

## Illegal Wildlife Trade: Half Year Report

<b>Project Ref No.</b>	IWT 02
<b>Project Title:</b>	Cutting Out the Middleman: Combatting Wildlife Trafficking in Vietnam
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Vietnam (and Vietnamese diplomatic missions, migrant worker associations, and private businesses in Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya and Angola).
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	WCS Vietnam
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	CITES MA Vietnam; National Environmental Police (Southern Office)
<b>Project Leader</b>	Scott Robertson
<b>Report date and number (eg HYR1)</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> October, 2014; HYR1
<b>Project website</b>	None.

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

#### **Output 1: Vietnamese journalists and local civil society groups are informed and supportive of international wildlife trade issues.**

Activity 1.1. and 1.2. WCS revised the online media tracking methodology for coverage of wildlife trafficking issues in the domestic media. During the period April 1st-September 30th 2014, there were 175 articles on the subjects wildlife and wildlife trade in the local online media, with only 19 (11%) classed as providing a positive view (supportive to enforcement efforts). We have also revised our screening methodology to focus on domestic media coverage, omitting international media coverage that has in turn adjusted our stated 2013 baseline from 47% to 20% (91/440 stories) providing positive coverage. We have continued to collate and share news reports on Vietnam's illegal wildlife trade, especially on the prosecutions of wildlife trade related crime, among our network of journalists, NGOs, and international agencies on a daily basis. The communications team has also been sharing selected news reports and articles that highlight enforcement progress via WCS social network platforms, particularly Facebook (see: <https://www.facebook.com/wcs.vietnam>).

Activity 1.3. WCS has initiated regular monitoring of online trade e.g. websites advertising wildlife products, traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) chat groups and blogs, etc to help inform the development of this protocol. Furthermore, we have held a number of meetings with Action for Wildlife, a student volunteer organisation in Ho Chi Minh City, to strengthen the organisation's capacity and response to the local wildlife trade. We have carried out a mapping exercise to identify the key local NGOs with capacity to address the issue of online trade and the government agencies with a mandate to combat this crime. In the coming quarter we will organise a series of coordination meetings with both to develop a protocol for reporting of online wildlife crimes.

#### **Output 2. Local civil society and law enforcement agencies identify and begin to address the priority barriers to the prosecution and punishment of transnational wildlife trafficking cases and the key actions required to address these issues.**

Activity 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 In order to identify and rank barriers to effective enforcement WCS and CITES made the decision to carry out the analysis of enforcement efforts in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and under the framework of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit ([www.unodc.org/documents/Wildlife/Toolkit\\_e.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/Wildlife/Toolkit_e.pdf)). This toolkit will allow us to generate an accurate analysis of the current preventative and criminal justice responses to wildlife crimes in Vietnam.

In the first six months of the project's implementation, the relevant permissions and mechanisms for implementing the ICCWC toolkit have been established and consultations have been held with Vietnam Wildlife Enforcement Network (WEN) members to develop the work plan for implementing the toolkit. The

first UNODC mission to Viet Nam and set of meetings with the authorities took place from the 13-15<sup>th</sup> October 2014 in Ha Noi. The CITES MA, as the standing member of Viet Nam WEN, convened a meeting of WEN member agencies where they introduced the upcoming toolkit analysis. During this meeting, a formal working group was formed that consists of key enforcement agencies, notably including the Supreme People's Procuracy and the Supreme People's Court. This working group has nominated 1-2 officers to lead on toolkit implementation, facilitating access to data and sub-departments of their respective agencies at national and provincial levels. The data collection and analysis will be completed over the coming quarter.

One barrier to effective law enforcement that has already been identified by the CITES MA and the Supreme People's Procuracy is the ambiguity involved in determining the severity of crime, and therefore penalties, when it comes to non-native species. To address this, WCS and the CITES MA have worked with the Supreme People's Procuracy (SPP) to draft a joint-ministerial circular providing clear guidance on criminal prosecution of those who smuggle, transport, and/or illegally store rhino horn and ivory. As currently drafted, this circular would be signed by the ministers of Public Security, Finance, Agriculture and Rural Development, Industry and Trade, the Supreme Courts and the Supreme People's Procuracy. The process to draft the new circular has enhanced interagency cooperation as well as agreement on punishment and sanction of offenders. As currently drafted, and agreed on in principle by most agencies, punishments for offences involving elephant ivory and rhino horn would more than double (from 7 to a maximum 15 years custodial sentences); the circular shifts from calculating the level of the crimes based upon the economic value of the goods seized to the weight (as is the case with other illicit goods such as narcotics). We have recently commissioned an independent legal review to respond to comments from the Ministry of Justice.

Another priority barrier identified by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has been weaknesses in inventorying, sampling and sharing of data on stockpiles of seized rhino horn and ivory. The CITES MA, with technical support from WCS, have been developing a proposal to the Prime Minister for the centralisation, inventory and destruction of elephant ivory and rhino horn stockpiles held throughout the country. This has involved carrying out a desk review of practices in other countries; media analysis and outreach to the provincial agencies to support estimating the extent of stockpiles; consultations with Stop Ivory on their available stockpile management tools and crucially, building interagency (e.g. Customs) and interprovincial (e.g. Hai Phong, Ho Chi Minh City) support and consensus on a key step of the law enforcement process. Further, this significant activity builds the cross-agency awareness and agreement that these high-value wildlife products should not be viewed as a commercially valuable product, but rather an illicit good (like narcotics) and destroyed; making a significant contribution to enacting an effective national response to wildlife crime.

**Output 4. Formal and informal inter-agency forums are functioning and the relevant law enforcement agencies are regularly sharing information through briefings and cooperating on planning and developing strategies to tackle rhino horn, elephant ivory and big cat trafficking crimes.**

Activity 4.1. The topic/geographic area selected for discussion at the annual VN-WEN meeting of national law enforcement agencies is the implementation of Prime minister's Directive No. 03/CT-TTg on strengthening measures for controlling and protecting endangered, rare and precious wildlife. Under the directive, relevant agencies submit an annual report on implementation progress and results prior to every 15<sup>th</sup> of December. The annual VN-WEN meeting was originally scheduled for the second project quarter, but was rescheduled to the third project quarter to coincide with Directive 03's reporting period. In preparation for this meeting WCS/CITES are encouraging and in some cases supporting localities (e.g. HCMC, Hanoi, Quang Ninh) with preparatory meetings and actions.

**Output 5. Frontline police, customs, forest rangers and prosecutors start utilising intelligence analysis software and applying professional investigative techniques to gather and manage information on wildlife crimes**

Activity 5.1. Following an initial review of available systems that included consultations with a number of agencies and organisation, we have identified two companies to be considered for procuring intelligence management software: i2 and Palantir. We are now in discussions with both companies to determine which software is the best fit for the project's needs in Viet Nam and which can provide the most cost-effective deployment.

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WCS has also initiated discussions with the National Police academy and is preparing a formal cooperation agreement that will focus on strengthening existing curricula and modules on wildlife crime prevention for current and future police cadets.

**2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments 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 Viet Nam CITES MA Director, and our project focal point has enrolled in a Master's Degree In Management And Conservation Of Species In Trade: The International Framework at the International University of Andalusia (UNIA) and was studying in Spain and absent from the office from the end of May through the middle of July. This caused delays in implementation of the project over that period that we are trying to address now.

**2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?**

Discussed with LTS: No

Formal change request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance      N/A

**3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?**

Yes  No  Estimated underspend:      £

**3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully as it is unlikely that any requests to carry forward funds will be approved this year.** 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 and would like to talk to someone about the options available this year, please indicate below when you think you might be in a position to do this and what the reasons might be:

**4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to IWT challenge Fund management, monitoring, or financial procedures?**

No

Please note: Any **planned** modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also** be raised with LTS International through a Change Request.

Please send your **completed report** by email to Joanne Gordon at [IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk](mailto:IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk). The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 001 IWT Half Year Report**

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