



**Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund  
Half Year Report  
(30th October 2020)**

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| <b>Project reference</b>  | IWT073  |
| <b>Project title</b>  | Strengthening anti-poaching techniques and countering wildlife trafficking in Uganda  |
| <b>Country(ies)</b>   | Uganda  |
| <b>Lead organisation</b>  | Wildlife Conservation Society   |
| <b>Partners(s)</b>  | Uganda Wildlife Authority;<br>National Wildlife Crime Coordination Task Force   |
| <b>Project leader</b>   | Simon Nampindo  |
| <b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>   | April 2020 – September 2020 HYR2  |
| <b>Project website/blog/social media</b>  | <a href="https://uganda.wcs.org/strengthening-anti-poaching-techniques-and-countering-wildlife-trafficking.aspx">https://uganda.wcs.org/strengthening-anti-poaching-techniques-and-countering-wildlife-trafficking.aspx</a> |
| <b>Report author (s) and date</b>   | Simon Nampindo and Isaac Kiirya, October 30th, 2020   |
| <b>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).</b> |   |

### **Activity 1.5 Purchase of intelligence equipment**

In Consultation with Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and National Wildlife Crime Coordination Task Force (NWCCTF) on the intelligence equipment most required to combat illegal poaching wildlife trade and trafficking, WCS purchased and delivered intelligence equipment to UWA and NWCCTF. The delivered equipment included the following: One desktop computer with all its accessories, one laptop Computer, two Sony voice recorders, four screen protectors, four 32GB memory cards and four Tecno Spark four Mobile phones.

### **Activity 2.2 Develop a national strategy to combat wildlife crime**

As continuation on support WCS gave to the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities (MTWA), to develop the National Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife Products in the last reporting period (March 2019 to April 2020), in this reporting period, WCS identified a printing company (Digiprint systems (U) Ltd) **website:** [www.digiprint.biz](http://www.digiprint.biz) through a competitive bidding process, finalized the editing and designing of the “Anti-PITT” strategy, the printing of 200 copies and dissemination of the “anti-PITT” strategy will be finalized in the Month of October and the final copy of the “Anti-PITT” strategy approved by the Minister of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities uploaded on project webpage.

### **Activity 2.6: NWCCTF quarterly meetings to analyse intelligence information and plan joint operations.**

WCS supported a two-days quarterly meeting for NWCCTF which was held between 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020. The meeting was chaired by the Executive Director (ED) UWA/ Chairman of the NWCCTF, and moderated by the Manager Intelligence UWA and attended by the representatives to the NWCCTF from Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF), Uganda Police Force, Financial Intelligence Authority (FIA), INTERPOL, Internal Security Organization (ISO), External Security Organization (ESO), Uganda Civil Aviation Authority (UCAA), National Forestry Authority (NFA), Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control (DCIC), UWA and National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). The meeting discussed operations that were undertaken since the last meeting, reviewed the progress of the NWCCTF activities, presented and discussed the Key Performance indicators of each member institution, reviewed Tanzanian Anti – Poaching SOP's, Work-plan for Q3 FY 2020/2021 and activities to be conducted by the NWCCTF. The report will be posted on the project website after removing sensitive information, particularly that related to the court matters.



**NWCCTF members attending the Quarterly meeting at Protea Hotel, Kampala**

### **Activity 2.7 Support NWCCTF to conduct overt and covert operations.**

The NWCCTF with financial support from WCS conducted 02 intelligence led operations against armed poaching in Nwoya and Oyam districts which border Murchison Falls Conservation area in April 27<sup>th</sup> – May 6<sup>th</sup>, and July – August 2020. The operations targeted Murchison Falls Conservation Area and neighbouring Districts of Oyam and Nyowa. The two

operations resulted in the arrest of 10 suspects involved in armed poaching and recovered 12 guns. The suspects are being prosecuted by the General Court Martial, Makindye in Kampala and others are committed to the Wildlife Court, Buganda Road in Kampala.

During these operations, a number of challenges were noted by the NWCCTF namely

- i. Many illegal guns are still available in the community, specifically in northern Uganda (in the districts of Zombo, Arua, Oyam and Nwoya). From reliable intelligence information so far collected by NWCCTF's intelligence section, 20 guns are still out there and being used to poach wildlife. The precursor to this phenomenon is the historical conflict (i.e. Lord Resistance Army, rebel activities in South Sudan and DR Congo). This needs more human and financial resources to ensure the recovery of these guns as well as conduct education and sensitization of security and law enforcement agencies, particularly the Resident District Commissioners, District Police Commanders, UPDF military barracks leaders, internal security officers in this part of the country to support the taskforce work.
- ii. Resistance from security and law enforcement agencies, particularly the Resident District Commissioners, District Police Commanders, District Internal Security Officers (DISO), and Sub county [Gomborola] Internal Security Officers (GISO), Police officer, local political leaders and some UWA park-level staff. The officers are aiding or facilitating crime due to the financial benefits received from the wildlife criminal gangs as well as the lack of clear understanding of the role of the NWCCTF. As a remedy, the NWCCTF plans to undertake regular regional sensitization meetings with the security and law enforcement agencies to create education and awareness about the wildlife crime and its wider impacts such as insecurity, loss of wildlife, disruption of economic activities and livelihood disruptions.
- iii. Corruption among Resident District Commissioners, District Police Commanders, District Internal Security Officers (DISO), and Sub county [Gombolola] Internal Security Officers (GISO), Police officer, local political leaders, some UWA park-level staff and judicial officers (magistrates and some justices of the high court). In fact, tribal, moral and humanitarian sentiments have kicked in to influence court decisions and low sentenced awarded to criminals. As a result, the communities are now resentful in giving intelligence information to the NWCCTF for fear of their safety. This particular challenge is bigger than the NWCCTF's core mandate and operational plans. We plan to engage the Office of the Directorate of Public Prosecution, a member of the taskforce and the judicial service commission to create awareness and raise the importance of wildlife crime to society and the economy. Following our discussions with USAID Mission in Uganda who are supporting other initiatives dealing with IWT/CWT, we learned that they are developing and activity specifically for addressing corruption within the government institutions. WCS plans to collaborate and coordinate with the implementing partner for this Activity once it commences.
- iv. Sustained insecurity in DR Congo and parts of South Sudan have continued to be a source of illegal guns being used by poachers. This is a transboundary and transnational dimension of wildlife crime, which require active engagement of the governments in the region to generate solutions to this challenge. Again, this is beyond the scope of this project, however, every important aspect that needs to be talked through political and diplomatic engagements.
- v. Due to the nature and complexity of the wildlife crime drivers, more financial resources and human capacity at the grass root level is required. A reward system and management plan for informants is needed. NWCCTF is reviewing its SoPs and has

requested WCS to support them to develop the Informant Management Plan, including the risk mitigation measures. WCS CWT Expert will be leading this process to help UWA and the NWCCTF develop and adopt the plan. During the meeting with IWT on October 28, WCS sought guidance from the donor on how best this issue can be handled.

- vi. Lastly, COVID-19 Pandemic caused a lot of disruptions and delays in executing some of the activities due to the government's decision to lockdown the country in response to the pandemic. As such, we lost time in executing some of the activities such as the conducting the capacity needs assessment for UWA's Wildlife Crime Unit and the NWCCTF institutions, maintenance of the five kilometre trench and conducting of NWCCTF-led operations. UWA has recorded six COVID-19 cases and lost one ranger to the pandemic. WCS has developed the SoPs and is religiously following the Ministry of Health Guidelines such as social distancing, wearing of Masks and use of sanitizers to wash hands. We have also reduced physical meetings and conduct virtual meetings to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

### ***Regional Security meeting held by NWCCTF on how to deal with armed poaching***

In order to get District and regional support for the NWCCTF operations targeting armed poaching, the team conducted one Regional Security meeting at Gulu District Headquarters to discuss the threat of armed poaching in Murchison Falls National Park (MFNP). The meeting was chaired by the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) Nwoya and attended by among others the RDC Oyam, the Second in command of 4<sup>th</sup> Division that is under the command of Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) and the District Security Committee members of Oyam, Nwoya, Lira and Gulu Districts. The meeting noted among others that Oyam and Nwoya districts were the most notorious in armed poaching in the Region. The meeting further observed that the Sub Counties of Myene and Lii do not have sufficient security presence making it a safe haven for the poachers. It was noted that Lii Sub County in Nwoya district did not have a Police Post. The meeting recommended among others that; NWCCTF should spearhead the establishment of Regional Wildlife Crime Coordination Taskforces (RWCCTF), UPDF (4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division) supports Police deployment in Myene and Lii, the guns that were recovered be fully investigated, the police stations across the region to establish dedicated wildlife crimes desks, and the NWCCTF team to organize mass sensitization/awareness programs within the security agencies against wildlife crime in the region.



*Regional Security meeting at Gulu*

### ***Activity 2.8 Conduct the analysis of records entered in the online wildlife offenders' database to establish the proportion of IWT/CWT cases prosecuted and sentences handed to the offenders, and utilize the information, knowledge and experiences obtained from the Uganda – China initiative to address the law enforcement gaps.***

WCS requested for the online offenders' data sets for 4 years (2017 – 2020) from UWA for analysis. UWA shared three data sets in excel with WCS on arrests, court cases and suspects. The data was analyzed by WCS and preliminary analyses were shared with the UWA focal person for review. The review is yet to be concluded and there after a final report will be compiled and shared with the NWCCTF member institutions and other key stakeholders. However, during data sorting and analysis, some gaps were identified within the system

including wrong record entries and dates, missing information for some of the field such as age and gender of suspect, status of exhibits recovered. Further, there was a lot of missing information on mandatory fields and some responses to closed ended questions were misleading. On a positive note, if data quality and regular entry of records is maintained, the Online Wildlife Offenders Database is a very critical source of information for monitoring the performance of the project. For example, results of the preliminary analysis showed that wildlife crime cases recorded in the database had reduced from 701 recorded in 2017 to 281 in July 2020. A total of 1811 cases had been entered in the database between 2017 and July 2020. The highest number of crime suspect arrests were illegal possession of park products (488 cases recorded), and illegal entry of the park (476 cases recorded) and the most affected protected area is Murchison Falls Conservation Area. Routine patrols (48%) followed by intelligence-led ambushes (28%) were the most reported methods being used by UWA. The major (43%) reason for committing these offences are monetary benefits, implying that people enter the park to hunt and harvest resources for commercial purposes. It is important to note that this data has never been analyzed before to identify these issues. During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown (March – June 2020), UWA witnessed a surge in illegal wildlife crime due to the reduction in patrol effort due to loss of tourism revenue, and stopping of researchers and eco-lodges shut down, who play a critical role in deterring people from entering the park. WCS is planning on engaging the system developer through UWA to rectify the problem of wrong date capture. Besides that, there is need for joint quarterly data reviews with UWA to monitor the system and support continuous improvements.



**Activity 3.4 Conduct training of community wildlife scouts and park adjacent community members with special consideration of women and youth in livelihood initiatives.**

Six days of training in financial literacy, business skills, savings and credit and group dynamics for Apiary farmers and Wildlife Scouts in Kiryandongo and Oyam Districts which are adjacent to Karuma Wildlife Reserve was conducted through consultants (Tumukunde Mercy Agaba – Lead Consultant and Wilson Kabanda – Co Facilitator). The training approach was majorly practical employing experiential learning techniques to enable participants acquire knowledge, relate it to actual experiences and practice learnt skills. Consistently, various methodologies were used which included: short presentations, open discussion, group discussions and presentation, role plays and open question and answer sessions. The training was held into two training sessions for the different groups (26 Apiary farmers and 20 Wildlife Scouts) each was conducted for 3 days. The training was attended by 46 (92%) (14 females and 32 male) out of the targeted 50 participants (Table 1).

*A participant making presentation*

**Table 1: Composition of Participants**

| S/No | Group 1             | Participants |           | Total     |
|------|---------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|
|      |                     | Male         | Female    |           |
| 1    | Can Odiya Group     | 09           | 06        | 15        |
| 2    | Ribe En Teko Group  | 03           | 08        | 11        |
|      | <b>Sub Totals</b>   | <b>12</b>    | <b>14</b> | <b>26</b> |
|      | <b>Group 2</b>      |              |           |           |
| 3    | Wildlife Scouts     | 20           | 00        | 20        |
|      | <b>Grand Totals</b> | <b>32</b>    | <b>14</b> | <b>46</b> |

The training consultants wrote a report and gave a presentation to WCS project staff highlighting some of the major challenges and opportunities for strengthening the community groups. Key among the recommendations was to identify and train and mentor Trainer of Trainees (ToT) in bee keeping to support the bee keeping groups improve on the bee colonization, packaging and branding of the honey as well as ensure proper financial management. The other key area identified was improvement in the governance and general administration of the bee keeping groups. A training report will be uploaded on the project website.

**Activity 3.5 Purchase equipment for the scouts for HWC mitigation and park adjacent communities for enterprise development.**

WCS procured and delivered equipment and tools to support the Wildlife scouts in three sites of Nyamahasa, Diima Parishes in Kiryandogo district and Juma parish, Kamudin in Oyam district. The equipment procured include the following: 50 Pairs of Gumboots, 30 Boxes of Matchboxes, 60 Big Torches, 50 Vuvuzelas, 60 Bangers and 30 boxes of Batteries. The equipment supported the 50 Community Wildlife Scouts in HWC mitigation to the communities adjacent to Karuma Wildlife Reserve. This will reduce the human elephant conflict that has been arising from crop raiding by elephants thus wining more support for the conservation of wildlife the adjacent communities.



**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.**

**Lessons learnt.**

The illegal guns in the communities being used for poaching are not only a threat to the conservation of wildlife in the Protected Areas but are also causing livelihood and security threats to the people within those communities.

There is need for direct engagement, awareness creation and active participation of the District and Regional Security agencies for effective and successful operations of NWCCTF in combating illegal wildlife trade and trafficking.

There is need for encouraging the communities to own the elephant trenches and appreciate their impacts as a result of the elephant trenches constructed along Karuma Wildlife Reserve

through regular awareness creation by all responsible institutions. Livelihood projects such as the bee keeping enterprise is highly valued by the communities and a strong incentive for them to participate in conservation. More investment, however, is needed to achieve adequate scale and number of community members benefiting. At the moment, we have limited resources to scale up this intervention.

**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.**

Implementation of Project activities between April and June were affected because of COVID-19 total lock down that was introduced and implemented by the Government as a Presidential directive, MoH guidelines and SoP to control spread of corona virus. Project implementation started around July 2020 but SoP for the MoH, WCS and presidential directives have to be followed to avoid being infected or infecting others with corona virus. We are optimistic that the situation will continue to normalise so that we are able to implement the planned activities.

**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: Yes/No YES

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No To be made by next week

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No Not submitted yet, but discussed the proposal with LTS and they are expecting the change request.

**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?**

No issues to raise.

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](mailto: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.**