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 2022

Project reference	IWTEV004
Project title	Developing a unique open-source global wildlife crime tracker
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Nigeria, Malaysia, Vietnam
Lead partner	Environmental Investigation Agency
Partner(s)	Justice for Wildlife Malaysia (JWM), United for Wildlife
Project leader	*Melanie Butler*
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	*HYR1*
Project website/blog/social media	*https://eia-international.org/global-environmental-crime-tracker/*

1. 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).

Since the project's start date of 01/07/2022, project partners have focused on recruitment of two key roles – a Case Tracker position at Justice for Wildlife Malaysia (JWM), and a Data Manager position at EIA. Progress has also been made on all outputs.

Under Output 1, EIA has continued to collect seizure data on elephants, pangolins, rhino, Asian big cats, totoaba and timber. A total of 649 incidents have been added to the database since 1st July and are publicly accessible through the online Crime Tracker tool. 75 of these were in project countries, with the majority in Vietnam. The recruitment of a dedicated Case Tracker position in partner organisation Justice for Wildlife Malaysia should significantly increase this for Malaysia incidents throughout the next quarter. JWM are also working with the Malaysian government to get access to official case data which will provide a more accurate indication of figures. They are in discussions with the government on what can be shared publicly through the Crime Tracker platform.

EIA is conducting outreach to in-country CSOs in Nigeria and Vietnam to improve collection of prosecution data and build longer term relationships. EIA's existing partner in Nigeria, African Nature Investors (ANI), has highlighted some issues with the accessibility of court case records in Nigeria, so we will continue to work with them to identify solutions to this.

Under Output 2, EIA has shared a total of 668 names from collected open-source seizure incidents with financial sector institutions through the Media Monitoring Programme during the project period, with 48 for Vietnam, 11 for Nigeria and 2 for Malaysia. Collection of this data has highlighted issues in the accessibility of seizure data in target countries which will be addressed in the coming weeks through targeted research and outreach.

EIA has been successful in recruiting into the Data Manager position at EIA and the successful candidate started on 26th September. He comes with excellent technical skills and has therefore been able to progress the automation process required for the Media Monitoring Programme to be expanded to financial taskforce members later in the project.

In September, under Output 3, EIA conducted an in-person meeting with TRAFFIC, a key stakeholder in this project due to their online Wildlife Trade Portal. During the meeting the two organisations shared difficulties with data collection and agreed on a proposed format for the proposed working group. TRAFFIC has committed to giving time to the working group and taking a lead role in reaching out to other organisations to contribute. The feedback on a proposed collaborative platform has been positive.

In addition, meetings have been set up with two NGOs (C4ADS and Oxpeckers) to sign information sharing agreements and set regular data sharing timelines on wildlife and timber seizure data. They will be invited to join the proposed working group and contribute to the agenda. EIA has an existing relationship with UNODC and will be reaching out in November to discuss their involvement in the seizure data working group, as although the World Wise database is not publicly accessible, it is recognised that they will provide valuable insight into seizure data collection. It is possible this engagement may be delayed due to participation in the upcoming CoP19.

The IWT data gap survey has been drafted and will be ready to be circulated to key stakeholders in early November. Results of the survey will be used as discussion points for the working group, as well as providing EIA with a better understanding of gaps in accessible data on wildlife crime. EIA will then identify possible changes to the Crime Tracker, or another platform, which could be considered to fill these data needs.

In addition, JWM are in discussions with a local organisation Sinar Project who aim to provide public access to data in Malaysia, including a government document archive, a database on Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) and a civil society open data portal. JWM are exploring how the court case data they collect could contribute to this national platform and we will be reviewing this tool under Output 3 alongside our discussions on a collaborative platform.

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.

It has become apparent that the accessibility of court case records in all project countries is limited, particularly in Nigeria and Vietnam. EIA is now harnessing existing relationships with NGOs in these countries to collect and share prosecution data. It is expected that consultancy money put aside for tech consultants will need to be used for research consultancy instead, to proactively find case outcomes in-country. This should not impact on the budget as we believe that the tech work can now be completed by the Data Manager, releasing consultancy funds to be spent on local researchers where needed. This will also increase the overall percentage of funds spent in-country. However, this may impact slightly on the timetable of activities as it will likely take longer than expected to improve the percentage of outcomes available in the Crime Tracker.

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

Discussed with NIRAS-LTS:	No
Formal Change Request submitted:	No
Received confirmation of change acceptance	No
Change request reference if known:	

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

| Yes ☐ No X☐ | Estimated underspend: £ |

4b. 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.

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

No

If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response (including the submission of your risk register), 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.

Please note: Any <u>planned</u> modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but should also be raised with NIRAS-LTS International 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**