



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

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

<b>Project reference:</b>	IWT050
<b>Project title:</b>	Developing elephant eco-guardians: fundamental for co-ordinated anti-poaching/trafficking initiatives in Mali.
<b>Country(ies):</b>	Mali
<b>Lead organisation:</b>	The Wild Foundation
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	The Mali Government: Ministry of the Environment, with its Direction Nationale des Eaux et Forêts (DNEF) as the principle contact; plus other Ministries as appropriate but particularly the Ministries of Defence and Territorial Administration.  Chengeta Wildlife  Local communities  British and American embassies  The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)
<b>Project leader:</b>	Dr Susan Canney
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1):</b>	31 October 2019, (HYR2)
<b>Project website/blog/social media:</b>	Website: <a href="https://www.wild.org/mali-elephants/">https://www.wild.org/mali-elephants/</a> Blog: <a href="https://www.wild.org/category/blog/mali-elephants-blog/">https://www.wild.org/category/blog/mali-elephants-blog/</a> Twitter: @MaliEleProject Facebook in Mali: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/gourmamali/">https://www.facebook.com/gourmamali/</a> <i>WILD Facebook:</i> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/wildfoundation/">https://www.facebook.com/wildfoundation/</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).**

**Output 1: The capacity and motivation for eco-guardians to lead and promote elephant conservation activities is increased through training and the formalisation of their occupations, enabling them to work in synergy with the APU.**

Given the high level of insecurity in the elephant range only truly motivated and dedicated young men are accepted as eco-guards. They are selected by the community in a public and transparent process whereby the role of an eco-guard is discussed through the process of drawing up a list of criteria of essential qualities for an eco-guard. Then individuals are proposed and selected by the community. The role of eco-guard carries local status and provides an occupation for these young men, that is much preferred to joining the jihadist groups, despite the large sums paid by the latter. In times of peace, which would facilitate the

uptake and conduct of these CBNRM systems, experience has suggested that providing incentive payments would become unnecessary once the benefits of these systems are felt and the practices become habitual. In times of conflict and insurgency, however, it is important to reinforce these systems to engage as many of the youth as possible. The MEP currently supports a total of 673 ecoguards from the whole elephant range; the IWT funds support incentive payments and training for the most competent and committed 50.

The project is also trialling a quarterly system, as opposed to monthly, to enable community facilitators to stay in the field for longer without having to interrupt their activities and come back to base to complete their reporting paperwork. This also reduces the amount of travel required between the field and their office in Douentza, and hence the risks associated with it. The field team took their annual leave in September – October and then the accountant and office manager suffered from Malaria (the end of the rainy season is a particularly bad time for Malaria) which means reporting has been delayed and so detailed community ecoguard activities from July-September are not included in this report.

**Activity 1.1.** *Training workshops for community eco-guardians (five 2-day workshops in year 1; five 1-day workshops in years 2-3).*

In May 5 ecoguards received practical training in ecological survey methods as they assisted 2 MEP staff in the repetition of a W-transects at N’Gaw-N’Gaw and Inani (control). The results showed that while there had been no more trees cut at Inani (which had shown substantial tree cutting in 2017), there was a slight increase in the number of cut trees at N’Gaw N’Gaw compared to 2017. This is thought to be due to the presence of armed groups in the area which has prevented ecoguards from patrolling the area on a regular basis.

16 ecoguards were trained in the elephant ground count method (see Output 3) in order to test the methodology and provide practical tuition for the ecoguards before the survey itself. Although the census itself is due to take place in 2020, it was important to conduct the trial at this time as the method relies on counting the elephants at the end of the dry season (April-May), when they are concentrated around a few waterholes. For security reasons, the training session was organised in Sévaré and not in the field. 16 ecoguards attended the 6-day training from 15-20/05/2019.

**Activity 1.2.** *Incentive payments are made on a monthly basis to the 50 best-performing eco-guardians in return for CBNRM and elephant protection activities.*

In April, 89 ecoguards received incentive payments for 2 months each: 1 ecoguard from Boni (Haire) for providing photos; 4 ecoguards for awareness raising and monitoring of HEC in Boni (Haire) assisted by 5 members of the association « Amis des éléphants »; 72 ecoguards for awareness raising, monitoring of HEC and sharing information with the anti-poaching unit (APU) in Lobial (Débééré), Amba (Dangol-Boré), Manko (Dangol-Boré), Falembougou (Dangol-Boré), Gogoro (Hairé) and Bossouma (Dallah); 12 ecoguards from Kikara (Gandamia) to monitor livestock pressure around Inani Lake until the beginning of the rainy season.

In May, 171 ecoguards received incentive payments as follows: 60 ecoguards from Santondi, Niogolon, Doumpa, Batouma, Doumbara for 1 month each to collect information on elephant location in Dangol-Bore; 1 ecoguard from Boré to take photos and GPS readings during the trial count (see A 3.2.); 76 ecoguards from Idourfan (Korarou), Ibrizaze (Korarou), Diona (Korarou), Gnimignama (DB), Wami (Hombori) and Oussougou (Haire) for 2 months each to collect information on elephant location to help direct the pilot during test flights (see A 3.4); 24 ecoguards to record GPS coordinates of all waterholes with elephants in the communes of Dangol-Bore, Korarou, Debere, Gandamia with a view to select one or two for the trial count (see A 3.2); 10 ecoguards for 5 days each to delineate a protection perimeter around Inani waterhole in order to facilitate access by elephants.

In June, 95 ecoguards received incentive payments as follows: 7 ecoguards for 6 days each to take GPS readings of all the waterholes with elephants in Hombori as part of their training in the ground count method; 88 ecoguards from the areas of Kobou (Mondoro), Petten-N’Dotty (Hombori), Wami (Hombori), Niangassadjou (Mondoro), Dioulouna (Mondoro), Wamde-Rabere (Mondoro), Daribangui (Hombori), and Boumboum (Hombori) for 2 months each to monitor elephants.

**Activity 1.3. Monitoring of eco-guardian activities by community leaders and MEP field team.**

This is an ongoing part of the project's activities. The field team maintains frequent, if not daily, contact with its network of eco-guards, and the field manager's assistant is responsible for coordinating their activities. All ecoguard activities supported by the project are first logged onto a receipt signed by the participant ecoguards and countersigned by the project, before being checked and entered in the financial reports.

**Activity 1.4. Annual household surveys with the 50 eco-guardians that receive training and incentive payments.**

To be completed Y3. As reported in the Y1 AR, insecurity in the elephant range has limited the ability of the project staff to travel out to the sites to conduct social surveys. As a result, the baseline survey of eco-guards which was due to take place in Y1 had to be postponed.

**Activity 1.5. Activities related to the launch of the process of formal recognition of the eco-guardian role.**

To be completed. As reported in the Y1 AR, the long-term plan is for the eco-guard role to be recognised at the national level, however, under the violent circumstances the Government currently has other priorities. Nevertheless, a number of commune-wide conventions have been finalised which officially recognise the central role played by eco-guards in CBNRM. These conventions, which are agreed by the communities, their traditional leaders and elected representatives at the commune-level by way of consensus, help cement the status of eco-guards within their communities and should also facilitate their recognition at a higher level at a later stage.

**Output 2: The anti-poaching unit (APU) conducts effective proactive and reactive operations based on eco-guardian monitoring reports.**

**Activity 2.1. Community reports on elephant movements and poaching activity are collected, processed and forwarded to the APU.**

The project received a total of 64 reports on elephant movements from community ecoguards from April to the end of July, i.e. 16 reports per month, which are forwarded to the APU.

**Activity 2.2. APU conduct proactive missions for ><sup>1</sup>7 days/month across all 8 core communes of the elephant range.**

The APU conducted 43 days of proactive patrols between April and September, i.e. 7 days/month, as well as providing an escort for the trainers while they were conducting formalities in Sevare and while travelling on the Sevare-Douentza main road.

**Activity 2.3. APU responds to community reports on poaching related activity (reactive missions) across all 8 core communes of the elephant range.**

There has been no reported poaching incident since October 2018.

**Activity 2.4. APU mission reports created, analysed and synthesised into quarterly reports.**

The APU provides the monthly reports on expenditure, patrols and vehicle use. These are then summarised into activity/expenses reports and patrols are entered into a database and mapped using GIS.

**Output 3: A census of the total elephant population is conducted by aerial surveillance and local communities counting simultaneously.**

The project had originally planned to carry out a combined ground and aerial census of elephants at the end of the 2019 dry season. Due to the delay in the deployment of the aerial surveillance, the presence of armed groups around key waterholes, and the need to make sure that the methodology is well understood by the ecoguards, it was decided to postpone the census until 2020 (Q1 of Y3) and carry out a trial count instead. The method for the ground count was piloted in May, with the aim of testing the feasibility and reliability of a community-led ground survey of elephants. This was an innovative experiment in community census which aims to enable the establishment of a locally-adapted protocol and initiate a regular large-scale

<sup>1</sup> See modification request

monitoring of the elephant population. One forested area comprising 4 waterholes, located in Korarou commune, was selected for the trial. The ecoguards counted a total of 71 individual elephants. The aerial surveillance unit was able to conduct a series of test flights intended to identify possible constraints and work out how to deploy the aircraft.

**Activity 3.1.** *Elephant census strategic plan and methods completed and accepted by project partners and census participants.*

The protocol for the pilot study builds on the experience from previous aerial surveys of elephants in the Gourma (Blake et al, 2003; Bouche et al, 2009) and others carried out under similar conditions in Sub-Saharan Africa (Craig, 2012; Schlossberg et al, 2016). It also incorporates a new element, a ground count carried out by local community members, based on a protocol implemented in Burkina Faso to count elephants on foot (Ouédraogo et al, 2009). This will enable the comparison of the data collected in the two types of survey while taking the engagement of communities to a higher level. It is also an opportunity for actors from all levels to physically come together and collaborate on a common goal, thereby cementing the unifying systems approach adopted by the project from the very beginning.

**Activity 3.2.** *Elephant census training provided to community eco-guardians, APU personnel and other participants (3 days for 132 participants).*

16 of the ecoguards who had received training in the elephant count methodology carried out a trial count at a preidentified waterhole in the area of Diona (Korarou). They were assisted by 2 ecoguards tasked with taking photos to document the activity. The method proved successful in as much as the ecoguards were able to carry out the count, identifying 71 elephants, however some finetuning will be necessary to make sure ecoguards also record the GPS coordinates of their sightings.

**Activity 3.3.** *Ground census completed by communities, APU and other participants during 10 consecutive days.*

To be completed Y3

**Activity 3.4.** *Aerial census completed by aerial surveillance unit during 5 consecutive days.*

To be completed Y3.

**Activity 3.5.** *Census data collated and analysed and report completed and distributed to all partners and stakeholders.*

To be completed Y3.

**Output 4: Training materials are produced and distributed to community eco-guardians and APU personnel; and project progress and lessons learned are disseminated to the wider national and international community.**

**Activity 4.1.** *Field manual for community eco-guardians written and distributed.*

Completed (see AR Y1)

**Activity 4.2.** *Field manual on elephant monitoring for APU written and distributed.*

To be completed Y3. As reported in the Y1 AR, this activity was delayed due to the inexperience of the 2018 anti-poaching cohort, and the need to focus efforts in training them to operate in a way that minimises risk given the security situation.

**Activity 4.3.** *Elephant census report written and distributed.*

To be completed Y3

**Activity 4.4.** *Article(s) on community-based elephant monitoring and protection written and submitted to peer-reviewed journal.*

To be completed Y3

**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.**

Obtaining the permission of overflight in the Gourma took longer than expected, which meant that by the time the paperwork got finalised the dry season was drawing to an end there wasn't enough time to carry out both the test flights and the aerial count. The presence of armed groups close to key waterholes also forced the project to postpone the full ground census until 2020.

**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?**

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.**