



Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Half Year Report



(due 31st October 2017)

Project reference:	IWT014
Project title:	Bi-national Collaboration to Eradicate Wildlife Trafficking in Belize and Guatemala
Country(ies):	Belize and Guatemala
Lead organisation:	Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
Collaborator(s):	Asociación Balam, Consejo Nacional de Áreas Protegidas (CONAP), Environmental Justice Forum of Petén (EJF), Friends for Conservation and Development (FCD), Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development
Project leader:	<i>Roan Balas McNab</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1):	<i>October 2017, HYR3</i>
Project website/blog/social media etc:	http://guatemala.wcs.org/en-us/Initiatives/Illegal-Wildlife-Trade.aspx

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 the end September).

The project has established a cohesive binational partnership to address trans-frontier IWT, with support from the governments of Guatemala and Belize and national Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in both countries. Specific advances are detailed as follows.

Output 1: Improved Enforcement/Belize

Activity 1.1 (Completed): The Chiquibul anti-poaching strategy that was developed by FCD in 2015 and updated in 2016 was used to guide scarlet macaw nest protection activities during the 2017 nesting season. The strategy was reviewed and further updates incorporated at a workshop on 9th June 2017 with Belizean and Guatemalan CSO stakeholders (FCD, Belize Bird Rescue, Belize Wildlife & Referral Clinic, WCS Belize, WCS Guatemala, Balam, EJF).

Activity 1.2 (Completed): The Anti-Poaching Task Force was formed in Year 1 of the project, comprising FCD, FD, BDF and Police. This has been convened as part of existing monthly inter-agency coordination meetings led by the BDF rather than through separate dedicated meetings, since the same institutions are involved. Participation of Belize government personnel in patrols during the 2017 nesting season has again been intermittent, and FCD generally patrolled nesting areas without government accompaniment.

Activity 1.3 (Completed): FCD rangers continued to use SMART to support monitoring and enforcement operations in CNP, although some patrols were recorded using alternative GIS software as not all rangers had yet received sufficient training in the use of SMART. To address this capacity gap, WCS Belize conducted a SMART training session for FCD rangers on 26th September 2017, supported by funds from a separate project.

Activity 1.4 (Completed): FCD patrolled scarlet macaw nesting sites and access routes throughout the 2017 nesting season, with rangers on duty day and night to protect nests. For the third consecutive season since the project began, no poaching occurred at monitored nests; 8 chicks successfully fledged, with 3 lost to natural predation. However, for the first time, FCD rangers succeeded in capturing two poachers in CNP who were subsequently arrested by the authorities; they had not extracted any macaw chicks but admitted that was their intention. The poachers, both Guatemalan nationals, were charged with illegal entry into the country and wildlife offenses; each received a 6 month jail sentence and a fine of BZ\$1,500 or a further three months in jail if unpaid. The poachers have provided valuable information regarding associates in Guatemala which will be followed up by the Mesa Técnica in the coming months.

Output 2: Prosecution/Guatemala

Activity 2.1 (Completed): The Inter-institutional IWT Strategy was developed in Year 1; the annual evaluation workshop was held prior to the current reporting period, in February 2017.

Activity 2.2 (Completed): On 10th-11th August 2017, enforcement authorities in Belize and Guatemala participated in a joint field visit to FCD's research station in CNP; the event was attended by environmental prosecutors in Petén and Guatemala City, the judge specialized in environmental issues in Petén, CONAP enforcement personnel, personnel from the Forest and Environment Departments in Belize, and representatives of all of the project's CSO partners. On 25th-27th September 2017, CSO project partners and the environmental judge in Petén participated in a trinational exchange in Chajul, Mexico, to share information and experiences relating to IWT enforcement efforts and seek opportunities for further collaboration to combat cross-border trafficking between the three countries. EJV held training events with judges and environmental prosecutors from Petén and Guatemala City on 19th and 23rd-24th September 2017 to raise awareness of IWT and relevant legislation. Using funds from a complementary project, a three-day workshop was convened on 14th-16nd June 2017 in Guatemala City by WCS, EJV and CONAP, which focused on building investigative capacity among enforcement personnel. The workshop was attended by 29 participants from 11 institutions, including prosecution and criminal intelligence personnel from relevant government agencies.

Activity 2.3 (Completed): The Mesa Técnica continued to support investigations into suspected wildlife trafficking activities; a total of 6 investigations were supported during the reporting period. Investigations were undertaken collaboratively by Balam, EJV and WCS personnel as a first line of research; leads were then turned over to the relevant government institutions (CONAP, Public Prosecutor's Office - Ministerio Público/MP, Attorney General's Office - Procuraduría General de la Nación/PNG, and the investigative and natural resource departments of the National Police - DIGIC and DIPRONA). Investigative methods included monitoring of wildlife for sale on social networks and targeted patrols and checkpoints at strategic locations identified in the IWT Strategy. During the reporting period Balam conducted a total of 11 monitoring patrols and 12 control checkpoints along key wildlife trafficking routes in southern Petén, in collaboration with CONAP, DIPRONA and the Guatemalan armed forces. Searches at these checkpoints resulted in the seizure of 1.9 cubic meters of timber transported by truck, and three red-lored amazon parrots transported by bus. In the case of the timber seizure, the driver was detained and the case is ongoing. In the case of the parrot seizure, no arrests were made as none of the passengers admitted responsibility.

Activity 2.4 (Completed): EJV has continued providing technical accompaniment of CONAP, MP and PNG as they investigate suspects and obtain warrants for searches, and supporting prosecutors to strengthen legal cases against detainees. EJV supported the 6 investigations described under Activity 2.3 and provided legal accompaniment to an additional case involving an individual caught transporting two red-lored amazon parrots on a bus in December 2016; on 31st July 2017 the individual was successfully convicted for illegal wildlife trafficking and obliged to pay a fine of Q5000.

Output 3: Cross-border Collaboration

Activity 3.1 (Partially Completed): While the project's CSO partners in both Belize and Guatemala remain committed to promoting binational cooperation at the government level, progress continues to be limited by heightened political tensions between the two governments. Although contacts in both governments initially showed interest in a high-level political meeting that had been proposed by the project's CSO partners, it does not appear that such a meeting is likely to take place before the project's end due to continued resistance from the highest levels of government to engage in bilateral dialogue. However, given these difficult circumstances, securing participation of personnel from both governments in the CNP field visit in August 2017 (see Activity 2.2) was a significant achievement by project partners. *(Please consider the above information as a response to the query in the 2nd Annual Report review.)*

Activity 3.2 (Partially Completed):, Although one meeting of the MITA took place within the reporting period, participation by Belizean institutions has still not been possible as a result of the tensions mentioned above. However, outside the MITA, project partners from both countries participated in 4 bi/multilateral meetings during the reporting period on the subject of IWT, particularly relating to scarlet macaws: the workshop hosted by FCD in June 2017 to review and update the Chiquibul anti-poaching strategy (see Activity 1.1); the CNP field visit in August 2017 (see Activity 2.2); and two trinational workshops involving Mexican CSO Natura y

Ecosistemas Mexicanos A. C., one in Guatemala on 3rd-4th August 2017 and one in Mexico on 25th-27th September 2017. FCD and Balam continue to work closely together under a long-standing cooperation agreement towards conservation and rural development in the Maya Mountains-Chiquibul Adjacency Zone, while FCD, WCS and Natura y Ecosistemas Mexicanos A. C. continue to cooperate on scarlet macaw conservation under the trinational agreement signed in Year 2. All project partner CSOs are currently working together to develop a broader binational agreement at the civil society level that would represent a formal commitment towards combatting IWT in Belize and Guatemala and act as a foundation for further interinstitutional and cross-border collaboration.

Activity 3.3 (Completed): Updates on project advances have been provided to the UK Embassy in Guatemala by Balam and WCS, and to the UK High Commission Office in Belize by FCD, including copies of the second Annual Report.

Output 4: Sustainable Livelihoods

Activity 4.1 (Completed): Principal trafficking routes and target communities for investment (La Rejoja, San Marcos, Monte los Olivos and Las Brisas de Chiquibul) were identified in Year 1. In addition to these four priority communities, investment in alternative livelihood initiatives has been possible in a further 7 communities located along key trafficking routes in the Guatemalan adjacency zone, thanks to the expansion of the Seed Fund with contributions leveraged from other funding sources (totalling approx. USD , or USD excluding UK government funding sources).

Activity 4.2 (Completed): Viable alternative livelihood investments were identified by Balam in coordination with the Coordinadora de Asociaciones Campesinas Agropecuarias de Petén (COACAP) in Year 1.

Activity 4.3 (Completed): A strategy for the management and distribution of Seed Fund investments was developed by Balam and COACAP in consultation with relevant stakeholders in Year 1, and progress was presented to the MITA General Assembly and Governing Council at several meetings during Year 2.

Activity 4.4 (Completed): In Year 1, an agreement with regard to Seed Fund management was signed between Balam and COACAP. Agreements to formalise the conditions of Seed Fund investments and ensure that the beneficiaries recognise the objectives of investment, including reduction of IWT, were signed between COACAP and two of the beneficiary communities in Year 2.

Activity 4.5 (Completed): Balam conducted baseline surveys of attitudes towards wildlife trafficking and alternative livelihoods within a sample of beneficiary families in six of the beneficiary communities in Years 1 & 2. A follow-up survey will be conducted in the coming months to assess changes in community attitudes.

Activity 4.6 (Completed): Alternative livelihood projects supported by Seed Fund investments across all 11 beneficiary communities include 146 agroforestry plots, 188 kitchen gardens, 108 tilapia farms, 90 ponytail palm nurseries, 16 firewood-saving stoves, 14 xaté plantations, 5 broiler hen farms, 3 egg-laying hen farms, and 3 bakeries. These initiatives are currently benefiting a total of 269 households, with a total of 122 women participating in women's groups leading the management of community bakeries and hen farms.

Activity 4.7 (Pending): The evaluation will take place in the coming months.

Activity 4.8 (Partially Completed): Balam conducted baseline socioeconomic surveys within a sample of beneficiary families in six of the beneficiary communities in Years 1 & 2. A follow-up survey will be conducted in the coming months to assess socioeconomic changes.

Output 5: Greater Awareness

Activity 5.1 (Completed): Balam has developed a strategy for raising awareness about IWT among communities along key trafficking routes in southern Petén, and has implemented a radio outreach campaign with two radio spots broadcast each month on two different local radio stations (Radio Utunkaj in Q'eqch'í Maya language and Radio Felicidad in Spanish). During the reporting period Balam conducted a total of 30 radio interviews and 24 television interviews on multiple channels across Petén to raise awareness of a range of environmental issues, including the threat posed by IWT and the penalties for wildlife trafficking crimes.

Activity 5.2 (Completed): Outreach materials produced through the campaign developed by WCS in collaboration with CONAP (4000 posters, 3000 brochures, 5000 stickers and 350 t-shirts) have been distributed to schools and relevant government institutions in Petén and

Guatemala City, and were incorporated into several events held over the summer in La Aurora Zoo in Guatemala City as part of a campaign by the International Association of Zoos to raise awareness about IWT (<https://www.facebook.com/contratIES/>). Awareness-raising among government enforcement personnel was also a key objective of the capacity-building activities described under Activity 2.2. Broader media outreach by project partners is detailed under Activities 5.1 and 5.4.

Activity 5.3 (Partially Completed): The baseline awareness survey among relevant government personnel in Petén and Guatemala City was completed by WCS and EJF in Year 1. Balam conducted baseline awareness surveys among members of the MITA and among beneficiaries of Seed Fund investments in six communities within the Guatemalan Adjacency Zone in Years 1 & 2. Follow-up awareness surveys will be conducted in the coming months.

Activity 5.4 (Completed): Updates on project achievements, and links to relevant news items relating to IWT, have been shared on project partner websites and Facebook pages; see links listed below. The Facebook page launched in 2016 to promote the awareness-raising campaign gained an additional 34 followers during the reporting period, reaching 347 followers, with an average of 20 likes per post (<https://www.facebook.com/noaltraficodevidasilvestre/>).

Activity 5.5 (In Progress): A draft White Paper is in progress with input from project partners.

Activity 5.6 (Completed): The project approach and key achievements to date were presented by WCS and FCD at a trinational scarlet macaw conservation workshop in Petén on 3rd August 2017, and by WCS and EJF during an international IWT enforcement workshop on 12th-14th September 2017 organised by WCS in Lima, Peru, involving government and civil society participants from 9 Latin American and Asian countries.

Publications in the national press:

<https://www.breakingbelizenews.com/2017/07/05/guatemalan-macaw-poachers-detained-chiquibul/>
<https://emisorasunidas.com/elarchivo/noticias/nacionales/capturan-a-cazadores-guatemaltecos-en-belice/>
<http://www.prensalibre.com/ciudades/guatemala/traficantes-de-especies-silvestres-acechan-a-quacamayas-y-loros>

Publications on project partner websites and Facebook pages:

<http://asociacionbalam.org.gt/visita-historica-de-presidente-de-guatemala-a-la-zona-de-adyacencia/>
<http://asociacionbalam.org.gt/secretario-general-de-la-oea-visita-la-zona-de-adyacencia-guatemala-belice/>
<https://www.facebook.com/conapgt/posts/1341453229236468>
<https://www.facebook.com/conapgt/posts/1417419418306515>
<https://www.facebook.com/conapgt/photos/a.486213728093760.1073741828.479226092125857/1393043737410750/?type=3&theater>
<https://www.facebook.com/conapgt/posts/1392959844085806>
<https://www.facebook.com/conapgt/photos/a.486213728093760.1073741828.479226092125857/1384413324940458/?type=3&theater>
<https://www.facebook.com/conapgt/photos/a.486213728093760.1073741828.479226092125857/1383361685045622/?type=3&theater>
<https://www.facebook.com/fcdbelize/photos/a.512039668866007.1073741827.264801210256522/1493575940712370/?type=3&theater>
<https://www.facebook.com/fcdbelize/photos/a.512039668866007.1073741827.264801210256522/1485498434853454/?type=3&theater>
<https://www.facebook.com/fcdbelize/photos/a.512039668866007.1073741827.264801210256522/1444858392250792/?type=3&theater>
<https://www.facebook.com/fcdbelize/posts/1439990832737548>
<https://www.facebook.com/fcdbelize/photos/a.512039668866007.1073741827.264801210256522/1434198246650140/?type=3&theater>
<https://www.facebook.com/fcdbelize/photos/a.512039668866007.1073741827.264801210256522/1510880378981926/?type=3&theater>
<https://www.facebook.com/fcdbelize/photos/a.512039668866007.1073741827.264801210256522/1572525099484120/?type=3&theater>
<https://www.facebook.com/fcdbelize/photos/a.512039668866007.1073741827.264801210256522/1528290523907578/?type=3&theater>
<https://www.facebook.com/fcdbelize/photos/a.512039668866007.1073741827.264801210256522/1519487674787863/?type=3&theater>
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=258960637842027&id=109654022772690
<https://www.facebook.com/109654022772690/photos/a.113552525716173.1073741828.109654022772690/257033808034710/?type=3&theater>
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=280819265656164&id=109654022772690
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=278754179196006&id=109654022772690
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=277378509333573&id=109654022772690
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=274187899652634&id=109654022772690
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=267959253608832&id=109654022772690
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=266171367120954&id=109654022772690
https://web.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=286074878463936&id=109654022772690
<https://www.facebook.com/240880799667402/photos/a.253451738410308.1073741828.240880799667402/310680396020775/?type=3&theater>
<https://www.facebook.com/240880799667402/photos/a.253451738410308.1073741828.240880799667402/292991831122965/?type=3&theater>

2a. 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.

No notable problems or unexpected developments have been encountered by the project over the last 6 months.

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: N/A

Formal change request submitted: N/A

Received confirmation of change acceptance N/A

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. 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. 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 rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget, so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary.

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.

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document. Additionally, if you were funded under R3 and asked to provide further information by your first half year report, please attach your response as a separate document.

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 Victoria Pinion 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 e.g. Subject: IWT001 Half Year Report.**