



Darwin Initiative Capability & Capacity Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the "Project Reporting Information Note":
(<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources/information-notes/>).

It is expected that this report will be a maximum of 20 pages in length, excluding annexes)

Submission Deadline: 30th April 2024

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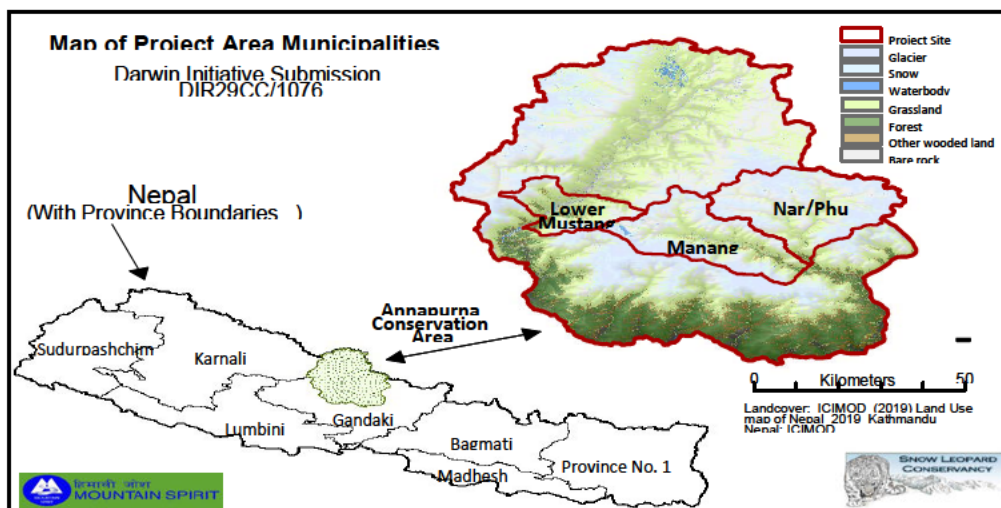
Darwin Initiative Project Information

Project reference	DARCC035
Project title	Integrating local government and community conservation capacity for snow leopards
Country/ies	Nepal
Lead Partner	Snow Leopard Conservancy (SLC)
Project partner(s)	Mountain Spirit (MS)
Darwin Initiative grant value	GBP 170,660
Start/end dates of project	April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2025
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2023 – Mar 2024) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	April 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024 Annual Report (AR) #1
Project Leader name	Dr Shailendra [REDACTED]
Project website/blog/social media	www.snowleopardconservancy.org
Report author(s) and date	Dr S [REDACTED], Brian [REDACTED], Purna [REDACTED], Dr Rodney [REDACTED]

1. Project summary

The Snow Leopard (*Panthera uncia*), an apex predator / umbrella species for biodiversity (listed as Endangered, on Nepal's Red List and Vulnerable on IUCN's Red List) are sparsely distributed, occupying large home ranges, and frequently crossing administrative boundaries. Rural communities often perceive this cat negatively for killing livestock (See Appendix), which may constitute 15-30% of their diet. Although losses rarely exceed 1-3% of total livestock numbers, occasional incidents of multiple killing (10-50 + sheep/goats contained in poorly built corrals) drive retributive killing of snow leopards and other predators like wolf (*Canis lupus*). Economic impacts to poverty-prone households are severe, given annual per capita incomes of <\$1,500 or annual losses totaling \$200-400. Compensation, if present, only covers 10-15% of the animal's market value; verification is difficult, costly and time-consuming. Multiple killing is prevented by predator-proofing corrals, but these number many hundreds, improvements are costly and predicting at-risk structures problematic. Improving wild prey populations is also needed. Conservationists must adopt multiple strategies, like improving livestock guarding and strengthening local livelihoods and revenue streams from livestock raising and trekking/tourism – while also accounting for climatic change and other risks. To date, these activities are largely led by independent agents with limited networking, dominated by centralized government

regulations. Additional diversified and more harmonious conservation mechanisms and well-targeted interventions are vital to help offset economic impacts of livestock depredation to marginalized pastoralists, supported with shifting the typical livestock owner’s perception of snow leopards as a pest to being recognized as valuable ecological “assets”. However, scaling up will be challenging, requiring blending traditional and scientific knowledge, fostering greater community participation and leadership, greater advocacy and strengthening government capacity for biodiversity conservation at both regional and local scales. With Nepal’s devolution of governance to regional and local levels, there are new unrealized opportunities currently in their infancy (see Conservation and Prosperity, 2018). Given the resource constraints (funding and technical knowledge), and imperatives for moving from one-off, single-site interventions to landscape level actions, this is an excellent time to build effective and operational networks of owners and local communities to address gaps and needs. More streamlined and efficient livestock depredation compensation schemes operating at sub-national levels addresses the immediate poverty challenge of replacement incomes following snow leopard attacks on domesticated livestock. Scaling-up a snow leopard linked conservation enterprise and distributing benefits among all community shareholders establishes an equitable and sustainable funding source for future coordinated snow leopard conservation across rural municipality boundaries.



This initiative will assist local municipalities and their constituents (e.g., herd owners, businesses, marketing alliances, NGOs, NTNC-Annapurna Conservation Area Project, provincial veterinary agencies and technical universities) collaborate, network and solve problems, drawing on their combined resources and knowledge and employing participatory tools like APPA to (1) mobilize value-added marketing of select local products like the wild chives of Nar + Phu and adjacent valleys and (2) codify and implement an efficient and economically viable wildlife damage compensation program, and (3) improve livestock health and productivity through a newly established subnational livestock owner cooperative.

2. Project stakeholders/ partners

Partnerships were established with Gharapjhong Rural Municipality of Mustang District, and with Manang Ngisyang Rural Municipality and Narpa Bhumi Rural Municipality of Manang District, and stakeholders including Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA) managed by Nepal Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) and grassroots level conservation institutions formed by ACA. These partnerships were built on mutual interests in sustainable development and Snow Leopard conservation initiatives under three rural municipalities (local government bodies located in Snow Leopard habitat). All partners are actively involved in project planning, and decision-making through regular meetings, ongoing consultations, and collaborative workshops to shape and design project strategies and actions.

The partnerships have led to significant achievements in community engagement, Snow Leopard conservation and conflict mitigation through safeguarding livestock centered on livestock insurance, installation of predator deterrents like Foxlights (randomly blinking lights on corral boundaries), and facilitation in proper documentation for receiving insurance or

compensation of livestock loss linking wildlife conservation and sustainable development. Collaborative efforts have resulted in the implementation of community-based conservation projects, improved livestock enclosures (predator proof / deterrent corals and Foxlights), and enhanced livelihood opportunities for local communities through branding and marketing of Himalayan chives (jimbu), documentation of other non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and identification of 15 species of edible mushroom species (Fungus) for future potential enhanced livelihood opportunities. Villagers in Thini expressed interest in developing a snow leopard trail as an eco-tourism venture, which is being explored further with project assistance. Villagers in two sites also expressed interest in developing skills in producing wool products such as handbags, blankets and carpets, but this is a very competitive market in Nepal and predominately yak wool products are considered coarse and rough by many mainstream tourists.

The partnerships have highlighted the importance of local ownership, participatory decision-making, and adaptive management approaches. The robustness of this project includes strong local community support, effective communication channels, and shared goals and values among partners, as evidenced by the frequent contacts between staff and local community members. During this year the challenges faced included capacity limitations of the local community, occasional differences in priorities, and temporary settlement from the highland snow region to low elevation seasonal stays in Kathmandu, factors addressed through transparent communication, conflict resolution mechanisms, and capacity-building initiatives.

Local communities have been actively engaged through participatory approaches, community meetings, and capacity-building programs. Public institutions such as three rural municipalities have been consulted regularly for policy guidance and regulatory compliance. The partnerships and stakeholder involvement have been instrumental in driving positive outputs, fostering collaboration, and addressing challenges in a collaborative and inclusive manner.

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Thirteen (13) consultation meetings were held with a total of 231 participants consisting of herders, herd owners, and farmers, Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA) officials and Municipality officials were consulted. Women's participation in consultation meetings was low, only 26%. One of the reasons being most of positions in Rural municipalities and community groups are disproportionately male. The focus of workshops and meetings was developing livestock or farmer-based cooperatives to promote broader future livelihood and conservation-related activities. These workshops and consultations formed the basis for future project activities.

Activity 1.1: (Output 1, Indicator 2.1.4) The fiscal transfer process from Federal Government to Provincial Government to Local Government (called Rural Municipalities, RMs) was reviewed, and an internal report generated. This served as a first step toward determining areas where the advocacy and authority of Rural Municipalities could be strengthened, and for the project to focus on getting more autonomy for enabling compensation for livestock depredation by snow leopards. The project assumed that the Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA) management would be devolved and handed over to local communities with the Provincial Government and Rural Municipalities playing crucial roles. This did not occur, and ACA was granted 5 additional years of management authority. In village level consultations, high level of dissatisfaction for not receiving a low compensation amount and a lengthy process to settle claims were expressed. ACA officials were made aware of these issues. The project has noticed some positive changes in handling livestock depredation and compensation issues from ACA. However, there has been no progress on devolving more decision-power to Rural Municipalities to handle compensation issue which is one of the risks highlighted in the original proposal.

Nepal has three main types of compensation schemes for paying losses from depredation of livestock by wild animals such as snow leopards. The first are small grants programs that pay herders a small fraction of the value of the lost livestock. These usually predate the more formal

government managed schemes and were typically funded by ngos or ingos. These are not popular, and their sustainability is questionable as they are primarily ngo funded and payments are based on interest generated from the initial capital funding. The second are government managed compensation programs. The guidelines for these were approved in 2012. They have been amended three times, the latest amendment was in July 2023 which has been extended with additional wild animals and compensation amounts increased. In the case of the project working area, ACA is responsible as the primary conservation agency to handle depredation loss claims and process for compensation. The fund for compensation is centrally managed and there are some issues particularly in the transfer of compensation funds by individual Protected Areas from their revenues to ensure their claims are entertained later. Project staff continue to work in collaboration with ACA to understand the compensation process and requirements to speed up claims processing and encouraging Rural Municipalities and beneficiaries + victims to better advocate for more fair and expedited claims. The third type of compensation scheme is also government sponsored but operated through private insurance companies who have been designated to implement these programs. The government provides 80% of premium, and the remaining 20% is shared equally by the herders and the project. The insurance provides 90% market value of depredated animals. The project has initiated livestock insurance trials to test the effectiveness of these insurance schemes.

Project staff investigated current and past livestock depredation insurance schemes. Despite past unsatisfactory experiences with insurance schemes, and hesitancy and scepticism on insurance effectiveness, in year one, the project was able to insure a total of 804 cattle with the Siddhartha Insurance Company in Manang and The Prabhu Insurance Company in Mustang district. The process for making insurance claims was thoroughly described during workshops and tagging of the insured livestock.

SN	Rural municipalities	Yak	Goat/sheep	Total
1	Gharapjhong RM, Mustang	84	307	391
2	Narpa Bhumi RM	34	80	114
3	Manang Ngisyang	139	160	299
			Total	804

Testing the effectiveness of insurance schemes is ongoing, thus far with a total of 4 insured livestock killed by snow leopards following its implementation, while one goat met a natural death in Manang Ngisyang RM within three months of its insurance registration. Similarly, 4 insured yaks were killed by snow leopards in Garabjhong RM. The project supported herders who lost their livestock with the preparation of documents for insurance claims as per government guidelines.

Unfortunately, herders of Nar village with the highest livestock numbers (419 yak and 500 goats) in Manang district were unwilling to insure their livestock, citing two major reasons: First, they did not understand what coverage the insurance schemes would provide or the benefits thereof. Second, they doubted the insurance company’s willingness to honor insurance claims filed. Thus, it will take more project staff time and briefing on the potential advantages of livestock insurance schemes to convince Nar villagers to experiment with insurance, even on a trial basis. On the positive side, the project has identified one herder who has a 100% success record with insurance claims. He will be used as a resource person to motivate other herders during the year 2, using the peer-to-peer learning approach. The people of Tanki Manang village were also unwilling to try insurance for similar reasons. Results of this insurance trial and its effectiveness will be reported in year 2.

Activity 1.2: Identifying current market structure strengths and weaknesses (Output 1: Indicator 1.1 and 1.3): A Cooperative expert was hired and conducted 2 Cooperative trainings on Cooperative registration, processes and functions. He also incorporated small business planning and development. Using these tools, market structures were examined, challenges and constraints identified, and potential market products identified. Almost all households in this area are involved in seasonal yarsagumpa collection, a highly valued Tibetan medicinal caterpillar fungus. Traders routinely visit these villages to purchase yarsagumpa directly from collectors and may even provide advance money to secure the purchase of yarsagumba. As yarsagumpa prices

fluctuate highly from year to year and the season lasts only a few weeks, exploring other potential pasture-based products is essential to improving supplementary incomes. Market potential is limited in several of the project's working areas, due to restricted or lack of road access and seasonal migrations to Kathmandu by local people. Some species of NTFPs are currently being used especially Yarsagumpa (caterpillar fungus) which has provided the main source of local income for almost two decades. The NTFP report will be used to develop appropriate training materials to add potential value to NTFPs including mushroom products and for exploring other income generation options.

These were identified during project consultations by project staff. One Community Agriculture Cooperative in Syang village exists and most goat and yak owners are members, offering the potential to be developed and expanded for income generation and diversification. In addition, villagers in Syang and Nar expressed interest in developing wool products, especially carpets. Project staff will follow up in year 2.

Recognizing the need for product diversity, the project conducted a survey of non-timber-forest products and documented 63 different potential NTFPs, including 60 Mushroom species (15 are edible with income generation potential) along with other NTFPs in Narpa Bhumi RM as potential local products for underpinning snow leopard conservation through economic livelihoods enhancement. Yak cheese production and sales in Bhraga village was also identified as a potential snow leopard linked product and service. Villagers expressed interest in increasing skills and income potential from wool products such as blankets, scarves, carpets etc at 2 sites in Syang and Nar. This is a very competitive business in Nepal with yak wool products occupying a niche market, for the fibers are coarse and have limited appeal to the mainstream tourist.

Activity 1.3: (Output 1: Indicator 2.3) Study tour to explore successful livestock and non-timber forest product enterprises: Output 1: Indicator 1.3:

Background material was collected for this output in year 1. Study tours are not planned for year 1, instead constituting a year 2 activity.

Activity 1.4: Sub National Marketing Cooperative established for snow leopard linked products: Output 1: Indicator 1.1)

During year one, the Ubi Jimbu Cultivation Committee was formed and consultations held in July 2023 in Narpa Bhumi Rural Municipality (RM). Later, this committee dissolved to form the 'Phu Village Agriculture Group' with 7 board members. The reason cited for dissolving the previous committee was difficulties operating successfully due to a high presence of elderly members in the executive committee. The new group has now been legally registered with local government. The goal of this committee is branding, marketing and sales of the jimbu products along with other agriculture products of Phu village in future.

This group was specifically established to process, brand and market cultivated jimbu (Himalayan Chives) that has typically been harvested from high pasture areas. This the first time this high value, low volume Himalayan herb has been cultivated commercially. Revenues from jimbu cultivation are intended to replace income losses from depredation of domesticated livestock by snow leopards. One woman group member harvested cultivated jimbu 3 times this year, making over 25,000 rupees (US\$ 200), or enough to cover incidental household expenses. She plans to expand her jimbu cultivation. Most farmers expressed relative confidence that jimbu can be successfully cultivated in their fields and that it has high potential to supplement household incomes. However, scaling-up challenges remain. Ubi, the jimbu cultivation site, shares prime habitat with wild prey ungulates like blue sheep and also serves a seasonal livestock pasture when villages move from their higher pastures to the village in winter. Protecting jimbu from blue sheep or livestock grazing is a major challenge and for several reasons farmers have been unable to transplant saplings grown in poly houses to their fields. Since Ubi is a large area, fencing it off would be very expensive. The irrigation system rehabilitated during the previous project (Darwin #27-025) is not sufficient to irrigate a large area. Scaling up of jimbu cultivation was discussed with Rural Municipality (RM) officials who are also conducting trials to test market

opportunities and explore impact of potential value additions (see Annex photos of jimbu branding and packaging).

Activity 1.5 Consolidation, branding and marketing of snow leopard linked products: Output 1: Indicator 1.2.1

Jimbu packaging and marketing designs were provided to the Phu Village Agriculture Group for introducing this and related mountain products to the growing Kathmandu marketplace. 27 kgs of jimbu was purchased and used in designing a package with text introducing Jimbu and highlighting its conservation and livelihood benefits. Potential retailers for sales were contacted under a pilot initiative. The group will need to formally register their product with the Department of Small Cottage Industry for marketing and branding, and also apply for a licence from the Department of Food Technology and Quality Control for enabling sales in the marketplace. There is need for ongoing support and project staff will also work to expand jimbu cultivation in Phu. Photos of marketing and branding materials are in the attached Annex.

Activity 1.6: Revenues generated across Rural Municipality Boundaries (Output 1: Indicator 1.4)

This is a year 2 target as volumes of plant products are deemed insufficient for broad scale marketing which also required permissions from the Department of Small Cottage Industry as mentioned above.

Small hotel and lodge management training for livelihoods support

Two 15-day trainings on Small Hotel and Lodge Management were conducted by the National Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management, Kathmandu from January 19 to February 28, 2024. The session involved 12 trainers and 40 participants (17 female and 23 males) from Manang and Mustang districts, crossing district and rural municipality boundaries. The primary goal was to provide basic hands-on training in lodge management and food preparation (e.g., barista and bakery). Based on local interests, the project is currently discussing piloting a snow leopard trail above Thini village (one of the lesser-known snow leopard hotspots) in collaboration with the Thini Homestay Committee. This includes training local youth as snow leopard trackers, marking trail routes, and installing QR coded story boards for visitor information/education.

Outcomes:

- Participants were satisfied with training programs and said they would use the knowledge and skills gained to improve operations and quality of their small hotels, lodges, teahouses, and restaurants.
- They increased their knowledge and awareness on essential aspects of successful hotel and lodge management, including food presentation, customer service, and tidy room maintenance.
- The training encompassed both theoretical and practical learning tools and experiences.
- Participants are expected to transition from simple traditional to improved guest / teahouse management practices, emphasizing cleanliness, comfort, and hygiene standards.

Challenges:

- The random participant selection employed resulted in varying levels of interest and engagement by participants, necessitating continued follow-up and monitoring.
- Limited access to coffee machines in rural areas posed challenges for practicing coffee-making skills learned during training. Although barista training was their top demand.
- Participants also remarked that the short training duration limited the depth of learning and skill development, but they noted conflicts with personal obligations limited their ability to attend a longer training program.

Solutions:

- Extending training duration would allow for more comprehensive and advanced skill development, addressing participants' needs more effectively. Future trainings should prioritize genuinely interested participants through a more structured selection process to ensure maximum training effectiveness.

Snow leopard information board

To promote snow leopard conservation awareness and inform both local community members and tourists, 3 weatherproof conservation information signs were prepared for installation at project sites in May. These signs aim to promote awareness and understanding among local communities and eco-tourist visitors on the importance of coexisting with snow leopard, highlighting key facts about this threatened cat, its habitat, behaviour, ecological significance and need for conservation. The signs will hopefully be effective at fostering increased responsibility and stewardship, by encouraging individuals to preserve snow leopards and their fragile mountain ecosystems. A photo of the signboard is included in the annexes.

Activity 1.8: Results sharing in peer review journal.

Output 2: Indicator 2.4.1)

This is a year 2 activity and is dependent upon the project generating sufficient data for publication.

Activity 2.1 Livestock herder/owners priorities and challenges identified:

Output 2: Indicator 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3 and 2.1.4

*****One Health Activities were done with SLC Matching Funds**

Activity 2.1 Indicator 2.1.1: Veterinary Training Materials

Activity 2.1 Indicator 2.1.2 Number of animals Vaccinated and Treated

With matching funds from Snow Leopard Conservancy (SLC), an 8-day training on One-Health-One-Welfare training and conservation workshops were conducted in Manang District from September 22-29, 2023, with financial and technical support from the Snow Leopard Conservancy, International Veterinary Outreach, Mountain Spirit, Animal Nepal, the District Veterinary Hospital, Livestock Service Expert Center Manang, and the National Trust for Nature Conservation/Annapurna Conservation Area. The goal was to expand veterinary services, emphasizing improved health and welfare for working animals, provide One Health community education in remote mountain areas to enhance public health, mitigate human-wildlife conflict, and promote domestic animal health and welfare in areas overlapping snow leopard habitats, thereby reducing zoonotic disease transmission risks across species. The program also focused on specialized veterinary training for local professionals, including Junior Technicians and wildlife officials, combining classroom instruction with hands-on experience.

In total, 14 Junior Veterinary Technicians (JTs) and Veterinary Technician Assistants (JTAs) from 4 Rural Municipalities of Manang were trained, including 4 female participants. Additionally, two representatives from the Annapurna Conservation Area Project's Conservation Area Management Committee (CAMC) attended training on predator-safe herding techniques. The program included 3 days of classroom-based training and 5 days of free animal health clinics in Koto, Chame, Pisang, Bhraka, and Manang, during which 248 animals (mules, horses, cows, goats, dogs, and cats) were examined, vaccinated, and treated. During the clinics, the JTs and veterinarians also educated 49 animal guardians on animal health and welfare.

The OHOW training resulted in significant improvements in participants' understanding and confidence in animal health and welfare. Before the program, the majority of JTs/JTAs rated their knowledge as "good," but post-training evaluations showed that 87% strongly agreed their comprehension of animal welfare practices had substantially improved. Additionally, 75% felt more prepared to offer enhanced livestock health services after the training. Personal reflections from participants further confirmed their enriched knowledge, appreciation for coexistence strategies, and eagerness to apply their learnings to improve livestock management and contribute to snow leopard conservation efforts in their communities.

Villagers in Thini also expressed interest in improved veterinary health as a livestock cooperative focus, providing strong links to the One Health One Welfare trainings offered by SLC. Follow up training will be done in year 2 as per local demand.

Activity 2.1: Indicator 2.1.3 Support for improved deterrence through devices (Foxlights) (Darwin funded activity)

The project distributed 38 Foxlights (a solar powered, randomly blinking deterrence device) to herders in several villages (21 in Mustang and 17 in Manang districts). They provide temporary deterrence to depredation by snow leopards, tending to be effective for only 2 years. One reason for the limited effectiveness is that herders are not diligent relocating the Foxlights and snow leopards are prone to becoming habituated to the stationary light. Despite these shortcomings, herders continue to request Foxlights.

Indicator 2.1.4 Improved Corrals (Darwin funded activity)

Local livestock corral conditions were assessed during the 2nd and 3rd field visits at 12 sites including Bhraga in Manang district. Following the workshops and herder meetings, 11 improved predator deterrent corrals are being built directly benefiting 15 herders. Eleven additional herders were identified to receive improved corrals using gabion wire and corrugated iron roofs. These corral materials are currently being manufactured in Beshishahar, a major market center near Manang, and will be transported to the field for distribution by the mid May this year. 11 herders belonging to 5 herder groups were identified to receive this support. Once manufactured, improved corrals will be transported to sites for distribution by the mid-May 2024. A photo of a prototype improved corral is included in the annexes.

Activity 2.2 Key informant information from herders and livestock owners

Seven (7) Cooperative consultation meetings were held in year 1. One meeting was held in Narpa Bhumi RM, two in Manang Nyisyang RM, and four in Gharapjhong RM. Participant details for each location are below.

- Nar village: 30 participants (21 men, 9 women)
- Manang village: 17 participants (15 men, 2 women)
- Bhraka village: 12 participants (4 men, 8 women)
- Thini village: 13 participants (9 men, 4 women)
- Syang village: 13 participants (11 men, 2 women)
- Gharapjhong RM office: 9 participants (6 men, 3 women)
- Jomsom village: 12 participants (10 men, 2 women)

**Activity 2.3: Livestock Cooperative Established and registered
Indicator: 2.2**

Six livestock groups have been formed or strengthened through training. The most promising ones at this stage are: Thini, Syang, and Manang. Nar and Phu are being formed but the process must start with drafting and legalizing the Cooperative Act and Regulations. The chart below details site conditions.

More on Indicator 2.2: Status of Existing Livestock Cooperatives

Venue	Cooperative status		Remarks
	Existing	Planned	
Thini	1 (2020)	2	One Community Livestock Group, registered in 2020. 2 more livestock groups formed but not registered.
Syang	1 (2021)		2 herds, one registered with municipality. One Community Agricultural Cooperative, with yak and goats

			Registration planned for other herd	registered 2021. One more planned in year 2
Jomsom			24 persons trained in Cooperative planning, (13 females)	Most herders have joined livestock Cooperatives. Field staff requested to update and provide data
Phu			No current Cooperatives	Cooperative expert supported review and drafting of cooperative act and regulation for Nyisyang Manang and Narpa Bhumi RMs
Nar	2*		Meetings with herders decided to form Goat and Sheep Community Group and Yak Community Group.	No Cooperative Act in place. RM in process of registering groups + enacting Cooperative Act.
Gharapjhong	10		10 groups registered but only 3 are active, these include groups in Syang, Thini and Marpha.	Cooperative Act in place, *More Cooperative training was requested especially for livelihoods activities
Manang Ngisyang	2		Ad Hoc Yak herder Group formed (with 9 members) and Goat herder group formed (5 members)	One herder registered his herd with RM and received support to build improved corral. RM officials interested to establish cooperatives for livelihoods
Bhraka	1			One registered goth at Taanke Sheep Goat Rearing Center but little information available.

Activity 2.4: Challenges identified and prioritized for action across 3 rural municipalities: Indicator 2.1.3 Improved corrals

As a baseline for establishing legally recognized livestock groups, a series of consultations and meetings were held to determine the status of existing livestock herds, the location and condition of corrals and pastures and status of any existing livestock Cooperatives which the project could build upon for sustainability. Each village has slightly different herding and corral practices. To better design appropriate project interventions, project staff spent time in year 1 documenting the current status at each project site. Please see the table Summary of Goth (corral) and pasture data in the Annexes.

The project conducted surveys in **Bhraga** of individual goths/corrals for exploring design improvements on current local construction techniques. Goths were generally simple stone walls with tarpaulin or plastic sheet roofing. Herders have no guard dogs and use a small room built next to the goth for their shelter, so these are easily attacked by snow leopards. Based on observations and discussions with herders, four types of predator-proof goths for future trials were highlighted. Research grantees also visited 11 sites to assess the condition of goths, and met with 33 herders in Narpa Bhumi RM. This survey focused on documenting herding practices, the status of livestock predation by wild animals (including snow leopards) over the past five years. The **11 improved corrals** mentioned above are 10 by 20 feet in size and will accommodate 20-25 young yak calves, the livestock most vulnerable to snow leopard depredation. These corrals will be installed around traditional corrals built with stones for extra protection.

Activity 2.5 Consolidated Livestock herder/owner learning sharing in peer-to-peer journal: Indicator: 2.41 and 2.42:

These activities will be conducted in year 2, assuming significant advances in knowledge have occurred.

Output 3 Indicator 3.1 and 3.2:

Compensation practice review and herder insurance trial for livestock depredation:

Activity 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3: Rational for substituting insurance trials instead of compensation review

The project originally aimed at reviewing and strengthening the government managed compensation process over the life of the project (see Indicator 2.1.4). This was pre-conditioned on assuming Rural Municipalities would have greater authority to design and manage their own local compensation schemes. It also assumed that the federal government would devolve their powers and authorities to these local officials as stated in unbundling report approved by the government in 2017, a project assumption. ACA was recently granted another five years of management authority in the conservation/development arena. As a conservation agency, ACA has been given the responsibility to handle compensation claim process. The project has played important roles for generate awareness of the local government officials and people about compensation policy and claim process during consultations/workshops. Some positive changes have already been noticed of these efforts. For example, the herder who lost 77 goats in a single night to snow leopard depredation in Dhakar of the Upper Mustang in November 2023 has received NPR 385,000 or USD 2940 recently. The project's staff based in Mustang facilitated the compensation claim process in consultation with ACA and the respective Rural Municipality. While the compensation process has been reviewed informally, documented and examined, it was determined that project resources could be better used to investigate and document the experiences of local community members and herder toward applying available insurance scheme. Therefore, the project decided to run an experimental trial at insuring livestock using the available insurance schemes, documenting the application process and testing efficiency at paying claims in the event of livestock depredation. The first step involved determining prior community experience with the existing insurance schemes.

Most villagers have some experience with livestock insurance schemes but remain sceptical and notably hesitant based on prior negative experiences. Specifically, they stated prior insurance schemes had fully processed claims, were very slow to provide funding and in their opinion had unrealistic documentation or verification requirements. Nevertheless, project staff were able to convince villagers in several sites to enrol in insurance schemes and subject them to more rigorous testing during the project period.

Livestock insurance trials

Despite this hesitancy and scepticism, in year one, the project was able to insure a total of 804 cattle with the Siddhartha Insurance Company in Manang and The Prabhu Insurance Company in Mustang district.

SN	Rural municipalities	Yak	Goat/sheep	Total
1	Gharapjhong RM, Mustang	84	307	391
2	Narpa Bhumi RM	34	80	114
3	Manang Ngisyang	139	160	299
			Total	804

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Output 1: Three rural municipalities collaborate, and market snow leopard linked products and services (e.g., Himalayan chives, tourism) promoting biodiversity conservation.

The most significant progress on this output was the legal formalization of the Phu Village Agriculture Community Group (Narpa Bhumi RM) with registration by local government progressing. The group is formed to market cultivated Himalayan chives (jimbu; see attached photos for branding design and marketing materials). Progress to date has been limited to one rural municipality as the volume of jimbu (chives) production from other rural municipalities is limited with product quantities currently insufficient for generating consolidated sales. This target may be hard to reach under the two-year project period as jimbu cultivation will take several seasons to reach a scalable volume of production.

Recognizing the need for diversifying enterprises, the project conducted a survey of non-timber-forest products and documented 60 Mushroom species (15 are edible with income generation potential) and other NTFPs in the Narpa Bhumi RM, also offering potential local enterprise products for helping to underpin snow leopard conservation.

From consultations on forming livestock cooperatives, several potential livestock-based enterprises were identified, including yak cheese production and sales (Bhraga village), and wool products such as blankets and carpets (Syang and Nar).

To increase income potential from eco-tourism services across rural municipalities, lodge and hotel management and barista training was conducted, aimed at strengthening and expanding the number of households involved.

In Thini village, the potential of a dedicated snow leopard trail was identified. This is a lesser-known snow leopard hotspot, that follows a rugged but scenic route over a high pass and crossing to s Nepal's largest alpine lake. This potential for trans-municipality snow leopard tourism will be explored in year 2.

Progress on indicator #1.4, namely increasing funds to rural municipalities from Federal sources, is less likely based on the experience of year one implementation. Federal authorities have decreased rather than increased the extent of funds dispersed to rural municipalities, contrary to earlier expectations that further progress on devolution would occur.

Output 2: New cooperative of livestock owners operating across three rural municipalities

During Year 1, four informal herders community groups were established in Manang Nyisyang RM (two herder community groups in Bhraga and two in Manang villages). The informal group in Phu village will be formed during project year two and registered with government.

As part of the project's matching grant program, training to safeguard and improve health of livestock by reducing the transmission of disease between livestock and snow leopards (and other wildlife) was conducted and involved 14 government veterinarians from Manang district (12 from Government and 2 from ACA). After completion of classroom training, field-based livestock health camps were organized in four locations, namely Koto, Chame, Pisang, and Manang villages, all in Manang District.

To better safeguard livestock across rural municipality boundaries, 11 prototype predator-proof corrals for five different herder groups are under construction. Predator deterrent instruments like Foxlights were also distributed to herders (38 in total: 17 in Manang, and 21 in Mustang).

Study tours are planned in year two and peer-to-peer learning is expected after local participants gain more experience on working collaboratively across rural municipality boundaries. Provincial and national level workshops are also a year 2 targeted activity.

Output 3: Common approach, standards and mechanism to compensate herders for livestock depredation events is formed and operates across sub-national boundaries.

As mentioned in section 3.1, the three different type of livestock compensation pocesses were reviewed and assessed. The project determined that addressing livestock insurance provides the best immediate opportunity and 804 animals were enrolled in the pilot program.

Participating villages were Phu, Nar, and Bhraga villages of Manang district and Marpha, Syang villages of Mustang District, offering a potentially rich opportunity to assess their effectiveness across municipality boundaries. Data on depredation of livestock was also recorded. Herders were trained to complete standard, required procedures for documenting livestock insurance claims from natural deaths or predators such as snow leopards. Herders were also trained in the documentation process for livestock loss compensation required by Annapurna Conservation Area of Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation Area.

Capturing and disseminating lessons learned and documenting them into journal articles, assuming valuable lessons are learned within such a short time period will be undertaken in year two.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

There are two stated outcomes for this project. First is to create and operationalize two fora for snow leopard conservation in at least two rural municipalities. The second is to support herders so that they can effectively be compensated for livestock depredation events caused by snow leopards and other wild predators.

Outcome 0.1.1 and 0.1.2: The first fora for snow leopard conservation entailed the establishment and legal recognition with strengthened business planning for the community group, Phu Village Agriculture Group, comprised of 7 members and successfully formed under the Narpa Bhumi Rural Municipality. This group was formed to sustainably cultivate, process and sell Himalayan chives (jimbu) as replacement income from livestock lost to depredation by wildlife. This year, the project helped formally register this enterprise group with the Rural Municipality. The name 'Phu Jimbu' is being registered as a brand with the Department of Small Cottage Industry. An application for a food quality license from the Department of Food Technology and Quality Control for promotional marketing and sales is in process and expected in Year 2. Phu Village Agriculture Group is designed to improve economic livelihoods through branding and marketing of location specific Jimbu products for the first time in Nepal's history.

Knowing that mountain communities are subject to major climatic and market variations, the project is also conducting training to help organize the communities across rural municipalities for diversifying potential enterprise products. Four trainings (two on cooperatives and two on small hotel and lodge management) were conducted in Manang and Mustang districts. The first cooperative training was held in Mustang, the second one in Kathmandu district, with the goal of forming a community/herder-owned cooperative for the livelihood enhancement through sustainable use of livestock products. A total of 49 people, including 20 women, participated in these cooperative trainings. To encourage additional enterprise from the service sector, the project also organized training in small hotel and lodge management conducted at the National Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management. The goal was to provide professional training in hygienic food preparation covering bakery, barista and housekeeping as the project sites are internationally known for its trekking tourism. Forty people in total were trained, including 17 women. Based on post training assessments and evaluations, participants were enthusiastic about these trainings and found them to be of practical value. These trainings are the foundations for creating cross-rural municipality forums for encouraging nature conservation.

Outcome 0.2.1 Indicator: In addition, economic safeguarding of livestock was also carried out through the insurance program. In the first year, a total of 804 livestock were insured. Mountain Spirit helped document seven insured yaks that were killed by snow leopards, which allows villagers to process compensation claims with the Insurance Company in Manang district. MS also assisted in documentation of one goat which died of natural causes for insurance claims.

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

The 5 assumptions identified in project design remain relevant. However, after 1 year of implementation several require slight modification, as documented in the pending change request. Assumption #1: The value of networking has not been fully recognized by either community members or local governments. While mountain communities are typically self-reliant and distrustful of outsiders including neighbour communities, continued promotion of this concept will remain a priority for project staff. Assumption #2 faces similar challenges, as the initial chives production resulted in small volume of marketable goods and therefore limited economic benefits except to the farmers whose fields are producing harvestable chives. Project staff continue emphasizing values of collaboration and consolidated marketing, but progress is expected to remain limited until economic benefits are greater, based on increased total kilograms of chives, increased sales promotions with resulting revenue growth. Assumption #3 remains valid: cross boundary marketing materials have been designed and groups under registration. Assumption #4 has proven partially incorrect with central and provincial Government officials decreasing rather than increasing contributions to local government authorities, a national level disappointment. As stated in recent Nepali Times Newspaper

article, “Sub National governments have been constitutionally empowered but only on paper” (Khim Lal Devkota, Nepal’s foremost local governance expert quoted by Sonia Awale, Nepali Times, January 4, 2024). Assumptions #4 and #5 remain in effect, respectively the lack of outside political interference (thus far) with no major natural disasters or pandemics having occurred in year one.

3.5 Achievement of positive impact on biodiversity and poverty reduction

The project seeks significant local government involvement and commitment to conserve snow leopards and their habitat through strengthened insurance and compensation mechanisms for livestock depredation and mobilizing market forces and other incentives for encouraging local community engagement and participation. While progress has been made on several fronts (as described in other report sections) the evidence is limited, which is to be expected under a one year timeframe.

The higher-level biodiversity impact being targeted in this project will be demonstrating some more effective ways the various levels the Government of Nepal could address human wildlife conflict through improved and especially more efficient compensation for wildlife damages. The project has initiated testing of a more robust insurance scheme to which 804 livestock have already been enrolled over the past 12-months or so. The first case where a snow leopard killed 4 domesticated livestock has documented and validated underlying challenges with currently policies and procedures. Included are localized variations of the compensation process, including several steps which are unrealistic to expect remote mountain communities to comply with. These will be presented, shared, and discussed at local meetings as well as a National Workshop planned for year two.

The major poverty reduction impacts being targeted are addressed through on-going chives marketing project and expanded eco-tourism trainings conducted in year one. These are expected to achieve significant local level reductions in poverty, especially when addressing income losses from snow leopard related livestock depredation. Lessons learned will also be shared at the provincial and national level workshops (2), but biodiversity impact benefits are anticipated at local rather than national levels.

Finally, improvements in corral design and livestock depredation are being conducted, included alternative predator-proofed corral designs and initial trials using solar electric fencing (all funded using SLC matching funds). The initial solar fencing trial highlighted the importance of “no openings” and has been modified with respect to design and routine maintenance under a second trial. By documenting and sharing experiences gained from this the initial experimental failure helps advance knowledge on improving deterrence mechanisms both locally and nationally.

4. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

Progress on these topics is consistent with the original proposal but is limited as was expected during a short-term two-year project. There are no changes from the original proposal submission.

5. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board ¹ .	This project does not have a formal Project Board. Snow Leopard Conservancy’s Executive Director is a woman; SLC’s 7-person Board of Directors has 3 women members. Mountain Spirit, a small local Nepali NGO organization is headed by a Nepali woman, with 6 of 9 Board members being local women. 50% of the persons working directly on the project are women.
Please quantify the proportion of project partners that are led by women, or which	There is only one partner organization, Mountain Spirit (MS). The MS Board Chairperson is a local Nepali woman from an ethnic minority group in Nepal.

¹ A Project Board has overall authority for the project, is accountable for its success or failure, and supports the senior project manager to successfully deliver the project.

have a senior leadership team consisting of at least 50% women ² .	
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GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
Not yet sensitive	The GESI context may have been considered but the project isn't quite meeting the requirements of a 'sensitive' approach	
Sensitive	The GESI context has been considered and project activities take this into account in their design and implementation. The project addresses basic needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups and the project will not contribute to or create further inequalities.	X
Empowering	The project has all the characteristics of a 'sensitive' approach whilst also increasing equal access to assets, resources and capabilities for women and marginalised groups	X
Transformative	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	X

As stated in the original proposal, gender considerations were factored into all project activities. The main infield project staff person is a local woman from the resident ethnic group, serving as the lead organizer and trainer for most participatory consultations and trainings/workshops. The exception was the Cooperative training which was led by a male expert from Kathmandu. Participant gender balances have been shared throughout the report, with women involved at all project events; however, women's engagement remains below 50% reflecting continuing male dominance in many local activities and in government posts. In total, 13 consultation meetings took place with 231 participants, of which 26% were women. Their participation was greater in the small lodge and hotel management trainings with smaller numbers of women participants in the herder training, reflecting typical gender balances for these occupations in rural areas. All project participants are from ethnically marginalized groups, fairly reflecting the demographics of the project area. Project staff are predominately also local ethnic populations, including the project leader, with 2 exceptions (Peniston and Purna Man Shrestha). In Rural Municipality staff trainings, women's participation remains below 50% reflecting the current electoral reality of project communities.

Summary of Activities with Gender Participation

S N	Date	Venue	Number of people or households			Remarks
			Male	Female	Total	
1	December 10-14, 2023	Jomsom	13	11	24	Cooperative training in Mustang
2	March 21-23, 2024	Kathmandu	7	18	25	Cooperative training in Kathmandu for Manang people
3	January 19-February 28	Kathmandu	17	23	40	Small hotel and lodge management training

² Partners that have formal governance role in the project, and a formal relationship with the project that may involve staff costs and/or budget management responsibilities.

4	Livestock insurance	Jomsom			15 HH	Herders (household-HH) of three RMs
5	Improved corral	Nar			11 HH	Herders of three RMs
6	Jimbu community formation	Phu			30 HH	Phu Village Agricultural Group with 30 household members

6. Monitoring and evaluation

Project monitoring duties are the primary responsibility of the Nepali partner organization, Mountain Spirit. A Change Request was submitted in January 2024 to strengthen the logframe indicators and means of verification and suggested improvements were received in late March 2024. Revised and strengthened indicators and means of verification were resubmitted to BCF/Darwin in late April. The change request remains pending and not yet formally approved. Thus, monitoring for this report is based on the original logframe, knowing some need for updating and/or strengthening.

As stated in the original proposal, monitoring is based on progress against the stated indicators of success. A concise reporting on progress on each indicator and means of verification is presented in Section Annex 1, the logframe.

At the Outcome level, formal agreements with all 3 target rural municipalities have been signed. Cross municipality cooperation and collaboration through networks remains the main challenge and desired project impact. Individual Rural Municipality (RM) groups have been formed and legally recognized for livestock herd management and corral/pasture improvements. Issues shared by all 3 Rural Municipalities, especially the urgent need for improved night-time corrals and a common compensation process for fair and time-sensitive addressing of livestock depredation and herd-management problems has been identified and is under process. Corrals for improvement have been identified in the 3 RMs and several designs will be compared for effectiveness across RM boundaries by Year 2 end; 804 livestock have been registered in a cross-boundary insurance scheme with one claim for livestock depredation and 4 other killed livestock under process. Results will be shared in upcoming workshops and consultations across each RM in Year 2, thus improving and standard deterrence methods along with the unified compensation/insurance process in order to contribute directly to the overall project goals.

A chives cultivation committee was formed in one RM. Meetings describing the advantages and legal process/structure of forming cooperatives have been conducted, but interest and willingness to participate varies among the RMs. It was discovered that not all Rural Municipalities have an approved Cooperative Act and Regulation, a necessary step for such formation. Community meetings determined a preference for forming legally registered *User Groups* instead, leading to a Change Request indicator, currently in process. RMs (like Manang) with greater road access and easier access to markets have expressed more interest in the entrepreneurial trainings than the other two remote, roadless communities.

7. Lessons learnt

- Several lessons have been learned and are reflected in the pending change request. First, there are significant differences between each community and the Rural Municipalities given past experiences with insurance schemes and resulting in often considerable distrust of such mechanisms, the current production levels of jimbu (where only Narpha Bhumi RM has any significant production and therefore income) and the willingness to innovate (Rural Municipalities closer to the roads and hence markets are more willing to experiment with new marketing innovations or ways of thinking). Overall, these differences translate into slower adaptation and experimentation in the more remote communities. Also, all 3 Rural municipalities do not have Cooperative Acts and Regulations in place, making it necessary to enact legislation for the project to implement some activities as described in Section 3. The pending Change Request reflects this as the project seeks approval to move from Cooperative formation to Group/User Groups. In retrospect, better appreciating the emerging “pull and push”

differences between different government and policy levels, we would have used somewhat different indicators and means of verification when designing the project.

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- An emerging and very significant difference relates to Federalism and the devolution of powers which has proceeded far slower than anticipated. Along with this, we expected that management of the Annapurna Conservation Area project would have more fully devolved conservation/development to local governments, but instead has been consolidated to remain with Nepal Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) for 5 additional years from its establishment over 35 years ago. While we anticipated resistance to full devolution from both the Federal Government and Provincial Government authorities and NTNC, we had expected greater assumption of responsibility, level of resources with more leverage outcomes from the select power and authority for biodiversity granted to local Rural Municipalities. As quoted in Section 3.4, Devolution of powers remain largely a paper exercise in Nepal, to the considerable disappointment of many Nepalis. Not only has devolution proceeded more slowly but the constantly reduced flow of revenue from the central Federal Government is hampering all Nepali Rural Municipalities and not just our project.
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- A further lesson learned is that convincing remote mountain communities to act collaboratively is a longer-term goal for communities may be reluctant to work and collaborate with their neighbours unless there are tangible, short-term benefits that accrue quickly as financial gains, irrespective of hard-to-predict market realities and forces. This was expected but it has taken more community consultation, persuasion, and dialogue to convince communities of these benefits than we originally anticipated.
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- Thus, one overall lesson learned and to share with other conservationists in Nepal is that institutional change and especially devolution and power sharing happens very slowly. That said, it remains a worthy goal to strive for, but one that will take longer than expected, even where communities show commitment and political will.
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8. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

This is the first annual review. The original proposal reviewer requested us to revise and make indicators SMARTer and strengthen the means of verification, which was done in a pending change request. After comments from the Change Request Reviewer, we are clearer about articulating more tangible means of verification which have been resubmitted for review and comment. Additional changes have been requested by the reviewer which are on-going.

9. Risk Management

An updated Risk registry was prepared and submitted on Oct 31, 2023. There are no significant changes to the registry, which continues to closely reflect the original proposal listing of risks. The risk of lower than ideal levels of female participation by the project beneficiaries remains in place but confirmed to be closely monitored for improvement. Delivery chain risks remain current and cooperative action continues to be a challenge as described above. Risk 4 has proven significant for federal authorities continue to resist devolving power and resources and have in fact reduced the amounts of revenues provided to Rural Municipalities. The marketing risk remains in place given chive production is currently limited to one Rural Municipality, hampering consolidation and collective market efforts for other Rural Municipalities have both limited production (or collection) and therefore little interest in consolidating their supplies to a common marketing platform. It was always assumed that progress on this would be among the slowest target to achieve.

10. Sustainability and legacy

The efforts of the first year gained almost all project approvals, developed formal partnerships with the Rural Municipalities, recruited and trained staff, conducted participatory planning meetings, initiated project implementation, and fostered greater communication and collaboration across the 3 Rural Municipalities. Establishing the initial insurance scheme trials in several Rural Municipalities has been a significant achievement and since several depredation events have recently occurred, it offers an initial opportunity for testing program

effectiveness. Regardless of whether the insurance scheme works or not, the opportunity to share the results (positive and/or negative) will provide important lessons learned and potential sustainability at the multi- Rural Municipality level. Once results of insurance claims are process, more opportunities for share experience across boundaries will be available.

11. Darwin Initiative identity

Darwin Initiative logos and recognition have been used for all written materials, the sign Boards, and all conducted trainings. These have also been used extensively in Snow Leopard Conservancy communications such as Annual reports and other social media communications. Mountain Spirit has also credited Darwin Initiative support in their multiple social media posts and communications.

12. Safeguarding

Has your Safeguarding Policy been updated in the past 12 months?	No
Have any concerns been reported in the past 12 months	No
Does your project have a Safeguarding focal point?	Yes <i>Dr Shailendra [REDACTED], Project PI</i>
Has the focal point attended any formal training in the last 12 months?	No
What proportion (and number) of project staff have received formal training on Safeguarding?	Past: % Planned: % All (100%) project staff are familiarized with both the SLC and Mountain Spirit safeguarding procedures, especially at the time of recruitment. This is an informal rather than formal training.
Has there been any lessons learnt or challenges on Safeguarding in the past 12 months? Please ensure no sensitive data is included within responses.	
No safeguarding incidents occurred this reporting period	
Please describe any community sensitisation that has taken place over the past 12 months; include topics covered and number of participants.	
There have been no known safeguarding incidents or trainings at the institutional, organizational or community level this project period.	
Have there been any concerns around Health, Safety and Security of your project over the past year? If yes, please outline how this was resolved.	
No health, safety or security incidents have occurred this project period.	

13. Project expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024)

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2023/24 Grant (£)	2023/24 Total Darwin Initiative Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)				Fewer field staff trips and less time
Consultancy costs				On target
Overhead Costs				On target
Travel and subsistence				Fewer international trips
Operating Costs				More corrals and material support as per community priorities
Capital items (see below)				NGO partner purchased year 2 computer in Year 1
Others (see below)				Fewer bank fees as SLC negotiated lower fee rate
TOTAL	80,820	80,911.30		

Project mobilised or matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024)

	Secured to date	Expected by end of project	Sources
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project (£)			<p>Snow Leopard Conservancy (SLC)</p> <p>Sources: Woodtiger Fund, Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, Memphis Zoo, Islands Fund (Anonymous), and individual donations</p> <p>International Veterinary Outreach (IVO)</p>
Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building			<p>Snow Leopard Conservancy (SLC)</p> <p>Sources: Woodtiger Fund, Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden,</p>

on evidence, best practices and the project (£)			Islands Fund (Anonymous), and individual donations International Veterinary Outreach (IVO)
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14. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

Nothing to add at this time

15. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements or progress of your project so far (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes.

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds to edit and use the following for various promotional purposes (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

Nothing to attach at this time

File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)	File Name or File Location	Caption including description, country and credit	Social media accounts and websites to be tagged (leave blank if none)	Consent of subjects received (delete as necessary)
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against Indicators of Success for Financial Year 2023-2024

NOTE: A log frame Change Request was submitted, and Reviewer's Comments and suggestions were noted.

Based on email from BCF dated April 30,2024, the requested changes were accepted. There is a further need to strengthen the Means of Verification which will addressed in future correspondence with BCF and the Reviewer.

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2023 - March 2024	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Impact</p> <p>Mechanisms for coordinated snow leopard conservation across sub-national boundaries in Central Nepal established and operational</p>		
<p>Outcome Mechanisms for coordinated snow leopard conservation across sub-national boundaries in Central Nepal established and operational</p>		
<p>Outcome indicator 0.1</p> <p>O.1 Two or more Fora (e.g., networks, user groups or businesses) that support snow leopard conservation activities are formed and operating in at least two rural municipalities by end of project.</p> <p>Training provided to three livestock herders or user groups by end of year 2</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Himalayan chives (Jimbu) enterprise established and registered. Applications to operate pending with Dept of Small and Cottage Industries. Operating at single Rural Municipality level in year one. 2. 40 participants trained in small hotel and lodge management to expand eco-tourism options 3. Compensation scheme insuring livestock from snow leopard depredation in trial phase with first claims pending. 	<p>Awaiting Dept of Small Industry approval to start sales at scale.</p> <p>Follow up business planning required for small hotel and lodge management.</p> <p>First depredation claim pending</p> <p>Herder group training in year two</p> <p>Thini snow leopard trail idea to be investigated further in year 2</p>

<p>Outcome indicator 0.2, Herders supported to insure their livestock and process their livestock depredation claim for livestock loss compensation. Two User groups involved in insurance schemes and compensation process</p>	<p>55 herders have insured 804 livestock in 2 rural municipalities. Initial claim is in process Preparation of manual and training material to standardize future training in process</p>	<p>In process</p>
<p>Output 1: Three rural municipalities collaborate and market snow leopard-linked products and services (e.g., chives, tourism) promoting snow leopard conservation.</p>		
<p>1.1: A User group formed and operating that promotes the snow leopard as a brand for local products is established and supported. **** A marketing brand in support of snow leopard conservation registered, and the experience shared with cooperatives/groups to establish subnational marketing network for local products.</p>	<p>Phu village Himalayan chives (jimbu) group legally recognized, and application for sales in process with Dept of Small Industry.</p>	
<p>1.2: User Groups consolidate production, marketing, branding, processing, and sales of snow leopard-linked products and services. A business, marketing and branding plan produced and tested by end of year one.</p>	<p>Chive marketing materials and information designed and finalized</p>	
<p>1.3: ****/User groups across three rural communities increase incomes from snow leopard linked enterprises</p>	<p>To diversify enterprises, non-timber forest product (ntfp) survey completed and feasibility studies on-going Livestock enterprise ideas identified and feasibility studies on-going</p>	

1.4: All three rural municipalities incrementally increase their annual contributions from federal general development funds to support coordinated snow leopard conservation activities.	Progress on this is unlikely as Federal Government authorities have resisted devolution of power and restricted funding to rural municipalities	
Output 2: New cooperative of livestock owners operating across three rural municipalities.		
2.1 Minimum of 30% of livestock herders and livestock owners are trained in improved veterinary and livestock welfare.	Eight (8) day One Health One Welfare training of 14 JTAs and ACA officials completed. 248 animals vaccinated and treated. 49 animal guardians trained	
2.2 Three Livestock User groups established, or municipalities are supported for the formation of user groups by end of year 1	6 livestock groups trained, formed or strengthened across rural municipality boundaries. Priorities for follow up identified	
2.3 Two study tours involving livestock cooperatives/groups completed during Year 1 and 2 of the project.	Study tours are planned for year two after more experience is gained	
2.4 Peer-to-peer knowledge sharing networks established between herders in three rural municipalities (*Non-Darwin funding sources)	More experience and lessons learned are necessary before any journal articles can be considered	
2.5 Herder workshops for sharing herder-snow leopard interface and challenges associated with it conducted at provincial and national levels, and results shared.	Herder workshops identified common challenges and 11 sites selected for predator proof corrals. Workshops planned for year two.	
Output 3: Common approach, standards and mechanism to compensate herders for livestock depredation events is formed and operates across sub-national boundaries.	ACA compensation schemes tested, and one herder received compensation. He has been recruited for per to peer training of other herders. Manuals on completing depredation claims being prepared. 804 livestock enrolled in insurance scheme and first claims process underway.	
3.1: Recommendations made to simplify existing compensation guidelines to speed up compensation process.	Planned for year two after insurance claims process is completed and lesson learned	

3.2: 50% of herders demonstrate improved understanding of livestock insurance and compensation policies.	55 herders participated in Cooperative training. Target is met at the rural municipality level in some project sites but not all	Need to quantify baseline of number of herders in project areas
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Annex 2: Project’s full current Indicators of Success as presented in the application form (unless changes have been agreed)

****metric of these indicators may be revised based on inputs from participatory village meetings and more detailed data collection. If there are even minor changes, they will be communicated and negotiated with NIRAS through emails and the regular Change Request Process.****

Outcome	SMART Indicator	Means of Verification
Mechanisms for coordinated snow leopard conservation across sub-national boundaries in Central Nepal established and operational	O.1 Two or more Fora (e.g., networks, user groups or businesses) that support snow leopard conservation activities are formed and operating in at least two rural municipalities by end of project.	O.1.1: One or more value-chain user group networks registered and operating within 2 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User group meeting minutes • List of user group members • Terms of reference for user group • Local Government authority records
	Training provided to three livestock herders or user groups by end of year 2	O.1.2: Training results from three Livestock-owner and herder user groups registered* or existing groups supported by end of year 2.
	O.2: Herders supported to insure their livestock and process their livestock depredation claim process for the livestock loss compensation. Two. User groups involved in insurance schemes and compensation process	O.2.1: Number of herders receiving insurance claims for depredation loss increased. * (Changed Numbers of insurance claims will depend on the number of depredation incidents within the project period) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document current compensation processes and implementation challenges. • Identify institutional conflicts between National Parks and Annapurna Conservation Area authorities.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on study findings suggest proposed improvements to compensation empowering local authorities • Number of community members enrolled in insurance scheme <p>02.2: Number of herders compensated for their livestock loss, if any. (See * Comment above. Compensation only occurs following depredation events)</p> <p>02.2 Number of registered and operating livestock user groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half year and annual user group meeting minutes with key decisions noted • Number of registered participants/members at meetings
<p>Output 1: Three rural municipalities collaborate and market snow leopard-linked products and services (e.g., chives, tourism) promoting snow leopard conservation.</p>	<p>1.1: A User group formed and operating that promotes the snow leopard as a brand for local products is established and supported. **** A marketing brand in support of snow leopard conservation registered, and the experience shared with cooperatives/groups to establish subnational marketing network for local products.</p>	<p>1.1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User group created and operating. • Marketing plan developed and implemented. • Informal meeting/s held and shared marketing experience with neighbouring communities. • Marketing and branding materials produced. • Volume of products sold and gross revenues generated
	<p>1.2: User Groups consolidate production, marketing, branding, processing, and sales of snow leopard-linked products and services.</p>	<p>1.2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plan produced in year 1

	<p>A business, marketing and branding plan produced and tested by end of year one.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing and branding materials designed, printed and in use in year 1 • Revenues generated by branded products sold by end year 2 • Number of herders getting revenues from branded goods sold by end year 2
	<p>1.3: ****User groups across three rural communities increase incomes from snow leopard linked enterprises</p>	<p>1.3.1 For plant-based enterprises: # of KGs produced and sold by end of project.</p> <p>1.3.2 For livestock enterprises: sales of livestock products (quantity and revenues generated by end of year 2</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.3.3 For service enterprises: increase in tourist visitors and revenues by end of year 2. • Number of households/herders receiving some financial benefits from user group sponsored activities by end of project. <hr/>
	<p>1.4: All three rural municipalities incrementally increase their annual contributions from federal general development funds to support coordinated snow leopard conservation activities. *****</p>	<p>1.4: All three rural municipalities coordinate on snow leopard conservation activities and contribute according to their priorities. (Measured against baselines collected in Q1 Year 1)</p>
<p>Output 2: New cooperative of livestock owners operating across three rural municipalities.</p>	<p>2.1: Minimum of 30% of livestock herders and livestock owners are trained in improved veterinary and livestock welfare.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.1.1: Training materials produced. • Number of veterinary technicians trained by end of year 2 • Pre- Post Training assessment of new skills learned by participating herders by end of Y 2.

		<p>2.1.2 Number of livestock treated and vaccinated by end of Y2 *</p> <p>2.1.3 Number of predator deterrent devices distributed and effectiveness assessed (fox lights) by end of Y2</p> <p>2.1.4 Number of livestock sheds (corrals) improved to reduce depredation by end of Y2.</p>
	2.2: Three Livestock User groups established or municipalities are supported for the formation of user groups by end of year 1	2.2: Registration documents by end of y2. Meeting minutes noting numbers of participants annually
	2.3: Two study tours involving livestock cooperatives/groups completed during Year 1 and 2 of the project.	2.3: Study tour reports on completion of study tours
	2.4: Peer-to-peer knowledge sharing networks established between herders in three rural municipalities (*Non-Darwin funding sources)	2.4.1: Ideas from at least one owner/herder group are documented and replicated by another group by end of year 2.
		2.4.2: Appropriate, peer reviewed paper detailing knowledge sharing experience prepared for on-line distribution and submitted to Snow Leopard Network.
		2.4.3 Innovative herder performance awards granted by end of year two.
	2.5: Herder workshops for sharing herder-snow leopard interface and challenges associated with it conducted at provincial and national levels, and results shared.	2.5: One Provincial and one National level workshop conducted at end of project. <i>*These workshops will also be combined with those listed in Indicator 3.3</i>

Output 3: Common approach, standards and mechanism to compensate herders for livestock depredation events is formed and operates across sub-national boundaries.	3.1: Recommendations made to simplify existing compensation guidelines to speed up compensation process.	3.1.1: Report analysing current livestock insurance and compensation policies produced with recommendations for improvements by end of year 2 \
	3.2: 50% of herders demonstrate improved understanding of livestock insurance and compensation policies.	3.2: Pre and post workshop evaluations of herders understanding of insurance and compensation processes following workshops.
Activities (each activity is numbered according to the Output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output		
<p>1.1 Desk and key informant review of Fiscal Transfer Process under evolving Constitution reviewed and “Best Practices” for conservation funding allocation options and fund transfer mechanisms produced</p> <p>1.1 Key informant interviews to identify current marketing structures identified and strengths & weaknesses identified recognized.</p> <p>1.2 Study tour to successful community cooperatives involved in agriculture and livestock based enterprises conducted, and lessons learned and adapted for use</p> <p>1.3 Subnational marketing cooperative capacity established, legally registered and operating</p> <p>1.4 Capacity for consolidation, processing, branding and marketing of snow leopard linked products are operating using chives cultivation as a model, but adapted for other sites as products come online</p> <p>1.5 Revenues generated and benefits shared across Rural Municipality boundaries and among community members</p> <p>1.6</p> <p>1.7 If appropriate, results shared in peer reviewed on-line publication like OnePlus</p>		

2.1 Livestock owners common priorities and challenges identified and prioritized

2.2 Key informant interviews conducted with livestock owners and herders

2.3 Livestock cooperative legally established, registered and capacity to operate in place

2.4 Shared challenges identified and prioritized, and pilot activities initiated across three municipalities.

***Note: ***Approaches likely to differ based on locally identified priorities designed to tackle specific constraints, risks and opportunities. Anticipated priorities based on past experience are Livestock Health product marketing and rangeland restoration (Nar and Phu), Cultural Conservation (Manang) and Corral Improvements (Jomsom)

2.5 if appropriate, result consolidated and shared in online peer reviewed journal like OnePlus.

3.1 Desk review and key informant interviews on existing compensation mechanisms

3.2 Three municipality (subnational) workshop to identify areas to improve compensation mechanisms, new structure proposed and implemented

3.3 Results from new compensation schemes are analysed and recommended improvements implemented based of field experiences

Please describe up to 6 key assumptions that, if held true, will enable you to deliver your Outputs and Outcome.

*Communities and local governments recognize value of networking

*Municipalities (mayors and staff) provide financing (as in the chives/jimbu project) and endorse collaborative efforts across administrative boundaries

*Marketing cooperatives achieve cross-boundary collaboration and marketing agreements

*Municipalities receive sufficient funding from the Central and Provincial governments for supporting conservation projects with communities or cooperatives going forward.

*Outside political pressures do not adversely dictate or impact how funds are utilized

*Pandemics or natural calamities are short-lived and do not adversely impact the local economy, enterprise operations or product marketing and sales

Annex 3: Standard Indicators

Table 1 Project Standard Indicators

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DI-A05	Number of trainers trained reporting to have delivered further training by the end of the project	People	Gender; Age Group; Stakeholder group: Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, Nationals, public sector, civil society, private sector.	No trained participant led training sessions in year 1				Not a planned target in this project
DI-A06	Number of people with improved access to services or infrastructure for improved well-being.	People	Gender; Age Group; Stakeholder group: Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, Nationals	55 herders trained Men Women No age disaggregation				
DI-A07	Number of government Institutions departments with enhanced awareness and understanding of biodiversity and associated poverty issues	4	Government institutions	3 Rural municipalities plus Dept of Livestock Services (Vet Training)				
DI-A10	Proportion sustainable livelihood enterprises established that are functioning at project end (at least a year after establishment)	One/ one	Himalayan Chives (jimbu) project established and getting registered					

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DI A11	Number of sustainable livelihood enterprises that are profitable (at least a year after establishment)	One	Mixed gender owners					
DI A 12	Annual turnover of established sustainable livelihood enterprises in the project's final year	GBP Sterling/year	End of year one only					

Table 2 Publications

Title	Type (e.g. journals, best practice manual, blog post, online videos, podcasts, CDs)	Detail (authors, year)	Gender of Lead Author	Nationality of Lead Author	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (e.g. weblink or publisher if not available online)
No Publications generated in year one						

- Lack of counselling support to the entrepreneurs to start up and improve the business operated by the cooperative members are priority follow up actions.

END of Annual Report #1

Checklist for submission

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the correct template (checking fund, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and deleted the blue guidance text before submission?	
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line.	
Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please discuss with BCF-Reports@niras.com about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	
Have you included means of verification? You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 15)?	
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	