



Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Half Year Report

(due 31st October 2018)

Project reference: 398

Project title: Securing Mongolia's Borders and Communities against Wildlife Trafficking

Country: Mongolia

Lead organisation: Zoological Society of London

Collaborators: Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET); Customs General Authority (CGA); National Police Agency (NPA); United Kingdom Border Force (UKBF); Mongolian Gender Equality Center (MGEC)

Project leader: Gitanjali Bhattacharya

Report date and number (e.g. HYR1): 31/10/18 HYR1

Project website/blog/social media: www.zsl.org/conservation/threats/illegal-wildlife-trade-crisis/illegal-wildlife-trade-in-mongolia

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 project has made significant progress over the last three months and is on track to meet its planned activities set in the milestones for Year 1. The project grant agreement was signed on June 25th, with the project commencing on July 1st, 2018. Notable progress towards initial project implementation, includes:

Project set-up

- ZSL informed key project partners of the project's commencement, sending official letters to senior officials of CGA on August 29th, Detector Dog Training Centre on July 6th, and NPA on September 4th. These letters requested nomination of key partner contacts responsible for coordinating project activities.
- Meetings with key project partners (UKBF on July 17th, CGA on October 8th, Detector Dog Center on September 17th and October 4th, MGEC on October 12nd, and CGA Training Center on October 5th) successfully agreed upon project deliverables and appointed key representatives of project partners.
- ZSL drafted MoUs and officially sent these to project partners (CGA, NPA, and UKBF). These MoUs are currently under review with plans to sign them by year end.
- Recruitment of the Project Officer began in July. The successful candidate, Mrs. Tungalag Gansukh was recruited on October 1st. CV is attached.

Output 1. Effective Border Detector Dog (BDD) Programme incentivized and capable of intercepting wildlife trafficking at Mongolia's vulnerable border crossings.

Activity 1.1: As data associated with Mongolia's border crossings is confidential and a security-risk, permission for its use is required from senior government authorities. Therefore, ZSL has held meetings with the CGA and its Customs Research & Training Center to obtain data to identify three priority vulnerable border crossings. Through CGA's records and ZSL's

Silent Steppe II Report, Zamiin-Uud has been identified as the first priority site. Bichigt, Hangi and Gashuun Suhait have also been identified as potential sites. It is planned that by early November the CGA will confirm the three vulnerable border crossings based on internal data collection from the relevant agencies (i.e. NPA, Border Defence Agency, MGEC). The CGA will then compile this data into a 'Border Vulnerability Index'.

Activity 1.3: ZSL is hosting the UKBF in Mongolia from October 22nd – November 1st, 2018. Meetings with the CGA and UKBF took place on October 23rd to confirm details of the collaboration between ZSL-CGA-UKBF. During this visit the Senior Officer and trainer from the UKBF CITES Team (Guy Clarke), and the Chief Instructor of the UKBF National Dog Team (Robert Gray) are conducting a review of the CGA's frontline law enforcement and border dog training programme (and dog training facility). Site visits also include Customs Authorities in Ulaanbaatar (i.e. airport, rail and post), and two border crossings (Zamiin-Uud and Hangi).

Output 2. A newly established inter-agency Wildlife Crime Control Task Force (WCCTF) integrating the work of well-trained Customs, Police and Border Defense Agency staff.

Activities 2.1 – 2.3: Following the UKBF's October 2018 review, and initial report, training modules and materials for law enforcement staff are being developed by the UKBF/CGA for delivery through a series of trainings (i.e. wildlife product detection, human-trafficking, utilisation of IWT database). These are planned for June 2019 to be conducted jointly by the UKBF, CGA and MGEC. The consultancy Cops Without Borders will potentially deliver survival skills training, with the scope and necessity of the modules currently under discussion.

Activity 2.4: In March 2018, WCS Mongolia established a National IWT Committee that includes representatives from five different state organisations (i.e. MET, CGA, NPA, National Intelligence and National Inspection) with the purpose of improving inter-agency collaboration to combat IWT – we were not aware of this during project planning. Given the overlap with the project's proposed WCCTF, ZSL held meetings with WCS to discuss project overlap and potential to collaborate on the National IWT Committee. ZSL and WCS have tentatively agreed on the principles of collaboration. As a result, ZSL and WCS will have a meeting with the National IWT Committee (15th November) to discuss the expansion of the committee to include a representative 'secretary' from ZSL and the incorporation of the WCCTF's activities into the National IWT Committee's agenda.

Activity 2.5: To support Mongolia's presence at international conferences, ZSL coordinated the attendance of Mongolia's MET Vice Minister Batbayar Ts., Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Tsogtbaatar D., and Senior Officer of the MET's Climate Change and Foreign Cooperation Department Ms Ariuntuya D. to this year's London Conference on IWT. ZSL also supported the participation of two representatives from national NGO Spirit Mongolia to attend the conference side-event 'Community Voices' in addition to the two-day conference.

Output 3. A capable Community Surveillance Network (CSN), gathering vital intelligence and raising public awareness on 'wildlife trafficking at project sites.

Activity 3.1 – 3.4: During the October visit to Zamiin-Uud and Hangi, ZSL met with soum police authorities to discuss the establishment of the Community Surveillance Network (CSN), and the training and recruitment of public police officers. ZSL has already held meetings with the MGEC to discuss their involvement in the CSN and have agreed upon their delivery of baseline sociological surveys at project sites. Currently planned for November/December.

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.

Unfortunately, the project officially commenced during Mongolia's biggest national festival (Naadam) when many Mongolians partake in national celebrations, weddings, spiritual gatherings and their annual holidays. As a result, it is very difficult to communicate with project stakeholders during July and August. For example, key officials of the CGA, and NPA were all on their annual leave, causing delays in arranging initial project meetings, subsequently preventing the implementation of project activities until September onwards. This holiday period

also required longer recruitment to hire the law enforcement project officer, which as a result was only finalised by the end of September. Fortunately, established working relationships with key law enforcement agencies has facilitated the effective delivery of current planned Year 1 activities so that delivery of overall Year 1 milestones is not expected to be affected.

During the project planning no multi law-enforcement agency existed. As discussed in Section 1, in March 2018, WCS established a National IWT Committee, and discussions are underway on collaboration and the incorporation of proposed WCCTF activities into the Committee. This is currently seen by WCS and ZSL as a positive development as it allows for a collaborative effort from Mongolia's leading NGOs working on IWT to partner with Mongolia's key law enforcement agencies to present a unified front in establishing this multi-agency task-force. This established committee and ZSL-WCS collaboration also has the additional benefit that it might be expected to reduce costs and speed up the achievement (and support additional achievements) of WCCTF-related objectives.

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?

Recruitment of a country manager is in progress. ZSL in-country and UK-based staff are working together to minimise impacts on project delivery.

Project leader Gitanjali Bhattacharya has moved department within ZSL and is now Head of International Fundraising. As a result, Monica Wrobel (Head of Asia) will be changed to project leader in the interim until the country manager is hired (expected in early 2019). ZSL is planning to submit a change request to LTSI this November to confirm these changes.

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.**