



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

(due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018)

<b>Project reference:</b>	IWT-035
<b>Project title:</b>	Sustainability through ecotourism: improving livelihoods and disrupting wildlife trade, Cambodia
<b>Country(ies):</b>	Cambodia
<b>Lead organisation:</b>	Wildlife Alliance
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Areng Valley and Chi Phat Community Based Ecotourism Associations / Department of Terrestrial Protected Areas, Ministry of the Environment, Royal Government of Cambodia
<b>Project leader:</b>	Sophany Touch
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1):</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2018, (HYR2)
<b>Project website/blog/social media:</b>	<a href="http://www.wildlifealliance.org">www.wildlifealliance.org</a> / @WildlifeRescue

### 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).

We have made substantial progress in the past six months (April to September 2018) against all project outputs and indicators and we feel that our activities are on-track to deliver our overall conservation and livelihood objectives. In the past six months we have begun activities under Project Output 3 (supporting micro-finance) and Output 5 (leveraging lessons learnt from the project for influencing best community-based ecotourism practices regionally). As reported in our first annual progress report we have completed the majority of activities under Output 1 (setting up transparent and bottom-up structures for community-based ecotourism operations) but are continuing with on-the-job training and capacity building. As such activities during this reporting period focussed on the implementation and promotion of the Areng Valley Community Based Ecotourism (CBET) (Output 2), the establishment of community micro-finance (Output 3), and ongoing law enforcement patrolling by government rangers supported by Wildlife Alliance and this project (Output 4). Below we detail progress against the indicators and activities across each Project Output between April and September 2018.

#### **Output 1: Management structures, capacities, and infrastructure within communities in the Areng Valley are sufficient for successful establishment of Community Based Ecotourism (CBET).**

As described in earlier reports the majority of the activities and results of this Output have been completed and action during this reporting period focussed on limited additional training of community service providers and equipping of ecotourism facilities. By the end of September, a total of 22

community homestays are fully-equipped and operational ([Activity 1.10](#); [Indicator 1.4](#)) whilst during the reporting period an additional 30 community members, all women, were trained on cooking and hospitality ([Activity 1.9](#); [Indicator 1.3](#)).



*Community service providers are trained in cooking by a chef from a Phnom Penh restaurant*

### **Output 2: CBET functions effectively within the Areng Valley and generates annual income increases to CBET members**

During the reporting period the project focussed on promoting the Areng Valley CBET through outreach with Cambodian tour operators ([Activity 2.1](#)). Members of the CBET Association attended the Travel Fair of the Cambodian Association of Tour Agents in the capital Phnom Penh and distributed 500 leaflets promoting the Areng Valley and its unique tourist attractions. Following the event business contracts were signed with five tour operators ([Indicator 2.2](#); January 2020 target = 10). The project also collaborated with the Cambodian Ministry of Tourism to make two promotional videos on the natural attractions of the Areng Valley and the tourism services provided. As part of the ongoing mentoring of key community members, the chief of the CBET Association attended four national workshops on ecotourism development and marketing ([Activity 2.3](#)).

Between April and September, a total of 319 tourists visited the Areng Valley CBET ([Indicator 2.4](#)); the majority of these were Cambodian nationals (307) with only 12 international visitors (January 2020 target – 500 annually). However, this reporting period coincided with the off-season for international tourism to Cambodia (which peaks between December and March) and we are confident that, with further strong marketing and links with operators, the indicator is achievable. The limited number of visitors meant that the total income generated by CBET during this reporting period ([Indicator 2.1](#)) was also limited: US\$ (January 2020 target US\$ annually).

### **Output 3: Women's Credit and Savings Groups established in 8 villages in the Areng Valley and supporting at least 200 microenterprises per year**

Activities under this Output, which had been a little delayed due to staffing issues, commenced during this reporting period and good progress was made towards our goals. Following an awareness raising meeting which was attended by 100 CBET service members and 30 local government officials ([Activity 3.1](#)) Credit and Savings Groups were established in six villages in the Areng Valley ([Activity 3.1](#)). This is lower than the indicator of groups in eight villages as, due to small populations and social links, we

combined two villages (Toapklei and Samroang) together to form a single group whilst an additional village, Koh the most accessible in the valley, had an existing micro-finance group established by the developmental organization CEDAC (the Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture).

A total of 73 villagers (between 11 and 16 per village) self-selected to join the Credit and Savings Groups and received training on financial literacy ([Activity 3.2](#)). The by-laws, regulations, and guidelines for each group were also developed and approved ([Activity 3.3](#)). Whilst we are pleased that this aspect of the project has started we have not yet achieved the 2018 targets of 200 members ([Indicator 3.1](#)) and 100 female trainees ([Indicator 3.3](#)).



*The project discusses the Credit and Saving Group with a local woman in her home (left) and discussion and drafting of Saving Group by-laws (right).*

#### **Output 4: Multi-agency anti-poaching law enforcement teams patrol minimum of 15 days per month reducing threats to commercially hunted mammal species**

Law enforcement patrolling from the Wildlife Alliance ranger station in the Areng Valley continued during this period with 237 patrols completed between April and September. This exceeds our target of 15 multi-day law enforcement patrols conducted monthly ([Indicator 4.1](#)). The ranger patrols covered 9,675-km and resulted in the removal and destruction of 748 hunting snares and 12 poaching and logging camps. A total of 26 chainsaws, 2 home-made guns, 2 trucks, and 1 motorbike were confiscated whilst 23 live animals were rescued from wildlife traders. These were safely released into the forests of the Areng Valley. As a result of the patrol team's enforcement activities four legal cases against wildlife and forest criminals were submitted to the Koh Kong provincial court.





*Wildlife Alliance rangers with rope-snares (left) and a chain-saw and home-made gun (right) confiscated during law enforcement patrols.*

**Output 5: Model of Community Based Ecotourism in the Cardamom Rainforest Landscape is regarded as a global best practice methodology for developing sustainable livelihoods for communities impacted by the Illegal Wildlife Trade**

Activities under this Output commenced during the reporting period with ten students from Phnom Penh’s prestigious Norton University visiting the Areng Valley to study, and report upon, a successful community based ecotourism initiative ([Activity 5.3](#)).

**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.**

Whilst we are generally pleased with the progress of the project and believe it is delivering tangible benefits to conservation and local communities we note we are a little behind on some of the quantitative project indicators. This does, however, highlight the quality and transparency of our monitoring and evaluation and allows us to consider possible adaptive management measures.

Income to CBET service providers remains relatively low (<\$per year) largely due to few international visitors. Whilst we are confident that this will increase (due to activities under Output 2 of the project) this has created some issues within the community with two members of the CBET Association resigning due to the limited profits thus far. A lesson learnt is that it is critical to manage expectations – this is particularly the case given the proximity of Areng Valley to Wildlife Alliance’s successful and pioneering CBET project in Chi Phat which generates >\$ per year for community members - however this took 10 years to achieve and Areng Valley CBET has been open for less than 12-months. The relatively high number of local Cambodian visitors is, however, positive for future sustainability and for

environmental education.

The Credit and Savings Groups and the groups had fewer members than predicted which means that the 2018 indicators under Output 3 have not been met. There remain (as discussed in previous reports) some suspicions in some communities regarding micro-finance and loans particularly as previous projects in the region, not so locally rooted and created by developmental organisations, have failed. However, we hope that success of the six groups which are in operation will encourage more members to join over the next six-months. If this is not the case we may need to revise the numbers associated with this indicator and overall project Outcome (0.3: By Mar 2020 at least 200 microenterprise loans awarded from Women's Credit and Savings Groups). Under such circumstances a formal Change Request Form will be submitted following the Year 2 Project Annual Report (March 2019).

Discussed with LTS: Yes/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/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: £ N/A

**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?**

An interesting activity which the project has been undertaking during this reporting period, and which did not feature in the original log-frame, has been collaborating with local cultural groups to restore a unique indigenous musical instrument ("Ploy") to the Areng Valley. Using a single 'old-master' who knew the instrument we have supported training three teenage CBET service providers to construct (from local forest materials) and play the Ploy. This traditional music will become a cultural tourism product for the Areng Valley CBET and is particularly appreciated by local Cambodian visitors.



*Community members learning the Ploy for an old master (centre on the left photograph).*

During the reporting period our project, particularly Output 4 on law enforcement, also featured prominently in the World Ranger Day issue of the DEFRA-Illegal Wildlife Trade Newsletter: <http://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/assets/uploads/2018/07/IWT-Newsletter-July-2018-World-Ranger-Day-FINAL.pdf>.

**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 R4 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](mailto: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.**