



Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Half Year Report



(due 31st October 2017)

Project reference:	IWT-018
Project title:	Developing long-term law enforcement capacity to protect the Mali elephants
Country(ies):	Mali, Burkina Faso
Lead organisation:	The WILD Foundation
Collaborator(s):	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.
Project leader:	Dr Susan Canney
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1):	31 st October 2017, HYR3
Project website:	http://www.wild.org/mali-elephants/

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

- Strengthening the capacity of the anti-poaching unit through advanced in-operations training sessions with specialist trainers.
- Ongoing augmentation of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) and elephant monitoring initiatives.

Progress and results:

Major achievements:

- Zero elephant poaching incidents since the APU became fully operational in February 2017 – the longest period without poaching since 2013.
- A multi-agency anti-poaching protocol was finalized and signed in June 2017.
- Increased capacity for detection of ivory, weapons and other contraband after the deployment of three sniffer dogs and training of handlers.
- Extension of CBNRM initiatives to additional communities in high-risk areas.

Reduction in elephant poaching.

In the first nine months of 2017 there has been a significant reduction in the rate of elephant poaching, with no elephants killed since the APU became fully operational in February. After nine elephants were killed by poachers in early January, no incidents were recorded in the following eight months. This represents an 86% reduction compared to the same period in 2015 when 64 elephants were killed, and a 64% reduction compared to the same period in 2016. This is a major step towards eliminating elephant poaching in the Gourma and is a remarkable

achievement given the deteriorating security situation, particularly in the Mali-Burkina Faso cross-border region (see section 2a). It will be essential to maintain this positive momentum throughout the next reporting period and prevent any escalation in poaching activity as was witnessed between October 2016 and January 2017 when 35 elephants were poached.

Based on reports from local community members the reduction in poaching is largely due to the increasing awareness that the APU is able to conduct proactive and reactive missions throughout the elephant range, including the most insecure and inaccessible areas. Their presence has been welcomed by many communities that have not received any government assistance for extended periods, and the distribution of medical supplies and treatment has proved an effective way to interact with and support the most vulnerable people. Ongoing community work is vital to maintain community engagement and solidarity in fighting elephant poaching, and in recent months the community eco-guardians in the areas most at risk of poaching in the south-east of the elephant range have been motivated to intensify their monitoring and reporting activities. This continues to form the basis of the anti-poaching strategy and provides a respected role for young men who might otherwise be tempted to assist poachers or join the armed groups. Demonstrating the benefits of CBNRM lays the foundations for community support for the protection of the elephants and their habitats, and between April and September commune-wide initiatives were launched to reduce unsustainable tree cutting in six communes and income-generating initiatives were extended to additional communities (partially supported by Darwin Initiative funds).

Increasing the capacity of the anti-poaching unit.

The multi-agency (DNEF, FAMA, MINUSMA and WILD Foundation) anti-poaching strategy was finalized and signed in May 2017, securing the commitment of all partners until 2021. Three advanced in-operations training and mentoring sessions for the 36-man APU (lasting a total of 45 days) were completed by Chengeta Wildlife trainers between April and September 2017. During these sessions proactive missions to monitor elephants (based on eco-guardian reports of their movements) and deter poachers were completed across the elephant range, with the APU using temporary overnight camps to avoid detection and ambush. The capacity of the APU to detect ivory, weapons and other contraband was increased with the deployment of three sniffer dogs and the training of handlers in partnership with Canis Global Detection (Netherlands). In July the APU successfully tested a Cybertracker database which enabled them to collect and transmit patrol data via GPS-capable smartphones, however there is resistance to its use by the APU's leader who is concerned it may be a security threat. It is also difficult to get consistent reporting through the filling in of paper forms. The project will continue to try to negotiate to obtain monitoring information.

Radio-communications system.

The radio-communications system remains non-functional due to ongoing issues with the power supply. Initially it was planned that Malian technicians would complete additional training to repair and maintain the existing system, however a decrease in security has meant that a new plan has been devised to dismantle the repeaters until security improves, and to deploy handheld satellite radios in the interim, and is currently under investigation with an interested donor.

The following activities from the project timetable have been completed or have commenced and are ongoing (please refer to change request submitted on 19/10/17 and associated modified log-frame):

Output 1: Anti-poaching rangers are 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 means that the APU uses temporary camps to avoid ambush. When not on active operations the APU is based adjacent to military bases. When security improves the forester posts will be reinforced (using MINUSMA funds) and reoccupied.***

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, protocols completed and implemented.

Activity 1.3. Installation of a military state-of-the-art secured radio-communications system in the most vulnerable parts of the elephant range. ***Refer to text above.***

Activity 1.4. Training course and field visit to Nazinga Game Ranch in Burkina Faso for field foresters. ***Completed in March 2016.***

Activity 1.5. Training of field foresters in working with local communities as part of community activities and ongoing monitoring of performance. ***Ongoing as part of the anti-poaching unit's in-operations training.***

Activity 1.6. Subsequent training courses in 2016 and 2017 based on needs assessed through ongoing monitoring of performance. ***Ongoing as part of the anti-poaching unit's in-operations training and assessment by Chengeta Wildlife trainers and other partners. Four additional 2-week in-operations training sessions are expected by end of IWT-018 in March 2018.***

Activity 1.7. Two large community meetings (one for each cercle) of all the mayors, security forces, local government and administration to gather and share information on the poaching issue, create community solidarity around the poaching issue and make a public declaration that will be disseminated locally and by national media. ***Completed in November 2015.***

Output 2: Effective anti-poaching ranger presence throughout the elephant range working in concert with homologues in Burkina Faso.

Activity 2.1. Meeting, training course and exchange to establish community-forester anti-poaching systems with cross-border co-operation and integration of poaching response. ***Meetings held in previous reporting periods have established the systems and relationships required for ongoing co-ordination of activities.***

Activity 2.2. Follow-up meetings to assess progress, learn lessons. ***Ongoing.***

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.

Insecurity and armed conflict have continued to increase across the elephant range, particularly in the Mali-Burkina Faso cross-border region in the south-east. This is thought to be linked to the presence of jihadists and other armed groups that have exploited the continued absence of government to enforce their own version of law and order. Continued widespread theft and banditry might create opportunities for these groups to gain traction, and this is being closely monitored by the MEP field team. Despite the insecurity, the MEP field team and APU remain fully operational. The skills acquired by the APU during their advanced in-operations training were demonstrated at the end of September when they successfully repelled an aggressive ambush by an armed group near the Mali-Burkina Faso border. Although three members of the APU were injured, the chief anti-poaching instructor remarked that, "...every man in the brigade [APU] had reacted to the ambush in a most courageous and professional manner..... due to the right TTPs [Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures] and the brigade putting them into practice." The three wounded men are recovering well.

Radio-communications system - please refer to text above.

Aerial surveillance – The light aircraft funded by MINUSMA is ready for deployment to support anti-poaching operations, and discussions are almost concluded with the Malian Armée de l'Air for its operation.

None of these issues will affect the existing budget or timetable.

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 – on 17/10/17
Received confirmation of change acceptance	Yes – in process

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.

N/A

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

A change request and modified log-frame (attached) were submitted on 17/10/17 in response to the reviewer's comments on the 2016-17 Annual Review:

"If the project continues to experience difficulties under Output 2, the project should consider a revision to its M&E approach, logframe and indicators to reflect this change in the project."

The change request and modified log-frame have followed additional suggestions by the reviewer to rectify baselines and indicator terminology to reflect project objectives and activities more accurately.

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.**