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Rich Biodiversity and Prosperous Communities



Funded by the UK Government through Darwin Initiative.



**SCALING CONSERVATION  
OF HIMALAYAN  
PLANTS AND FUNGI  
THROUGH SUSTAINABLE TRADE**



UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN



OXFORD MARTIN SCHOOL



**Nepal's alpine Himalayan forests and rangelands are exceptional global biodiversity hotspots, home to keystone species, including multiple plants and fungi. Over 40 key NTFPs are harvested and traded internationally, providing critical contributions to the incomes of the rural poor.**

## PROJECT DURATION

**Start:** April 2024  
**End:** March 2029

# PROJECT SUMMARY

Nepal's alpine Himalayan forests and rangelands are exceptional global biodiversity hotspots, home to keystone species, including multiple plants and fungi. Over 40 key NTFPs are harvested and traded internationally, providing critical contributions to the incomes of the rural poor.

Local livelihoods and biodiversity in these areas are threatened by wild plant and fungi overharvesting, climate change, illegal trade and inequitable supply chains. This has an impact across the region.

There are significant opportunities to improve both sustainability and trade of wild-harvested forest products, scaling up successful pilots in Nepal, linking to major markets (including in India, China, Europe).

This project will improve local livelihoods, elevate traditional knowledge, and strengthen national and regional approaches to sustainable biodiversity-based trade, building on successful pilot projects in the Western Himalayas of Nepal.

Aligning with national policies and supporting international commitment (e.g. CBD, CITES and SDGs), the project will address threats to biodiversity, such as pre-mature and overharvesting and illegal trade, while improving local livelihoods and promoting equitable supply chains.

By focusing on sustainable trade, the project contributes to the conservation of keystone species and their habitats, ensuring long-term benefits for both people and nature.

# MAJOR ACTIVITIES

- Train local resource persons, harvesters, producer companies, and CSOs on sustainable resource management, good business practices, governance, and FairWild Standard.
- Implement harvester's registration systems; Engage harvesters towards voluntary certification; Establish green enterprises; Enhance sustainable harvesting, processing and trade of NTFPs.
- Develop resource inventory toolkit for high altitude species; Conduct participatory resource assessments; Improve productivity of high valued NTFPS; Update and/or develop operational management plans of CFUGS.
- Co-develop project influence plan; Analyse trade and value chains of NTFPS; Implement pilot traceability systems; Develop sustainability plan for NTFP value chains; Organize matchmaking events with businesses, and promote sustainable trade agreements.
- Review policy and regulatory frameworks and identify gaps; Develop policy briefs; Facilitate for regional multi-stakeholder forums; Document case studies.

# EXPECTED OUTCOME

Floral and fungal diversity in 10 mountainous Himalayan districts is conserved through sustainable, traceable and equitable trade, based on empowered and resilient communities, strengthened policies and responsible value chains.

## IMPACTS ON POVERTY AND LIVELIHOODS IN HARVESTING AREAS

- 20,000 harvesters benefit from trainings; and 10,000 (at least 40% women) improve their income and food security through sustainable trade in wild plant and fungi ingredients
- 3,600 CFUG members participate in wild harvesting improvement projects on the pathway to the voluntary certification. 20 sustainable livelihood enterprises benefit from technology upgrades at local level.
- Operational plans of 60 CFUGs are updated/developed to include the sustainable management, regenerative practices, community monitoring; guidance on plans update rolled-out to all target CFUGS.
- Benefits will reach ten districts in Nepal, identified as most commercially important for sourcing and trade in target species.

## IMPACTS ON NATURAL RESOURCES

- Stock assessment of high-value Himalayan wild plants and fungi published covering about 1.5 million ha forests and meadows, as the basis for resource management.
- Over 100,000 ha of high-altitude Himalaya are sustainably managed through participatory land and species management and monitoring approaches.
- The management practices and stock assessment will cover NTFP species, which are under pressure from commercial harvesting in target community forests: *Jatamansi-Nardostachys jatamansi*, *Kutki-Neopicrorhiza scrophulariiflora*, *Setochini-Polygonatum* spp., *Banlasun/Kaloli-Fritillaria cirrhosa*, *Atis-Delphinium himalayae*, *Satuwa-Paris polyphylla*, *Sugandhawal-Valeriana jatamansi*, *Guchi chyau-Morchella esculenta*, *Padamchal-Rheum australe*, *Panchaule-Dactylorhiza hatagirea*, *Yarsagumba-Ophiocordyceps sinensis*.
- Enable CFUGs to apply their proven natural resource management capacity to conserve stocks of these species.

## IMPACTS ON POLICY AND ENABLING SYSTEMS

- Pilot traceability system provides data on origins, legality, sustainability along the critical points.
- At least 50 companies from markets in China, India, Europe and US attend matchmaking events with producer enterprises and exporters, fostering the development of trading agreements including price premiums.
- An increase in the volume of internationally traded sustainable Himalayan wild NTFP products (flora and fungi) complying with CITES requirements, and/or provisions of FairWild Standard.
- Relevant policies and legal frameworks of countries along the value chains reflect the importance of sustainable, traceable, equitable trade.

