Asia 16-072

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US Agency for International Development (USAID)
Asia Bureau Regional

AMENDMENT 2 TO INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EXAMINATION

PROGRAM/ACTIVITY DATA:

Cooperative Agreement:	Leader with Associates Award to the World Wildlife Fund
Countries:	Central Asian Republics, Mongolia, Nepal, India, China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bhutan
Program:	Conservation and Adaptation in Asia's High Mountain Landscapes and Communities
Time Period:	September 2012-September 2017
Funding begins:	FY 2011
Funding ends:	FY 2017
LOP Amounts:	$8,000,000

IEE prepared by: Mary Melnyk, Environment Officer, Asia and Middle East Bureaus

Mary Melnyk Date 6/10/2016

Date: 06/08/2016

IEE Amendment (Y/N): Y **DCN of Original:** Asia and Middle East 12-168 and AMD1 Asia 14-142

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION RECOMMENDED: (Place X where applicable)

Categorical Exclusion:	X	Negative Determination:	X
Positive Determination:		Deferral:	

ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS: (Place X where applicable)

CONDITIONS	X	PVO/NGO:	

PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT:

The purpose of this amendment is, as required by the original IEE and its amendment, to expand the examination to newly proposed Conservation and Adaptation in Asia's High Mountain (AHM) Landscapes and Communities activities

BACKGROUND:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) aims to catalyze an alliance that covers the majority of the Asia range of snow leopards from Afghanistan to Mongolia to build momentum for snow leopard conservation and to improve the adaptive capabilities and lives of some of the world's most remote communities in the high mountains of Asia. These communities are dependent on glaciers for water directly and their resource management supports the overall water quantity and quality for river basins. Critical to this integration is a focus on landscapes: landscapes that include the snow leopard's habitat and adjacent communities. Both people and wildlife are at risk to climate change. Glacier retreat impacts environmental flows that play a significant role in the health of high mountain ecosystems. Recognizing how this web of life is connected not only within the biological world, but also to the physical world will contribute to the development of holistic approaches that have at their heart the conservation of the region's water supplies. Therefore, this program aims to have the additional co-benefit of protecting the headwaters of Asia's major rivers in response to glacier melt.

Snow leopard landscapes include large and critical tracts of snow packs and glaciers and forests—some of the last forests in Asia—and store over three times the amount of carbon as non-snow leopard landscapes in Asia. A majority of the landscapes lie in the 25 biodiversity hotspots of the world. This program will build on past and on-going USAID-funded programs and projects in selected countries and will seek to foster consistent, coordinated and continuous efforts by various stakeholders to protect habitats and increase population of snow leopards as well as to provide benefits to local communities.

The program will focus on targeted, policies, transnational cooperation across the snow leopard range states with limited site-based efforts in key areas. The program will also foster linkages to the private sector that can assist with innovative enterprises and/or technologies for adaptation and conservation and as well as linkages among governmental and non-governmental organizations across the range states.

The planned overall outcomes of this program are:

- The beginnings of a regional alliance with governments, non-governmental organizations and communities for snow leopard conservation across the high mountains of Asia.
- The successful implementation of environmentally and economically-resilient development for high mountain communities.
- The conservation of critical headwater landscapes for Asia's important rivers.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

This IEE evaluates new activities planned under Conservation and Adaptation in AHM Landscapes and Communities in Pakistan, Bhutan, and Nepal that include (See also the AHM Small Scale Infrastructure Projects Table below):

1. Implement climate-smart watershed management plans developed through a participatory process in Project Year 3 for two small river basins in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. In order to improve water security at these sites, demonstration activities will likely include introduction of improved water storage methods, such as clean water storage tanks and ponds, as insurance against spring droughts. For improved land management, methods for reducing riverbank erosion and subsequent loss of agricultural lands will be introduced e.g., reinforcing river banks with densely planted sea buckthorn, willow shrubs, and multiple rows of live brushwood spurs, and some rip-rap work to protect new plantings. For the river bank reinforcement, there will be approximately 50 feet of irrigation canal along a river bank that will need repair and then the adjacent river bank will be reinforced with rocks.
2. Repair two bridges on major trails in the western highland area of Bhutan's Wangchuck Centennial National Park (WCNP). These bridge repairs in Sephu Geog will ensure that yak herders can continue their full seasonal migration between summer and winter pastures. They will also be used by rangers patrolling the park, caterpillar fungus collectors who migrate to the area in June, and tourist trekking groups. There will be two types of trail repairs: in muddy areas neat rows of paving stones will be installed; and in areas where landslides have eliminated the trail pick axes and shovels will be used to scratch out a new trail across the slide area. For bridge repairs, rotten planks will be stripped off, trees cut down and sawn it into planks, then planks will be carried by porters to the bridge in need of repair and laid in place. Rehabilitated areas will be re-designed so that they can withstand next slide; and trees that have been cut will be replanted at a ratio of 1:10 and maintained so that they grow properly to serve as erosion and slide protection.
3. Work with the local communities and herders in the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA) of Nepal to promote sustainable grazing and pastureland improvement initiatives to maintain healthy pasture ecosystems. These pasture management initiatives will include promoting rotational grazing; invasive species control; water source protection and improvement; improved predator-proof corrals; and improvement in pasture access facilities, such as trail improvements, that result in increased rotation of pastures and improved quality of all local pasture lands.

AHM Small Scale Infrastructure Projects Table			
Location	**Activity Description**	**Examples of Potential Impacts**	**Recommended Threshold Determination**
Pakistan, Gilgit	Storage tanks (concrete) to capture drinking water situated above ground of concrete	Habitat disturbance, increased erosion, contaminated water supply, worker safety	Negative determination with conditions
Pakistan, Gilgit	Water diverted from an existing irrigation canal to fill pond for livestock consumption	Reduced downstream water supply, impaired water quality, habitat disturbance, worker safety	Negative determination with conditions
Pakistan, Gilgit	Irrigation canal is alongside a river bank, they want to reinforce the river bank so that the irrigation canal does not wash away during summer river water level rise.	Increased erosion, impaired water quality, worker safety	Negative determination with conditions
Bhutan, WCP	Changing logs on foot bridge	Habitat disturbance, increased erosion, worker safety	Negative determination with conditions
Bhutan, WCP	Repairing foot trails across landslide area	Habitat disturbance, increased erosion, worker safety	Negative determination with conditions
Nepal, KCA	Enhancing existing trail across landslide	Habitat disturbance, increased erosion, worker safety	Negative determination with conditions
Nepal, KCA	Placing flat walking rocks on muddy trails to enhance safety	Habitat disturbance, increased erosion, worker safety	Negative determination with conditions

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDED THRESHOLD DECISION:

A Negative Determination with Conditions, pursuant to 22 CFR 216.3(a)(3) is recommended for all the new Conservation and Adaptation in AHM Landscapes and Communities activities described above. The conditions of the negative determination are:

1. Prior to initiating the activities, the implementing partner will prepare Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plans (EMMP) in the format provided in Annex 1. The Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) will approve the EMMPs prior to implementation.
2. EMMPs will be captured in annual work plans, and therefore budgeted for and reviewed for adequacy at least annually.
3. The AOR, and whenever feasible a cognizant Mission Environmental Officer (MEO), will be responsible for monitoring compliance of activities by means of desktop reviews and field inspections.
4. If an individual activity is found to pose significant adverse environmental effects that have not been identified and addressed in the approved EMMPs, new EMMPs will be developed to include environmental safeguards for such effects and then be approved.
5. If at any time the project is found to be out of compliance with the IEE, the AOR will immediately notify the Asia Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO).
6. Implementing partners will report on environmental compliance requirements as part of their routine project reporting to USAID.
7. A summary report of Mission's compliance relative to this IEE will be sent to the AOR on an annual basis, normally in connection with preparation of the Bureau's annual environmental compliance report required under ADS 203.3.8.5 and 204.3.3.
8. New Conservation and Adaptation project activities, not described in this amendment, will require additional IEE amendments.

APPROVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION RECOMMENDED:

By signing below, you approve the Amended IEE for Conservation and Adaptation in AHM Landscapes and Communities.

Asia/TS Director/Acting: _____ Date 6/13/2016
Monique Moslof

DECISION OF THE ASIA BUREAU ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER:

Asia Bureau Environment Officer: _____ Date June 15, 2016
William Gibson

ANNEX 1

Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan for New Conservation and Adaptation in AHM Landscapes and Communities Activities

Activity	Identified Environmental Aspects or Impacts	Mitigation Measure(s)	Monitoring Indicator(s)	Monitoring and Reporting Frequency	Party(ies) Responsible
Planning and Design (if applicable)					
	•	•	•		
	•	•	•		
Mobilization (if applicable)					
	•	•	•		
	•	•	•		
Sourcing of Material (if applicable)					
	•	•	•		
	•	•	•		
Rehabilitation works (if applicable)					
	•	•	•		
	•	•	•		
Construction Demobilization (if applicable)					
	•	•	•		
	•	•	•		
Testing, Operation, and Maintenance (if applicable)					
	•	•	•		
	•	•	•		

Prepared by:_____

Date:_____