade on wildlife and wildlife parts will be undertaken with capacity building programme for field level functionaries and local stakeholders

2. Is the project aligned with the thematic focus of the UNDP Strategic Plan? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

○ *3: The project responds to one of the three areas of development <u>work</u> as specified in the Strategic Plan; it addresses at least one of the proposed new and emerging <u>areas</u>; an issues-based analysis has been incorporated into the project design; and the project's RRF includes all the relevant SP output indicators. (all must be true to select this option)*

○ 2: The project responds to one of the three areas of development <u>work</u> as specified in the Strategic Plan. The project's RRF includes at least one SP output indicator, if relevant. (both must be true to select this option)

○ 1: While the project may respond to one of the three areas of development <u>work</u> as specified in the Strategic Plan, it is based on a sectoral approach without addressing the complexity of the development issue. None of the relevant SP indicators are included in the RRF. This answer is also selected if the project does not respond to any of the three areas of development work in the Strategic Plan.

Evidence

The project priorities are consistent with the UNDP Strategic Plans and outcomes (Growth and development are inclusive and sustainable, incorporating productive capacities that create employment and livelihoods for the poor and excluded). The project's incremental value lies in demonstrating, in the four high altitude landscapes in the Trans- and Greater Himalayan region (that consists of alpine pastures, sub-alpine forests and critical watersheds) through four inter-related components, participatory natural resources management practices and enterprise based sustainable livelihoods for local communities while concurrently conserving the biodiversity contained within these landscapes, maintaining their ecosystem values and ameliorating climate change impacts, enhancing surveillance, monitoring and trans-boundary cooperation to reduce wildlife crime and related threats, and improving knowledge and communications.
The project directly contributes to the sustainable development pathways especially for the high range Himalayan ecosystem which is critical to life and livelihood of the Indian sub-continent, build resilience for the vulnerable communities in these region. Further the institutional mechanisms proposed to work with community institutions to promote participation in planning and implementation of conservation and livelihood activities. The communities again include the tribal and the agro pastoral communities who are also the marginalized groups. The project will contribute to inclusive and effective democratic governance by working with the community institutions and enhancing their capacity in biodiversity management and increase livelihood options. Further convergence with other sectoral programmes in this region will also help communities get access to basic facilities .

Relevant	Quality Rating: Satisfactory

3. Does the project have strategies to effectively identify, engage and ensure the meaningful participation of targeted groups/geographic areas with a priority focus on the excluded and marginalized? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects this project)

○ 3: The target groups/geographic areas are appropriately specified, prioritising the excluded and/or marginalised. Beneficiaries will be identified through a rigorous process based on evidence (if applicable.)The project has an explicit strategy to identify, engage and ensure the meaningful participation of specified target groups/geographic areas throughout the project, including through monitoring and decision-making (such as representation on the project board) (all must be true to select this option)

○ *2: The target groups/geographic areas are appropriately specified, prioritising the excluded and/or marginalised. The project document states how beneficiaries will be identified, engaged and how meaningful participation will be ensured throughout the project. (both must be true to select this option)*

○ 1: The target groups/geographic areas are not specified, or do not prioritize excluded and/or marginalised populations. The project does not have a written strategy to identify or engage or ensure the meaningful participation of the target groups/geographic areas throughout the project.

○ Not Applicable

Evidence

The areas/ geographic locations selected are all high altitude remote Himalayan region. Mostly the target communities are

Management Response

tribal/ agro pastoral communities with very little access to basic needs. The project primarily focuses to work with these communities and strengthen their institutions and livelihood interventions. A number of stakeholders have been identified which also consist of the fields level functionaries of various government agencies. There is a serious need to capacitate the frontline functionaries for conservation related activities. The project has designed strategies to capacitate the frontline officials of the forest department
for combating wildlife trade, surveillance and monitoring as well as work with the other line departments to address the issues related to conservation and protection of the landscape and design programmes and schemes suitable for sustainable livelihood in the region

4. Have knowledge, good practices, and past lessons learned of UNDP and others informed the project design? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects this project)

○ 3: Knowledge and lessons learned (gained e.g. through peer assist sessions) backed by credible evidence from evaluation, corporate policies/strategies, and monitoring have been explicitly used, with appropriate referencing, to develop the project's theory of change and justify the approach used by the project over alternatives.

◉ *2: The project design mentions knowledge and lessons learned backed by evidence/sources, which inform the project's theory of change but have not been used/are not sufficient to justify the approach selected over alternatives.*

○ 1: There is only scant or no mention of knowledge and lessons learned informing the project design. Any references that are made are not backed by evidence.

Evidence	Management Response
UNDP has significant experience across the globe working on mountain eco-systems and number of programmes are ongoing in different countries which will serve as good practices. Further UNDP in India has also worked in different projects in the Himalayan states and the best practices related to conservation, NRM, Livelihood market and enterprise will be useful. The Project Document has further listed (Pg 168-180) various other best practices in different fields such as role of community in conservation, innovative agriculture practices, reduction in human wildlife conflicts ,water harvesting etc . Further the project also builds on the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Conservation Program (GSLEP). At the national level, as part of the GSLEP, India has the National Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection (NSLEP) Priorities. The NSLEP is consistent with and complementary to the country's Project Snow Leopard, designed for all biologically important habitats within the snow leopard's range, irrespective of their ownership (e.g. protected areas, common land, etc.). The project will incorporate the best practices from these ongoing programmes	

5. Does the project use gender analysis in the project design and does the project respond to this gender analysis with concrete measures to address gender inequities and empower women? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects this project)

○ 3: A participatory gender analysis on the project has been conducted. This analysis reflects on the different needs, roles and access to/control over resources of women and men, and it is fully integrated into the project document. The project establishes concrete priorities to address gender inequalities in its strategy. The results framework includes outputs and activities that specifically respond to this gender analysis, with indicators that measure and monitor results contributing to gender equality. (all must be true to select this option)

◉ *2: A gender analysis on the project has been conducted. This analysis reflects on the different needs, roles and access to/control over resources of women and men. Gender concerns are integrated in the development challenge and strategy sections of the project document. The results framework includes outputs and activities that specifically respond to this gender analysis, with indicators that measure and monitor results contributing to gender equality. (all must be true to select this option)*

○ 1: The project design may or may not mention information and/or data on the differential impact of the project's development situation on gender relations, women and men, but the constraints have not been clearly identified and interventions have not been considered.

Evidence   **Management Response**

Preliminary Gender Analysis on the project has been conducted. Further assessment of women's groups and their role in conservation and bio diversity has also been assessed in this project. The gender roles have been identified. The project outcomes specially the livelihood outcomes which include value addition and marketing have been proposed keeping in mind the involvement of women's groups and natural resource based activities that they are engaged in. Given that women are also involved in collection of Non timber Forest Produce (NTFP) and medicinal plants, the project strategies and activities have already mentioned that emphasis will be given on village level planning where women can play an important decision making role. Various activities planned including innovative agricultural implements in partnership with line departments, as well as using alternate source of energy to reduce drudgery of women.

6. Does UNDP have a clear advantage to engage in the role envisioned by the project vis-à-vis national partners, other development partners, and other actors? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects this project)

◉ *3: An analysis has been conducted on the role of other partners in the area where the project intends to work, and credible evidence supports the proposed engagement of UNDP and partners through the project. It is clear how results achieved by relevant partners will contribute to outcome level change complementing the project's intended results. If relevant, options for south-south and triangular cooperation have been considered, as appropriate. (all must be true to select this option)*

○ 2: Some analysis has been conducted on the role of other partners where the project intends to work, and relatively limited evidence supports the proposed engagement of and division of labour between UNDP and partners through the project. Options for south-south and triangular cooperation may not have not been fully developed during project design, even if relevant opportunities have been identified.

○ 1: No clear analysis has been conducted on the role of other partners in the area that the project intends to work, and relatively limited evidence supports the proposed engagement of UNDP and partners through the project. There is risk that the project overlaps and/or does not coordinate with partners' interventions in this area. Options for south-south and triangular cooperation have not been considered, despite its potential relevance.

Evidence   **Management Response**

The National Implementation partner is the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Govt and the state
Forest Departments. UNDP's partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change is one of its longest in India. Starting in 1985, UNDP has support the Ministry in its efforts
to meet India's environmental commitments.
MOEFCC is the focal point for implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in India. Responsible for wildlife, forestry and climate change policy in the country and for coordination across State Governments in these areas. UNDP has been engaging with relevant divisions in the MOEFCC in many programmes for the past over 2 decades. The relevant divisions are the Mountain, Biodiversity and the Wildlife Divisions. MoEFCC supports the climate change resilience and adaptation risk management with the relevant state departments and with the National Biodiversity Authority. Since MOEFCC is the nodal Government agency for all policy related to forest and wildlife, they will steer the process and play a key role in establishing coordination and collaborative links with central and state forest and wildlife departments. UNDP has links with other international agencies and through its offices in neighbouring countries will also strengthen tranboundary cooperation in conservation work.

India GEF SECURE project is part of a global programme, which helps secure multi-country partnership on wildlife conservation and wildlife crime prevention. This partnership allows for extensive and continued information exchange amongst the different countries on forensics, status of key species, law enforcement and wildlife crime, and the exchange of "good practice" and capacity building efforts

Through the global partnership, India will seek opportunities for exchange visits to learn lessons from individual project interventions from within and outside the Program, help foster intergovernmental cooperation, use M&E tools and geospatial services, apply best practices and peer review and develop portfolio-wide training and communication strategies. India's continued participation in GSLEP, provides an opportunity for collective action that would help coordinate and unify the efforts among the snow leopard countries and the global community to achieve a shared vision and goal. It would provide a forum for sharing of good practices and lessons in conservation, community involvement and wildlife crime and trade prevention that can be scaled up and implemented in a wider context. The project will provide valuable monitoring information that would be widely shared to help bring a high-level of attention towards meeting the goals of GSLEP. It would help in efforts to enable countries (some of which are already implementing or formulating GEF projects for snow leopard conservation), international and national partners and donors to adjust and improve efforts to reflect new knowledge and experiences. Moreover, UNDP has directly supported over 35 projects in the areas of climate change, sustainable natural resource management and chemical management. Further UNDP has worked in these states in the past and has good working relations with the State Governments of J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim.

UNDP through its existing programmes working with the private sector, will provide strong support in developing market linkages and skills development in the remote Himalayan villages.

A stakeholder analysis has also been done and various important agencies, government and non-government, community institutions have been identified and the roles that there likely to play. Annexed with the Project document. Gender analysis plan has also been prepared

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Social & Environmental Standards   **Quality Rating: Highly Satisfactory**

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7. Does the project seek to further the realization of human rights using a human rights based approach? (select from options 1-3 that best reflects this project)

○ 3: Credible evidence that the project aims to further the realization of human rights, upholding the relevant international and national laws and standards in the area of the project. Any potential adverse impacts on enjoyment of human rights were rigorously identified and assessed as relevant, with appropriate mitigation and management measures incorporated into project design and budget. (all must be true to select this option)

◉ *2: Some evidence that the project aims to further the realization of human rights. Potential adverse impacts on enjoyment of human rights were identified and assessed as relevant, and appropriate mitigation and management measures incorporated into the project design and budget.*

○ 1: No evidence that the project aims to further the realization of human rights. Limited or no evidence that potential adverse impacts on enjoyment of human rights were considered.

Evidence   **Management Response**

Equal opportunities to vulnerable segment of society such as the tribal communities, women, migratory groups, poor and landless, will be provided under the project to mainstream human rights based approach in the project. The Gram Sabha

or the village council is a decision making body in the local governance structure and all adults in the village have right to participate and voice their opinion. The project has strategized to work with these institutions and democratic decision making is one of the vital components in the success of the project. The communities will be trained in different capacity building initiatives and get other benefits from project initiatives. The village level institutions would be involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of project interventions. The project interventions are designed to address and ultimately sustain the livelihood of these local communities that would result in poverty alleviation, improvement of living conditions and sustainable development of natural resources. In this way it will improve the economic and social rights of the local communities and will also take care of cultural values of the local communities. It will consider the right to habitat and economic security. Improved employment opportunities will facilitate right to work. Interventions to resolve tenurial issues will facilitate right to land. The project impacts would expedite right to environmental protection.

8. Did the project consider potential environmental opportunities and adverse impacts, applying a precautionary approach? (select from options 1-3 that best reflects this project)

○ *3: Credible evidence that opportunities to enhance environmental sustainability and integrate poverty-environment linkages were fully considered as relevant, and integrated in project strategy and design. Credible evidence that potential adverse environmental impacts have been identified and rigorously assessed with appropriate management and mitigation measures incorporated into project design and budget. (all must be true to select this option).*

○ 2: No evidence that opportunities to strengthen environmental sustainability and poverty-environment linkages were considered. Credible evidence that potential adverse environmental impacts have been identified and assessed, if relevant, and appropriate management and mitigation measures incorporated into project design and budget.

○ 1: No evidence that opportunities to strengthen environmental sustainability and poverty-environment linkages were considered. Limited or no evidence that potential adverse environmental impacts were adequately considered.

Evidence	**Management Response**
The proposed project is not likely to cause any adverse impacts. Some project activities will be undertaken in areas adjacent to critical habitats and/or environmentally sensitive areas, including legally protected areas. However, these do not involve changes to the use of lands and resources that may have adverse impacts on habitats, ecosystems, and/or livelihoods, rather the project is designed to improve the ecological health of the landscape. All project activities are geared towards conservation of endangered and threatened species. Specific efforts would be made on evaluating the condition of resources that would be used in livelihood and value chain programs to ensure that extraction is within sustainable limits. Review of existing practices of non-timber forest products (mushrooms, medicinal plants and other products) harvest would be undertaken to ascertain ecologically friendly and sustainable nature. This would include defining specific areas and harvest rates on the basis of internationally acceptable criteria, based on scientific information and closely monitored. The project will not directly or indirectly increase social and environmental vulnerability to climate change now or in the future. The project does not involve large-scale infrastructure development. The project will not involve support for employment or livelihoods that may pose a potential risk to health and safety of communities and/or individuals or to biodiversity and ecosystem functions. The project will not involve any temporary or permanent physical displacement, nor will there be the need for land acquisition or access restrictions – even in the absence of physical relocation. It would not exacerbate land tenure arrangements and/or community based property rights/customary rights to land, territories and/or	

resources. Any restrictions on access and use of natural resources would not be imposed by the forest department, but would evolve through a collective decision-making process amongst the community members and be supported by alternative livelihood and resource measures that adequately compensate for any loss of income or resources. Refer to the Annex 18 SESP (pg 158-167)

9. Has the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) been conducted to identify potential social and environmental impacts and risks? [If yes, upload the completed checklist as evidence. If SESP is not required, provide the reason(s) for the exemption in the evidence section. Exemptions include the following:

- Preparation and dissemination of reports, documents and communication materials
- Organization of an event, workshop, training
- Strengthening capacities of partners to participate in international negotiations and conferences
- Partnership coordination (including UN coordination) and management of networks
- Global/regional projects with no country level activities (e.g. knowledge management, inter-governmental processes)
- UNDP acting as Administrative Agent

◉ *Yes*

○ No

○ SESP not required

Evidence

SESP has been conducted (Refer to the Annex 18 SESP (pg 158-167)

Management & Monitoring	**Quality Rating: Satisfactory**

10. Does the project have a strong results framework? (select from options 1-3 that best reflects this project)

○ 3: The project's selection of outputs and activities are at an appropriate level and relate in a clear way to the project's theory of change. Outputs are accompanied by SMART, results-oriented indicators that measure all of the key expected changes identified in the theory of change, each with credible data sources, and populated baselines and targets, including gender sensitive, sex-disaggregated indicators where appropriate. (all must be true to select this option)

◉ *2: The project's selection of outputs and activities are at an appropriate level, but may not cover all aspects of the project's theory of change. Outputs are accompanied by SMART, results-oriented indicators, but baselines, targets and data sources may not yet be fully specified. Some use of gender sensitive, sex-disaggregated indicators, as appropriate. (all must be true to select this option)*

○ 1: The results framework does not meet all of the conditions specified in selection "2" above. This includes: the project's selection of outputs and activities are not at an appropriate level and do not relate in a clear way to the project's theory of change; outputs are not accompanied by SMART, results-oriented indicators that measure the expected change, and have not been populated with baselines and targets; data sources are not specified, and/or no gender sensitive, sex-disaggregation of indicators.

Evidence	**Management Response**
Refer to Project Result Framework (pg 48-52) Outputs are accompanied by SMART, results-oriented indicators, but baselines, targets and data sources may not yet be fully specified as lot of baseline studies will be commissioned during the initial years of project inception.	

11. Is there a comprehensive and costed M&E plan with specified data collection sources and methods to support evidence-based management, monitoring and evaluation of the project?

◉ *Yes*

○ No

Evidence

The project results as outlined in the project results framework will be monitored annually and evaluated periodically during project implementation to ensure the project effectively achieves these results. Supported by Component/Outcome Four: Knowledge Management and M&E, the project monitoring and evaluation plan will also facilitate learning and ensure knowledge is shared and widely disseminated to support the scaling up and replication of project results.

Project-level monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken in compliance with UNDP requirements as outlined in the UNDP POPP and UNDP Evaluation Policy. While these UNDP requirements are not outlined in this project document, the UNDP Country Office will work with the relevant project stakeholders to ensure UNDP M&E requirements are met in a timely fashion and to high quality standards. Additional mandatory GEF-specific M&E requirements (as outlined below) will be undertaken in accordance with the GEF M&E policy and other relevant GEF policies .

In addition to these mandatory UNDP and GEF M&E requirements, other M&E activities deemed necessary to support project-level adaptive management will be agreed during the Project Inception Workshop and will be detailed in the Inception Report. This will include the exact role of project target groups and other stakeholders in project M&E activities including the GEF Operational Focal Point and national/regional institutes assigned to undertake project monitoring. The GEF Operational Focal Point will strive to ensure consistency in the approach taken to the GEF-specific M&E requirements (notably the GEF Tracking Tools) across all GEF-financed projects in the country. This could be achieved for example by using one national institute to complete the GEF Tracking Tools for all GEF-financed projects in the country, including projects supported by other GEF Agencies.

12. Is the project's governance mechanism clearly defined in the project document, including planned composition of the project board? (select from options 1-3 that best reflects this project)

○ 3: The project's governance mechanism is fully defined in the project document. Individuals have been specified for each position in the governance mechanism (especially all members of the project board.) Project Board members have agreed on their roles and responsibilities as specified in the terms of reference. The ToR of the project board has been attached to the project document. (all must be true to select this option).

◉ *2: The project's governance mechanism is defined in the project document; specific institutions are noted as holding key governance roles, but individuals may not have been specified yet. The prodoc lists the most important responsibilities of the project board, project director/manager and quality assurance roles. (all must be true to select this option)*

○ 1: The project's governance mechanism is loosely defined in the project document, only mentioning key roles that will need to be filled at a later date. No information on the responsibilities of key positions in the governance mechanism is provided.

Evidence

The project will be implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India with UNDP providing implementation support services. MoEFCC, as the Implementing Partner, will assume full responsibility and accountability for the effective use of resources and the achievement of the project outcomes and outputs at all levels as set forth in the document. The MoEFCC will be responsible for the overall implementation of the project at national and state levels. The MoEFCC will designate National Project Director (NPD), who will be responsible for overall management, including achievement of planned results, and for the use of UNDP funds through effective process management and well established programme review and oversight mechanisms. MoEFCC will facilitate partnership development with state governments and coordination with other relevant central ministries as required:

The accountability of MoEFCC is for:
• Reporting, fairly and accurately, on project progress against agreed work plans in accordance with the reporting schedule and formats included in the project document/ Annual Work Plans;
• Maintaining documentation and evidence that describes the proper and prudent use of project resources in conformity to the project document and in accordance with applicable regulations and procedures. This documentation will be available on the request to project monitors (project assurance role) and designated auditors;

Management Response

• Meetings the targets and the outputs outlined in the approved and signed annual work plan;
• Approving and signing of the Combined Delivery Report (CDR) at the end of the year
• Signing the Financial Report or the Fund Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures (FACE).

The MoEFCC will sign a budgeted Annual Work Plan (AWP) with UNDP to achieve planned results. Each state government will designate a nodal officer who will facilitate support the project at state, district and sub-district levels.
Oversight of project level activities will be provided by the National Project Steering Committee (NPSC) that will be chaired by the Additional Director General (Wildlife) of the MoEFCC. The Committee will have high level, cross-sectoral representation including representatives of the relevant national ministries, state government departments, key government institutions, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, National Biodiversity Authority, representative of one non-government organization and representatives of relevant stakeholders. Other participants can be invited to the National Steering Committee meetings at the decision of the Chair, as and when required to enhance its efficacy. It will meet at least twice a year or as needed.
National Project Steering Committee
The National Project Steering Committee will be chaired by the Additional Director General (Wildlife) of the MOEFCC. The NPSC will have high level, cross-sectoral representation including representatives of the relevant national ministries, state government departments, key government institutions and representatives of relevant stakeholders. Other participants can be invited to the NPSC meetings at the decision of the NPSC, as and when required to enhance its efficacy. It will meet at least twice a year or as needed. The National Project Director (NPD) will take responsibility for calling its meetings, preparation of agenda, documentation and distribution of minutes and ensuring that decisions of the NPSC are implemented in letter and spirit. Specific responsibilities of the National Project Steering Committee would include the following:
Provide strategic direction and guidance for implementation of the project;
Review project's progress, review and evaluation reports and make and ensure for follow-up actions for timely and quality implementation;
Approve annual work-plans and budgets and any essential deviations (above 50% of budget reduction from one of the four components) from the original plans and budgets;
Provide coordination and conflict resolution forum for implementing agencies and key stakeholders i.e. concerned ministries, state line departments, and relevant research institutions;
Oversee and support the commitment and funding and other support for the project;
Oversee prudent and efficient use of project budgets and other resources;
Decide on conceptual and design changes and other recommendations of external mid-term review; and
Provide guidance on post-project sustainability, institutional and financial arrangements, keeping in view the recommendations of external reviews.

A National Project Officer hired by UNDP will run the project on a day-to-day basis on behalf of the National Implementing Partner within the constraints laid down by the NPSC. The National Project Officer's function will end when the final project terminal evaluation report and corresponding management response, and other documentation required by the GEF and UNDP, has been completed and submitted to UNDP (including operational closure of the project. Project Assurance will be provided through an assigned Program Manager within the UNDP Country Office. Additional quality assurance is to be provided by the UNDP Regional Technical Advisor, as and when

needed.

National Project Management Unit
The National Project Management Unit (PMU) will comprise of National Project Officer, Project Officers and Associates and Administrative and Finance Assistant. The PMU, in collaboration with the MOEFCC and state coordinating committees will have overall management and administrative responsibility for facilitating stakeholder involvement and ensuring increased ownership of the project. The PMU staff will be located in Delhi to ensure coordination among key stakeholders at the federal level and with State Forest Departments supported by the State Project Management Units and at the landscape level to facilitate the implementation of the project during the project period.

State Steering Committees
In order to govern the project, a steering committee at the state level, under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary/Additional Chief Secretary (except in the case of Ladakh, where the Chief Executive Councillor of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Council may serve as the Chairman) will be formed. The Chief Warden Wildlife/Project Director will be the Member Convener of the Committee. This committee will be composed of - PCCF and a senior member from the Wildlife/Forest department (2); Chairman of the State Biodiversity Board (3); representatives from relevant line departments (depending upon the key livelihood areas of the landscape); (4); and members from NGOs and research and development Institutions (5) individual experts on conservation and livelihoods (6) and a representative from UNDP. The key function of the committee will be to take policy decisions related to programme implementation, finance, human resource and operation of the project. The State Steering Committees will support implementation and oversee annual work plans, progress and budgets of the project in the state, provide guidance and ensure consistency, synergy and convergence of approaches with the other ongoing development projects and processes in the state, and support annual work-plan development and implementation. The steering committees would also facilitate block, district and sector agency participation in the landscape level planning operations at village level to ensure convergence of manpower and financial resources.

State Project Management Unit

At the State level, oversight and coordination will the responsibility of a State Project Director - a senior officer of the Wildlife Department designated as the Nodal Officer. He/she will oversee the project, but will not be a full time position. One of the senior officials of the State Wildlife/Forest department will be made in charge of the project and will function as a State Project Manager. The Project Manager will run the project on a day-to-day basis and also coordinate the functioning of the Landscape Planning and Implementation Team. The Project Manager will liaise with the state line agencies to ensure coordination and convergence of programs and resources. He/she will oversee the operation of the State Project Management Unit that will include Project Officers and Administrative and Finance Assistant.

Landscape Level Committee

The Landscape level committees will be chaired by the District Collector and will have representatives from key line departments with representatives from civil society organizations, community level institutions and representatives from UNDP. The Landscape level Committees will support implementation and progress of the project at the landscape level, provide guidance and ensure consistency, synergy and

convergence of approaches with the other ongoing
development projects and processes in the landscape, and
support annual work-plan development and implementation.
The committees would also facilitate block, district and sector
agency participation in the landscape level planning operations
at village level to ensure convergence of manpower and
financial resources.

Landscape level Project Management Unit

The Landscape level Project Management Unit will comprise of
a Landscape Level Facilitation Officer (Officer from Wildlife
Department) , Community Mobilization and Livelihood Officer,
Conservation Officer and an Administrative and Finance
Assistant. The Unit will co-opt block, district and sector staff and
NGOs, as relevant to facilitate convergence of manpower,
budgetary resources and technical support in the planning and
implementation of village microplanning activities so as to
coordinate and maximize resources.

13. Have the project risks been identified with clear plans stated to manage and mitigate each risks? (select from options 1-3 that best reflects this project)

○ 3: Project risks related to the achievement of results are fully described in the project risk log, based on comprehensive analysis drawing on the theory of change, Social and Environmental Standards and screening, situation analysis, capacity assessments and other analysis. Clear and complete plan in place to manage and mitigate each risk. (both must be true to select this option)

◉ *2: Project risks related to the achievement of results identified in the initial project risk log with mitigation measures identified for each risk.*

○ 1: Some risks may be identified in the initial project risk log, but no evidence of analysis and no clear risk mitigation measures identified. This option is also selected if risks are not clearly identified and no initial risk log is included with the project document.

Evidence	Management Response
A risk log has been prepared as part of the project document. * risks pertaining to operational, financial, environment, social and institutional has been identified and risk mitigation strategies suggested	

Efficient	**Quality Rating: Highly Satisfactory**

14. Have specific measures for ensuring cost-efficient use of resources been explicitly mentioned as part of the project design? This can include: i) using the theory of change analysis to explore different options of achieving the maximum results with the resources available; ii) using a portfolio management approach to improve cost effectiveness through synergies with other interventions; iii) through joint operations (e.g., monitoring or procurement) with other partners.

◉ *Yes*

○ No

Evidence

The project will adopt a landscape approach for conservation, sustainable use and management of natural resources. While doing so, the project would build synergies among relevant government departments, agencies, non-government organizations, academic and research institutions and private sector for better outcomes.

15. Are explicit plans in place to ensure the project links up with other relevant on-going projects and initiatives, whether led by UNDP, national or other partners, to achieve more efficient results (including, for example, through sharing resources or coordinating delivery?)

○ *Yes*

○ No

Evidence

The project would link up and synergize with relevant on-going projects and initiatives of the government and other partner for achieving more efficient results. The project would adopt a landscape approach and would create a platform for bringing together all the relevant stakeholders (central minsitries, state governments, non government departments, non-government organizations, academic and research institutions and private sector) for better outcomes.
This has also been outline in the project document

16. Is the budget justified and supported with valid estimates?

○ 3: The project's budget is at the activity level with funding sources, and is specified for the duration of the project period in a multi-year budget. Costs are supported with valid estimates using benchmarks from similar projects or activities. Cost implications from inflation and foreign exchange exposure have been estimated and incorporated in the budget.

◉ *2: The project's budget is at the activity level with funding sources, when possible, and is specified for the duration of the project in a multi-year budget. Costs are supported with valid estimates based on prevailing rates.*

○ 1: The project's budget is not specified at the activity level, and/or may not be captured in a multi-year budget.

Evidence

The activities have been formulated after extensive consultation in each of the project state with various stakeholders. Based on the indicative activities which have emerged, budget has been prepared for each of the project landscape and compiled into outputs for 6 years. This is again an estimated budget and each years work-plan will be firmed up after the approval of the project.

17. Is the Country Office fully recovering the costs involved with project implementation?

○ 3: The budget fully covers all direct project costs that are directly attributable to the project, including programme management and development effectiveness services related to strategic country programme planning, quality assurance, pipeline development, policy advocacy services, finance, procurement, human resources, administration, issuance of contracts, security, travel, assets, general services, information and communications based on full costing in accordance with prevailing UNDP policies (i.e., UPL, LPL.)

◉ *2: The budget covers significant direct project costs that are directly attributable to the project based on prevailing UNDP policies (i.e., UPL, LPL) as relevant.*

○ 1: The budget does not reimburse UNDP for direct project costs. UNDP is cross-subsidizing the project and the office should advocate for the inclusion of DPC in any project budget revisions.

Evidence	**Management Response**
The budget covers significant direct project costs that are directly attributable to the project based on prevailing UNDP policies. This includes charges for hiring Human Resources, Procurement, Finance (direct payment) , Logistics-Travel support to technical staff. This amounts to around 210000 USD which is around 2% of the total project cost.	

Effective   **Quality Rating: Exemplary**

18. Is the chosen implementation modality most appropriate? (select from options 1-3 that best reflects this project)

◉ *3: The required implementing partner assessments (capacity assessment, HACT micro assessment) have been conducted, and there is evidence that options for implementation modalities have been thoroughly considered. There is a strong justification for choosing the selected modality, based on the development context. (both must be true to select this option)*

○ 2: The required implementing partner assessments (capacity assessment, HACT micro assessment) have been conducted and the implementation modality chosen is consistent with the results of the assessments.

○ 1: The required assessments have not been conducted, but there may be evidence that options for implementation modalities have been considered.

Evidence	Management Response
Capacity development assessment has been undertaken using the UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard and option for implementation modality have been thoroughly considered. (refer to Annex 24 (pg 198-201)	

19. Have targeted groups, prioritizing marginalized and excluded populations that will be affected by the project, been engaged in the design of the project in a way that addresses any underlying causes of exclusion and discrimination?

◉ *3: Credible evidence that all targeted groups, prioritising marginalized and excluded populations that will be involved in or affected by the project, have been actively engaged in the design of the project. Their views, rights and any constraints have been analysed and incorporated into the root cause analysis of the theory of change which seeks to address any underlying causes of exclusion and discrimination and the selection of project interventions.*

○ 2: Some evidence that key targeted groups, prioritising marginalized and excluded populations that will be involved in the project, have been engaged in the design of the project. Some evidence that their views, rights and any constraints have been analysed and incorporated into the root cause analysis of the theory of change and the selection of project interventions.

○ 1: No evidence of engagement with marginalized and excluded populations that will be involved in the project during project design. No evidence that the views, rights and constraints of populations have been incorporated into the project.

○ Not Applicable

Evidence

Evidence
Number of consultations have been done during the PPG phase , from identification of the landscape , formulation of activities and seeking inputs on the project document where the communities have been involved. Consultants engaged under the project have travelled to the remote corners of each of the landscapes and held meetings in the villages, specifically with agro/ grazing communities, tribal communities, women to seek their inputs and suggestions to plan the livelihood and other interventions in the project. The people's representatives, the elected members at the district and Panchayats have also been consulted to seek their inputs. Village level planning has been identified as one of the core areas where the inputs from the most marginalized and vulnerable communities will be incorporated. Further the institutional mechanisms suggested in the project has identified important decision making role for the Gram Sabha (village assembly) and other institutions at the village level such as JFMCs, EDCs, Women self-help groups etc. Strategies have also been identified to involve people in conservation related activities and planning for its sustainable use since the most poor and marginalized communities are largely dependent on the natural resources. Livelihood strategies have focused on market linkages and value addition to the local products that are collected by these communities and specially women.

20. Does the project conduct regular monitoring activities, have explicit plans for evaluation, and include other lesson learning (e.g. through After Action Reviews or Lessons Learned Workshops), timed to inform course corrections if needed during project implementation?

◉ *Yes*

○ No

Evidence

Outlined in the project document

21. The gender marker for all project outputs are scored at GEN2 or GEN3, indicating that gender has been fully mainstreamed into all project outputs at a minimum.

◉ *Yes*

○ No

Evidence   **Management Response**

Refer to page no. 53 of the project document

22. Is there a realistic multi-year work plan and budget to ensure outputs are delivered on time and within allotted resources? (select from options 1-3 that best reflects this project)

◉ *3: The project has a realistic work plan & budget covering the duration of the project at the activity level to ensure outputs are delivered on time and within the allotted resources.*

○ 2: The project has a work plan & budget covering the duration of the project at the output level.

○ 1: The project does not yet have a work plan & budget covering the duration of the project.

Evidence

Landscape wise activities have been identified and budgeted and institutional and monitoring mechanisms laid out for realistic budgeting and delivery of outputs

Sustainability & National Ownership   **Quality Rating: Exemplary**

23. Have national partners led, or proactively engaged in, the design of the project?

◉ *3: National partners have full ownership of the project and led the process of the development of the project jointly with UNDP.*

○ 2: The project has been developed by UNDP in close consultation with national partners.

○ 1: The project has been developed by UNDP with limited or no engagement with national partners.

○ Not Applicable

Evidence

National Partner, The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has been leading the process for development of the project from the beginning. The Ministry has played key role along with UNDP to identify the key areas that the project should focus on. They have taken the lead to bring the State Governments on board and have coordinated with the States for all the visits for the initial studies that the consultants have undertaken. Ministry has also led the process by participating in all the landscape level consultations to seek inputs from the stakeholders. Further inputs have also been provided in preparation of the document

24. Are key institutions and systems identified, and is there a strategy for strengthening specific/ comprehensive capacities based on capacity assessments conducted? (select from options 0-4 that best reflects this project):

○ 3: The project has a comprehensive strategy for strengthening specific capacities of national institutions based on a systematic and detailed capacity assessment that has been completed. This strategy includes an approach to regularly monitor national capacities using clear indicators and rigorous methods of data collection, and adjust the strategy to strengthen national capacities accordingly.

◉ *2.5: A capacity assessment has been completed. The project document has identified activities that will be undertaken to strengthen capacity of national institutions, but these activities are not part of a comprehensive strategy to monitor and strengthen national capacities.*

○ 2: A capacity assessment is planned after the start of the project. There are plans to develop a strategy to strengthen specific capacities of national institutions based on the results of the capacity assessment.

○ 1.5: There is mention in the project document of capacities of national institutions to be strengthened through the project, but no capacity assessments or specific strategy development are planned.

○   1: Capacity assessments have not been carried out and are not foreseen. There is no strategy for strengthening specific capacities of national institutions.

○   Not Applicable

Evidence

Capacity assessment has been conducted for different stakeholders which includes field level functionaries of government agencies, local communities and other stakeholders in the landscape. Adequate budgetary provisions have also been made. Special focus will also be on combating wildlife trafficking and illegal trade. Towards this comprehensive capacity building on different aspects such as identification, detection, surveillance and intelligence sharing will be undertaken for different set of officials.
For livelihood related interventions and landscape level planning, specific areas / assessment for capacity building has been provided in the project document for the local communities
Capacity building for other line agencies for convergence with conservation related activities have also been identified.

25. Is there is a clear strategy embedded in the project specifying how the project will use national systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluations, etc.,) to the extent possible?

◉   *Yes*

○   No

○   Not Applicable

Evidence

There is a clear strategy embedded in the project specifying the ways national systems will be used. Refer to Pg. no 68-78 of the project document

26. Is there a clear transition arrangement/ phase-out plan developed with key stakeholders in order to sustain or scale up results (including resource mobilisation strategy)?

◉   *Yes*

○   No

Evidence

There is a clear phase out strategy which has been developed with the key stakeholders for ensuring sustainability of the initiatives.The project is designed to provide demonstration models for up-scaling in India. The project's approach of integrated conservation and livelihood planning and management and introduction of new planning and monitoring guidelines specifically for sustainable pasture and forest management will provide basis for application in other regions of the country.
The viability of long term sustainability is assured given the existing and planned level of Government commitment, programs and resources that are available for the High Himalayan landscape. The promotion of value chains and market driven approach to create sustainable solutions can outlive the life of the project. The project focuses on developing business models that allow local farmers and other inhabitants tot participate and benefit from the economic systems that facilitates productive enhancement and marketing, promotes local entrepreneurs, and development of ecotourism benefits.
The project's investment component will seek to develop synergies among rural development actors and programs with an objective of raising additional investments that will fund and expand models of resource use and alternative livelihood activities within and outside of the targeted landscapes.

Quality Assurance Summary/PAC Comments

The LPAC for the project was successfully done on 17.10.2017 at Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India.