



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

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

<b>Project reference:</b>	IWT041
<b>Project title:</b>	Strengthening community anti-poaching and ecotourism in the Western Terai Complex
<b>Country(ies):</b>	Nepal
<b>Lead organisation:</b>	Zoological Society of London
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) and Himalayan Nature (HN)
<b>Project leader:</b>	Hem Sagar Baral
<b>Report date and number:</b>	31 October 2019, (HYR3)
<b>Project website/blog/social media:</b>	<a href="https://www.zsl.org/conservation/regions/asia/strengthening-community-anti-poaching-and-ecotourism-in-the-western-terai">https://www.zsl.org/conservation/regions/asia/strengthening-community-anti-poaching-and-ecotourism-in-the-western-terai</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).**

A project review meeting was held at the start of year 3 with all project partners and a workplan was developed. The project progress was reviewed against the logframe utilising data from ZSL’s continuous project monitoring and evaluation activities. Additionally, the Project Coordination Committee (PCC) has been coordinating all the project activities at the central level (in Kathmandu), with periodic guidance given to the site level Project Management Unit (PMU). The PMU has coordinated with local communities, Community Based Anti-Poaching Units (CBAPUs) and local stakeholders including buffer zone committees and local authorities to ensure ownership of all project outputs at the local level. PCC meetings are held quarterly, while PMU meetings are held monthly, with *ad hoc* meetings held according to need. Regular formal and informal meetings are held with local communities to involve them in all decision-making processes. This has helped ensure strong support of local communities.

ZSL has maintained a strong relationship with DNPWC, NTNC and HN. A strong relationship has also been built with the Nepal Army and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB).

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

ZSL’s in country expert staff have conducted refresher training of trainers in the operation of GSM-enabled surveillance cameras for 30 frontline staff from all project sites. Protected area staff in all three project sites have regularly deployed GSM-enabled surveillance cameras, with at least 10 cameras active at a time in areas known to be vulnerable to poaching. Rapid Response Units (RRUs) are active in all three sites, responding to a total of 183 threats identified through GSM-enabled surveillance cameras as well as through other sources (Act. 1.8). Out of these identified threats, 90% were responded to, resulting in arrests in 17% of

cases (31) and warnings in 60% of cases, while in 23% of cases no action was taken. 73% of cases were related to resource extraction such as firewood collection, fodder collection, sand and gravel mining, and fishing; and 15% involved timber smuggling and potential poaching all of which were responded to. The other sources include the network of 4 infra-red alarms per each site and 2 wireless CCTV cameras in Banke National Park (Act. 1.9). Consultations with all protected area authorities and DNPWC have been made to plan annual intensive anti-poaching sweeping operations and long-range patrols begin in the next period. The anti-poaching sweeping operation will be carried out once in each protected area and long-range patrols will be carried out once per month from October to March (Act. 1.12).

The project has been coordinating with protected area authorities to insure RRU staff, and this activity will be completed by the next reporting period (Act. 1.6). Staff from 12 anti-poaching camps - 4 camps in each project site - have also been supported with equipment such as binoculars and surveillance cameras (Act. 1.11).

***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.***

The project has been regularly supporting CBAPUs to coordinate with protected areas to conduct regular patrols (Act. 2.6 and Act. 2.9). Altogether 70 patrols have been made by the CBAPUs in all project sites. CBAPUs have conducted 20 patrols in Banke, 32 in Bardia and 18 in Shuklaphanta. During these patrols, CBAPUs have recorded a total of 28 illegal activities from all three project sites, which resulted in 11 arrests for illegal fishing (2), timber cutting (3) and sand and gravel extraction (6). CBAPUs in Shuklaphanta have been supported to organise an interaction programme and prepare an action plan to stop potential illegal activities in the national park and buffer zone area, in particular during the festival season when there are increased threats to wildlife. Support was also provided to CBAPUs in Shuklaphanta to celebrate Global Tiger Day 2019, during which the members performed a street drama on wildlife conservation, ecotourism, wildlife trade and poaching. CBAPUs in Bardia were supported to add 15 new members. The newly bolstered CBAPUs were oriented on various aspects of conservation and their roles and responsibilities. Similarly, CBAPUs in Bardia were supported to conduct four site level biodiversity and wildlife conservation awareness workshops focusing on curbing IWT which have reached an estimated 600 people.

A mechanism has been implemented for CBAPUs to share IWT information with protected area authorities (Act. 2.7). Three community watchtowers have also been constructed (Act. 2.3).

***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 meeting has been held among protected area authorities, including protection units, to agree an intelligence sharing procedure. Information will be shared with relevant law enforcement agencies including Nepal Police through WCCB. WCCB meetings are being held in each project site every three months for information sharing; relevant law information agencies share information formally and informally using phones, emails and letters (Act. 3.6). The planned informant training workshop has been rescheduled due to heavy agricultural workload for community members at this time (Act. 3.10).

Government officials in Nepal (DNPWC) and India (NTCA) have continued to be supported to share intelligence through meetings and informal channels – promoting greater transboundary intelligence cooperation (Act. 3.8). A familiarisation visit has now been agreed to Corbett National Park in India for protected area authorities and relevant stakeholders (Act. 3.11).

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

32 participants from homestay groups supported by the project in the buffer zones of Banke, Bardia and Shuklaphanta National Parks were trained in homestay operation and management (Act 4.2). The President of Krishnasar Homestay, Mrs Mina Devi Chaudhary, who took part in the training, expressed that the training “boosted up confidence of all the participants to run a homestay” and committed that they will work closely with the national park and buffer zone committee for the protection of wildlife and biodiversity in their surrounding area. Working with local communities revealed real appetite for complementary ecotourism ventures to the previously established homestays. A community run souvenir shop is planned to be established, providing an additional income source in the next period (Act. 4.4). Annual socio-economic surveys to assess uptake of ecotourism is planned for the end of year 3 (Act. 4.7).

**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.**

During our community consultations with local communities, the request for complementary ecotourism ventures such as souvenir shops, cycling facilities or jeep safaris, were raised. Following an initial feasibility assessment, a trial souvenir shop is planned to multiply the ecotourism benefits for 75 households, approximately 415 people.

**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**

**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.**

**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.**