



Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Half Year Report

(due 31st October 2019)

Project reference:	IWT065
Project title:	Strengthening Liberia's response to illegal wildlife trade
Country(ies):	Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone
Lead organisation:	Fauna & Flora International
Collaborator(s):	Forest Development Authority (FDA), Liberian Law Enforcement Sub-Committee (LESC), Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF), Conservation International (CI), Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue and Protection (LCRP), Society for the Conservation of Nature in Liberia (SCNL)
Project leader:	Nikki Chapman
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1):	31/10/2019, (HYR1)
Project website/blog/social media:	

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 started on 1 July 2019 (Y1, Q2) following a change request. Due to this change, progress towards activities that were originally timetabled for delivery in Y1, Q1 has been reported for Q2 instead. And, where noted, some activities have been reassigned for delivery in Q3.

Output 1

1.1: Run a national stakeholder workshop to develop a national strategy to tackle IWT in line with regional priorities

- A national stakeholder workshop has been planned for December 2019/January 2020. Planning for this workshop is currently underway and a suitable date is being discussed with partners. At least one meeting has been held with project partners to propose dates for the workshop. This workshop will initiate the development of a national strategy to tackle IWT in line with regional priorities.
- Furthermore, a draft protocol for wildlife confiscation and arrests of IWT suspects was developed during a workshop¹ held from the 12-13 August 2019 at the Forestry Development Authority (FDA). The workshop was attended by FFI's Country Manager and Project Manager for the Ziama-Wonegizi-Wologizi Landscape. During the workshop in Monrovia, participants – including members of a newly established Wildlife Crime Task Force (WCTF - made up of wildlife authorities, security agencies and sanctuaries), judiciary, local and national government authorities and NGOs, came

¹ <https://www.liberianobserver.com/news/fda-partners-develop-protocols-to-enhance-wildlife-crime-task-force/>

together to draw up procedures for the i) confiscation/seizure of live animals, bushmeat and wildlife parts/specimen; ii) arrest and iii) prosecution of suspects under different scenarios, with examples from on-going and past cases.

Although the protocol development workshop was supported under another grant to partner organisations, Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF) and Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue and Protection (LCRP), the draft protocol, which will be reviewed and finalised at the national IWT strategy workshop, serves as a starting point for the development of a collaborative strategy for IWT in Liberia. 1.2: Host four LESC meetings and technical sessions for stakeholders to develop the regulations for the new wildlife law and organise the national strategy workshop.

- FFI attended the meeting of the Law Enforcement Sub-Committee (LESC) of the Species Working Group, Liberia (SWGL). The meeting was hosted by WCF and held at the offices of the Society for the Conservation of Nature in Liberia (SCNL - a partner on this grant) in Monrovia. During the meeting, FFI updated members on progress made in the recruitment of a local legal firm for the development of wildlife regulations. This will be supported under another grant. Negotiations are on-going and the work is expected to commence before the end of 2019. The meeting was attended by several NGOs, government security and wildlife authorities and a delegation of the EU. FFI was represented by its Country Manager. The LESC meeting is held on a monthly or bi-monthly basis and the hosting is circulated among members. FFI will be hosting at least two of these meetings during the first year of this grant.

1.3: Via regional transboundary committee/taskforce platforms, develop transboundary IWT coordination agreements and information sharing plans to enable informed and coordinated action acting on regional intelligence.

- FFI also attended the meeting of the Transboundary Law Enforcement Technical Committee (TLETC) of the Tai-Grebo-Krahn-Sapo (TGKS) transboundary landscape (between Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire on the 24-25 September 2019 in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. The Committee is one of three Technical sub-committees of the TGKS Transboundary (regional) Steering Committee and is focused on establishing a transboundary collaborative law enforcement strategy for the protection of the landscape between Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire. At this meeting, issues of illegal cross-border trade between Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire were discussed as well as the needed capacity for both countries for coordinated action in tackling IWT and a plan for information sharing. The need for capacity building for law enforcement personnel and a review of the wildlife laws of both countries for stronger coordination and harmonisation were discussed. The meeting was attended by members of the TLETC (made up of selected government representatives from both countries), NGOs (WCF and FFI – who are observers) and other local and regional government authorities who also were observers. FFI's Technical Specialist, Protected Area Management, Constant Ndjassi attended the workshop, and the attendance of the County Attorney for Grand Gedeh County (one of the counties where Sapo National Park is situated in south-east Liberia, which borders Cote d'Ivoire) was partly supported under this grant.

Activities under 1.4 were not planned for this half year.

Output 2

2.1: Design and complete a capacity assessment of key Liberian authorities and institutions responsible for law enforcement (e.g. FDA, border customs, security, police and judiciary.)

- This will be started early next year (Y1, Q4). However, a Liberian student from the African Leadership University in Rwanda recently completed an internship placement with FFI in August 2019. During his internship, he carried out an assessment of the level of awareness of wildlife and environmental laws by government institutions working in the forestry and environment sector. He interviewed government officials from various ministries and agencies, including the FDA, Environmental Protection Agency, Ministry of Mines and Energy and the Ministry of Justice. A report will be produced will be used to inform future works and strategies once the data analysis is completed.

Activities under 2.2-2.13 were not planned for this half year.

Output 3

3.1: Design key IWT messaging and produce a series of awareness raising campaign materials (posters, info-graphics, billboards, murals, social media posts etc.) to promote public engagement.

- A communication strategy has been developed for the Sapo landscape and a communications strategy for the wider Ziama-Wonegezi-Wologizi landscape is underway. These will feed into an outreach plan under this grant, which will be reviewed by the LESC and finalised during the national IWT strategy workshop.
- Liberia's protected species posters and flyers were designed earlier this year to commemorate the International Day of Biodiversity in May 2019. These posters and the flyers, which highlight excerpts of the wildlife law on penalties for wildlife crime, will be reprinted under this grant. The design of other posters, including species-specific information (mostly pictorial, with short messages and facts about the species) and messages highlighting negative impacts and consequences of illegal trade and persecution of wildlife are underway. T-shirts and posters were also distributed on the World Chimpanzee Day on 17 July 2019. The distribution of these posters will continue across the country – in major cities, protected areas, transboundary areas and ports (airports and seaports).

3.6: Survey a random sample of campaign material distribution sites at least annually to gather information on outreach impact and monitor changes in perception.

Activities under 3.2-3.5 were not planned for this half year.

Output 4

4.3: Work in partnership with FDA to determine an enforcement baseline.

- This is expected to happen at the beginning of every year. An initial baseline will be collected during the first quarter of 2020 and thereafter a review of progress made will be carried out. This will mostly monitor and assess progress made in the implementation of the national IWT strategy - application of the protocols, number of arrests made and wildlife specimen/live animals seized/confiscated, types of species traded, location, agencies involved, response time, frequency of reporting etc. These will eventually feed into the database that will be developed under this grant. During this period discussions have been held on how best to support the Wildlife Confiscation Unit set up recently at the FDA. Under the LESC, we will be co-defining the baseline indicators and other relevant information available from the FDA and other security agencies.

4.4: Collate monthly enforcement agency effort (days of ranger patrols, days of mobile unit patrols, days of FDA officer intelligence gathering effort).

- This activity is on-going as our field teams in Sapo National Park (SNP and Wonegizi Proposed Protected Area (WPPA) are supporting the law enforcement rangers of the FDA in collecting threat data. We will further improve on data collection through the support of the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), with the development of a protocol for using SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting tool) in law enforcement patrolling in SNP and WPPA. A training-of-trainer in SMART will be held in Sapo in November 2019, to be facilitated by ZSL. Thereafter, the technical team and law enforcement rangers trained will implement a training for rangers in Wonegizi. In addition, the establishment of a patrol grid system have been planned to commence in Sapo and Wonegizi in 2020.

Activities under 4.1, 4.2 and 4.5 were not planned for this half year.

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.

- 1) Late commencement of the grant. There was a 3-month delay in the commencement of the project, partly due to the delay in recruitment of the Upper Guinea Programme Manager (see below). A change request was made to LTS, including a slight modification to the budget. This was approved by LTS and the grant commenced on the 1st of July 2019. As a result, activities have had a 3-month shift and activities initially planned for the second quarter of 2019 were moved to the third quarter and following activities subsequently delayed by 3 months.
- 2) Staff turnover and long recruitment process: The recruitment for the role of the Upper Guinea Programme Manager, responsible for overseeing the management of this grant took longer than expected. However, the role has now been filled and Dr. Nikki Chapman assumed the position in July 2019.

The process for recruitment of the project coordinator role has commenced and we expect to have this role filled by the first quarter of 2020. In the meantime, the FFI Country Manager, Dr. Mary Molokwu-Odozi has been responsible for the coordination of the grant in-country.

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: Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance **Yes**

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?