

Applicant: **Lanchbury, Kate**
Organisation: **WWF-UK**
Funding Sought: **£596,618.00**

DIR29S2\1010

Strengthening communities' livelihood and stewardship to conserve Otters in Karnali

In the Lower Karnali Watershed in Western Nepal, indigenous river dependent communities and otters share and benefit from healthy river ecosystems. However, intensive fishing practices and river aggregates extraction have severely depleted natural fish abundance, threatening the traditional livelihoods of Tharu and Sonaha communities. This project will improve the wellbeing of 200 marginalised river dependent households through inclusive community-based conservation of freshwater resources and livelihood diversification, improving fish abundance and conservation of otter habitats to secure its viable populations.

CONTACT DETAILS

Title Mrs
Name Kate
Surname Lanchbury
Website (Work) [REDACTED]
Tel (Work) [REDACTED]
Email (Work) [REDACTED]
Address [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

CONTACT DETAILS

Title Ms
Name Nicola
Surname Loweth
Organisation WWF-UK
Website (Work) [REDACTED]
Tel (Work) [REDACTED]
Email (Work) [REDACTED]
Address [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

CONTACT DETAILS

Title Mr
Name Rajesh
Surname Sada
Website (Work) [Redacted]
Tel (Work) [Redacted]
Email (Work) [Redacted]
Address [Redacted]

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Section 1 - Contact Details

CONTACT DETAILS

Title Mrs
Name Kate
Surname Lanchbury
Website (Work) [REDACTED]
Tel (Work) [REDACTED]
Email (Work) [REDACTED]
Address [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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Email (Work) [REDACTED]
Address [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

CONTACT DETAILS

Title Mr
Name Rajesh
Surname Sada
Website (Work) [Redacted]
Tel (Work) [Redacted]
Email (Work) [Redacted]
Address [Redacted]

GMS ORGANISATION

Type	Organisation
Name	WWF-UK
Phone (Mobile)	[Redacted]
Email (Work)	[Redacted]
Website (Work)	[Redacted]
Address	[Redacted]

Section 2 - Title, Ecosystems, Approaches & Summary

Q3. Title:

Strengthening communities' livelihood and stewardship to conserve Otters in Karnali

What was your Stage 1 reference number? e.g. DIR28S1\1123

DIR29S1\1244

Q4. Key Ecosystems, Approaches and Threats

Select up to 3 biomes that are of focus, up to 3 conservation actions that characterise your approach, and up to 3 threats to biodiversity you intend to address, from dropdown lists.

Biome 1

Freshwater (streams, rivers and lakes)

Biome 2

Tropical-subtropical forests

Biome 3

No Response

Conservation Action 1

Land/water protection (area/resource/habitat)

Conservation Action 2

Livelihood, economic & other incentives (incl. conservation payments)

Conservation Action 3

Land/water management (area, invasive control, restoration)

Threat 1

Biological resource use (hunting, gathering, logging, fishing)

Threat 2

Other threats

Threat 3

No Response

Q5. Summary of project

Please provide a brief summary of your project: the problem/need it is trying to address, its aims, and the key activities you plan on undertaking. Please note that if you are successful, this wording may be used by Defra in communications e.g. as a short description of the project on the website.

Please write this summary for a non-technical audience.

In the Lower Karnali Watershed in Western Nepal, indigenous river dependent communities and otters share and benefit from healthy river ecosystems. However, intensive fishing practices and river aggregates extraction have severely depleted natural fish abundance, threatening the traditional livelihoods of Tharu and Sonaha communities. This project will improve the wellbeing of 200 marginalised river dependent households through inclusive community-based conservation of freshwater resources and livelihood diversification, improving fish abundance and conservation of otter habitats to secure its viable populations.

Section 3 - Title, Dates & Budget Summary

Q6. Country(ies)

Which eligible host country(ies) will your project be working in? Where there are more than 4 countries that your project will be working in, please add more boxes using the selection option below.

Country 1

Nepal

Country 2

No Response

Country 3 No Response

Country 4 No Response

Do you require more fields?

No

Q7. Project dates

Start date:	End date:	Duration (e.g. 2 years, 3 months):
01 April 2023	31 March 2026	3 years

Q8. Budget summary

Year:	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total request
Amount:	£167,599.00	£198,077.00	£230,942.00	£0.00	£596,618.00

Q9. Proportion of Darwin Initiative budget expected to be expended in eligible countries: %



Q10a. Do you have matched funding arrangements?

Yes

What matched funding arrangements are proposed?

WWF staff members' time proposed to spend in project management with specific roles to support partners with technical expertise, program and operational oversight to ensure quality and compliance standards and requirements, will have partial match for the project along with the office running costs apportioned to the level of efforts estimated to the project. This accounts for £[REDACTED] as confirmed matching funding including WWF UK and WWF Nepal.

Q10b. Total confirmed & unconfirmed matched funding (£)

£[REDACTED]

Q10c. If you have a significant amount of unconfirmed matched funding, please clarify how will you fund the project if you don't manage to secure this?

N/A

Section 4 - Problem statement

Q11. Problem the project is trying to address

Please describe the problem your project is trying to address in terms of biodiversity and its relationship with poverty. What is the need, challenge or opportunity?

For example, what are the drivers of biodiversity loss that the project will attempt to address? Why are they relevant, for whom? How did you identify these problems? Please cite any evidence you are using to support your assessment of the problem (references can be listed in a separate attached PDF document).

The Lower Karnali Watershed covers 747 km² in Nepal's Terai Arc Landscape. Rich in aquatic biodiversity it harbours 136 fish species(1) and provides ecosystem services for local communities. The watershed provides a rich mosaic of habitats that includes rivers, riverine forests, floodplain grasslands and oxbow lakes which is suitable for a large number of fish species and provides habitat for many IUCN Red List species such as gharial crocodile (critically endangered), mugger crocodile (vulnerable), Gangetic river dolphin (endangered) and smooth-coated otter (vulnerable). Considering its significance, the Government of Nepal prioritised the western channel of Karnali River as an ecological corridor and the eastern channel is included in Bardia National Park bufferzone.

Otter species are an ecological indicator of healthy aquatic ecosystems and protected by the amended Aquatic Animal Protection Act 2002 of the Government of Nepal. However, declining fish diversity and abundance due to overfishing(2,3,4,5,6,7,8) and habitat disturbance caused by intensive river aggregates extraction(3,6,8,9) threaten the health of the river ecosystem and declining smooth-coated otter populations(10). Limited research on their distribution hampers development of an effective national otter conservation strategy(11).

Illegal and unsustainable fishing is prevalent in western channels of Karnali River due to interlinked drivers - limited capacity to enforce fisheries regulations and insufficient fisheries management procedures.

Unregulated river aggregates extraction has rapidly increased in the western belt of the Karnali(9). Local governments lack capacity to ensure sustainable extraction and extraction contractors extract aggregates without following environmental mitigation plans required by Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) reports. Weak compliance and monitoring mechanisms from local governments allow degradation of river systems and otter habitat, destroying vegetation and fish spawning sites.

This has caused a sharp decline in fish diversity and abundance, threatening the traditional livelihoods and food security of indigenous and marginalised Sonaha and Tharu communities (targeted project participants). In the project intervention sites there are around 61,125 Tharu and Sonaha people (Tharu: 34,195 and Sonaha: 26,930). Sonaha are an indigenous group, not legally or formally recognised by the Nepalese Government and incorrectly categorised under the indigenous Tharu group. Since ancestral times, Sonaha have practised gold panning in the lower Karnali river, and fishing is their customary practice. Sonaha depend on fishing for subsistence while Tharus depend on fishing primarily for commercial purposes (fishing is an important component of their traditions).

With the declining fish population, their subsistence and livelihoods are at risk, however they lack knowledge, tools and techniques for sustainable fishing, and need to diversify their incomes to reduce reliance on fishing and build their financial resilience. Both groups have limited access to other livelihood options and lack representation in local decision-making bodies such as Community Forest User Groups, which has further marginalised these communities, limiting their access to knowledge, services and opportunities available.

Declines in fish stocks and habitat destruction is also directly impacting on the otters, gharial, mugger crocodiles and dolphin whose major source of food is fish, and who rely upon healthy rivers.

Section 5 - Darwin Objectives and Conventions

Q12. Biodiversity Conventions, Treaties and Agreements

Q12a. Your project must support the commitments of one or more of the agreements listed below.

Please indicate which agreement(s) will be supported and describe which objectives your project will address.

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs)

Q12b. National and International Policy Alignment

Using evidence where available, please detail how your project will contribute to national policy (including NBSAPs, NDCs, NAP etc.) and in turn international biodiversity and development conventions, treaties and agreements that the country is a signatory of.

NATIONAL

Increasing resilience of river dependent Sonaha and Tharu communities by diversifying their livelihoods will support the prioritised adaptation programmes of Nepal's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2021-2050.

Nepal's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) (2016-2020) prioritised declaration and management of at least 3 suitable wetlands as fish sanctuaries and also prioritised development and implementation of in-situ and ex-situ conservation plans for at least 10 threatened and economically valuable native fish and other aquatic species. This project will be instrumental to achieve the targets set by NBSAP by supporting the establishment of one fish sanctuary and one national species action plan for smooth-coated otters.

As Gharial and Dolphin inhabit the site, the project's habitat conservation activities and livelihood diversification demonstrably support the government's Gharial Conservation Action Plan (2018-2022) and Dolphin Conservation Action Plan (2021-2025).

The latest National Fishery Development Policy-2022 aimed for sustainable fisheries sector development by conserving, protecting and wise-use of freshwater biodiversity, ecosystem and local freshwater organisms, and improving livelihoods of river dependent communities. The project directly supports implementing this new policy.

By ensuring ecological integrity of Karnali river, the project contributes to the government of Nepal's biological corridor approach as mentioned in Terai Arc Landscape Strategy and Action Plan (2015 -2025).

INTERNATIONAL

The project supports SDG Goals 1 (no poverty), 6.3 (improve water quality by reducing pollution) and 6.5 (protect and restore water-related ecosystems) and 15 (conserve and restore terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems) by implementing livelihood interventions to diversify incomes of river-dependent people, thus reducing pressure on fish and empowering local people as stewards of freshwater ecosystems and ensuring habitats for indicator species like Otter. Community river stretch management groups formed will regularly conduct monitoring to reduce illegal and destructive fishing and unsustainable river aggregates extraction practices resulting in a healthy river.

Engagement with river-dependent people for capacity building, micro-enterprise development, market linkages, will contribute directly to SDG 8 and 10. Aligned to SDG 2 and 12, the project will promote sustainable fishing and sustainable use of river resources. These activities will ensure food and nutritional security of local people and support responsible consumption of fish.

The project aligns with CBD's Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework as the project will reduce threats to the river ecosystem, co-manage the river resulting in maintaining, restoring or enhancing the integrity and resilience of the river ecosystem (Goal A). The formation of Community River Stretch Management Groups, and their capacity building to co-manage river stretches and adopt sustainable fishing practices will ensure sustainable use and management of biodiversity (Goal B). More specifically, the project will support 2030 action targets: 2, 3, 4, 8, 19, 20.

Section 6 - Method, Change Expected, Gender & Exit Strategy

Q13. Methodology

Describe the methods and approach you will use to achieve your intended Outcome and contribute towards your Impact. Provide information on:

- how you have reflected on and incorporated **evidence and lessons learnt** from past and present similar activities and projects in the design of this project.
- the specific approach you are using, supported by **evidence** that it will be effective, and **justifying why you expect it will be successful** in this context.
- how you will undertake the work (activities, materials and methods)
- what will be the **main activities** and where will these take place.
- how you will manage the work (governance, roles and responsibilities, project management tools, risks etc.).

The project will build on the USAID-funded 'Program for Aquatic Natural Resources Improvement' which applied river stretch co-management in the middle and upper Karnali Basin, and work by WWF Laos on community-based fisheries conservation, including a fish sanctuary. These approaches significantly improved aquatic biodiversity, increased community stewardship and improved local livelihoods(3,12). This project will upscale and apply lessons to project sites in the Lower Karnali (Rajapur, Tikapur and Geruwa Municipality).

Livelihood interventions for Sonaha/Tharu communities will build on WWF Nepal's experience supporting livelihood enhancement of Bote, Musahar and Tharu communities(13) and its USAID-funded 'Hariyo Ban Program' which improved the livelihoods of 30,270 natural resource-dependent people(14). Enterprises established under this are still operating, ensuring long term community benefits.

Approaches and activities include:

River stretch co-management:

Co-management mechanisms will empower indigenous fishing communities to co-design and implement inclusive river stretch management plans in areas of high ecological importance. These plans will recognise and incorporate the traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous fisherfolk as well as science-based evidence. Major fish spawning sites will also be identified, with exploration of establishment of a 'Fish Sanctuary' to address declining fish diversity and abundance.

Activities:

- 1.Support formation and registration of 10 Community River Stretch Management Groups (CRSMGs), ensuring equal representation of men and women.
- 2.Support CRSMGs to prepare river stretch management plans, incorporating sustainable fishing guidelines.
- 3.Train 2 members from each CRSMG (20 total) on sustainable fishing practices and river monitoring to support management plan implementation.
- 4.Support 10 CRSMGs to organise awareness-raising programmes to implement management plans and sustainable fishing guidelines.
- 5.Conduct feasibility assessments and stakeholder consultations for the declaration of one fish sanctuary.
- 6.Develop fish sanctuary management plan and establish its management committee for government approval (in close coordination with CRSMGs and initiated only after getting FPIC from potentially affected local and indigenous people).

Diversifying livelihoods:

The project will enhance the skills of 200 community participants in selected income-generating activities, build their capability to establish micro-enterprises, support product development and diversification and ensure market linkages are established.

Activities selected following community consultation and based on local partners' experience, potential opportunities, resources available and product/service (marketability) include: On-farm (e.g. Fish/shrimp farming, fruit & vegetable farming, betel leaf farming, livestock rearing); Off-farm (e.g. catering/hospitality, traditional fishing gears, traditional handicrafts, tailoring, mechanics).

Participants will be federated into share members in two cooperatives to access loans, market products together, and develop and share business expertise.

Activities:

- 1.Vulnerability mapping to prioritise most vulnerable 200 households
- 2.Provide market oriented on-farm and off-farm training, and employment skills development to 200 participants.
- 3.Provide input/material support needed for enterprise establishment, product development training and support market linkages to facilitate enterprise growth and development.
- 4.Form/Reform existing community savings and credit groups to establish co-operatives.
- 5.Provide training to build cooperative capacity for sustainable access to finance, savings, and collateral free loans, supporting the set-up of micro-enterprises in the target communities.

Institutional capacity building:

Local government capacity will be strengthened to tackle unregulated aggregates extraction and illegal and unsustainable fishing, through the development of local government mining protocols, and awareness raising and training to ensure effective monitoring mechanisms, improve regulation and enforcement.

Activities:

- 1.Raise awareness of government officials around threats/drivers to otters, fisheries and local communities from unregulated aggregates extraction and destructive fishing practices.
- 2.Develop a standard protocol and monitoring mechanism to regulate aggregate extraction
- 3.Train officials to follow standard processes of IEE and avoid Otter hotspot areas (identified in Output 4) from aggregates extraction.
- 4.Equip and train government officials and elected local government representatives to conduct river monitoring to control destructive fishing and unsustainable aggregate extraction.

Enabling conditions to scale and safeguard otters:

A National Smooth-coated Otter Conservation Action Plan, underpinned by research findings, will be prepared in coordination with CRSMGs, and all the three tiers of government in Nepal.

Activities:

1. Work with otter, fish experts and local communities to conduct participatory surveys on otter threats, ecology and occupancy, and fish diversity and abundance surveys.
2. Draft inclusive Otter Conservation Action Plan through a series of consultation workshops and multi-stakeholder meetings with federal, provincial and local governments, conservation organisations, and local communities. Informed by results from outputs 1, 2 and 3.
3. Review, finalise and secure federal government endorsement.

Project Governance

WWF-UK will be accountable and responsible for quality assurance and Darwin reporting. A grant agreement will be in place between WWF-UK and WWF-Nepal who will sub-grant to local partners through a co-managed project implementation arrangement with the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE). See Annex.

Q14. Capability and Capacity

How will you support the strengthening of capability and capacity in the project countries at organisational or individual levels, please provide details of what form this will take, who will benefit, and the post-project value to the country.

The capability and capacity of fishing dependent communities and local stakeholders to sustainably manage river resources is essential to the project's sustainability and will be enhanced in the following ways:

Government departments:

In coordination with Division Forest Offices, 48 government officials and elected local government representatives will have improved capacity in regulating river aggregate extraction, how to follow standard IEE processes and how to ensure extraction is not allowed in otter hotspots. Development of a standard protocol and monitoring mechanism for river aggregates will further enhance institutional capacity to regulate river aggregate extraction.

45 law enforcement officials will have increased knowledge of illegal river activities and their impacts on local fisherfolk and otters, and improved capability to tackle them.

Fishing communities:

The project will build the capacity of local indigenous men and women by improving the skills and knowledge of the members of 10 CRSMGs (250 individuals) and 2 cooperatives on conservation and sustainable fisheries management, enabling them to co-design and implement inclusive and sustainable river management models.

Community members will be capacitated in setting up co-management structures: consensus building; drafting regulations, including demarcation of fish sanctuaries, revisions of regulations, etc. Building capacity in this way will help ensure communities can take full responsibility at exit and others will require less support (technical and financial) going forward, therefore increasing long-term sustainability.

Individuals:

Locally appropriate, tailored training, technical support & capacity building will be provided to 200 local

indigenous people (100 women). On-farm training to 100 farmers; off-farm training to 60 individuals; and long term certified training courses for employment such as electric auto rickshaw/car driving, masonry, plastering training to 40 individuals will support small-scale fisherfolk to diversify their incomes and improve wellbeing based on existing livelihood strategies. Capability to access finance will also support this endeavour.

Q15. Gender equality

All applicants must consider whether and how their project will contribute to reducing inequality between persons of different gender. Explain how your understanding of gender equality within the context your project, and how is it reflected in your plans. Please summarise how your project will contribute to reducing gender inequality. Applicants should, at a minimum, ensure proposals will not increase inequality and are encouraged to design interventions that proactively contribute to increased gender equality.

Indigenous Sonaha communities lack voice and recognition in local governance systems and institutions. This situation is compounded for women, whose ability to participate in river governance and use is further restricted due to traditional social norms. Women play an important role in fisheries yet have less access to, and control over, river resources than men. This, combined with lower levels of education and literacy, limits girls' and women's ability to exercise their rights.

A Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) approach will view gendered discrimination as the compounded discrimination an individual faces based on intersectional social identities of gender, caste, class, ethnicity, religion, geography, age and (dis)ability. This approach will determine inclusive participant selection criteria and focused capacity building training based on actual needs. It will focus on four critical aspects:

- Inclusion in governance mechanisms/bodies: Community leadership training will build leadership skills to enhance meaningful participation of indigenous communities, especially women, so they are better able to self-organise, participate in key executive positions, and in decision making. CRSMGs will have equitable membership and further ensure women's representation and meaningful participation in executive committees.
- Economic empowerment: Marginalised groups will be prioritised in livelihoods training, where 50% women from marginal backgrounds will be selected so they benefit from livelihood diversification and increased income. A sub-committee formed within the cooperative will improve women's financial inclusion.
- Participation: Engagement processes will be designed to ensure 1) women's views are explicitly sought and 2) women are supported to engage considering time of day, location, mechanism (e.g provision of childcare, costs of travel covered, language etc).
- Monitoring: Community dialogues will be hosted every two months to monitor project progress and enable community voices to be heard. Sex-disaggregated data will facilitate monitoring of women's participation, representation, and how women benefit from the project.

Q16. Awareness and understanding

How will you raise awareness and understanding of biodiversity-poverty issues in your stakeholders, including who your stakeholders are, what approaches/formats/products will you use, how you will ensure open and free access to all data, and how will you know that the messages are understood?

All the four outputs of the project include awareness raising of diverse stakeholders to support project results.

Indigenous communities:

Engaged Sohana and Tharu communities will be capacitated to conduct fish diversity and abundance assessments to inform river stretch management plans. They will also be involved in participatory surveys on otter threats, ecology and occupancy, and encouraged to act as citizen scientists and community champions to raise understanding of the importance of river ecosystems, sustainable fishery practices and otter conservation. Written materials will be prepared in local languages.

Youth-led campaigns will mobilise their peers, influence decision-makers and encourage river-dependent women and men to support sustainable fishing practices and otter conservation. Key events, such as a festival on World Otter Day will also strengthen awareness of otters, wetlands and support for their conservation.

An indicator of improved understanding and knowledge of the threats to river ecosystems and river resource conservation will be community willingness to participate in co-management models and adoption of sustainable fishing practices.

Government authorities:

Through workshops and training sessions, we will work with local government authorities and law enforcement agencies to build awareness and understanding of how to monitor and regulate over-extraction of river aggregates, tackle illegal and destructive fishing and the importance of river and fisheries co-management.

Civil society, academia and NGOs:

All project technical reports will be made freely available. Research articles published will be available through open access peer reviewed journals. The National Otter Action Plan will be disseminated publicly through WWF Nepal, partner and government websites. For those without access to digital platforms, hard copies of plans/reports will be made available upon request.

WWF will share the project's lessons and stories through global communications mechanisms, will also disseminate through organisations such as Himalayan Otter Network, IUCN Otter Specialist Group and Nepal Otter Network.

Q17. Change expected

Detail the expected changes to both biodiversity and poverty reduction, and links between them, this work will deliver. You should identify what will change and who will benefit a) in the short-term (i.e. during the life of the project) and b) in the long-term (after the project has ended) and the potential to scale the approach.

When talking about how people will benefit, please remember to give details of who will benefit, differences in benefits by gender or other layers of diversity within stakeholders, and the number of beneficiaries expected. The number of communities is insufficient detail – number of households should be the largest unit used.

Short term benefits:

In the short-term, the capacity of 250 local indigenous women and men will be built to engage in community river stretch management groups to manage at least 10 kms of river stretch alongside

respective local governments and community forest user groups (for river stretches that pass through community forest). Inclusive decision-making processes will ensure local women and men make the decisions which affect river resource governance. Improving their knowledge of river resource conservation and ensuring implementation of inclusive river management plans will promote more sustainable fishing practices and improve protection of fish spawning sites, leading to increased abundance of fish.

At least 93 local government and law enforcement officials will have strengthened capacity to monitor and regulate destructive aggregate extraction and tackle illegal fishing to reduce the priority threats/drivers to fish and otter habitats.

Mobilising communities to manage at least 10km of river stretch while reducing destructive aggregate extraction and fishing practices that threaten fish and otter habitats will also support improved fish abundance and diversity and otter occupancy.

This will benefit both communities that rely on fish for food security and livelihoods, as well as improving the sustainability of otters' prey source, ultimately supporting an improvement in otter occupancy in the Lower Karnali Watershed.

200 indigenous, river-dependent and marginalised households (1,026 people) will have reliable, diversified and strengthened income sources and employment opportunities. This will improve their financial resilience and enable them to reduce their reliance on declining stocks of fish. Skill-based training, capacity building together with access to credit and micro-enterprise establishment will increase their income by 15%, improving their wellbeing, food security, economic and social status, and enabling them to access better education, health, and public services.

Government endorsement of the otter conservation action plan will ensure the likelihood of regular budget allocation for the otter and its habitat conservation in the long run.

Long term benefits:

In the long-term, the active engagement of indigenous women and men in co-management of river stretches will continue to further enhance community stewardship of river resources. Livelihood diversification of Sonaha and Tharu communities will reduce their dependence on river resources, and diversify and enhance their incomes, enhancing their wellbeing. In the long term the supported communities will enjoy reduced poverty, improved wellbeing, economic and social status, and a more secure and better future for their children.

Reducing primary reliance of local communities on river resources and fishing, and ensuring more sustainable management of river stretches and fisheries will reduce pressure on fish, supporting increased fish diversity and abundance, which will indirectly benefit the food security and livelihoods of 61,125 Sonaha and Tharu people of 8 municipalities.

Scaling up of community-based river management will safeguard ecological integrity of freshwater biodiversity in the Lower Karnali Watershed, improving the resilience of local livelihoods of river-dependent communities, and securing and increasing smooth coated otter populations, as well as supporting conservation of dolphin, gharial, mugger and fish.

Q18. Pathway to change

Please outline your project's expected pathway to change. This should be an overview of the overall project logic and outline why and how you expect your Outputs to contribute towards your overall

Outcome and, longer term, your expected Impact.

Our theory of change is that if marginalised, river-dependent communities are empowered to make decisions around sustainable stewardship of river resources upon which they depend, and supported to diversify their livelihoods, combined with improved controls to reduce unsustainable extraction and illegal fishing, then pressures on fish resources will be reduced enhancing fish abundance ultimately, improving the wellbeing of Sonaha/Tharu community and habitat for freshwater (Outcome).

This will be achieved by:

1. Enabling Sonaha/Tharu fishing communities to co-design and implement inclusive and sustainable river management (Output 1)
2. Providing training, technical support and access to finance for market-based enterprises to sustainably diversify local livelihoods (Output 2)
3. Improving the capacity of government officials to monitor and regulate over-extraction of river aggregates, and tackle illegal and destructive fishing (Output 3)
4. Securing government agreement to an inclusive, otter conservation plan in order to secure future resource allocation (Output 4)

Longer term, this model for enhanced community wellbeing and stewardship of river resources can be scaled-up throughout the watershed - sustaining freshwater biodiversity (including gharial, mugger, dolphin and their prey-base) and enabling the population of smooth-coated otters in the Terai region of Nepal to thrive (Impact).

Q19. Exit Strategy

How will the project reach a sustainable point and continue to deliver benefits post-funding?

How could post-project scaling of the approach (if proven) be delivered: through new finance or through uptake by stakeholders or other mechanisms? Are there any barriers to scaling and how will these be addressed?

How will the required knowledge and skills remain available to sustain the benefits?

Sustaining benefits:

Co-management institutions: The establishment of co-management arrangements and capacity within CRSMGs and local authorities will ensure that sustainable river management will continue. We will work closely with local governments to secure annual budget allocation for river management implementation.

WWF Nepal will connect with the Natural Water Fisheries Promotion and Conservation Center and Fisheries Development Center to ensure the sustainability of the Fish Sanctuary beyond the project period.

Sustainable livelihoods: FKWDF will support market linkages and enterprise development ensuring sustainability of livelihood interventions. Private sector participation in business development interventions and realisation of profit by community participants will provide a strong basis for economic sustainability.

Access to finance: Building cooperative membership and organisational capacity will help to enhance the sustainability of the cooperatives and of enterprises. Cooperatives will be established under the legal framework of Cooperative Act 2049 and spirit of Local Governance Operational Acts 2017.





Cooperatives will be technically supported for short term loan sourcing from external financial institutions and linked with relevant government agencies at local and district level to enhance sustainability through their continuous support. This will also help to strengthen their financial and operational sustainability.

Governmental capacity: Building the capacity of government agencies and officials to address illegal extraction and fishing, and mining protocol (endorsed during project) will ensure river protection after the project completion.

Scaling up: The project will provide a model for up-scaling of inclusive and sustainable fisheries management in Nepal. WWF Nepal will widely disseminate lessons learnt among other municipalities.

Endorsement and adoption of the Otter Conservation Plan will ensure future actions to protect otters at a wider scale, as well as budgetary allocation to support this.

If necessary, please provide supporting documentation e.g. maps, diagrams, references etc., as a PDF using the File Upload below:

-
-  [Annex](#)
 -  09/12/2022
 -  18:03:11
 -  pdf 910.54 KB

Section 7 - Risk Management

Q20. Risk Management

Please outline the 6 key risks to achievement of your Project Outcome and how these risks will be managed and mitigated, referring to the [Risk Guidance](#). This should include at least one Fiduciary, one Safeguarding, and one Delivery Chain Risk.

Projects should also draft their initial risk register using the [Risk Assessment template](#) provided, and be prepared to submit this when requested if they are recommended for funding. Do not attach this to your application.

Risk Description	Impact	Prob.	Gross Risk	Mitigation Header	Residual Risk
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Fiduciary

Funds are lost or not accounted for through mishandling or fraud, or not spent as per agreed budget. Multiple partner organisations receiving funds adds to the complexity of financial management. Any fraud or misuse of money could lead to failure to complete agreed project activities, reputational risk and donor withdrawal.

Moderate Unlikely Moderate

WWF has robust procurement, sub-granting and financial management processes and zero tolerance on fraud and corruption. WWF Nepal conducts due diligence of partners and project compliance training periodically. Quarterly financial reporting will be in place with evidence of procurement and transaction lists, followed by annual financial monitoring and audits.

Minor

Safeguarding

Safeguards measures are not fully implemented by WWF or partners. Insufficient understanding of project staff leads to safeguards and mitigation plans not being fully or only partly implemented.

Moderate Unlikely Moderate

All WWF and partner staff need to adhere to and are trained on WWF's Social Environmental and Social Safeguards; and developing risk mitigation plans, and establishment of locally appropriate grievance mechanisms. Project Management Team meetings will review progress; alongside monitoring on compliance by WWF-Nepal's Risk Management Team.

Minor

Delivery Chain

The delivery model is through multiple delivery partners that WWF-UK does not have direct management over. Ineffective partnership working is a risk in this delivery model.

Minor Possible Moderate

WWF-UK is responsible for maintaining strong collaborative relationships with partners, organising regular team meetings. In addition to grant agreements, a Partnership Agreement will be signed at the beginning of the project. WWF-UK is accountable for the use of Darwin Initiative funds, will ensure compliance and will provide all reporting.

Minor

Risk 4	Restricting access to fishing in certain stretches of the river and in the fish sanctuary might negatively affect the communities in terms of income, food security and livelihoods.	Moderate	Possible	Major	WWF Nepal conducted FPIC with communities at potential sites and will ensure FPIC in all sites prior to implementation. Fishing will only be restricted in Fish sanctuary and hotspots during fish breeding seasons while sustainable fishing is allowed elsewhere. Livelihoods support for 200 most vulnerable hhs will reduce risk.	Minor
Risk 5	CRSMG members involved in monitoring destructive fishing practices and aggregates extraction might be exposed to retaliatory threats from people involved in illegal activities.	Minor	Unlikely	Minor	CRSMGs involved in monitoring will be sensitised on possible risks, provided basic safety training and insurance. Furthermore, Sonaha Bikash Samaj will conduct an initial project inception meeting among relevant stakeholders and community to make them aware of the overall objective of the project and its benefits to the indigenous community.	Minor
Risk 6	Coronavirus pandemic and Dengue impacting project implementation. This project is based on in-depth engagement with local communities to co-develop and implement project activities. Social distancing measures & illness could delay activities due to partners being unable to carry out activities with communities.	Minor	Unlikely	Minor	We will adapt & plan accordingly to local context, taking a flexible approach, and following national guidelines. We will hold remote meetings when appropriate. Mitigation measures in stakeholder meetings include: outdoor meetings, small groups, social distancing, provision of masks, hand sanitisers, handwashing stations, information exchange on Covid-19 and Dengue risks.	Minor


Section 8 - Implementation Timetable

Q21. Provide a project implementation timetable that shows the key milestones in project activities


Provide a project implementation timetable that shows the key milestones in project activities. Complete the Word template as appropriate to describe the intended workplan for your project.


[Implementation Timetable Template](#)


Please add/remove columns to reflect the length of your project. For each activity (add/remove rows as appropriate) indicate the number of months it will last, and fill/shade only the quarters in which an activity will be carried out. The workplan can span multiple pages if necessary.

 [BCF-Implementation-Timetable-Template-202](#)

[2-23-FINAL 6 December](#)

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Section 9 - Monitoring and Evaluation

Q22. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Describe how the progress of the project will be monitored and evaluated, making reference to who is responsible for the project's M&E.

Darwin Initiative projects are expected to be adaptive and you should detail how the monitoring and evaluation will feed into the delivery of the project including its management. M&E is expected to be built into the project and not an 'add' on. It is as important to measure for negative impacts as it is for positive impact. Additionally, please indicate an approximate budget and level of effort (person days) to be spent on M&E (see [Finance Guidance](#)).

Successful delivery of the project will be supported by the integration of monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) throughout the project lifecycle:

Development of Project Monitoring Framework: WWF Nepal in collaboration with 4 implementing partners (SMCRF, SBS, FKWDF, DCC) will develop the monitoring framework based on "pathway to change", incorporating feedback mechanisms and GESI-friendly techniques. The collection of baselines (where required) will be done within six months of project inception.

Internal Review and Planning meetings of the progress: These meetings will be conducted bi-annually among project staff including partners to review/track project performance, progress and results.

Project Monitoring: WWF Nepal will conduct programmatic and financial monitoring. Three implementing partners (SBS, FKWDF, DCC) will conduct regular field (activity) monitoring. There will be annual joint monitoring visits with representatives from local governments, 3 implementing partners and WWF Nepal. Findings from these monitoring will be reviewed half yearly, contributing to adaptive management of the project.

Database: WWF Nepal online database will be used to store project data which will track the activity performance. All 4 implementing partners (SMCRF, SBS, FKWD DCC) will be oriented on data-entry processes for its effective use. Two-way approaches will be used to ensure data quality: field verification

through data quality assurance tools (periodically), and project quarterly reports.

There are different level of results which needs to be tracked through different assessments:

- To track Outcome 1, baseline and endline will be created for its five indicators: O.1 GESI Assessment, Level of Income and KAP assessment O.2 Community River Management Scorecard, O.3 Otter Occupancy Survey O.4 Threat assessment (O.3 and O.4 conducted by SMCRF) and O.5 Fish Survey (conducted by external consultant).
- To track its 18 Output indicators, the project will use various Means of Verification such as O 1.1 will use group registration certificate, O 1.4 will refer to field monitoring reports from CRSMGs, O 2.2 will use training completion reports and O 3.1 will use Capacity Need/ Gap Assessment in year 1 and year 3 etc.
- Other output level indicators that require quantitative results will be measured through the WWF Nepal online database and validated through activity completion reports, cooperative reports, and documentation of government engagement such as meeting minutes.
- Periodical data quality will be assured through the Data Quality Assurance tool.

An independent final project evaluation will be conducted by an external evaluator. Yearly tracking of the results according to the log frame will be led by the Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, WWF Nepal, liaising with all four implementing partners following WWF Nepal's monitoring protocols and other assessments conducted by the project.

WWF Nepal's M&E Officer will coordinate the project's MEL processes working with the project team and partners to institutionalise the framework in collaboration with WWF-UK's Design and Impact Advisor.

Total project budget for M&E in GBP (this may include Staff, Travel and Subsistence costs)	£ [REDACTED]
Percentage of total project budget set aside for M&E (%)	[REDACTED]
Number of days planned for M&E	70

Section 10 - Logical Framework

Q23. Logical Framework (logframe)

Darwin Initiative projects will be required to monitor and report against their progress towards their Outputs and Outcome. This section sets out the expected Outputs and Outcome of your project, how you expect to measure progress against these and how we can verify this.


- [Stage 2 Logframe Template](#)


The **logframe template** (N.B. there is a different template for Stage 1 and Stage 2) needs to be downloaded from Flexi-Grant, completed and uploaded as a PDF within your Flexi-Grant application – **please do not edit the logframe template structure (other than adding additional Outputs if needed) as this may make your application ineligible.**


Please upload your logframe as a PDF document.

 [BCF-St2-Logical-Framework Stage 2 9 Dec 20](#)

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Impact:

The ecological integrity of the Lower Karnali Watershed is safeguarded to sustain freshwater biodiversity, smooth coated otter populations and improve the resilience of local livelihoods.

Outcome:

By 2026, improved river management and enhanced wellbeing of 200 river dependent households through diversified livelihoods, result in increased fish abundance and otter occupancy in the Lower Karnali Watershed.

Project Outputs

Output 1:

River stretch co-management

Output 1. By 2026, river dependent communities and local governments demonstrate river stretch co-management covering at least 10 kms of the Karnali river and one fish sanctuary, enhancing sustainable fishing practices and inclusive decision making processes.

Output 2:

Diversifying, culturally appropriate livelihood options

Output 2. By 2026, 200 Sonaha/Tharu households (at least 50% women as direct participants) living in and around the lower Karnali increase their annual income by 15% through market oriented vocational training to enhance their technical skills followed by material support for establishment of micro-enterprises.

Output 3:

Institutional capacity building

Output 3. By 2026, government officials (municipalities, division forest office, park authorities) have improved capacity to monitor and control river aggregates extraction and destructive fishing practices, in order to better protect fish spawning sites and otter habitats.

Output 4:

Enabling conditions to scale and safeguard otters

Output 4. By 2026, endorsed otter conservation action plan is adopted by all relevant stakeholders (federal, provincial and local governments, conservation organisations, and local communities) underpinned by robust scientific research and evidence based approaches.

Output 5:

No Response

Do you require more Output fields?

It is advised to have fewer than 6 Outputs since this level of detail can be provided at the Activity

level.

No

Activities

Each activity is numbered according to the Output that it will contribute towards, for example, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 are contributing to Output 1.

River stretch co-management

Output 1. By 2026, river dependent communities and local governments demonstrate river stretch co-management covering at least 10 kms of the Karnali river and one fish sanctuary, enhancing sustainable fishing practices and inclusive decision making processes:

Activity 1.1. Identify river stretch and adjoining hotspot areas (identified in Output 4) to be managed by the community, while considering climate impacts.

Activity 1.2. Support the formation and registration of 10 community river stretch management groups (CRSMGs) ensuring equal representation of men and women, in coordination with the local government

Activity 1.3. Train 20 community members (2 from each CRSMG) on sustainable fishing practices and river monitoring to support the implementation of river management plans.

Activity 1.4. Conduct fish diversity and abundance assessments with local community representatives from the CRGMGs along the designated river stretch

Activity 1.5. Draft 10 river stretch management plans incorporating sustainable fishing guidelines in coordination with local government and community groups and submit to local governments for approval/endorsement.

Activity 1.6. Support CRSMGs to conduct regular monitoring of their designated river stretch to control illegal activities in the river with the local government and law enforcement agencies.

Activity 1.7. Support 10 CRSMGs to organise awareness raising programmes, install hoarding boards and develop IEC materials and implement youth-led campaigns related to sustainable fishing practices and Otter conservation

Activity 1.8. Based on hotspots identified in Output 4, conduct feasibility assessments and stakeholder consultations with CRSMGs on the potential of establishing a fish sanctuary

Activity 1.9 Develop a fish sanctuary management plan for the agreed site; and create a management committee and submit the plan for approval to the local government.

Diversifying, culturally appropriate livelihood options

Output 2. By 2026, 200 Sonaha/Tharu households (at least 50% women as direct beneficiaries) living in and around the lower Karnali increase their annual income by 15% through market oriented vocational training to enhance their technical skills followed by material support for establishment of micro-enterprises:

Activity 2.1. Identify and prioritise most vulnerable households through vulnerability mapping and select beneficiaries

Activity 2.2. Support Sonaha/Tharu community through On farm trainings (fish/shrimp farming -45, seasonal and off seasonal vegetable, fruits farming-30, betel leaf farming-10, livestock /poultry rearing-15)

Activity 2.3. Support Sonaha/Tharu community through Off farm trainings (small restaurant opening -10, traditional fishing gears, jewellery making, handicraft making -20, tailoring -15, repair mechanics (motorcycle, AC, mobile, auto rickshaw)- 15)

Activity 2.4. Provide Input /material support (seeds, breeds, tools, seed money) to facilitate enterprise establishment

Activity 2.5. Support Sonaha/Tharu community through Skill development trainings (Long term certified course for employment creation (electric auto rickshaw/ car vehicle driving, masonry, plastering training *etc.- 40)

Activity 2.6. Training on product development diversification, packaging and labelling to add value to the existing products especially for betel leaf and fish products.

Activity 2.7. Support market linkages to facilitate enterprise development through participation in trade fairs, promotion via online platforms, cooperative, business counselling, stakeholders and market actors interaction.

Activity 2.8. Support the establishment/reformation of two local community cooperatives for sustainable access to finance and to ensure sustainability of project initiative.

Institutional capacity building

Output 3. By 2026, government officials (municipalities, division forest office, park authorities) have improved capacity to monitor and control river aggregates extraction and destructive fishing practices, in order to better protect fish spawning sites and otter habitats:

Activity 3.1. Provide training to government officials on otter and their prey base conservation, the consequences of destructive fishing practices and ensure standard processes of Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) are followed.

Activity 3.2. Develop a standard protocol and monitoring mechanism to regulate river aggregates extraction in Otter hotspot areas identified in Output 4 and advocate for endorsement by the local government.

Activity 3.3. Conduct training workshops on the Aquatic Animal Protection Act (2017) for 45 law enforcement agency (Nepal Police) officials on illegal activities related to aquatic biodiversity.

Activity 3.4. Support the Division Forest Office (Kailali and Bardia) and Bardia National Park to conduct regular river patrolling to control river aggregates extraction and destructive fishing practices.

Enabling conditions to scale and safeguard otters

Output 4. By 2026, endorsed otter conservation action plan is adopted by all relevant stakeholders underpinned by robust scientific research and evidence based approaches:

Activity 4.1 Prepare otter identification manual in Nepali language and a smooth-coated otter monitoring protocol for use by all relevant stakeholders

Activity 4.2. Train 20 local community members on otter identification and monitoring protocols drafted by WWF

Activity 4.3. Conduct sign surveys and camera traps (at hotspot sites) for Otter occupancy along the potential habitat (rivers, wetlands and riparian zones) by otter experts mobilising trained CRSMGs members.

Activity 4.4. Engage 4 university graduates to conduct and publish research on Otter ecology- food habit and habitat use

Activity 4.5. Conduct threat assessment of otters using absolute threat rank system to inform the development of strategies for the species and its habitat protection.

Activity 4.6. Draft Smooth-coated Otter Conservation Action Plan of Nepal

Activity 4.7. Engage Otter experts and DNPWC and DoFSC officials in reviewing draft plan, finalise plan as per DNPWC standard format and get government's endorsement of the Conservation action plan

Section 11 - Budget and Funding

Q24. Budget


Please complete the appropriate Excel spreadsheet, which provides the Budget for this application. Some of the questions earlier and below refer to the information in this spreadsheet. Note that all Darwin Main should be using the over £100,000 template. Please refer to the [Finance Guidance](#) for more information.


- Budget form for projects over £100k


Please ensure you include any co-financing figures in the Budget spreadsheet to clarify the full budget required to deliver this project.


N.B.: Please state all costs by financial year (1 April to 31 March) and in GBP. The Darwin Initiative cannot agree any increase in grants once awarded.

Please upload the Lead Partner's accounts at the certification page at the end of the application form.

 [BCF-Budget-over-100k-MASTER-Apr22 \(Nepal\)](#)

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Q25. Funding

Q25a. Is this a new initiative or does it build on existing work (delivered by anyone and funded through any source)?

- Development of existing work

Please provide details:

WWF Nepal recently added otters as freshwater focal species in its new strategic plan (2022-2026) because of its ecological significance and declining population status. The proposed project seeks to raise the profile of the river ecosystems and aquatic biodiversity using otters as the flagship species. Up until now, this species has received little attention. The community based river stretch management model proposed in this project has been applied and proven successful through the USAID funded 'PANI' project, which significantly improved aquatic biodiversity and increased community stewardship towards conservation in the middle and upper Karnali Basins. This project builds on this approach, upscaling and applying the lessons learnt to additional project sites in the Lower Karnali watershed. WWF Nepal has been engaged in improving livelihood of river dependent communities in different parts of the Terai Arc Landscape and Chitwan Annapurna Landscape (ChAL) which will be upscaled in this watershed as well.

Q25b. Are you aware of any current or future plans for similar work to the proposed project?

- Yes

Please give details explaining similarities and differences, and explaining how your work will be additional and what attempts have been/will be made to co-operate with and learn lessons from such work for mutual benefits.

WWF Nepal has recently prepared a community based smooth-coated otter monitoring protocol which will be used for training CRSMG members.

We are aware USAID has recently awarded funding (around USD 30 million) to support a 5 year Biodiversity Activity Project (formerly known as the Jal Jangal project) which will focus on improving the health of freshwater and forest ecosystems and biological diversity, environmental and social safeguards, climate resilience and addressing environmental crime in Nepal. The project will work with the

Government of Nepal (GON), community groups, civil society, and private sector actors, and will align with the Government of Nepal's vision of conservation of biodiversity for sound and resilient ecosystems and national prosperity. As this project has only just been awarded, details are unclear at this stage but we will seek synergies between the two projects and explore opportunities to share project findings, key learnings and support beyond the project period.

Besides, the Government of Nepal is planning to prepare the Otter Conservation Action Plan of Nepal and the project will be sharing the scientific data related to smooth-coated otter and their prey-base. Building on this plan, a conservation action plan of smooth-coated otter will be prepared under this project.

Q26. Capital items

If you plan to purchase capital items with Darwin funding, please indicate what you anticipate will happen to the items following project end. If you are requesting more than 10% capital costs, please provide your justification here.

The project intends to purchase one boat to facilitate river monitoring along the designated river stretch. It is anticipated this will be handed over to Bardia National Park once the project ends. In addition, 10 camera traps, 10 pairs of binoculars, 2 GPS and 2 digital cameras are required to support community otter monitoring as well as 2 laptops and 3 printers for our project partners. Once the project finishes these will be retained by the communities and local partners to facilitate future ongoing activities and monitoring.

Q27. Value for Money

Please demonstrate why your project is good value for money in terms of impact and cost-effectiveness of each pound spend (economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity). Please make sure you read the guidance documents, before answering this question.

Within WWF, value for money (VfM) is analysed around the 4E framework (economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity) to maximise results. VfM has been considered in the design of this project as follows:

Economy is ensured through application of WWF's Finance and Operations Standards. The budget was constructed by identifying the inputs required for implementing each activity and assigning known/estimated cost based on local and current knowledge. Match funding equivalent to £37,754 has also been secured.

Efficiency: to support efficiency a governance structure with clear lines of reporting, a "Project Management Team" is created. Regular review of results and discussions on how to improve our efficiency are core to WWF's approach and will involve regular monitoring with partners to facilitate adaptive management actions.

Effectiveness: WWF-Nepal's government co-management model ensures government ownership and policy oversight while recognising local communities, CSOs and local government agencies as core implementing partners on the ground, leveraging the local knowledge, resources and stewardship for sustainability. Project effectiveness is also ensured through project design choices - based on (i) learning from previous projects, established landscape programmes and local partner knowledge; and (ii) through the application of good monitoring systems to evidence results and guide adaptive management.

Equity is ensured through (i) interventions which are community owned, through applying collaborative design and delivery approaches; (ii) resources are managed for future generations. Equity is put into practice in embedding WWF's social, gender & indigenous people's policies.

Section 12 - Safeguarding and Ethics

Q28. Safeguarding

Projects funded through the Darwin Initiative must fully protect vulnerable people all of the time, wherever they work. In order to provide assurance of this, projects are required to have appropriate safeguarding policies in place.

Please confirm the Lead Partner has the following policies in place and that these can be available on request:

Please upload the lead partner's Safeguarding Policy as a PDF on the certification page.

We have a safeguarding policy, which includes a statement of our commitment to safeguarding and a zero tolerance statement on bullying, harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse	Checked
We have attached a copy of our safeguarding policy to this application (file upload on certification page)	Checked
We keep a detailed register of safeguarding issues raised and how they were dealt with	Checked
We have clear investigation and disciplinary procedures to use when allegations and complaints are made, and have clear processes in place for when a disclosure is made	Checked
We share our safeguarding policy with all partners	Checked
We have a whistle-blowing policy which protects whistle blowers from reprisals and includes clear processes for dealing with concerns raised	Checked
We have a Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers that sets out clear expectations of behaviours - inside and outside the work place - and make clear what will happen in the event of non-compliance or breach of these standards	Checked

Please outline how you will implement and strengthen your safeguarding policies in practice and ensure that all partners apply the same standards as the Lead Partner. If any of the responses are "no", please indicate how it is being addressed.

All partners in Nepal receive training on our Environment and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF), and social policies covering child safeguarding & rights; gender; indigenous people; human rights. Partners have agreed to adhere to these. WWF-Nepal undertakes local ESSF monitoring and reporting on compliance.

All activities were screened from a safeguarding perspective. Possible project-impacted people were

consulted following National FPIC (refer Annex for detail) guidelines during proposal development. Activities also consist of the mitigation actions suggested by indigenous communities residing in project sites. A formal mechanism to receive and respond to feedback and complaints will also be established at partner level.

Q29. Ethics

Outline your approach to meeting the key principles of good ethical practice, as outlined in the guidance.

WWF applies its Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework to identify, avoid and mitigate any negative social and environmental impacts, including:

Access and benefit sharing: Through inclusive community planning and decision making processes any change to access rights will be clearly discussed with rights holders and decisions only made with agreement of right holders.

Participation: Local communities and stakeholders were consulted meaningfully, this will continue with an emphasis on women, rights-holders and vulnerable groups. Locally appropriate grievance mechanisms will be in place to respond to complaints raised by stakeholders who may be affected by our work.

Consent: FPIC is one of our mandatory Standards, the principles of which underpin all our stakeholder engagement. This process will contribute to ensuring rights of indigenous people to give or withhold their consent to proposed activities/actions that will/may affect their traditional lands, territories and natural resources they customarily own, occupy or otherwise use.

WWF Code of Ethics & Health and Safety policies: Our staff, partners and consultants are bound by these.

Human Rights: Potential human rights risks are mitigated through proper analysis with stake/rights-holders, and by ensuring government support is subject to capacity assessments, appropriate training and conditionalities on respect for human rights.

Section 13 - FCDO Notifications

Q30. FCDO Notifications

Please state whether there are sensitivities that the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office will need to be aware of should they want to publicise the project's success in the Darwin Initiative in any country.

No

Please indicate whether you have contacted FCDO Embassy or High Commission to discuss the project and attach details of any advice you have received from them.

Yes (no written advice)

Section 14 - Project Staff

Q31. Project staff

Please identify the core staff (identified in the budget), their role and what % of their time they will be working on the project.

Please provide 1-page CVs or job description, further information on who is considered core staff can be found in the [Finance Guidance](#).

Name (First name, Surname)	Role	% time on project	1 page CV or job description attached?
Nicola Loweth	Project Leader	10	Checked
Deborah MacKay	WWF-UK Finance grant manager: lead for financial reporting and assurance	10	Checked
Rajesh Sada	WWF-Nepal Project Manager: Project Implementation Leader & freshwater technical advisor	30	Checked
Bivishika Bhandari	WWF Nepal GESI Specialist: Support project team to integrate GESI in overall project planning and implementation.	10	Checked

Do you require more fields?

Yes


Name (First name, Surname)	Role	% time on project	1 page CV or job description attached?
Arati Rayamajhi	WWF Nepal Livelihood Specialist: Provides technical oversight on overall livelihood and entrepreneurship development activities in the project.	20	Checked
Pushpanjali Malla	WWF Nepal M&E Officer: Provides technical oversight support on baseline and endline survey, and conducts periodic programmatic monitoring with partners.	10	Checked
Project Associate, (New Hire)	WWF Field Project Office Project Associate:supports project planning, coordination, progress tracking, quality assurance and reporting in coordination with project partners	100	Checked


Indrajit Chaudhary	FKWDF Community Livelihoods Coordinator: Leads the livelihood interventions, technical oversight, community mobilisation, field monitoring and reporting.	50	Checked
Narayan Chaudhary	FKWDF Entrepreneurship Development Facilitator: Supports to develop and implement entrepreneurship activities in coordination with target communities.	100	Checked
Ratna KC	SBS Community River Stretch Management Coordinator: Leads river stretch co-management with communities, awareness raising and technical oversight, monitoring and reporting at field level	100	Checked
Bijay Raj Shrestha	DCC Advocacy Expert: Supports overall policy, advocacy and government liaison on freshwater biodiversity conservation and extractives.	50	Checked
Sanjan Thapa	SMCRF Otter Expert: Leads otter research and preparation of the national otter action plan	10	Checked


Please provide 1 page CVs (or job description if yet to be recruited) for the project staff listed above as a combined PDF.

Ensure the file is named clearly, consistent with the named individual and role above.

 [Combined CVs Nepal Darwin](#)

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Have you attached all project staff CVs?

Yes

Section 15 - Project Partners

Q32. Project Partners

Please list all the Project Partners (including the Lead Partner - i.e. the partner who will administer the grant and coordinate the delivery of the project), clearly setting out their roles and responsibilities in the project including the extent of their engagement so far and planned.

This section should demonstrate the capability and capacity of the Project Partners to successfully deliver the project. Please provide Letters of Support for all project partners or explain why this has not been included.

The partners listed here should correspond to the Delivery Chain Risk Map (within the Risk Register template) which you will be asked to submit if your project is recommended for funding.

Lead partner name:	WWF-UK
Website address:	www.wwf.org.uk
Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project):	<p>In 2019, WWF-UK made a commitment to the UK Government that it will lead all grant proposals from the global WWF Network, taking on responsibility for overall programme oversight, financial and quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation, and safeguarding. WWF-UK has worked in close collaboration with project partners to develop this proposal and will continue to work in close partnership throughout implementation to ensure effective & sustainable impact.</p> <p>WWF-UK is responsible for issuing grant agreements and payments to WWF-Nepal, expertise on M&E and tools for baseline data collection, oversight of safeguarding and risk management, sharing best practice and learnings, support to external project communications, facilitating the contract for evaluation and audit.</p> <p>WWF-UK will be accountable for use of Darwin Initiative funds and will ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of funding and will provide all reporting (using input from partners).</p> <p>WWF-UK will provide a Project Leader and grant specialist who have a wide range of relevant expertise including leading on UK government grants.</p> <p>WWF UK provided technical backstopping during the development of the application through digital medium.</p>
Allocated budget (proportion or value):	£ [REDACTED]
Represented on the Project Board	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes
Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes
Have you provided a cover letter to address your Stage 1 feedback?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes

Do you have partners involved in the Project?

Yes

1. Partner Name: WWF Nepal

Website address: www.wwfnepal.org

WWF in Nepal is one of the leading organisations working in the field of biodiversity conservation for the past three decades. WWF has long standing conservation efforts on population recovery of large mammals in Terai Arc Landscape (TAL). WWF Nepal mobilised the largest community based anti-poaching units in TAL and has experienced working with 1,500 community-based institutions and leveraging their efforts in recovery and awareness raising of aquatic and terrestrial species. WWF Nepal provides technical backstopping to the government of Nepal on strategizing species management through development of species-focused action plans/protocols.

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project):

WWF Nepal will be the lead in-country partner, will coordinate and manage project delivery (all 4 outputs) in Nepal and provide technical expertise on preparing river stretch management plans, sustainable fishing guidelines and mining protocols. It will facilitate coordination with multi-stakeholders for the endorsement of a smooth coated otter conservation action plan. It will ensure good governance within the "Project Management Team". In addition to the project manager, technical experts - Livelihoods, GESI, Safeguards, financial compliance and M&E will provide their expertise.

During the project application phase, it worked closely with all partners in creating project logic, identifying actions and conducting in depth stakeholder consultations.

Allocated budget: £ [REDACTED]

Represented on the Project Board Yes

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation? Yes

2. Partner Name: Small Mammals Conservation and Research Foundation (SMCRF)

Website address: <https://smcrf.org/>

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project):

SMCRF is a national organisation working on biodiversity conservation and research in Nepal and has been involved in otter conservation since 2016. SMCRF led and edited Nepal Otter Action Plan, Phase I: Research Focus (2020-22) in collaboration with IUCN Otter specialist Group, Himalayan Otter Network and in support from Altman Foundation. SMCRF was involved in developing community based smooth-coated otter Monitoring Protocol provided by WWF Nepal. Mr. Sanjan Thapa from SMCRF is involved as a lead in developing “Nepal Otter Conservation Action Plan (2023-2027)” in the ownership of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC). Previous experiences include mobilising river dependent communities as citizen scientists in Otter surveys and spreading awareness on otter conservation.

In this project, SMCRF will lead the otter research under output 4 contributing to the development of the smooth-coated Otter conservation action plan. They will be responsible to conduct otter occupancy surveys, fish abundance assessments and threats assessments by mobilising local communities as citizen scientists, the results of which will contribute to develop a robust conservation action plan for the smooth-coated otters.

SMCRF provided scientific research data, heavily supported in designing research components during the application stage.

Allocated budget: £ [REDACTED]

Represented on the Project Board Yes

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation? Yes

3. Partner Name: Sonaha Bikash Samaj

Website address: www.sbs.org.np

Sonaha Bikash Samaj (SBS) is a community-based civil society organisation established in 2011 and known for integrated community development. Group of indigenous people from the Sonaha community leads the organisation. Sonaha are a marginalised and underprivileged community known for panning gold using locally available sieves. For the past 10 years, SBS has been working in Bardiya district to uplift Sonaha.

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project):

Through USAID funded PANI project, it gained experience in strengthening community capacity for river stretch co-management in upper Karnali river, to promote sustainable fishing practices such as discouraging destructive fishing practices and supporting alternative livelihood opportunities. It works with local communities to ensure ownership through dialogue and coordination among local communities, government and other relevant stakeholders.

In this project, SBS will implement activities related to river stretch co-management and awareness raising under output 1. It will be responsible to identify hotspot river stretches, form CRSMGs with equal men-women participation, develop and implement river stretch management plans in close coordination with the local government, mobilise CRSMGs to monitor river stretches and establish, manage one of the sites as 'Fish Sanctuary'. SBS co-designed the project through field consultations, information sharing and to establish project logic and actions on the ground.

Allocated budget: £ [REDACTED]

Represented on the Project Board Yes

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation? Yes

4. Partner Name: Freed Kamiya Women Development Forum (FKWDF)

Website address: Website currently inactive

Details (including roles and responsibilities and capacity to engage with the project):

Freed Kamaiya Women Development Forum (FKWDF) is an organization formed by the initiatives of the N- Peace Award 2015 winner and anti-slavery activist Ms. Kaushila Chaudhary. It is a woman-led, non-governmental, non-political, and non-profit organisation established in 2008. FKWDF was established to raise the voice of vulnerable and disadvantaged women, to address their needs and support them to uplift their livelihoods. FKWDF has developed as an umbrella organisation of freed Kamaiya women and Kamlari girls where the indigenous Tharu communities are in majority. FKWDF conducts diverse programs for the welfare of the marginalised community, children, women, and girls. It focuses on poverty reduction, building social harmony and supporting social integration. They have long standing experience in market oriented micro enterprise development, establishing market linkages, cooperative establishment and capacity building. FKWDF has experience of working with various national and international organizations such as UNDP, Plan Nepal, Free the Slave.

In this project, FKWDF will lead the implementation of the livelihood actions under Output 2 and will ensure equal women beneficiaries of livelihood interventions.

FKWDF co-designed the project through conducting rapid assessment of livelihood needs/gaps, market potentials, and consultations with potential beneficiaries to establish project logic and actions on the ground.

Allocated budget:

£ [REDACTED]

Represented on the Project Board

Yes

Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation?

Yes

5. Partner Name:

Dolphin Conservation Centre (DCC), Nepal

Website address:

No website address

**Details
(including roles
and
responsibilities
and capacity to
engage with the
project):**

DCC Nepal, a local NGO based in Kailali district, has worked on Dolphin, Otter, Gharial and biodiversity conservation since 2011. They have formed an Otter Conservation Committee in their organisation and introduced "Protect Otters" initiatives in 2020. They have formed 7 community level Otter conservation groups in lower Karnali and have mobilised these groups to raise awareness on Otter. Each year, they conduct around 8/10 events to disseminate information about the importance of Otters and other aquatic biodiversity, along with river cleaning campaigns. It has a strong on the ground work experience and knowledge to protect freshwater habitat particularly in the lower Karnali river system. It was actively involved in preparing the Dolphin Conservation Action Plan and local government level Aquatic Animal and Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation Act in partnership with local and provincial governments.

In this project, DCC Nepal will lead the awareness and institutional capacity building interventions under output 3, and are responsible to create community awareness on otter conservation and advocate for sustainable fishing practices.

DCC Nepal co-designed the project through engagement with local government and analysed the level of awareness among youths. DCC Nepal provided information to establish project logic and actions on the ground.

**Allocated
budget:**

£ [REDACTED]

**Represented on
the Project
Board**

Yes

**Have you
included a
Letter of
Support from
this
organisation?**

Yes

**6. Partner
Name:**

No Response

**Website
address:**

No Response

**Details
(including roles
and
responsibilities
and capacity to
engage with the
project):**

No Response

Allocated budget: £0.00


Represented on the Project Board Yes
 No


Have you included a Letter of Support from this organisation? Yes
 No


If you require more space to enter details regarding Partners involved in the project, please use the text field below.


No Response


Please provide a cover letter responding to feedback received at Stage 1 if applicable and a combined PDF of all letters of support.


 [Darwin Stage 2 Cover Letter Nepal](#)


 12/12/2022


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 pdf 128.16 KB

 [Combined Letters of Support Darwin Nepal](#)

 09/12/2022

 17:46:29

 pdf 5.33 MB

Section 16 - Lead Partner Capability and Capacity

Q33. Lead Partner Capability and Capacity

Has your organisation been awarded Darwin Initiative, Darwin Plus or Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund funding before (for the purposes of this question, being a partner does not count)?

Yes

If yes, please provide details of the most recent awards (up to 6 examples).

Reference No	Project Leader	Title
IWT106	WWF-UK	IWT-CF: Reducing IWT through community-led conservation in a transboundary landscape
29-0 22	WWF-UK	Darwin Initiative:Community-led fisheries management in the Mara Wetlands, Tanzania
DARNV008	WWF-UK	Sound Of Safety: Testing Pingers for River Dolphins and Fishers
Darwin - 14013	WWF-UK	Community Management of NTFPs in Kangchenjunga Conservation Area, Nepal

No Response No Response No Response

No Response No Response No Response

Have you provided the requested signed audited/independently examined accounts?

If yes, please upload these on the certification page. Note that this is not required from Government Agencies.

Yes

Section 17 - Certification

Certification

On behalf of the

Trustees

of

WWF-UK

I apply for a grant of

£596,618.00

I certify that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, the statements made by us in this application are true and the information provided is correct. I am aware that this application form will form the basis of the project schedule should this application be successful.

(This form should be signed by an individual authorised by the applicant institution to submit applications and sign contracts on their behalf.)

- I have enclosed CVs for project key project personnel, cover letter, letters of support, a budget, logframe, Safeguarding Policy and project implementation timetable (uploaded at appropriate points in application)
- Our last two sets of signed audited/independently verified accounts and annual report are also enclosed.

Checked

Name

Kate Akhtar

Position in the organisation

Director of Public Sector Partnerships, WWF-UK

Signature (please upload e-signature)
Kate's e-sig
09/12/2022
16:41:12
jpg 18.43 KB

Date 09 December 2022

Please attach the requested signed audited/independently examined accounts.

WWF-UK Annual Report and Financial Statements 2020-21 web 09/12/2022 16:45:49 pdf 2 MB	WWF-UK Annual Report and Financial Statements 2019-20 09/12/2022 16:45:42 pdf 1.55 MB
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Please upload the Lead Partner's Safeguarding Policy as a PDF

WWF UK Safeguarding Code of Conduct - September 2022 09/12/2022 17:24:49 pdf 110.03 KB	WWF UK Safeguarding Policy September 2022 - internal 09/12/2022 17:24:32 pdf 223.57 KB
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Section 18 - Submission Checklist

Checklist for submission

	Check
I have read the Guidance, including the "Darwin Initiative Guidance", "Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Guidance", "Risk Guidance" and "Financial Guidance".	Checked
I have read, and can meet, the current Terms and Conditions for this fund.	Checked
I have provided actual start and end dates for the project.	Checked
I have provided my budget based on UK government financial years i.e. 1 April - 31 March and in GBP.	Checked
I have checked that our budget is complete, correctly adds up and I have included the correct final total at the start of the application.	Checked
The application been signed by a suitably authorised individual (clear electronic or scanned signatures are acceptable).	Checked
I have attached the below documents to my application <ul style="list-style-type: none">my completed logframe as a PDF using the template provided	Checked
<ul style="list-style-type: none">my budget (which meets the requirements above)	Checked

• my completed implementation timetable as a PDF using the template provided	Checked
I have included a 1 page CV or job description for all the Project Staff identified at Question 31, including the Project Leader, or provided an explanation of why not.	Checked
I have included a letter of support from the Lead Partner and partner(s) identified at Question 32, or an explanation of why not.	Checked
I have included a cover letter from the Lead Partner, outlining how any feedback received at Stage 1 has been addressed where relevant.	Checked
I have included a copy of the Lead Partner's safeguarding policy, which covers the criteria listed in Question 28.	Checked
I have been in contact with the FCDO in the project country/ies and have included any evidence of this. If not, I have provided an explanation of why not.	Checked
I have included a signed copy of the last 2 annual report and accounts for the Lead Partner, or provided an explanation if not.	Checked
I have checked the Darwin Initiative website immediately prior to submission to ensure there are no late updates.	Checked
I have read and understood the Privacy Notice on the Darwin Initiative website.	Checked

We would like to keep in touch!

Please check this box if you would be happy for the lead applicant (Flexi-Grant Account Holder) and project leader (if different) to be added to our mailing list. Through our mailing list we share updates on upcoming and current application rounds under the Darwin Initiative and our sister grant scheme, the IWT Challenge Fund. We also provide occasional updates on other UK Government activities related to biodiversity conservation and share our quarterly project newsletter. You are free to unsubscribe at any time.

Checked

Data protection and use of personal data

Information supplied in the application form, including personal data, will be used by Defra as set out in the **Privacy Notice**, available from the [Forms and Guidance Portal](#).

This **Privacy Notice must be provided to all individuals** whose personal data is supplied in the application form. Some information may be used when publicising the Darwin Initiative including project details (usually title, lead partner, project leader, location, and total grant value).

	Activity	No. of months	Year 1 (23/24)				Year 2 (24/25)				Year 3 (25/26)			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Output 1	By 2026, river dependent communities and local governments demonstrate river stretch co-management covering at least 10 kms of the Karnali river and one fish sanctuary, enhancing sustainable fishing practices and inclusive decision making processes													
1.1	Identify river stretch and adjoining hotspot areas (identified in Output 4) to be managed by community, while considering climate impacts.	5												
1.2	Support the formation and registration of 10 community river stretch management groups (CRSMGs) in the designated community managed river stretch in close coordination with the local government in three municipalities, ensuring equal representation of men and women, in close coordination with the local government and community forest users groups.	12												
1.3	Train 20 Community members (2 from each CRSMG) on sustainable fishing practices and river monitoring through training and workshops to support the implementation of management plans.	18												
1.4	Conduct fish diversity and abundance assessments with local community representatives from the CRGMGs along the designated river stretch	12												
1.5	Draft 10 river stretch management plans incorporating sustainable fishing guidelines, informed by the fish abundance and otter occupancy baseline assessments, in coordination with local government (environment focal point, representatives of municipal environmental committees), and community groups (Community forest and buffer zone community forest user groups, water users group), and submit to local governments for approval/endorsement	9												
1.6	Support CRSMGs to conduct regular monitoring (twice a month) of their designated managed river stretch to control illegal activities in the river with the local government, CFUG (Community Forest User Group) and law enforcement agencies	27												
1.7	Support 10 CRSMGs to organize awareness raising programmes, install hoarding boards and develop IEC (digital) materials and implement youth-led campaigns related to sustainable fishing practices and Otter conservation to support the implementation of management plans and sustainable fishing guidelines	30												

Project Title: Strengthening communities' livelihood and stewardship to conserve Otters in Karnali

	Activity	No. of months	Year 1 (23/24)				Year 2 (24/25)				Year 3 (25/26)			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.8	Based on hotspots identified in Output 4, conduct feasibility assessments and stakeholder consultations with CRSMGs on the potential of establishing a fish sanctuary.	6												
1.9	Develop a fish sanctuary management plan for the agreed site, conduct a brief environment study; and create a management committee who will submit the plan for approval to the local government and will be initiated only after FPIC from the local and indigenous people living nearby and potentially affected by the proposed site	15												
Output2	By 2026, 200 Sonaha/Tharu households (at least 50% women as direct beneficiaries) living in and around the lower Karnali increase their annual income by 15% through market oriented vocational training to enhance their technical skills followed by material support for establishment of micro-enterprises.													
2.1	Identify and prioritize most vulnerable households through vulnerability mapping and select beneficiaries	5												
2.2	Support Sonaha/Tharu community through on farm trainings (fish/shrimp farming -45, seasonal and off seasonal vegetable, fruits farming-30,betel leaf farming-10,livestock /poultry rearing-15)	15												
2.3	Support Sonaha/Tharu community through Off farm trainings (Hospitality /Tea Shop, small restaurant opening -10,Traditional fishing gears/ beads jewelry making, traditional handicraft making -20,Tailoring -15,Repair mechanics (Motorcycle, AC, power tiller, mobile, auto rickshaw,)- 15	12												
2.4	Provide Input /material support (seeds, breeds, tools, seed money) to facilitate enterprise establishment	12												
2.5	Support Sonaha/Tharu community through Skill development trainings (Long term certified course for employment creation (Vet, electric auto rickshaw/ car vehicle driving, Mason, PoP, Electrician, Plumbing training *etc.- 40)	12												
2.6	Training on product development diversification, packaging and labeling to add value to the existing products especially for betel leaf and fish products.	5												

Project Title: Strengthening communities' livelihood and stewardship to conserve Otters in Karnali

	Activity	No. of months	Year 1 (23/24)				Year 2 (24/25)				Year 3 (25/26)			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2.7	Support market linkages to facilitate enterprise development through participation in trade fairs and promotion via online platforms. Various Meetings, Interactions, Trade Fair Participation for Market Linkage-12 Events(Buyer seller interaction, wholesalers and retailers farm visit, showcasing, participation in trade fairs, promotion via online platforms, cooperative, business counseling, stakeholders and market actors interaction etc.)	9												
2.8	Support establishment/reformation of two - local community cooperatives (capacitate and support existing saving and credit groups to turn into cooperatives) for sustainable access to finance (collateral free loan for enterprise establishment, expansion and for saving product) and to ensure sustainability of project initiative	30												
Output 3	By 2026, government officials (municipalities, division forest office,park authorities) have improved capacity to monitor and control river aggregates extraction and destructive fishing practices, in order to better protect fish spawning sites and otter habitats													
3.1	Provide training to government officials (including environment focal point/division forest office & park authorities) on otter and their prey base conservation, the consequences of destructive fishing practices and ensure standard processes of Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) are followed based on capacity gap assessment	5												
3.2	Develop a standard protocol and monitoring mechanism to regulate river aggregates extraction in Otter hotspot areas identified in Output 4 and advocate for endorsement by the local government.	12												
3.3	Conduct training workshops on the Aquatic Animal Protection Act (2017) for 45 law enforcement agency (Nepal Police) officials on illegal activities related to aquatic biodiversity based on capacity gap assessment.	5												
3.4	Support the Provincial Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forests and Environment (MoITFE, Lumbini and Sudurpaschim province), Division Forest Office (Kailali and Bardia) and Bardia National Park to conduct regular river patrolling to monitor and control river aggregates extraction and destructive fishing practices.	27												
Output 4	By 2026, endorsed otter conservation action plan is adopted by all relevant stakeholders underpinned by robust scientific research and evidence based approaches													

Project Title: Strengthening communities' livelihood and stewardship to conserve Otters in Karnali

	Activity	No. of months	Year 1 (23/24)				Year 2 (24/25)				Year 3 (25/26)			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
4.1	Prepare otter identification manual in Nepali language and a smooth-coated otter monitoring protocol for use by all relevant stakeholders	6												
4.2	Train 20 local community members on otter identification and monitoring protocols drafted by WWF	1												
4.3	Conduct sign surveys and camera traps (at hotspot sites) for Otter occupancy along the potential habitat (rivers, wetlands and riparian zones) by otter experts mobilizing trained CRSMGs members	10												
4.4	Engage university graduates to conduct and publish research on Otter ecology- food habit and habitat use	30												
4.5	Conduct threat assessment of otters using absolute threat rank system to inform the development of strategies for the species and its habitat protection.	4												
4.6	Draft smooth-coated otter conservation action plan of Nepal	8												
4.7	Engage Otter experts and DNPWC and DoFSC officials in reviewing draft plan, finalize plan as per DNPWC standard species conservation action plan format and get government's endorsement of the Conservation action plan	2												
5	Project Planning, Implementation and MEL Support													
5.1	Project inception and planning workshop (including GESI, ESS sensitization, project compliance rollout)	2												
5.2	Baseline and Endline Assessments (KAP, Level of income, Capacity Need/Gap, Community River Management Scorecard, and GESI)	6												
5.3	Field level planning and monitoring	2												
5.4	Programmatic and financial Monitoring (including joint monitoring)	3												
5.5	Final project evaluation	4												
5.6	Environment and social safeguard in project implementation (FPIC)	1												
5.7	Project learning documentation and communications assets	4												

Project Title: Strengthening communities' livelihood and stewardship to conserve Otter in Karnali

Project Summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
<p>Impact: The ecological integrity of the Lower Karnali Watershed is safeguarded to sustain freshwater biodiversity, smooth coated otter populations and improve the resilience of local livelihoods</p>			
<p>Outcome:</p> <p>By 2026, improved river management and enhanced wellbeing of 200 river dependent households through diversified livelihoods, result in increased fish abundance and otter occupancy in the Lower Karnali Watershed.</p>	<p><u>Human wellbeing</u> 0.1 By 2026, 200 river dependent households in 10 pilot sites report an improvement in wellbeing in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. an increase in income levels by 15% due to livelihood interventions b. financial resilience due to diversification of income sources c. increased participation and influence over river governance and fisheries management decisions <p>(in comparison to the year 1 baseline)</p> <p><u>Improved river management</u> 0.2 By 2026, 10 Community River-Stretch Management Groups (covering at least 10 km and one fish sanctuary) are implementing and measuring the effectiveness of sustainable river management plans.</p> <p><u>Increased otter occupancy</u> 0.3 By 2026, occupancy of smooth coated otter increases across the entire lower Karnali watershed against Year 1</p>	<p>0.1 Baseline and endline reports on GESI Assessment Report (Year1 and Year3), Change in level of income Assessment Report (Year1 and Year3), Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) Assessment Report (Year1 and Year 3)</p> <p>0.2 Group registration certificate and Community River Management Scorecard (Year 1 and Year 3)</p>	<p>River dependent communities around the Lower Karnali Watershed perceive potential for more resilient and equitable benefits from river stretch co-management models, increasing likelihood of involvement.</p> <p>The introduction of community stretch co-management and sustainable fishery practices are sufficient for the fishery and/or key fish species to partially recover in the time period, or at all.</p> <p>Reduction of threats/drivers leads to an increase in otter occupancy; otter populations can increase and disperse within the lifetime of this project.</p> <p>Conservation interventions will occur quickly enough for fish populations to react within the lifetime of the project, resulting in positive changes in fish abundance - while visible</p>

Project Title: Strengthening communities' livelihood and stewardship to conserve Otter in Karnali

	<p>baseline [current understanding is 21% occupancy over a stretch of 8 km in western channel of Karnali river - Kathariya 2022; and 44% occupancy over a stretch of 12 km in eastern channel of Karnali/Geruwa river - Thapa 2019].</p> <p><u>Reduction in threats/drivers to otters</u> O.4 By end 2026, identified priority threats/drivers (declining prey, unregulated aggregates extraction, illegal and unsustainable fishing) to otters and other freshwater species are each reduced (compared to year 1 baselines).</p> <p><u>Increased fish diversity and abundance</u> O.5 By end 2026, native fish abundance and diversity within the lower Karnali watershed have increased (in comparison with the year 1 baseline).</p>	<p>O.3 Otter occupancy survey Report (Year 1 and Year 3)</p> <p>O.4 Threat Assessment Report (Year 1 and Year 3)</p> <p>O.5 Fish survey reports (Year 1 and Year 3)</p>	<p>changes in fish stocks will take longer than the project to materialise.</p>
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Project Title: Strengthening communities' livelihood and stewardship to conserve Otter in Karnali

<p>Outputs:</p> <p><u>River stretch co-management</u> Output 1. By 2026, river dependent communities and local governments demonstrate river stretch co-management covering at least 10 kms of the Karnali river and one fish sanctuary, enhancing sustainable fishing practices and inclusive decision making processes</p>	<p>○ 1.1 Formal arrangements with 10 community groups (consisting of approximately 25 individuals) for co-management of river stretch in place by year 2 (from a baseline of 0), with equal representation of men and women involved in decision-making, ownership and financing (baseline 2022: no formal arrangements in place)</p> <p>○ 1.2 10 sustainable river stretch management plans incorporating sustainable fishery guidelines, informed by the fish abundance and otter occupancy baseline assessments, finalised by CRSMGs and local governments by year 3 (baseline 2022: no management plans in place)</p> <p>○ 1.3 By 2025, 50 % CRSMGs members have adopted sustainable fishing practices to support implementation of management plans and sustainable fishing guidance in comparison with the year 1 baseline with year 3 endline (disaggregated by gender)</p> <p>○ 1.4 Each community group conducts monitoring of their respective river stretch twice a month for 3 years (except during July-Sept- i.e., monsoon</p>	<p>○ 1.1 Municipalities' Meeting Minutes and Group registration certificate</p> <p>○ 1.2 Community River Stretch Management Groups (CRSMG) reports; River Stretch Management Plan</p> <p>○ 1.3.a KAP Assessment Report (Baseline and endline)</p> <p>○ 1.3.b Periodic monitoring report (incorporating anecdotal data, digital photos) by lead and implementing partners</p> <p>○ 1.4 Field Monitoring Reports by CRSMGs</p>	<p>The government continues to allow the registration of community groups and does not make any legislative changes impacting on the registration.</p> <p>Communities and local governments can reach a consensus and agreement on river co-management plans</p> <p>Community groups formed for co-management of river stretches are significantly inclusive and capable of delivering the results.</p> <p>Increased knowledge and understanding among CRSMGs members will encourage them to adopt more sustainable fishing practices</p> <p>CRSMG members are continuously willing and able to monitor river</p>
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Project Title: Strengthening communities' livelihood and stewardship to conserve Otter in Karnali

	<p>season) (baseline 2022: no monitoring being conducted)</p> <p>O 1.5 By 2026, Nepal's first Fish Sanctuary designated with its management plan</p>	<p>0.1.5 Local government's official records of fish sanctuary designation</p>	<p>Government is supportive and committed of declaring Nepal's first fish sanctuary</p>
<p><u>Diversifying, culturally appropriate livelihood options</u> Output 2. By 2026, 200 Sonaha/Tharu households (at least 50% women as direct participants) living in and around the lower Karnali increase their annual income by 15% through market oriented vocational training to enhance their technical skills followed by material support for establishment of micro-enterprises.</p>	<p>O 2.1 Increase in annual income of 200 Sonaha/Tharu households by 15% due to livelihoods focused interventions by the end of Year 3 (disaggregated by gender and disability status) (baseline to be collected at project outset)</p> <p>O 2.2 By end of year 2, 100 women have enhanced their skills in On-farm (e.g. Fish/shrimp farming, fruit & vegetable farming, betel leaf farming, livestock rearing) or Off-farm (e.g. catering/hospitality, traditional fishing gears, traditional handicrafts, tailoring, mechanics) activities to diversify and increase household incomes (baseline to be collected at project outset)</p> <p>O 2.3 By end of year 2, at least 2 local community cooperatives established</p>	<p>O 2.1 2 Change in level of Income Assessment Reports (Baseline and endline)</p> <p>O 2.2 Training completion report</p> <p>O 2.3 Periodic Progress Report prepared by participating cooperatives and Technical Project Report</p> <p>O 2.4 Periodic Progress Report prepared by participating</p>	<p>70% HHs provided with skill-based training are successful in running their enterprise and earn sufficient income to sustain their livelihood.</p> <p>The governance of the cooperatives is effective and they are capable of using the seed money wisely</p> <p>Selection of a range of livelihood activities based on local partners' experience in market development in the area, potential opportunities, resources available and product/service marketability means that viable livelihoods can be derived from</p>

Project Title: Strengthening communities' livelihood and stewardship to conserve Otter in Karnali

	<p>(baseline 2022: no multi-purpose cooperatives exist with Sonaha/Tharu members, will be built on existing community savings and credit groups; membership disaggregated by gender)</p> <p>O 2.4 By end of year 2, at least 100 share members have increased access to cooperatives and secured loans (disaggregated by gender)</p> <p>O 2.5 By end of year 3, 20 micro-enterprises established by the targeted HHs (disaggregated by gender and disability status of entrepreneurs)</p>	<p>cooperatives (that includes loan disbursements for share members)</p> <p>O 2.5 Project monitoring and technical progress reports</p>	<p>on- and off-farm activities and enterprises.</p>
<p><u>Institutional capacity building</u> Output 3. By 2026, government officials (municipalities, division forest office, park authorities) have improved capacity to monitor and control river aggregates extraction and destructive fishing practices, in order to better protect fish spawning sites and otter habitats</p>	<p>O 3.1 Increased knowledge and understanding of 48 government officials on the impacts of uncontrolled aggregates extraction and destructive fishing practices on fish stocks, Otter habitat and prey, and on standard processes of Initial Environmental Examination</p> <p>O 3.2 Standard protocol and monitoring mechanism of river aggregates extraction developed and endorsed by local government to regulate unsustainable aggregates extraction in high conservation value areas (including otter habitats and fish spawning sites) (Baseline 2022: No protocols or mechanisms exist)</p>	<p>O 3.1 Capacity Need/Gap Assessment report (Year 1 and Year 3) - part of KAP assessment</p> <p>O 3.2 Local government endorsed protocol</p>	<p>Government prioritises protocol developed for river aggregates extraction for implementation.</p> <p>Protocols are adopted by local governments once endorsed.</p> <p>Government officials have sufficient capacity to enforce fishing/illegal extraction regulations.</p>

Project Title: Strengthening communities' livelihood and stewardship to conserve Otter in Karnali

	<p>O 3.3 Number of cases reported with regards to destructive fishing and unsustainable aggregate extraction decreased by 50 % in the river stretch covered by CRSMGs by the end of year 3 (in comparison to year 1 baseline)</p> <p>O 3.4 Conduct training workshops for 45 law enforcement agency (Nepal Police) officials have increased understanding on how to tackle illegal activities related to the Aquatic animal protection act (2017).</p>	<p>O 3.3 Field Monitoring Reports by CRSMGs</p> <p>O 3.4 Pre- and post training assessments</p>	<p>Monitoring activities do not pose any risks to CRSMGs members and their family members.</p>
<p><u>Enabling conditions to scale and safeguard otters</u> Output 4. By 2026, endorsed otter conservation action plan is adopted by all relevant stakeholders (federal, provincial and local governments, conservation organisations, and local communities) underpinned by robust scientific research and evidence based approaches</p>	<p>O 4.1 Baseline study on otter occupancy, prey species diversity and abundance and threat assessment completed by the end of Year 1</p> <p>O 4.2 By year 3, Smooth coated otter action plan prepared in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, ensuring at least 50 % participation of marginalised river dependent communities with equal participation of women (disaggregated by gender)</p> <p>O 4.3 By year 3, Otter Conservation Action plan formally endorsed by relevant stakeholders and published</p>	<p>O 4.1 Otter Occupancy survey report; Fish diversity and abundance assessment reports</p> <p>O 4.2 Consultation documents; minutes of meetings</p> <p>O 4.3 Published plan</p> <p>O 4.4 Journal article</p>	<p>All the relevant stakeholders from government and community continue to be supportive of developing the Otter conservation action plan.</p> <p>All relevant stakeholders (federal, provincial and local governments, conservation organisations, and local communities) commit to implementing the action plan, and support the necessary actions beyond the lifetime of the project</p>

Project Title: Strengthening communities' livelihood and stewardship to conserve Otter in Karnali

	O 4.4 At least one research article submitted to a peer-reviewed journal		
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Activities:

River stretch co-management

Output 1. By 2026, river dependent communities and local governments demonstrate river stretch co-management covering at least 10 kms of the Karnali river and one fish sanctuary, enhancing sustainable fishing practices and inclusive decision making processes

Activity 1.1. Identify river stretch and adjoining hotspot areas (identified in Output 4) to be managed by the community, while considering climate impacts.

Activity 1.2. Support the formation and registration of 10 community river stretch management groups (CRSMGs) ensuring equal representation of men and women, in coordination with the local government

Activity 1.3. Train 20 community members (2 from each CRSMG) on sustainable fishing practices and river monitoring to support the implementation of river management plans.

Activity 1.4. Conduct fish diversity and abundance assessments with local community representatives from the CRGMGs along the designated river stretch

Activity 1.5. Draft 10 river stretch management plans incorporating sustainable fishing guidelines in coordination with local government and community groups and submit to local governments for approval/endorsement.

Activity 1.6. Support CRSMGs to conduct regular monitoring of their designated river stretch to control illegal activities in the river with the local government and law enforcement agencies.

Activity 1.7. Support 10 CRSMGs to organise awareness raising programmes, install hoarding boards and develop IEC materials and implement youth-led campaigns related to sustainable fishing practices and Otter conservation

Project Title: Strengthening communities' livelihood and stewardship to conserve Otter in Karnali

Activity 1.8. Based on hotspots identified in Output 4, conduct feasibility assessments and stakeholder consultations with CRSMGs on the potential of establishing a fish sanctuary

Activity 1.9 Develop a fish sanctuary management plan for the agreed site; and create a management committee and submit the plan for approval to the local government.

Diversifying, culturally appropriate livelihood options

Output 2. By 2026, 200 Sonaha/Tharu households (at least 50% women as direct beneficiaries) living in and around the lower Karnali increase their annual income by 15% through market oriented vocational training to enhance their technical skills followed by material support for establishment of micro-enterprises.

Activity 2.1. Identify and prioritise most vulnerable households through vulnerability mapping and select beneficiaries

Activity 2.2. Support Sonaha/Tharu community through On farm trainings (fish/shrimp farming -45, seasonal and off seasonal vegetable, fruits farming-30, betel leaf farming-10, livestock /poultry rearing-15)

Activity 2.3. Support Sonaha/Tharu community through Off farm trainings (small restaurant opening -10, traditional fishing gears, jewellery making, handicraft making -20, tailoring -15, repair mechanics (motorcycle, AC, mobile, auto rickshaw)- 15)

Activity 2.4. Provide Input /material support (seeds, breeds, tools, seed money) to facilitate enterprise establishment

Activity 2.5. Support Sonaha/Tharu community through Skill development trainings (Long term certified course for employment creation (electric auto rickshaw/ car vehicle driving, masonry, plastering training *etc.- 40)

Activity 2.6. Training on product development diversification, packaging and labelling to add value to the existing products especially for betel leaf and fish products.

Activity 2.7. Support market linkages to facilitate enterprise development through participation in trade fairs, promotion via online platforms, cooperative, business counselling, stakeholders and market actors interaction.

Activity 2.8. Support the establishment/reformation of two local community cooperatives for sustainable access to finance and to ensure sustainability of project initiative.

Institutional capacity building

Project Title: Strengthening communities' livelihood and stewardship to conserve Otter in Karnali

Output 3. By 2026, government officials (municipalities, division forest office, park authorities) have improved capacity to monitor and control river aggregates extraction and destructive fishing practices, in order to better protect fish spawning sites and otter habitats

Activity 3.1. Provide training to government officials on otter and their prey base conservation, the consequences of destructive fishing practices and ensure standard processes of Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) are followed.

Activity 3.2. Develop a standard protocol and monitoring mechanism to regulate river aggregates extraction in Otter hotspot areas identified in Output 4 and advocate for endorsement by the local government.

Activity 3.3. Conduct training workshops on the Aquatic Animal Protection Act (2017) for 45 law enforcement agency (Nepal Police) officials on illegal activities related to aquatic biodiversity.

Activity 3.4. Support the Division Forest Office (Kailali and Bardia) and Bardia National Park to conduct regular river patrolling to control river aggregates extraction and destructive fishing practices.

Enabling conditions to scale and safeguard otters

Output 4. By 2026, endorsed otter conservation action plan is adopted by all relevant stakeholders underpinned by robust scientific research and evidence based approaches

Activity 4.1 Prepare otter identification manual in Nepali language and a smooth-coated otter monitoring protocol for use by all relevant stakeholders

Activity 4.2. Train 20 local community members on otter identification and monitoring protocols drafted by WWF

Activity 4.3. Conduct sign surveys and camera traps (at hotspot sites) for Otter occupancy along the potential habitat (rivers, wetlands and riparian zones) by otter experts mobilising trained CRSMGs members.

Activity 4.4. Engage 4 university graduates to conduct and publish research on Otter ecology- food habit and habitat use

Activity 4.5. Conduct threat assessment of otters using absolute threat rank system to inform the development of strategies for the species and its habitat protection.

Activity 4.6. Draft Smooth-coated Otter Conservation Action Plan of Nepal

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Activity 4.7. Engage Otter experts and DNPWC and DoFSC officials in reviewing draft plan, finalise plan as per DNPWC standard format and get government's endorsement of the Conservation action plan