# Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Half Year Report

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| **Project reference:** | IWT183 |
| **Project title:** | Combatting IWT in Cameroon through improved law enforcement and community empowerment. |
| **Country(ies):** | Cameroon |
| **Lead organisation:** | Zoological Society of London |
| **Collaborator(s):** | Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife(MINFOF) Cameroon, University College London, |
| **Project leader:** | Paul De Ornellas |
| **Report date and number (e.g. HYR1):** | 31 October, 2017, (HYR2) |
| **Project website/** | http://www.zsl.org/conservation/regions/africa/dja-conservation-complex |

**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).**

**Output 1. Communities empowered and actively engaged in monitoring and management of natural resources, incentivised through reinforced local livelihoods:**

ZSL continues to consult with communities bordering the Dja Biosphere Reserve (DBR) to identify suitable and willing candidates to participate in project activities. In total, we are working with ten villages bordering the southern sector of the DBR. In this period, two new villages were added to the VSLA program, bringing the total to 8 villages. Eight additional communities were assessed for inclusion in the CSN/ExCiteS component with three of these being identified as suitable bringing the total involved in this component to 6. Two of the new villages (Odoumou, and Bemba II) are Baka, one (Mbouma) is Bantu. In summary, four villages have VSLAs and ExCiteS, two have Excites only, and four have a VSLA only. CSNs are active in 10 communities. The project will target 4 additional ExCiteS villages around Southern DBR and two additional VSLAs in the next period (Activity 1.1). The second socioeconomic and perception surveys are planned for November. The first survey data has been analysed (Activity 1.2). Three of the six ExCiteS communities along the southern boundary of the DBR are now actively reporting through the ExCiteS software. The remaining 3 will commence reporting in October. These reports provide direct evidence of wildlife crime, including reports of poacher's camps, killed animals, and weapons. Whilst effective law enforcement response remains a challenge, the approach has been positively received by the communities who have given much positive feedback and a sense of empowerment in being able to record and report illegal activities taking place (Activity 1.4). Reports are taken autonomously and transmitted automatically through both SMS and data connection (Activity 1.5). The two new villages trained in VSLA tools during September are Adjab and Ando'o, both Baka communities located on the southern Djoum-Mintom highway. One of them has started a savings program and the other will start in October (Activity 1.6). Monthly follow-up visits are being carried out. Presently, among the 8 VSLA groups, 4 are Baka and are 4 Bantu with a total of 194 members (101 women; 52.1%). The total saving amount to date is FCFA, with FCFA of loans. The meetings are held either weekly or every 2 weeks and the VSLA share varies from FCFA to FCFA (Activity 1.7). Six of the VSLAs are planning to share out the savings in December to complete one cycle (Activity 1.7). A baseline survey on non-timber forest products (NTFP) production in 6 target communities has been carried out at the end of which three main products were identified by communities to be the focus of the value chain enhancement: moabi, bush mango, and djangsang (Activity 1.8). The NTFP value chain enhancement has been introduced in training sessions and activities organized in collaboration with the NGO Tropical Forests and Rural Development (TFRD) into 4 modules: (1) administration and finances; (2) 1st transformation steps (from gathering, cleaning, and storing the fruits and processing into to the raw products); (3) experience sharing trip and (4) grouped sales. Delivery of module 1 took place in April and covered: (a) financial administration, (b) good governance principles, (c) steps in group formation and (d) system of representation in groups with the participation of 143 people (Activity 1.9). The training session on module 2 took place in June and was aimed at developing the 1st transformation steps (from gathering of the fallen fruits to the first drying of the almonds). This involved a total of 159 people (84 women, 52.8%) in all the 6 communities. The third part of the training was organized as an 'experience sharing trip' in June to Yaounde and Kabilon II in northern Dja, with 2 members from each of the 6 communities (6 men and 6 women). The objectives of the training were (1) revise the different steps of 1st transformation and apply them; (2) make the link between the 1st transformation and the 2nd transformation, to understand the importance of obtaining the best quality products; (3) share experience with existing groups in the Northern Dja on NTFP valorisation success stories; and (4) make the link between NTFP valorisation and biodiversity conservation (Activity 1.9). The next steps for the NTFP valorisation will be the practical session on 1st transformation

(during the effective production period) and the organisation of grouped sales (Activity 1.10). A multi-stakeholder platform was held in Abong Mbang in October (Activity 1.11).

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**Output 2. Land managers (Conservation Service and timber company staff) have increased capacity to effectively protect wildlife:**

ZSL and MINFOF conducted two Dja Biosphere Reserve (DBR) SMART implementation evaluations (Activity 2.1). We carried out an evaluation of patrol deployment effectiveness to respond to intelligence or immediate threats and the results suggested that patrol teams need to be based closer to the Reserve for a quick and targeted response to an identified threat, but also as a deterrent (Activity 2.1). A patrol platform with basic patrol facilities to improve response is now being built along the Dja River and will allow the ecoguard teams to carry out more river patrols and be close to the park (not a day trip away at the nearest town of Djoum) for effective anti-poaching response (Activity 2.1). Following the ZSL-DBR SMART evaluation meetings, additional PDA and powerbanks were provided to DBR to ensure that teams continue to collect data even during very poor weather conditions. This will ensure each patrol team has 2 PDAs to ensure there are always replacements available. During this reporting period, there was an internal redeployment within the DBR which resulted in the appointment of a new head of the DBR Southern Sector. As a result we have provided an intense 2 days SMART training followed by regular remote coaching to make sure the data collection, cleaning and sharing protocol are respected for effective adaptive patrol management (Activity 2.2). Patrols continued successfully in the DBR including the Southern Sector. With the initiation of a results-based incentive scheme, eco-guards have seized 1 firearms, 11 live ammunitions, arrested 3 poachers (Activity 2.2). In April, during a five day mission in SFID-Djoum site, we upgraded SMART software to SMART 4.1.0 version, and trained the wildlife team chief on queries (Activity 2.2). During the April mission at SFID-Djoum logging concessions, we discussed the renewal of the MoU between SFID-Djoum and MINFOF's DBR Southern Antenna for them to conduct monthly anti-poaching missions inside their forests. Under Cameroon forestry law, only the forestry administration has the mandate to conduct anti-poaching missions. Patrols have seized 7 firearms, 24 ammunitions, 155 pieces/entire of bushmeat, and 93 snares cables. Over the past six months they have carried out patrols at an average of 18 days per month (Activity 2.4). Following the initial SMART setup at both manager and field levels, refresher training and remote support have been ongoing to ensure that all the staff are capable of effectively patrolling according to agreed protocols. ZSL is providing patrol mobilisation funds and ensures patrols are carried out in the DBR based on the initial agreed plan (targets, areas to cover, number of days, etc.). So far, we have organized in two evaluation meetings (April & September 2017) to discuss patrol performance and approaches and to adapt patrol strategy accordingly (Activity 2.4).

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**Output 3. Enforcement agents, prosecutors and court house staff trained and supported in the implementation of laws relating to wildlife crime:**

ZSL works with and consults MINFOF and other law enforcement agencies in order to create bespoke training input to frontline law enforcement officials, which is subject to pre-training assessment with the relevant agencies or units by ZSL Law Enforcement Advisor. Often, this reveals lack of understanding and knowledge in very basic tenets of law enforcement skills. Thus, any support, guidance or training is adapted and made bespoke to address the needs, especially around essential policing and evidence gathering attributes (Activity 3.1). In May 2017, as part of this commitment, we delivered a tactical patrolling and arrest course for 14 MINFOF agents operating in the Dja, covering essential bushcraft and patrolling skills (Activity 3.2). ZSL delivered Basic Law Enforcement Training in October 2017 to 12 frontline MINFOF agents comprising essential policing skills human rights and evidence gathering and maintenance. (Activity 3.2). All training conducted by ZSL requires students to compile feedback (which is stored centrally for perusal) which is then used to modify or update training processes and materials as necessary (Activity 3.3). Already, the capacity to swiftly assess training needs has led to the planning of the training of a further 24 MINFOF staff in the first half of 2018 in Basic Law Enforcement techniques (Activity 3.4). Court cases and processes in Cameroon are beset with incompetence, interminable bureaucracy and overt corruption, which makes ongoing support and follow up extremely difficult. In addition, there is no centralised database of court records or proceedings. In order to mitigate against this, ZSL have streamlined their support process for ongoing prosecutions, enabling much more transparency to be adhered to in a smaller number of select cases, deemed to be of institutional importance. These cases are: 1) a firearms seizure where 2 individuals were arrested and are currently appearing before courts; 2) an intelligence–led operation (initiated by ZSL) where a trafficker dealing in live chimps and pangolin scales was arrested and is currently going through the courts; 3) violence and attempted murder of MINFOF agents, where several individuals have been arrested and are going through the court process relating to shots being fired at MINFOF agents conducting seizures and patrols in the Dja area (Activity 3.5).

**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.**

**Community engagement**: Motivating communities through remunerations to provide information on wildlife crime

while ensuring the validity of the data remains a challenge. We continue to refine the process in order to ensure that the information provided is actionable before remuneration is paid. Language has been a barrier in the NTFP value chain trainings, but the use of local translators has helped to break the barrier and improve understanding of the topics. The VSLA approach and methodology were novel to the indigenous Baka communities and these had to evolve slowly and the rules were gradually adapted to their social context to facilitate their participation. The training of resource persons in each group for VSLA monitoring and phone follow-ups helped to ensure that things were progressing well.

**Site-based protection:** There has been a large turnover of protected area staff in the landscape with 49 ecoguards fully-trained in SMART transferred out of the Dja Reserve and 51 newly appointed ones brought in. This means we will need to retrain people as soon as possible to keep the momentum going.

**Law Enforcement challenges:** Corrupt officials often hamper IWT investigations in Cameroon. This leads to enforcement officials (including front-line agents/officers) becoming quickly demoralised and disheartened. A somewhat nonchalant and lackadaisical attitude often pervades the agencies of law and order which is difficult to counter. An example being the anti-smuggling unit at Cameroons international airports were suspended from duty. Anecdotal information from reliable external law enforcement sources suggest that it was because they were hampering the illegal trafficking activities of well-connected politicians and other individuals.

| **2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?** |
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| Discussed with LTS: | No |
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| Formal change request submitted: | No |
| Received confirmation of change acceptance | No |

| **3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?** |
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| **Yes** ☐  **No** x   Estimated underspend:   £ |

| **3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully.** |
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| **4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to IWT challenge Fund management, monitoring, or financial procedures?** |
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| 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.**