Nepal Climate Initiative

THINK TANK BUSINESS PLAN

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PART I

Vision, Mission, Strategic Goals and Services/Products

1.1 Vision

"Building knowledge and capacity to facilitate improved in-country and country-led responses to climate change in Nepal".

1.2 Mission

"Through research, knowledge- and capacity-building initiatives, we strive to empower stakeholders at all levels to efficiently access and utilize climate finance, and ultimately ensure enhanced climate action, resilient communities and ecosystems, reduced climate risks, swift response to climate impacts and promotion of sustainable development in Nepal".

STRATEGIC GOALS	PRODUCTS
Strategic Goal 1: Develop and foster in-house and intergenerational research, knowledge, and capacity on climate change and climate finance	**Product 1.1:** Continuously build in-house knowledge and produce cutting-edge insights on climate change, with a focus on facilitating access to climate finance in Nepal, through focused research and by staying abreast of evolving developments and discourse. **Product 1.2:** Build a resource center on climate change within the academia. **Product 1.3:** Support students in relevant academic fields through scholarships, internships, and funded thesis research.

Strategic Goal 2: Catalyze thought leadership to shape climate action in Nepal	**Product 2.1:** Foster strategic collaborations with top experts and officials from government, academia, civil society and private sector and establish the think tank as a credible, authoritative, and dependable source of insights and information on climate change. **Product 2.2:** Provide thought leadership to shape and advance enabling national, provincial and local policies, organizational policies, and business models.
Strategic Goal 3: Enhance accessibility and dissemination of timely information through knowledge sharing initiatives, leveraging the existing mandate and work of the academia	**Product 3.1:** Develop open-source knowledge sharing platforms, leveraging ongoing work of the academia. **Product 3.2:** Develop timely and relevant resource books, policy briefs, and other publications, leveraging ongoing work of the academia.
Strategic Goal 4: Empower in-country stakeholders and clients through demand-driven capacity building products and services	**Product 4.1:** Design training materials, and organize training programs at local, provincial, and national level in consultation with government and other relevant stakeholders and clients. **Product 4.2:** Support academic programs on climate change including through integration of climate change courses in existing curriculums in collaboration with other academic institution. **Product 4.3**: Provide consulting services to private sector and other clients and stakeholders, including, for example, customized research and analysis, trainings and workshops, project design and implementation support, and support with mainstreaming climate-relevant aspects into organizational policy and operations etc.

Nepal Climate Initiative (NCI) aims to empower stakeholders in Nepal with the information, skills and internal institutional capacity needed to access and utilize climate finance to effectively respond to climate change. We do this through research, knowledge- and capacity-building programs related to climate finance, as well as broader climate change action.

Through existing and new strategic collaborations with relevant stakeholders including experts, government officials, and academia, we aim to provide insights that shape climate governance, and related policy and implementation in Nepal. We strive to establish the think tank as a credible, authoritative, and dependable source of information and insights. Our ongoing prioritization of the continuous internal growth of our own knowledge and capacity will enable us to provide cutting-edge insights and thought leadership that lends to our credibility.

We aim to empower in-country stakeholders and clients through demand-driven capacity-building products, trainings and workshops. The think tank will provide pro bono services in its pilot phase in 2024 and shift to a hybrid approach post-2024 where it will provide services free or at charge, depending on the stakeholder and to be decided by the think tank leadership on a case-by-case basis. In cases where services are provided pro-bono, the think tank will leverage the existing mandate, work, and resources of the academia. The think tank will prioritize pro-bono services for the government and small Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). It will provide fee-based consultative services to the private sector, and where deemed possible, NGOs, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and others.

Because access to climate finance requires the continuous development of climate change information and data, we believe that the research our academia produces in the areas of climate mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage lends to the overall objective of the think tank. Leveraging this, we aim to develop and foster in-house, and intergenerational knowledge and capacity related to climate change and climate finance, under and outside our academia, specifically through a climate change resource center within the academia, through open-sourced knowledge-sharing platforms for our stakeholders, timely and relevant research and publications, scholarships and internships to students within relevant fields, and collaborations with other universities.

The strategic goals and corresponding output, products and services outlined in part I, intend to collectively lend to the strengthening of Nepal's ability to secure necessary climate finance to advance in-country climate action and response.

Through these initiatives, NCI aims to contribute to enhanced climate action in Nepal, including efforts related to climate change mitigation, adaptation, resilience building, loss and damage, and sustainable development.

Part II
Business Model, Market and Organizational Charter

2.1 Presentation of the Business

- **Strategic Goal 1,** and the associated outputs and products, which aims to develop internal research, knowledge and capacity of our members, professors and students, lends ultimately to our credibility as an academic institution and a thought leader in the space of climate change and climate finance in Nepal. This goal aims to enhance our ability to produce topical and cutting-edge perspectives and insights. Additionally, it fosters intergenerational growth and innovation and helps contribute to the development of long-term in-house and in-country expertise related to climate change and climate finance.

This strategic goal aims to leverage the existing mandate and resources within the academic sector to enhance climate change education and research. The plan includes the establishment of a dedicated resource center on climate change. This center will serve as a hub for climate science and policy information, offering a comprehensive repository of research, data, and tools to support academic and practical understanding of climate issues.

Additionally, the strategy will provide support to students by offering various forms of financial and practical assistance. This support might include – scholarships, internships, funded thesis research.

- **Strategic goal 2**, and the associated outputs and products aim to leverage this ongoing in-house growth and innovation to build the think tank's credibility and influence climate-relevant governance, policy and action at different levels within the country and within relevant institutions. This will be done through active efforts that build strategic collaborations with relevant stakeholders within government, academia, civil society, and the private sector and by providing relevant and topical thought leadership and insights related to climate finance access and broadly on climate change as well. This strategic goal will draw on the existing work the academia.

Drawing on outcomes of Strategic Goals 1 and 2, Strategic Goal 3 and its products intend to enhance the accessibility and dissemination of timely information relevant to climate finance access among stakeholders through open-sourced knowledge-sharing platforms, resources, and publications. This strategic goal will draw on the existing mandate and research of the academia.

Finally, Strategic Goal 4, intends to offer demand-driven products and services that build the knowledge and capacity of relevant stakeholders including government and other implementing and direct access entities to enable access and utilization of climate finance. The think tank aims to offer either pro bono or fee-based consulting services to its partners and clients, as decided by the think-tank leadership on a case-by-case basis.

Under Goal 4, climate finance access products and services could be in relation to multilateral climate funds such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Global Environmental Facility (GEF), Adaptation Fund (AF), Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and Loss and Damage Fund (LDF). Partners and clients could include national, provincial and local government agencies, implementing entities and direct access entities as relevant or other institutions interested in accreditation or project implementation, including NGOs, INGOs, and private sectors.

The spectrum of support under strategic goal 4 includes customized training and workshops, research and briefings, and other pro bono or consulting services related to:

(i) Proposal writing including data and information support, for example in the development of climate rationale;

(ii) Project design including with strong theory of change, implementation and reporting support, including criteria that need to be met and safeguards that need to be maintained;

(iii) Support with mainstreaming climate-relevant aspects into institutional policy and operations.

(iv) Others, as appropriate.

2.2 Action Agenda

NCI will focus on climate finance access to enhance climate change mitigation, adaptation and response to loss and damage. Areas of support include products and services to facilitate proposal writing, project design, project implementation, and reporting, with a particular focus on the elaboration of climate rationale, institutional criteria that need to be met, and project safeguards required. These areas of focus are informed through the consultations conducted by NCI with some of Nepal's GCF-accredited and implementing entities during the first phase of the project.

The think tank will focus on capacity building for enhancing the capabilities of government bodies, NGOs, INGOs, and other stakeholders to access and effectively utilize climate finance through training programs and workshops. The think tank will also emphasize knowledge building and sharing by conducting and disseminating research on best practices and emerging trends, and creating platforms for collaboration among various stakeholders, including policymakers and financial institutions. The think tank will also provide its services to private sector stakeholders and other prospective client groups relevant to climate action, including through customized research and analysis, trainings and workshops, project design and implementation support, and support on integrating mainstreaming climate change into organizational policies and operations. Other areas of support include analyzing and advising on government policies, regulations and their implementation.

The think tank also aspires to build in-house and in-country long-term capacity on climate change. To do so, its internal team will continuously appraise and stay abreast of the evolving climate change science and international, regional, and national political and policy developments to inform climate change discourse in-country. Additionally, by providing scholarships and internships in relevant areas through the academia, as well as through collaborations with other universities, it will also aim to build inter-generational and long-term capacity on climate change.

In its pilot phase in 2024, NCI successfully developed resource books on ***“Strengthening Climate Rationales Enhancing Access for Climate Finance”*** and ***“Integrating Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Climate Finance”*** access efforts, and is developing training manuals for national, provincial and local level stakeholders. Training will be provided which will help the government as well as different stakeholders to develop evidence-based proposals to access of climate funds.

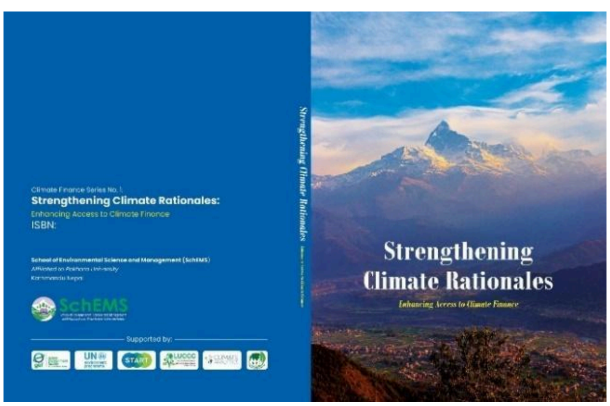

Figure: Cover page of both books

2.3 Priority Activities Linked to Capacity Building and Provision of Technical Services.

In alignment with the NCI's goals, priority activities associated with capacity building and climate finance service/product provision encompass developing in-country knowledge on climate change, catalyzing thought leadership to shape climate action in Nepal, enhancing the accessibility and dissemination of timely information through knowledge-sharing initiatives, and empowering in-country stakeholders through targeted capacity-building programs.

- To develop in-country knowledge, the think tank will conduct comprehensive research on the impacts of climate change in Nepal, identifying specific vulnerabilities and opportunities for mitigation and adaptation. This effort will be supported by creating knowledge repositories that store and organize climate-related data, research findings, and case studies specific to Nepal.

- To catalyze thought leadership, the think tank will host forums, conferences, seminars, and workshops to bring together experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to discuss and develop innovative climate finance solutions. Additionally, the think tank will publish policy briefs and reports that provide analyses and recommendations on climate finance policies and practices tailored to the Nepalese context.

- To enhance information dissemination, the think tank will develop online platforms offering access to real-time data, research publications, and tools related to climate finance. Information campaigns utilizing social media, webinars, and newsletters will further disseminate critical information on climate finance developments and opportunities.

- Finally, to empower in-country stakeholders, the think tank will offer training programs to build expertise in climate finance and provide technical assistance and consultancy services to support local organizations in developing and implementing climate finance projects effectively.

By focusing on these priority activities, the think tank aims to cultivate a robust, informed, proactive, and capable climate finance ecosystem in Nepal.

2.4 Collaborate Activities with State and Non-State Stakeholders

Products and services outlined in Section 2 can be customized as required by the stakeholder and subject to availability of resources. These activities may be related to climate finance access and utilization, including proposal development; project design, implementation and reporting; institutional mainstreaming of key criteria and safeguards; etc. They may also be related more broadly to conducting relevant research, shaping climate change relevant policy and governance, improving intergenerational capacity, improving internal capacity of the think tank, or targeted awareness raising and capacity building on key issues.

Stakeholder	Collaborative activities
Government	● Joint or needs-based research, analysis, and briefs ● Needs-based trainings ● Policy development workshops, including diverse stakeholders for exchange of knowledge and views and to establish collaborative efforts ● Creating and managing online platforms to share data, research findings, best practices, case studies
NGOs, INGOs	● Demand driven research, analysis, and briefs ● Needs-based trainings, workshops and consulting services
Private sector	● Demand driven research, analysis and briefs ● Needs-based trainings, workshops and consulting services
Academia	● Joint research and analysis ● Mainstreaming climate change in existing curriculum ● Creating and managing online platforms to share data, research findings, best practices, case studies
Women, youths, local communities and Indigenous Peoples	● Consultative workshops to mainstream vulnerable groups' and communities' concerns ● Needs-based training

Students	● Develop climate-relevant curriculum ● Support students in relevant academic field through scholarships, internships, and funded thesis research.
CSOs	● Consultative workshop and knowledge sharing platforms

Potential collaborative activities with government officials and other practitioners, including civil society organizations and the private sector, encompass several strategic initiatives. Conducting joint research projects with government agencies, academic institutions, and civil society organizations will explore climate change impacts, vulnerabilities, and mitigation strategies, ensuring the integration of comprehensive and diverse perspectives. Policy development workshops with government officials, policymakers, and non-state actors sector representatives will facilitate the co-development and refinement of climate finance policies, fostering knowledge exchange and ensuring that policies are practical, innovative, and aligned with national and local needs as well as the latest climate science and knowledge. Establishing public-private partnerships (PPPs) will enable the funding and implementation of climate finance projects, leveraging private sector resources, expertise, and innovation in conjunction with government regulatory support and infrastructure. Capacity building programs, developed and delivered in collaboration with government agencies, NGOs, and industry experts, will target various stakeholders to enhance their expertise in climate finance and project management. Creating and managing online platforms with stakeholders to share data, research findings, best practices, and case studies will promote transparency, foster collaboration, and ensure access to critical information.

Additionally, collaborating with civil society organizations and media outlets to launch awareness and advocacy campaigns will educate the public and key stakeholders about climate finance opportunities, challenges, and successes, driving greater engagement and support for climate action initiatives.

2.5 Potential Products

The NCI will develop several grant-based products to support its strategic goals. Firstly, it could continuously build in-house knowledge and produce cutting-edge insights on climate change, with a focus on facilitating access to climate finance in Nepal. This would involve staying abreast of evolving developments and discourse in the field. Secondly, the think tank will build a resource center on climate change within the academia, serving as a hub for knowledge and research. Additionally, the NCI will support students in relevant academic fields through scholarships, internships, and funded thesis research, helping to develop the next generation of climate experts. Finally, the think tank will develop open-source knowledge sharing platforms and produce timely publications on climate change, leveraging the ongoing work of the academia.

- **Fee-for-Service Products**
  Alongside the grant-based offerings, the NCI will also provide fee-for-service products to generate revenue and ensure the sustainability of the NCI. This will include fostering strategic collaborations with top experts and officials from government, academia, civil society, and the private sector, establishing the think tank as a credible and authoritative source of insights and information on climate change. The think tank will also provide thought leadership to shape and advance enabling national, provincial, and local policies, as well as organizational policies and business models related to climate change.

  Additionally, NCI will design customized training materials and programs at the local, provincial, and national levels in consultation with relevant stakeholders and clients. It will also support the integration of climate change courses into existing academic curriculums.

  Finally, the NCI will offer consulting services to private sector and other clients, including customized research and analysis, trainings and workshops, project design and implementation support, and assistance with mainstreaming climate-relevant aspects into organizational policy and operations.

- **Scope and Government Advisory Services**
  The key aspects of the advisory services and technical products that could be provided to government officials are:
    - Capacity Building and Knowledge Transfer
  - Ensuring the feasibility study and advisory services are done in a manner that enables replication by the government for future projects.
    - Provide training and knowledge transfer to government officials
    - Present potential viable services and products for the first year of the think-tank's existence that contain key GESI consideration and elements

In its first year, the NCI will focus on offering pro-bono services and products related to climate rationale and GESI considerations by utilizing the small grant from the UNI-LEAD project. Based on the learnings from Phase 1 of the project, the products and services developed will address the specific needs and challenges faced by GCF accredited entities in accessing climate finance in Nepal. The training services and products developed in response to these challenges will be designed to be accessible to different range of stakeholders, including at national, provincial and local levels. The climate rationale and GESI resource books and the subsequent trainings will collectively serve to improve capacity for climate finance access, and help meet inclusivity criteria and safeguards while doing so.

The GESI resource book and the training programs in particular will build stakeholder capacity to incorporate GESI considerations while designing projects and build safeguards during project implementation. Targeting to cover both project design and execution phases, these products have been tailored for government officials, NGOs, private sector representatives, as well as community leaders to ensure a broad understanding of GESI principles and implementation approaches.

By offering these services and products, the think tank will contribute to making climate finance efforts are inclusive, equitable, and effective, addressing the needs of vulnerable groups and communities and contributing to sustainable.

2.6 Viable Areas for NCI Intervention

The NCI has identified viable areas of intervention, based on the stakeholder consultations it performed in Phase 1 of the UNILEAD project as well as considerations of its own existing and growing capacity as well as the existing work of the academia it is housed under.

First, the NCI will work to enhance the capacity of accredited and implementing entities of various climate funds, especially in relation to climate rationale and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) considerations through topical and relevant resource books and training as well as through the provision of consulting fee-based services as appropriate.

More specifically, areas of intervention include climate finance access products and services in relation to various multilateral climate funds such as GCF, GEF, Adaptation Fund, Least Developed Countries Fund and Loss and Damage Fund. Partners and clients could include national, provincial and local government agencies, existing or aspiring implementing entities and direct access entities, including NGOs, INGOs, and private sectors. The spectrum of support under strategic goal 4 includes customized training and workshops, research and briefings, and other pro bono or consulting services related to: (i) Proposal development including data and information support, for example in the development of climate rationale; (ii) Project design including development of strong theory of change, implementation and reporting support, including criteria that need to be met and safeguards that need to be maintained; (iii) Support with mainstreaming climate-relevant aspects into institutional policy and operations etc.

The NCI will deliver these by leveraging the extensive knowledge and experience of its leadership team, the academia the think tank is housed under, and its expert advisors. The thinktank has gained its expertise through the past work of its members, the capacity building pilot phase under the UNILEAD project, as well as the aspiration to continuously update its own internal knowledge and capacity through relevant and timely research and study. NCI would therefore be well-positioned in terms of expertise and experience to intervene in these areas.

Because access to climate finance requires the continuous development of climate change information and data, we believe that the broader research produced by our academia in the areas of climate mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage lends to the overall objective of the think tank. Leveraging this, we aim to develop and foster in-house, and intergenerational knowledge and capacity related to climate change and climate finance, under and outside our academia, specifically through a climate change resource center within the academia, through open-sourced knowledge-sharing platforms for our stakeholders, timely and relevant research and publications, scholarships and internships to students within relevant fields, and collaborations with other universities. The think tank intends to act as a thought leader and leverage the substantial mandate, research, resource, expertise and network of the academia to find synergies and have openly available knowledge at the disposal of various targeted stakeholders, including government officials, NGOs, students, women and vulnerable groups and communities. Furthermore, it aims to use its network to provide thought leadership to shape climate change governance, policy and implementation.

2.7 Intended Areas of Product/Service Diversification and Expansion

In the future, the think tank aims to expand the provision of climate finance services to existing or aspiring accredited and implementing entities of the GCF, GEF, AF, LDCF, and (when operationalized) LDF.

- **Proposal Development Support**
  Consultancy services will be offered to accredited entities providing guidance on how to develop robust proposals, for example, with a strong theory of change and climate rationale, maximizing co-benefits, mainstreaming GESI principles and safeguards, and meeting other criteria. Support for proposal development could also include support with data and information through targeted research and analysis. This may also include support for aspiring accredited and implementing entities, including support with meeting criteria on institutional policies and operations.

- **Capacity Building Training and Workshops**
  Organize trainings and workshops at national, provincial, and local level to enhance the ability of participants to prepare good climate finance funding proposals. These capacity-building programs will also aim to teach the importance and mainstreaming GESI in climate finance project development and implementation.

- **Project Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Support**
  Identify guidelines and indicators that may help assess the effectiveness of climate finance projects with consideration of GESI elements.

- **Problem Identification and Solutions**
  Engage with the stakeholders in order to identify the needs and opportunities for improving areas of climate change finance access and implementation, particularly with regards to vulnerable groups, and offer solutions within the capacity building framework. This may imply dealing with factors such as technical issues in the project, in the management process or with regard to policy issues.

- **Partnership Development**
  Enhance partnerships and cooperation with international climate finance institutions, bilateral and multilateral development agencies, and private partners accessing the climate funds. Promote cross-learning and the sharing of best practices to improve the work accomplished for developing proposals.

2.8 Staffing, Organizational Charter, and Management

The think tank is embedded within School of environmental Science and Management (SchEMS) Pokhara University, operating under the university's climate and sustainability initiatives. This structure allows the NCI to benefit from the university's resources, expertise, and networks while contributing to the university's strategic objectives in climate research, finance, and sustainable development.

Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

Leadership is essential to the smooth operation of the NCI. The key leadership roles and responsibilities are as follows:

- **Hiring and Staffing:** The hiring of staff members will be overseen by the Advisory committee lead by point of Contact (PoC) in collaboration with the coordinator. The selection process will be based on qualifications, relevant experience, and the candidate's ability to contribute to the NCI's objectives. All hires will align with the university's broader HR policies.

- **Project Selection:** The advisory and Expert committee will be responsible for identifying and evaluating projects that align with the NCI's mission. This committee will include senior leadership and key advisors who will assess potential projects based on feasibility, alignment with climate finance goals, and potential impact.

- **Decision-Making Processes:** The NCI follows a hierarchical structure where key decisions will be made through consultation between the Chair, Co-chair, and the Advisory Committee. Decisions regarding project proposals, budget allocations, and strategic initiatives will be made collectively in regular leadership meetings, ensuring transparency and collaboration.

2.9 Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee plays a pivotal role in providing guidance, oversight, and support. Below is a breakdown of key members and their roles:

S. N	Name	Expertise	Responsibility
1.	Mr. Manjeet Dhakal	Head of LDC support Team at climate Analytics (CA)	Provide guidance and feedback on TT to achieve its goals
2.	Ms. Sneha Pandey	• Climate diplomacy, including international climate change negotiations and policies • Climate policy and implementation	Guide the team and provide feedbacks on the ongoing activities of TT
3.	Dr. Sudeep Thakuri	Climate change and sustainable development	Guidance on Climate change mitigation
	Prof. Dr. Sanjay Nath Khanal	Environmental Science and Research Methodology	Ensuring engagement of Universities in TT activities
4.	Mr. Praveen Kumar Regmi	Climate change, environmental conservation	Support TT's overall activities
5.	Ms. Deepa Oli	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)	Government support for Providing guidance on GESI in Project activities
6.	Mr. Raju Sapkota	Climate change	Government support on TT's activities
8.	Mr. Bhupendra Sharma	Climate change and environment	Government support on overall activities of TT aligning with Nepal's Policy Support

9.	Dr. Sudip Pandey	Project development on climate change	Universities support on TT activities
10.	Mr. Ajay Bhakta Mathema	Climate Change and Adaptation	Communication, project development
11.	Ms. Laxmi Chhinal	Climate Finance and GESI	Project implementation and oversees project activities and Coordination

2.10 Staffing

The following table outlines the roles and responsibilities of key staff members of the NCI:

S. N	Name	Position	Roles and Responsibility
1.	Mr. Ajay Bhakta Mathema	PoC	Communication, organization, coordination
2.	Prof Dr. Madan Koirala	Chair	To ensure TT achieve its goals by leadership, oversight, mentorship and evaluation
3.	Prof. Dr. Sanjay Nath Khanal	Co-chair	Support chair, collaboration, coordination, feedback
4.	Ms. Laxmi Chhinal	Coordinator	organizing meetings, managing documentation, and ensuring that the cluster's objectives are met efficiently
5.	Mr. Shrawan Kumar Pradhan	Finance Director	Budget management, financial reporting, investment decisions
6.	Ms. Durga Prajapati	Finance Manager	Bookkeeping, financial statement preparation, tax compliance, Aduit, reporting

7.	Ms. Nisha Basnet	Advisor (Marketing Manager)	Strategy development, workshop management, market research, content creation, brand management, collaboration

This structure ensures that key functions such as finance, project management, and stakeholder engagement are effectively managed, and that decision-making processes are clear and inclusive.

2.11 Organizational Structure and Recruitment Processes for the NCI

To ensure the effective operation of the TT, the development of an **organogram** is essential. This visual representation will help illustrate the TT's operational structure, highlighting leadership, key staff roles, and the coordination unit's hierarchy.

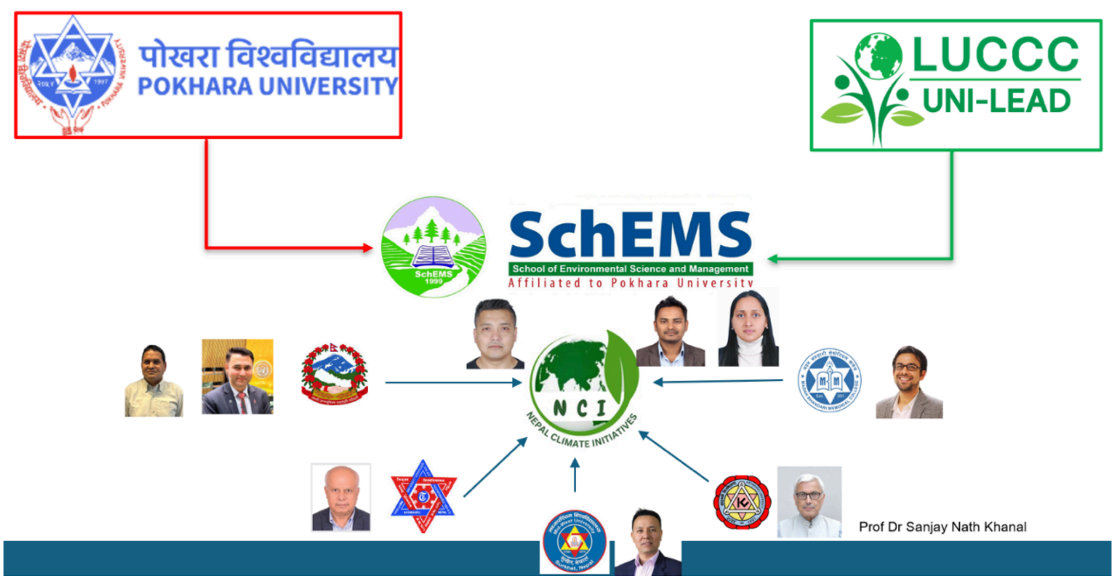

Figure: Structural representation of NCI

This organizational structure will promote clarity, accountability, and strategic alignment, ensuring that the NCI operates efficiently while advancing its mission in climate finance and climate change policy.

2.12 The General Assembly

The General Assembly will serve as the highest decision-making body of the NCI, providing strategic direction and oversight on major policies, initiatives, and projects. All the general

Assembly members are the members within the NCI. Its primary role is to ensure that the NCI's work aligns with its mission, national climate priorities, and global best practices. The General Assembly will be responsible for approving annual work plans, major research outputs, and key decisions regarding funding, partnerships, and resource allocation. The composition of the General Assembly will include:

- **University Representation**: Prof. Dr. Madan Koirala, Prof. Dr. Sanjay Nath Khanal and Dean of Science and Technology and Engineering of Mid-Western University, Dr. Sudeep Thakuri to provide academic leadership.

- **Government Representation:** It will also include high-level government representatives, Mr. Raju Sapkota under secretory of Climate Change Management Division, Ms. Deepa Oli under secretory of MoFE, Mr. Bhupendra Sharma from MoIMAC.

Coordination unit

The Coordination Unit of the NCI will be led by Coordinator Ms. Laxmi Chhinal and supported by the Point of Contact (PoC)Mr. Ajay Bhakta Mathema, will be responsible for ensuring the effective and timely implementation of TT's activities. The coordinator oversees strategic planning, task management, and alignment with TT's objectives, while providing guidance and supervision. The PoC acts as the primary liaison, facilitating communication among internal teams and external stakeholders, managing schedules, and supporting the coordinator in monitoring progress. Together, they handle strategic oversight, stakeholder engagement, task execution, reporting, and capacity building, ensuring all activities are efficiently coordinated and meet established timelines.

2.13 Recruitment Processes for Future Hires

The NCI will establish a transparent and competitive recruitment process for future hires:

- **Recruitment Strategy**: The NCI will create job descriptions, define qualifications and skills, and publish vacancies through various channels such as university platforms, climate change networks, and professional organizations.

- **Selection Committee**: A selection committee led by the coordinator, in consultation with leadership and the university's HR department, will oversee recruitment. Shortlisted candidates will undergo interviews and assessments.

- **Capacity Building**: The NCI will also identify any capacity gaps in its technical team and ensure that resources are available for training or hiring experts to address those gaps.

2.14 Human Resources and Capacity Development

A human resource (HR) needs assessment was conducted during the initial phase of the Think Tank's formation to identify the necessary expertise from various fields to establish the NCI. This process will be repeated, if necessary, to facilitate the expansion of the NCI. The required expertise encompasses technical knowledge, administrative support, gender and social inclusion specialists, and financial management skills. Any identified gaps will be addressed through strategic recruitment or collaborations with external experts**.**

2.15 Recruitment and Payment Modes for NCI Staff and Associates

The recruitment processes and payment modes for NCI staff and associates will be established through the following steps:

Payment Modes for NCI Staff and External Experts

- **Payment for Staff**
  NCI staff will receive regular salaries based on their roles and contract terms. Payment will be on a monthly basis via direct deposit to their bank accounts.

- **Payment for External Experts/Consultants**
  Payment to external consultants will be made according to the terms outlined in the contract. Payments could be:

  - **Lump Sum**: Paid after the completion of the entire consultancy or project.
  - **Milestone-Based Payments:** Payments are made in phases based on agreed milestones.
  - **Hourly/Daily Rates:** For short-term work or consulting, experts will be paid based on the number of hours or days worked.

Payments will be made via bank transfer or through a reputable payment platform, depending on the consultant's location and preference.

2.16 Recruitment Process for NCI Staff

1. **Job Descriptions and Advertisement**
   Clear and detailed job descriptions will be developed, outlining roles, responsibilities, qualifications, and expectations. These will be posted on relevant platforms such as the SchEMS's website, NCI's website, job boards, social media, and professional networks.

2. **Application and Screening**
   Applicants will submit their resumes/CVs and cover letters. The advisory team will review applications based on qualifications, experience, and relevance to the NCI's objectives. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interviews, which may include practical tests or presentations.

3. **Interviews and Selection**
   The final selection will be based on a combination of interviews (in-person or virtual), skill assessments, and reference checks. Candidates who meet the requirements will be offered positions.

4. **Onboarding**
   Successful candidates will undergo an onboarding process that includes orientation on NCI values, policies, and the specific project work.

2.17 Recruitment Process for External Experts or Consultants

- **Need Identification**
  When specialized expertise is required for short-term assignments, a Terms of Reference (ToR) outlining the scope of work, timeline, and deliverables will be prepared.

- **Public Tender/Request for Proposal (RFP)**
  The TT will issue an RFP to invite proposals from external consultants or firms. This process will be open and transparent, allowing for multiple candidates to submit their qualifications and financial proposals.

- **Evaluation and Selection**
  Proposals will be evaluated based on the consultant's qualifications, relevant experience, cost-effectiveness, and proposed methodology. Shortlisted consultants will be interviewed, and the final selection will be based on the best fit for the task.

- **Contracting**
  A formal contract will be signed with the selected consultant, including clear terms of work, deadlines, and payment conditions.

2.18 Procurement Procedures for External Experts or Consultants

- **Procurement Policy**
  The NCI will follow a transparent procurement policy that adheres to legal and institutional guidelines, ensuring fairness and competitiveness. For consultancy contracts, procurement will be based on an RFP or direct invitation to a selected pool of consultants.

- **Contractual Agreements**
  External experts will sign contracts outlining deliverables, timelines, and expectations. Payment terms, including any advance or milestone-based payments, will be specified in the contract.

- **Approval Process**
  All external contracts will undergo internal approval processes to ensure compliance with NCI's budget, goals, and funding requirements.

2.19 Pending Human Resource and Capacity Gaps/Needs for the NCI

The NCI is currently lacking essential human resources, including subject matter experts in GESI, and climate finance, along with technical researchers and policy analysts to translate research into actionable policies. There is also a need for communication and outreach personnel to engage with stakeholders, as well as capacity-building specialists to lead training programs. Additionally, the absence of monitoring and evaluation experts, administrative support staff, and professionals skilled in fundraising and grant management is hindering the TT's operational efficiency and impact. Addressing these gaps is critical for the NCI's success. The gaps will be addressed by:

- Establishing the recruitment processes and payment modes for TT staff and associates, to ensure the relevant individuals and experts can be onboarded to fill capacity gaps:
  - This should include procurement procedures and modes of payment for external experts or consultants that the NCI may collaborate with.

2.20 Legal Structure

To ensure compliance with legal and reporting requirements, the think tank will adopt the following mechanisms:

1. **University-Affiliated Phase**
   - Adhere to the university's governance structure, financial regulations, and reporting protocols.
   - Maintain transparency in research funding, project implementation, and resource utilization.
      - Submit periodic progress and financial reports to the university administration and relevant academic bodies.
2. **Transition to a Non-Profit Organization**
   - Register as a legal entity under Nepalese non-profit laws, ensuring compliance with statutory regulations.
   - Develop internal governance policies, including bylaws, financial management systems, and audit mechanisms.
   - Establish a board of directors to oversee compliance, ethics, and operational integrity.
   - Maintain tax-exempt status by fulfilling tax reporting obligations and adhering to regulations for non-profits.
   - Submit annual financial and impact reports to relevant government agencies and donors, ensuring transparency and accountability.

2.21 Legal Compliance and Reporting Requirements

Since the NCI is currently conceived as an extension of Pokhara University, the university's legal and financial systems will serve as the primary mechanisms for ensuring compliance with local laws, regulations, and institutional policies. However, certain responsibilities specific to the NCI will need to be addressed to ensure smooth functioning.

2.22 University Responsibility for Legal Compliance

1. **Tax Reporting and Financial Oversight**
   - **University Oversight:** The SchEMS's existing financial systems will be responsible for tax reporting, financial audits, and compliance with legal obligations, including staff compensation and procurement processes.
      - **Compliance with National Regulations:** The university's finance and legal departments will ensure that all necessary government filings, such as tax returns, are completed in line with national regulations. The NCI will not be a standalone

tax entity; therefore, all tax-related compliance will be handled through the university's administrative processes.

2. **Staff Compensation and Human Resources**
   - All compensation for NCI staff will be handled through the **SchEMS's** payroll system, ensuring compliance with local labour laws, university policies, and national regulations. Recruitment, hiring, and termination processes will follow university HR guidelines, with additional oversight by the NCI's leadership.

3. **Office Space and Infrastructure**
   - The NCI will be housed within Pokhara University, which will provide office space, utilities, and IT support as part of its commitment to the project. Any expansion of infrastructure (e.g., additional office space or laboratory facilities) will require university approval and be subject to university procurement procedures.

2.23 NCI-Think Tank-Specific Compliance Mechanisms

While the NCI will largely rely on the university's systems for legal and administrative matters, there are specific areas where the NCI must ensure compliance independently:

1. **Procurement and Payment Procedures for External Consultants**
   - The NCI will develop its own procurement policies for engaging external experts, consultants, and partners. These procedures will align with the university's procurement policies but will have a specialized focus on climate finance and research partnerships.
   - Payment modes for external consultants will follow contractual agreements, ensuring timely disbursement through university accounts, in compliance with national and university regulations.
2. **Grant and Donor Reporting**
   The NCI will be responsible for the reporting and compliance requirements of external funding agencies, including international climate finance institutions and development agencies. These reports will include financial statements, progress reports, and audits as per donor guidelines. The Finance Director of the TT, in collaboration with the university's finance department, will ensure all reporting is accurate and submitted in a timely manner.

3. **Formal Agreements with External Partners**
   The NCI will establish Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with external partners, such as government bodies, international climate finance institutions, and private sector

partners. These agreements will clearly define roles, responsibilities, and compliance obligations to ensure transparency and accountability in all partnerships.

4. **Legal Registration (If Required)**
   In the event that external donors or partners require the NCI to be legally recognized as a standalone entity, steps will be taken to register the TT as a separate legal entity under Nepali law. However, for the time being, all legal compliance will be covered under the broader umbrella of the university's legal structure.

2.24 Relationships with External Donors: Potential for Future Partnerships

The NCI has significant potential to develop products and services that support Nepal's climate change adaptation efforts across both government and non-government sectors. The NCI can conduct cutting-edge research, build in-house expertise on climate change impacts and adaptation strategies, and offer climate finance solutions. Additionally, it can create open-source platforms, resource centers, and publications to share insights, while providing scholarships, internships, and research opportunities for students and young professionals. By offering thought leadership, the NCI can influence climate policy at national, provincial, and local levels, assist in integrating adaptation into development planning, and support the design and implementation of local adaptation plans (LAPAs).

The NCI can also foster strategic collaborations between government, academia, civil society, and the private sector, organize multi-stakeholder dialogues, and serve as a trusted source of climate change knowledge. Moreover, it can develop customized training programs, support the integration of climate change curricula in academic institutions, and offer consulting services in research, analysis, and implementation.

The NCI's diverse offerings can position it as a key enabler of climate action in Nepal, supporting both public and private stakeholders.

- **Public Sector Stakeholders**
  Government entities like the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE), Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation (MoEWRI), Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD), Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA), National Planning Commission (NPC), and Ministry of Finance (MoF) can benefit from the NCI's research, resource centers, and training programs. Provincial and local governments, community-based organizations, and development partners working on adaptation and climate action will also benefit from the NCI's support in building knowledge and capacity.

- **Private Sector Stakeholders**
  Larger companies, particularly multinational corporations in energy, agriculture, and manufacturing, along with industry associations, farmer cooperatives, and community-based organizations, can leverage the NCI's research, resources, and training services to enhance their climate resilience and adaptation efforts.

- **Non-State and International Stakeholders**
  NGO networks like the NGO Group on Climate Change (NGOCC) and international organizations such as UNDP Nepal, IUCN, WWF, and the World Bank can utilize the NCI's expertise in climate change adaptation and finance, including developing climate rationales to access funding from global entities like the GCF and GEF.

2.25 Potential Partners for the NCI-Think Tank (TT)

Potential partners for the NCI-Think Tank include academic institutions such as Nepali universities and international research centers, which can offer research support and expertise. Government bodies like the National Climate Change Focal Point and the Ministry of Forests and Environment can provide policy alignment and access to climate finance. International organizations, including UNDP, the World Bank, the Green Climate Fund, and other think tanks, can offer financial and technical support for climate initiatives. Collaborating with both international and local NGOs can enhance the impact and reach of climate projects. The NCI can access funding through grants, donations, fee-for-service models, and partnerships, ensuring it has the financial and technical resources to achieve its climate and GESI goals.

- **Building Collaborative Relationships with Funders**
  The NCI's relationships with external donors, partners, and initiatives will be founded on mutual goals and collaboration. Partnerships with government bodies such as the National Climate Change Focal Point will be formalized around policy alignment and national climate priorities. International organizations like UNDP and the World Bank will provide project-based funding and technical support, while NGOs and civil society will collaborate on community engagement and capacity building. The private sector can engage through sponsorships, partnerships, or fee-for-services, and foundations such as START International, GEF, and GCF will provide grants for climate action projects. All collaborations will prioritize transparency, shared objectives, and accountability.

  Currently, the NCI is in the early stages of building relationships with external stakeholders. Initial connections, particularly with universities and government agencies, have provided a foundation for future collaborations. For instance, preliminary discussions have taken place with the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE) regarding potential partnerships in climate finance and policy. Relationships with international donors are still in the early phases but hold promise for future formal partnerships.

As the NCI transitions into a non-profit organization, a more structured donor communication strategy will be developed. This will include clear engagement protocols, professional communication channels (such as a website, reports, and briefings), and standardized proposal and reporting processes. A dedicated donor relations team will be responsible for maintaining transparent and timely communication, ensuring compliance with donor requirements, and providing regular updates. These mechanisms will enhance partnerships, build credibility, and support long-term sustainability.

- **Gaps for Future Engagements**
  Despite all the potential avenues for collaboration listed above, the NCI faces capacity gaps in donor engagement, proposal development, financial management, and formalizing partnerships, particularly in signing MoUs with the government due to fluctuating staffing at the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE). To address these challenges, the NCI plans to build institutional capacity by training staff in grant writing, financial management, and donor relations, while also developing standardized templates for proposals and reporting. Additionally, it will strengthen collaborations with universities, government agencies, and experienced organizations to receive technical support. To navigate challenges in formalizing MoUs, the NCI has planned to sign MoU with MoFE as soon as possible when the staffing in government become stable to establish flexible engagement strategies, maintain continuous dialogue with government officials, and leverage academic affiliations for smoother coordination. These measures will enhance the NCI's ability to secure funding, strengthen partnerships, and implement impactful projects.

2.26 Marketing Strategy

To effectively disseminate information about climate-finance products and services, the NCI will develop a communication strategy that will integrate a variety of traditional and digital media, supported by training, workshops, and research initiatives conducted within the think tank. The primary objective is to increase the awareness among government, educate stakeholders, and promote the adoption of climate-finance solutions. Through targeted workshops and sector-specific training sessions on climate rationale, government officials, policymakers, and local stakeholders will gain practical knowledge on implementing and enhance the access of climate finance. Research publications and policy briefs will be disseminated to influence decision-making, with a focus on evidence-based recommendations and case studies.

Digital media will play a crucial role in reaching a broad audience, utilizing social media webinars, and blogs to engage with the public, especially younger demographics. Traditional media, such as press releases, radio interviews, and print advertising, will ensure that the message reaches all segments of society, including those less active online. The think tank will also leverage its authority to host roundtable discussions, conferences, and collaborative research projects, further advocating for climate finance solutions. Continuous monitoring and evaluation through feedback and performance metrics will allow for refinement and improvement of the strategy, ensuring its effectiveness in driving climate action.

Part III
Financial and Sustainability Planning

3.1 Financial Plan

To operate effectively, the think tank will require funding to cover staff salaries, fixed operational costs, and project expenses. The key cost categories and financial management processes are outlined below.

Key Cost Categories

- **Staff Costs:** Salaries for researchers, administrative personnel, and project coordinators.
- **Fixed Costs:** Office rent, utilities (electricity, internet, water), and office supplies.
- **Administrative Costs:** Legal fees, registration costs, insurance, and compliance-related expenses.
- **Project Costs:** Research activities, stakeholder consultations, workshops, field visits, and publication expenses.
- **Technology & Communication:** Website maintenance, digital tools, and outreach materials.

Estimated Annual Cost

While the exact budget will depend on the scope of activities and funding availability, a **preliminary annual estimate** could range between **$70,000–$90,000**, covering salaries, office operations, and project implementation.

Preliminary Budget Approval, Expenditure Tracking & Reporting

- **Budget Approval:** The think tank will develop an annual budget reviewed and approved by a designated finance committee.
- **Expenditure Tracking:** A financial management system will be established to track project expenditures, categorize costs, and ensure compliance with donor requirements.
- **Reporting Mechanisms:** Financial reports will be prepared annually for internal review and donor reporting, ensuring transparency and accountability.

As the think tank evolves, these mechanisms will be strengthened to align with best practices in financial management, enabling effective organizational and project budget oversight.

3.2 In-Kind Support for NCI from Pokhara University

Pokhara University is dedicated to offering extensive in-kind assistance to help NCI goals and effort succeed. The university will provide support in a number of ways, including through college resources, office space allotment, library access, and ongoing advisor service from Mr. Ajay B Mathema. The University will provide administrative support for project management, coordination, and administrative chores, as well as access to cutting-edge laboratories, computer rooms, and other specialized facilities pertinent to NCI. In order to guarantee a productive work environment, university will set up a specific office space with all the necessary furniture and technology (computers, printers, internet access), in addition to meeting rooms for group collaboration, presentations, and conversations. The NCI will get full access to the vast book collection of the university library. The PoC and chair of the NCI have the authority to further discuss and facilitate lasting in-kind support from the University as the think tank continues to establish itself.

- What is the relationship of the TT coordinator to those with decision making authority?

  The relationship between the Think Tank (TT) coordinator and those with decision-making authority is typically collaborative and supportive. The TT coordinator acts as a bridge between the think tank's research and activities and the decision-makers who can implement the ideas generated. The coordinator facilitates communication, ensures that relevant information and findings reach those in positions of authority, and organizes discussions or presentations to influence policy and decision-making.

  In addition, the TT coordinator is responsible for aligning the think tank's work with the priorities and needs of decision-makers, making sure that products and goals outputs are timely, relevant, and actionable. The coordinator is also responsible to provide logistical support, manage stakeholder relationships, and ensure that the think tank’s insights are effectively integrated into policy and strategic decisions.

  Ultimately, the coordinator plays a key role in ensuring that the think tank's work has real-world impact by fostering strong relationships and ongoing engagement with those who hold decision-making power.

3.3 Parallel Co-Financing for NCI from Pokhara University

At this stage, the university has indicated potential for co-financing through in-kind support such as office space, administrative services, and utilities, though a formal commitment to a specific level has not yet been finalized. The final co-financing arrangement will be determined according to the university's internal policies for collaborative projects, which take into account research priorities, operational needs, and budgetary considerations. Additionally, while a future partnership is still being defined, there is a likelihood of collaborating with government signing the MoU and by providing fee based technical support such as helping in policy refine, evidence based research work, providing the training for different stakeholders and government official in climate finance adaptation and also helping to write proposal with strong climate rational for climate projects which could further complement and enhance the overall financial framework for the NCI.

3.4 Potential Sources of Future Grant Support

The NCI, initially university-affiliated, has the potential for future grant support from internal university funding mechanisms, research grants, and collaborative funding opportunities with academic partners. The NCI also plans to apply for Phase 2 of this project, seeking further opportunities to expand and scale up its impact.

NCI will also seek to government support such as the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE) and the Ministry of Finance, which often allocate funds for climate-related projects and research, presents another avenue for funding. International climate finance mechanisms, including the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Adaptation Fund, and other national climate finance sources, may also provide significant support. Furthermore, various international organizations, UN bodies, and development agencies like UNDP, UNEP, the World Bank, and regional development banks are key sources of funding for climate and GESI projects in Nepal, especially those aligned with their global priorities.

To ensure that potential future grant funders are appropriately identified and engaged, the NCI will undertake the following broad strategy:

- **Research & Networking**: Regularly monitor funding calls from international donors, government agencies, and local entities. Establish connections through conferences, workshops, and climate finance events.
- **Partnerships with Government & NGOs:** Collaborate with government agencies and NGOs to understand emerging funding opportunities, especially in disaster-prone areas, climate adaptation, and GESI.

- **University Collaborations:** Leverage the university's existing networks, research programs, and partnerships with international academic institutions to access co-funding or joint grant opportunities.

Similarly, the NCI will seek to apply various communication strategies and considerations to ensure that potential funders are clearly and effectively engaged. These include:

- **Clear Project Alignment:** Ensure that all communication materials—such as proposals, concept notes, and reports—are aligned with the funder's priorities, demonstrating how the think tank's activities support their objectives.

- **Regular Updates & Transparency:** Send annually reports, newsletters, and impact stories to keep funders informed of progress, challenges, and milestones.

- **Direct Engagement & Networking:** Organize donor briefings, webinars, and meetings to build relationships and deepen understanding of the think tank's work. Utilize social media and academic platforms to raise visibility and engage potential funders.

- **Tailored Proposals:** Develop customized proposals for each funding opportunity, ensuring clarity on how funds will be used, the expected impact, and the sustainability of the project.

3.5 SWOT Analysis

Some of the key Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats to the operations, development, and sustainability of the NCI are summarized here. This SWOT analysis is the outcome of a robust interrogation of the NCI's products, services, stakeholder contexts, potential partnerships, funding models, and sustainability considerations.

Strength	**Weakness**
1. Expertise and Knowledge 2. Research capabilities 3. Network and Partnerships 4. Innovation Approaches	1. Funding Dependency 2. Resource limitation 3. Policy Influence
Opportunities	**Threats**
1. Growing Interest in Climate Finance 2. Technological Advancements 3. Partnerships and Collaborations 4. Policy Shifts 5. Funding opportunities	1. Political instability 2. Economic downturns 3. Competitions 4. Public perception

3.6 Sustainability Plan

Long-Term Financing and Operational Strategy

To ensure the long-term sustainability of the NCI, a multi-pronged approach will be adopted, incorporating financial, institutional, and strategic partnerships.

- **Diversified Revenue Streams:** NCI will primarily generate revenue through fee-based services, including capacity-building trainings for government and non-government sectors, policy reviews, and research-based consultancy services. Additionally, NCI will actively seek grant funding from national and international organizations such as ICIMOD, IUCN, FAO, and other development partners to support its research and policy initiatives. In-kind support from the university will be leveraged to provide office space, legal services, and advisory support through the university's advisory committee.

- **Strategic Partnerships and Institutional Arrangements:** To establish a stable operational framework, NCI will pursue formalized agreements such as Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with key government entities at national and subnational levels. These agreements will create long-term commitments for research, policy advisement, and capacity-building programs, ensuring a consistent stream of projects and collaborations. Additionally, by expanding engagements with provincial and municipal governments, NCI will diversify its client base and strengthen its relevance across multiple governance levels.

- **Integration with University Priorities:** To further institutional sustainability, NCI will align its work with the long-term objectives of the university. This includes providing research opportunities for students, hiring graduates to build a pipeline of skilled professionals, and contributing to curriculum development on climate policy, finance, and adaptation strategies. Through these efforts, NCI will serve as a bridge between academic knowledge and policy implementation, reinforcing its role within the university structure and ensuring continued institutional backing.

- **Capacity Building and Knowledge Management**: NCI will establish a structured knowledge management system to ensure the continuity of expertise and institutional memory. This includes developing a repository of research outputs, best practices, and training materials that can be utilized for future capacity-building programs. Additionally, by engaging experts and fostering mentorship programs, NCI will create a sustainable network of professionals who can support its activities over time.

By integrating financial diversification, strategic partnerships, institutional alignment, and knowledge management, NCI will build a robust foundation for long-term sustainability, ensuring that it remains a key player in climate policy and capacity-building initiatives in the coming years.

3.7 Feedback Mechanisms

The sustained capture and application of feedback regarding the NCI’s objectives and operations will be facilitated through a range of integrated mechanisms. A centralized feedback system will be established to systematically collect lessons learned and feedback from surveys, meetings, and internal staff interactions. Dedicated feedback channels, including emails, online forms, town hall meetings, and suggestion boxes, will be implemented to provide ongoing input. In addition, regular written and verbal communication channels, such as performance review meetings and internal team discussions, will be scheduled to ensure continuous engagement.

To ensure the alignment of strategies, goals, and objectives with the university's priorities, the review committee will conduct a comprehensive assessment on an annual or bi-annual basis. For this advisory Committee will set as review committee. Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be developed and monitored to quantify outcomes such as publications, media appearances, and funding secured. The designated staff members will be responsible for capturing feedback and reviewing performance against these KPIs, with bi-annual reviews to facilitate timely adjustments. The advisory committee, in collaboration with program management staff, will lead the review of performance against KPIs and other relevant criteria to ensure the think tank remains aligned with its objectives and can adapt to any necessary changes.

Qualitative assessments will be conducted through various methods, including stakeholder interviews, case studies, external peer reviews, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews with think tank staff, university stakeholders, and external collaborators. These assessments will provide deeper insights into the perceived value, challenges, and suggestions for improvement. An advisory board, composed of key university stakeholders and external experts, will be convened bi-annually to offer strategic guidance, review performance, and provide constructive feedback. This will enable the think tank to continuously refine its approach in alignment with the university's evolving priorities.

A continuous improvement cycle will be implemented to systematically analyze feedback and performance data, develop action plans, monitor the effectiveness of changes, and communicate progress to all stakeholders. Insights gained from these processes will be shared with relevant university activity heads to ensure alignment of priorities, coordination of efforts, and identification of opportunities for collaboration. This multifaceted approach will enable the think tank to remain agile, relevant, and impactful, ensuring its work consistently aligns with the university’s priorities and the broader community's evolving needs.

To enhance transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement, the NCI will establish a structured stakeholder feedback mechanism. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to provide feedback through multiple channels, including consultation meetings, surveys, stakeholder workshops, email correspondence, and an online feedback portal. For structured projects, dedicated feedback forms and participatory review sessions will be conducted to capture detailed insights and concerns.

A formal review process will be implemented to ensure that feedback is acted upon. Inputs will be analyzed, categorized, and addressed by the relevant teams. Regular stakeholder reports and follow-up meetings will provide updates on how feedback has influenced decision-making and project adjustments. This process will ensure that the NCI remains responsive to stakeholder needs and continues to improve its engagement and outcomes.

3.8 Adaptability

To ensure flexibility in the NCI's institutional and administrative structures, the organization will adopt several key strategies. First, the NCI will be designed with a modular organizational structure that allows departments or teams to be easily reorganized or scaled based on evolving needs or changes in priorities. This structure will promote cross-functional collaboration and allow for flexibility in project allocation. Additionally, the NCI will establish an adaptive governance framework, where the board or advisory committee meets regularly and adopts an approach that responds swiftly to changes in leadership, policies, or the university's strategic direction. To further enhance adaptability, a cross-training program will be implemented, ensuring staff members can take on various roles, allowing for smoother transitions and faster response to new tasks. Decision-making will also be decentralized, empowering team leaders with the authority to make swift decisions on staffing, resources, and partnerships, without lengthy approvals. The think tank will also develop a flexible budgeting system, which includes a contingency reserve to accommodate unforeseen expenses and provide quick reallocation of funds when necessary. Lastly, dynamic communication channels will be established to ensure quick information sharing and decision-making, enabling the think tank to respond effectively to feedback or shifts in the external environment. By implementing these strategies, the think tank will maintain an agile structure capable of adapting to changes and continuing to operate efficiently. These interventions and the broader planned adaptation framework to continued alignment and effective operation within the evolving landscape of university policies and priorities are detailed below:

1. **Continuous Monitoring of University Policies**
   - **Action:** Regularly review and stay informed about university policies, strategic goals, and funding changes. Engage with university leadership to understand evolving priorities and their impact on the think tank.
     - **Method:** Participate in university-wide meetings, forums, and internal newsletters, and maintain an open line of communication with key stakeholders in the university administration.
2. **Flexible Organizational Structure**
   - **Action:** Design the think tank's governance and operational structure to be adaptable to shifts in university priorities.
     - **Method:** Implement a modular structure that allows easy reorganization of teams or resources based on the university's evolving focus areas, while still adhering to the core objectives of the think tank.

3. **Diversification of Funding Sources**
   - **Action:** Reduce reliance on university funding by exploring external funding sources, including government grants, international donors, and private sector partnerships.
     - **Method:** Establish a funding diversification plan that includes securing financial support from various stakeholders to ensure sustainability in case university support fluctuates.

4. **Stakeholder Engagement & Communication**
   - **Action:** Develop regular feedback and communication channels with university stakeholders, including faculty and administrators, to understand their perspectives on emerging priorities and expectations.
     - **Method:** Organize quarterly meetings and informal discussions with university departments to ensure the think tank's objectives remain in sync with the university's goals.

5. **Regular Review & Evaluation**
   - **Action:** Conduct annual reviews to assess how the think tank is responding to changes in university policies and whether any adjustments are necessary to ensure continued alignment.
     - **Method:** Implement performance evaluations that include feedback from university leadership and key stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and adaptation.

By maintaining flexibility, clear communication, and proactive planning, this framework will help the think tank adapt to changes in university policies or priorities while ensuring its ongoing success and relevance within the university structure.

3.9 Review and Evaluation

To ensure that the business plan remains relevant and aligned with the evolving needs of the think tank, a regular review and revision schedule will be established. The think tank will conduct a biannual review of the business plan, with the first review scheduled six months after implementation, followed by annual reviews. During these reviews, the following key aspects will be assessed:

1. **Progress against goals and objectives** – Evaluate whether the think tank is on track with its strategic objectives, including project milestones, stakeholder engagement, and financial performance.

2. **Financial performance and sustainability** – Assess the budget, funding sources, and financial stability to ensure that the think tank remains financially sustainable and capable of pursuing its mission.

3. **Alignment with external changes** – Review any changes in university policies, government priorities, donor interests, and the climate finance landscape to ensure that the business plan is still aligned with these developments.

4. **Operational** efficiency – Evaluate the effectiveness of the organizational structure, staff capacity, and operational processes in achieving the think tank's goals.

5. **Feedback from stakeholders** – Incorporate input from key stakeholders, including university leadership, government partners, donors, and staff, to identify areas for improvement or adjustments.

The results of these reviews will inform potential revisions to the business plan, ensuring that it remains adaptable and responsive to changes. The revised plan will be presented to the governing board for approval. This process will also be used to update internal and external stakeholders about any significant changes in direction or strategy.