

## Illegal Wildlife Trade: Half Year Report

(due 31 October)

<b>Project Ref No.</b>	IWT-018
<b>Project Title</b>	Developing long-term law enforcement capacity to protect the Mali elephants
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Mali, Burkina Faso
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	The WILD Foundation
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	The Mali Government: Ministry of the Environment - Direction Nationale des Eaux et Forêts (DNEF).  The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).  The US Embassy to Mali.
<b>Project Leader</b>	Dr Susan Canney
<b>Report date and number (eg HYR1)</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2016; HYR2
<b>Project website</b>	<a href="http://www.wild.org/mali-elephants/">http://www.wild.org/mali-elephants/</a>

### 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).

The main activities during this reporting period (April – September) were as follows:

- Strengthening the capacity of DNEF anti-poaching rangers through advanced training sessions with specialist trainers.
- Securing increased capacity within the Malian government
- Ongoing support to community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) and elephant protection initiatives, including training workshops and incentives to promote monitoring and reporting of elephant movements and poaching-related activities.
- Engaging the Malian military to continue with patrols to deter and respond to elephant poaching and restore security in key areas of the elephant range.
- Re-installation and securing of the radio-communications system with support from a MINUSMA helicopter mission to transport technicians to the repeater sites.

#### **Progress and results:**

The two major achievements during the reporting period were:

- A reduction in elephant poaching
- The establishment of the leadership and structures required within DNEF to support the mobilisation of the ranger force and provide Mali with an on-going capacity to combat elephant poaching.

#### **Reduction in elephant poaching**

In the first half of 2016, and particularly during this reporting period (April – September), there has been a reduction in the rate of elephant poaching. Nine elephants were killed by poachers between April and September. This can be compared to the same period in 2015 when 41

elephants were killed by poachers. The total number of elephants killed between January and September 2016 was 25, compared to 64 in the same period in 2015.

This reduction is partly due to a combination of ongoing community work, and engaging the Malian military to conduct anti-poaching patrols while the ranger force is being trained and mobilised. The community work is vital to maintain community engagement and solidarity in fighting elephant poaching. The project has brokered a way for information about elephant poaching to be passed on to the military. The continued expansion of CBNRM initiatives is vital for demonstrating the benefits of elephant conservation through sustainable resource management both for people (through improved livelihoods and social cohesion) and elephants (through habitat protection and restoration). The recent launch of initiatives aimed at generating additional income for communities (partially funded by the Darwin Initiative), such as the harvesting of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) by women's associations, has stimulated great interest among the communities and has maintained widespread engagement in CBNRM and elephant protection. It is also vital in providing a role for young men as 'eco-guardians' who might otherwise be tempted to be poachers or join the jihadists.

The community eco-guardians continue to form the basis of the anti-poaching strategy by monitoring the movements of the elephants as they migrate across their vast range, and provide vital intelligence about any poaching activity, often acting as guides during anti-poaching patrols. In addition to the training workshops for eco-guardians, meetings were held with communities in the north of the elephant range (Inadiatafane) in June and in the south (Mondoro) in May and September to inform local people about the deployment of the anti-poaching rangers and the support of the Malian military in protecting the elephants and restoring security. The meetings also provided a platform for community leaders to publically voice their ongoing support for the project and denounce the killing of elephants.

### **Capacity building within DNEF**

The process of mobilising the anti-poaching foresters has been a significant learning experience for DNEF at national, regional and local levels as well as for the Ministry.

The training and deployment of the anti-poaching rangers had been brought to a stand-still by the leadership of DNEF, as reported previously. The training sessions of the anti-poaching rangers organised by the project provided the testing round to clearly flag up the deficiencies in the government response and enable these to be rectified. The ranger force has been reformed, the leadership of both the ranger force and the DNEF has been changed, and the structures are in place to support the ongoing training. The experience of the first set of training sessions provided the tangible evidence of what was not working and why, and in September a new Minister, Secretary General and Director of DNEF were announced, and were keen to be informed about the current situation, and what was required. A series of intense meetings culminated in a workshop presided over by the Minister to ensure that everyone was aware of the situation and the way forward.

The recruitment of Alassane Maiga by the project in January has been invaluable in working with the DNEF and the Ministry to ensure progress given the challenging circumstances. He was a previous Director of DNEF and is highly respected.

### **Training the anti-poaching ranger force**

In April a needs assessment of ranger competence and the anti-poaching strategy as a whole was completed by Rory Young of Chengeta Wildlife. Subsequently, a core unit of 15 of the most capable DNEF rangers was selected for advanced anti-poaching training led by Rory Young and other specialist trainers during three 3-week sessions. Throughout all training activities an emphasis has been placed upon the importance of working with local communities sensitively and effectively, and the importance of gathering, analysing and acting upon intelligence provided by the network of community eco-guardians. Additional training sessions are planned at regular intervals and will include training in human rights given by MINUSMA.

Due to the increased frequency of armed attacks across the elephant range since the start of

the year, the support of the security forces (Malian military and MINUSMA) during anti-poaching operations remains essential. The head of the Malian Army, General Didier Dacko, has recently confirmed his commitment to the anti-poaching strategy.

### **Radio-communications system**

This is still not operational due to the difficulties reported previously. In April a MINUSMA helicopter operation transported specialist technicians from Kinetic 6 to the repeater sites on the escarpments to establish the microwave link between the two repeater masts. Unfortunately the strict time constraints required by MINUSMA meant there was not sufficient time to establish the link and test the system during the prescribed flight plan and the system subsequently suffered from power failure. It is now a priority to reinstate the radio-communications system to full working order and a follow-up mission is scheduled for November 2016.

The following activities from the project timetable have been completed or have commenced and are ongoing:

#### **Output 1: DNEF field foresters able to work with local community brigades to mount anti-poaching patrols, respond to poaching incidences, collect and report required evidence.**

Activity 1.1 Construction, equipment and establishment of 10 additional forester posts. ***The security situation is such that these cannot be used and the foresters are stationed next to military bases. Additional funds have been secured from MINUSMA for their reinforcement.***

Activity 1.2 Deployment of 2 vehicles plus protocols of use and responsibility, under the control of the project's field manager working in conjunction with the chefs de service. ***Vehicles procured and in place.***

Activity 1.3 Installation of a military state-of-the-art secured radio-communications system in the most vulnerable parts of the elephant range. ***Unfortunately the 1 day helicopter mission to drop the two technicians at the repeater sites to establish the microwave connection resulted in neither repeaters working as the works took longer than expected and the technicians ran out of time. Another 2-day mission is being planned for November 2016.***

Activity 1.4 Training course and field visit to Nazinga Game Ranch in Burkina Faso for field foresters. ***Already completed***

Activity 1.5 Training of field foresters in working with local communities as part of community activities and ongoing monitoring of performance. ***Ongoing.***

#### **Output 2: DNEF at commune, cercle and regional levels able to support ground operations, deliver effective anti-poaching and trafficking operations, collect and keep required data.**

***The process of mobilising the anti-poaching foresters has been a significant learning experience for DNEF at National, regional and local levels as well as for the Ministry. The training sessions of the anti-poaching rangers provided the testing round to clearly flag up the deficiencies in the government response and enable these to be rectified. The ranger force has been reformed, leadership has been changed, and the structures are in place to support the ongoing training.***

Activity 2.2 Ongoing monitoring of performance to assess take-up and identify further training needs. ***Ongoing.***

#### **Output 3: Effective forester presence throughout the elephant range working in concert with homologues in Burkina Faso.**

Activity 3.1 Meeting, training course and exchange to establish community-forester anti-poaching systems with cross-border co-operation and integration of poaching response. ***Initial***

meetings held in previous reporting periods have *established the systems and relationships required for ongoing co-ordination of activities.*

Activity 3.2 Follow-up meetings to assess progress, learn lessons. **Ongoing.**

**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.**

- Although there has been an increase in armed attacks against Malian military, government, UN, NGO and civilian personnel and equipment in 2016. The MEP field team remains fully operational, a testament to their commitment and skill, and closely monitors the situation on the ground.
- The lack of leadership at the top of DNEF has been an enormous problem and hamstrung the deployment of the ranger force, however as described above, the evaluation report of the training enabled an intense learning process for the government and together with the replacement of the Minister led to the replacement of the Director of DNEF and a process of constituting the structures required.
- The delayed release of funds for this grant and the new Darwin Initiative grant unfortunately coincided with substantial delays by many months in the release of funds from 3 of the project's other major funding partners (all UN agencies): the UN Trust Fund (MINUSMA); UNEP's African Elephant Fund and UNEP's CITES-MIKE. This unfortunate coincidence caused huge problems.

**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: Yes

Formal change request submitted: Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes

**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?**

Please no more delays in the disbursement of funds if at all possible!

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.