

Illegal Wildlife Trade: Half Year Report

(due 31st October 2015)

Project Ref No.	IWT 02
Project Title:	Cutting Out the Middleman: Combatting Wildlife Trafficking in Vietnam
Country(ies)	Vietnam (and Vietnamese diplomatic missions, migrant worker associations, and private businesses in Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya and South Africa).
Lead Organisation	WCS Vietnam
Collaborator(s)	CITES MA Vietnam; National Environmental Police (Southern Office)
Project Leader	Scott Robertson
Report date and number (eg HYR1)	31 st October, 2015; HYR2
Project website	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. From April 1st – Sept. 30th 2015, we continued sharing our daily news reports on illegal wildlife trade and crimes to our established network of journalists, NGOs, and international agencies. Our media tracking collated 435 articles covering illegal wildlife trade and seizures in the local and international online media. 420 articles show positive views (supportive to enforcement efforts) (96.5%); 05 (1.2%) articles provide neutral views and 10 (2.3%) has no clear views. The steady increase in the number of the articles reflects the increasing interests by journalists in wildlife conservation issues. Almost all articles are considered positive because journalists have improved their understanding and changed their writing tone against illegal trade and use of wildlife products. We will continue producing wildlife news scans and enlarging our journalist network in the next period.

Activity 1.2. WCS disseminates press releases on key events with our journalist network. In this period, we yielded good coverage on the Africa trip by the Viet Nam Wildlife Enforcement Network (VN-WEN) delegation in May 2015, which was covered in more than ten electronic newspapers directly under Government or Communist Party, namely:

<http://www.nhandan.com.vn/khoahoc/thien-nhien/item/26332602-viet-nam-can-nhac-tieu-huy-kho-tang-vat-tu-dong-vat-hoang-da.html>

http://www.cpv.org.vn/cpv/Modules/News/NewsDetail.aspx?co_id=10008&cn_id=713349

<http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/environment/130883/vietnam-considers-destruction-of-protected-species-stockpiles.html>

http://dangcongsan.vn/cpv/Modules/News/NewsDetail.aspx?co_id=30089&cn_id=713747

<http://thoibaotaichinhvietnam.vn/pages/xa-hoi/2015-05-19/no-luc-phong-chong-toi-pham-lien-quan-den-dong-vat-hoang-da-20915.aspx>

<http://fr.nhandan.com.vn/environment/item/1227571-le-groupe-viettel-redouble-d%E2%80%99efforts-contre-la-criminalite-liee-aux-especes-sauvages.html>

<http://www.tienphong.vn/the-gioi/viet-nam-cu-tuy-vien-can-h-sat-toi-chau-phi-862210.tpo>

<http://www.vietnamplus.vn/tien-toi-thoa-thuan-viet-nammozambique-ve-bao-ve-dong-vat->

hoang-da/324202.vnp

http://www.kiemlambryt.org.vn/Desktop.aspx/List/Thong-tin-nganh/Viet_Nam-Nam_Phi_hop_tac_bao_ton_dong_vat_hoang_da/

<http://baotintuc.vn/thoi-su/viet-namnam-phi-hop-tac-bao-ton-dong-vat-hoang-da-20150521072538659.htm>

Furthermore, we coordinated media coverage for Richard Branson's visit to Viet Nam that included placement of an Op Ed about the role of private sector in solving global environmental issues, including wildlife trafficking, and exclusive interviews on the same theme for a leading newspaper and prime-time news show. Our communications team also highlighted updated information on legal mechanisms and issues related to wildlife trafficking via WCS social network platforms, particularly Facebook, and through our mailing list of Vietnamese journalists.

Activity 1.3. WCS has had a series of meetings and discussions with civil society organizations (CSOs) such as Action for Wildlife (AWO), GreenViet, and Live&Learn Vietnam about our plan to develop volunteer network to monitor online crimes. We are now under preparation for a full day workshop co-hosted by WCS and AWO in November 2015 for leaders of clubs and forum administrators who have capacity to inspire their group members to report online crimes to law enforcement agencies. We have reached out to the local Facebook representatives in Vietnam to participate in the workshop to provide technical solutions to 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: The National working group reports and ICCWC Toolkit analysis have been finalised and disseminated to Government. These outputs identify the priority barriers facing wildlife law enforcement in Vietnam. The CITES MA, with technical support from WCS, has developed a National Program to control illegal trade in wild fauna and flora to 2020 that incorporates a number of findings from these reports. This program is under revision and planned for submission to the Prime Minister by the end of 2015. In addition, WCS and the CITES MA worked with the National Assembly (NA) to organize a consultation meeting to discuss the Penal Code and Criminal Procedures Code currently under revision in October 2015 and continue to provide technical inputs to that process. As it stands the Penal code will increase penalties from 7 to 15 years custodial sentences and from \$25,000 to \$250,000 fines for criminal violations of wildlife protection laws.

Output 3. Vietnamese diplomatic missions, migrant worker associations and trading and tourism companies in and relating to key African ivory and rhino horn source/transit states are informed of the risks, punishments and scaled up law enforcement efforts and political commitment to tackling this in both Africa and Asia

Activity 3.1. and 3.2: In May 2015, after a number of CITES MA official correspondences to VN embassies in Mozambique and Tanzania, we organised a 10-day mission of key Viet Nam law enforcement and regulatory agencies (police, prosecutors, customs, forest rangers, and CITES MA) to meet their counterparts in the ivory and rhino horn range states including Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and South Africa. WCS coordinated the trip in partnership with Vietnam embassies in those African countries. A series of meetings and events with government agencies, embassies, international organizations, business and Vietnamese community members has increased bilateral enforcement cooperation against illegal wildlife trade between Vietnam and these range states. These landmark meetings have also produced a promising agenda for future enforcement cooperation, including deployment of a Vietnamese police liaison officer to Mozambique and developing a mutual legal assistance treaty (MLAT) between Vietnam and Mozambique. New cooperation opportunities with the embassies of Vietnam in Tanzania, Mozambique and South Africa were clearly identified during the trip. All the Vietnamese diplomatic missions showed their strong concerns about transcontinental wildlife trafficking issue and scaled up their political commitments. A new partnership was built with Viettel Corporation in Tanzania and Mozambique for future implementation of crime prevention

outreach campaigns for Vietnamese community in Africa. Around 50 posters and information education and communications (IEC) materials were given to raise awareness for Viettel staff in Tanzania. Over 50 Vietnamese attended the special outreach event in Mozambique. WCS sent 04 videos, 50 posters, 34 leaflets and 70 stories about rhino horn trafficking and wildlife protection to the Vietnam Embassy in Mozambique for awareness raising.

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. WCS has supported CITES MA to organize two coordination meetings for the VN-WEN and Ho Chi Minh City in April and July 2015 respectively. In the April VN-WEN meeting, discussion focused on the implementation of Prime Minister's Directive No. 03/CT-TTg on strengthening measures for controlling and protecting endangered, rare and precious wildlife (Directive No.3), the proposal for the centralization and inventory of all CITES App I seized products (Proposal) (notably, elephant ivory, rhino horn, and tiger skins), recommendations for international cooperation between Vietnam and African countries for combatting illegal wildlife trade, and problems in wildlife crime monitoring indicators in Vietnam. At the VN-WEN meeting in July 2015, the law enforcement agencies had another chance to report their one year implementation of Directive No.3; provided comments on the stockpile Proposal and the National Program to combat wildlife trafficking. They developed an implementation plan for VN-WEN for the period of July 2015 to June 2016 as well as a plan to strengthen VN-WEN structure and operations. Both meetings helped strengthen the network collaboration and the active involvement of all relevant enforcement agencies. WCS will continue to support CITES MA Vietnam to organize annual VN-WEN meeting in 2016 with topics identified by VN WEN members including implementation and communication of wildlife protection articles in the revised Penal Code.

Activity 4.2. WCS had various meetings with key agencies from Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Supreme People's Procuracy on potential collaboration on priority wildlife crime issues under the framework of VN-WEN in 2015. WCS also facilitated the pre- Africa trip and post Africa trip meetings for preparation and agreements on trip report as well as follow-ups. We had a number of consultation meetings with CITES MA to prepare for the Toolkit presentation workshop (with UNODC) in Sept. 2015 and to organize the Penal code revision consultation meeting (with National Assembly) tentatively in late Oct. 2015. We leveraged support from GiZ to organize a dialogue meeting series with African delegations during the first week of Nov. 2015. In the next period, we will continue to support CITES MA to revise and finalize their National Program and stockpile Proposal. We also supported the CITES MA in collecting horn samples and sending to the source countries for DNA analysis including to handover 15 rhino horn samples and 09 ivory samples to CITES South Africa. With WCS staff's secondment to the CITES MA, we facilitated more timely activity implementation and have quarterly workplan updated and implemented. We solicited more inputs in developing activity implementation plan and will continue to develop the next year workplan with CITES.

Activity 4.3. On 23 July 2015, a field mission was organized for representatives from the Viet Nam CITES MA, National Customs Anti-smuggling Unit and Regional III Forest Protection Department, Agricultural Security Department to Moc Bai border gate, Tay Ninh province – a major trafficking choke-point on the Viet Nam-Cambodia land border. The delegation had a formal meeting with the Director of Moc Bai Customs Sub-Department to understand the Customs' border control operation and to confirm the information on a 9.4 kg rhino horn trafficking case seized in July 2015 by Border Army in Moc Bai. We plan to support VN-WEN to organize one more field mission to a wildlife trafficking hotspot in Vietnam over the next year.

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

[REDACTED]

Activity 5.2. In this reporting period, we leveraged further support from USFWS to co-finance a training course for law enforcement officers from Southern Viet Nam in August 2015 in Da Lat City. The participants were from provincial departments of forest protection, economical police, environmental police, customs and border army. The training focused on three main topics of legislation system, investigation methods and crackdown planning, wildlife identification. The training also applied active learning methodology to help the participants understand well and suitably apply the legal framework into solving wildlife violations with their daily scenarios.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Activity 5.6. WCS collaborated with HCMC People's Procuracy to organize a workshop on improving the handling of wildlife crimes in May 29-30, 2015 with attendance of 32 key representatives from procuracy, court, police and forest protection. The workshop clarified concerns on legal framework and called for engagement of law enforcement agencies during the investigation, prosecution, and conviction based on Vietnam law against wildlife crimes, especially rhino horn and ivory cases. WCS is now in discussions with Ho Chi Minh City People's Court for a training plan for court officers.

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.

Changes in the leadership and the arrival of the new Viet Nam CITES MA Director on board in July 2015, have delayed some activities of the project that need close follow-up actions and quick decision-making processed. We are working with the new director of CITES MA to problem solve and execute activities as planned.

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

[REDACTED]

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. 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**