



Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Half Year Report (due 31st October 2020)

Project reference	IWT 058
Project title	Securing Africa's ivory: Developing gold-standard stockpile management systems
Country(ies)	Uganda, Ethiopia, Malawi
Lead organisation	EPI Foundation
Partners(s)	EWCA Ethiopia, UWA Uganda, DNPW Malawi
Project leader	Ruth Musgrave
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	April 2020-September 2020, (HYR3)
Project website/blog/social media	www.elephantprotectioninitiative.org www.stopivory.org @EPIAfrica https://www.facebook.com/elephantprotectioninitiative/ https://www.instagram.com/elephantprotectioninitiative/?hl=en

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).

Progress on the project between 1st April 2020– 30th September 2020, has not been significant and we are currently evaluating with our project partners, if we can complete the work within the project period.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on both the EPIF and our partners operations and ability to implement activities. This will be detailed in section 2a.

Within the first 6 months of Year 3 for *Output 1*: Two complementary tools for improving storeroom security and management: 1) Guidelines for Ivory Storerooms from minimum to gold award standards, relevant to conditions typically found in EPI countries, are published. 2) A template Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Storeroom management and chain of custody (CoC) from point of seizure to decentralised and centralised storerooms

- The Gold Standards document is available on the EPI website in English, French and Portuguese for free download. During the time frame there have been 89 online views. Additionally, we have shared them with partners within other projects including TRACE, and LWT.
- The Gold Standards document is also being referenced by the CITES working group on ivory stockpile management, as a recommended resource.

- Template Standard Operating Procedures have been developed – these have taken the Gold Standard document, and adapted them into a slightly different format for an operating procedure. These are available in English, French and Portuguese. They are not yet available on the website but will be after field testing.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on international travel, we are having to develop new ways to train people on the Gold Standards and the Assessment phase. Therefore, we are in the process of developing a training video for Gold Standard Storeroom Assessments. This will be filmed in part in Kenya, and at the UK at a Navy base where there are comparable storeroom facilities and our Gold Standards technical expert (Philip Stewart) can be filmed explaining the Assessment. Unfortunately filming an actual ivory storeroom has not been possible.
- The Gold Standard Assessment tool has been refined in excel. To facilitate data collection and reporting, we are developing a Gold Standard Assessment App. This app will lead the user through the Assessment questions, with simple Yes/No type answers for each question, it will allow the taking of photographs as well. The data will be converted into an automatic report of the Assessment. Where possible, a list of improvements required will be automatically generated. The report will provide the basis of a full Assessment report.
- In addition to Nigeria, Angola and Cote d'Ivoire working towards meeting the Gold Standards, we have received new funding to support Gabon to work towards the Gold Standards.

Within the first 6 months of Year 3 for Output 2: Improved Ivory storeroom management and security in three partner countries (Uganda, Malawi and Ethiopia).

Uganda:

The installation of the final improvements to the storeroom, including expanding the central storeroom and strengthening the field storerooms has moved forward slowly. Though the procurement of equipment including fire extinguishers, has been slowed due to shops being closed, supply chains disrupted due to Covid-19 lockdown between March and August 2020, and then travel has been restricted to deliver the items to the national parks. However it is anticipated that all the improvements to storerooms will be completed by December 2020.

The developed Standard Operating Procedures for the storeroom have been agreed upon at technical level, incorporated in the General UWA Standard Operating Procedures and submitted to the UWA Board of Trustees for review and approval. The new UWA Board of Trustees was inaugurated in July 2020, and the SOPs are on the Agenda for their review and approval, though it is uncertain when this will happen. However, where possible, some aspects of the SOPs are being implemented in daily work. Training on the SOPs would ordinarily be undertaken once the SOPs have been endorsed, however, since it is highly unlikely that the Board will make substantial changes in the draft, we shall plan for training on SOPs in the January – March 2021.

Malawi:

All the identified improvements to the storerooms have been completed. The model SOPs for the management of the storerooms have been tailored to meet Malawi's needs and are currently undergoing review by the DNPW senior team. It is anticipated that they will be finalised by the end of October 2020. Due to international travel restrictions, a local security firm has been identified to undertake the final Assessment of the storerooms to verify that minimum standards are now being met.

Ethiopia:

Progress remains slow and work has halted during the pandemic as well as civil strife in Ethiopia. EWCA, the principal partner, has had to enforce a policy of priority work only. All

ivory-related work was deemed non-priority for the last 6-months due to COVID, especially between regions (Chebera and Kafta), as well as in Addis Ababa. This has not yet been lifted by the Government, and therefore the strengthening of the storerooms has not advanced.

We have been working with the EWCA team on the SOP development, the model SOPs were sent to them, and we have developed a questionnaire for them to complete to start the discussion process. However, it has not progressed. We are in discussion with the Director General of EWCA on how and when we can advance the project. They are not open to recruiting a consultant to work with them on the SOPs as it is considered an internal document, therefore time needs to be carved out from within the EWCA team's workload to focus on the SOP development. The EPI Foundation Horn of Africa Lead, Greta Iori, is in regular contact with the Director General at EWCA and we are trying hard to get the project back on track, however until ivory work is considered priority or the restriction is lifted this remains hard.

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 COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact in undertaking our work, since March 2020, due to the required restrictions enforced to limit the spread of the virus. This has included Wildlife Department offices closing their offices for a time period (for example in Uganda), followed reducing the number of working days for staff to restrict the numbers in the office (in all 3 countries). Working restrictions to promote a safe working environment are still in place, with limited numbers allowed to attend socially distanced meetings.

Additionally, all travel has been majorly impacted. Travel within Malawi, Uganda and Ethiopia was initially banned for all non-essential work. Since August the restrictions are gradually being lifted in Uganda and Malawi. National travel in Ethiopia however remains banned. International travel during the reporting period (April -September 2020) has not been possible, the work whilst is important is not considered as essential, and the UK FCO advises against international travel. Additionally, the quarantine measures are unworkable, and travel insurance to include COVID19 is unavailable.

Within the EPI Foundation, we have had to take cost cutting measures to minimise the impact of COVID19 on our work. This has included some of our UK staff we have used the UK Government furlough scheme during March – August 2020, our permanent consultant staff have agreed to a reduced working week and salary, and we have relinquished our London office and are all working from home.

Due to this, we have been developing new ways to approach our work with EPI Countries and with the Gold Standards work, with a focus on the provision of remote support. We are developing remote training tools and using zoom for meetings with Government partners. In Malawi, we have identified a local security firm who will be able to undertake the final Assessment, if travel is not possible between now and March 2021.

We are currently evaluating if we need a no-cost extension. Whilst activities in both Uganda and Ethiopia have been delayed, Uganda should be able to complete the activities in the next 6 months. However, in Ethiopia, it is uncertain of when ivory work can be formally relaunched, and we expect it will not be imminently. Therefore, we will likely submit a financial change request form in the coming weeks. Whilst the change request will be for the whole project, we hope to close activities in Malawi and Uganda by March 2021.

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

Formal change request submitted:	No
Received confirmation of change acceptance	NA

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?

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. 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.**