



CASE STUDY

Sustainable Vicuña Management



The Sustainable Vicuña Management project helps to conserve the vicuña (Vicugna vicugna) species whilst also contributing to improving traditional production-based livelihoods for members of the Olaroz Chico Community. Orocobre contributes to this project by providing necessary training, equipment, and administrative support.

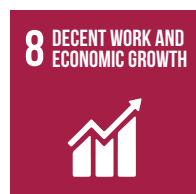
Strategic alignment to **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Shared Value Pillar



Natural resources
and local production

Direct Contribution



Indirect Contribution



SDG Target 8.2: Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation.

SDG Target 8.3: Encourage formalisation and growth of micro-, small- and medium sized enterprises

SDG Target 8.4: Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation.

Background

Our Olaroz Lithium Facility is situated within the Olaroz-Cauchari provincial fauna and flora reserve. This reserve was created in 1981 with the primary goal of protecting the *Vicugna vicugna* (vicuña) species. Vicuñas are native to the Puna and high Andes regions of South America, and are found in Peru, north-western Argentina, Bolivia, and northern Chile. The fibre from Vicuñas is considered very fine and hunting of vicuñas and export of these fibres resulted in the species becoming endangered. As a result, international agreements such as the Convention for the conservation and management of the vicuña (Vicuña Convention) have been implemented to promote the sustainable management of the species, for the benefit of local communities. Vicuñas are now classified as a species of 'least concern' on the IUCN's Red List of Endangered Species¹.

The families that live in the Olaroz Chico Community have traditionally implemented ancestral "Chaku" vicuña (*Vicugna vicugna*) rearing practices to supplement to their household economy. These activities involved herding and capturing the vicuña, shearing the animals, and then releasing them again.

Proposal

The Sustainable Vicuña Management project was identified as an opportunity for Orocobre to contribute to developing shared value with our local communities by:

1. Leveraging traditional livelihoods focused on the ancestral "Chaku" vicuña (*Vicugna vicugna*) rearing practice to generate additional sustainable income sources in the Puna region of Jujuy.
2. Monitoring and increasing the number of vicuñas in the region through the development of sustainable management and preservation skills.

In 2019, an opportunity was identified for the families from the Olaroz Chico Community to assist the Office of the Secretary of Biodiversity and Sustainable Development (OSBSD) in the Province of Jujuy with monitoring of vicuñas in the region. A preservation and management plan was created to train participating community members in vicuña census-taking and monitoring.

Orocobre contributes to this project by coordinating a vicuña specialist to provide the required technical support and training for the local communities. We also make contributions to assist with acquiring the equipment needed to make improvements to shearing activities.

There are opportunities to expand the project to additional communities as well as to utilise new shearing technology to expand production activities associated with traditional livestock (llama and sheep).

Barriers faced

The restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic have prevented some planned on-site activities during FY20 and delayed to deployment of some activities associated with the program. To address these restrictions, the OSBSD provided virtual training during 2020 and virtual technical support activities have also continued.

Partnerships

This program is possible thanks to the collaborative partnership between Orocobre, the families involved and the Office of the Secretary of Biodiversity and Sustainable Development of the Province of Jujuy (OSBSD). The OSBSD provides support focused on species preservation and sustainable development, according to the guidelines of the Vicuña Convention.



¹ <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22956/145360542>



Project outcomes and indicators

During FY20, three vicuña censuses were conducted. The results yielded promising data on animal populations and will help define sites for possible further vicuña management activities.

Further indicators related to this project will be developed, and are likely to include: funds invested in machinery, funds invested in shearing process technology enhancement, number of project participants, vicuña population numbers, amount of fibre obtained from the shearing activities, income/revenue from production, value generated (value of associated employment, contracts, etc.). Orocobre will continue to provide updates on project results and outcomes measured.