



**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	IWTEX001
Project title	Dismantling pangolin trade in Vietnam
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Vietnam
Lead partner	Save Vietnam's Wildlife
Partner(s)	Save Vietnam's Wildlife, managers of Cat Tien NP, U Minh Thuong NP, and U Minh Ha NP
Project leader	Thai Van Nguyen
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	30 th September 2023_HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	svw.vn https://www.facebook.com/svw.vn

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).

1. Strengthening law enforcement & ensuring effective legal frameworks

a) The anti-poaching team has been working hard to stop illegal wildlife poaching in and around Cat Tien National Park, U Minh Thuong, U Minh Ha and to apply SMART to track the patrol results for forest protection and biodiversity monitoring.

In the past six months, we carried out 5,890 patrols over a total of 6,830 patrol-days, covering 40,634km over 6,527 hours of walking patrols. We detected 63 suspects, arrested 29 violators, destroyed 1,735 traps, seized 8 guns, and removed 4 illegal hunting camps. Hunters set up illegal camps in the forest to shelter for a few days while they hunt for wildlife. Then, they dismantle the camps and move to other places for hunting. The camps are very simple and small, with a roof made of straw or reeds. The end of the year is a crucial time when violations become more frequent with the collection of forest by-products such as bamboo shoots, honey and hunting activities. The team has been successful in handling and detecting many violations.

The table below summarises the results of the patrols in the three national parks (anti-poaching-SMART)

Patrol Results/ NPs & NRs	Cat Tien	UMT	UMH
Number of staffs	141	30	48
Patrols conducted	4690	731	469
Number of patrolled days	5549	763	518
Km patrolled by foot	31377	5846	3411
Hours spent on patrol	25.550	1808	2164
Poachers encountered	46	14	3
Poacher arrested	19	8	2
Traps removed	1450	249	36
Guns confiscated	8	0	0
Camps destroyed	4	0	0
Electro-fishing	0	0	0
Live poached animals found	0	0	0
Dead poached animals found	4	40	0
Kg poached animal parts found	0	0	0
Kg of other none-timber products	0	11	0

Some pictures of forest protection patrol



Forest patrol in U Minh Ha National Park



Forest patrol in U Minh Thuong National Park



Confiscate illegal guns in Cat Tien



Remove traps in U Minh Ha



Forest patrol in Cat Tien

b) Training course on SMART

We conducted two advanced SMART training courses and two SMART mobile training classes for National Parks and other forest owner units in Dong Nai, Kien Giang, and Ca Mau provinces from April to June 2023. The main objectives of these courses were to enhance the capacity of the participants on how to use SMART to improve forest protection management and biodiversity conservation. The specific results are as follows:

Advanced SMART technical training

We trained 28 people from nine units in Dong Nai province from April 24 to 28, 2023. The units included the Dong Nai Forest Protection Department, Long Thanh protective forest management unit, Xuan Loc protective forest management unit, Tan Phu protective forest management unit; Dong Nai Culture and Nature Reserve, LA NGA - DONG NAI FORESTRY COMPANY LIMITED; Tan Mai corporation Joint Stock Company- Southeast branch, the Agricultural Service Center of Dong Nai province and Vietnam National University of Forestry at Dong Nai (VNUF).

We trained 17 people from five units in Kien Giang and Ca Mau provinces from June 13 to 16, 2023. The units included the Kien Giang and Ca Mau Forest Protection Departments, the U Minh Thuong and U Minh Ha National Parks, and Kien Giang protective forest management unit.

SMART mobile training

We trained 16 people from four units in Dong Nai province on how to use SMART mobile to collect field data from May 8 to 10, 2023. The units included the Dong Nai Forest Protection Department, Long Thanh protective forest management unit, Xuan Loc protective forest management unit, and Tan Phu protective forest management unit.

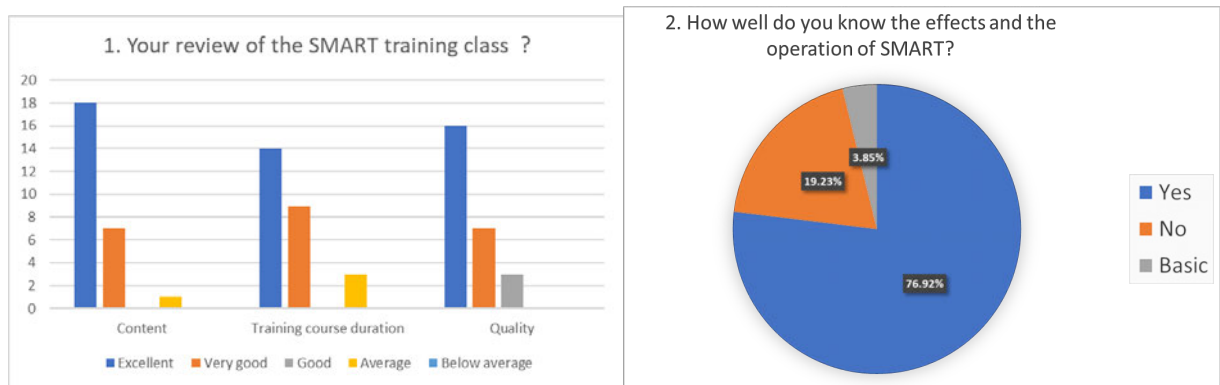
We trained 14 people from three units in Kien Giang province on how to use SMART mobile to collect field data from June 19 to 21, 2023. The units included the Kien Giang Forest Protection Department, the U Minh Thuong National Park, and Kien Giang protective forest management unit.

The participants were key technical staff at forest owner units. The training courses covered basic to advanced topics such as:

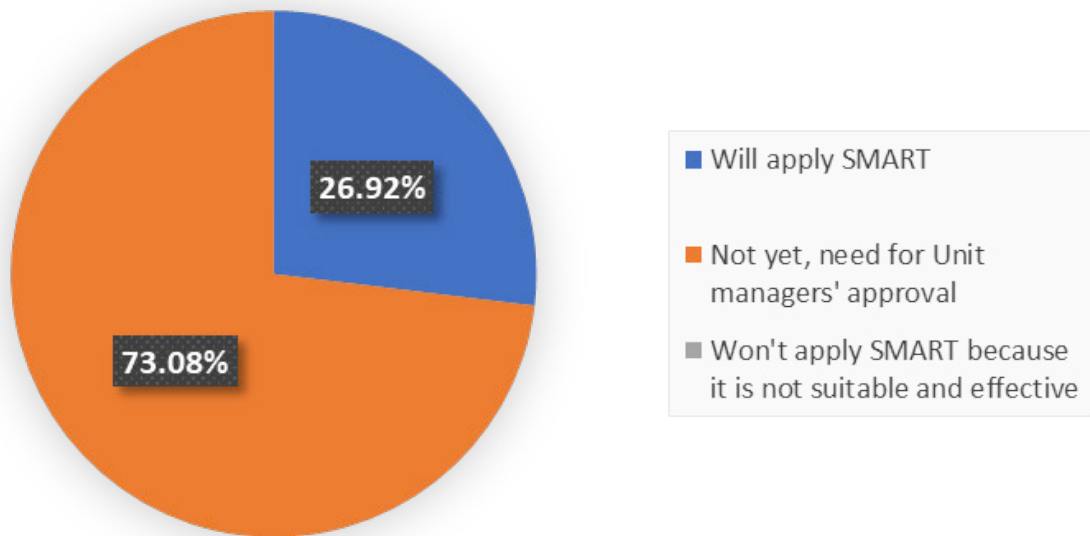
- Building a conservation area information model;
- Setting up and managing base maps;
- Setting up and managing data models;
- Entering field data using GPS and SMART mobile;
- Setting up data sample configuration for SMART mobile, installing SMART mobile
- Importing SMART mobile field data into SMART desktop
- Retrieving data, exporting and importing queries;
- Making reports, exporting and importing reports;
- Developing SMART Planning plan;
- Managing SMART connect.

Most of the participants rated the trainers as enthusiastic, good quality, useful tools, and fresh content that provided them with a full range of knowledge to apply SMART tools in collecting forest protection management and biodiversity monitoring data for their work.

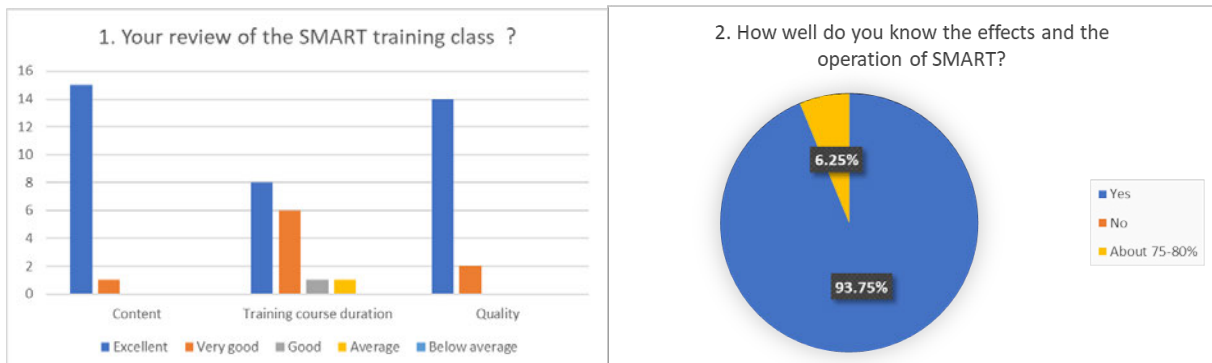
The feedback from the participants in Dong Nai province showed that the training course was well evaluated and 76.92% of the participants were proficient in SMART, but nearly 19.23% still did not understand it clearly. According to the feedback, 73.08% units have not applied SMART and needed to consult their leaders, while 26.92% would apply SMART implementation.



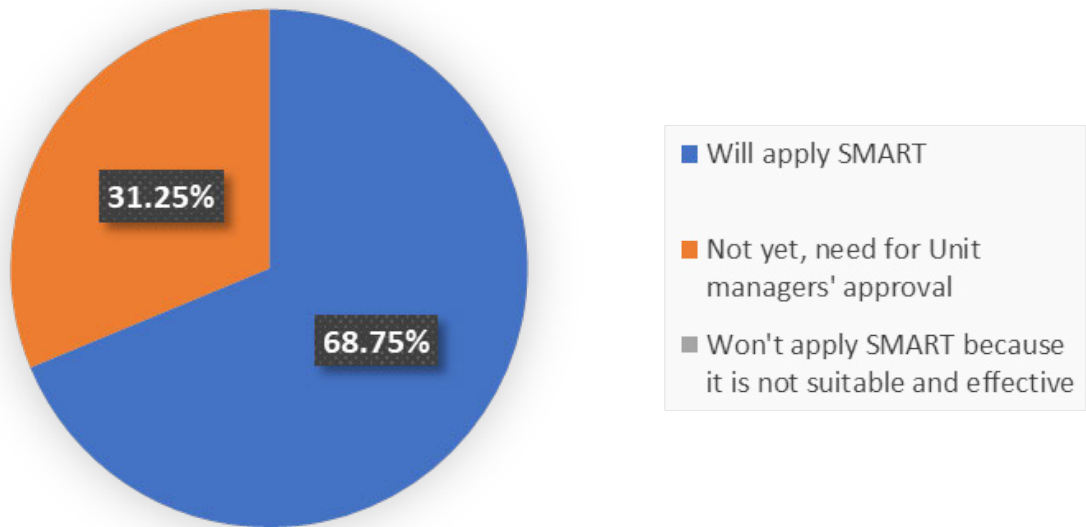
3. Are you ready to apply SMART at your unit after the training course?



The feedback from the participants in Ca Mau and Kien Giang provinces showed that the training course was well evaluated and 93.75% of the participants were proficient in SMART, while only 6.25% had basic knowledge of SMART. The feedback also showed that 68.75% of the units were developing and planning to continue SMART implementation, while about 31.25% of the units would seek approval from their leaders to deploy SMART.



3. Are you ready to apply SMART at your unit after the training course?



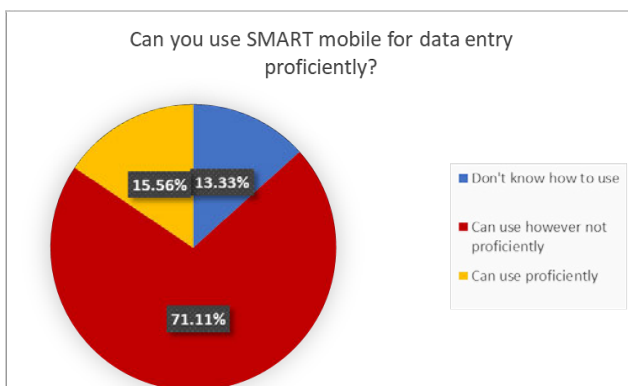
Advanced SMART technical training for officials of Dong Nai Province



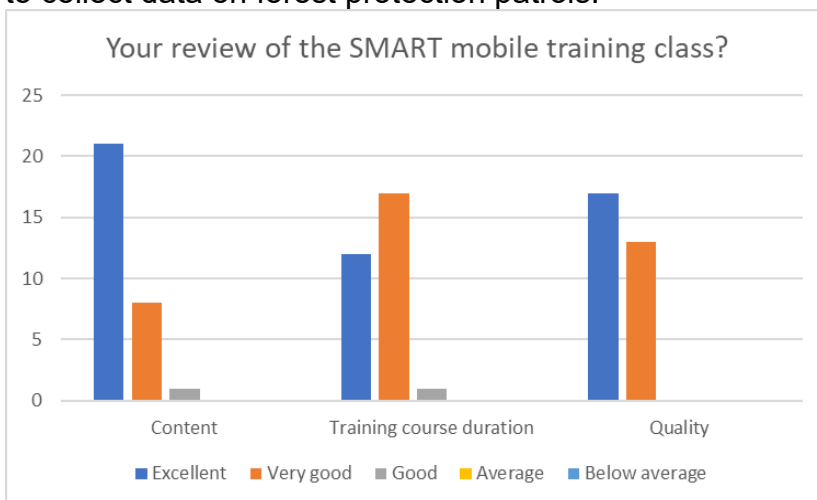
Advanced SMART technical training for officials of U Minh Thuong National Park, U Minh Ha National Park, Ca Mau forest rangers Unit, Kien Giang forest rangers Unit

The data collection using SMART mobile training at U Minh Ha National Park

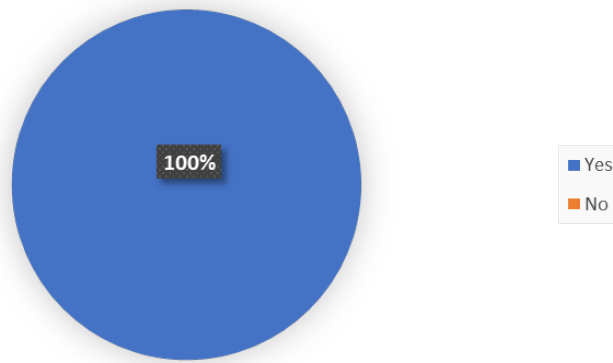
SVW conducted a training on data collection using SMART mobile in forest protection management and biodiversity monitoring at U Minh Ha National Park on June 8 and 9, 2023. The training was attended by 57 officials from U Minh Ha National Park. The training aimed to enhance the capacity of the officials on how to use SMART mobile to collect and record data on forest protection patrols and biodiversity observations. The training methods included lectures, demonstrations, exercises, discussions and evaluations. The pre-training and post-training surveys showed that the participants improved their knowledge and skills on SMART mobile after the training. Before the training, only 15.6% of the participants were proficient in SMART mobile, 13.3% did not know how to use it and 71.1% knew how to use it in basic terms. After the training, 93.3% of the participants were proficient in SMART mobile, 6.7% had basic knowledge of SMART mobile and none of them did not know how to use it.



Evaluation after training, all participants were 100% proficient in using SMART mobile to collect data on forest protection patrols.



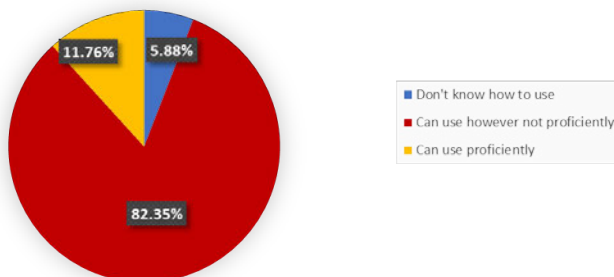
How well do you know the effects and the operation of SMART mobile?



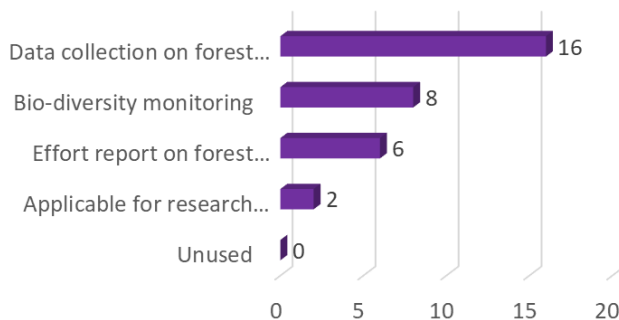
SVW conducted a training on data collection using SMART mobile in forest protection management and biodiversity monitoring at U Minh Thuong National Park on June 21st, 2023 with the participation of 18 officials from U Minh Thuong National Park.

The results of the pre-training survey showed that before the training, only 11.8% of the participants were proficient in using SMART, while 82.4% had basic knowledge of SMART and 5.8% did not know how to use it. The training aimed to improve the skills and confidence of the participants on how to use SMART mobile to collect and record data on forest protection patrols and biodiversity observations. The feedback from the participants showed that the training was useful and relevant for their work. Most of the participants realized the utility and importance of using SMART mobile to collect data on forest protection patrols.

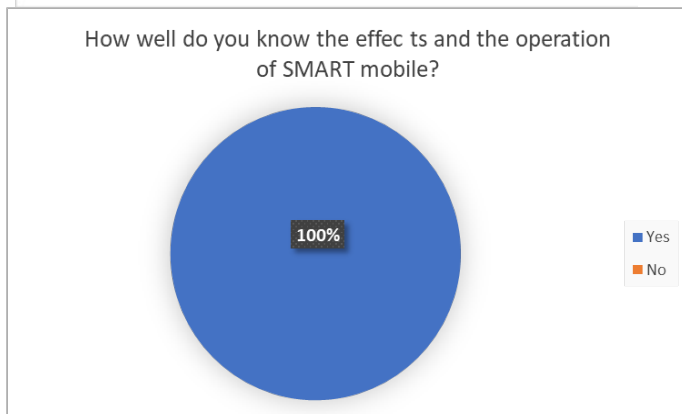
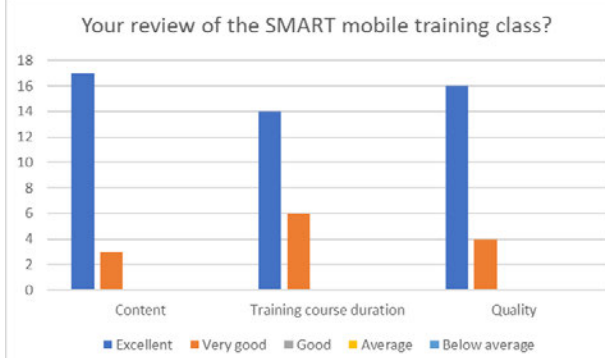
Can you use SMART mobile for data entry proficiently?



what are the uses of SMART mobile ?



Evaluation after training, all participants were 100% proficient in using SMART mobile to collect data on forest protection patrols



Training course on SMART mobile at U Minh Thuong national park and U Minh Ha National park

Patrol equipment purchase

SVW is in the process of purchasing patrol equipment. SVW has submitted a change request to the IWT Challenge Fund and is awaiting approval. SVW will follow our own financial and procurement regulations to acquire the equipment.

Training courses on Wildlife Law Enforcement

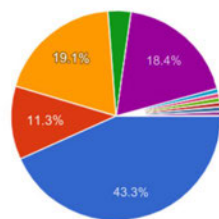
Two workshops were organised with 140 delegates including leaders, civil servants, public employees, forest rangers, contract officers, and forest guards hired during peak periods at Cat Tien National Park on April 18 and April 20. The workshops discussed sharing experiences and inspiration in forest patrolling and solutions and cooperation options between the two units to promote the effectiveness of law enforcement and improve the quality of forestry, raising community awareness in Cat Tien National Park.

[Link official dispatch and agenda](#)

In the workshop, the survey shows that "Income from work", "Capacity development opportunities" and "Leadership recognition" are important factors that increase motivation for forest protection forces, which will Help Park leaders in adjusting human resource management to increase forest protection effectiveness.

To help you increase your motivation at work, which of the following would you like to improve the most?

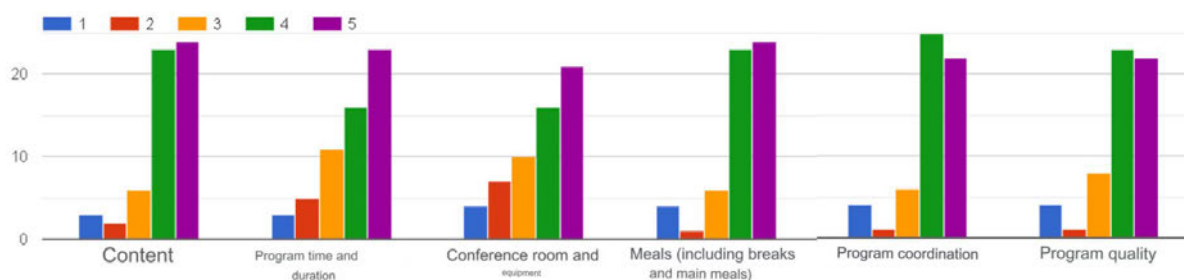
141 answers



- Income from work
- Leaders recognize, honor and praise...
- Opportunities to learn and improve skills...
- Working environment and relationships d ...
- Meaningful and respected work...
- All
- All of the above
- Leaders recognize, honor and praise...
- All of the above ideas
- All of the above
- All of the above items

And some objective evaluations of the workshop organization process from the training participants.

Please rate your level of satisfaction with the organization of the Conference (with 1 being Very dissatisfied and 5 being Very satisfied)



[Link see more photos of the training course](#)

Thailand trip

SVW conducted a tour and study program at Thailand from May 8 to May 14, 2023. The program was attended by 23 people from SVW and five national parks in Vietnam, including representatives of the Forest Protection Department, directors, and leaders of Cuc Phuong National Park, Pu Mat National Park, Cat Tien National Park, U Minh Thuong National Park, and U Minh Ha National Park. The program aimed to learn from the best practices and experiences of Thailand in forest protection management and biodiversity monitoring. The program consisted of four main activities: visiting Khao Yai National Park, visiting Thap Lan National Park, visiting Sakaerat Environmental Research Station, and visiting several museums in Bangkok. In each activity, the participants had the opportunity to observe and interact with the staff and experts from Thailand, to learn about their methods and tools for forest protection management and biodiversity monitoring, such as SMART, camera traps, drones, GIS, etc. The participants also had the chance to exchange their knowledge and ideas with their counterparts from Thailand, to discuss the challenges and solutions for forest conservation in both countries, and to explore the possibilities for future cooperation and partnership.

[Link see more photos](#)

Provinces workshops

We planned and prepared logistics, agenda, invitation, and guest list for five workshops of strengthening law enforcement and interagency collaboration in combatting IWT in 5 provinces while awaiting approval from governmental leaders at the provincial level. We completed 5 short clips to kick off a series of provincial-level activities.

[Link the draft of agenda, invitation, and guest list.docx](#)

[Link 5 kick off films](#)



Districts workshops and Community workshops

We started drafting plans, and preparing logistics for three district workshops in Dong Nai provinces (Tan Phu, Vinh Cuu, Dinh Quan district) and 12 community workshops in the buffer zone of Cat Tien National Park.

[Link agenda, invitation, and guest list of district workshop](#)

[Link agenda of community workshop](#)

We completed the design and production of the set of 82 exhibition photos at the Conference. The photo exhibition is the opening activity of the Workshop, the content helps provide information about wildlife conservation through 5 topics Best Vietnam Wildlife Wonder, Threats, and Causes, Consequences, and Wildlife Conservation Efforts. This exhibition set of photos will be used for all workshops within the project.

[Link the photo exhibition](#)



Installing propaganda billboards around Cat Tien National Park

We also completed location maps of 70 propaganda billboards around Cat Tien National Park, U Minh Thuong and U Minh Ha National Parks, and Dong Nai Cultural Nature Reserve. We are expanding our awareness-raising efforts to the community of Dong Nai Cultural Nature Reserve, which shares the flora and fauna subdivision with Cat Tien National Park and has easy access to it. We are in the process of adjusting the design of the billboards according to the requirements of Cat Tien National Park, promoting consensus with the People's Committees of buffer zone communes on installation and field locations before starting construction.

[Link the location billboards of Cat Tien National Park](#)

[Link the location billboards of Dong Nai Cultural Nature Reserve](#)

[Link the location billboards of U Minh Thuong National Park](#)

[Link the location billboards of U Minh Ha National Park](#)



2. Developing sustainable livelihoods

Ten workshops for 1250 PFES members

For developing sustainable livelihoods, we initially collected information, documents and evaluated the effectiveness of the forest protection program in developing community livelihoods in the buffer zone of Cat Tien National Park. We are negotiating and preparing for the first three workshops to connect and provide in-depth training for group leaders who are reputable people, serving as a bridge between Cat Tien National Park and the Payment for Forest Environmental Services (PFES) program.

Corporates engagement to follow alternative job opportunities offered for signed-up poachers and evaluate possible income increase

We also interviewed and collected information about businesses wishing to recruit workers in Dong Nai, Lam Dong, and Binh Phuoc provinces to offer alternative job opportunities for signed-up poachers in workshops. This is a long-term solution that suits the needs of signed-up poachers who want a job near their home. We are also connecting with local authorities to compile more information about demand and opportunities for local employment at Employment Advisory Service locations.

[Link business list in Cat Tien, Binh Phuoc, Lam Dong province](#)

3. Reducing demand for IWT products

From April to September 2023, the Demand Reduction team conducted community surveys, developed a behavioral change intervention proposal, and prepared the logistical procedures for the launching workshops to launch the demand reduction campaign in five provinces surrounding three project sites. The activities were as follows

Community surveys

We completed a background survey at Cat Tien National Park with 960 community members to gain background data on their perceptions, attitudes, awareness, knowledge, and behaviors related to wildlife consumption. We also conducted two pre-intervention surveys in Cat Tien and U Minh Thuong/U Minh Ha to gain baseline data for comparison with post-intervention data to measure the impact of the campaign on the community's attitudes, knowledge, and consumption of wildlife products.

Link to background survey in Cat Tien: [Cat Tien Background Research Technical Report EN.pdf](#)

Link to pre-intervention survey: [IWTCF pre-intervention report EN.pdf](#)



Collaborators interviews community members during our background and pre surveys.

Billboard and poster campaign

Based on our analysis of background research, we developed an intervention proposal that outlines our methodological approach and the series of activities to change the behaviors of the local community surrounding wild meat consumption. For the billboard and poster campaign, we worked with a contract designer to complete the design package. The designs incorporate local culture and characteristics, featuring messages calling for an end to wild meat consumption among local people and will be represented by respected and influential individuals in each community. In the coming months, we will work with local government authorities of the project districts and communes to initiate the installation of these posters and billboards in the community.

Link to intervention package proposal: [Intervention Proposal.pdf](#)



Designs of poster campaign

Short films and media

We collaborated with an external media agency to revamp and develop our online communication strategy on the Demand Reduction website and Facebook page. We also made progress on producing a documentary and a short Public Service Announcement (PSA) that will highlight the stories of forest rangers and protectors at three national parks, as well as the consequences of consuming wild meat on wildlife and the lives of community members. These short films are in production and expected to be completed by the end of this year for broadcast on local and national television.



Behind the Scene footage of short film production

Launching workshops

We developed the agenda and prepared logistics for five launching workshops of demand reduction campaign in 5 provinces while awaiting approval from governmental leaders at the provincial level. We also discussed with our park partners on how to

connect with provincial leaders so that we can implement our demand reduction activities. In Dong Nai, we issued a formal request of cooperation with Dong Nai Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and drafted an action plan that aims to advise provincial governmental leaders on how to strengthen law enforcement, develop sustainable livelihoods and reduce demand for illegal wildlife trade products from 2023 to 2025. Our estimated time for the workshop in Dong Nai is around the end of October 2023. We also planned to use Dong Nai as an example of success to connect with the remaining provinces.

Link to formal request of cooperation with Dong Nai Department of Agriculture and Rural Development: [142. CV TTBT.pdf](#)

Link to drafted action plan: [Action plan to implement the campaign Dong Nai province says no to illegal wildlife products.docx](#)

Link to drafted agenda of the launching workshop in Dong Nai: [Agenda, invitation, and guest list.docx](#)

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.

The SMART training process showed that SMART is a useful and necessary tool for forest management, protection and biodiversity conservation. It also helps to digitize the data on patrolling and monitoring conservation areas, national parks and other special-use/protection forests. The data can evaluate the effectiveness of conservation and protection of the province's biodiversity areas and contribute to the digital transformation process at the national level. The Vietnam Forestry Department has proposed to apply SMART to all special-use and protection forests to unify and digitize forest management and protection data nationwide. However, it has not been implemented synchronously nationwide, because there is no policy mechanism for state units to implement and deploy SMART in the field according to the central government's orientation. Units face difficulties in procuring equipment for effective SMART implementation. These equipment are mainly supported by conservation organizations.

In July, we submitted an adjusted timeline of activities, which outlined detailed changes and reasons for the changes that we are proposing to the original timeline. We took into account the potential challenges in administrative procedures and staffing capacity to ensure that the updated timeline accurately and realistically reflects the implementation of project activities.

The biggest lessons learned for us continued to be flexible and adaptable when working with governmental agencies and being proactive with project outputs. As we wrapped up our community surveys and planned to organise the launching workshops, we expected that the launching workshops would be followed by an official directive issued by the provincial leader to officially kick off the series of campaign activities in the respective region. However, given the administrative schedule and changes in the structure and personnel of some provincial offices, we are experiencing delays in connecting and meeting with them. With the deadline approaching for many activities, we decided to proceed with any activities that could be implemented with approval from a lower governmental level, such as the district or commune level. We also worked closely with our park partners so they could provide guidance and advice on the administrative procedures necessary to implement such activity.

While working with external service providers, we also learned the importance of setting clear requirements and expectations, frequent follow-ups, and open, constructive communication to ensure the quality of the final product and improve the effectiveness of future collaboration

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

Discussed with NIRAS-LTS: Yes/No

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

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)?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

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?

N/A

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**