

Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Evidence: Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the “Project Reporting Information Note”:
(<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/resources/information-notes/>)

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 20 pages** in length, excluding annexes)

Submission Deadline: 30th April 2025

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IWT Challenge Fund (IWTCF) Project Information

Project reference	IWTEV022
Project title	Project Minerva: Establishing Malaysia’s Baseline of Wildlife Crime Court Cases
Country/ies	Malaysia
Lead Organisation	Justice for Wildlife Malaysia
Project partner(s)	Malaysian Judiciary, Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia (DWNP/Perhilitan), Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC), Sabah Wildlife Department (SWD), Sabah Parks (SP)
IWTCF grant value	£ 98,978.00
Start/end dates of project	01/08/2024 – 31/03/2026
Reporting period (e.g. April 2024-Mar 2025) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	August 2024 – March 2025 (Annual Report 1)
Project Leader name	Lavinia Augustine
Project website/blog/social media	Website: www.justicewildlifemy.com Twitter: @jwmys Instagram: @jwildlifemy
Report author(s) and date	Hazeeq Syahme Mohd Afzan (Project Officer) Nur Atiqah Hanis Muhammad Tamrin (Admin and Finance Officer) Nor Arlina Amirah Ahmad Ghani (Director) 30 th April 2025

1. Project summary

The intake of wildlife crime cases throughout the criminal justice system in Malaysia is rarely studied. No baseline has been established, particularly on the sociodemographic background of offenders, prosecution data, and the overall damage these crimes cause to Malaysian wildlife. Project Minerva is set in Malaysia, which comprises Peninsular Malaysia on the mainland and East Malaysia on the island of Borneo (**see Figure 1 below**). The project aims to foster transparency, identify gaps in the post-arrest and prosecution process, and establish a baseline on the state of wildlife crime cases in Malaysia. Hence, the project aims to supplement policy and advocacy work, especially in resource allocation towards lawful enforcement of wildlife laws, with

the baseline figures. The activities include attending court sessions, analysing court reports and prosecution data, and reviewing the legislation.

Project Minerva covers all species included under the relevant wildlife legislations, mainly the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010 (Peninsular Malaysia), Wild Life Protection Ordinance 1998 (Sarawak), Wildlife Protection Enactment 1997 (Sabah), and the International Trade of Endangered Species Act (Malaysia). For the purpose of this project, however, we have identified four key species: the Tiger (*Panthera tigris*), Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*), Malayan Sunbear (*Helarctos malayanus*), and Sunda pangolin (*Manis javanica*). These four were selected due to their local significance and their prominence in the illegal wildlife trade.



Figure 1: Map of the project site.

2. Project stakeholders/partners

Throughout the last year, our collaboration with important partners and stakeholders, especially local wildlife enforcement agencies, has been crucial for implementing project activities, particularly the case tracking efforts. Justice for Wildlife Malaysia (JWM) has maintained existing relationships with government bodies such as the Malaysian Judiciary, the Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia (DWNP), the Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC), the Sabah Wildlife Department (SWD), and Sabah Parks (SP).

Our partnerships with local wildlife enforcement agencies are determined by geographical location, reflecting the structure of the Malaysian legal system. Each agency possesses legal jurisdiction over a distinct land area, defined by either region or state. Consequently, Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak have their specific wildlife legislation: the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010, the Wildlife Protection Enactment 1997, and the Wild Life Protection Ordinance 1998, respectively.

DWNP is the primary governing authority authorised to arrest, investigate, and prosecute wildlife crime in Peninsular Malaysia. Nonetheless, its capacity is considerably limited. The DWNP legal team currently has four deputy public prosecutors (DPP) with legal training who are seconded by the Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC) to manage cases across all 11 states and two federal territories in Peninsular Malaysia, supported by the prosecuting officers. The legal team must also balance litigation work with the agency's other legal needs.

Unlike DWNP, the government agencies in Sabah and Sarawak do not have seconded prosecutors who are legally trained. Instead, all wildlife crime cases under the government agencies in Sabah and Sarawak, such as SWD, SP and SFC, are handled by state prosecutors with minimal assistance from the prosecuting officers. These state prosecutors have limited knowledge and background on wildlife crime, and cases are assigned at random or according to the availability of the prosecutor.

The case tracking work in Peninsular Malaysia commenced in 2022. JWM has maintained a positive relationship with DWNP, not only through the case tracking efforts but also via the capacity-building workshops we organise annually for the prosecuting officers. However, despite our existing relationship with SWD, SP, and SFC, the case tracking work remains relatively new to the states on Borneo Island. In our effort to formalise the case tracking work in Sabah, we have held three formal meetings with SWD.

1. On 29/10/2024, the director and case tracker attended a courtesy meeting with the then-Head of Prosecution of SWD. This courtesy meeting was held to formally introduce JWM and the planned case tracking work for Sabah. The discussion also encompassed the purpose of data collection on past wildlife cases, followed by a request for historical prosecution data from SWD.
2. On 19/12/2024, the case tracker followed up with the then-Head of Prosecution of SWD on the status of the wildlife cases pending registration in court and the letter requesting past prosecution data. We received verbal confirmation that the then-Director of SWD approved the request, but a formal reply from the agency is pending as the restructuring has started at this point.
3. On 08/01/2025, another follow-up discussion was held with the new Head of Prosecution of SWD. Two case trackers in Sabah, one of whom is funded by another grant, attended this discussion to formally introduce the case tracking work and establish a relationship with SWD. We received a court date via this meeting and the case tracker attended a court case on 13/01/2025. The case tracker maintains communication with the prosecuting officer through text messages and phone calls.

In addition to that, we have also established communication with SP.

1. On 28/11/2024, the case tracker and research officer attended the first meeting with the Head Deputy Director of Enforcement and Operations, and the officer responsible for capacity building. Similar to the meetings with SWD, the discussions centred on case tracking work and data collection related to previous wildlife cases. At that time, the most recent case dated back to August 2024, but it involved a trespassing incident.
2. On 11/03/2025, the director and case tracker attended a courtesy meeting at the SP Headquarters in Kota Kinabalu Times Square to formally introduce JWM and the case tracking work. **Annex 4.1** provides the email requesting the courtesy meeting dated 20/12/2024, **Annex 4.2** provides the letter attached, and **Annex 4.3** provides the confirmation of attendance.

On 22/01/2025, we had a courtesy meeting with the Sabah Attorney-General's Chambers office, along with our partners Danau Girang Field Centre and SWD. The discussion mainly revolved around understanding the prosecution pathway in Sabah and ascertaining the potential bureaucratic challenges we may encounter throughout our work in the state. **Annex 4.4** provides the email requesting the courtesy call and **Annex 4.5** provides the letter attached.

Despite the progress made in establishing a relationship with relevant agencies, case tracking work in Sabah has been slower than anticipated because of the circumstances faced by the two agencies in the past year.

Our case tracking efforts in Sarawak, however, began fairly smoothly. We have tracked **11 cases** as of March 2025.

1. On 08/10/2024, the courtesy meeting was held before the case tracker joined at the SFC Headquarters in Kuching. JWM's director, project leader, and project officer attended the meeting. On SFC's side, the Head of the Enforcement and Protection Division and two prosecuting officers attended the meeting. In addition to introducing JWM and our case tracking work, this courtesy meeting also allowed us to understand the nature and situation of wildlife enforcement and prosecution in Sarawak.

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Output 1: Successful hiring of law graduates to be incepted into wildlife conservation work as case trackers

Activity 1.1: Engagement with law students in pursuing a career in wildlife conservation

Comments: JWM conducted a mini talk with law students at the University of Malaya on 30/05/2024. **Annex 4.6** provides the photo from the engagement. The engagement took place in the university's Faculty of Law Conference Room, in collaboration with Ecolawgy, a student club focusing on environmental law. **Annex 4.7** provides the presentation for the session. A total of 15 students attended the engagement. Consequently, JWM has accepted three interns who expressed an interest in the work and mainly contributed to procedural law reviews and the legislative analysis of a state park enactment. We recognise that the mini talk took place before the project started, but we had already committed to and planned for this in anticipation of the project's usual start date, rather than the postponed one.

Activity 1.2: Hiring of regional case trackers and a data analyst

Comments: As of 01/08/2024, JWM has commenced recruitment for three regional case trackers based in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak, respectively, along with one data analyst based in Peninsular Malaysia. The case trackers for Peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak are both law graduates. In contrast, the case tracker for Sabah has a science degree and relevant experience in conservation and policy, a situation stemming from the low number of law graduates from Sabah applying for this position. The case tracker in Peninsular Malaysia acts as the project officer and is responsible for consolidating the cases tracked in Sabah and Sarawak.

Activity 1.3: Mobilisation of regional case trackers and a data analyst

Comments: The case tracker for Peninsular Malaysia) has started the work on 01/08/2024, whereas the case tracker for Sabah began work in September 2024, and the data analyst started in October 2024. The case tracker for Sarawak commenced work in January 2025 after serving a three-month resignation notice from his previous employment. On 23/09/2024 and 24/09/2024, onboarding for the case tracker from Sabah and the data analyst took place in Kuala Lumpur. **Annex 4.8** provides the photo from the onboarding session. This was followed by a visit to the Seremban Courthouse on 25/09/2024 as a hands-on component of the onboarding process. The onboarding for the case tracker from Sarawak was conducted online via Microsoft Teams on 08/01/2025. The onboarding process for both case trackers in Sabah and Sarawak is followed up with weekly one-on-one sessions via Microsoft Teams with the project officer/case tracker in Peninsular Malaysia to ensure that the case tracking work is set up smoothly. A weekly catch-up meeting is scheduled every Monday morning for all the case trackers and the data analyst to update each other on the case tracking work.

In March 2025, the data analyst tendered her resignation and will be serving the required one-month notice as per the contract. We are in the process of hiring the new data analyst, set to start in April 2025.

Output 2: By the end of the project, at least 50% of the current and past registered cases of each of the three main wildlife law enforcement agencies in Malaysia are systematically tracked in JWM's database.

Activity 2.1: Physical court case tracking

Comments: Since 01/08/2024, we have tracked 59 cases and attended 170 court proceedings. However, because of capacity constraints and the method of information collection, certain cases go unnoticed and are identified only after the court session. For Sarawak, we have tracked 11 cases since January 2025 (when the Sarawak case tracker started). SFC is open to sharing information on upcoming cases with the case tracker. We have thus far tracked only one case in Sabah. Nevertheless, the SWD has shared the information and status of forthcoming cases with

the case tracker. It is anticipated that at least three new cases will be registered in court in 2025 in Sabah.

Activity 2.2: Prepare case briefs for each case tracked

Comments: All tracked court case sessions will have an updated case brief – one case brief document is maintained for each case. Each registered case will be assigned a unique identification number, which varies by region, along with a corresponding case brief. This case brief is a living document, updated as the case progresses until a sentence is passed. We currently have 118 case briefs on record – 86 briefs are closed (the sentence/appeal stage has passed), while the remainder are still in the midst of case management or trial.

Activity 2.3: Input court details into internal database

Comments: Similar to Activity 2.2, all tracked court case sessions will be accompanied by an entry or update in the JWM internal database (workbook). However, due to insufficient information for some cases, particularly in the early stages, there are empty fields. Each main region has its own workbook to facilitate the team's tracking of progress specific to the region or wildlife enforcement agency. **Annex 4.9(a), Annex 4.9(b) and Annex 4.9(c)** provides a copy of the workbooks for Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak, respectively.

Activity 2.4: Draft reports for cases that go to trial

Comments: For cases that have concluded the trial stage, an additional report summarising what has occurred will be prepared. This document also serves as the back-to-office report for the rest of the team.

Activity 2.5: Liaising with relevant stakeholders on obtaining court case information

Comments: As briefly mentioned in Activity 2.1, there are limitations on how information regarding upcoming cases is collected. Based on our meetings and interactions with DWNP, the agency does not maintain a centralised case tracking system. Although communication occurs among the enforcement officers—those involved in arresting, raiding, and investigating—and the legal unit, the case information is not consolidated into a single file or system. Instead, the DWNP appoints key personnel to oversee the cases. As the prosecuting officers lack formal legal training, they must rely on the training provided after their appointment, mostly from external workshops co-organised and funded by non-governmental organisations.

Across all three jurisdictions, JWM case trackers rely on their relationships with prosecuting officers to gather information about upcoming dates, case numbers, related species, and the court location of the cases. The information obtained can be cross-referenced with a publicly accessible court e-filing system (EFS) website provided by the Malaysian Judiciary. **Annex 4.10** contains the link to the EFS website. Details such as the court location, case number, date, perpetrator's name, and case status can be triangulated to verify the accuracy of the information received. However, a limitation to this system is that it is only applicable to cases registered in Peninsular Malaysia.

Sabah and Sarawak have their own court e-filing systems (E-KSS); however, they are not publicly accessible and can only be accessed by government officials. Efforts have been made to acquire access to the system, but the registered account must be linked to a government agency. **Annex 4.10** provides the link to the E-KSS website and **Annex 4.11** provides the email sent to the court inquiring about access.

Activity 2.6: Hold meetings with relevant stakeholders to verify court dates and information obtained from court visits

Comments: JWM case trackers continually engage with prosecuting officers regarding court dates and case details. Additionally, court visits serve as a chance to confirm information and assess the status of ongoing and future cases.

Output 3: A baseline assessment that aids in the understanding of the wildlife crime case intake throughout the criminal justice system in Malaysia is produced.

Activity 3.1: Extract the data obtained from court registry

Comments: JWM has two main sources of data for our case tracking work. One source is from our physical court visits. Another source is from the wildlife enforcement agencies themselves. As of now, we have obtained prosecution data from DWNP. As of March 2025, we are still in the process of obtaining the prosecution data from SWD, SP and SFC. With that said, even though we do not have the data at the moment, we have obtained verbal confirmation from SWD, SP and SFC that their historical data can be shared. The case trackers in Sabah and Sarawak are working to obtain the data. We store the data we obtain from wildlife enforcement agencies and case tracking work separately for redundancy purposes.

As mentioned in the Project stakeholders/partners section above, a letter had been sent to SWD to request the prosecution data, and we have been notified that the letter has been approved and is pending a follow-up discussion in April 2025. **Annex 4.12** provides the email requesting the prosecution data from SWD, and **Annex 4.13** provides the letter attached.

We maintain the workbooks for all three regions separately. As mentioned in Activity 2.3, all court cases tracked are recorded in the workbooks (redacted version of the workbook in **Annex 4.9(a), (b) and (c)**).

Activity 3.2: Clean the data obtained from court registry and physical court visits

Comments: Since October 2024, the data analyst has started the data cleaning process.

Activity 3.3: Analyse data obtained from physical court visits and court registry reports

Comments: The data analyst has prepared a preliminary analysis of the prosecution data of both our Peninsular Malaysia workbook and the data we obtained from DWNP as of December 2024. Referring to Activity 1.3 above, the offboarding process and the onboarding of the new data analyst are planned from 07/04/2025 to 10/04/2025.

Activity 3.4: Draft paper on baseline assessment of wildlife crime court cases

Comments: Drafting the paper on the baseline assessment of the wildlife crime court cases is planned to start in April 2025. The team has decided on a cut-off date of March 2025 for the dataset for the analysis.

Activity 3.5: Disseminate assessment of wildlife crime court cases to stakeholders

Comments: As of March 2025, no dissemination of the assessment of wildlife crime court cases has been made to our stakeholders, as we are finalising the analysis and confirming our results with the relevant agencies.

Activity 3.6: Roundtable discussions with NGOs

Comments: No formal roundtable discussions have been conducted with any of the project partners and stakeholders. However, in partnership with a local news media organisation, Macaranga, JWM is organising a roundtable discussion with journalists and social media content creators in May 2025, focused on covering wildlife crime cases and the illegal wildlife trade in Malaysia.

Activity 3.7: Draft, review and disseminate pre- and post-roundtable surveys

Comments: The drafting of the pre- and post-roundtable surveys is scheduled to commence in early May 2025.

Activity 3.8: Liaise with journalists to produce articles on wildlife crimes post-arrest

Comments: JWM case trackers have been engaging with journalists covering wildlife court cases since October 2024. We foresee that these engagements will continue after the roundtable discussion in May 2025. We have been approached by journalists covering wildlife crime cases and are expecting an article to come out later this year. A link will be provided in the next reporting period.

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Output 1: Successful hiring of law graduates to be incepted into wildlife conservation work as case trackers

Comments: On 30/05/2024, the project conducted an engagement with law students from the Faculty of Law at the University of Malaya. The interns were also recruited from this engagement, and they commenced their work during the project's duration.

Of the three available case tracker positions within the project, we have employed two law graduates as case trackers (Peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak). As previously noted in Activity 1.2 above, there are insufficient candidates with a legal background in Sabah. However, the case tracker possesses a background in conservation and experience and is knowledgeable about conservation and enforcement work in Sabah. We believe that this is a satisfactory compensation of knowledge, as the rest of the team is well-versed in law and can fill in the gaps.

Output 2: By the end of the project, at least 50% of the current and past registered cases of each of the three main wildlife law enforcement agencies in Malaysia are systematically tracked in JWM's database.

Comments: As of 31/03/2025, we have recorded 118 number of cases in JWM's database via case tracking. According to our projection and cross-referencing with various sources (court data and agency annual reports), this represents approximately 50% or more of the total figure.

Initial observations indicate that the number of court sessions in 2025 up until 31/03/2025 is 74, nearly half of the total number of court sessions in 2024 (179), suggesting an increase in cases prosecuted.

Our preliminary observation and case tracking work indicated that we currently have 93 individuals convicted (data from JWM case tracking from year 2024). The full analysis of the data is scheduled to begin in April 2025.

Output 3: A baseline assessment that aids in the understanding of the wildlife crime case intake throughout the criminal justice system in Malaysia is produced.

Comments: In April, alongside the onboarding of the new data analyst, a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) meeting will take place. Following the M&E, discussions are scheduled to begin on drafting the updated framework for wildlife crime case intake in Malaysia, alongside recommendations, in April/May 2025. This updated framework is expected to be completed by June/July 2025 and will be included in the subsequent half-year report for 2025/26.

The best practices guide, and peer-reviewed publication of the baseline assessment discussions are scheduled to be conducted in tandem with the analysis process.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Outcome: By the end of the project, an improved understanding of the wildlife crime case intake through the crime justice system in Malaysia is achieved.

Comments: We have engaged with at least five relevant government agencies involved in wildlife crime: the Malaysian Judiciary, the Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia, the Sabah Wildlife Department, Sabah Parks, the Sarawak Forestry Corporation, and the Royal Malaysian Police. We have also engaged with three non-governmental organisations (NGOs), such as the Danau Girang Field Centre, World Wildlife Fund for Nature Malaysia, Panthera Malaysia. It is still too early to assess whether these government agencies and NGOs have a better understanding of the issues surrounding wildlife crime case intake. However, pre-surveys are scheduled to be disseminated by Q2Y2.

One article on wildlife crime is scheduled to be published within the first half of 2025.

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

Assumption 1: Law graduates are interested in pursuing a career in wildlife conservation.

Comments: This assumption is still valid.

Assumption 2: The governmental agencies responsible for prosecuting wildlife crimes are cooperative and willing to share information on ongoing court cases.

Comments: This assumption is still valid.

Assumption 3: No major changes within the current prosecution procedures that could potentially hinder or delay case tracking work; for example, changes in case handling between the agency's legal unit and the office of the state Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC).

Comments: This assumption remains valid. The restructuring and agency overhaul for Sabah have postponed some of the case tracking work to allow the new Head of Prosecution to adjust to the role. The state AGC has also indicated the establishment of a new State Law unit within the agency tasked with handling all Sabah state litigation matters – this will certainly delay our case tracking work as the agencies are trying to navigate the administrative and bureaucratic aspects of it.

Assumption 4: No major political disturbance that could affect the legislative and criminal justice process and its associated stakeholders.

Comments: This assumption remains valid. In Sabah, we expect a delay in case tracking during the latter half of 2025 due to the upcoming state general election, though the exact date is still unknown.

Assumption 5: Our current reference for the baseline is the UNODC Rapid Assessment of the Criminal Justice Response towards Wildlife Crime produced in 2016.

Comments: This assumption is still valid.

4. Thematic focus

We expect the project to contribute to at least three themes: reducing demand for IWT products, ensuring effective legal frameworks and deterrents, and strengthening law enforcement. The demand reduction efforts primarily involve disseminating information about wildlife laws to the public, which may serve as a deterrent to wildlife crime. Although this dissemination work does not fall primarily under this grant (except for the socialisation activities with our project partners and NGOs), we anticipate that the article output will significantly assist the public in understanding the legal restrictions and repercussions of committing wildlife crime.

At the end of the project, establishing a consolidated database could provide relevant information on wildlife crime cases in Malaysia, enabling wildlife enforcement agencies to identify gaps and assess the effectiveness of their efforts. A comprehensive analysis could be conducted on the database to formulate an updated prosecutorial and judicial response to wildlife crime. This will greatly enhance our understanding of the existing legal frameworks and refine interventions to deter individuals from engaging in wildlife crime and illegal wildlife trade.

This project is also expected to strengthen law enforcement by providing insights into prosecution trends. Numerous learning opportunities may be uncovered, which law enforcement agencies can leverage as areas for improvement.

As of March 2025, a preliminary analysis has been conducted by the data analyst.

5. Impact on species in focus

We have not yet observed any direct impacts, including the four focus species mentioned in the Project Summary section above. This project also does not focus on one species or one particular

project site. However, we have noted indirect impacts. In addition to the wildlife enforcement agencies, JWM serves as the primary organisation for information regarding the status of wildlife court cases in Malaysia for other NGOs and media journalists – This cooperation is beneficial as it ensures that the information we obtain from this work is communicated to the public and supports the conservation efforts on the ground. The case tracking work also fosters greater transparency by enabling the verification of information with the authorities.

The direct impacts have yet to be evident, as no species-based intervention has been developed. Such an intervention can be implemented after the baseline for the state of wildlife crime in Malaysia has been established.

6. Project support for multidimensional poverty reduction

Poverty encompasses more than just financial deficits. Its definition includes the various socioeconomic conditions that a group of individuals may encounter, such as social standing, opportunities for employment and education, access to legal protection and representation, and more. The long-term goal of Project Minerva is to assess the implementation and enforcement of laws regarding wildlife crime in Malaysia by establishing a baseline of the wildlife crime situation within the criminal justice system.

Over the past year, our case tracking work has pointed to the addition of wildlife crime cases involving indigenous communities as perpetrators, a group previously exempt from prosecution under certain provisions accorded by the law. In Malaysia, the law recognises the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination, cultural integrity, and protection of their livelihoods. Specific wildlife laws, such as the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010 [Act 716], grant special privileges to indigenous peoples for certain offences, provided they are for personal subsistence. There are cases relating to this issue involving indigenous peoples in Pahang, Peninsular Malaysia; one of these cases concerns a tiger. While we cannot be certain at present, the involvement of indigenous communities in wildlife crime could potentially indicate that some form of exploitation is occurring. The case tracking work will document information about these cases, as not all wildlife cases are published in legal journals.

A preliminary analysis based on our case tracking data and DWNP's data revealed that approximately 69% of wildlife crime cases in Peninsular Malaysia involve local communities.

We recognise that while wildlife is often the main focus of this project, wildlife crime does not solely affect wildlife. The case tracking work can help us understand the various demographics of individuals involved in the system, their levels of involvement, and the motivations behind their actions. This could aid authorities in identifying vulnerable communities with low awareness and education regarding wildlife crime issues and in designing interventions tailored to the needs of these communities.

7. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
Not yet sensitive	The GESI context may have been considered but the project isn't quite meeting the requirements of a 'sensitive' approach	
Sensitive	The GESI context has been considered and project activities take this into account in their design and implementation. The project addresses basic needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups and the	/

	project will not contribute to or create further inequalities.	
Empowering	The project has all the characteristics of a 'sensitive' approach whilst also increasing equal access to assets, resources and capabilities for women and marginalised groups	
Transformative	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	

After considering the principles of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), the project is rated as **'Sensitive'** on the GESI scale.

Wildlife offences are usually criminal in nature. This means that principles of criminal law, such as the presumption of innocence until proven guilty, along with the fundamental right to be heard and the right to a fair trial, are applicable.

Specifically regarding GESI, the Malaysian legal system recognises gender equality through Articles 8(1) and (2) of the Federal Constitution (FC). Article 8(2) states explicitly that there shall be no discrimination on the grounds of gender. The inclusion of the term 'gender' followed Malaysia's signing and accession to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1995. Gender equality is also safeguarded under case law, notably in *Noorfadila Ahmad Saikin v Chayed Basirun & Ors* [2012] 1 CLJ 769 (HC), whereby the High Court referred to CEDAW in defining 'equality' and 'gender discrimination' under Article 8(2) of the FC. The Malaysian Judiciary recognises its role in safeguarding gender equality and facilitating eliminating discrimination. Regarding environmental policies at the national level, the National Policy on Biological Diversity 2022-2030 acknowledges the role of Indigenous peoples and local communities, including women and children, in biodiversity conservation. Furthermore, the National Policy on Climate Change 2.0 highlights the necessity of consulting vulnerable communities and groups, such as Indigenous peoples, women, youth, and persons with disabilities, as key stakeholders. It also emphasises the importance of incorporating a gender perspective to improve community awareness, preparedness, and adaptive capacity in relation to climate-related hazards and disasters.

At the organisational level, JWM has a zero-tolerance policy against discrimination. There is no bias against the gender of the candidates hired, as the hiring is based on merit and the candidate's suitability for the position. Eight out of 12 JWM members are women.

At this stage of the project, we have not had the opportunity to implement the GESI approach for two main reasons:

1. No engagements are planned with any community or groups of people under the project, with the exception of NGOs .
2. Planned engagements with stakeholders and partners are in the project's second year.

However, while designing and planning the project, we have considered and included the 'sex' and 'age' columns in our case tracking database. Our preliminary analysis reveals that the majority of individuals charged with wildlife crime offences in Malaysia are men. While the number of women involved in wildlife crime recorded in our dataset is low, initial assumptions suggest that the motivations for women committing wildlife crime may differ from those of men. Each case involving women that we recorded must be examined in depth to understand the nuances, rather than simply being included in the statistics. The team is also exploring whether there are signs of bias in sentencing towards marginalised communities or groups.

At the project partners and stakeholders level, women are represented and hold decision-making positions. In Peninsular Malaysia, three out of four Deputy Public Prosecutors in the DWNP legal unit are women. In Sabah, the head of the SWD Enforcement Division is a woman. Ten out of

the 22 prosecuting officers from the DWNP who participated in our capacity-building workshop in December 2024 were women.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

As part of the M&E process, at least one online meeting is routinely scheduled to provide updates on the progress of the case tracking work via Microsoft Teams. Additionally, the project officer is tasked with maintaining regular check-ins with the case trackers in Sabah and Sarawak. These check-ins serve as an extension of the onboarding process and offer guidance on the case tracking work.

In terms of record-keeping, the workbooks are maintained internally by the case trackers, and access is granted only to project partners on a case-by-case basis. Information for the workbooks come from case brief and case tracking form, along with other information gathered from the agencies themselves. The other indicators specifically for the baseline are mainly measured through the information gathered from the case tracking work, particularly the workbook. The workbook was updated in February, with some changes in structure, columns added and removed, but no alterations to the M&E method.

Our outcome indicators will be assessed through surveys conducted with the relevant agencies and through the publication of an article on wildlife crime in Malaysia aimed at the public. Some indicators related to capacity building are assessed through surveys and personal communication, as certain information is regarded as sensitive, and respondents prefer to remain anonymous.

We plan to hold the monitoring and evaluation meeting in early April 2025. The M&E work is carried out solely by JWM, with verification and validation by the relevant agencies and stakeholders. We communicate our data and the current analysis work with our wildlife government agency partners.

9. Lessons learnt

Our efforts yielded several positive outcomes, particularly in building relationships with stakeholders, effective analysis, and a deeper understanding of the criminal justice pathway. However, these successes highlighted the need to fine-tune our procedures in tracking cases. To address this, we aimed to improve data collection by incorporating new fields and automating several processes.

The project faced several challenges during its execution. One significant issue was the delay in commencing case tracking work in Sabah, which hindered progress. Some agencies were also reluctant to share vital information, further complicating the situation. Obtaining sensitive information proved to be difficult, both for the agencies involved and certain public offices, despite the open-source nature of court cases in Malaysia.

We have also learned that retrospective data from agencies also did not contain crucial information such as information on the accused (name, nationality, sex, age), so we had to resort to an analytics approach on best effort basis to predict the details. This is much less accurate, and we will not get the full picture of recidivism amongst the offenders.

Additionally, there was a sense of general fatigue among team members, contributing to decreased productivity. We have observed a steady increase in the number of cases and court sessions over the past year, as outlined in Output 2 of the Progress towards Project Outputs section. We have since discovered that the number of case trackers we proposed for this project is insufficient to meet the needs resulting from this increase, particularly in Peninsular Malaysia, which comprises 11 states and two federal territories. Technically, we were meant to have more case trackers funded under a different grant, but with the suspension of US foreign funding affecting the organisation, our case trackers under this BCF fund are now overextended, needing to travel across the country to monitor cases.

In evaluating our past processes, it is clear that, should we undertake this again, no major changes are anticipated aside from the increase in case trackers. A thorough understanding of

the criminal justice system, particularly the administration and bureaucracy, is essential, as the critical details often reside in the less engaging processes such as remand and bail. Familiarity with the relevant legal provisions is crucial. Any changes that arise are routinely integrated and communicated during our weekly meetings with the case trackers, a practice we intend to maintain going forward.

10. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

This is the first Annual Report submitted for the project.

11. Risk Management

We have identified one new risk in the last 12 months, i.e. the risk of funding suspension from other donors due to political instability affecting the project's progress. On 25/01/2025, JWM received a notification of a 90-day suspension order of all U.S.-funded foreign assistance by the United States government. This suspension has negatively impacted our case tracking work as two case trackers (at the time) are funded under the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) projects. As a result, JWM has sought to reassess this new change to look for potential funding opportunities, including from existing projects. A financial change request is scheduled to be sent to the IWT Challenge Fund to re-allocate the surplus funds from the 2024/25 to cover salaries of the affected personnel and operational costs.

12. Scalability and durability

The project has been communicated to the stakeholders through courtesy meetings. This soft diplomacy approach has instilled new confidence in potential new adopters, who have expressed interest in undertaking a similar project. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability is fully aware of the project. The next step is to pursue formal support from the ministry to convince environmental agencies to adopt our approach of tracking court cases. As of now, we have yet to fully start the formal work of communicating the project to other potential partners and agencies, but it is in the pipeline. As of 2024, our aim is to stabilise our dataset, improve and simplify our processes. In 2025, we hope to encourage agencies to track cases themselves once we have more clarity on the best practices to track court cases moving forward.

13. IWT Challenge Fund identity

On 01/11/2024, we posted on Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) to announce JWM's status as one of the recipients for Round 10 of the IWT Challenge Fund and the project. Annex 4.9 provides the links to the posts.

14. Safeguarding

15. Project expenditure

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (April 2024-March 2025)

Project spend (Indicative) since last Annual Report	2024/25 Grant (£)	2024/25 Total actual IWTCF Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)				
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				

Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items (see below)				
Others (see below)				
TOTAL	44,256.93	24,922.88		

*Figure before the approval of the financial change request (CR25-009)

Table 2: Project mobilised or matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025)

	Secured to date	Expected by end of project	Sources
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project (£)			
Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project (£)			Nature Based Solutions Sdn Bhd, Pahang State Park Corporation

16. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

17. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements or progress of your project so far (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes.

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds to edit and use the following for various promotional purposes (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)	File Name or File Location	Caption including description, country and credit	Social media accounts and websites to be tagged (leave blank if none)	Consent of subjects received (delete as necessary)
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against Indicators of Success for Financial Year 2024-2025

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2024 - March 2025	Actions required/planned for next reporting period
Outcome By the end of the project, an improved understanding of the wildlife crime case intake through the criminal justice system in Malaysia is achieved.		
Outcome indicator 0.1 By the end of the project (Q4Y2), at least five relevant government agencies dealing with wildlife crime and five wildlife conservation NGOs demonstrate an improved understanding of the problems surrounding wildlife crime case intake throughout the criminal justice pathway in Malaysia.	In 2024/25 five relevant government agencies and three non-governmental organisations involved in wildlife crime were engaged.	A pre- and post- survey will be drafted and disseminated to the stakeholders and agencies within 2025/26.
Outcome indicator 0.2 By the end of the project (Q4Y2), at least one article on wildlife crime case intake beyond arrest is published on public news outlets in Malaysia.	In 2024/25 no news articles were published.	Increase engagements with journalists and social media content creators. At least one news article on wildlife crime is scheduled to be published in 2025/26.
Output 1 Successful hiring of law graduates to be incepted into wildlife conservation work as case trackers.		
Output indicator 1.1 Within the first month of Q1Y1, at least one engagement with recent law graduates held, with a demonstrated interest by participants in pursuing careers in wildlife conservation.	In 2024/25 one engagement with law students was organised. Annex 4.6 provides the photo taken at the Faculty of Law, University of Malaya.	None
Output indicator 1.2 By the end of Q1Y1, three law graduates hired as a project officer and case trackers.	In 2024/25 two law graduates were hired as project officer and case tracker, respectively.	None
Output 2 By the end of the project, at least 50% of the current and past registered cases of each of the three main wildlife law enforcement agencies in Malaysia are systematically tracked in JWM's database.		

Output indicator 2.1 By the end of Q1Y2, court cases involving at least three law enforcement agencies in Malaysia are systematically tracked in JWM's database with 50% values in the columns for registered cases filled.	In 2024/25 the court cases involving three law enforcement agencies in Malaysia are systematically tracked in JWM's database. Annex 4.9 (a), (b) and (c) provides the workbooks for Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak.	Obtain prosecution data from SWD, SP and SFC. Full analysis based on the data is scheduled in April 2025.
Output indicator 2.2 By the end of the project, number of individuals convicted for wildlife crime increased by 10% as a result of the case tracking work.	Progress cannot be quantified yet	Full analysis based on the data is scheduled in April 2025.
Output indicator 2.3 By the end of the project, number of individuals successfully charged for wildlife crimes increased by 10% as a result of the case tracking work.	Progress cannot be quantified yet	Full analysis based on the data is scheduled in April 2025.
Output 3 A baseline assessment that aids in the understanding of the wildlife crime case intake throughout the criminal justice system in Malaysia is produced.		
Output indicator 3.1 By the end of Q1Y2, an updated framework of wildlife crime case intake in Malaysia and recommendations is produced.	Case briefs for ongoing cases record potential recommendations	Full consolidation and analysis based on the data is scheduled in April 2025.
Output indicator 3.2 By the end of the project, a best practices guide in addressing gaps within the criminal justice system for law enforcement officers and prosecution officers is produced.	Case briefs for ongoing cases record potential gaps observed in court	Full consolidation and analysis based on the data is scheduled in April 2025.
Output indicator 3.3 By the end of the project, a peer-reviewed publication of the baseline assessment is prepared and disseminated.	Journals for publication shortlisted	Drafting work to start in April 2025

Annex 2: Project's full current Indicators of Success as presented in the application form (unless changes have been agreed)

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Impact:			
Outcome: By the end of the project, an improved understanding of the wildlife crime case intake through the crime justice system in Malaysia is achieved.	0.1 By the end of the project (Q4Y2), at least five relevant government agencies dealing with wildlife crime and five wildlife conservation NGOs demonstrate an improved understanding of the problems surrounding wildlife crime case intake throughout the criminal justice pathway in Malaysia. 0.2 By the end of the project (Q4Y2), at least one article on wildlife crime case intake beyond arrest is published on public news outlets in Malaysia.	0.1 A pre- and post-engagement survey disseminated among stakeholders and agencies (disseminated before the inception of the project and after the publication of reports). 0.2 Link to publication.	
Output 1 Successful hiring of law graduates to be incepted into wildlife conservation work as case trackers.	1.1 Within the first month of Q1Y1, at least one engagement with recent law graduates held, with demonstrated interest by participants in pursuing careers in wildlife conservation. 1.2 By the end of Q1Y1, three law graduates hired as a project officer and case trackers	1.1 Post-engagement survey 1.2 Hiring contracts	Law graduates are interested in pursuing a career in wildlife conservation.
Output 2 By the end of the project, at least 50% of the current and past registered cases of each of the three main wildlife law enforcement agencies in Malaysia are systematically tracked in JWM's database.	2.1 By the end of Q1Y2, court cases involving at least three law enforcement agencies in Malaysia are systematically tracked in JWM's database with 50% values in the columns for registered cases filled. 2.2 By the end of the project, number of individuals convicted for wildlife crime increased by 10% as a result of the case tracking work. 2.3 By the end of the project, number of individuals successfully charged for	2.1 A consolidated database of wildlife crime court cases with systematic data structure 2.2 Case brief and case tracking form 2.3 Case brief and case tracking form	The governmental agencies responsible for prosecuting wildlife crimes are cooperative and willing to share information on ongoing court cases. No major changes within the current prosecution procedures that could potentially hinder or delay case tracking work; for example, changes in case handling between the agency's legal unit and the office of the state Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC).

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
	wildlife crimes increased by 10% as a result of the case tracking work.		No major political disturbance that could affect the legislative and criminal justice process and its associated stakeholders.
Output 3 A baseline assessment that aids in the understanding of the wildlife crime case intake throughout the criminal justice system in Malaysia is produced.	3.1 By the end of Q1Y2, an updated framework of wildlife crime case intake in Malaysia and recommendations is produced. 3.2 By the end of the project, a best practices guide in addressing gaps within the criminal justice system for law enforcement officers and prosecution officers is produced. 3.3 By the end of the project, a peer-reviewed publication of the baseline assessment is prepared and disseminated.	3.1 A published report 3.2 A Best Practices Manual for prosecuting wildlife crime in Malaysia. 3.3 A published report and peer-reviewed publication.	Our current reference for the baseline is the UNODC Rapid Assessment of the Criminal Justice Response towards Wildlife Crime produced in 2016.
Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1) 1.1 Engagement with law students in pursuing a career in wildlife conservation 1.2 Hiring of regional case trackers and a data analyst 1.3 Mobilisation of regional case trackers and a data analyst 2.1 Physical court case tracking 2.2 Prepare case briefs for each case tracked 2.3 Input court details into internal database 2.4 Draft reports for cases that go to trial 2.5 Liaising with relevant stakeholders on obtaining court case information 2.6 Hold meetings with relevant stakeholders to verify court dates and information obtained from court visits 3.1 Extract the data obtained from court registry 3.2 Clean the data obtained from court registry and physical court visits 3.3 Analyse data obtained from physical court visits and court registry reports 3.4 Draft paper on baseline assessment of wildlife crime court cases 3.5 Disseminate assessment of wildlife crime court cases to stakeholders 3.6 Roundtable discussions with NGOs			

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
3.7 Draft, review and disseminate pre- and post-roundtable surveys 3.8 Liaise with journalists to produce articles on wildlife crimes post-arrest			

Checklist for submission

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the correct template (checking fund, scheme, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and deleted the blue guidance text before submission?	/
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the subject line.	/
Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please consider the best way to submit. One zipped file, or a download option is recommended. We can work with most online options and will be in touch if we have a problem accessing material. If unsure, please discuss with BCF-Reports@niras.com about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the subject line.	X
Have you included means of verification? You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	/
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 17)?	/
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	/
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	/
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	