



Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Half Year Report



(due 31st October 2017)

Project reference:	IWT035
Project title:	Sustainability Through Ecotourism: Improving Livelihoods and Disrupting Wildlife Trade, Cambodia
Country(ies):	Cambodia
Lead organisation:	Wildlife Alliance
Collaborator(s):	Chi Phat and Stung Areng Community Based Ecotourism Associations, Cambodian Ministry of the Environment
Project leader:	Sophany Touch (gray@wildlifealliance.org)
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1):	31 st October 2017, (HYR1)
Project website/blog/social media etc:	https://www.facebook.com/arengecotourism/ https://www.wildlifealliance.org/livelihoods/

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).

All project activities are on-track and major progress was made during the reporting period on developing the governance structures and increasing community capacity for the implementation of effective Community Based Ecotourism (CBET) in the Areng Valley. A trial opening between June and September 2007 saw approximately 200 Cambodian and 30 international tourists visiting the site and generated more than \$ for CBET service providers and \$ for CBET management costs. Full opening is on track for mid-2018. Below we summarise key achievements and progress across specific project Outputs.

Output 1

The CBET Management committee was established following elections whilst by-laws and CBET benefit sharing mechanisms were agreed upon (Activities 1.1, 1.2, 1.3). The management committee comprises 15 members (5 female) all of whom are ethnic Chong. In August the Stung Areng Community Based Ecotourism Association was legally registered as an association by the Cambodian Ministry of the Interior (Activity 1.4). The Appreciative Participatory Planning in Action (APPA) methodology was implemented with community members to identify tourist attractions and compile stories (Activity 1.5). A total of 65 natural and cultural attractions were identified including waterfalls, scenic viewpoints, wildlife viewing areas, and ancient burial sites. These are in the process of being formally mapped and described (Activity 1.6, 1.7). 100 CBET service providers (primarily guides and motorbike taxi drivers) have been trained in English by Cambodian university students and the CBET Management committee trained on leadership and management skills and computer literacy by Wildlife Alliance staff (Activity 1.9). Finally nine of the target 25 community homestays have been improved and fitted out to receive tourists (Activity 1.10). Activities 1.5 –1.10 will be continued during the coming six-months.



Election of the CBET Management Committee and a scenic viewpoint across the Areng Valley identified during the APPA process.

Output 2

A Facebook page for Strung Areng Community Based Ecotourism (<https://www.facebook.com/arengecotourism/>) has been created (Activity 2.2). As per the project timetable activities under this Output will be accelerated in Year 2 of the project.

Output 3

Activities under this project Output will commence in November 2017. However 80 local women from four villages have already self-selected as members of the Women's Credit and Saving Groups (Activity 3.1).

Output 4

Law enforcement patrols by the Cambodian Ministry of Environment, with technical and logistical support and management from Wildlife Alliance, were undertaken throughout the reporting period within Southern Cardamom National Park (Activity 4.1). A total of 225 patrols, covering 9,255-km, together with 48 night ambushes on roads resulted in 1,044 animal snares being removed, 23 chainsaws and 4 motorbikes confiscated, and 15 legal cases submitted to the provincial court.

Social surveys were also conducted, under the project's Monitoring and Evaluation component, to establish pre-project baselines for the numbers of households in the Areng Valley involved in commercial poaching and trade (Project Outcome Indicator 0.4, Activity 4.2). Based on advice from the Interdisciplinary Center for Conservation Science (<https://www.iccs.org.uk/>) the Unmatched Count Technique (UCT) methodology was used to assess prevalence of illegal activity. This methodology safeguards interviewees against giving self-incriminating answers regarding illegal activity and ensures anonymity of respondents. A total of 145 villagers were interviewed in July 2017 (53% males; mean age 39.8; range 19-72; mean household members 4.5: range 1-15; 42% CBET service providers). However due to the combination of the relatively low sample size and evidence of biased responses (even with the robust methodology used), likely due to the known association between Wildlife Alliance and robust law enforcement, we are not confident in the results representing a robust pre-project baseline of illicit activity levels. However data was also collected on perceived importance of illegal hunting and wildlife trade as a livelihood activity within each village in comparison with eight other activities. **Illegal wildlife trade was ranked as the 5th (\pm SD 2.8) most important source of village level income** (behind the sale of two Non Timber Forest Products, fish, and illegally harvested timber). **Income from Community Based Ecotourism was ranked as the 8th (\pm SD 2.7) most important income source.** The project proposes to use changes in these ranks as indicators of behavior change in the Areng Valley.

Output 5

Activities under this output will commence in Year 2 of the project.

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.

The project has not experienced any notable problems during the reporting period which we believe are likely to significantly impact project delivery, budget, or timetable.

As described above we encountered some issues in robustly developing baselines for levels of illegal hunting and poaching despite using a methodology (the Unmatched Count Technique) recommended by social scientists' and conservation biologists. A **lesson learnt** is that such a methodology likely needs a larger sample size (and thus is not applicable to relatively small communities such as the Areng Valley) and for the interviewers to not be associated in any way with a conservation NGO (which is also difficult in remote communities where permission for all work needs to be granted by village chiefs and district officials). However we believe the slightly revised indicators (detailed earlier) are likely to be suitable for the project.

An additional **initial challenge** for project development was obtaining the trust of the local community members as there was perception that the project could be a plot to take land from communities and totally prohibit them from using the forest. However through a clear and transparent process community trust was gained. Having Wildlife Alliance community liaison staff members based permanently and **living in** the community strongly helped with this and is recommended for similar projects.

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 No

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?

Notwithstanding any possible Brexit-induced devaluation of the Pound we have no issues we wish to raise and we thank DEFRA and the IWT Challenge Fund for your support for this project.

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.**