



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

Project reference:	IWT072
Project title:	Reducing Demand for Marine Turtle Products in Nicaragua
Country(ies):	Nicaragua
Lead organisation:	Fauna & Flora International
Collaborator(s):	SEE Turtles; SOS Social Solutions (SOS); Eastern Pacific Hawksbill Initiative (ICAPO); National Turtle Network (NTN); World Wide Fund for Nature – UK (WWF-UK).
Project leader:	Alison Gunn
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1):	HYR2
Project website/blog/social media:	https://www.fauna-flora.org/projects/conserving-marine-turtles-eastern-pacific-nicaragua

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).

Project Management

During this period, adaptive management of the project has been coordinated through regular meetings of members of the Steering Committee (one full committee meeting, plus six sub-committee meetings) and in-country implementation team (bi-weekly). The Yr2 workplan and budget were reviewed by FFI in detail in May, to evaluate scheduling and budgetary impacts of Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions; this process identified a suite of adaptations to the design of project activities and monitoring (as outlined below) but no substantive changes to the project or overall Yr2 budget.

Output 1: Evidence-based behaviour change campaigns targeting three consumer profiles for marine turtle eggs and shell developed.

External specialist support to the project has been strengthened by the formal addition of SOS Social Solutions (SOS) as a project partner, with a key advisory role on monitoring and evaluating impact on attitudes, perceptions and behaviours, to inform adaptive management and maximise the impact of campaign interventions. The project team has also been strengthened through FFI's recruitment of a Programme Officer, Environmental Education & Behaviour Change, to replace the envisaged role of the National Turtle Network in coordinating campaign promoters and survey teams, refining monitoring plans and collating lessons learned. Both these changes have been submitted to and approved by the IWT Secretariat.

Building on the advances in Yr1, the evidence-based Theories of Change (TOCs - using templates developed by Rare) and associated strategic actions, monitoring plans and indicators

have been finalised for the five target consumer groups of eggs and shell (i.e. three identified pre-project, plus two identified as priorities during the Yr1 strategy development workshop). This process has benefitted from both internal and external expert review, with inputs from FFI's Head of Wildlife Trade and SOS's Projects Director.

The media agency contracted in Yr1 to lead the design and validation communications materials and messaging has continued this work throughout this period. They have made significant advances in the design of the campaign logos, slogans and plans for incorporating a range of media, graphic design, messages, events, communications channels and ways of involving key influencers, in line with the agreed strategic approach. The agency shared their creative concepts and proposals for the distinct phases of the campaign - inform, educate, call to action. They invited feedback from the project team through a series of meetings and presentations from April to July, and following which they have refined the agreed slogans, messages and materials.

Work to validate the effectiveness of these slogans, messages and materials through trials with focus groups was delayed due to Covid-19 risks associated with convening groups face-to-face. However, the design of the focus group validation process - i.e. number of people per group, location of participants, design of questions and software for data analysis - has been agreed, adapted for application virtually via group telephone interviews and Zoom meetings (~1.5hrs each session) and scheduled for Q3. A written manual has been produced to guide this process and ensure consistency.

The second communications agency with experience in behaviour change approaches and monitoring social change, has been contracted on complementary terms of reference. This agency, which also participated in the strategy development workshop in Yr1, is leading the collection of baseline data (under Output 3) and is coordinating as appropriate with the project's media agency with respect to the focus group validation process.

Output 2: Evidence-based targeted behaviour change campaign targeting three consumer profiles for marine turtle eggs and shell implemented.

At Steering Committee meetings in April and July, impacts of Covid-19 on project activities and schedule were evaluated. The two main adaptive management decisions taken are for the behaviour change campaign to have a reduced focus on demand for hawksbill shell from international tourists due to the collapse in international travel and an increased focus on use of digital communications to reach all target audiences. Campaign activities and associated monitoring are focused on three administrative departments in Nicaragua - Managua, Masaya and Chinandega - known hotspots for the consumption of eggs and shell (as corroborated by 2011 study of market availability). Activities are targeted towards priority consumer groups 'Don Jose' in all three departments, 'Dona Maria' at one pilot site and 'Rachel' via online communications only.

A suite of campaign channels and approaches are proposed, for implementation through this project and beyond, encompassing: visual materials displayed on buses, printed materials and clothing; radio infomercials and a radio novella to give the turtles a 'voice'; publication of a 'fanzine' linked to the novella; artistic competitions for songs, cartoons and a community mural; social mobilization and recognition of individuals and groups committed to not consuming turtle products (e.g. via social media); and engaging influencers, including working with a popular chef to design and popularise alternative recipes (i.e. substituting turtle eggs with ingredients with similar symbolic or cultural values, such as yucca or pork) working with companies (e.g. to produce branded sports gear), and working with church leaders to incorporate messages into sermons (in coordination with WWF-UK). Use of social media is highly important throughout, recognising the need to connect with people virtually due to Covid-19 restrictions, that there are 3.1 million users of social media in Nicaragua (almost 50% of the population, both male and female) and the increased use of social media throughout the pandemic.

Output 3: Behaviour change campaign monitoring used to assess impact and share learning regionally to promote innovation.

As well as validating proposed strategies and the effectiveness of communications messages and materials (under Output 1), the project monitoring and evaluation will measure the impact of the campaign through surveys pre- (i.e. baseline) and post-campaign implementation. Monitoring plans and SMART indicators have been finalised for each consumer group (in line with the TOCs defined under Output 1). Survey questionnaires have been designed for baseline data collection on knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. Targets linked to each indicator will be finalised following the completion and analysis of baseline monitoring. Specialists in monitoring social change, from the communications agency contracted under the project (as described above), are leading the collection of baseline data in coordination with FFI and the advisory inputs of SOS.

Collection of baseline data in Q1-2 was delayed due to Covid-19 and the need to adapt the data collection methods so they can be applied virtually. Alternative software options have been evaluated and revised methods and workplan (including virtual training for the data collection team) agreed. A trial of the survey questionnaires (sample size 30 participants) is underway to evaluate the questions posed, length of interview, and trial the software. SOS is supporting the agency in data analysis and interpretation.

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.

Notable lesson learnt: As described in our Yr1 report, the project team have been on a steep learning curve regarding social marketing and the Social and Behaviour Change Communications (SBCC) approach. Whilst there is now significantly increased capacity within the FFI team and therefore in Nicaragua about SBCC, in retrospect we believe that incorporating [time and budget for targeted training](#) at project inception would have been beneficial.

Notable problem encountered: The postponement of the strategy development workshop in Yr1 from November to January, meant that key activities were pushed back to the last two months of Y1 and have since been disrupted by the impacts of Covid-19.

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.

The pandemic has had significant impacts on both project context and implementation. Overall, although official figures for the number of cases of Covid-19 remains low in comparison to other nations, the true figures are likely to be higher.

The global pandemic has impacted an already fragile tourism industry in Nicaragua. There is very limited domestic tourism and no international travel - almost all flights remain suspended and some land borders (i.e. with Honduras) are closed. The majority of touristic markets (i.e. those selling hawkshell) have been closed for the period. Wholesale food markets, where turtle eggs are found for sale, have also closed intermittently. These factors will affect our ability to measure the project's impact, as consumer behaviours will have been significantly affected by market closures and travel restrictions and it will be difficult to unpick which

changes are due to the project versus the pandemic.

Meanwhile, the pandemic and associated quarantine measures has increased the number of hours people spend online, potentially increasing the reach and therefore impact of digital campaign activities (e.g. via social media).

Accordingly, the project team have reviewed the project logframe, activities, monitoring and budget, in the light of the adaptive management decisions needed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated national context. As mentioned above, due to the collapse in international travel, the project cannot avoid having a reduced focus on demand for hawksbill shell from international tourists and will therefore have a greater focus on target audiences inside Nicaragua. In addition, no massive events can be held as part of the campaign's approach. However, we are able to adapt the campaign to increase use of virtual / digital tools for data collection and to have an increased focus on use of digital communications to reach target audiences.

The pandemic has delayed the collection of baseline data and therefore the delivery of campaign activities themselves. Whilst baseline data collection on knowledge, attitudes and behaviour is now underway, therefore campaign activities can soon be launched, parallel surveys of market availability remain postponed. These market surveys - to characterise availability, hotspots and change (since 2011), and determine direct/indirect livelihood impacts of reduced demand - were originally scheduled for Yr1 Q4, but were delayed as markets closed due to the Covid-19 outbreak. The TOR, geographic scope (across 7 administrative departments) and lead researcher for this study were agreed in Y1 and the study team proposed a revised timetable for the surveys in Yr2 Q2 (July-September), corresponding with the peak season for availability of turtle eggs. However, these surveys can only be conducted in person and our risk assessment confirmed that risks related to Covid-19 could not be sufficiently mitigated. This activity therefore remains on hold until it becomes safer to visit the markets in person.

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: No

Formal change request submitted: No *(N.B. Issues related to Covid-19 have been relayed to LTS via a Change Request, but no substantive changes to the project's approach or logframe have been requested)*

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?
N/A

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.**