

Snow Leopard Conservation Grants Program

Final Report

Submitted to

Snow Leopard Network (SLN)

**Predator Proof Corrals in Baltistan Region
of Gilgit Baltistan (GB) Pakistan**

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List of Acronyms

AKRSP:	Aga Khan Rural Support Program
BWCDO:	Baltistan Wildlife Conservation Development Organization
IUCN:	International Union for Conservation Network
PSL:	Project Snow Leopard
SLN:	Slow Leopard Network
SLC:	Snow Leopard Conservancy
SLCC:	Snow Leopard Conservation Committee
SLCGP:	Snow Leopard Conservation Grant Program

1. Background and Objectives:

The Baltistan Wildlife Conservation & Development Organization (BWCDO), formerly recognized as Project Snow Leopard (PSL), is a non-profit organization registered under the 1984 Companies Ordinance, working in Baltistan since 1999¹. Its objective is to find ways and means to conserve and protect Baltistan's wildlife, the snow leopard in particular, with the active support of the local communities, the regional forest department, and the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme.

The snow leopard (*Uncia uncia*), is classified as Endangered in the 2008 IUCN Red List (IUCN 2008), "Critically Endangered" in the Red List of Pakistan Mammals of Sheikh and Moullar (2005) and listed on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Snow Leopards kill domestic livestock, a source of livelihoods for the local farmers, who retaliate by poisoning, shooting or trapping snow leopards. BWCDO-PSL provides community-based livestock insurance scheme and anti-predator material and management infrastructure to local communities in Baltistan to reduce the incidences of retaliatory killings and help protect snow leopard population.

Our mission is to conserve wildlife through long lasting and sustainable institutional action. In addition to this, BWCDO-PSL relies on scientific research in management and implementation of wild life conservation activities. It has produced scientific papers on the importance of wildlife and the ecology of snow leopards and existing and impending threats to its population in Pakistan. Its main strategic objectives are to:

- provide economic incentives to local farmers through insurance schemes and financial compensation against livestock losses by snow leopard attack
- offer solutions to predation of livestock by improving existing animal pens, training to improve herding techniques and preparation of predator-proof corrals for small ruminants
- conduct and publish research on snow leopard ecology, behavior, conservation and management practices

¹ PSL was officially incorporated in 2007 and has six founding members who all serve on the Board of Directors. five of them are based in Baltistan. Two are conservationists, two work in development, one serve in public office in Baltistan and one is a journalist

2. Executive Summary:

The Final Report of the Baltistan Wildlife Conservation & Development Organization (BWEDO) and Snow Leopard Conservation Grants Program (SLCGP) encompasses all the progress of “construction of predator proof corrals” implemented in four villages of Basha valley Skardu District Baltistan during the year 2013. The report covers the activities and outcomes on the communities and their efforts towards conservation of the snow leopard and includes objectives, Methodology, results, and pictures which further clarify the details of the activities during the project. it describes some of the approach and method of “introduction of livestock compensation scheme”.

3. Objectives:

The defined goals and objectives:

- Built predator-proof corrals to reduce farmers wildlife Conflict;
- To protect resources of livelihoods of the local community
- To protect snow leopards , their natural habitat and natural resources
- Assist the public sector for pasture and natural resource management by engaging local communities.

4. Methods:

BWEDO-PSL is raising awareness of local communities about wildlife and its role; building capacity of farmers to better protect their livestock through vaccination; providing compensation to farmer who lose livestock to snow leopards; constructing predator proof corrals and small community based infrastructure project. All of these activities are carried out by the communities in collaboration with and with the support of resources from from Snow Leopard Conservancy, USA or SLN.

Under the Snow Leopard Conservation Grants Program 2013, “Construction of Predator Proof Corral”, BWEDO-PSL completed the following activities.

- Consultation and partnership building with newly formed Snow Leopard Conservation Committees (SLCC) for the implementation of projects;
- Construction of Predator Proof Corrals in those deprived communities which are most suffered from snow leopard and wolves attack;
- Monitoring and managing of constructed predator proof corrals.
- Each year the communities use to cut the barks of Birch trees and shrubs to construct a fence to keep their livestock inside, and this practice they use to do every year. This put lots of pressure in natural forest. After construction of corrals; it is a permanent solution and the pressure on natural forest decreased and as a result of the predator proof corrals the burden on natural forest has decreased and save the time of the local communities.

5. Results:

- The construction of 4 predator proof corral secured the value asset livestock from the attack of snow leopard, wolf and other natural effects.
- Through the SLCC formulation, the communities are now more responsible and empowered.
- Predator proof corrals has reduced farmer-wildlife conflict and increased farmers' livelihood base and resilience to absorb losses from snow Leopard predation
- As a result of SLCC formation the ibex population is increasing and fulfilling the dietary requirements of snow leopard.
- The obligation imposed on the benefiting communities under the agreement between the project and the communities to protect the wildlife.
- The predator proof corrals decreases the work load of the community herders to look after the animals.

6. Discussion:

Baltistan is rich habitat of snow leopard; occasionally snow leopard attack on domestic livestock at night time. Because the farmers leave their small animals open near the human huts. In order to protect the domestic livestock of the local people, BWCDO-PSL started building predator-proof corrals in the hot spots areas of the pastures in the Basha valley of Baltistan, northern Pakistan

Local people justify the killing of snow leopard by asserting the fact that this wild animal attacks their domestic livestock, which is the vital source of livelihoods for them. BWCDO-PSL has introduced Livestock Compensation Scheme in which all the small and large ruminants of the targeted area are insured. To date BWCDO-PSL has provided compensation to more than 200 livestock farmers.

During the year 2013, the operational Snow Leopard Conservation Committees (SLCC) in each of the intervened villages hold various meetings to discuss the issues and practices related to wildlife conservation. Moreover, the SLCC remained involved in managing and monitoring the ongoing and implanted projects of predator proof corrals construction. The progress of the activities regarding the construction of predator proof corrals monitored on monthly basis and to insure the use of materials. Cash was delivered to the communities in two installments, first before starting the project, 2nd after completion of project. The communities select a project committee which is responsible to complete the project. The Snow Leopard Conservation Committee is responsible to check the work done by project committee.

7. Photographs:



Picture 1: Meeting with community representatives



Picture 2: Signing TOP with community in Basha valley Baltistan Pakistan



Picture 3: Before the project the local constructed animal shed



Picture 4: Predator proof corral after completion



Picture 5: Predator proof corral after completion



Picture 6: Predator proof corral after completion