



Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Half Year Report

(due 31st October 2019)

Project reference:	IWT073
Project title:	Strengthening anti-poaching techniques and countering wildlife trafficking in Uganda
Country(ies):	Uganda
Lead organisation:	Wildlife Conservation Society
Collaborator(s):	
Project leader:	<i>Simon Nampindo</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1):	<i>31st October 2019 HYR1</i>
Project website/blog/social media:	https://uganda.wcs.org/strengthening-anti-poaching-techniques-and-countering-wildlife-trafficking.aspx

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).

In this project, WCS purposes to tackle key capacity gaps within the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and other security and law enforcement agencies in combating illegal wildlife trade. We are providing technical support, equipment and infrastructure to UWA to enhance their capacity to tackle wildlife crime at local and international levels. We are also working with the National Wildlife Crime Coordination Task Force (NWCCTF) to improve inter-agency coordination and cooperation among security and law enforcement agencies. Below are highlights of progress made since commencement of implementation by output.

Output 1: UWA’s capacity to gather intelligence, investigate, and conduct arrests at national and park level improves, resulting in increased prosecution of wildlife crime offenders

Under this output, we purposed to hire an IWT/CWT technical advisor by July 2019. An advert was published in one local daily, one regional weekly newspaper and on the internet. A number of applications were received, most of which were from within Uganda and a few were internationals. However, WCS didn’t find a suitable candidate among the applicants. Further circulated the advert via WCS networks and managed to identify a suitable candidate who is expected to commence work next quarter after completion of the recruitment process. In the meantime, we have drafted the terms of reference for the NWCCTF capacity needs assessment. This will be done concurrently with the NWCCTF needs assessment in Output 2. The technical advisor will oversee execution of this task once recruited.

We conducted a two-day training in the use of the online wildlife offenders’ database (OWODAT) for 42 UWA staff in September 2019. While this was meant to be a refresher training, many of the participants were newly recruited investigators whose responsibility includes wildlife offenders’ data capture. The training was successful and a field trip to update

the database has been planned for next quarter. Uganda Wildlife Authority Online Wildlife Offenders database manager in the legal depart has been engaged to conduct this work with technical support from WCS project team. From experience, we agreed that UWA should be in-charge to ensure protection of sensitive information and full control of the process in order to guarantee sustainability.

Due to the fact that UWA's Cellebrite intelligence software had expired, we purchased new licenses for the Cellebrite packages that UWA uses to conduct electronic forensic analysis and information extraction from cell phones and other electronic devices of arrested suspects. This technology is so critical to UWA's Wildlife Crime Unit as it facilitates continuity of intelligence gathering and analysis which are undoubtedly necessary in the effort to combat wildlife crime.

Output 2: NWCCTF (led by UWA) is operating effectively and contributing to improved IWT and CWT actions in Uganda, resulting in higher detection and combating of wildlife crime in Uganda

As indicated under output 1 above, the needs assessment to identify equipment needs of the NWCCTF will be conducted in the third quarter of year 1.

We facilitated quarterly meetings of the NWCCTF to finalise the standard operating procedures (SOP) and to initiate development of the national strategy to combat poaching, illegal wildlife trade and trafficking that the Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities (MTWA) is leading with technical support from WCS. As we wait for the CWT advisor to get on board, WCS together with MTWA identified and engaged a Ugandan consultant with impeccable experience in developing strategies as well as a good understanding of the subject matter to assist the MTWA to develop the national strategy on poaching, IWT and wildlife trafficking.

We conducted a training for NWCCTF members in the application of the CITES framework and processes involved, including the import and export permitting system for wildlife products. The training involved a trip to Murchison Falls National Park to expose the NWCCTF members to wildlife in order to appreciate the value of wildlife, the threats to wildlife and challenges that UWA faces in managing national parks and wildlife reserves. This trip also purposed to create a suitable environment and context for the members to develop trust and better inter personal relationships among themselves. During the training, Dr Akankwasah Barirega, the Commissioner for Wildlife at MTWA (which is the CITES management authority of Uganda), Charles Tumwesigye, the UWA Deputy Director Field Conservation and focal point person for the CITES scientific Authority, Douglas Kabagambe, the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) Customs Officer in charge of the seizure database management and monitoring of imports and exports of wildlife materials, and Issa Katwesige, in charge of plants permitting process at the Forest Sector Support Department, who are all members of the NWCCTF presented their experiences and lessons learned in implementing the CITES as well as introduced the different databases used by each institution to the members. In attendance, there were three females and fourteen males.

Output 3: Human wildlife conflict mitigation measures and livelihood initiatives led by communities around MFNP are scaled-up in furtherance of the implementation of the community-based park action plan to combat wildlife crime developed under the previous IWT Challenge Fund grant to WCS and IIED

We conducted two field visits to Murchison Falls Conservation Area to meet with the project beneficiaries (i.e. UWA, park adjacent communities represented by the community scouts, local leaders) to identify areas for trench excavation, and agree on the approach for implementing the wildlife scout, community livelihood enterprises and other human wildlife conflict mitigation interventions. Three parishes adjacent to Karuma Wildlife Reserve where there are existing community wildlife scout groups that have received very little or no support for their operations were identified for engagement in this project. In addition to receiving less support from UWA and other organizations working on the human wildlife conflict issue, the sites were chosen based on the high human wildlife conflict incidences reported to UWA. Two separate meetings were held with the scouts to initiate our interventions in the community. A total of 50 scouts

have been enlisted to participate in and benefit from this project. During the next quarter, we will identify and engage a livelihoods enterprise expert to assist us identify the economically feasible enterprises for implementation. We will also work closely with UWA and the park adjacent communities to start the excavation of the elephant trench in the HWC hotspot area recommended by the community.

Output 4: The experiences and lessons learned from this project are documented and shared among stakeholders in order to increase the level of support for disrupting and dismantling IWT networks in Uganda - from the community to the government, including the private sector actors

We conducted a project inception workshop on the 1st of August 2019 and involved members of the NWCCTF and other partners working on IWT/CWT such as International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Natural Resource Conservation Network and government institutions including UWA and National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). A total of 27 people (23 males and 4 females) attended the workshop. The main objectives of the workshop were a) to review the logframe and b) to enlighten the NWCCTF members on the key activities and the responsibilities that each of the members would play during implementation. Some changes to the logframe were proposed. The suggested changes are submitted alongside this report in the change request form for your consideration.

As part of the project launch, we developed a number of project information materials and awareness messages, including a project brochure and banners for public display to stimulate public interest and support. The brochure that summarises the goal, objectives and key intervention areas was distributed during the inception workshop. In addition, a project web page has been developed (<https://uganda.wcs.org/strengthening-anti-poaching-techniques-and-counteracting-wildlife-trafficking.aspx>) where all materials developed for this project will be continuously posted and shared with the key partners and the general public.

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.

Finding the right candidate for the position of IWT/CWT Technical Advisor was a challenge as many of the applicants didn't have the right qualifications. This is a unique position requiring a lot of experience and knowledge about IWT/CWT, skills in personal relations, working with government institutions, risk management and mentorship, which most applicants could not meet. As such, finding the suitable candidate has slightly delayed commencement of some activities and caused a slight underspend in the first half of the year, however, we believe this will not have major consequences to the overall annual targets and budget, if our change request is granted. Using the peer-to-peer sourcing and full exploitation of our networks in this particular field, we have finally identified the right candidate for this position. WCS is now conducting all the necessary recruitment process based on our internal human resource policy and also ensuring that the necessary logistical support for the CWT expert to start work in Uganda are fully met. We are very optimistic that by the next reporting period, this person would have commenced work.

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:	No
Formal change request submitted:	Yes (alongside this report)
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.

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.

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.**