



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

(due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019)

<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 2019, (HYR3)
<b>Project website/blog/social media:</b>	<a href="http://www.wildlifealliance.org">www.wildlifealliance.org</a> / @wildliferescue / <a href="https://www.facebook.com/arengecotourism/">https://www.facebook.com/arengecotourism/</a>

**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 Areng Valley, Cardamom Rainforest Landscape*

Our project is now entering the home-stretch (just six months remaining) and we are generally pleased with our progress and we are proud to have established a genuine community-led ecotourism project in

Cambodia's Areng Valley at the heart of the Cardamom Rainforest Landscape. Combined with our continued focus on effective law enforcement patrolling (Output 4) the project is reducing illegal wildlife trade whilst providing alternative income to local communities. All activities have been completed, or are on-track for completion, across all five project Outputs. In the next six-month period, our final impact monitoring (particularly against Outcome Indicators 0.1, 0.2 and 0.4) will allow a robust overall assessment of progress against our ambitious poverty reduction and illegal wildlife trade goals.

Below we discuss progress, during the past six-month period, against the project's Outputs and Activities.

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

Activities under Output 1 are focussed on establishing the necessary community-owned structures and capacities for equitable Community Based Ecotourism (CBET) implementation. This is key for ensuring the project functions with local buy-in and achieves long-term sustainability. As reported in previous annual and half-year reports all the outputs and activities have been completed. However, training and capacity building for community ecotourism service providers continues largely through our strong partnerships with the national Ministry of Tourism and the Koh Kong Provincial Department of Tourism. In June the Provincial Department providing training to 19 service providers (12 female) on 'hospitality and food security' whilst also briefing on national published guidelines surround 'Human Trafficking and Child Sexual Exploitation at Tourism Sites'. Community forest guides were also trained by national Ministry of Tourism staff on 'tourism trekking standards' and 'preparation of Adventure Tourism in the Forest'. Areng was chosen as the venue for this regional training given our experiences in forest trekking and organising adventure tours.

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

During the reporting period the Areng Valley CBET continued to operate effectively with tourist visitors generating revenue for CBET and local community service providers. As discussed in previous reports the project has had phenomenal success in attracting young middle-class Cambodian visitors. Whilst this results in less direct income to service providers (meaning the project is unlikely to meet all of our indicators related to numbers of foreign visitors and income) this represents a fantastic long-term conservation legacy of the project through engaging Cambodians with nature and wildlife. Between April and September 2019 a total of 329 tourists (325 domestic and 4 international) visited Areng Valley CBET (Output 2.4) generating \$US 3,080 income for local communities (Output 2.1). A total of 8 agreements have now been signed with tour operators. (Output 2.2).



*Tourists enjoying a boat trip and bird-watching on the Areng River*

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

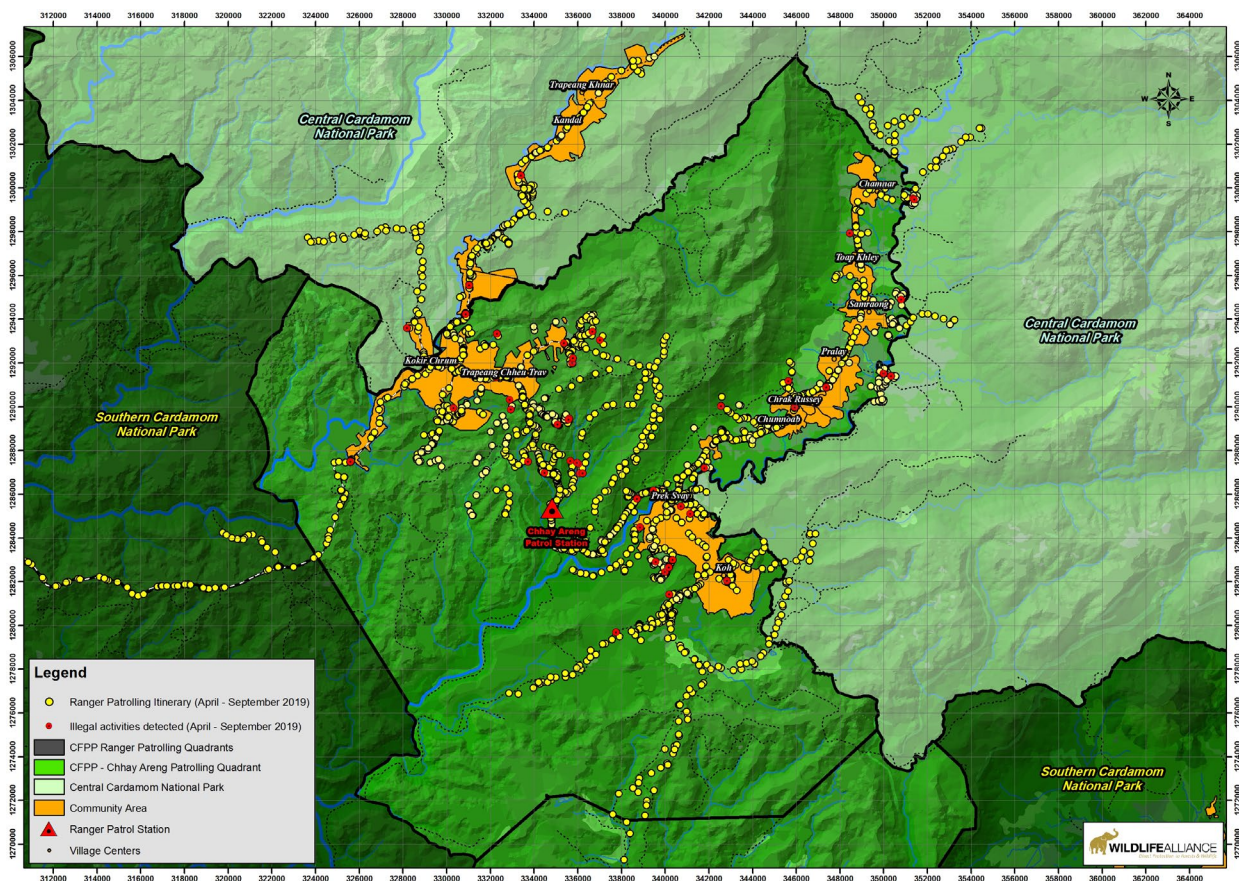
This project output is now progressing smoothly with a full-time Wildlife Alliance staff member embedded into the communities and providing technical and moral support for the operation of the Savings Groups. During the reporting period six groups were operational across all eight Areng Valley villages with 78 members (Output 3.1) depositing \$ into the fund (an additional \$ was provided through project funding). During the reporting period 6 community micro-enterprise loans were issued to community members from four villages (mean loan amount \$).

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



*Cardamom Rainforest Landscape field rangers with two live Sunda pangolin confiscated from illegal wildlife traders (left) and with rope hunting snares removed from the forest (right).*

Our effective multi-agency law enforcement anti-poaching patrols continued throughout the reporting period. A total of 215 patrols and 46 night-time ambushes covered 8,905-km across the Chhay Areng patrol quadrant ([Output 4.1](#)). The rangers removed 2,859 lethal illegal hunting snares and 393-m of hunting nets (primarily set to capture pangolins and porcupines). Thirty-three chainsaws and six home-made hunting guns were confiscated and two court cases were submitted by Judicial Police Officers against serious wildlife and forest criminals. The ranger teams rescued eleven live animals from snares and illegal wildlife traders all of which were safely returned into the forest. These included two Critically Endangered Sunda pangolin and five Endangered impressed tortoise: two species whose populations globally have been strongly impacted by the illegal wildlife trade.



*Ranger patrol routes and detected incidents of wildlife and forest crime April to September 2019.*

**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**

Throughout the reporting period we continued promoting Areng Valley CBET as the regional ‘Gold Standard’ for bottom-up community owned ecotourism. A number of influential Cambodian social media celebrities have visited and promoted the project and in May a study tour of 12 students from the Liger Leadership Academy (<http://www.ligeracademy.org/>) visited the project ([Output 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.**

We did not experience any significant problems or unexpected developments during the last six months. However, it now seems likely that, despite our considerable successes, we will not be able to meet our ambitious goals related to numbers of foreign tourists and income by the end of the project. We do believe that these are achievable in the longer term and that the structures for CBET which we developed will be long-lasting and will generate future and sustainable income for the communities of the Areng Valley. As shown by the number of snares our law enforcement teams continue to remove hunting of wildlife continues. We believe that this is largely driven by outsiders (i.e. non community members) but this clearly highlights that **even with local community support strict law enforcement is required and is needed in the long-term**. This is an important lesson from our project.

**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/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: £

**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?**

None

**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.**

**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 DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report by email** to [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.**