

This report will be made public. If it contains confidential or sensitive information, please also provide a revised report for sharing with the public.

Section I. Project Information	
<b>Project Title:</b> Securing the future of Tigers: Tigers beyond protected area networks	
<b>Grantee Organisation:</b> Zoological Society of London-Nepal Office	
<b>Location of project:</b> Adjoining forests and communities towards east of Parsa National Park <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Janagriti Community Forest, Nijgadh Municipality-5, Bara, Nepal</li> <li>2. Janasrijanshil Community Forest, Nijgadh Municipality 6, 7, Bara, Nepal</li> <li>3. Bagh Bhairav Community Forest, Nijgadh Municipality-4, Bara, Nepal</li> </ol>	
<b>Size of project area (if appropriate):</b> 2,071 ha of CFUG for community works and approx. 500 sq.km. for survey	<b>No of tigers and / or Amur leopards in project area, giving evidence &amp; source:</b> 18 in PNP and 1 tiger camera trapped towards east of PNP towards
<b>Partners:</b> <i>(Please give details of partners, including communities, academic institutions etc. for this project.</i> <p><b>Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC)</b></p> <p>DNPWC is the main government authority providing oversight for conservation and management of wildlife in Nepal. It is responsible for the overall management of Nepal's PAs including the buffer zones. ZSL has a working MoU with DNPWC since 2014 renewed for five years in 2019 and has a very good professional relationship. Through DNPWC it also has a close working relationship with the PA managers at PNP. The DNPWC, through Programme Coordination Committee (PCC) facilitates implementation of the project activities and is responsible for overall monitoring and evaluation of the project. This is based on a monitoring mechanism established under the project. The proposed project has been formulated under the guidance of DNPWC and the required permission has been obtained. The project will help DNPWC gain valuable lessons to improve significant tiger habitat and mitigate HTC in other tiger-bearing PAs of Nepal.</p> <p><b>Divisional Forest Office (DFO) Bara</b></p> <p>DFO Bara is the concerned authority responsible for the protection and management of forest in the project location. It operates under the state ministry for trade, industry and environment and closely coordinates re the welfare of wildlife with the DNPWC/PNP. The DFO also works in close coordination with the communities in protecting the forest within the project site and managing it sustainably, while also conserving its biodiversity. ZSL has previously worked with DFOs across its project sites in Nepal and initiated this project through inception meeting. The DFO continues to support engagement with communities and stakeholders across the project site, including the community forestry user groups. The DFO forms part of monitoring and evaluation team mentioned earlier under the project.</p>	

**Mithila Wildlife Trust (MWT)**

MWT is non-profit non-governmental organisation established by a group of committed professional nature lovers. Social workers and volunteers in 2069 BS (2013 AD) registered with District Administration Office, Dhanusha, Nepal and affiliated with Social Welfare Council, Kathmandu, Nepal. MWT has been organizing and strengthening capacities of local volunteers for planning, implementing and monitoring social development programs thereby facilitating their own and community's welfare through sustainable and wise use of natural resources. The trust has its office at Mithila Bihari Municipality-3 (Mithileshwor) Dhanusha, Province 2, Nepal.

**Community Forests Users Groups (CFUGs)**

Community forests have existed in their modern form in Nepal since 1987. Community forest cover nearly 30 percent of the total forest area of the country. More than 19,361 user groups are involved in community forestry, with more than two million households benefitting from their management of 1.8 million hectares of community forests. ZSL has previously worked with CFUGs. The CFUGs will help support community engagement and ensure sustainability of the project.

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**Actual start date of project:** 1 February 2020

**Reporting period:** 1 February 2020 – 31 July 2020

**Section II. Project Progress**

**Summary of progress for the first 6 months:** *(please provide a summary for use in our communication materials)*

With an aim to secure the growing tiger population in Parsa National Park (PNP) and their movement beyond PNP, an inception meeting was conducted among the representatives of District Forest Office (DFO) Bara, PNP staff, CFUGs members for effective implementation of project activities and their support for project success. For habitat assessment and survey, grids were designed, vegetation plots were identified, and Landsat images were prepared to assess the change in habitat along the project sites. The images prepared will be later verified via field observations within this project duration. Likewise, secondary data have been collected from all project sites to acquire preliminary information of households and communities and a set of questionnaire has been designed to carry out the social survey along the three CFUG communities of the landscape to collect information about socio-economic conditions of the local communities, human-wildlife conflict status and map the conflict prone zones, their knowledge and attitude towards tiger conservation. Of the planned awareness raising activities, three schools were identified to set up three tiger conservation champion clubs and flyers and information board carrying messages about the importance of tiger conservation were produced and are ready to be distributed to wider public and erected in vulnerable communities along

the tiger movement landscape. The global pandemic - COVID 19 and government enforcing lockdown to contain the pandemic since the first case identified in March 2020 in Nepal has become the main obstacle to carry out the project activities as per our work planning.

**Details of activities and results to date:** *(Please give details of progress made towards the objectives & outputs of your Logframe, and activities included in your Workplan. Please add any relevant charts, maps and images.*

The project was given approval through PCC at the DNPWC. Prior to the implementation of the project activities, an inception meeting was conducted among the staff of DFO Bara including district forest officer, PNP staff, members of CFUGs, and local communities to inform and explain the project objectives, activities and the workplan in detail. The inception meeting has laid the foundation to start the activities and gain support for project success.

### **1.1 Conduct rapid wildlife and habitat assessment between the eastern border of Parsa National Park and Bagmati River.**

The first phase of rapid wildlife and habitat survey was planned to conduct east of PNP to determine habitat utilization by tiger in the month of March and April as per the work plan. Later, in consultations with DNPWC, DFO and local CFUGs and prevailing Covid19 scenario, it was concluded to carry out both the assessment and camera traps deployment for tiger survey in the month of November and December.

Planning for this has continued; 15km X 15km grids were designed for occupancy survey in the project sites following the National Tiger and Prey Base Monitoring Protocol 2017 (DNPWC, 2017). Based on the result of occupancy survey camera traps will be deployed on hotspot areas of tiger and its prey base. Likewise, locations for the vegetation survey have been identified and the survey will be carried out during occupancy survey and Landsat images of two different years were assessed which will be verified through field survey. With revised plan, orientation trainings to field surveyors will be provided starting in the month of October. (The maps along with the grid designs, and a revised workplan are attached as a supplementary document along with this technical report).

### **2.1 Conduct social surveys to identify vulnerable communities and map Human-Wildlife conflict zone.**

Altogether there are 1744 households (HHs) in three CFUGs. Of the 1744 HHs, almost 20 % of the total households belong to indigenous communities and 11% belong to disadvantaged, marginalised and scheduled caste groups and are the family most vulnerable to wildlife conflicts. Most of them residing close to forests to some extent are dependent on forest resources. Structured questionnaires have been designed to carry out the survey in these vulnerable communities with the view to collect information about socio-economic conditions of the local communities, human-wildlife conflict status, map the conflict prone zones, their knowledge and attitude towards tiger conservation. This will further help to assess the dependency of vulnerable communities on forest resources and locations used for resource extraction. Primary data of vulnerable households, for the revised work plan, will be collected in the month of October and November.

### **2.2 Conduct awareness raising programmes for schools and communities**

A consultation meeting was conducted with representatives from local government, CFUGs, Divisional Forest Office and community members to organize the three workshops addressing the needs of tiger conservation and its importance to a healthy ecosystem. Other issues planned to discuss are, impacts of forest degradation and habitat fragmentation towards tiger movement, and associated risks and conflicts along the project location (Please refer to the revised plan attached along with this technical report). 500 flyers clearing up information on tiger and its habitats conservation, tiger conservation issues and laws, tiger conservation long term-benefits and ways to minimize human tiger conflict has been designed, printed and ready to be distributed. These flyers will be distributed to the wider public in schools and communities through workshop, school awareness raising programs and community meetings. Likewise, three hoarding/information boards have been designed and finalized for installation in the month of September along the vulnerable habitat of tigers. (The electronic copy of flyers and hoarding board message has been attached as a supplementary document along with this technical report)

To conduct school programmes and set up of the three tiger conservation champion clubs, three school (Shree Sharbajanik Madhayamik Vidyalaya, Gaurishankar Madhayamik Vidyalaya and Janakalyan Aadharbhut Vidyalaya) nearly with a total of 2500 students, one each in CFUG has been identified. During this whole reporting period, all schools have been closed due to COVID and the school programs will be carried out once they are allowed to open.

In order to conduct the survey, we have already sub-contracted our in-country conservation partner organisation for province no. 2 MWT, who are familiar to the landscape. MWT will start the household survey and community and awareness raising programs according to the revised plan.

**Give details of any obstacles to success that the project has encountered over the last 6 months.**

*(Please provide detailed examples, explain what impact these will have on the project results and the changes to the budget and timetable of project activities)*

The COVID-19 pandemic has become the obstacle to carry out the project activities as per the workplan. The outbreak was first identified in March 2020 in Nepal. Since then, the pandemic is accelerating across the country till date. The government has announced to enforce strict lockdown with the rise in cases of COVID-19 infections across the country from last 5 months. Almost all of our project activities require public engagement which need large gatherings and poses high risk of COVID-19 spread. Therefore, we are not able to execute our project activities as per the time plan submitted initially. We have designed a new workplan to implement the project activities in the field and hoping that lockdown will ease in coming months.

**Budget: Is the spend on target? If not, please give details and provide an updated budget sheet.**

Budget sheet is provided.

**Media:** Please provide a list of recent publications and media both local and national which mentions the work funded by this project and/or mentions WildCats Conservation Alliance

**N/A**

WildCats Conservation Alliance asks for at least 5 relevant high-resolution jpeg files of images of the project activities during this time period.

Please find the supplementary documents attached.