Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund
Half Year Report

(due 31st October 2018)

Project reference:	IWT041
Project title:	Strengthening community anti-poaching and ecotourism in the Western Terai Complex
Country(ies):	Nepal
Lead organisation:	Zoological Society of London
Collaborator(s):	Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) and Himalayan Nature (HN)
Project leader:	*Hem Sagar Baral*
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1):	*31 October 2018, (HYR2)*
Project website/blog/social media:	*https://www.zsl.org/conservation/regions/asia/strengthening-community-anti-poaching-and-ecotourism-in-the-western-terai*

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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).

ZSL held a meeting with all project partners to review the progress made in year 1 and plan activities for year 2. During this reporting period, the project progressed largely according to the project timeline, with some activities rescheduled to Q3 of year 2 due to the monsoon. The Project Coordination Committee (PCC) is coordinating all the project activities at the central level and has been providing overall guidance at the site level to the Project Management Units (PMUs) responsible for implementation. The PMU is comprised of the Chief Conservation Officer of the respective Protected Area as the Chairperson and staff from ZSL, NTNC and HN as the members. The PMU is also coordinating with local communities including members of Community Based Anti-Poaching Units (CBAPUs).

PMUs meet regularly to coordinate project implementation. Also, regular meetings and consultations have been conducted with local communities, with the involvement of the Protected Area Offices, Buffer Zone Management and Users Committees.

ZSL has built a strong relationship with DNPWC and other project partners including the Nepal Army Units present in each project site and local communities, which has ensured effective project implementation. The project agreements signed in year 1 with NTNC and HN to implement the project activities on the ground have been continued.

Progress against agreed milestones for the 2nd half year:

Output 1: Effective and efficient rapid response network utilising the latest technology and tools to combat wildlife crime

Refresher training of trainers has been conducted in all project sites to enhance the capacity of Rapid Response (RR) unit staff to deal with the threats of poaching and illegal wildlife trade. (Activity 1.4 - *Complete*). A standardised RR protocol at the central level is being prepared and meetings have been organised with relevant partners to agree the principles of the RR protocol and to build institutional support for the RR units to increase their effectiveness (Activity 1.5 – *Ongoing*). GSM-enabled camera traps and infrared alarms have been deployed in each site and wireless CCTV cameras have been deployed in Banke National Park (BaNP) (Activities 1.8 and 1.9 – *Ongoing*). Equipment such as display screens, mobile phones and other information collection equipment has been provided to BaNP, Bardia (BNP) and Shuklaphanta National Parks (ShNP) (1.10 – *Compete*). During this reporting period, information gathering, analysis and archiving procedures have been drafted and are currently under review (Activity 1.13 – *Ongoing*).

Output 2: 12 (4 per site) 10-man Community Based Anti- Poaching Units (CBAPUs) effectively collecting and disseminating anti-poaching intelligence, using the SMART approach.

Sites for construction of three community watchtowers have been identified and preparations to start construction are underway. Consultations on the design of the watchtowers are being conducted with Protected Area officials and community members (Activity 2.3 – *Ongoing*). CBAPU members have been identified for inclusion in training to enable them to work effectively in anti-poaching, intelligence gathering and sharing. The training will be completed by the end of Q3 year 2 (Activity 2.6 - *Ongoing*).

Output 3: Improved intelligence gathering and sharing and collaboration between relevant Nepal agencies (e.g. DNPWC, BZMC, Nepal Army, Nepal Police, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)) and enhanced transboundary intelligence collaboration.

A workshop has been organised at the site level to share the database with Protected Area authorities and protection units and feedback was collected for further improvement of the database (Activity 3.3 – *Complete*). Responsible government staff from each Protected Area have been assigned to input information into the database (Activity 3.4 – *Complete*). Also, the project has supported the recruitment of an additional two informants in each of the 3 Protected Areas (Activity 3.9 – *Complete*).

Output 4: Cooperative community ecotourism venture successfully operating in the WTC supported by an endowment fund established to make soft loans to ecotourism enterprise.

Field level consultations were conducted with all the project partners, Protected Area offices and stakeholders such as buffer zone management committees and user groups in each Protected Area to inform the establishment of the endowment fund. The community consultation process was led by the PMU established in the respective Protected Area and facilitated by the chairperson of the buffer zone management committee (Activity 4.4 – *Ongoing*). An initial field level meeting with the buffer zone management committee and the regional tourism board was carried out at the site level to produce an ecotourism advertising campaign for the Western Terai Complex (Activity 4.5 – *Ongoing*)

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 supported the deployment of GSM-enabled surveillance cameras and these have proved very effective in arresting poachers/illegal intruders. The effectiveness of these cameras is dependent on the quality of training provided to RR staff in operation and handling. Also, the effectiveness of the camera network is increasing as staff gain more practice.

Recruitment of informants is vital along with proper training of informants and handlers. Incentives, support for efficient communication, and an insurance policy for CBAPU members will further improve the informant network's effectiveness. Working to develop alternative livelihood opportunities for members of CBAPUs and informants has already been found to support the engagement of communities and the effectiveness of these community anti-poaching efforts.

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?

None to report.

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. 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.**