**Discovery Communications x World Wildlife Fund**

*Project CAT Overview*

**WHAT IS PROJECT CAT?**

Project CAT (Conserving Acres for Tigers) is an initiative by WWF and Discovery Communications to protect tigers and their habitat. Through this initiative, Discovery Communications is supporting WWF’s efforts towards the global Tx2 goal to double the number of tigers in the wild by 2022, through awareness-building and fundraising via Discovery subscribers globally.

In November 2016, Discovery announced a philanthropic partnership with WWF, focusing on a critical tiger habitat along the border of India and Bhutan, under the umbrella of WWF’s tiger conservation initiative (Tx2). The Transboundary Manas Conservation Area (TraMCA) spans nearly a million acres, and contains one of 19 critical sites identified by WWF as a key area for tiger recovery—the Royal Manas/Manas Complex.

Discovery’s support is enabling WWF, partners and country governments to focus on a global priority transboundary landscape. Key goals of the conservation work include: ensuring protection for tigers and other species, restoring critical grassland habitat, and enhancing joint transboundary tiger monitoring

Project CAT serves as a key global communications and awareness-building platform, to encourage additional consumer-driven fundraising in support of WWF’s global Tx2 efforts, by reaching Discovery’s nearly 3 billion subscribers worldwide via content across Discovery’s global networks and Discovery-managed communication channels. Discovery will launch a PSA on Global Tiger Day 2017 (July 29th), which will feature a call to action for viewers to donate to WWF’s tiger conservation efforts.

**ABOUT THE PROJECT SITE IN INDIA AND BHUTAN**

**What is the history of the TraMCA site in India and Bhutan?**

Transboundary Manas Conservation Area (TraMCA) is the name that WWF has given this transboundary landscape, which runs along southeastern Bhutan and the northeast Indian state of Assam. It is a vital mosaic of conservation spaces across the Eastern Himalayas that is high in biodiversity, and encompasses both Manas Tiger Reserve in India and Royal Manas National Park in Bhutan (and surrounding areas). The rea within Bhutan covers three protected areas—Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary, Royal Manas National Park, and Jomotshangkha Wildlife Sanctuary—as well as two biological corridors, which allow tigers and other animals to move between the protected areas. The Manas Tiger Reserve in India and the Royal Manas NP in Bhutan form the Tx2 site, and the core of this biologically outstanding transboundary region that is home to flagship species such as tigers, elephants and greater one-horned rhinos, and more than 1,500 other species of mammals, birds and plants. Key threats within this landscape include encroachment (mostly on the Indian side), poaching, hunting, human-wildlife conflict—and resulting retaliatory killing of wildlife—overgrazing in forested areas by domestic livestock, degradation of grasslands, and forest fires.

**How is WWF involved?**

While the national parks and protected areas in this landscape are under the jurisdiction of the two country governments, WWF engages with both governments, local communities and the other stakeholders to take a larger landscape approach to conservation, expanding our focus just these protected areas. WWF plays an important role in developing and implementing plans for the landscape together with the two governments and other partners in the landscape. WWF-India has been working in the state of Assam since 2011, and in Manas Tiger Reserve for over 12 years. WWF-Bhutan has been working in Bhutan since 1977, and in Royal Manas National Park since 2003.

WWF has also been instrumental in assisting governments to develop and roll out new and innovative tools and strategies for conservation. This includes tools to tackle protected area management (Conservation Assured Tigers Standards), human-wildlife conflict (Safe Systems Approach) and poaching (SMART and SMART Connect).

**What is the focus of this project?**

The overall vision for this project is a transboundary landscape managed for the benefit of wildlife conservation and people. To this end, the project works on long-term monitoring and management of tiger and Asian elephant populations that move back and forth across the border; joint enforcement conducted along the border, including anti-poaching efforts and intelligence-sharing; transboundary management of protected areas, habitat, and wildlife movement corridors; integrated land use planning; reducing human-wildlife conflict; engaging communities for the management of strategic areas adjacent to the protected areas; and working with communities to further sustainable livelihood opportunities, among others.

**TIGER FACTS**

**What is Tx2?**

There was a rapid 97% decline from an estimated 100,000 at the start of the 20th century to an estimated 3,200 tigers in 2010. Bringing tigers back from the brink takes commitment on a global scale. Recognizing that global wild tiger numbers are at a critical low, all 13 tiger-range countries met in 2010, the last Year of the Tiger, at the Tiger Summit in St. Petersburg, and committed to the most ambitious and visionary species conservation goal ever set: Tx2, to double wild tiger numbers by 2022, the next Year of the Tiger.

**What is the current global wild tiger population?**

Now, due to intense efforts on behalf of WWF, governments, other organizations and individuals/partners, the global wild tiger population is up to about 3,890 (as of April 2016)—and is rising for the first time in a century. These numbers reflect the extraordinary commitment of regional leaders and leading philanthropists to double the population of tigers in the wild. This growth trend marks a major turnaround, but it will be tenuous unless we sustain momentum by amplifying attention and investment in key tiger landscapes. Discovery’s devotion to conservation and impressive reach can only inspire others to join the cause.