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Stakeholder Analysis in Snow Leopard Landscape Management Planning

Advice Document Addendum to the General Guidelines for Climate Smart Snow Leopard Landscape Management Planning

The home range of an individual snow leopard can range in size from 200 km² to more than 1,500 km²; thus, a landscape containing a healthy population of snow leopards can span thousands of square kilometres - much larger than most protected areas located across snow leopard range. Further, studies have shown that over half the snow leopard population in the world may occur outside protected areas, thus making landscape level conservation efforts imperative. Securing such a large area for snow leopard conservation is a complex undertaking as it is likely to encompass a variety of traditional and modern land uses such as agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, resource extraction, rural and urban development and conservation. This large people-wildlife interface means that numerous stakeholders are naturally a part of landscape level management.

Who is a stakeholder? A stakeholder is an individual, group or institution that has an interest in or is impacted by a project. Stakeholders, particularly influential ones such as government departments or industries, can play a decisive role in how a landscape is managed. Most of these agencies are active in the landscape due to long-standing and legitimate mandates. Their role may complement conservation (e.g. protected areas, fulfilling sustainable livelihood requirements), or conflict with it (e.g. large infrastructure or unsustainable resource extraction projects), but in either case can be seen as crucial for local or national interest by local people and/or policymakers.

For the landscape management planning process to be successful, it is crucial not only to work closely with local communities (as discussed in Addendum 4. Participation in Conservation), but also to identify and engage with the other stakeholders involved with other land uses in the landscape. In this document, we discuss ways to identify the stakeholders in your snow leopard landscape, analyze their activities and roles in the landscape, and strategically engage with them during the landscape management planning and implementation process.

This document is intended to provide additional guidance on stakeholder analysis, as a supplement to the existing guidance framework developed by the Snow Leopard Trust, "General Guidelines for Snow Leopard Landscape Management Planning."

Identifying Stakeholders

Identify known stakeholders

The first step in conducting a stakeholder analysis for your landscape is to identify all of the known stakeholders in the landscape. First, consider the types of stakeholders in the landscape. Once you have identified the types of stakeholders in your landscape, you can then systematically list the individual stakeholders that fall under each type. Often the best way to search for these stakeholders is to have discussions with some key people in the district administration, local NGOs and local community, and through the perusal of websites. These methods can also assist in finding some less known stakeholders (see below). Here are some examples of types of stakeholders frequently found in snow leopard landscapes:

- **Local communities** including both small villages and larger towns or cities located within the landscape as well as downstream.
- **Local traditional institutions** such as pasture user groups, village elders, or women's groups
- **Government agencies**, both local and national, who are in charge of human welfare, economic development, security, conservation, etc.
- **Non-governmental agencies** with their own economic development, social welfare and/or conservation goals and objectives
- **Private businesses and industry** including small local businesses and enterprises as well as national or multi-national corporations
- **National and international donor agencies** can often have keen interest in supporting tenable welfare, development or conservation programs in the region

Discover and identify unknown stakeholders

While you may be aware of most of the stakeholders within your landscape, it is possible there are other stakeholders of whom you may not be aware. For example, a resource extraction company could be quietly holding a license on a parcel of land to use in the future, or a government agency that is not currently operating any projects in the landscape could be planning the construction of a road five years from now. The resource extraction company and the government agency, as well as the populations, communities and institutions that will be affected by the projects, could thus be considered stakeholders in the landscape and should be engaged during the landscape management planning process.

One method of discovering unknown stakeholders in the landscape is to engage in discussions with the known ones. You should talk to local community members, government officials and NGO partners and inquire about other institutions that may be working in the area. It should be noted that the entire stakeholder analysis process is not a linear one, but rather an iterative process that will require repeated inquiries, analysis and engagement as information is gathered.

Finally, you should think beyond the boundaries of your landscape. Are there communities, populations or industries located outside of your landscape that are dependent on it? Where are they located? How and to what extent are they dependent on the landscape?

Stakeholder Analysis¹

Stakeholder analysis in project management begins with the process of identifying the individuals or groups that are likely to affect or be affected by the project. This information is used to assess how the interests of those stakeholders should be addressed in a project plan, policy, program, or other actions. Stakeholder analysis thus consists of weighing and balancing all of the competing demands on a project by those who have a role in it, in order to arrive at fulfilling the project's obligation.

Therefore, the goal of stakeholder analysis is to develop better understanding and cooperation between the stakeholder and the project team and, ultimately, assure successful outcomes for the management plan (See [Annex 1](#) for an example).

Once you have identified the stakeholders in your landscape, you can begin your analysis to determine which stakeholders may serve as key partners or threats to snow leopard conservation efforts, and ultimately how you will engage each stakeholder in the landscape management planning process. The broad steps of Stakeholder Analysis, including how the information can be utilized for management plan implementation, are given below:

Categorize the stakeholders

Agencies can be broadly categorized under sectors such as production (e.g. agriculture, veterinary, horticulture), welfare (e.g. health, rural development), business (e.g. local small business, tourism, industry), administration (e.g. district administration, village level elected body), infrastructure (e.g. roads, power projects), national security (e.g. army or paramilitary), conservation (e.g. forestry, NGOs), etc. The agencies can also be tagged as government, non-government, traditional, etc. (see section titled [‘Identify known stakeholders’](#) above).



Stakeholders work together on a snow leopard landscape management plan in Nepal. Photo: Koustubh Sharma.

¹ This document uses the term Stakeholder Analysis, but the same is also referred to as ‘Institutional Analysis’ in some sources.

Gathering key information on stakeholders

To better analyze the stakeholders in your landscape, you should try to gather information on each stakeholder. Importantly, this information can include their mandates, projects (past, present and future), key personnel, funding sources, existing partnerships, relationships with other agencies, and legal standing of their works. It is recommended that you create a table or chart to organize this information.

During this engagement some other aspects can be queries and include:

- What is their environmental impact on the landscape? You can explore if there is any environmental impact assessment (EIA) of their project.
- What is their level of political and financial influence? This, naturally, is a sensitive matter but crucial for the management plan. It is important for the team to know this but may not be included in the management plan document as such.
- What is their estimated level of support for landscape management planning? Assess this after you have explained the management plan process to them (see section titled '[Outreach to stakeholders](#)' below)
- Where specifically in the landscape are they located, working or planning to work?

As previously mentioned, this information can be gathered from conversations with stakeholders or from publicly available information such as Websites. Annual reports or development plans produced by district administration or institutions can often be a good source of information. In many instances, however, the best way to gather information about a particular stakeholder will be to speak directly to that stakeholder. See that you are able to speak with the concerned official or community leader or key informant. You can learn more about engaging directly with stakeholders below. The information on projects and programs should be gathered at least for the past five years and for about five to ten years in the future too.

Prioritizing stakeholders and identifying areas of convergence and divergence

Once you have gathered information on the stakeholders in your landscape, you should have at least an initial understanding of which stakeholders may be potential partners in snow leopard conservation and the landscape management planning process and which may serve as threats, and list them out. You can take this understanding a step further by analysing the information you have gathered to rank the stakeholders according to their level of importance for snow leopard conservation in the landscape and their potential level of partnership and collaboration (See Addendum 2. 'Strategic Management Planning in Snow Leopard Landscapes').

Furthermore, you should identify specific areas of convergence where collaborative work can be included in the management plan as well as areas of divergence where dialogue and negotiations may need to take place to minimize negative impacts on the landscape.

With regard to convergence, identify where already existing projects or work synergizes with the conservation goals under the management plan. For example, the Agriculture Department may have an existing pasture development scheme with enough resources for work throughout the landscape. The management plan too may recognise habitat restoration through pasture development as an activity. Early discussions and identification of these shared goals can lead to collaboration in terms of the pastures to be selected, fodder species or methods to be used, etc. The work can be carried out in a manner with benefits for both the Agriculture Department and its constituents and snow leopard conservation.

It is also clear that there will be areas of divergence where mandates or projects of agencies conflict with the landscape management plan and conservation goals. These areas of divergence can be included in the threats to your landscape management plan with details provided about how the conflicting project will harm conservation. Determining how to address areas of divergence can be challenging as they may be led or invested in by powerful interests such as businesses, government departments or entire communities. Early detection and details about such a project can help in preparing the case for steps for resolution. The team should identify the problem clearly, study all related interests, legal issues and political support. It will also be useful to consult with subject experts to learn about any alternatives. These may include negotiations to stop or alter the project. In some cases suitable compensatory mechanisms or offsets can be negotiated that can help other aspects of the management plan. In some rare cases where the impacts can be demonstrably negative, data can be provided to specialised agencies to take legal recourse.

Most analyses will be about listing institutions and their programs to identify those that are key threats or opportunities for conservation of snow leopard and the landscape. These may be ranked as per their perceived importance for their positives or negatives in tables or matrices. It is also good to understand existing structures at various administrative levels through organograms. The relative importance and interactions among agencies can be studied and represented using Venn diagrams or flowcharts.



Stakeholders collaborate on a snow leopard landscape management plan in Nepal. Photo: Koustubh Sharma.

Engaging with Stakeholders

The team visiting the stakeholders is extremely important for the landscape management planning process as they are possibly the first interface for the stakeholders to learn about the process, its goals, objectives, philosophy and their possible role in it. The manner in which the team interacts with the stakeholders is crucial; these aspects are discussed below:

Outreach to stakeholders

Your initial discussions with stakeholders may be your primary method of learning about them, their involvement in the landscape and their potential status as partners in snow leopard conservation and the landscape management planning process.

For the stakeholder, it may be their first time hearing about the landscape management planning process. This is a good opportunity to inform them about the GSLEP landscape conservation initiative, its goals and leadership, and to answer any questions that they may have. Specifically, stakeholders are often concerned about new restrictive protected areas – you can use this opportunity to inform them that this initiative is not about the creation of vast protected areas, but is about developing an inclusive landscape management program where they are likely partners.

While the landscape management planning process is ideally a collaborative process, you should think strategically about the best way to initially engage with each stakeholder. Should you reach out to them directly or through a mutual connection or institution? Do you need permission to meet with them? Will a letter of introduction from a suitable politician or officer be useful? Would it be better to meet with multiple stakeholders at one time in a workshop or official meeting? What information should you divulge or not divulge? What questions should you ask? The team can also think of producing a simple flier in the local language with brief information on the GSLEP process, the national Government's commitment to it, and the plan's inclusive nature for conservation and development. Such printed information can be a positive reference for them.

Forming an assessment team

As mentioned above, the team doing the assessments is key to the process. Here are some basic guidelines for your assessment team:

1. Select an effective team of staff, students and volunteers who are interested in the process.
2. Invest in the team's capacity, helping them to understand the management plan, its philosophy, goals and implementation approach.
3. Invest in informing the team about the stakeholders (through informal discussions, annual reports and Websites) so that they are aware of the agencies' schemes a-priori and obtain details on all relevant programs.
4. The team should be respectful and courteous irrespective of the stakeholder's behaviour or status.

Conclusions

Stakeholders can have legitimate stakes in the landscape that may complement or conflict with snow leopard conservation goals. A stakeholder analysis process enables you to optimize the benefits of positive programs by avoiding duplication, involving diverse agencies in conservation, saving conservation funds and generating a sense of long-term collaboration. At the same time, this analysis allows us to deal with potential conflicts with stakeholders through a better understanding of the conflicts and space to negotiate a settlement using a proactive rather than a reactive approach. The stakeholder analysis thus can strengthen conservation in the landscape using a true partnership-based approach (See [Annex 1](#) for an example).

References

- Sutherland, W. (2000). Conservation Handbook: Research, Management and Policy. Blackwell Publishing. Oxford, UK. (see Chapter 7: Conservation Planning, Chapter 8: Organisational management and fund raising, and Chapter 14: Integrating Conservation and Development)
- Anonymous (2011). Management Plan for the Upper Spiti Landscape Including the Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary. Wildlife Wing, Himachal Pradesh Forest Department & Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysore. (See Chapter 2.4 Institutions in Spiti and Chapter 7: Set up Mechanisms for Collaborative Conservation.)

Annexes

Annex 1: The need of stakeholder analysis in management planning: an example

A snow leopard landscape spans across 10,000 km² that includes 10 villages. Using an analysis of biodiversity values, traditional threats to biodiversity and needs of local communities, a management plan was prepared that dealt extensively with local issues. The plan also identified four critical snow leopard areas that had demonstrably better values for wildlife and arranged for its conservation with local communities. Activities aimed at managing livestock depredation by snow leopards was worked out with the most affected communities through detailed participatory processes. Further, given the very poor situation of energy for both cooking and lighting a program to provide subsidized cooking gas and solar lighting was arranged at considerable cost (30% of the management plan's allocations). Three scenarios are discussed below:

1. Energy: *In the second year of the management plan implementation, the team, after considerable effort, was able to arrange for solar lighting in 3 of the 10 villages. However, at the same time the Government's department of energy already had a program for solar lighting through decentralized solar plants in five of the large villages along with an integrated solar kit that also charges mobiles for the remaining five smaller villages. The need for the solar lanterns in the villages supported by the management plan declined in another year and was discarded by the villagers.*

2. Conflict management included corral improvements for livestock for which 20% of project costs were kept aside. Village meetings were held and corral improvement work was planned in four priority villages. However, since the problem of depredation and heavy winter snowfall had been acute for the past five years, the villagers had been demanding covered corrals from the local administration. The animal husbandry department had already approved corral improvement for all 10 villages and the program began around the same time as the management plan implementation, thus making the effort by the management plan redundant.

3. Grazing-free reserves: Four critical snow leopard areas were identified with the support of local people. However in year three of the management plan implementation, the infrastructure department began work to connect two important border posts that passed through one of these critical snow leopard sites. Upon inquiring with the department, they said the project had been cleared as a project of national importance after an Environmental Impact Assessment five years ago, and implementation began as soon as funds were available and cannot be altered at this stage.

In all of the above examples, prior information about the programs of other agencies would have greatly helped the management plan's efficiency. In the case of solar lighting and corral improvements, precious funds could have been saved while also providing an opportunity for the other departments to participate in conservation. In the case of the road, prior consultation could have helped in potentially negotiating realignment.