

Concept note
Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Conservation Forum
24-25 August 2017,
Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic

I. Introduction

The magnificent snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*) is an integral part of the cultural history of Asia's mountain people. An indicator of strength, stealth and liberty, the snow leopard is revered in all regions where it is found. Snow leopards occur in high mountains of Asia, which are considered to be the water towers of the world. Supplying water to up to 60% of the world's human population, and providing numerous other ecosystem services that have high economic and cultural value, these mountains have regional and global relevance for the welfare of humankind.

The snow leopard is found in 12 countries that include Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Around 3000 to 7000 snow leopards survive in the nearly two million square km within these 12 countries and is provided the highest level of protection by the local law as well as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) threatened with extinction. Hunting of snow leopards is strictly prohibited and it is listed in the International Red Book of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Several conventional threats such as illegal poaching, habitat destruction and climate change are posing greater threats on snow leopard and its ecosystem than ever before, urging for the need to take immediate action.

Recognizing the importance of snow leopard conservation, the Honorable President of the Kyrgyz Republic Mr. Almazbek Atambaev hosted the Global Snow Leopard Conservation Forum (Global Forum) in 2013. The goal of this Forum was to draw the world's attention to the plight of the snow leopard, and urge the global community to take appropriate steps to preserve the snow leopard and its ecosystem. The Bishkek Declaration for snow leopard conservation was endorsed at the Global Forum by all snow leopard range countries, and supported by international financial institutions and non-governmental organizations. The Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program was initiated at the forum to coordinate activities

The endorsing of the Global snow leopard and its ecosystem conservation Program (GSLEP) as the result of the Global Forum provided a strong impetus to the development and expansion of cooperation with snow leopard range States, international financial institutions and organizations, as well as with the main experts in the field of conservation of the snow leopard and biodiversity.

The Global Forum provided a powerful impetus to the development and expansion of cooperation between countries, international financial institutions, organizations and experts for snow leopard and biodiversity conservation in the mountain ecosystems of Central and South Asia. "This was the first time that political leaders from the 12 snow leopard range countries came together on a single platform to unanimously pledge support to the conservation of snow leopard and its ecosystem. Cumulatively, more than \$40 million have been channelized for GSLEP implementation via GEF 6 STAR allocations to seven range countries. Additionally, \$1 million has been approved by GEF for GSLEP program coordination and implementation of the Global Support Components such as trans-boundary management of snow leopard landscapes and development of

comprehensive monitoring mechanisms. “Silent Roar”. UNDP and GEF in the snow leopard landscape.”

The year 2017 will mark the midpoint of the implementation of the GLSEP program. To provide a strong impetus to the progress made so far, and to ensure tangible investments and conservation outputs, the President of Kyrgyz Republic is hosting a Global Snow Leopard Summit that should additionally seek Green Investments in the mountain regions of the snow leopard range.

A Green Investment Forum is envisaged to facilitate investments and resource mobilization towards ecologically responsible. It will also propose meaningful mechanisms to facilitate the industry sector to invest in sustainable development and snow leopard conservation in Asia’s mountains.

II. Aims and objectives of the Forum 2017

At the international and national levels to attract and expand the understanding of the political, scientific and economic elite and the general public to the issues of conservation and enhancement of the population of the snow leopard, the expansion of favorable conditions for its existence within its supporting natural ecosystems.

- **Forum 2017 as a discussion platform.** Strengthen the platform where leaders of 12 countries of snow leopard will unite to work together to protect and conserve the snow leopard and highland systems. The leaders of the world community as a whole share the responsibility to preserve and increase the population of the snow leopard and its supporting the existence of natural ecosystems. Forum 2017 will allow to develop joint proposals and commit to achieve real results in order to achieve the GSLEP goal «Secure 20 by 2020”.

Key performance indicator 1: The final statement of the range countries.

- **Forum 2017 as a communication platform.** Forum 2017 is a good opportunity and an occasion to raise public awareness and government of range countries to the problem of conservation of the snow leopard and its ecosystems. All participants of the Forum 2017 will have a unique opportunity to create new and strengthen old partnerships.

Key performance indicator 2: The number of participants in the Forum 2017 in the context of the target audience.

- **Forum 2017 as an exhibition area.** Besides the exchange of views, experiences and discussions, the Forum 2017 provides a platform for the exhibition of projects and activities for the international organizations, associations and other institutions in implementing "green" technologies, "green" investments and others.

Key performance indicator 3: number of exhibitors.

- **Forum 2017 as an investment (partner) area, to** attract donors, corporates, business houses and international financial institutions to support development, research and management with focus on biodiversity conservation in the

mountains of these 12 snow leopard range countries..The expansion of existing and opening of new opportunities for the development of ecotourism, green growth, increased use of environmentally friendly infrastructure, and research and community development without causing a negative impact on human health and the environment in the range states, including Kyrgyzstan.

Key performance indicator 4: The final management plans landscapes in the project areas of snow leopard countries.

III. Organizers of the Forum 2017

- President Office of the Kyrgyz Republic device;
- Prime-minister Office of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- State Agency on Environment Protection and Forestry under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic.

IV. Strategic partners of the Forum 2017

- Global Environment Facility (GEF)
- Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP)
- Global Tiger Initiative Council (GTIC)
- Nature And Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU)
- Snow Leopard Trust (SLT)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
- Secretariat on Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program.

V. Venue and dates of the Forum 2017

“24-25” August 2017, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic

VI. Events of the Forum 2017

Plenary sessions, thematic sessions, side events, exhibitions, expositions and cultural events.

VII. Target audience of the Forum 2017

Heads and representatives of the Governments of the snow leopard range countries:

- Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
- Kingdom of Bhutan
- People's Republic of China
- Republic of India
- Republic of Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyz Republic
- Mongolia
- Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal
- Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- Russian Federation
- Republic of Tajikistan
- Republic of Uzbekistan

And:

1. Heads of State / Government / representatives / other foreign countries and heads of foreign diplomatic missions accredited in the Kyrgyz Republic;
2. Heads and representatives of international organizations and environmental conventions;
3. Members of the delegations of the main co-organizers and sponsors;
4. Members of the delegations of donor organizations and foundations, etc.;
5. Scientific community.

VIII. Expected outcomes of the Forum 2017

- Bolster high-level political support at the highest level to facilitate green growth models in the implementation of the Landscape Management Plans and to ensure in mountain landscapes to achieve the goal of the GSLEP Program "Secure 20 by 2020" and policy recommendations based on the thematic documents.
- Adoption by snow leopard range countries, as well as international financial institutions and other organizations, of commitments to allocate financial and technical resources to achieve the goal of "Secure 20 by 2020".
- Prepared and presented the concept of a regional project for the conservation of the snow leopard and its ecosystems at the Forum 2017.

The regional project will mobilize financial resources for a full-scale multi-country project, with the leading role of Kyrgyzstan, consonant with global calls and commitments we have undertaken to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

IX. The final document of the Forum 2017

1) Bishkek declaration on the conservation of the snow leopard and its ecosystems. The declaration will give chance to the governments of the countries of the range to demonstrate once again their willingness to take care of the well-being of the snow leopard populations, and will become an important basis for introducing changes in international and state policies and in animal protection laws in general. Its adoption will also contribute to improving the system for monitoring compliance with measures to protect the snow leopard and promoting humane treatment towards it in the areas where it lives.

2) Thematic document for snow leopard range countries, which will include the following directions:

1	Resources	Prepared a resource mobilization strategy for the GSLEP program to implement the Global and National priorities.
2	Business and Industry	Targeted National portfolios of projects prepared to engage the business sector.
3	Research and Monitoring	Expo on the day after the Summit to showcase all research work being done in the snow leopard range. The outcome can be a clear direction on gaps and opportunities for future research.

4	Community based Conservation	A training module will be finalized to be delivered in multiple phases based on capacity needs identified by range countries.
5	Infrastructure	Developed a strategic plan for promoting Green Infrastructure models in GSLEP landscapes. Adopting smart green infrastructure principles in national policies. A green infrastructure model plan for one landscape in Kyrgyzstan will be put in place
6	Poaching , Illegal Trade and Traffic	Developed a document analysing the legal frameworks for snow leopard poaching and trafficking across the range. A strategy for combating illegal wildlife trade in snow leopards across Central Asia.
7	Capacity building	Developed a capacity building strategy within GSLEP based on collate information from countries.
8	Landscape Management Planning	Updated management planning guidelines based on management planning experience of GSLEP landscapes.
9	Climate Change	Strategy to strengthen climate change adaptation in ways that are aligned with the conservation goals for these landscapes.