



**Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects  
Half Year Report  
(due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020)**

<b>Project reference</b>	IWT 036
<b>Project title</b>	Implementing park action plans for community engagement to tackle IWT
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Uganda
<b>Lead organisation</b>	IIED
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Uganda Wildlife Authority, Wildlife Conservation Society, Village Enterprise, Uganda Conservation Foundation
<b>Project leader</b>	Dilys Roe
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)</b>	HRY4
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<a href="https://www.iied.org/park-action-plans-increasing-community-engagement-tackling-wildlife-crime">https://www.iied.org/park-action-plans-increasing-community-engagement-tackling-wildlife-crime</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 end September).**

### **Output 1 Existing wildlife scouts programmes in human wildlife conflict and IWT hotspots around Murchison Falls National Park are improved.**

Our original project plan for the 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2020 period was for WCS to continue supporting the Scouts in their Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) work by answering any queries that the Scouts have, checking in regularly to provide motivation, and distributing the final field kit supplies. This support continued: it could only be conducted by mobile phone while Uganda was on lockdown under Covid19 restrictions, and WCS contacted the Scouts via the mobiles provided as part of this project, as well as mobiles that some of the Scouts owned themselves.

On 1<sup>st</sup> September, IIED held a progress call with WCS, please see the meeting minutes in Appendix A. We discussed the remaining project support for the Scouts including distribution of HWC field kit. We also continued discussions about securing long-term support for the Scouts after this project finishes, as our original Exit strategy was based on securing support from the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA). However, while UWA is incredibly positive about our Scout programme (for example UWA funded training for the Scouts in Year 3), UWA's financial support is now unlikely because UWA has suffered sudden declines in tourism income under Covid19. We agreed that WCS will start to engage NGOs who are working in and around the Park who could be able to support the Scouts for the long term.

When Covid19 restrictions eased, the WCS team visited the 50 Scouts supported by this project, following Covid19 safety measures (see Appendix B). From 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Sept, the team visited the Scouts in the field, assessing the extent of crop raiding, and distributing HWC equipment including boots and torches (see the report in Appendix B). Then on 17<sup>th</sup> September, WCS held refresher training for the Scouts on the ODK software for HWC data entry. WCS also distributed 9 new mobile phones to the Scouts, as there were issues with data uploading from the previous phones, and the training included how to use these new mobile phones (see the report in Appendix C).

Finally, WCS attended our team internal progress meetings and supported the IIED Comms team with the article on the UWA's new Community Conservation Policy and with the Stories of Change from the Scouts (see Output 4).

### **Output 2 Small enterprises are developed in HWC / IWT hotspots for existing wildlife scout programmes as an alternative income source to poaching**

Our original project plan for the 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2020 period was for VE to continue supporting the Model Conservation Village that was initiated as part of VE's scaling up activity, as well as providing "light touch" support for the original Enterprises. As for the Scouts, this support continued but only via mobile phones while Uganda was on lockdown under Covid19 restrictions. This support worked well for the original Enterprises. However, it was limited for the new Model Conservation Village because these enterprises and their Business Saving Groups (BSGs) has recently begun and this early stage was the key time for VE's business mentoring. VE provided support as far as possible and changed their grant distribution from in-person cash handouts to online transfers via "mobile money" to make sure that the grant distribution continued.

In August, the VE business mentors started to undertake field visits again. In addition, the VE team based in Kampala visited the Enterprises of the Model Conservation Village to assess progress since April and to understand where to target efforts going forward. These Enterprises (and their associated BSGs) had started their chili enterprises during the end of Year Three, when VE had made direct links between the Enterprises and a commercial buyer. During the field trip, VE also recorded their learning points which are described in VE's report in Appendix D. In summary:

- Political activity is increasing as Uganda prepares to go to presidential and Parliamentary polls early next year, which unfortunately is resulting in rallies without proper social distancing in place
- Uganda's lockdown halted business activities and this had a significant impact throughout the country, especially on the agricultural sector because crops that were ready to harvest could not be taken to market

- Some of this project's BSGs suspended their savings meetings, although at the time of VE's field visit, all BSGs were resuming their activities
- What is working well with regards to the chili enterprises: instigating a direct link between the Enterprises and a commercial buyer (Manji), as Manji appointed an agent who interacts with the Enterprises supporting their chili crop growing and as Manji provided additional seed for those who lost their first crop. To date, 20 BSGs have sold chili to Manji jointly earning over \$.
- What is not working well with regards to the chili enterprises: farmers having enough land to grow chili crops, as some had to plant chili in-between their other crops which reduces the likelihood of a successful harvest; some BSGs did not invest all of their grants into chili growing which in-part reflected the gap from not receiving in-person VE mentoring support
- What is working well with regards to the 4 BSGs: total savings to-date of \$ (which is an average of \$per BSG) despite business activities being affected by the Covid19 restrictions; a continued commitment to VE's "Savings with a Purpose" initiative which evidently provides a structure for savings as well as the motivation to do so; and, good record keeping.
- What is not working well with regards to the 4 BSGs: the impact of Covid19 restrictions meant that the target share-out of \$ was revised to \$

The original project plan for VE from April to September 2020 also included completing the final attitude surveys and income assessments of the original Enterprises. However, this could not be completed in April as planned because of the Covid19 restrictions. Instead it was re-scheduled for October and the project team discussed any implications for the data analysis given the surveys would not be completed when VE support finishes, but rather a few months later. We will seek to maximise this opportunity to explore issues emerging from the survey results, such as the resilience of the Business Savings Groups after project support had finished, possibly by additional interviews.

On 15<sup>th</sup> September, IIED held a progress call with VE and then followed up with a more detailed progress call as part of our team meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020 (please see Appendix D; while this meeting was held in October the meeting minutes are included as discussions regarded the time under this report). We discussed feedback from the mentoring by mobiles that VE had undertaken, including the continued work by many of the BSGs, but also how best to target VE's efforts going forward especially with the Model Conservation Village. We agreed that VE should continue providing business mentoring but also place renewed emphasis on the importance of the link between the Enterprises and the commercial buyer.

Finally, VE attended our internal progress meetings and supported the IIED Comms team with the Stories of Change from the Enterprises (see Output 4).

### **Output 3 The capacity and profile of the UWA community conservation unit is developed**

Our original project plan for the 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2020 period was to host the final annual training event, although this was put on-hold because of the Covid19 restrictions. Instead we focused on the Communication activities to raise awareness of, and promote, UWA's new Community Conservation policy that had been successfully published (see Output 4). Towards the end of September, we contacted UWA to discuss whether an event to launch the Community Conservation policy could be undertaken within Covid19 safety measures or whether we should host the event online. As Uganda continues to emerge from lockdown, the UWA team thought that an event would be possible with strict Covid19 safety measures in place and had begun to investigate possible venues. We plan to host the event later 2020.

## **Output 4 The lessons learned from the project are disseminated nationally and internationally**

The original project plan for Output 4 during Year 4 Q1 was:

- Disseminate project updates via PCLG international network and partner networks
- Start to prepare the final project report
- Start to prepare 1 national and 1 international briefings papers
- Run the final Park Coordination Forum

We have been granted a project extension given the Covid19 restrictions limited our project activities. In this extension period, we will be hosting the final Park Coordination Forum and producing the project report and briefing papers, so these activities will start later in Year 4.

Instead we focused on promoting UWA's new Community Conservation Policy. The policy is available on IIED's website -

In July 2020, IIED and WCS Uganda worked with UWA's Director of the Community Conservation Sub-Directorate (George Owoyesigire) to produce a Q&A article on the new Community Conservation Policy. The Q&A was led by WCS Uganda's Geoffrey Mwedde and questions included:

- Could you describe the history of community conservation approaches in Uganda?
- The Uganda Wildlife Authority has recently updated its community conservation policy. Why has the old policy been revised?
- What's particularly innovative about the new policy?
- Do you think this policy could inspire other countries in the region, in East Africa, or even internationally?
- The policy talks about creating a wildlife crime prevention action plan. How does this relate to the community-based wildlife crime prevention action plans created for Murchison Falls and Queen Elizabeth National Park? Does it replace them or build on them?
- Now on to COVID-19. How has the pandemic affected community conservation work?
- What's next for the policy?

The Q&A article was published on the IIED webpage:

To-date it has been viewed by 242 individuals, which were 98 from the UK, 76 from Uganda and the remainder from India, UAE and other countries in Europe. On average a reader from Uganda spent 20 minutes reading the Q&A article illustrating a high level of engagement.

The IIED team developed a leaflet of the Community Conservation Policy to have an easy-to-read high level summary of the policy:

In particular, the leaflet draws attention to how the policy proposes tackling wildlife crime and more information on Community-Based Wildlife Crime Prevention Action Plans.

The IIED team continued to progress the Stories of Change illustrating experiences of participant's in Village Enterprises' BSGs and how the activities of this project have influenced their wellbeing. The team also began preparing the Stories of Change collected by WCS on the Scouts, to promote and share the impact of this IWT Challenge Fund project in the later periods of Year 4.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A: IIED and WCS Progress Call Meeting Minutes

Appendix B: WCS field trip report and Covid19 safety measures

Appendix C: WCS training report

Appendix D: VE field trip report

**2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for Covid-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

Any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months not associated with Covid19: none

**2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of Covid-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

As noted above, field support was suspended for most of this period but WCS and VE continued their support via mobile phones, and then resumed field activities when this was possible.

The Scout Programme had already been established and, while there was a delay with issuing field equipment, the Scout programme itself was not affected by the suspension of field activities. The Scouts continued their HWC work in the field, as this was possible with Covid19 control measures, and so they continued collecting data for our forthcoming data analysis. However, our exit strategy was for UWA to support the Scouts after our project finishes, the Community Conservation rangers engaging with the Scouts and collecting their HWC data, and with UWA providing HWC equipment for the Scouts. While UWA has already been much engaged with the Scouts and this engagement looks to continue, it is unlikely that UWA will be able to provide financial support because their tourism income has suddenly and severely declined under Covid19. Given the on-going uncertainty over international tourism because of Covid19, our response has been for WCS to engage NGOs working around the Park to promote the Scouts and engender support for the long-term.

The UWA Park staff reported that they continued undertaking law enforcement patrols during Uganda's lockdown. We are uncertain whether the extent of patrol coverage was the same as before lockdown, and are currently arranging access to the latest law enforcement patrol data to be able to assess any gaps in the data and/or change in the extent of patrol coverage. Feedback from the Park Staff is that law enforcement patrols have now resumed so we anticipate that any gaps or change in coverage would be short-term and not of significant impact on our data analysis.

The original Enterprises were to receive "light touch" support from VE during the April to September period, and so were not greatly affected when this support was via mobile phones. However, the new Enterprises established as part of the Model Conservation Village had just started, when business mentoring and support is important for their start-up. Not having in-person support was a limitation for these BSGs, although they had the direct link with the commercial buyer and some BSGs harvested and sold chili crops to the buyer. Furthermore, when VE visited the BSGs, they assessed what was and was not working to now be able to target their business mentoring accordingly. VE consider that the limitation will be short-lived and the BSGs will soon become fully established.

All our activities before Covid19 with the Community Conservation (CC) Unit of UWA have raised the profile of the CC Unit within UWA and engendered much motivation and empowerment amongst the CC staff. Covid19 is a significant impact: UWA has had to cut back

its Community Conservation activities because of social distancing requirements and a sudden and severe shortage of funds. In response, we used lockdown to undertake various communication activities to promote the new Community Conservation Policy, especially to potential donors and supporters, and will continue this promotion with the formal launch of the Policy later this year. While the new CC Policy is published and there is greater recognition of the CC Unit by UWA Senior Management, the CC Unit continues to see a reduction in their funding because of the financial impact on UWA from Covid19. We will continue to work with the CC Unit, raising their profile and supporting the Unit as much as we can.

Our project extension has been approved and we do not anticipate any further change to our budget or timetable.

**2c. 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
Received confirmation of change acceptance	Yes

**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. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.**

**4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin’s management, monitoring, or financial procedures?**

Isaac Kiirya took over from Geoffrey Mwedde as the WCS Project Lead. Isaac is the WCS IWT/CWT Projects Manager and has previously worked for the Uganda Wildlife Authority, as well as NGOs including NatureUganda, ECOTRUST and DanChurchAid. In addition, Shivan Kamugisha joined WCS as the Community Engagements Coordinator in May 2020 and will be supporting Isaac.

At IIED, Francesca Booker went on maternity leave in October. Olivia Wilson-Holt will provide support for communication activities going forward.

**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 [Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk](mailto:Darwin-Projects@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: 25-001 Darwin Half Year Report**