



**BIODIVERSITY  
CHALLENGE FUNDS**



**Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects**  
**Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus**

**Half Year Report**

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: 31/10/2024**

Submit to: [BCF-Reports@niras.com](mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com) including your project ref in the subject line.

<b>Project reference</b>	IWTEx001
<b>Project title</b>	Dismantling pangolin trade in Vietnam
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Vietnam
<b>Lead partner</b>	Save Vietnam's Wildlife
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Save Vietnam's Wildlife, managers of Cat Tien NP, U Minh Thuong NP, and U Minh Ha NP
<b>Project leader</b>	Thai Van Nguyen
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> September 2024_HYR3
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	svw.vn <a href="https://www.facebook.com/svw.vn">https://www.facebook.com/svw.vn</a>

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

**Law enforcement**

In the last 6 months in Cat Tien National Park, there were many human violations expected due to the malva nut season and bamboo shoot season. However, the number of violations did decrease compared to the same period in 2023. Nevertheless, there needs to be plans and measures to reduce the number of violations.

In U Minh Thuong National Park, aside from the continued patrolling efforts, the anti-poaching team there have organised SMART support activities for the local forest rangers.

Below is a summary of anti-poaching activities in the last 6 months

Patrol Results/ NPs & NRs	Cat Tien	U Minh Thuong	U Minh Ha	Total
Number of staffs	151	30	41	222
Patrols conducted	4593	798	476	5867
Number of patrolled days	5595	817	544	6956
Km patrolled by foot	29775	9.201.09	3857,84	29775
Hours spent on patrol	32155	2482.01	1940,58	34637.01
Poachers encountered	50	13	3	66
Poacher arrested	37	13	2	52
Traps removed	997	194	33	1224
Guns confiscated	6	0	0	6
Camps destroyed	3	0	0	3
Electro-fishing	0	2	0	2
Live poached animals found	0	0	0	0
Dead poached animals found	5	0	0	5
Kg poached animal parts found	13,7	0	0	0
Kg of other non-timber products	4,7	0	41	41

### 1.5 Workshops at 5 provinces

- Completed organising 01 workshop in Dong Nai with 156 attendees
- The People's Committees of Binh Phuoc, Kien Giang and Ca Mau provinces have given written permission to organise the workshop.
- SVW is coordinating with relevant units to prepare for the workshops

### 1.6 Workshops for 10 districts

In the process of obtaining approval from the People's Committee of Dinh Quan, Tan Phu, Vinh Cuu districts of Dong Nai province.

### 1.8 Community workshops for 81 villages

- Completed organising 12 workshop in 7 district of Dong Nai, Lam Dong and Binh Phuoc province with 1,400 attendees
- The People's Committees of 4 communities in Ca Mau have given written permission to organise the workshop.
- SVW is coordinating with relevant units to prepare for the workshop.

### 2.1 Training workshops for PFES members

- Completed 2 intensive training courses for 90 team leaders and 13 direct training sessions at residential groups for 900 forest protection contract beneficiaries at Cat Tien National Park. 990/1250 members were awarded certificates of participation in the training

### **Community survey around Cat Tien National Park**

In the first six months of this year, SVW completed the data analysis from a community survey conducted around CTNP and produced a comprehensive report to share with the demand reduction team, anti-poaching team, CTNP management, and other key stakeholders. The study surveyed a diverse group of participants, revealing a nearly equal gender split (52.7% male, 47.2% female) and a majority of farmers (62.4%) with monthly household incomes below 10 million VND. Most respondents (65.4%) were aged 30 to 59, representing 24 ethnic groups, with the Kinh being the most prominent (67.8%). Over 60% of participants had completed primary or secondary education, indicating a basic understanding of local biodiversity and wildlife protection laws. However, despite this knowledge, active involvement in conservation efforts was limited. The study identified **key hotspots for wildlife poaching and trade**, including **Da Teh, Cat Tien town, Phu Ly, and Quoc Oai commune**, where illegal activities persist. Hunters were predominantly male, aged 20 to 49, with the highest concentration in their 40s. The ongoing illegal hunting and wildlife consumption emphasises the need for enhanced conservation strategies. To address these challenges, the study recommends strengthening the **relationship between local rangers and communities**, particularly in **Binh Phuoc**, to strengthen engagement in conservation initiatives. Collaboration with **provincial rangers** is essential for disseminating information to both adjacent and non-adjacent villages. The study suggests implementing educational programs for local students and adults to increase awareness of biodiversity. **Demand reduction** initiatives should focus on decreasing wildlife consumption, particularly among **individuals aged 30 to 49 in Dong Nai and Lam Dong provinces**. Additionally, expanding patrol efforts in identified hotspots and establishing effective communication channels for reporting wildlife crimes will enhance law enforcement capabilities. Engaging local communities actively in conservation efforts, including reporting violations, is crucial for sustainable wildlife protection. Overall, the findings emphasise the need for comprehensive approaches to wildlife conservation in the CTNP buffer zone.

### **Demand Reduction**

Progress in the first half of the project year marked our securing of approval to implement demand reduction activities in 4 provinces, including Dong Nai, Binh Phuoc, Kien Giang, and Ca Mau; followed by the completion of several project activities scheduled in Year 3. In August, we successfully organised the launching workshop of the campaign "Dong Nai Province Says No to Illegal Consumption of Wildlife", following the issuance of an action plan titled 254/KH-UBND by the provincial government on implementing the Series of Events "Dong Nai Province Says No to Illegal Consumption of Wildlife." Attended by 100 governmental leaders from provincial, district, and commune authorities, the launching workshop also received great media coverage with a total of 15 press clippings and news articles featuring the event. The launching workshop in Binh Phuoc is scheduled to take place at the end of October, while discussions are underway with Kien Giang and Ca Mau Forestry Department about the plan to organise the launching workshops this year.

Given the challenges and time-consuming process of using local representatives on the billboards, we re-strategized our approach and decided to use graphic illustrations of characters on the billboard design for all 3 national parks. The set of characters includes: a government official, a law enforcer, a ranger, a woman, farmers, and children. So far, we have completed the final designs for the billboards and are in the process of identifying billboard locations with local communes.

Additionally, we collaborated with our anti-poaching team to conduct field investigations and identify a list of restaurants selling wildlife around 3 key sites. Following the action plans issued, we have been discussing the plan to implement the restaurant campaign with the Forestry Departments of each implementing district.

In terms of communication and media, we maintained an online presence on our Facebook page and website, producing weekly content to build awareness for our campaign and promote behaviour change through demand reduction information and messages. We collaborated with a well-trusted media agency in Vietnam to support content creation and targeted marketing. Furthermore, we also connected with Ca Mau and Dong Nai TV Stations to discuss the broadcast of our short films and are awaiting their review of our communication products.

At the same time, the Demand Reduction team organised 11 successful community events in the buffer zone of Cat Tien National Park with the participation of over 1000 people in 11 communes of Dong Nai, Lam Dong, and Binh Phuoc province. Our community events were well-received and helped to strengthen the bond among community members while providing them with knowledge about wildlife conservation.

**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.**

### **Demand Reduction**

Complex and lengthy administrative process remains an ongoing challenge for the project team during the simultaneous implementation of project activities in 5 different provinces. Limited staffing and geographical constraints between the 3 project sites also put pressure on our staff to ensure project activities were carried out as planned. After having an action plan to implement the campaign issued by the provincial government, paperwork is required before implementing any activity since each activity involves approval and collaboration from different authorities. In some rare instances, the lack of cooperation and timely response from certain government agencies means that our staff must maintain frequent communication and follow-up with the contact points. So far, the biggest challenge was observed with the billboard campaign as the regulations surrounding installing large-sized billboards in public spaces require several authorities to approve the design, messages and locations. This has resulted in the process taking longer than we expected.

#### **Law Enforcement Billboards**

Another issue is climate change and extreme weather. UMT and UMH NP face storms, heavy rains and landslides of dikes and roads, affecting the raise awareness billboard system that must be repaired and remedied, leading to delays in handover to UMT and UMH NP. If the situation persists, additional repair and maintenance costs will arise.

#### **Law enforcement/Anti-poaching efforts**

The increasing number of instances of extreme weather events and the unpredictability of weather patterns as a result of climate change also affected the efforts of anti-poaching teams. Most prominently, it is becoming increasingly taxing for anti-poaching teams, with their current capabilities, to maintain an adequate number of patrols and to be able to cover an adequate area. Also because of weather conditions and other factors, the rate of breakage for PoacherCams in the project areas have been particularly high. This, coupled with a lack of specialised repair services, results in a lot of wastage.

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

Discussed with NIRAS:	Yes
Formal Change Request submitted:	Yes
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	Yes

Change Request reference if known: *If you submitted a financial Change Request, you can find the reference in the email from NIRAS confirming the outcome*

**4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024)**

**Actual spend:**

**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 2025)?**

Yes ☐ No ☐ Estimated underspend:

**4c. If you expect and underspend, then you should 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 to your project 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?**

Challenges in project management and monitoring stem from the considerable distance between project sites. Communication and management are hindered by delays in information updates. Project team and field staff primarily rely on email and online forms, with limited opportunities for face-to-face interactions. For BCF management, strict and close monitoring through monthly reports and periodic project status updates via email and Zoom meetings enhances monitoring capabilities. However, the tightening of state management of foreign funds through Decree 80/2020/ND-CP, which regulates the use of grant aid not classified as official development assistance from foreign agencies, organisations, and individuals for Vietnam, introduces several issues. These include delays and obstacles in project implementation, resulting in difficulties with disbursement and financial management.

**6. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent annual report.** Please provide the comment and then your response. If you have already provided a response, please confirm when.

In the most recent annual report, SVW received feedback from BCF highlighting that some indicators were set too high and were unrealistic given the project's situation, making them difficult to achieve. Additionally, monitoring and evaluation had not been closely focused. To address these issues, the project revised the logframe, including the indicators, with BCF's support. A monthly reporting mechanism was also established to ensure these concerns are continuously addressed

## Checklist for submission

**For New Projects (i.e. starting after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024)**

Have you <b>responded to any additional feedback</b> (other than caveats) received in the letter you received to say your application was successful which requested a response at HYR (including safeguarding points)?	Yes
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If not already submitted, have you attached your <b>risk register</b> ?	Yes
<b>For Existing Projects (i.e. started before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024)</b>	
Have you responded to <b>feedback from your latest Annual Report Review</b> ?	Yes
<b>For All Projects</b>	
Include your <b>project reference</b> in the subject line of submission email.	Yes
Submit to <a href="mailto:BCFs-Report@niras.com">BCFs-Report@niras.com</a> .	
Have you reported against the most <b>up to date information for your project</b> ?	Yes
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	Yes