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**United Nations Development Programme
Global Ecosystems & Biodiversity Programme**

UNDP- GEF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG) INITIATION PLAN

Country:	Global
Project Title:	Transboundary Cooperation for Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Conservation
Expected Output (s):	GEF Biodiversity Focal Objective 1: Improve Sustainability of Protected Areas Systems. Objective 2: Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into production landscapes, seascapes and sectors
Initiation Plan Start Date:	20 January 2014
Initiation Plan End Date:	19 August 2015

GEF Focal Area:	Biodiversity		
Programme Period:	2014-2017	Total allocated resources (under this award)	
Atlas Award ID:	00085504	GEF	\$70,000
Project ID:	00093146		
PIMS #	5413		
Mgt Arrangements	DIM	PAC meeting date 9 January 2015	

Approved by:

Stan Nkwain
Deputy Director, BPPS

20 January 2015
Date

A. Brief Description of Initiation Plan:

GEF assistance through UNDP is requested for the preparation a project proposal for a medium sized project entitled ***“Transboundary Cooperation for Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Conservation”***. This document will be submitted to the GEF following further information gathering and stakeholder consultation, and will be accompanied by co-financing letters in line with the PIF.

This project aims to strengthen conservation of snow leopard ecosystems and landscapes and ensure stability of global snow leopard population by addressing drivers of existing and emerging threats. The main global environmental problem that the project will contribute generally to is to halt the decline of snow leopard populations and to secure the snow leopard ecosystems in the 12 range countries (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Kingdom of Bhutan, People’s Republic of China, Republic of India, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Russian Federation, Republic of Tajikistan, and Republic of Uzbekistan). The project aims to facilitate advancement of national and regional actions that the 12 snow leopard range countries have agreed to under the aegis of the Global Snow Leopard Programme that was signed at the Snow Leopard Forum in Bishkek in 2013. The project is in line with existing national strategies and national priorities of the 12 range countries.

The project will specifically focus on the 5 countries in the Central Asian region. This focus speaks to the need for a regional initiative that includes all the range countries in the region that complements the national actions for enabling the transboundary conservation of snow leopards and their habitats. The Central Asian region faces several common environmental challenges including managing rivers and river basins, and fighting against wild life crime and trafficking, managing transboundary landscapes and ecosystems. These are inherently cross-border in nature and can only be tackled effectively through a cooperative effort at regional level. Although there were some initiatives for regional cooperation most have been focused on issues related to water and energy in particular regional use of water for production of hydropower or for irrigation. Unlike in the other regions, there has been currently limited experience in regional cooperation in the Central Asian region in the broader environmental management and in particular in joint management and conservation of transboundary landscapes. In addition, national regulation implementation and enforcement remain weak particularly in transboundary areas due to the limited administrative capacity while public and local community participation are presently less developed.

As the top predator in the high mountains in these countries, the snow leopard plays an important ecological role in controlling the populations and health of the wild ungulate species it preys on. Protecting the snow leopard, its prey species, and its habitat is critical to protecting broader eco-regions as well, such as the high altitude grasslands and wetlands in these range countries. As such it is an important indicator species of highly healthy mountain ecosystems. In addition, the Snow Leopard is an important cultural symbol. In all the range countries, the lifestyle, religious beliefs and traditional practices (traditional agriculture, marriage, governance) are inter-connected with the presence of snow leopard. Ecosystems inhabited by snow leopards are incredibly rich and diverse. These ecosystems also underpin agriculture (a mainstay of the majority of local communities who live in these areas).

The key threats that snow leopards and their ecosystems face are: (a) *Habitat fragmentation and degradation* especially due to large scale infrastructure development (roads, mining, hydropower development etc.) spurred by high population growth and countries’ striving for economic development; (b) *Increasing livestock and overgrazing* that occurs in several range countries, reducing

populations of ungulate species on which snow leopards prey, and sometimes leading to retaliatory killing by local communities when their livestock is killed by snow leopard; (c) *Illegal trade and poor law enforcement* due to remote landscapes undermine conservation efforts; (d) *Weak transboundary cooperation*. Political borders rarely coincide with entire ecosystems. This is particularly true of mountain regions where national boundaries commonly follow ridgelines and where snow leopards and mountain ungulates range on both sides and; (e) *Limited human and financial capacity for conservation and weak conservation policies and institutions*: All of the snow leopard range countries report they have insufficient numbers of trained conservation practitioners at all levels, from frontline PA staff to game managers and wildlife law enforcement personnel to research scientists. Moreover, and even where conservation staff levels may be adequate, such as in some scientific institutions, low funding limits their effectiveness.

Whilst there are several initiatives (at national and global levels) that address snow leopard conservation issues in individual range countries but these efforts are currently not adequately coordinated particularly at the level of transboundary landscapes to ensure a systematic and effective strategy to reduce pressures on the snow leopard and the snow leopard ecosystem. Likewise, efforts to design and implement inter-governmental strategies and programs for conservation of snow leopard and other endangered species in transboundary areas are very much limited. To kick start the implementation of the ambitious conservation plans that were presented by the snow leopard range countries at both national and global levels and to ensure long term sustainability of the activities, the project aims to put in place an effective and coherent strategy and process for coordinating national and global efforts, knowledge sharing and monitoring impacts to secure national and transboundary snow leopard landscapes and ecosystems particularly in the Central Asian region. The project will deliver the above mentioned aims of the project through three inter-related components:

Component 1: Knowledge generation and sharing for transboundary landscapes: This component will be aimed at building an increased understanding of the approaches and tools required to address key gaps for successful transboundary snow leopard landscape management and protection. This will include supporting identification of knowledge gaps related to designing, planning, implementing and monitoring transboundary landscape management plans, development of tools, methods and guidelines to advance the actions in snow leopard transboundary landscape conservation and management. Training materials and a training strategy will be developed on the use of the tools and approaches and will be disseminated through existing on-line platforms such as those created under initiatives such as NBSAP Forum and BES-Net. In addition, various enforcement mechanisms (regulations, monitoring, apprehending, and prosecution) from the range countries will be mapped and analysed to provide recommendations to improve wildlife crime management effectiveness through a multi-agency approach.

Component 2: Global and national monitoring framework: This component will support the development of an appropriate national and global monitoring framework focussed on monitoring mechanisms for the transboundary landscapes. Employing appropriate technologies such as GIS / Remote Sensing, landscapes will be mapped, efforts made to estimate snow leopard populations and together with comprehensive enumeration and analysis of various threats to form the key parameters and baseline of the proposed monitoring system. This will complement and coordinate with on-going efforts under the GSLEP to collaboratively develop common monitoring indicators and methods including plans to establish a mechanism for periodic data sharing.

Component 3: Ensuring sustainability of SL conservation: This component will support fostering an effective, and coherent strategy for partnership including establishing platforms for engagement with the private sector that ensure enhanced support and leverage increased resources for snow leopard conservation actions at national and global levels. It will also support the organisation of donor coordination and multi-stakeholder consultations (including range countries, bilateral and multilateral development agencies, private

sector) leading to developing a long term strategy and commitment to mobilize resources to implement GSLEP and NSLEP actions. In addition, guidelines on integrated financing strategies for implementing NSLEPs, considering resource mobilization from a range of sources including government budgetary resources, official donor assistance, private sector and other innovative funding mechanisms (e.g. PES, conservation bonds, biodiversity offsets etc.) will be developed and made available to range countries.

The PIF for the project has been developed by the UNDP, in consultation with the Global Tiger Initiative of the World Bank, representatives of the 12 range countries and the interim Global Snow Leopard Programme Secretariat. The project preparation stage will build on the currently on-going efforts under the Global Snow Leopard Programme such as the preparation of National Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection Programme and related processes. It is envisaged that the project will be implemented through involvement of a range of government, civil society and private sector entities as specified in the PIF.

B. Project preparation activities:

Activity 1: Identification and scoping of trans-boundary landscapes in Central Asia and rapid baseline assessment: This activity will work with partners in Global Snow Leopard Programme Secretariat, the GTI and with relevant range State government agencies to identify potential snow leopard conservation transboundary sites for piloting the transboundary snow leopard conservation efforts as mentioned in the PIF. This exercise should take cognizance of and complement efforts to identify snow leopard landscapes under the GSLEP (23 landscapes covering 500,000 sq km of snow leopard habitats, to be secured by 2020). The activity will ascertain the characteristics of the selected landscape (at macro and micro levels), in terms of ecological, socio-economics and current conservation approaches based on which strengths and gaps will be identified and measures to enhance conservation status (e.g. improving connectivity and other habitat improvements) are recommended. In addition, this activity will also assess the baseline activities including key baseline projects in the range countries (and those operating at the regional level - transboundary) that will serve as the baseline for the project, upon which project interventions will be built on. As part of the situational analysis this activity will also ascertain various approaches and tools currently existing for enhancing transboundary snow leopard landscape management and protection (e.g. habitat assessment, identification of habitat needs, conservation measures required, capacity requirements, regional / national / local level actions and partners etc.). In addition, assessments of the current monitoring frameworks at global and national levels will be carried out including the on-going collaborative efforts under the Global Snow Leopard Programme to develop common monitoring indicators and methods including plans to establish a mechanism for periodic data sharing. The key output will be a detailed situational analysis that documents all the above together with baseline scenario and projects mapped in the transboundary landscapes that will be considered together with a description of the transboundary landscape selected together with the rationale / criteria used to select. In addition this activity will also secure the necessary commitment and co-financing from the concerned range countries and partners.

Activity 2: Engaging key actors in and conducting consultations: This second activity will focus on engaging with and holding consultations with several stakeholder groups including:

- Snow leopard range States – these countries have signed up to the International Agreement to conserve snow leopard and its ecosystems under the Bishkek process in 2013.
- Global Tiger Initiative (GTI) / World Bank – the GTI is currently assisting the 12 range countries and the Working Secretariat in driving the global Snow Leopard conservation agenda through planning, coordination and facilitating communications

- Global Snow Leopard Conservation Programme Working Secretariat – as part of the Bishkek process, there is currently an interim secretariat based at the Forum host country (Kyrgyzstan).
- Partners – several partners are involved (e.g. WWF, SNT, WCS, SLC, NABU, WildCRU, US-AID, INTERPOL, CITES, TRAFFIC etc.) in supporting actions under the GSLEP and NSLEPs

The nature of these engagements will differ from one stakeholder group to the other. For reasons of efficiency and constrained by limited resources, wherever possible such consultation will be carried out by piggy-backing on planned events organized by the GSLEP Secretariat and as part of other international process (e.g. CBD related meetings). The key output of the activity will be “broad buy-in and support from all stakeholders for the project design and interventions for the success of the project ensured”.

Activity 3: Feasibility Analysis, Project Strategy and Budget: Based on the above analysis and detailed information generated following consultations with the key stakeholders, the project strategy will be prepared. Key outputs under this activity include: (i) detailed project strategy, including incremental cost analysis, cost-effectiveness, and risks; (ii) detailed budget; (iii) detailed monitoring and evaluation plan; (iv) a sound replication strategy; (v) a financing plan, including co-financing commitments for all project outputs and activities. Finalization of project results framework: The results framework for the project will be refined with appropriate objective-level and outcome-level quantitative and qualitative SMART indicators, and end-of-project targets. Special attention will be given to include socio-economic and gender sensitive indicators. Definition of monitoring and evaluation (M&E): A detailed M&E work plan will be developed, including clear identification of responsibilities and accountabilities, as well as an appropriate M&E budget. The plan will be based on the standard template provided in the UNDP-GEF project document template that reflects the mandatory requirements of GEF M&E Policy. The organisational structure governing the project will be decided during the preparatory stage. This will include identification of the project board and project management unit. The process will confirm the institutional arrangements for project implementation including the role of different agencies and partners from government, civil society and the private sector.

Management Arrangements

The provisional governance structure is as follows:

- *Project advisory board:* UNDP-GEF, GTI, Global Snow Leopard Programme and GEF Secretariat
- *Project management unit:* UNDP-GEF New York and relevant UNDP Country Offices

The project preparatory stage will ensure full participation of key government representatives and other stakeholders as described earlier and ensure development of the project results framework and agreement on the project objectives and outcomes. During the preparation stage, key stakeholders will be consulted for financial planning and co-financing opportunities.

The project preparatory stage will prepare a detailed multi-year budget following the standard template provided in the UNDP-GEF project document template that reflects the mandatory requirements of the GEF M&E Policy. Explore multilateral and bilateral co-financing opportunities. The project preparatory activities will also include a series of consultations with partners to develop a coherent approach and strategy for the project including coordination with the national and global efforts under the GSLEP.

C. Total Budget and Work Plan:

Award ID:	tbc
Project ID:	tbc
Award Title:	Global Snow Leopard Conservation
Business Unit:	UNDP1
Project Title:	Transboundary Cooperation for Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Conservation
PIMS #:	5413
Implementing Partner (Executing Agency)	UNDP

GEF Outcome/Atlas Activity	Responsible Party/	Fund ID	Donor Name	Atlas Budgetary Account Code	ATLAS Budget Description	Amount US\$
Activity 1 Project preparation grant to finalize the UNDP-GEF project document for project “Transboundary Cooperation for Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Conservation”	UNDP	62000	GEF TRUSTEE	71300	Local Consultants	10,000
				71200	International Consultants	30,000
				71600	Travel	15,000
				75700	Workshops and meetings	11,000
				74500	Miscellaneous	4,000
					PROJECT TOTAL	70,000

BUDGET NOTES¹

Note	Items	person weeks	Budget (\$)	Explanation
1	Local consultant: Biodiversity Conservation Specialist	10	10,000	To cover costs of a Biodiversity Conservation Specialist recruited locally in the transboundary area selected (See Annex 2 for detailed description of tasks)
2	International consultants: International Biodiversity Conservation Specialist / GEF Project Development Expert	10	30,000	To cover consultants’ time in leading the MSP project preparation process. See Annex 2 for detailed description of tasks.
3	Travel	-	15,000	To cover travel costs of staff, consultants and meeting participants including tickets and DSA
4	Workshops and meetings	-	11,000	To cover the cost of organizing stakeholder consultations and meetings
5	Miscellaneous	-	4,000	To cover unforeseen costs associated with organizing meetings, bank charges, and other sundry expenses
Total PPG Budget			70,000	

¹ Indicative budget; actual disbursements will reflect the broader PPG funding needs as outlined in the PPG request.

Annex 1: GEF CEO PIF and PPG approval letter



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

Naoko Ishii
CEO and Chairperson

June 12, 2014

Ms. Adriana Dinu
GEF Executive Coordinator
United Nations Development Programme
One United Nations Plaza
304 East 45th St.
FF Bldg., 10th floor
New York, NY 10017

Dear Ms. Dinu:

I am pleased to inform you that I have approved the medium-sized project concept detailed below. I have also approved your request for project preparation grant.

Decision Sought:	Project Identification Form (PIF) and Project Preparation Grant (PPG) Approval
GEFSEC ID:	5886
Agency(ies):	UNDP
Agency ID:	5413 (UNDP)
Focal Area:	Biodiversity
Project Type:	Medium Size Project
Country(ies):	Global
Name of Project:	Transboundary Cooperation for Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Conservation
Indicative GEF Project Grant:	\$1,000,000
Indicative Agency Fee:	\$95,000
PPG Grant:	\$70,000
PPG Agency Fee:	\$6,650
Funding Source:	GEF Trust Fund

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Sincerely,



For Naoko Ishii

Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson

Attachment: GEFSEC Project Review Document
Copy to: Country Operational Focal Point, GEF Agencies, STAP, Trustee

Annex 2: Terms of Reference for Consultants Financed by the Initiation Plan

CONSULTANT #1

Type of Consultant: International

Position / Titles: International Biodiversity Conservation Specialist / GEF Project Development Expert

Dollar amount per person week: 3,000

Person weeks needed to carry out the task: 10

Tasks to be performed:

The overall objective of the consultant is to prepare the medium-size Project Document and GEF CEO Endorsement Request Form² for project “**Transboundary Cooperation for Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Conservation**” for approval by the Global Environment Facility. The **GEF Project Development Expert** will take the lead in collaboration with the UNDP, key stakeholders, implementing and executing agencies in designing the project document.

The Key duties and responsibilities are:

- Supporting UNDP in providing technical advice, guidance on GEF requirements and inputs to the formulation process for the “**Transboundary Cooperation for Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Conservation**”;
- Provide strategic guidance to UNDP to ensure that all the necessary elements are covered in sufficient details to meet GEF approval of the CEO Endorsement;
- Working together with the local consultants and lead completion of the UNDP Project Document and CEO Endorsement, drafting sections, providing review comments/inputs and finalising the documents;
- Review the official comments from the UNDP, STAP, GEF and others, and assist in preparation of responses;
- Conduct feasibility analysis of different options for the implementation of project activities and project governance.
- Ensure action points from the UNDP environmental and social screening process (ESSP) for the PIF stage are fully implemented during the PPG.
- Conduct the full UNDP ESSP and compile a summary report indicating results of the PPG investigation and future actions.
- Define and validate the project outcomes, outputs, and activities based on a logical framework analysis and baseline gathered the PPG team.
- Design the project Monitoring and Evaluation system and provide guidance and orientation to the project implementation unit on defining appropriate indicators and targets to track project progress and effectiveness.
- Develop the results framework of the project with SMART indicators, baseline and targets with specific information for the selected transboundary landscape³ (and indirect replication to all snow leopard landscapes in the 12 range states)
- Completion of the relevant GEF Biodiversity Tracking Tool with inputs from the local consultants and national partners

² Templates may be subject to change, the person responsible for this consolidation and drafting will be required to obtain guidance by the UNDP/GEF Regional Technical Advisor on applicable formats and templates and ensure that his/her work is compliant with UNDP/GEF and any UNDP CO requirements

³ Based on the PPG assessment and consultants, different categories of activities of the project (e.g. mapping, monitoring, enforcement mechanisms, trainings etc.) may require piloting in different transboundary landscapes. This will be determined and appropriate recommendations made.

- Compile the final baseline/situational analysis for the project based on the inputs from project consultants and contractual service providers and in close cooperation with the key national stakeholders. This will include a precise definition of baseline projects, activities, budgets, goals, and co-financing links to GEF outcomes; definition of GEF incremental value per outcome and output; and development of incremental cost matrices, describing and evaluating (costing) any alternative means of achieving the goals of the project.
- Perform final reviews of the required project documentation including quality control of outputs produced by the local consultants
- Compile response to GEF Secretariat's, council and STAP review comments and make necessary revisions to the documents

The key deliverable of the **GEF Project Development Expert** will be a final comprehensive project document in both GEF and UNDP formats and the CEO Approval Request Document, which need to be technically cleared by the UNDP Regional Technical Adviser for Biodiversity and Ecosystems.

Qualifications:

- Minimum 10 years professional experience in GEF Project related work with specialised skills in programme/project formulation and project M&E.
- Proven record of projects developed under Biodiversity Focal Area and approved by GEF
- Experience in working with government institutions as well as civil society/private organizations
- Master's or equivalent degree in natural or environmental sciences or other related to the expertise areas.

CONSULTANT #2

Type of Consultant: Local

Position / Titles: Biodiversity Conservation Expert

Dollar amount per person week: 1,000

Person weeks needed to carry out the task: 10

Tasks to be performed:

The overall objective of the Biodiversity Conservation Expert is to ensure that all required information for the transboundary landscapes (including leading selection process) are collated and made available so that it meets the criteria briefly described in the PIF and as may be described by the RTA concerned and the Project Advisory Board. The national expert will supply the technical expertise necessary and motivation for conservation site managers to achieve the goals of this project. The expert will also ensure smooth coordination with government conservation agencies and all relevant national, regional and international partners during the implementation period of this Initiation Plan.

The key duties and responsibilities of this project are:

- Based on consultations with key national and regional conservation agencies in the Central Asian region and through independent research, identify a list of project interventions necessary under different categories of capacity building, effective transboundary collaboration, data and other know-how gaps and so on.
- Support carrying out baseline assessment of conservation actions in general and snow leopard conservation related efforts (national and regional) across the 5 Central Asian countries, including identifying and costing of such baseline investments.

- Assist with drawing up of action plan to address the gaps identified above.
- Identify, scope transboundary sites that will serve as pilots for the project and then collect and collate data with regards all relevant parameters (e.g. status, biodiversity assessment, socio-economics, conservation needs and challenges etc.).
- Ascertain capacity and other needs of key national and local stakeholders and recommend ways to address them.
- Work together with international consultant to fulfill the broader goals of the project leading to the finalization of the GEF and UNDP documents.
- Identify key stakeholders and coordinate with all stakeholders at national and regional levels for the successful completion of the PPG/IP activities including where necessary responsible for organizing stakeholder consultations

Qualifications:

- 5 years of experience in biodiversity conservation and protected area management
- Good relationships with key people in government and government conservation agencies.
- Knowledge of and understanding of various elements of snow leopard ecosystems in the region
- Relevant advanced degree in biodiversity, environmental science, PA Management or similar
- Fluency in written and spoken Russian necessary