



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



(due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020)

<b>Project reference:</b>	398
<b>Project title:</b>	Securing Mongolia's Borders and Communities against Wildlife Trafficking
<b>Country(ies):</b>	Mongolia
<b>Lead organisation:</b>	Zoological Society of London (ZSL)
<b>Collaborator(s):</b>	UK Border Force (UKBF), Customs General Authority of Mongolia (CGA), National Police Authority of Mongolia (NPA), Mongolian Gender Equality Centre (MGEC)
<b>Project leader:</b>	Monica Wrobel
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1):</b>	30 April 2020 – 30 September 2020 HYR3
<b>Project website/blog/social media:</b>	<a href="http://www.zsl.org/mongolia">www.zsl.org/mongolia</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. Effective Border Detector Dog (BDD) Programme incentivised and capable of intercepting wildlife trafficking at Mongolia's vulnerable border crossings.**

**Activity 1.1:** In June, the project team (two ZSL staff and a national consultant for Community Surveillance Network (CSN)) visited Bichigt Border Checkpoint, the project site in Sukhbaatar aimag's Erdenetsagaan soum (1180 km from the capital and 61 km from Erdenetsagaan soum). We had two stakeholder meetings: one with Erdenetsagaan stakeholders (16 individuals representing soum government, and local community), and the second with law enforcement (LE) officers at Bichigt (13 officers from Customs, Border Defense and Special Inspection Agency). At meetings, ZSL presented IWT project results and key findings of "*Silent Steppe II: Mongolia's Wildlife Trade Crisis. Ten years later*" report, and facilitated discussions to obtain their views, learn about current environmental problems, including IWT. The team had individual meetings with the Erdenetsagaan Governor, an Intelligence officer based in Erdenetsagaan, the Chairman of Citizen's Representative Khural (CRK), the Secretary of Soum CRK, and the Head of Soum Police. Also, ZSL handed over a dog kennel (dimension: 190 : 300 : 200 cm) and 58-inch TV screen to Bichigt Authority for use as an information display screen in the Border Checkpoint hall. To support evidence gathering duties of the Soum public police officer, ZSL provided him with an iPad.

**Activity 1.6:** In September, ZSL Mongolia organized an incentivization system workshop bringing 13 dog (K9) professionals representing the CGA, Detector Dog Training Center, General Executive Agency of Court Decision, Professional Union for Detector Dogs (PUDD), NPA, Police Detector Dog School, Civil Aviation Authority of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar Central Post Office, National Emergency Management Agency and State Special Security Department. The purpose of the event was to present and discuss preliminary results of a rapid survey conducted by PUDD on the existing incentivization system practice among the dog handlers

and to agree on follow-up steps towards improving the performance evaluation metrics for dog handlers. The participants approved the survey findings of the lack of a K9 performance incentivization system and agreed to cooperate to standardize the incentivisation system to be complied with by all K9 organizations in Mongolia. The workshop provided an opportunity for the professionals to share common challenges, including communication problems with their superiors, who lack understanding of K9 operation requirements. The parties agreed on the following actions:

- Commenting on the current draft incentivization system.
- Revising the dog handler evaluation metrics based on the comments.
- Preparing to join the International Detector Dog Union.
- Searching for the president of the National K9 Union.
- Recruiting an expert on standards to work on performance evaluation and incentivization and getting the draft standard approved by the National Authority of Standardization and Metrics.

The workshop served as an essential kick-off activity for K9 professionals to strengthen information-sharing and collaboration, with the goal of becoming a recognized professional union of detector dog experts.

**Activity 1.7:** In June 2019 the Chief detector dog instructor of UKBF conducted 2 weeks of training for customs detector dogs and their handlers. ZSL is drafting a training monitoring report on the results. The survey on outcomes is planned for last quarter of 2020 to compare the baseline with post-training impact.

**Activity 1.8:** ZSL has been communicating with UKBF about finalizing the UKBF recommendation report and agreed on the report's content outline. The UKBF specialists visited Mongolia and the Customs border checkpoint in 2018 and provided the initial report in 2019.

## **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.**

**Activity 2.3:** ZSL keeps promoting the use of Sorgog, the existing IWT app, through regular training and re-training of LE officers. The project supported the creation of awareness-raising tools, including a promotional video about ways to collect IWT information from community members and another video about "Sorgog" to increase awareness of wildlife identification methods and associated regulations governing illegal trade and poaching. The updated Sorgog app has also been translated into English.

**Activity 2.4 and 2.5:** Due to Covid -19 pandemics, international travel to support Mongolia's presence at international IWT conferences were canceled. Therefore, ZSL plans to request a change of the activities under Output 2.

**Activity 2.6:** To monitor the performance of the public police officers (PPO) following training, ZSL Mongolia signed a contract with the local authorities to receive quarterly reports from them. The project receives the reports in a timely manner.

**Activity 2.7:** Following the June fieldwork and the desk review, the national consultant for CSN produced a report with a set of recommendations for working with local stakeholders to reduce IWT and increase community security. The project shared the report with PPOs and government authorities in three border sites.

## **Output 3. A capable Community Surveillance Network (CSN), gathering vital intelligence**

**and raising public awareness on 'wildlife trafficking at project sites.**

**Activity 3.2:** ZSL Mongolia organized a CSN training between July 20-21 for PPOs from three project sites (two from Zamiin Uud, one from Erdenetsagaan, and one from Khatanbulag) and representatives from CRK from Zamiin Uud soum and Erdenetsagaan soum (Bichigt). The purpose of the training was to increase the role of public police and the CRK's oversight for creating the CSN amongst the local community and intercepting poaching and IWT. During the training, each public police officer presented their work, and exchanged information, identified challenges and discussed ways to address the issues. ZSL introduced a new reporting template for PPOs and agreed to use it for future reporting. The national CSN consultant, delivered the training. Her topics covered ways to successfully engage with the local community, participatory methods to collect information and cooperate with community members. Each PPO drafted his/her work plan for 2020. The project staff committed to provide PPOs with awareness-raising materials, basic tools and to support field trips financially in order to reach rural herders as part of work plans. Following the training, the project procured three long-distance binoculars and five police body cameras and delivered these to PPOs to support their operations.

**Activity 3.3:** Content for three videos was developed, covering IWT regulations, IWT legal sanctions and the CITES. This was shared with all 21 provinces of Mongolia via the NPA's social media platform, which was then shared 801 times and viewed 64,100 times. The project commissioned three IWT awareness-raising posters. The production of another awareness-raising video clip is underway. ZSL has been cooperating with the Ecological Police Department on awareness-raising materials, explicitly targeting the public to provide information on how to report environmental crimes and infringements and how to claim their rewards. This information will be shared with PPOs at the target sites and all the provincial-level police for further use.

**Activity 3.4:** ZSL signed a contract with the Mongolian Gender Equality Center (MGEC), who conducted the baseline survey in 2018. The social survey will compare the baseline levels of the border community's IWT understanding and their perceptions about community security with the late 2020 condition. This survey will use the same methods as the baseline study under the cooperation framework agreed between ZSL and MGEC.

**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.**

Delays and cancellation of international travels for several project activities.

**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.**

Due to Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, the Government of Mongolia restricted public gatherings until October 1<sup>st</sup> of 2020 and is still enforcing international travel bans, thus, several project events had to be postponed. For these reasons, the activities involving international travel (2.4, and 2.5) are unlikely to occur during the project lifetime. Therefore, ZSL plans to propose necessary adjustments and reflect these in the budget, which will be described in the Change Request Form in details. In the reporting period, snow leopard and bear specimens' seizures increased in the urban markets and entry points to the capital city. The increased rate might

indicate rural income shortage due to the COVID-caused cashmere price fall. On the other hand, it could also be credited to the effective operation of the new EPD.

**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: Not yet

Formal change request submitted: Not yet

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. 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 IWT Challenge Fund management, monitoring, or financial procedures?**

No other issues to raise.

**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.**