

Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus Half Year Report

Note: If there is any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website, please ensure you clearly highlight this.

Submission Deadline: 31st October 2023

Project reference	IWTEV001
Project title	Developing a problem-oriented approach to reduce turtle trafficking in Cambodia
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Cambodia
Lead partner	Wildlife Conservation Society, Cambodia
Partner(s)	N/A
Project leader	WCS Cambodia
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	30 October 2023, HYR 2
Project website/blog/social media	https://cambodia.wcs.org

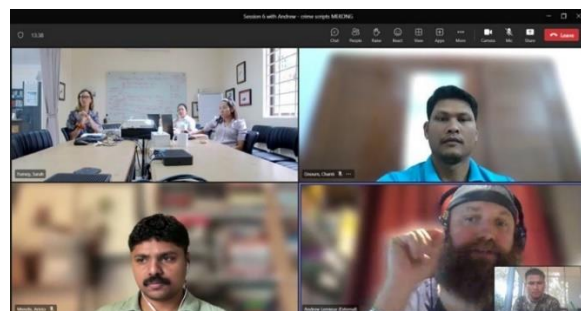
Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

During this reporting period, progress has been made as planned.

Output 1. A detailed understanding of at least two specific turtle trade chains including identification of drivers and opportunities for crime prevention.

Activity 1.1: Organise a training and ensure ongoing mentoring for project Staff on the problem-oriented wildlife protection approach.

During this reporting period, continued mentoring was provided by Dr. Andrew Lemieux to the CWT project staff and landscape staff through monthly online working sessions. Sessions #5 and #6 were held in May and June, to review the two crime scripts for Sre Ambel and the Mekong sites. Session #7 in July was dedicated to discussing the problem-oriented approach to develop preventive interventions for each site, using the crime script results. Session #8 was conducted in September to discuss the results of the stakeholder consultation meetings. A matrix was developed during the session, for scoring potential interventions to help prioritize them. A final session is scheduled for October on developing the preventive strategy.



Figures 1 & 2: online sessions with Dr. Lemieux.

Activity 1.2: Organise meetings with project stakeholders to introduce the project and approach.

This activity was completed in Year 1 and was reported in Y1 Annual Report.

Activity 1.3: Collect and analyse information through field surveys and discussion with local community members, online open-source research, compilation of existing records of patrols, captures, voluntary reports and enforcement and judicial action, to determine drivers and facilitators of poaching, illegal trade, and consumption of the two turtle species.

In addition to the data collection conducted in Year 1, the team conducted two field trips to validate and confirm the information collected. In April, the team interviewed a Fisheries Administration (FiA) Cantonment Officer in Preah Sihanouk province, and three fishers (2M, 1F) in Sre Ambel, Koh Kong province. Information about the SRT fishing techniques, and the absence of an overt trade network, were confirmed. Stakeholders highlighted that locals understand the value of the species, that fishers may be scared of the transmitters attached to the turtle's carapaces, and also that demand is limited.

In May, the team conducted two focus group discussions in Stung Treng and Kratie Provinces. 26 fishers, including 11 Community fisheries (Cfi) leaders and members (10M, 1F), and 13 local fishers (13M, 0F) from various villages participated. The discussion was structured as a mapping exercise, the co-development of a timeline to describe changes in turtles capture and trade, and key follow up questions developed as a follow up on previous interviews. Two focal Cantonments FiA Officers were also interviewed. These discussions highlighted that CGST trade is continuing but at a slower pace than in previous years. The different steps of the trade were described, and some participants suggested that CGST may be sold to Vietnam or Chinese restaurants in Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville cities.



Figure 3: Meeting with FiA Officer in Kratie.



Figure 4: Focus Group Discussion in Stung Treng.

Activity 1.4: Produce at least two crime scripts based on the information collected and analysed.

This activity was completed during the reporting period. The draft crime scripts about “SRT capture and trade in Sre Ambel system” and “CGST capture and trade in Mekong River” produced in Year 1 were adjusted based on new information, and finalised (see Annex 1). During the next reporting period, we will develop visuals for those crime scripts which currently have the form of a table. We will work with our communication’s team to develop designed versions that will be disseminated to stakeholders.

Output 2. Strategic interventions to prevent turtle poaching, trade, and consumption developed through a multi-stakeholder approach including Government, community, and civil society.

Activity 2.1: Organize a series of local meetings to discuss the results of the crime scripts and identify strategic interventions to prevent these crimes.

This activity is ongoing. On 7th July 2023, the project team organised a meeting to discuss crime script results with four landscape staffs. During the meeting, we used a set of questions from the preventive problem-oriented approach, to identify potential preventive interventions for each stage of the crime. Following this, the team organised two consultation meetings with communities and FiA, to present and validate the results of the crime scripts, and collaboratively develop preventive interventions to address capture and trade of the species.

The consultation meetings in Sre Ambel took place between 8th –10th August 2023 with 35 participants (35M, 2F), including the FiA Cantonment Officer of Botum Sakor, the FiA Cantonment Officer of Prey Nop, 24 Cfi members, 4 fishers, and 5 representatives from local authorities.

The consultation meetings in the Mekong sites took place on 22nd – 24th August 2023 in Ou Mreas commune hall, Stung Treng province with 23 participants (22M, 1F) composed of ten representatives of local authorities and 13 Cfi members. In Kratie province, the meeting gathered 22 participants (19M, 3F) including seven representatives of local authorities, seven Cfi members and eight fishers, in Sambor. FiA officials in Stung Treng and Kratie were also consulted. Consultation reports are available in Annex 2.



Figure 5: Consultation meeting in Sre Ambel.



Figure 6: Consultation meeting in Sambor.

During our research, we identified women as potential influencers within the households, and potentially able to play a role in preventing capture and trade of the species. Therefore, consultations with women (either working as fishers and members of the Cfis, or living in communities in our target areas) are scheduled for October 2023 in both landscapes to co-design preventive interventions engaging them specifically.

Activity 2.2: Utilize the outcomes of the workshops to develop an agreed crime prevention strategy.

This activity is ongoing. Based on result of the consultation meetings, we refined the potential interventions, using a scoring matrix developed with Dr. Lemieux. This matrix has a dozen criteria such as financial cost, time cost, WCS capacity, impact on communities, which are meant to guide assessment of interventions, and prioritize them. CWT and landscape staff worked closely together to score every potential intervention, as a basis for the crime prevention strategy.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

Only eight women in total participated in the interviews or focus group discussions, due to the nature of fishing, a male-dominated sector. To address this challenge, we worked with the Cfis leaders and/or village authorities to identify women (fishers or community members) and scheduled group discussions with them specifically. We anticipate that providing this dedicated space will help engage them more efficiently in our future interventions.

The sensitive nature of this research, looking into illegal capture and trade of Critically Endangered species, is still a challenge, as community members are reluctant to share information with us. To address this challenge, we arranged for two staff to attend a WCS training on conducting interviews on sensitive topics in Bangkok, Thailand, in September 2023. Our team is now better equipped to deal with this kind of situations.

Market survey proved challenging to conduct as we were not able to collect detailed information about specific places or markets where CGSTs might be traded. This could be because people are not willing to share this information, and because a large part of the trade has now gone 'undercover' to avoid detection. Therefore, we decided not to conduct in-depth market surveys, and only observed the main markets, without finding any SRT or CGTS on sale.

3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with NIRAS: No

Formal Change Request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance N/A

Change request reference if known:

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023)

Actual spend: £ [REDACTED]

4b. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this financial year (ending 31 March 2024)?

No

4c. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a re-budget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.**

NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

There are no other specific issues to raise. We have submitted an application for a Main project based on the results of this evidence project and are hopeful that further funding will be available to implement the preventative strategy.

If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response, or if your Annual Report Review asked you to provide a response with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document. All new projects (excluding Darwin Plus Fellowships and IWT Challenge Fund Evidence projects) should submit their Risk Register with this report if they have not already done so.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but should also be raised with NIRAS through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.**

Please send your completed report by email to BCF-Reports@niras.com. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number, followed by the specific fund in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 29-001 Darwin Initiative Half Year Report**