



## GSLEP Steering Committee Meeting Proceedings



October 2020

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### Introduction

[The Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection \(GSLEP\) programme](#) is an alliance of 12 snow leopard range countries, non-governmental organizations, multilateral organizations, scientists, conservationists and local communities coming together to safeguard snow leopards and the mountain ecosystems. The GSLEP programme was officially launched in 2013 to implement the goals of the Bishkek Declaration endorsed by the Governments of the snow leopard range countries.

The year 2020 marks seven years since the initiation of the GSLEP programme. The Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) **reviewed the work being done under the GSLEP programme** thus far across the snow leopard range countries and by partner organizations and **identified future priority actions to conserve our mountain ecosystems and the people living there.**

The SCM discussed how issues such as conservation, human and animal health, planetary health, and economic development can no longer be viewed in isolation from each other. The meeting was hosted virtually, using a modern and secure communication platform that integrated with secure communication tools. The virtual meeting venue was supported by international partners, the Snow Leopard Trust, United Nations Environment Program, Global Environment Facility, and United Nations Development Program.

The main themes of the Steering Committee Meeting were:

1. Resource mobilization strategy to support NSLEPs and Global Support Components across the snow leopard range.
2. Status of GSLEP program and work done in range countries between 2013 and 2020.
3. Prioritizing mountain ecosystems in policy, community based conservation, conservation education, conflict management and wildlife and human health in a post COVID-19 world.

The Steering Committee Meeting took place on 23 October 2020 on the [virtual platform, http://join.globalsnowleopard.org](http://join.globalsnowleopard.org). A total of 109 participants, including Ministers and Government officials from snow leopard range countries, and senior representatives from partner organizations of the GSLEP programme joined the virtual meeting. Partners set-up kiosks on the online platform with information about their work and projects. Country and Knowledge kiosks were set up on the virtual venue to share information on snow leopard conservation and ecology and useful resources.

This document summarizes the Proceedings from the Steering Committee Meeting and related side events. It also provides information about the kiosks and key links. Links to the presentations and meeting metrics are provided below.

## **A) Pre-Meeting Events**

### **1) October 22: Snow Leopard Network (SLN) pre-event to GSLEP Steering Committee Meeting**

The Snow Leopard Network hosted a virtual pre-event to the GSLEP SCM, on Thursday, October 22, 2020. The meeting brought members of the Snow Leopard Network together with the GSLEP SC participants to discuss snow leopard conservation from a global perspective. The SLN Steering Committee member Dr. Juan Li gave a brief overview presentation on the global status of snow leopard threats and opportunities for conservation. Dr. Juan Li has carried out global assessments of snow leopard responses to climate change, predicted global distributions and identified key geographic areas for conservation priority. After the presentation, a panel discussion highlighted the need for continued global collaborations in snow leopard conservation. Dr. Koustubh Sharma from the GSLEP Program highlighted the SLN-GSLEP partnership. The presentation can be viewed [here](#).

### **2) October 22: Webinar on "Snow Leopard: The Mystical Saint of the Central and South Asian Mountains"**

The Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change in India, held a webinar on Oct 22 for the snow leopard day. Dr. Charudutt Mishra, Executive Director of the Snow Leopard Trust and Dr. Ranjini Murali, Conservation Scientist at the Snow Leopard Trust spoke at the event. Dr. Mishra spoke about disease transmission in the high altitudes and the factors impacting disease transmission, stressing on the need to minimize such transmissions. Dr. Murali spoke about ecosystem services from snow leopard landscapes and the creation of alternative development models that account for these ecosystem services. The webinar can be accessed [here](#).

## **B) GSLEP MAIN EVENT**

### 3) GSLEP High Level Steering Committee Meeting, Oct 23

The GSLEP High Level Steering Committee meeting was held virtually on October 23 and was attended by 109 participants. Country focal points from 11 of the snow leopard range countries were also present. The meeting was organized into four segments. The detailed agenda for the SCM can be found in Appendix 1.

#### Segment 1: Statements

- **Welcome Address and country update by co-Chair: Kyrgyz Republic**

The Director of the State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry of the Kyrgyz Republic and co-Chair of the GSLEP Steering Committee, His Excellency Mr. Mirslav Amankulov delivered the welcome address. On behalf of the Kyrgyz Republic, he welcomed everyone to the GSLEP program's Steering Committee Meeting. He thanked the governments and NGO partners for supporting the initiative and congratulated them on the effort and work of GSLEP over the last 7 years. He reinstated that snow leopards are more than ever in need of our support and protection and reiterated the Kyrgyz government's support of the programme both in terms of resources and man-power. He said that the Kyrgyz Government is initiating bilateral programs with many countries for biodiversity conservation, including the Government of Nepal, Mongolia, India, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Russia and Uzbekistan. The Kyrgyz republic has launched the Green Fund and he requested the support of all range countries at the global level. He highlighted the need for coordination, joint effort and partnerships across the range for protecting the snow leopard, its habitats and water. He emphasized the key role that the Kyrgyz Republic has been playing for snow leopard conservation, including establishment of three new protected areas for snow leopards.

- **Chair's Address and country update: Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal**

The Minister from the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, His Excellency Mr. Shakti Bahadur Basnet spoke as the Chair of the Steering Committee. He addressed the gathering and acknowledged the contributions of countries in protecting the snow leopard. Nepal is strongly committed to snow leopard conservation and provides the highest level of protection to the snow leopard and its habitat. The country is working on grassland restoration and human-wildlife conflict, camera trapping to monitor snow leopards, and facilitation of research activities. The threats to snow leopards in Nepal include retaliatory killing and poaching, and habitat degradation. The Minister emphasized on the need to develop systems to improve livelihoods and shift strategies from cattle farming. Nepal is also focusing on prevention of poaching and wildlife trade. The minister highlighted the need for transboundary cooperation and the important role of the GSLEP platform in facilitating transboundary cooperation. The Minister concluded by acknowledging that COVID has impacted funding and is likely to continue to remain a concerning issue in the years to come.

- **Country statements by Environment Ministers representing snow leopard range countries**

Countries reaffirmed their commitment to protecting snow leopards, snow leopard habitats and local communities. They also restated their commitment to the Bishkek Declaration. Each country presented about the work they have been conducting in snow leopard research and community based conservation. The importance of transboundary cooperation for snow leopard conservation was reiterated.

The GSLEP program was urged to have a stronger voice for climate change that is likely to impact snow leopards and mountain communities. **Tajikistan and Mongolia offered to host the next GSLEP Steering Committee Meeting, provided the situation with covid has improved by then.**

### **Key points from country updates**

#### **Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

- Environmental laws in Afghanistan offer the highest degree of protection to the snow leopards
- Afghanistan has identified areas that can achieve the status of a protected area
- Wakhan National Park has already been designated as a protected area
- The Government of Afghanistan believes conservation should be based on science
- They work closely with local communities for snow leopard conservation
- They recognize the threat of growing human-wildlife conflict

#### **Kingdom of Bhutan**

- Bhutan reaffirmed its commitment to protect snow leopards and stressed that snow leopards have always been at the helm of their conservation efforts
- Killing a snow leopard is a criminal offense and liable for a fine of 14,000 USD
- Bhutan implemented the snow leopard action plan to protect snow leopard landscapes. It was formulated to conserve viable populations while mitigating negative impacts. The snow leopard action plan was formulated to conserve viable populations while mitigating negative impacts
- Bhutan is among the first range countries to have completed one population assessment surveys, and is already in the process of planning the next survey in line with the PAWS guidelines
- Bhutan is developing innovative and sustainable financing mechanisms: the country has made available 43 million USD over 3 years under the 'Bhutan for Life' Trust Fund, but resource crunch is still a challenge.
- Humans-and wildlife are intricately connected and Bhutan called on range countries to strengthen the collective effort for conservation and prevent disease transmission

- It was suggested that GSLEP can develop a collaboration with ICIMOD to focus on mountain conservation. It is important to emphasize success in spite of scarce resource investments. ICIMOD and GSLEP can collectively invest in end to end programmes. Together with ICIMOD, GSLEP can be more vocal about climate change.

### **China**

- China is completing the assessment of snow leopard habitats. They are identifying important and potential snow leopard habitats.
- China is in the process of estimating the snow leopard abundance
- Local wardens and nature reserve staff are being trained in monitoring and basic survey skills
- China is creating conservation plans for the whole snow leopard range including separate plans for snow leopards in natural parks, and snow leopards in nature reserves
- They are focusing on managing snow leopard habitats scientifically and finding solutions for local community development
- China has a large local population that overlaps with the snow leopard range. Public awareness programmes are being conducted to increase knowledge, understanding, and support for the snow leopard from the local community

### **India**

- In India, the snow leopard habitat covers around 1,80,000 km<sup>2</sup> and acts as the water tower for downstream populations
- The Government of India considers the snow leopard the flagship species of the high mountains.
- India has been conserving the snow leopard and its habitat. The National Protocol for Snow Leopard Population Assessment (SPAI) was launched during the 4th GSLEP meeting in 2019 to estimate the snow leopard population in India. GOI with its local partners
- States have also implemented GEF-funded projects that focus on landscape-level conservation
- India hosted CMS-COP 2020 and now is spearheading other conservation initiatives
- India is looking to strengthen trans-boundary conservation

### **Mongolia**

- The government of Mongolia fully supports GSLEP and its efforts
- Mongolia conducted an occupancy survey to determine the snow leopard distribution across the country. This was implemented through partnerships with universities and NGOs and was followed up with balanced acceptance sampling using camera traps to estimate the country-wide population of snow leopards.

- Mongolia is working on climate focused plans, and protecting biodiversity and promoting sustainable development.
- The Mongolian government is very happy to collaborate with and support local organizations.
- Ecological projects have been initiated in Mongolia. Mongolia commits to landscape level conservation of snow leopards
- Mongolia would like to host the GSLEP Steering Committee Meeting next year

### **Pakistan**

- Pakistan, due its unique geographical location is home to unique biodiversity including the snow leopard.
- The snow leopard is considered the flagship species of the high mountains.
- Pakistan, as a member of GSLEP, is committed to protect this species and its habitat in collaboration with other countries.
- The snow leopard is protected in Pakistan and various measures are in place for its conservation and protection, such as livestock insurance schemes, research and monitoring, and awareness activities.
- For snow leopard protection, the GEF-funded project Pakistan Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Project has been launched.
- More than \$750 million have been put aside for the revival of forestry and climate change adaptation.

### **Russian Federation**

- Since the last GSLEP steering committee meeting, Russia has started population assessments but many sites are inaccessible.
- >300 camera traps have been installed in snow leopard habitats. and >100 scat samples have been collected. This work was carried out in collaboration with Russian academy of sciences.
- Russia planned a multi-country conference but it had to be cancelled because of COVID.
- Russia started transboundary corporation and snow leopards have been collared on camera traps in Mongolian side that often cross the border
- Russia has not recorded any direct cases of poaching this year. Linear infrastructure is an emerging threat.
- 8 km of 40 km fence, between Russia and Mongolia, was dismantled this year
- The snow leopard has been recently classified as endangered in The Red Book of Russia based on information collected by the The National Ecological Project
- The Snow Leopard is a priority species for Russia and the country is working towards securing snow leopard landscapes.

### **Tajikistan**

- An exhibition was organized in the Hilton hotel on the snow leopard and its protection and sustainable development of people living in these landscapes
- Tajikistan signed a memorandum of agreement with neighbouring countries to protect the snow leopard
- Tajikistan organized a national seminar, together with UNDP and GEF, on snow leopard protection that was attended by all ministries. At this conference, achievements regarding snow leopard conservation were reported. Gender issues and women participation were also raised at the conference.. More than 20 women have joined snow leopard conservation efforts. They are trained as guides for tracking snow leopards.
- The area of one national park has been expanded where agricultural land has been converted to a protected area.
- Tajikistan would like to host the next GSLEP Steering Committee Meeting and warmly welcomes all range countries.

### **Uzbekistan**

- A memorandum of agreement related to the conservation of the snow leopard has been signed with Kyrgyzstan.
- A strategy to conserve snow leopards was approved along with expansion to new snow leopard habitats. The plan for snow leopard conservation and all other wildlife in mountain areas was approved by the Government.
- A dedicated budget is annually allocated by the government for technological, financial and scientific support for conservation.
- Uzbekistan is encouraging national and international collaborations for the protection of the snow leopard.

### ● **Partner/Sponsor statements**

GSLEP partners and sponsors, the International Snow Leopard Trust, the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, Global Environment Facility, and Global Tiger Initiative addressed the meeting. All partners recognized the critical need to protect snow leopards and mountain communities, especially during these unprecedented times. They recognized the work done by GSLEP thus far, but also stressed that work still needs to be done to continue to protect the snow leopard and its mountain ecosystem. All partners reaffirmed their commitment to continuing to support the GSLEP programme in different capacities. More information on the partner statements can be found [here](#).

### ● **Release of documents**

Three GSLEP documents were released by the representatives from different countries.

- a. Sharing the appeal with range countries' governments to strengthen conservation efforts and minimize disease transmission between wildlife and people.

The National Focal Point from Bhutan, Mr. Sonam Wangdi, shared the appeal to minimize disease transmission. Countries were asked to read and sign the appeal.

- b. Policy advice paper on unusual snow leopard encounters

The official delegation head from India, Mr. Rakesh Kumar Jagenia, released the policy brief unusual snow leopard encounters. The document can be found [here](#).

- c. Policy advice paper on conservation education

The National Focal Point from Pakistan, Mr. Samar Khan, released the awareness and education strategy from snow leopard landscapes which can be found [here](#).

## Segment 2: Updates

- **GSLEP general update**

The year 2020 marked the 7th year since the initiation of the GSLEP program. The pandemic was a stronger reminder for the need to care better for our natural world and local communities. It also impacted funding of several on-going conservation programs across the range countries and is likely to impact resource mobilization for biodiversity conservation, in the coming years.

The 12 snow leopard range countries are invited to jointly review the conservation work being done by various countries and the Secretariat under the GSLEP program; and identify future priority actions to conserve our mountain ecosystems and the people living there. The themes covered during the SCM include climate change, biodiversity loss, illegal wildlife trade, and disease. The meeting was organized using a state-of-the-art online platform that not only allowed seamless participation of 400+ representatives from about 25 countries, it also facilitated vibrant discussions, side-meetings, workshops and one-on-one interactions between participants. The meeting concluded with a GSLEP Resolution that was endorsed by representatives from all snow leopard range countries.

- **Prominent activities/events**

**PAWS:** The main objective of the Population Assessment of the World's Snow Leopards (PAWS) – led by snow leopard range country governments – is to generate a robust estimate of how many snow leopards there are across the 12 range countries.



One major focus of PAWS – and a condition for its success – is the establishment of agreed-upon best practices and protocols for data collection and management for population assessment. Learn more about the PAWS Resources developed by the GSLEP Secretariat and partners. Find out more on the PAWS progress by checking out the Proceedings from the 2020 PAWS Summit.

**Training Workshops:** GSLEP partnered with the Snow Leopard Network to provide a series of training modules that build participant skills and knowledge on a range of critical snow leopard related conservation tools. In total, more than 100 participants attended the workshops aimed at camera trapping for snow leopard population assessment, wild ungulates population assessment, community conservation, social research, and conservation genetics. Several training workshops are planned in the coming months, including communicating conservation, socially and ecologically responsible tourism, distribution surveys and so on.

- **Policy Advisories**

Two policy advisories have been developed so far in the year in response to requests from range countries.

The policy advisory on unusual encounters with snow leopards provides detailed recommendations for managing situations when snow leopards kill livestock in pastures or corals, or when encountering an injured or trapped snow leopard, abandoned cubs, or other encounters. The policy brief was developed based on the latest information and scientific evidence, by a working group of international and regional scientists and conservationists.

The Awareness and Education Strategy developed by GSLEP aims to empower children so that they can be actors of change and support snow leopard and wider environmental protection efforts. It outlines an approach that is gender sensitive and grounded in local ecology, knowledge and culture. The strategy also has examples of modules that can be used. These 10th and 11th such documents facilitated by the GSLEP Secretariat, are in continuation of the earlier nine policy briefs entitled, 'Background Papers for Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Conservation Forum Policy Recommendations', that addressed different themes relevant to snow leopard conservation.

- **Country updates**

Almost all range countries have prepared management plans for the GSLEP landscapes and are in different stages of implementation. In some countries, plans that were piloted for one landscape, have been expanded to other GSLEP landscapes.

More than 167 million USD has been made available for snow leopard and habitat conservation across the SL range countries 54 big projects have planned or currently being implemented across the SL range. Projects have been undertaken through

partnerships between governments, international and national NGOs; universities and local communities. Across range countries, 23 laws and one act have been amended to offer stronger protection to the snow leopard, prey species, and the habitat. Laws have focused on illegal poaching and wildlife trade, in particular. 17 protected areas have been created and boundaries of existing protected areas have been expanded. With this more than 29405 km<sup>2</sup>, which is about 1.4 – 1.8% of predicted snow leopard habitat, has come under additional protection. All countries have been active in SL research especially focusing on SL population and prey assessments. Community based conservation programs have been running or have been newly set-up in the GSLEP landscapes. The programmes include involving the local community in wildlife monitoring. More than 1100 personnel have trained in different aspects of SL conservation and research. Climate change has been recognised as a grave threat to snow leopards and to local communities and almost all range countries have started developing climate change adaptation, risk reduction and mitigation strategies for the GSLEP landscapes. Infrastructure projects such as mining and linear infrastructure have been recognised as one of the biggest threats to SL. In addition, disease, feral dogs, poaching and wildlife trade, and increasing livestock have also been recognised as threats to SL. All range countries have conducted an array of awareness programs. International days, such as snow leopard day, in particular has been used to spread awareness on snow leopards.

- **PAWS update**

Dr. Justine Shanti Alexander presented the PAWS update based on the information shared by national focal points and other PAWS partners. Across all 12 snow leopard range countries, a total of 29 teams have been involved in conducting snow leopard abundance surveys. This represents 125 surveys sites- which have been identified by government and national teams and subsequently submitted to PAWS. Out of these, 79 surveys that met PAWS guidelines took place between 2017-2020. At a minimum these 79 sites cover roughly 133,300km<sup>2</sup>- which is approximately 6-10% of the currently known snow leopard distribution range. This is an extraordinary achievement- and Dr. Alexander stressed that a huge tribute was deserved to the many teams working at local and country level- contributing to this important program. As part of the PAWS initiative, there has been considerable progress in building the tools and capacities in each country- in snow leopard study design, planning and data analysis. Over 250 individual practitioners across the snow leopard range have been trained in PAWS best practices to date, and several training and capacity building toolkits have so far been prepared and uploaded on the GSLEP website. A number of methodological innovations and manuals have been developed in collaboration with experts from across the world.

### **Segment 3: Technical sessions**

- **Session on Sustainable Financing for GSLEP program**

This session focused on the need to mobilize funding for snow leopard conservation especially since the pandemic is likely to impact funding. GEF-UNDP was a key financial support so far but that grant is now coming to an end, which further increases the urgency to mobilize funds. Key points from the session are highlighted below:

- **Promised funding**

- USAID will match donor country funding
- SLT will offer bridge funding
- UNEP committed to continue funding
- GEF offered new funding with a focus area of COVID recovery, with a snow leopard focus and to support knowledge sharing across countries.

- **Key focus areas for funding**

- Local and downstream ecosystem services, especially on water and carbon sequestration
- Ecosystem and human health especially since COVID-19 has been a wake-up call. COVID-19 has severely impacted high mountain areas with reverse migration (i.e people moving back to mountain areas) happening across the range. This could increase pressure on natural resources and on wildlife. There is a need to develop strategies to deal with the impacts of COVID-19 in the future.
- Climate change is a crucial focus area as without addressing climate change impacts, we cannot address the impact on snow leopards.
- Focus on impact analyses are meant to assess the condition of the ecosystems and document other wildlife in snow leopard habitats

- **Ideas for accessing funding**

- Target private sector funding
- Creation of a consortium of all the range countries to attract donor funding. Through the consortium, international NGOs such as GEF, UNDP and the WorldBank can be contacted. Business, industry and the private sector can be contacted as well, and offer possibilities of investment. Carbon sequestration and water conservation can be used to attract investor funding
- The green economy or alternative ideas of development that rely on natural capital, can be promoted and used to attract funding, especially from the business sector.

## **Segment 4: Conclusions & Next steps**

The Honorable minister from Bhutan, Sonam Wangdi, opened the conclusion segment. He started by highlighting the vulnerability of mountain landscapes to climate change. He then said that conservation and development, together, is possible, as shown by Bhutan's gross happiness index which can be applied to other countries. He highlighted the need for discussing financing strategies for GSLEP.

The next steps that emerged from this session were:

- 1) A draft resolution regarding human health and snow leopard landscapes was prepared which is to be shared with the countries. The countries will read the resolution and decide to sign. The draft resolution is attached in the Appendix 2.
- 2) The priority areas for the steering committee were highlighted as: green development, landscape planning, illegal wildlife trade, better public and animal healthcare, and monitoring surveillance disease systems.

## **c) Post-Events**

Several side events were organized at the GSLEP Steering Committee Meeting's virtual venue. These included the meeting of the PAWS Technical Advisory panel, a public facing event by the Snow Leopard Network showcasing the global status of snow leopard threats and opportunities for conservation, a webinar titled "Snow Leopard: The Mystical Saint of the Central and South Asian Mountains", snow leopard day celebrations from various countries, an event by the indigenous representatives of Land of the Snow Leopard Network from Central Asia celebrating snow leopards from the heart, meeting of the Pallas's cat International Conservation Alliance, Partners meeting of UNEP's Vanishing Treasures Project, a GIS workshop by UNEP's Vanishing Treasures Project, a webinar on the role of women in conservation in the Himalayan region, and a PAWS Summit bringing together experts and practitioners from across the snow leopard range and beyond.

### **4) Snow Leopard day celebrations, Oct 23**

The Wildlife Division, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MOEFCC), Government of India organized an online meeting on the International Snow Leopard Day. The meeting was presided by Shri Babul Supriyo, Hon'ble Minister of State, Environment Forests & Climate Change Govt of India. Honble State Chief Ministers and Hon'ble Lt. Governors of the Snow leopard range States/UTs in India also attended the event.

A community volunteer program booklet, Him Sanrakshak, was launched along with an origami notebook on Himalayan Biodiversity Conservation. Speeches and remarks were made by representatives from the GSLEP Secretariat and various snow leopard range countries at the event. The meeting was broadcasted live on the MOEFCC's YouTube Channel and also on the GSLEP Steering Committee Meeting's virtual venue.

## **5) Celebrating snow leopards from the heart, Oct 23**

On International Snow Leopard Day October 23, 2020, the Snow Leopard Conservancy (SLC) hosted a special virtual event: Celebrating Snow Leopards from the Heart. SLC was joined by key members of the Land of the Snow Leopard Network from Central Asia. This gathering highlighted the interconnection of Indigenous People and the sacred Snow Leopard. The Land of the Snow Leopard Network is an unprecedented conservation initiative, a groundbreaking collaboration between Western conservation science and Indigenous Traditional Knowledge, with the goal of creating pathways for Indigenous involvement in the conservation of snow leopards. For more information please visit [www.snowleopardconservancy.com](http://www.snowleopardconservancy.com) and <https://landofsnowleopard.org/>.

## **6) Meeting of the Pallas's cat international association, Oct 25**

The Pallas's cat, also known as the manul, is a small and elusive cat that lives throughout the steppes and mountain grasslands of Central Asia. They share much of their range with the snow leopard and they therefore face similar threats. The benefits of addressing threats to the snow leopard and their fragile habitats therefore will be easily extended to the Pallas's cat and vice versa. Both of these species are also good indicators of ecosystem health: as top predators, stable snow leopard populations mean healthy populations of large mammals and stable Pallas's cat populations mean healthy populations of smaller prey species. By extending GSLEP to advocate also for the Pallas's cat, GSLEP will not only extend the safeguarding of the health and functioning of these two species and their fragile mountain ecosystems but will also protect a number of additional species that fall under the wings of these two indicator species.

In this meeting, the Pallas's Cat International Conservation Alliance (PICA) discussed the conservation needs and the conservation status of the Pallas's cat and their ambition to increase the global conservation efforts on the species. The PICA team also discussed how GSLEP is a perfect platform for increasing the global conservation efforts for the species and how collaborative conservation efforts on Pallas's cats and snow leopards will have synergetic impacts on both species as well as their mountain ecosystems at large. The PICA team also shared information about how the PICA team, IUCN, and specialists from all range countries developed the first Status Review and Global Conservation Strategy for the Pallas's cat in 2019.

## **7) Vanishing treasures project partners meeting, Oct 26**

UNEP organized a virtual Project Partner's meeting, during which partners of the Vanishing Treasures Project got the chance to present their work and discuss the challenge they've encountered and the solutions they've found to deal with these. The meeting also discussed the way forward for 2021 and beyond. The primary goal of this meeting was to Inform all partners on progress, exchange challenges and

solutions encountered during project implementation, and discuss and plan future steps needed for project implementation in 2021 and beyond. The workshop was attended by UNEP, UN Great Ape Survival Partnership, Great Virunga Transboundary Collaboration, International Gorilla Conservation Programme, Global Tiger Centre, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, Ilbirs Foundation, Association of Nature Conservation Organizations of Tajikistan, Snow Leopard Trust, Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program, Humboldt University and Grid Arendal.

## **8) GIS workshop, Oct 27**

The Vanishing Treasures Project Partner's meeting was followed by a more technical GIS workshop. During the workshop, participants evaluated the need for streamlined data management and formats across partners and regions, determined the most useful information/maps that could be obtained from the combined biological, socio-economic and climate data that is useful for guiding pilot interventions and policy development, identified the most suitable tools to combine biological, socio-economic and climate data into models that could provide this information, and determined possible data management tools for communicating the findings of the data analyses and scenario modelling.

## **D) Kiosks**

### **1. Country Kiosks**

All 12 range countries had individual country kiosks describing the work done by them under GSLEP. The complete country updates can be found [here](#).

### **2. Partner Kiosks**

There were a total of 15 partner kiosks, which can be accessed [here](#). The partner kiosks were:

#### **1. The Snow Leopard Trust**

The Snow Leopard Trust, a funding and technical partner of GSLEP, has been working for 40 years to help conserve snow leopards through community-based conservation and cutting-edge science. Established in 1981, the Snow Leopard Trust and its partner organizations have pioneered research and conservation programs across the snow leopard range.

#### **2. United Nations Development Programme**

As a key partner of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP), UNDP has convened more than \$245 million investments (as of 2016) to support snow leopard range countries in meeting their national targets toward achieving GSLEP objectives. UNDP will continue collaborating with GSLEP and other partners on the conservation of snow leopards and their habitats, and on improving well-being of communities that live in snow leopard landscapes.

3. Global Environmental Facility

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems.

4. The United Nations Environment Programme

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the [United Nations system](#), and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.

5. The Snow Leopard Network

The Snow Leopard Network (SLN) is a worldwide organization dedicated to facilitating the exchange of information and insights between individuals around the world for the purpose of snow leopard conservation.

Our membership includes leading snow leopard experts in the public, private and non-profit sectors. It strives to “link up to scale up” and thereby enhance the impact of snow leopard conservation investments. Since the launch of the network in 2003, our membership has grown to over 700 members and organizations.

6. The Snow Leopard Conservancy

Established as a non-profit 501 (c) 3 non-profit in 2010, the [Snow Leopard Conservancy](#) grew from founder Rodney Jackson's 40 years of pioneering research and conservation experience with snow leopards (*Panthera uncia*). Dr. Jackson, widely acknowledged as a leading expert on snow leopards, was the first person to radio-collar and study snow leopards with his Nepalese associates from 1981-1984. This study led to the June 1986 cover story in National Geographic Magazine. Prior to establishing SLC with his partner Darla Hillard, Dr. Jackson trained protected area rangers and biologists from six of the 12 snow leopard range countries, although his real passion centered on developing and testing innovative techniques to help local herders better coexist with this elusive predator. A founding member of the Snow Leopard Network, SLC played a lead role in developing the 2014 [Snow Leopard Survival Strategy](#).



7. Aga-Khan Agency for Habitat

The Aga-Khan Agency for habitat has been implementing the “Protecting Snow Leopard Population Through Effective Habitat Management” project for two years now. The project is funded by Prince Sadruddin Aga-Khan Fund for the Environment.

8. INTERPOL

INTERPOL is the world's largest international police organization, with 194 member countries. Its role is to enable police around the world to work together to make the world a safer place. Using its high-tech infrastructure of technical and operational support, INTERPOL helps meet the growing challenges of fighting crime in the 21st century. As the only organization with a mandate to share and process criminal information globally, INTERPOL is uniquely qualified to lead these efforts.

9. High Altitude Programme, Nature Conservation Foundation

NCF and the Snow Leopard Trust work together in India's high altitudes, striving to help conserve the snow leopard – as well as the diversity of life & landscapes that this beautiful cat symbolizes – in a scientifically robust and socially responsible manner. We combine research, community involvement, conservation education, and policy-level dimensions.

NCF's conservation initiatives range from offsetting losses of the communities by supporting them to operate [community led livestock insurance scheme](#), [freeing up pastures](#) from grazing, predator proofing of corrals, supporting [women led livelihood initiative](#), integrating traditional aspects into conservation ([shangdong to stupa](#) initiative), [management of free ranging dogs](#) and [conservation education](#) and outreach.

10. Land of the Snow Leopard

The conservation community increasingly recognizes that cultural and biological diversity are deeply linked, and programs should take into account the ethical, cultural and spiritual values of nature. The Land of the Snow Leopard Network provides a unique approach to community-based snow leopard conservation blending Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and western science. Since 2010, the Snow Leopard Conservancy has worked with partners to build a coalition of Indigenous Cultural Practitioners (ICPs) who live and work in snow leopard habitat. The term ICP includes shamans, tribal medicine people, sacred site guardians, and revered elders.

11. PANTHERA - Snow Leopard Programme



Panthera is the only organization in the world that is devoted exclusively to the conservation of the world's 40 wild cat species and their ecosystems. Utilizing the expertise of the world's premier cat biologists, Panthera develops and implements global strategies for the most imperiled species of wild cat. Representing the most comprehensive effort of its kind, Panthera partners with local and international NGOs, scientific institutions, local communities, governments around the globe, and citizens who want to help ensure a future for wild cats.

#### 12. IUCN Save Our Species

IUCN Save Our Species supports actions to save the threatened snow leopard in Central Asia. [IUCN Save Our Species](#) is addressing priority issues to ensure survival of threatened species worldwide. In 2019, the IUCN Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECARO) joined the program to launch [SOS Central Asia](#). This project supports the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI) of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), and in the first phase of implementation, it has mobilised funding to support conservation action for the Snow Leopard (*Panthera uncia*) and the Goitered Gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*).

#### 13. Snow Leopard Foundation Pakistan

The Snow Leopard Foundation (SLF) is a non-profit organization which was set up under section 42 of the companies Ordinance 1984 with Securities & Exchange Commission of Pakistan. SLF's primary focus is to work towards the conservation of viable populations of snow leopards and other wild carnivores across Pakistan's diverse mountainous terrains and landscapes. Improving the socio-economic conditions of the people who share fragile mountain ecosystems, makes the core of SLF's conservation approach. The organization does so by helping them bear economic losses from predation and by promoting a peaceful co-existence of livestock owners with wildlife in areas that generally have a high presence of carnivores. Furthermore, the organization is recognized nationally and internationally for state-of-the-art research on elusive species like the snow leopard in rugged areas, and for generating unprecedented data on wildlife of northern Pakistan.

#### 14. Marwell Wildlife Snow Leopard Transboundary Cooperation

With partners in the Institute of Zoology in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and the Wildlife Institute at Beijing Forestry University, we are working to establish best practises and conservation outcomes for snow leopard across national borders in the Tien Shan mountains. This region links three GSLEP landscapes: Tomur; Sarychat and Northern Tien Shan

15. CREAM, University of St. Andrews

The Centre for Research into Ecological and Environmental Modelling is an inter-disciplinary research centre at the University of St Andrews, linking researchers from the Schools of Mathematics and Statistics, Biology and Geography and Geosciences. Our remit is to develop and apply advanced mathematical and statistical methods to practical problems in biology, ecology and geography. We have been working with GSLEP, the Snow Leopard Trust and the Snow Leopard Foundation to develop resources and provide advice and support for conducting camera trap surveys of snow leopards across their range, as well as assisting GSLEP with capacity building.

**3. Knowledge Kiosk**

There were a total of 21 knowledge kiosks. The knowledge kiosks shared information on resources that were relevant for snow leopard research and conservation, information of on-going projects in the landscape, new innovations, policy briefs, and projects related to other species in the snow leopard landscapes. The kiosks can be accessed [here](#).

## **Appendix 1: GSLEP Steering Committee Meeting Agenda**

### **Segment 1: Statements (70 minutes)**

*13:00-14:10 Hrs UB/Beijing time (+8:00 GMT)*

11:00-12:10 Hrs Bishkek/Thimpu/Nur Sultan time (+6:00 GMT)  
 10:45-11:55 Hrs Kathmandu time (+5:45 GMT)  
 10:30-11:40 Hrs Delhi time (+5:30 GMT)  
 10:00-11:10 Hrs Islamabad/Dushanbe/Tashkent time (+5:00 GMT)  
 09:30-10:40 Hrs Kabul time (+4:30 GMT)  
 08:00-09:10 Hrs Moscow time (+3:00 GMT)

- **Welcome Address and country update: Kyrgyz Republic (5 minutes)**
- **Chair's Address and country update: Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal (5 minutes)**
- **Country statements by Environment Ministers representing snow leopard range countries (3 minutes each)**
  - a. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
  - b. Royal Kingdom of Bhutan
  - c. People's Republic of China
  - d. Republic of India
  - e. Republic of Kazakhstan
  - f. Mongolia
  - g. Islamic Republic of Pakistan
  - h. Russian Federation
  - i. Republic of Tajikistan
  - j. Republic of Uzbekistan
- **Partner/Sponsor statements (3 minutes each)**
  - a. International Snow Leopard Trust
  - b. United Nations Development Programme
  - c. United Nations Environment Programme
  - d. Global Environment Facility
  - e. Global Tiger Initiative Council
- **Release of documents**
  - a. Sharing the appeal with range countries' governments to strengthen conservation efforts and minimize disease transmission between wildlife and people. (3 minutes)
  - b. Country updates: 2013-2020 (3 minutes)
  - c. Policy advice paper on unusual snow leopard encounters (3 minutes)
  - d. Policy advice paper on conservation education (3 minutes)
  - e. Summing up (3 minutes)

## **Segment 2: Updates (25 minutes)**

13:10-14:35 Hrs UB/Beijing time (+8:00 GMT)  
 12:10-12:35 Hrs Bishkek/Thimpu/Nur Sultan time (+6:00 GMT)  
 11:55-12:20 Hrs Kathmandu time (+5:45 GMT)  
 11:40-12:05 Hrs Delhi time (+5:30 GMT)  
 11:10-11:35 Hrs Islamabad/Dushanbe/Tashkent time (+5:00 GMT)  
 10:40-11:05 Hrs Kabul time (+4:30 GMT)  
 09:10-09:35 Hrs Moscow time (+3:00 GMT)

- **GSLEP general update (5 minutes)**
- **Country updates (5 minutes)**
- **PAWS update (5 minutes)**
- **IWT database update (5 minutes)**

- **Summing up (5 minutes)**

### **Segment 3: Technical sessions (75 minutes)**

14:35-15:50 Hrs UB/Beijing time (+8:00 GMT)  
 12:35-13:50 Hrs Bishkek/Thimpu/Nur Sultan time (+6:00 GMT)  
 12:20-13:35 Hrs Kathmandu time (+5:45 GMT)  
 12:05-13:20 Hrs Delhi time (+5:30 GMT)  
 11:35-12:50 Hrs Islamabad/Dushanbe/Tashkent time (+5:00 GMT)  
 11:05-12:20 Hrs Kabul time (+4:30 GMT)  
 09:35-10:50 Hrs Moscow time (+3:00 GMT)

- **Session on Sustainable Financing for GSLEP program (25 minutes)**
- **Session on Green Economic Development (25 minutes)**
- **Session on the need to prioritize mountain ecosystems in policy, community based conservation, conservation education, conflict management and wildlife and human health in a post COVID-19 world (25 minutes)**

### **Segment 4: Conclusions & Next steps (10 minutes)**

15:50-16:00 Hrs UB/Beijing time (+8:00 GMT)  
 13:50-14:00 Hrs Bishkek/Thimpu/Nur Sultan time (+6:00 GMT)  
 13:40- Hrs Kathmandu time (+5:45 GMT)  
 13:20 Hrs Delhi time (+5:30 GMT)  
 12:50 Hrs Islamabad/Dushanbe/Tashkent time (+5:00 GMT)  
 12:20 Hrs Kabul time (+4:30 GMT)  
 10:50 Hrs Moscow time (+3:00 GMT)

## Appendix 2: Resolution



### Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program Resolution

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*October 23, 2020*

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On the occasion of the International Snow Leopard Day, we, the representatives of the governments of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Kingdom of Bhutan, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of India, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Federal Republic of Nepal, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan gathered for the Steering Committee Meeting of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP), conducted virtually for the first time.

We shared our experiences and updates about the in-country efforts for conserving snow leopards and their ecosystems. We are pleased with the collective efforts made by the range countries, partner organizations and the GSLEP Secretariat under this program so far.

As the representatives of Asia's high mountains, we:

**Affirm** that the health of humans around the world is closely linked to the health of wild and domestic animals and to the vitality of the planet's natural ecosystems including the high Asian mountains and that it is being exacerbated by loss of biodiversity and climate change.

**Acknowledge** that the world is currently facing an unprecedented situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which, among other serious impacts, has affected the funding of several on-going conservation programs across snow leopard range countries and is likely to impact resource mobilization for biodiversity conservation in the coming years.

**Recognize** the need for urgent provisioning of resources to support the National Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Priorities and the Global Support Components of GSLEP.

**Urge** the heads of potential funding and financial institutions as well as other relevant donor partners to support the GSLEP Program.

**Direct** the GSLEP Secretariat to proactively and urgently engage with past and potential funding partners such as Global Environment Facility, United States Agency for International Development, Global Environment Facility-Small Grants Program, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, and others to assist in raising support for implementing GSLEP objectives.

**Resolve** to take significant and visible steps for coordinated green and inclusive economic development and conservation in our mountainous regions, including ecosystem-based adaptation and climate-smart wildlife conservation, and support efforts towards better animal health research and animal human healthcare and disease surveillance.

**Support** the ongoing efforts of the Secretariat in coordinating the initiative on Population Assessment of the World's Snow Leopards (PAWS); stronger information management on poaching and illegal wildlife trade; initiation of efforts to reduce consumption of illegally hunted wildlife; and the implementation of the newly developed guidelines for (i) conservation education, and (ii) managing snow leopards in unusual and conflict situations to effectively mitigate conflicts.

**Welcome** the offer of the governments of the Republic of Tajikistan and Mongolia to host the next GSLEP Steering Committee Meeting and other events in 2021, subject to favourable conditions for travel.

**Commend** the work of the GSLEP Secretariat in coordinating the program, developing need-based advisories through regional and international experts, and adopting technological innovations.

**Appreciate** the continued financial and technical support being provided to the GSLEP Secretariat by the International Snow Leopard Trust, Global Environment Facility, United Nations Development Program, GTI Council and United Nations Environment Program.

**Lastly, we express our deep gratitude** to the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic for hosting the Secretariat and to the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal for co-chairing the Steering Committee.

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