

Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus Half Year Report

Note: If there is any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website, please ensure you clearly highlight this.

Submission Deadline: 31st October 2023

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| Project reference | 29-023 |
| Project title | Community-based conservation of snow leopard and its habitat in Pakistan |
| Country(ies)/territory(ies) | Pakistan |
| Lead partner | Snow Leopard Foundation |
| Partner(s) | Snow Leopard Trust |
| Project leader | <i>Snow Leopard Foundation</i> |
| Report date and number (e.g. HYR1) | <i>30 October 2023, SLFHYP 2</i> |
| Project website/blog/social media | www.slf.org.pk |

Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

Although we are not looking for specific reporting against your indicators, please use this opportunity to consider the appropriateness of your M&E systems (are your indicators still relevant, can you report against any Standard Indicators, do your assumptions still hold true?). The guidance can be found on the resources page of the relevant fund website.

| Sr. No. | Activities planned as per Project Implementation Timetable | Progress from 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023 |
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| Output 1. Conservation and income generating initiatives including livestock vaccination, predator-proof corrals, livestock insurance and handicrafts enterprises established in 12 valleys. | | |
| 1.1. | Attend already established Valley Conservation Development Organization (VCDO)/ Community based Organization (CBO) meetings, provide guidance for community mobilization and gender empowerment | The project team attended 17 meetings of the VCDOs/CBOs in 13 project sites during the reporting period and provided guidance for community mobilization and gender empowerment during the community learning sessions. |
| 1.2. | Establish new VCDOs and CBOs as per project requirements and attend meetings to provide guidance for community mobilization and gender empowerment | Three women's committees within the jurisdictions of Naz Bar, Darkut, and Thoi valleys were established. The womenfolk were mobilized to gain their involvement and support for the conservation initiatives. The initiation of the Snow Leopard Enterprises (SLE) has helped the women to gain the necessary entrepreneurial skills |

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| | | and utilize the skills to contribute to the family livelihood. |
| 1.3. | Identify and procure vaccines as per vaccination protocol and medicine for ectoparasites as per feedback from the GB Livestock Department. | The Livestock and Dairy Development Department, Gilgit-Baltistan, recommended the <i>Black Quarter</i> (BQ), <i>Haemorrhagic Septicaemia</i> (HS), <i>Enterotoxaemia</i> , Foot and Mouth Disease, Caprine Pleuropneumonia (CCPV), sheep, and goat pox vaccines for the spring vaccination drive. The vaccines identified were procured and shipped to the program office for onward distribution in the program sites. |
| 1.4. | Vaccinate 50,000 cattle/ yak and 100,000 goat/sheep for Black Quarter, Enterotoxaemia, Foot and Mouth or other necessary vaccines recommended by the Livestock Department and protection of animals against ectoparasites like Mange. | The spring vaccination campaign was launched at Darwin sites in collaboration with the Livestock and Dairy Development Department, Gilgit-Baltistan, and the CBOs of program sites. A total of 49,548 livestock were vaccinated, including 9,794 cattle, 2,499 yaks, 16,827 goats, and 20,428 sheep, against BQ, HS, Enterotoxaemia, Foot and Mouth Disease, CCPV, sheep, and goat pox. The campaign was conducted by 59 Ecosystem Health Workers (EHWs). |
| 1.5. | Monitor, collect, and compile data, and payment to Ecosystem Health Workers | A total of 59 EHWs administered the vaccines in their respective villages. Data received from the field were verified and payment was made to the EHWs as per the were paid for their services to the local community. |
| 1.6. | Approve selected sites, prepare feasibility and cost estimates for the construction of 20 predator-proof corrals | Selected sites and prepared feasibility and cost estimates for the construction of 4 new predator-proof corrals one each in the Quramber, Thoi, Gulmit, and Passu Valleys. So far seven corrals have been initiated out of the 20 corrals to be developed by the end of the project. |
| 1.7. | Sign agreements with the VCDOs/CBOs for the construction of Predator-proof corrals | Agreements for the construction of three predator-proof corrals were drafted, discussed with the VCDOs, finalized, and signed during the reporting period. |
| 1.8. | Provide payment to the account of VCDO/CBO in installments for corral construction | The payment was made to three VCDO/CBOs of Quramber, Thoi, and Gulmit, and a second installment to the CBO Darkut for corral construction. |
| 1.9. | Monitor construction of corrals by the VCDO/CBO | SLF monitored the construction of seven (newly initiated and ongoing) corrals being constructed by the VCDOs. |
| 1.10. | Prepare completion report of corral construction | Corral in Darkut Valley was completed and completion report was prepared. |
| 1.11. | Sign agreements with the VCDOs/CBOs for 12 livestock insurance schemes (LISs) | Signed agreements with Bonji and KVO VCDOs for the establishment of the LISs during this reporting period. With these, a total of seven LISs were initiated out of the 12 planned in the project. |
| 1.12. | Monitor collection of community share by the VCDOs/CBOs for LISs | The three VCDOs viz., Bonji, KVO, and Khyber collected and deposited their share |

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| | | of PKR 1,009,000 in the respective LIS bank accounts as per agreement. |
| 1.13. | Form committees for the provision of compensations to community members for livestock loss due to predators | Established two committees one each in Bunji and KVO valleys to compile, verify, and recommend payment to predation-affected households using the LIS funds in the subsequent year. |
| 1.14. | Provide project share for LISs to VCDOs/CBOs | Provided project share for LISs in Bonji (PKR 400,000), KVO (PKR 400,000), and Khyber VCDOs (remaining PKR 25,000) during the reporting period. |
| 1.15. | Develop and provide selection criteria for different trainings of men and women community members of VCDOs/CBOs to identify the relevant community members | Developed and provided selection criteria to VCDOs/CBOs for the Snow Leopard Enterprises training in Thoi, Darkut, and Naz Bar. |
| 1.16. | Sign agreements for SLE with VCDOs/CBOs | Signed SLE agreements with Thoi, Darkut, and Naz VCDOs. |
| 1.17. | Provide training to women for SLE | Thirty-five women from three program sites i.e., Naz Bar, Thoi, and Darkut, were trained in selected SLE product lines. Two master trainers facilitated the 14-day training in the project sites. Major product lines developed included jewelry boxes, cushions, and carpet shoes. |
| 1.18. | Place order for SLE products received from SLT and private companies to the trained women, collect products twice/yr. and bring to SLF office to ship to the SLT/private companies | The government of Gilgit-Baltistan has allocated a space to establish a 'Women Gems and Handicraft' market in the picturesque and historic area of Gilgit city. This market aims to empower women who are involved in the business of gems and handicrafts, and it is managed and operated by women entrepreneurs. SLF under this project has rented a hut to showcase products prepared by the women artisans from the program sites and develop linkages with vendors. The products already developed by our artisans on the display and marketing of the SLE products have started. |

Output 2. Effectiveness of conservation initiatives on livestock losses, household income increased, attitudes towards conservation including gender effects are improved in 12 valleys and a new Protected Area added.

| Sr. No. | Activities planned as per Project Implementation Timetable | Progress from 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023 |
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| 2.1. | Monitor corral usage on an annual basis | Corral usage will be monitored after the completion of the corrals. |
| 2.2. | Provide profit of SLE products to communities' women | Efforts are being made to sell the SLE products developed by the women artisans. The SLE store established in the women's market in Gilgit city is operational. The artisans will get the profit from the sale of these products displayed at the SLE store, over time. |
| 2.3. | Monitor poaching of snow leopard and its prey and predation on livestock through | The SLF Gilgit-Baltistan team collects details of any poaching and predation |

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| | interaction with VCDOs/CBOs and GB Wildlife Department | incidents that occur within Gilgit-Baltistan each month, from both communities and the Parks and Wildlife Department. During the reporting period, no poaching of any wildlife species was reported. However, the Chipurson community reported the loss of livestock, including 4 sheep, 3 goats, and 3 yaks during the same period. The SLF, CBO, and Parks and Wildlife Department staff verified these incidents and prepared a reimbursed claim of 187,000 PKR for 8 herders. This amount will be paid in an event scheduled for November 2023. |
| Output 3. Capacity of 20 community activists built for community/ financial management and record keeping, 24 26 teachers, 200 students for conservation, 8 members of academia, 22 Wildlife Department staff and 28 community members for survey techniques through training and provision of resource material. | | |
| 3.1. | Make arrangements for a 2-days training workshop for 20 community activists (at least 30% women) in financial management and record keeping | Last year, during March 2023, the capacity of 16 community members (15 men & one woman) was built for community/financial management, record keeping, monitoring, reporting, and the importance of wildlife conservation as an outcome of a two-day training arranged under this project. The trained persons are now managing the VCDOs' activities with an informed attitude. |
| 3.2. | Engage 20 community conservation champions (at least 30% women) in dialogue with communities | Engaged 20 community conservation champions including 8 women coming from the Ghulkin, Khyber, Naz Bar, Chipurson, Misgar, Khuda Abad, Thoi, Darkut, Hanzal, Bonji, Shimshal, Qurumbar valleys in dialogue with communities and community learning sessions. |
| 3.3. | Arrange 4-days training for 26 teachers (13 men and 13 women) for conservation and training skills | The training module was developed and training is scheduled for December 2023 and will be arranged during the winter vacation. |
| 3.4. | Establish Nature clubs in 13 valleys | Five nature clubs were established in selected schools of the Chipurson, Ghulkin, Khyber, Khuda Abad, and Qurumbar valleys during the reported period. |
| 3.5. | Arrange 2-days nature study camps for 200 students (100 boys and 100 girls) | The nature camps will be conducted in two modes. In the first mode, Karakorum International University (KIU) Bachelor of Science (BS) Zoology students from the project sites will be taken to Khunjerab National Park (KNP) to familiarize them with the flora and fauna of the park. In the second mode, schoolchildren from at least five program sites will participate in nature camps. |
| 3.6. | Arrange one day workshop for 28 men members of CBO, 8 members of academia (4 men & 4 women), and 22 Wildlife Department staff in Wildlife survey techniques | This training workshop will be conducted in November 2023, just before the rut surveys of ungulates, so that the participants can conduct ungulate and DNA sampling |

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| | | surveys using the skills they learned during the training. |
| 3.7. | Collect technical material and design 5 posters and 5 leaflets on conservation related topics | Drafted a brochure on the Khunjerab National Park. Designed a poster on Astor Markhor during August-September 2023. |
| 3.8. | Print 5 posters and 5 leaflets on conservation related topics | Printed 5 booklets to promote the biodiversity and tourism potential of the Khujrab National Park NP, Deosai, Broghal, Chitral Gol, and Ghamot National Parks. |
| 3.9. | Disseminate printed 5 posters and 5 leaflets among stakeholders | The five booklets on the National Parks printed under activity #3.8 were disseminated. |

Output 4. Impact of conservation initiatives on abundance of wild ungulates and Snow leopards understood.

| Sr. No. | Activities planned as per Project Implementation Timetable | Progress from 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023 |
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| 4.1. | Provide relevant equipment/materials and conduct ungulate surveys through trained persons | After completing the workshop on ungulates and DNA sampling techniques (3.6), the participants will be provided with maps of their valleys, double observer method formats, GPS devices, range finders, bottles for DNA sample collection, binoculars, and spotting scopes. |
| 4.2. | Analyse the ungulate survey results and prepare the report | The rut surveys of wild ungulates i.e., Himalayan ibex and blue sheep were conducted from 29 th November 2022 to 25 th December 2022, Ladakh urial (29 th November 2022 – 02 December 2022), and Markhor (13 th December 2022 – 28 th December 2022). The survey data was analyzed using the Bayesian models and the following two reports were developed 1) Rut season survey report 2022-23 of Himalayan ibex and blue sheep in Gilgit-Baltistan 2) Rut season survey report 2022-23 of Astor Markhor and Ladakh urial in Gilgit-Baltistan. |
| 4.3. | Provide relevant materials and collect genetic samples of wildlife during surveys through trained persons | The DNA bottles filled with silica gel with stickers containing the fields for GPS coordinates and other relevant information were distributed to the participants of the 2022 survey training workshop. In total, the trained participants collected 96 DNA samples during the surveys from 29 ^h November 2022 – 28 th December 2022. |
| 4.4. | Record and store the collected samples after proper processing | The collected genetic samples were recorded and stored after proper processing. |

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| 4.5. | Identify Labs for analysis of genetic samples and make agreements with them | Identified “Genetic Lab, Department of Biology, Stanford University, USA” for analysis of genetic samples |
| 4.6. | Send the stored genetic samples to Labs for analysis | Sent 1,192 genetic samples of wildlife species to the Lab. for analysis |
| 4.7. | Prepare 2 scientific papers and send to scientific journals for publication | A scientific paper on “A Perspective on Conservation and Development” was sent to the official preprint server of SORTEE “ecoevorxiv” for publication. |
| 4.8. | Respond to the queries of scientific journals | Responded to the queries of the official preprint server of SORTEE ecoevorxiv and the paper was published in the journal. |
| 4.9. | Document one best practice and share with stakeholders | Documentation of one best practice will be initiated in the next quarter. |
| 4.10. | Prepare annual report | Prepared annual report of the project for 2022-23. |

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

Our project is in its second year, and we have already initiated various interventions across all 13 program sites. The major challenge we are encountering is the adverse climatic conditions, as all the program sites are situated at high altitudes with a very limited window for field activities, such as constructing predator-proof corrals. Consequently, construction of predator-proof corrals on a large scale within a single year becomes quite challenging. Out of the 13 program sites, 6 are located in the Ghizer district, 5 in the Hunza, and 1 in the Gilgit district. The geographical isolation of these program sites hinders the gathering of participants for different trainings at a central location that is accessible to all. As a result, most of the trainings have to be convened in Gilgit city, which significantly increases the budget for these training sessions.

Furthermore, since the prime snow leopard habitat encompasses the Darwin program sites, there are other valleys in the neighborhood like KVO, Passu, Gulmit, and Sikandar Abad Valleys that are teeming with snow leopards. Both local communities and government officials frequently approach the SLF Gilgit office to augment conservation efforts, including initiatives such as livestock insurance, livestock vaccination, and predator-proof corrals, as they believe that these interventions have proven to be effective tools in motivating and assisting communities in snow leopard conservation.

One of the team members i.e., Communication and SLE Coordinator has left the project and the position remained vacant during the reported period, however, we are trying to identify a person, preferably a female for this position.

Despite, these bottlenecks that the project team faced, we are pleased to report that the project is on track and has accomplished all the planned targets.

3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with NIRAS: Yes/No√

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes/No√

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No√

Change request reference if known:

4a. Please confirm your actual spending in this financial year to date (i.e., from 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023)

Actual spend: ██████████

4b. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g., more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this financial year (ending 31 March 2024)?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

4c. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a re-budget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.**

NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

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If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response, or if your Annual Report Review asked you to provide a response with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

All new projects (excluding Darwin Plus Fellowships and IWT Challenge Fund Evidence projects) should submit their Risk Register with this report if they have not already done so.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with NIRAS through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report by email** to BCF-Reports@niras.com. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number, followed by the specific fund in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 29-001 Darwin Initiative Half Year Report**