



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

Project reference	IWT-066
Project title	Legal Intelligence for Cheetah Illicit Trade
Country(ies)	Ethiopia, Somalia/Somaliland, Yemen
Lead organisation	Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF)
Partners(s)	International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Legal Atlas (LA)
Project leader	Dr. Laurie Marker, Executive Director, CCF
Report date and number	October 2020, (HYR2)
Project website/blog/social media	www.cheetah.org,

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).

I. During the first half of Year 2, LICIT Project partner Legal Atlas completed work on four draft national legal agendas (Activity 1.3). At the same time, partners CCF and IFAW reviewed and commented on the draft country assessments prepared by Legal Atlas during Year 1 (Activity 1.2). These sets of documents (assessments plus agendas) are being delivered to project country counterparts through virtual conferences that began with an introductory webinar in June, 2020. This marks the achievement of Outputs 1.2 and 1.3 in the project logframe. Legal Atlas remains engaged with counterparts and legal focal points in each country to review and validate the content of both types of documents to ensure they are contextually sound and free of technical errors. An example draft assessment and agenda (for Somalia) are attached as Annexes A and B. The other country assessments and agendas can be provided upon request. *Because these drafts are still undergoing validation, they are for informational purposes only and should not be further disseminated.* Once the assessments and agendas are finalized, Legal Atlas will begin preparing legal Guidebooks for the project training workshops (Activity 1.4/Output 1.4). Although this activity was planned for Year 1, the delay does not affect the project workplan since the training workshops have been postponed until 2021 due to the COVID pandemic. The Guidebooks will be finalized for delivery at the training workshops, as originally planned.

II. Despite pandemic-related limits that prevented travel and in person meetings, and difficulties in maintaining virtual contacts in project countries (largely due to internet access issues), the partners continued to make progress in building the LICIT networks (Output 2.1), which is a continuing activity throughout the project (Activity 2.3).

- In Ethiopia, the project took advantage of the formation of a new Bureau of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change in the Somali Regional State government to develop new stakeholder contacts who will have more direct responsibility for wildlife protection issues. The process of establishing the new Bureau was supported by the Ethiopia GEF program; the LICIT partners are discussing possible cooperation with the GEF program to strengthen the capacity and functioning of the new Bureau as it begins operations.

- With funding support from UNODC and the Ethiopia GEF program under its “Enhanced Management and Enforcement of Ethiopia’s Protected Area Estate” project, LICIT partners are organizing a joint meeting of wildlife enforcement officials from Ethiopia and Somaliland. The impetus for this meeting was a recent series of law enforcement operations in the two countries that resulted in confiscation of 34 cheetah cubs and one leopard cub. This event will include both national and local level officials and focus on developing bilateral communication and cooperation along the Ethiopia/Somaliland border region, which is a critical area for cheetah trafficking. The meeting is scheduled for November, 2020 in Ethiopia and can be organized in compliance with Ethiopian government COVID rules. The meeting provides a substantial benefit to the LICIT Project as an opportunity to expand the national networks in both countries, in particular through including local officials who are on the front lines in the effort to end cheetah trafficking, and to establish a stronger basis for cross-border cooperation against trafficking. The concept note for this event is attached as Annex C.
- The partners also expanded the number of stakeholders in Somalia, which was a significant development as most contacts to date had been controlled by a single official. Some of the new contacts are at higher levels of government, including an adviser to the Prime Minister, which should help facilitate Somalia’s collaboration with the LICIT project. LICIT partners are engaging the new contacts to validate the Somalia legal assessment and pursue further expansion of the Somalia national LICIT network.
- Partners continued efforts to expand contacts in Yemen, but the complex political situation there remains an obstacle. Several potential contacts were not pursued because they turned out to be associated with anti-government factions. As in Somalia, recent opportunities for contact with higher level officials should facilitate validation of the Yemen legal assessment and expansion of a stakeholder network.

III. The LICIT law enforcement training workshops (Output 2.3) were to have taken place in the first half of year 2. However, due to COVID-related restrictions, including travel bans, quarantine requirements, and limits on the size of in-person gatherings, it was not feasible to organize these events as originally planned. Partners decided to postpone the workshops until early 2021 (Q4 of year 2), with corresponding adjustments to the project timeline. Due to the persistence of the pandemic, it remains uncertain whether the workshops can be held on the new dates. If they cannot, the workshops will be rescheduled in project year 3, or training will be conducted virtually, per the partners’ mitigation strategy (see Part 2a below). Either option would require further adjustments to the project timeline and M&E plan, and a budget amendment, but could be accommodated within the project workplan. The LICIT partners have begun planning for the workshops and developing a curriculum (Activities 2.5/2.6/2.6.1). Concept notes for the workshops are attached as Annex D.

IV. Per the project timeline, LICIT partners have begun conceptual discussions on community outreach and awareness campaigns that will be developed for implementation in project year 3 (Output 3.1), and have entered discussions with the Ethiopia GEF program on a possible joint community engagement initiative that would complement and expand upon LICIT activities and objectives.

V. In Somaliland, CCF has continued to develop the informal LICIT partnerships with civil society veterinarians organizations formed in project Year 1. The objective of these partnerships is to train local veterinarians to help provide rapid assessments and emergency care for cheetahs confiscated from illegal trade and assist with caring for cheetahs at the CCF refuge in Somaliland. In addition to increasing the survival rate of confiscated cheetahs, training these veterinarians will help CCF build a network of contacts to facilitate outreach to rural communities impacted by wildlife trafficking. The past half year has seen a more specific focus on training opportunities for women veterinarians (Output 3.2).

VI. Over the past half year the LICIT Project has continued to establish informal partnerships to leverage resources and support to extend Project activities and expand the Project’s impact.

- The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Secretariat has agreed to provide funding to build on the LICIT legal analysis by expanding it to other IGAD member countries. CMS funds will support legal research and analysis focusing on compliance with Multilateral Environment Agreements and on identifying areas for regional legal harmonization in support of cross-border

cooperation on wildlife protection, including through Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs). IGAD, through the Horn of Africa Wildlife Enforcement Network (HAWEN), will provide institutional support for the project. This work will directly benefit the LICIT project by strengthening the regional anti-trafficking network. The project will begin immediately upon receipt of funds from CMS. A concept note is attached as Annex E.

- As noted in II and IV above, the Ethiopia GEF programme has agreed to work with the LICIT partners to help fund a joint meeting of wildlife enforcement officials from Ethiopia and Somaliland, and CCF is in discussions with the GEF program about GEF support for possible joint community development initiatives.
- UNODC agreed to work with CCF to organize a webinar for the Somali government on the process of requesting/conducting a country assessment based on the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) Toolkit. The ICCWC participants (UNODC, CITES Secretariat, INTERPOL, World Bank, and World Customs Organization) created the Toolkit to provide a framework through which the capacity of national institutions to prevent and respond to wildlife crime can be analyzed to identify technical assistance needs. An ICCWC-funded assessment is the first step for countries to unlock aid from the ICCWC organizations. Such an assessment in Somalia will benefit the LICIT Project by potentially bringing in additional capacity building initiatives that would magnify the impact of LICIT training and network building activities. The webinar should take place before the end of 2020.
- LICIT partners have also begun building an informal partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). USFWS recently concluded a long term strategic planning exercise that identified the Horn of Africa region and cheetahs among its priorities. USFWS has proposed three possible immediate intervention strategies:
 - Supporting behavior change in source and demand countries;
 - Strengthening law enforcement, and;
 - Creating a regional cheetah conservation network.These strategies correspond closely to LICIT Project objectives. USFWS solicited input from LICIT partners during the planning exercise and has requested further input on potential programs that could provide opportunities for collaborative efforts with the LICIT project.

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 Year 1 Annual Report Review for the LICIT project requested that “details on COVID-19 related delays and mitigation actions should be provided” in this half-year report. The COVID pandemic has been the most significant unexpected development and most notable problem faced by the project over the past six months. As described above, the pandemic has had a substantial impact on project activities, preventing travel for fieldwork needed to build LICIT networks and forcing postponement of the project training workshops.

The partners’ initial mitigation strategy for the workshops was to reschedule them for early 2021 (Q4 of Year 2), since funding for the workshops is included in the Year 2 budget, but it is still not certain they can be held at that time. If not, one alternative would be to move the workshops to project year 3. This would require rebudgeting and DEFRA’s agreement to shift project funds from Year 2 to Year 3. Another alternative would be to conduct as much of the training as possible virtually, or through a combination of virtual and in person sessions. IFAW has successful experiences with virtual training that could serve as a guide for LICIT events. Depending on when and how virtual events could be organized and scheduled, this alternative could also require rebudgeting and transfer of funds to Year 3.

Postponement of the workshops has pushed back the project timeline, which could impact the ability to implement project trainings that are designed to follow on from the workshops, especially community-

based training such as community guards (Output 2.5). Long-term COVID related travel and quarantine restrictions could also impact partners' ability to conduct community engagement activities (Activities 3.1, 3.2). In mitigation, partners will again try to conduct community-focused project activities virtually, either directly or by working through local partners, but this would face the additional challenge of generally poor internet access in rural areas of the project countries where the target communities are located.

The LICIT partners' mitigation strategy in response to the inability to conduct fieldwork has been to rely on virtual means to find and contact potential stakeholders and network members. As noted in Part 1 above, this has achieved some success, but it is clear that more could have been accomplished had travel and physical presence in the project countries been possible, especially at the community level. The partners intend to resume fieldwork as soon as they are able to do so. An encouraging sign is that the partners have received permission to organize the bilateral meeting of Ethiopian and Somaliland officials discussed in Part 1 above. Conduct of the event will be subject to Ethiopian government COVID rules regarding visitors to Ethiopia and in person gatherings.

Any COVID-forced changes to project activities or budget will need to be reflected through changes in the project logframe, workplan, and M&E measures.

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, the impact of COVID on the project was noted in the Year 1 Annual Report
Formal change request submitted:	No
Received confirmation of change acceptance	N/A

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

**Currently we do not expect to underspend for Year 2, but this will depend on whether it is possible to hold the law enforcement training workshops in early 2021 (Q4). If it is not possible, we will either postpone the workshops until Project Year 3 or attempt to conduct virtual workshops beginning in Q4 and extending into Year 3 if necessary. Either approach would likely result in a significant underspend for Year 2, but we would request to transfer unspent funds to Year 3 to ensure delivery of the workshops.

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.**