

## Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the “Project Reporting Information Note”:  
(<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/resources/information-notes/>).

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum** of 20 pages in length, excluding annexes)

**Submission Deadline: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

### IWT Challenge Fund Project Information

Project reference	IWT076
Project title	Cross-Border Coordination to Reduce IWT in the Guatemala-Mexico Green Corridor
Country/ies	Guatemala & Mexico
Lead partner	Wildlife Conservation Society
Project partner(s)	Asociación Balam, Environmental Justice Forum of Peten (EJF), Fundación para el Ecodesarrollo y la Conservación (FUNDAECO), Asociación de Comunidades Forestales de Petén (ACOFOP), Centro de Estudios Conservacionistas (CECON), Ministerio Publico (MP), Consejo Nacional de Areas Protegidas (CONAP), Pronatura Península Yucatán (PPY), Comisión Nacional de Areas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP), Secretaria de Medio Ambiente, Biodiversidad y Cambio Climático (SEMABICC)
IWTCF grant value	£399,703
Start/end dates of project	01 May 2020 – 30 November 2022
Reporting period (e.g. April 2021-Mar 2022) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	Annual Report 2 April 2021-March 2022
Project Leader name	Roan Balas McNab
Project website/blog/social media	<a href="https://guatemala.wcs.org/en-us/Initiatives/Proyecto-DEFRA-IWT-en-US.aspx">https://guatemala.wcs.org/en-us/Initiatives/Proyecto-DEFRA-IWT-en-US.aspx</a>
Report author(s) and date	WCS: Roan Balas McNab; Gabriela Ponce; Vinicio Morales; Kurt Duchez; America Rodriguez; Sofia Baca. EJF: Mirna Romero; FUNDAECO: Francisco Asturias, Ingrid Arias; PPY: Anuar Hernandez; April 30 <sup>th</sup> 2022

### 1. Project summary

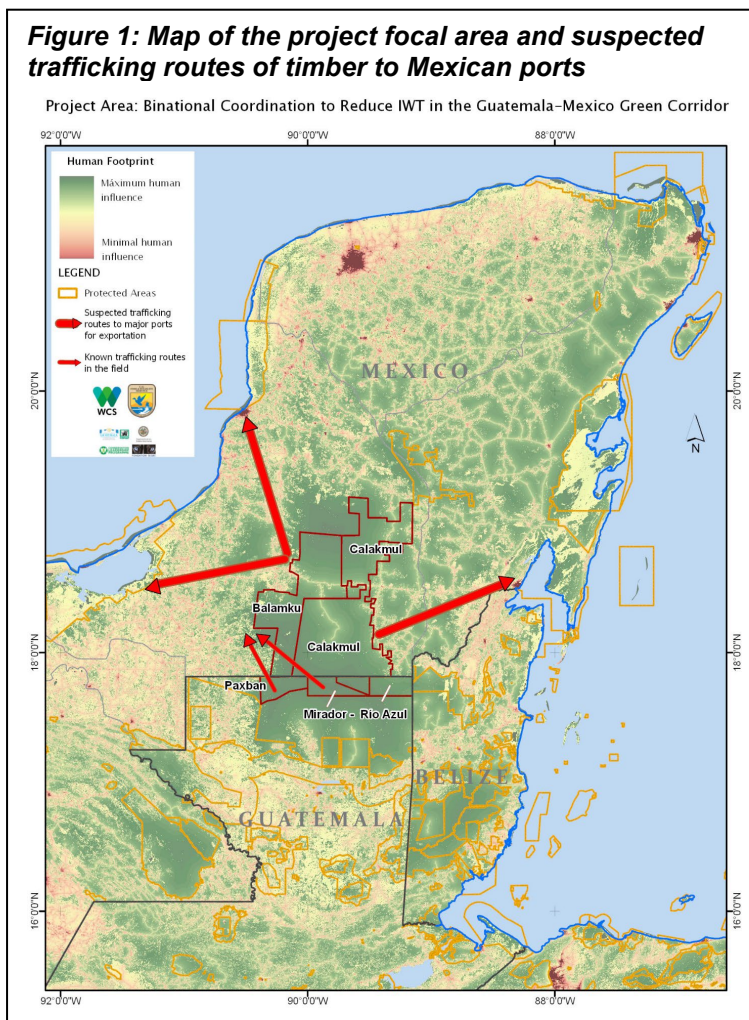
The United Kingdom’s Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund IWT076 project is focused on eradicating the lucrative illegal timber trade detected at the “Green Corridor” spanning adjacent

protected areas in Guatemala and Mexico, within the heart of the trinational Selva Maya, the largest intact block of forest in Mesoamerica. In 2018, park rangers detected large amounts of poached “granadillo” (*Platymiscium* spp., also known as “hormigo”) a valuable, rare hardwood species in the Paxban management unit of Guatemala’s Maya Biosphere Reserve (**Figure 1**, below). During 2019, illegal extraction intensified as well-organized syndicates opened roads, poached timber and killed/poached numerous wildlife species. In adjacent sections of Mexico’s Selva Maya, researchers discovered a jaguar corpse, missing paws, teeth, and reproductive organs. In Balamku, slaughtered Baird’s tapir and king vultures were discovered as PA agencies struggled to respond. But valuable hardwoods remained the most sought-after resources in the protected areas of both countries, particularly granadillo – an emerging substitute for rosewood, also known locally as “hormigo” in Guatemala, or “hormigón” in Mexico – as well as other valuable timber species including mahogany, ziricote, sapodilla, and Spanish cedar.

In April 2020, with the support of the DEFRA IWT Challenge Fund, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and partner organizations mounted a response, concerned by the increasing pressure imparted by timber trafficking syndicates based in Mexico. Without an adequate response to this growing threat at the Guatemala-Mexico frontier, partners believed that IWT of timber, and the associated opening of illegal roads, would eventually decimate populations of spotted cats (jaguar/NT; ocelot/LC, and margay/NT), Yucatan spider monkey/CR, Yucatan black howler monkey/EN, Baird’s tapir/EN, as well as northern mealy amazon/NT, red-lored amazon/NT, and white-crowned parrot/LC, among other commonly trafficked species.

After two challenging years, IWT076 has produced considerable reductions in timber and wildlife poaching in Guatemala and consolidated a foundation for long-term cooperation between Guatemalan and Mexican partners to counter trans-frontier IWT. During Year 2, IWT076 interventions continued increasing local resilience against timber and wildlife trafficking within rural communities and among authorities in Guatemala and Mexico through SMART protection patrols, increased outreach and awareness about IWT among national authorities, improved application of legal frameworks, and continued support for alternative livelihoods among rural households. IWT076 civil society partners also signed a Memorandum of Understanding to sustain cross-border collaborations in the future, adding new members to our partnership.

Plans for Year 3 of IWT076 include sustained field support to prevent IWT in vulnerable areas of Guatemala and Mexico, continued outreach to raise awareness about IWT including a visit to Mexico City for a high-level meeting between Guatemalan and Mexican authorities, continued leveraging of IWT investments both countries, and the production of a lessons learned White Paper.



## 2. Project partnerships

During Year 2, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Guatemala Program personnel led project implementation and monitoring, convening 14 team meetings (Annex O5.2Y2) during the 12-month period from 01 April 2021 through 31 March 2022. WCS has a 26-year history of working with Guatemala's National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP), under the aegis of a MOU designed to strengthen CONAP's conservation capacities in the Maya Biosphere Reserve and other national protected areas. WCS engaged national NGO and governmental partners during the project design phase and has ensured consistent feedback and collaboration during IWT076 implementation, considering the needs of partnering governmental and national organizations, adapting time frames and approaches as required to ensure safe implementation of field activities – particularly in response to the persistent COVID-19 pandemic. As during Year 1, in Mexico, due to continuing complications related to travel, during Year 2 we coordinated with *Pronatura Peninsula de Yucatan* (PPY) as the main project liaison with Mexico's federal institution, *Comision Nacional de Areas Protegidas Naturales* (CONANP), and the *Secretaria de Medio Ambiente, Biodiversidad y Cambio Climático* (SEMABICC) of the State of Campeche.

National government and NGO partners including FUNDAECO, *Asociación Balam*, the Environmental Justice Forum of Peten (EJF), and PPY were engaged in the development of the original project logframe. Partners have assisted WCS with two amendments requested and approved by LTS/DEFRA to date. The first amendment consisted of a modest logframe modification approved shortly after the project award; it permitted a one-month delay in project start-up and a two-month extension of the termination date, and it allowed us to direct modest project resources to help rural communities adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. The second amendment consisted of a modification of Activity 2.1, in conjunction with a modest reduction of PPY's Year 3 budget in Mexico, and a corresponding increase of the same amount (£1,000) in EJF Year 3 budget. This modification allows the EJF to assist PPY with surveying Mexican authorities' knowledge about IWT using pre and post surveys in conjunction with a targeted workshop to raise awareness about the timber trafficking challenges our Mexican focal landscape. Throughout Year 2, partners helped ensure IWT076 obtains value for money, particularly as related to the impactful use of Travel and Subsistence (T&S) funds originally slated for international travel. For a second year, T&S funds were repurposed to strengthen field activities by CONAP, CONANP, FUNDAECO, and PPY in lieu of travel for the annual IWT076 partner meetings, originally planned to be held in Mexico. WCS has also maintained close coordination with Guatemala's *Asociación de Comunidades Forestales de Petén* (ACOFOP) while advancing rural community tenure and rural livelihoods in Guatemala, while PPY has continued coordinating implementation with local ejidos and community leaders in Mexican communities, as well as CONANP (managers of Calakmul Biosphere Reserve; CBR), and SEMABICC (managers of the Balamku State Reserve).

Notable achievements during Year 2 include: a) sustained reduction in the amount of timber and wildlife poached in the Guatemalan focal area (see *Section 3.3*). During Year 1 we obtained an 89.6% reduction in IWT events as compared to the pre-project baseline, whereas during Year 2 IWT events decreased by 88.6% when compared to the same baseline; b) FUNDAECO, CONAP, and CECON, IWT076 partners working in Mirador-Rio Azul National Park and the Dos Lagunas Biotope, captured only 1 individuals engaged in illegal activity, and disrupted a group of timber poachers shortly after they set up a camp within the park, confiscating a firearm, munitions, and a chainsaw; c) The EJF's accompaniment of legal procedures propelled an emblematic legal sentence against a timber trafficking ring previously apprehended in Tikal National Park and UNESCO World Heritage Site. Two ex-employees of the park, including the former head of the park's ranger patrol team, received 10-year jail sentences with no opportunity to pay fines in lieu of serving time in jail. They were also ordered to pay £. 1,039 each in restitution (see *Section 3.1, Activity 3.1*), thereby becoming the most severe punishment for illegal timber extraction imposed in Guatemala to date; and finally, d) IWT076 civil society partners signed a Memorandum of Understanding to sustain our cross-border collaborations to halt IWT post project. Our new project partners from Guatemala's *Centro de Estudios Conservacionistas* (CECON) signed the agreement, as did representatives from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in Guatemala and Mexico. We have initiated discussions to include two new Guatemalan partners, the Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Association

(ARCAS) and the *Fundación Defensores de la Naturaleza* (FDN) and the Mexican NGO, *Natura Mexicana*, in the final iteration of the agreement.

Challenges faced by IWT076 partners include continued COVID-19 related restrictions on travel, with the border crossing between Belize and Guatemala restricted until March, 2022, impeding travel between the Peten of Guatemala and Mexico. Partners resolved this by holding IWT076 meetings on the Zoom platform, and also through the use of informal border crossings coordinated with Mexican partners, for example, to allow WCS staff to lead the development of the IWT protection protocol for Calakmul. A second challenge consisted of FUNDAECO's discovery in June, 2021, of Guatemalan soldiers assigned to Mirador-Rio Azul National Park hunting a wild bird for food. The subsequent reporting of this violation to army commanders resulted in the temporary removal of all army staff from the park, but Guatemalan soldiers have since returned to patrol the frontier area with Mexico, helping to hold timber traffickers at bay.

Finally, during Year 2, IWT076 project partners hosted two visits by UK Ambassador to Guatemala, Mr. Nick Whittingham and UK Embassy personnel to the Maya Biosphere Reserve. Visits provided UK staff an opportunity to receive updates on the project and meet with partners, including community beneficiaries and government partners. During the second visit in [March 2022, Ambassador Whittingham](#) visited the rural community of San Miguel, providing an opportunity to engage community beneficiaries, learn about the challenges for the future, and evaluate the impact of IWT076 investments in sustainable livelihoods (Annex 4.1Y2)

### **3. Project progress**

The DEFRA IWT076 project proposed a total of 39 activities; to date we have completed 30 (77%) and advanced another 3 (8%) during Years 1 & 2 combined. The 6 remaining activities are planned for completion during Year 3 of the project. We expect to complete the entire suite of activities during the remainder of the project.

#### **3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities**

Output 1 included 6 activities to strengthen protection against IWT in the Selva Maya Green Corridor of Mexico and Guatemala, with 5 activities completed and one advanced during Year 2. We completed Activity 1.1, consisting of training in the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) for Guatemalan and Mexican counterparts. SMART software improves the collection and spatial analysis of threat, biodiversity, and patrolling effort data associated with, or generated by, field patrols. During Year 2 we held one final SMART workshop in Mexico (Annex O1.1Y2). The in-person workshop was held in Calakmul, Mexico with 19 individuals including 6 women, all members of CONANP and SEMABICC in Mexico.

Activity 1.2 has been completed, consisting of a final IWT protection/patrolling protocol for the Guatemalan management units of Paxban, Mirador-Rio Azul National Park, and the Dos Lagunas Biotope (Annex O1.2.1Y2). The protocol was developed by WCS in partnership with CONAP, new IWT076 partner CECON, FUNDAECO, and Guatemala's Institute of History and Anthropology (IDAEH), the governmental entity responsible for archaeological sites. A letter detailing CONAP's satisfaction with the final protocol signals the completion of this output (Annex O1.2.2Y2).

Through Activity 1.3 DEFRA-IWT partners CONAP, FUNDAECO, CECON, and WCS continued field patrols along the Guatemalan portion of the Selva Maya Green Corridor. We registered 385 patrols, yielding 978 person-days of patrolling in the target area (Annex O1.3Y2). For a second year we greatly surpassed our planned output of 300 person-days of patrolling in Guatemala despite numerous impediments, including the persistent COVID-19 pandemic and the temporary exit of the Guatemalan army from Mirador-Rio Azul National Park. FUNDAECO, CONAP, and CECON, IWT076 partners working in Mirador-Rio Azul National Park and the Dos Lagunas Biotope, captured 1 individual engaged in illegal activity, and disrupted a group of timber poachers shortly after they set up a camp within the park, confiscating a firearm, munitions, a chainsaw, other tools used to open roads, as well as food and supplies.

Activity 1.4 consists of PPY's production of 2 concise IWT protection protocols, one each for Calakmul Biosphere Reserve (CBR), and the Balamku State Reserve (Balamku), managed by

CONANP and SEMABICC, respectively. During Year 1, PPY produced the draft IWT protection protocol for Balamku/SEMABICC, and this has now been updated to include a section covering the relevant environmental legislation (Annex O1.4.1Y2). During Year 2, WCS supported PPY to develop the protection protocol for Calakmul/CONANP. WCS Guatemala's lead protection expert, Luis Romero, visited Calakmul to help PPY and CONANP personnel develop the draft protocol during a week of meetings in July 2021; PPY subsequently produced a second version with a similar section on relevant environmental legislation (O1.4.2Y2).

Within Activity 1.5, CONANP and SEMABICC undertook 89 field patrols, registering 521 person-days patrolling in Mexico (Annex O1.5.1Y2). As during Year 1, the majority of field patrols occurred in the northern sector of Balamku, and the southern sector of Calakmul, adjacent to Guatemala. The project target for Activity 1.6 consisted of 1 annual joint patrol between Guatemalan and Mexican authorities along the vulnerable Guatemala-Mexico frontier. In the 2021 Annual Report we registered 3 joint patrols, and during Year 2 partners FUNDAECO, CONAP, CONANP, SEMABICC, CECON, WCS, and Gibor Ltd. Once again implemented 3 joint patrols, covering 1,124 kilometres (Annex O1.6Y2).

Output 2 included 8 activities to increase awareness regarding IWT, with 6 completed and one advanced during Year 2. Activity 2.1 was completed during Year 1, consisting of the baseline survey regarding awareness about IWT among Guatemalan national authorities and NGO leaders, undertaken by WCS and the EJF. In Mexico however, as we approached the end of Year 2 PPY remained unable to survey authorities, in part due to COVID-19 restrictions. In response, WCS adapted a new approach with PPY and the EJF and requested a logframe modification that was subsequently approved by LTS/DEFRA. PPY and the EJF will now merge Activities 2.1 and 2.2. (Pre and post awareness surveys, respectively), instead surveying knowledge about IWT in Mexico prior to, and after, an in-person IWT outreach event now planned for July 2022 (Year 3), as the Omicron wave subsides. As previously reported, PPY has already prepared the survey instrument, and identified the Mexican authorities to be interviewed. As we did in Guatemala, "Awareness" about IWT in Mexico will be gauged through a questionnaire focused on the local impacts of IWT, species impacted, national and international legislation, and broader impacts including IWT's global contribution to illicit economies. In Guatemala, Activity 2.2., the final IWT awareness survey, is planned for the 9<sup>th</sup> quarter of the project.

WCS completed Activity 2.3, producing the final version of our confidential report on timber and wildlife trafficking in target areas of Guatemala and Mexico (Annex O2.3Y2). *This report contains sensitive information and should not be distributed publicly.* WCS's previously reported collaboration with Insight Crime (IC) to release a public report with information about IWT along the Guatemala-Mexico Green Corridor was postponed by changes in IC personnel; the IC report is now planned for release during late 2022.

Within Activity 2.4, Balam, FUNDAECO, PPY, EJF and WCS registered 73 events of press coverage of IWT along the Guatemala-Mexico Green Corridor (Annex O2.4Y2), including a second report by Guatemala's most widely read newspaper, the Prens Libre, [highlighting DEFRA's contributions to halting IWT and improving rural livelihoods](#). Within Activity 2.5, project partners promoted 30 social media pulses through Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter, generating 2,716 "likes" during Year 2 (Annex O2.5Y2). For Activity 2.6, all 5 of our Civil Society partners updated their website pages dedicated to the IWT076 project, adding recent information detailing project impact to date (Annex O2.6Y2).

Within Activity 2.7, Guatemalan partners held 5 outreach events to raise awareness among authorities and member of the press about the impacts associated with the illegal trans-frontier timber and wildlife trade (Annex O2.7Y2). Events in Guatemala included an event focused uniquely on the IWT threat with 19 Guatemalan government authorities in Guatemala City held on April 07<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and 4 additional events including a meeting with the press (02 November 2021), and presentations to the Maya Biosphere Reserve Coordinating Committee, the Roundtable for National Security, and a CONAP meeting on environmental legislation in national protected areas. In Mexico, PPY implemented 2 outreach events, including a virtual presentation to the Wildlife Advisory Council in Mexico, and a presentation to the Secretary of Environment in Mexico. In total, IWT076 partners reached 80 participants from governmental and non-governmental institutions (Annex O2.7Y2).

WCS, Balam, and the EJV worked with CONAP and Guatemala's Ministry of Foreign Relations (MINEX) to advance Activity 2.8 to obtain high-level, bi-national commitments between Guatemala and Mexico regarding IWT in the project area. Advances during Year 2 once again included 2 meetings between CONAP, MINEX and project partners, with one consisting of the Roundtable for National Security reported above. WCS personnel provided a virtual presentation to CONAFOR and Mexico's Roundtable against Timber Trafficking; and with the support of MINEX, WCS's anti-trafficking expert, Kurt Duchez, presented IWT076 to officers of the Mexican consulate in Guatemala (Annex O2.8Y2). On April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022, PPY presented the IWT076 project to Layda Elena Sansores, the Governor of Campeche, and the State of Campeche's Security Council. CONAP, MINEX, and WCS continue planning a formal exchange among Guatemalan and Mexican counterparts, consisting of a trip by Guatemala's environmental authorities to Mexico's Federal District. This visit is planned for July, 2022, assuming that international travel remains viable.

Output 3 contained 5 activities to increase the use of legal frameworks, with 4 fully completed and one final activity now scheduled for Year 3. Activity 3.1 consisted of the EJV's technical support to obtain impactful prosecutions of traffickers captured within Guatemala, with only 1 individual of Guatemalan nationality arrested during Year 2 in Guatemala (Annex O3.1.1Y2). Sanctions consisted of jail time seven days in jail, and minor fines given that they were not engaged in commercial trafficking (i.e. hunting without permit or legal fire arm within a protected area). In these "minor cases", project partners abstained from advocating for stiffer penalties. In stark contrast, however, the EJV provided sustained technical support for a second case, consisting of two Tikal National Park and UNESCO World Heritage Site employees arrested for timber trafficking in 2016. The case was finally settled in February 2022, when the convicted traffickers lost their appeal, resulting in one of the stiffest penalties ever handed down in Guatemala for illegal wildlife trafficking (Annex O3.1.2Y2).

During Year 1, the EJV completed Activity 3.2, consisting of a report on opportunities for bi-national collaboration among the Guatemalan and Mexican governments to halt IWT at frontier areas: the report has since helped guide discussions between CONAP and MINEX as described in 2.8, above.

With the support of PPY, a consultant hired in Mexico who has now completed Activity 3.3, a detailed report on timber exportation volumes from Mexico. This report also identifies opportunities to close the normative gaps in Mexico that permit the laundering and subsequent "legal" exportation of illegal timber poached out of Mexican and Guatemalan protected areas. The final version of the report is available as Annex O3.3Y2. PPY will now utilize the report to advocate for normative changes described in Activity 3.5, below. PPY has already shared the report's preliminary results with CONAFOR, the National Forest Commission of Mexico (Annex O2.8Y2). These advances have set the stage for completing Activity 3.4, consisting of a public presentation to governmental allies in Guatemala and Mexico, now planned for July, as reported in Activity 2.8. In the interim, partners continue coordinating with our new governmental allies (Annex O2.8Y2), including MINEX in Guatemala, and the *Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional* (Mexican Army) and CONAFOR in Mexico. Activity 3.5 is planned for Year 3. This ambitious activity has the goal of working with government to establish new procedures in Mexico to reduce the loopholes allowing illegal timber to be laundered.

Output 4 included 14 activities to improve livelihoods of rural communities exposed to IWT, with 10 completed and one advanced during Year 2, and 3 planned for completion during Year 3. Ten (10) of the 14 activities were slated for implementation in Guatemala, and 4 in Mexico. During Year 2, PPY completed Activity 4.1, including recommendations for gender-relevant livelihoods investments within their socioeconomic study of 9 communities impacted by IWT that are adjacent to Balamku State Reserve (Annex O4.1Y2). PPY also initiated Activity 4.2, holding a meeting with Layda Elena Sansores, the Governor of the State of Campeche to increase investments in sustainable livelihoods using the gender-focused livelihoods assessment (Annex O4.2Y2).

WCS completed Activity 4.3 during Year 1, producing a gender-focused livelihoods assessment for the rural communities living along the "Road to Carmelita", the main access route to the IWT076 focal areas of Paxban and Mirador-Rio Azul National Park in Guatemala. WCS then used the assessment to guide our DEFRA livelihoods investments described in Activity 4.7. As an extension of our livelihoods planning in Guatemala, WCS hired a consultant under Activity

4.4., and completed a management plan for honey production along the Road to Carmelita, coordinating with the Guatemalan Ministry of Agriculture, Ranching, and Food (MAGA), and the Municipality of San Andres.

During Year 2 we can once again report robust co-investment in Guatemalan rural livelihoods alternatives (Annex O4.5Y2). WCS attracted new co-investment of £.87,193, above and beyond the £. 64,080 reported during Year 1. New financial support was provided by the Laguntza Foundation, the Canadian Wildlife Service, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Activity 4.6 consists of leveraging livelihoods investments to benefit 500 households in Mexico; as reported above, during 2022 PPY initiated their outreach with the Governor of Campeche, and they now plan to accelerate this activity during Year 3.

WCS completed Activity 4.7 during Year 1, developing a baseline for poverty/wellbeing among Guatemalan households receiving the support of DEFRA and leveraged livelihoods investments. We used a Basic Necessities Survey (BNS) to establish a baseline for wellbeing, surveying 104 of the 107 households receiving investments to date.

Livelihoods investments implemented by WCS in rural Guatemalan households during Year 2, with the respective number of households (Annex O4.7.1Y2), include: a) apiculture/beekeeping (48, same as Year 1), b) poultry ranching (11, an increase of 4), c) reforestation (55, an increase of 12), and d) non-timber forest product harvesting, including xate palm fronds and breadnut (74, 59 more than Year 1). DEFRA and leveraged sources sustained the forest restoration partnership among CONAP and community members from San Miguel la Palotada (see Activity 4.9; below). This intervention provides climate benefits, capturing carbon while also generating daily wages for community members who eliminate exotic pasture grasses in reclaimed pastures, prevent fire, and plant trees to accelerate forest recovery. A second livelihoods investment, completed during Year 2, was ACOFOP's construction of a non-timber forest product production area and warehouse (i.e. "*bodega*") to process "xate" palm fronds collected sustainably for sale to the United States floral market (Annex O4.7.2Y2). This investment was coordinated with the Association for Integrated Forest Management of Cruce a la Colorada (AFICC) and CONAP; happily, we can now report that after a long COVID-related suspension of Cruce a la Colorada's xate industry, AFICC's *xate bodega* is finally in use and helping the community maintain the quality of their xate for exportation. However, the *bodega* is also being used to sort, store, and market breadnut (*Brosimum alicastrum*), a [very nutritious forest fruit](#) that is used by humans and animals for food. The construction of the *bodega* has already benefitted over 50 families engaged in xate and breadnut collection, although we only surveyed 15 households in our original BNS baseline.

The formal reversal of CONAP's eviction order against the community of San Miguel la Palotada reported during Year 1 provided a huge step towards resolving the community's land tenure situation, and towards completion of Activity 4.9. With the support of WCS, Balam, ACOFOP, and other NGO partners, San Miguel residents continue their negotiations with CONAP to determine the details of a formal, binding agreement with CONAP that will provide them with land security and the rights to make improvements to their homes, undertake subsistence agriculture in properly zoned areas, and participate in natural resource management initiatives such as forest restoration, beekeeping, and minor livestock ranching. We attach Annex O4.9Y2 as evidence of the land zoning proposal submitted as part of the ongoing negotiations by San Miguel's Community Development Council to CONAP.

During Year 2 WCS completed Activity 4.10, compiling data on *additional* income and/or indirect benefits received by Guatemalan households supported by IWT076 and leveraged investments. Between April 2021 and March 2022, families from San Miguel and Cruce a la Colorada participating in the project received [REDACTED] of additional income (Annex O4.10Y2). Activity 4.11, the final BNS survey, is planned for the last quarter of project activity.

Through Activity 4.12, WCS and the EJF continue tracking the number of individuals arrested for IWT living within households receiving IWT076 livelihoods investments. As during Year 1, we have no arrests of beneficiaries to report during Year 2 (Annex O4.12Y2).

Under Activity 4.13, during Year 3 PPY will track additional investment spurred by their gender-focused livelihoods assessment and public outreach to benefit communities adjacent to Calakmul and Balamku, Mexico.

Activity 4.14 was completed during Year 1, consisting of a one-time pulse of material support for three forest communities during the height of the COVID-19 shutdown. We supported 150 families through this activity, and evidence of delivery is available in our 2021 Annual Report, Annex O4.13.

Output 5 included 6 activities, with 5 completed during Year 2, and one advanced activity slated for completion during Year 3. During Year 1, partners completed Activity 5.1, the development of the binational network to counter IWT threats along the Selva Maya Green Corridor. IWT076 partners continue coordinating field activities and exchanging information through two chat networks in WhatsApp to exchange information.

Under Activity 5.2, partners continued adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic by holding 14 virtual meetings, and by forgoing the annual in-person meetings planned for Chetumal, Mexico (Annex O5.2Y2). Reliance on virtual media for project coordination is expected to continue in the future, provoking additional project adaptations, including the repurposing of Travel and Subsistence funding into field costs associated with patrolling the extremely remote interior sections of the Guatemalan landscape.

WCS, PPY, CECON, and CONAP continued coordinating the IWT076 project with the Selva Maya Executive Coordinating Group (GEC). Advances during Year 2 include WCS's participation in the Annual GEC meeting held March 7-11 in Mexico, including an opportunity to present IWT076 to GEC participants (Annex O5.3Y2). WCS and partners continue working with the GEC to obtain formal, long-term recognition of the IWT-focused partnership between Guatemalan and Mexican stakeholders, considering the potential to include relevant Belizean actors.

During Year 2, FUNDAECO, CONAP, CONANP, and SEMABICC partners led Activity 5.4, holding 2 exchanges between rangers from Mexico and Guatemala. Exchanges occurred on August 02-06, 2021, and a second on December 06-09, 2021, with 25 and 20 rangers, respectively (Annex O5.4Y2). These exchanges help build camaraderie among the binational team, while allowing field rangers to exchange experiences and develop plans for strategic field interventions including future bi-national patrols and responses to IWT detections.

Finally, WCS and partners completed Activity 5.5, the signing of a bi-national MOU to codify long-term plans for collaboration among IWT076 partners (Annex O5.5Y2). The MOU was signed by all IWT076 NGO partners and was expanded with the inclusion of two additional institutions: WWF Guatemala and WWF Mexico. We plan to include Guatemala's Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Association (ARCAS) and the *Fundación Defensores de la Naturaleza* (FDN) as well as the Mexican NGO *Natura Mexicana*, by July, 2022. WCS has initiated compiling lessons learned from partners for Activity 5.6, the production of a White Paper planned for the last quarter of the project.

### **3.2 Progress towards project Outputs**

During Year 2, partners completed all 5 activities planned within Output 1. We originally planned 2 SMART training workshops and have now delivered 3 trainings during 2 years. During this second year, we held 1 workshop, training 19 individuals including 6 women. With 42 individuals trained during Year 1, we now reached a total of 61 individuals trained, surpassing our project goal of training 45; we have also trained 18 women in the use of SMART, surpassing our goal of training 4 (Annex O1.1Y2). Partners on both sides of the border continue using SMART to register patrolling effort and the number/types of threats detected (Annex O1.3Y2 and Annex O1.5.1Y2). The IWT protection protocol developed for Guatemala's Mirador-Rio Azul National Park, the Dos Lagunas Biotope, and the Paxban management was terminated (Annex O1.2.1Y2), helping guide patrols towards IWT "hot spots". SMART software registered 978 person-days of patrolling in Guatemala (Annex O1.3Y2), a 30% increase in the number of person-days of patrols when compared to the revised baseline of 750 person-days (see Annex 4.2Y2 for IWT076 updated baseline and indicator results). Partners arrested 1 Guatemalan national (Annex O1.3.1Y2) for illegal activities including poaching of wildlife. Remarkably, during Year 2 no new timber access routes were opened in Guatemala (Annex O1.3Y2), a noteworthy reduction compared to the baseline of 11 km/annually. During Year 1, we registered 2.5 km of new roads in Guatemala (Annex O4.2Y2).



In Mexico, PPY produced a second draft of Balamku's protocol to guide field patrols (Annex O1.4.1Y2), and in conjunction with WCS also updated the protection protocol for Calakmul Biosphere Reserve (Annex O1.4.2Y2). Mexican partners delivered 521 person-days of field patrols during Year 2, including 96 person-days in Balamku and 425 in Calakmul, surpassing our target of 300 person-days, and the updated baseline of 500 person-days (Annex 4.2Y2, and Annex O1.5.1Y2). Partners in Mexico were unable to arrest traffickers, but CONANP did register four disruptions in Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, displacing 59 individuals engaged in timber and/or wildlife poaching, destroying two clandestine camps, confiscating 2 motorcycles, 1 chainsaw, 1 truck, and 16.6 cubic meters of wood (Annex O5.1.2Y2). Partners implemented 3 joint patrols (Annex O1.6Y2), 2 in the central and eastern frontier area (Calakmul-Mirador Rio Azul) and one (1) in the western sector (Balamku – Paxban), surpassing our goal of one annual joint patrol. We expect all components of Output 1 to be completed by the end of the project, with the possible exception of not meeting our original target for the number of individuals captured, should our increased field presence remain an effective deterrent.

To increase awareness about IWT (Output 2), we planned 7 activities during Year 2, fully completing 6 and advancing 1. The baseline regarding the awareness about IWT among national authorities in Guatemala was produced in 2021 (Annex O2.1 2021 Annual Report). As reported previously in Sections 2 and 3.1, PPY was not able to survey Mexican authorities; WCS subsequently requested and received approval for an amendment to allow PPY and the EJF to survey awareness of IWT among Mexican authorities during Year 3, through “before and after” surveys to evaluate how much they learn at an IWT awareness event. WCS terminated the confidential report on IWT within the Guatemala-Mexico Green Corridor (Annex O2.3Y2). As detailed in Annex O2.4Y2, IWT within our focal area received 73 events of coverage (annual goal 5) by 20 press outlets (annual goal 2). Second year social media results were once again led by FUNDAECO, with a total of 2,716 positive reactions to their IWT-related posts (Annex O2.5Y2), again surpassing our three-year goal of 1000 positive reactions. All of our NGO partners updated their websites with data from Year 2 (Annex O2.6Y2), helping to raise the profile of the DEFRA Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund. Led by WCS and the EJF, partners held 5 outreach events in Guatemala, reaching 66 individuals, including at least 35 governmental authorities. In Mexico, PPY supported 2 outreach events, reaching at least 14 authorities. Together, we have already delivered 11 outreach events, surpassing our goal of 8 outreach events planned (Annex O2.7Y2). Finally, partners continue working to hold the “high-level” IWT coordination meeting among authorities from Guatemala and Mexico now planned to be held in Mexico City during Year 3. During Year 2 WCS, Balam, the EJF, and CONAP held 4 high-level meetings, including 2 with Guatemala's MINEX and CONAP (Annex O2.8Y2). As reported in Section 3.1, Page 6, PPY also held a high-level meeting with the Governor of Campeche. We have thus far delivered 5 high-level meetings, surpassing our project goal of 2. However, we continue working to ensure that high-level authorities from both countries meet to address IWT in the Green Corridor during Year 3. We expect all components of Output 2 to be completed by the project's end.

Output 3 included 4 activities during Year 2 to increase the efficacy of legal frameworks, with 3 completed and 1 advanced. In Guatemala, we registered three convictions, falling just short of our annual goal of 4 successful prosecutions. Field patrols only yielded one arrest of a Guatemalan national for illegal hunting/poaching in the project area. However, Guatemala's appellate court upheld the emblematic sentences against 2 Guatemalan timber traffickers captured in 2016. Both worked within Tikal National Park's ranger force, with one responsible for coordinating the park's protection strategy. Yet they assisted an organized band of timber traffickers to poach mahogany, Spanish cedar, and other valuable timber species with impunity inside Tikal. The employees were convicted in trial, and in 2021, they received “emblematic sentences” of [10 years in jail, with a fine of \[REDACTED\]](#), and no opportunity to pay fines to avoid the jail time, as is permitted in lesser crimes (Annex O3.1.1Y2). Sanctions for the single Guatemalan captured consisted of 7 days in jail, and minor fines (Annex O3.1.2Y2).

Our updated baseline (Annex 4.2Y2) revealed that only 1 Mexican national had previously been captured for timber trafficking, in 2018. Once again in Year 2, we failed to obtain new captures or prosecutions in Mexico, and now recognize this as a key deficiency impacting efforts to reduce IWT in Mexico. During Year 1 the EJF produced a seminal report on opportunities for bi-national collaboration and presented results to CONAP and MINEX, helping to identify a pre-existing bi-lateral agreement as the best avenue for addressing the transborder challenges of

IWT originating in Mexico (see Annex O3.2 in the 2021 Annual Report). The consultancy on timber management procedures and volumes exported from Mexico was completed (Annex O3.3Y2). This report will help guide IWT076 recommendations to close the loopholes in Mexico's timber management and tracking regimes that provide an opportunity to launder timber for "legal" sale on the international market. Concerning greater engagement from national authorities, we surpassed our goal of adding one "new" governmental entity to combat IWT, sustaining our coordination with MINEX in Guatemala, and the Mexican Army in Mexico (Annex O2.8Y2). Lastly, IWT076 recommendations regarding procedures to reduce the laundering of timber in Mexico will occur during Year 3, based on the aforementioned consultancy in Mexico. Obtaining formal approval from the Mexican government of new norms to reduce timber laundering remains the most ambitious goal of this project.

Within Output 4 partners implemented 11 activities to increase sustainable livelihoods in Guatemala and Mexico during Year 2, with 10 completed and 1 advanced. Within this output, most indicators lacked previous baselines, except for the two activities to improve land tenure for the rural forest community of San Miguel. As reported previously, in December 2020 CONAP revoked the outstanding 2009 eviction order against the community; since that date, the community development council has continued negotiations with CONAP to define the terms of an MOU providing long-term land security to San Miguel's inhabitants (see Annex O4.9Y2). During Year 1, WCS completed the livelihoods assessment in Guatemala (Annex O4.3, 2021 Annual Report). During Year 2 PPY completed the livelihood assessment in Mexico (Annex O4.1Y2). WCS used the Guatemala livelihoods assessment to guide Year 1 investments in 107 households, including 28 women (27%) participating in, or leading income generating projects. These data include 8 women producing honey, 7 women raising chickens, 11 women working in forest restoration, and 4 women participating in xate management in Cruce a la Colorada. During Year 2 IWT076 investments have supported 105 households, with a total of 36 women as direct beneficiaries, including 14 women producing honey, 11 women producing chickens, 19 women working in forest restoration, and 8 women participating in xate and/or breadnut management (Annex O4.7.1Y2). Particularly in San Miguel, some women participate in more than one economic activity. Between April 2021 and March 2022, 105 families participating in the project received ██████████ (██████████) of additional income (Annex O4.10Y2), an average of \$██████████ /household. The final evaluation of wellbeing using the Basic Necessities Survey (BNS) and the Most Significant Change (MSC) methods will be undertaken during months 26-27 (Q9). During Year 1, we completed the management plan for honey production along the Carmelita Road (2021 Annual Report Annex O4.4), helping honey producers to operate legally within the Maya Biosphere Reserve. To date, we have leveraged ██████████ of additional funding for rural livelihoods in Guatemala (Annex O4.5Y2), expanding beyond our original project goal of ██████████; in Mexico partners have yet to leverage increased funding in sustainable livelihoods. Thus far, no members of households receiving livelihood investments in Guatemala have been arrested for IWT-related offenses (Annex O4.12Y2). Finally, the initial pulse of COVID-related material support provided during the pandemic "shutdown" supported 150 families of rural Guatemalan and Mexican communities during the total shutdown (Annex O4.13, 2021 Annual Report). We remain on track to attain nearly all our projected goals within Output 4 during the project, with the leveraging of ██████████ of additional investment in sustainable livelihoods in Mexico remaining the most challenging.

During Year 2, Output 5 included 5 activities to increase binational collaboration to halt IWT during for Year 1; we completed all activities as planned, with only one activity remaining for Year 3. We sustained our anti-IWT network in Guatemala, and continued coordination through the pre-existing Selva Maya network for bi-national communication on threats (Annex O5.1Y2). During the last year information exchange led to WCS's engagement in the development of the Calakmul protection protocol in coordination with PPY and CONANP. Guatemalan partners also notified Mexican counterparts regarding the timber encampment discovered and flushed out of Mirador-Rio Azul National Park, although this did not lead to a capture on the Mexican side of the border. During Year 2 project partners participated in 14 meetings (Annex O5.2Y2). To date, partners have met in person and virtually a total of 28 times, vastly surpassing our goal of 1 annual meeting. It is important to emphasize that such bilateral, IWT-specific partner meetings did not occur prior to the IWT076 project. During Year 2, partners met 2 times with members of the Selva Maya GEC, including the participation of CONAP, CONANP, PPY and WCS within annual Selva Maya GEC planning meeting (March 7-11, 2021) supported by GIZ

(Annex O5.3Y2). Partners held 2 ranger exchanges, surpassing our annual goal of 1 exchange, as well as the historical baseline of 1 exchange (Annex O5.4Y2). WCS and partners terminated and signed the binational MOU consolidating our trans-frontier alliance to continue combatting IWT and supporting government partners in the Guatemala-Mexico Green Corridor (Annex O5.5Y2). During the final year of the project, WCS and partners will complete a White Paper on lessons learned during IWT076. We expect to meet or surpass all goals within Output 5 by the project end date of November 2022.

### 3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Outcome 1 (Field Protection): sustained patrolling during Year 2 yielded a –88.6% decrease in the number of IWT events detected in Guatemala during the second year, and a total of -89.2% over Years 1 & 2 combined (Annex O4.2Y2, Annex O1.3Y2). During Year 2, in Guatemala we registered 12 IWT “events”, consisting of 5 trees and 7 animals poached; this contrasts with the updated project baseline<sup>1</sup> of 106 IWT events annually in Guatemala (Annex 4.2Y2). In Mexico during Year 2 we registered 155 IWT events, as compared to 206 IWT events registered during Year 1, representing a Year 2 -61.3% reduction compared to the original 2018 baseline, and a collective reduction of -54.9% for Years 1 & 2 combined. During Year 2, we surpassed our target of a 50% decrease in annual IWT events in Mexico and expect to sustain that reduction through the project’s end.

Outcome 2 (Increased Awareness about IWT): We cannot yet evaluate the advance in Outcome indicator 2, with the goal of increasing awareness about IWT in the Guatemala-Mexico Green Corridor among at least 50% of the national authorities. However, as reported in the 2021 Annual Report, the IWT awareness baseline in Guatemala revealed low awareness of IWT. This evaluation suggested the need for more effective, targeted outreach, which we have been undertaking as reported in Annex O2.7Y2. In Mexico, after considerable delays due to COVID and difficulty coordinating with institutional authorities, we developed a new approach and expect to have data on change in awareness within by July, 2022. In Guatemala and Mexico both, one of the challenges with this indicator is the considerable and consistent amount of turnover of governmental personnel. To address this challenge, IWT076 partners have held more outreach events than originally planned, including numerous (repeat) discussions with new authorities in CONAP and the *Ministerio Publico* (MP) as well as with SEMABIC in Mexico, all of whom have been replaced during project. Despite these challenges, we remain on track to achieve this outcome by the end of the project.

Outcome 3 (Improved Law Enforcement/Legal Procedures): IWT076 remains on track to complete Outcome indicator 3, reporting at least 2 coordinated actions to halt IWT through the improvement or use of national legislation, or through the implementation of new bi-national agreements between Guatemala and Mexico to reduce transfrontier IWT. Our baseline for this indicator was zero. To date, we obtained 1 emblematic sentence against the 7 Mexican timber traffickers captured in Guatemala (Annex O1.3b in 2021 Annual Report), and we now register a second emblematic sentence, with the stiffest penalty ever handed down to timber traffickers in Guatemala (Annex O3.1.2Y2). During Year 3, IWT076 partners will continue working with Guatemalan and Mexican authorities to hold a high-level event in the Mexico’s Federal District and propose targeted policy reforms to halt the laundering of illegal timber in Mexico.

Outcome 4 (Sustainable Livelihoods): we have obtained ██████████ of additional investment in sustainable livelihoods in Guatemala through the support of 8 new sources. Both results surpass our Guatemala-specific project goals of obtaining at least ██████████ of additional funding, through at least 1 new donor. In Mexico, PPY has yet to leverage additional funding for local livelihoods; the stated goal in Mexico is to benefit at least 500 households. During Year 3, PPY will continue outreach with donors and decision makers guided by their socioeconomic analysis of livelihoods opportunities for the communities around Calakmul and Balamku. Leveraging formal funding in Mexico remains a challenge during the project lifespan, but the new funding obtained thus far in Guatemala provides a solid start towards meeting or even surpassing this outcome during the project lifespan.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2021, IWT076 partners reviewed results from previous years and developed an “updated baseline” for IWT “events” (defined during the proposal as a single tree poached or a single animal killed/extracted illegally, to ensure a standardized measure across all management units and amongst all partners). This new baseline covered the years of 2018, 2019, and 2020 prior to project initiation.

Outcome 5 (Bi-national Coordination): we have signed the binational MOU establishing a anti-IWT network for the Guatemala-Mexico Green Corridor. In so doing, we have expanded our civil society partners with five new partners including the *Centro de Estudios Conservacionistas* (CECON) of Guatemala's University of San Carlos, the World Wildlife Fund's representatives in Guatemala and Mexico (WWF), as well as the Guatemalan NGOs Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Association (ARCAS) and the *Fundación Defensores de la Naturaleza* (FDN). We plan to add a sixth new partner shortly, consisting of the Mexican NGO, *Natura Mexicana*.

### 3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

Below we provided comments on the risks and assumptions updated with perspectives following Year 2 of IWT076 implementation.

Assumption 1) Governmental investment is not significantly reduced in either country; This holds true particularly in Guatemala, however as noted in the Year 1 Annual Report, the Mexican government had attempted to reduce funding for CONANP, at one point proposing a [drastic 75% reduction](#) in CONANP's annual budget before [reversing course](#). As of 2020, CONANP partners have suffered a modest reduction in staff and operations, but this does not yet qualify as a "significant" reduction.

A2) Greater awareness about IWT will motivate some government actors to address IWT; Largely holds true: particularly in Guatemala IWT076 has received considerable support from CONAP and MINEX, as well as from CONANP in Guatemala. However, please also see Section 11, for additional comments on challenges encountered with the Guatemalan army.

A3) Binational and international agreements offer potential for greater collaboration on the Guatemala-Mexico border; Holds true.

A4) Guatemalan and Mexican Governments are committed to socioeconomic development and poverty reduction in project area; Holds true, again with clear evidence of support for projects in Guatemala.

A5) Government partners will be interested in collaborating with Civil Society; Holds true, see A2 above.

A6) Partners, including government, will be able to interdict IWT operations in the field adequately managing threats from criminal syndicates; Holds true, although the continued lack of high profile captures in Mexico indicates some reluctance among Mexican authorities to capture well-organized timber traffickers. Project partners must continue raising awareness about the threat with the Mexican government, and support press coverage to spark action.

A7) Women will be available and interested in participating in SMART training and in playing a role in rural law enforcement; Holds true, we have thus far trained 18 women in the use of SMART, however we reiterate that very few women participate in front line patrols.

A8) Press coverage and attention will increase the willingness of governments to respond, particularly if corruption is highlighted as a key enabling condition for IWT; Holds true, yet as noted above we will aim for more high-profile press coverage, particularly in Mexico.

A9) Greater ability to detect and apprehend traffickers and obtain sanctions will provide an increased deterrent to IWT; Holds true, particularly after the capture of 7 Mexican nationals.

A10) Governments of Mexico and Guatemala will collaborate to reduce corruption and trans-border IWT; Holds true, based on initial, positive advances with Guatemala's Ministry of Foreign Relations (MINEX); we continue to plan with the high-level meeting in Mexico City.

A11) The Guatemalan, and Mexican governments, bilateral, and international donors are truly interested in increasing socioeconomic investment in the MBR and in southern Mexico; True

A12) CONAP's next leadership will continue supporting alternative livelihoods for rural MBR communities, supporting honey production, sustainable NTFP harvests and small animal husbandry; Already proven to be true based on IWT076 advances, and tangible support for the DEFRA-propelled investments in alternative livelihoods.

A13) CONAP's leadership and the Executive Council will recognize the importance of engaging San Miguel inhabitants as strategic partners in the MBR; Proven true through the rescission of the 2009 eviction order against San Miguel's residents.

A14) Civil Society Organizations will remain committed and be able to obtain resources to sustain the binational network beyond the project period; Holds true.

A15) The tri-national GEC will remain operational throughout the entire project period; Holds true, the GEC continues operating and will benefit from sustained GIZ support through 2023.

### **3.5 Impact: achievement of positive impact on illegal wildlife trade and poverty alleviation**

The IWT076 impact statement indicated we would achieve *“reduced trafficking of fauna and flora in the Selva Maya Green Corridor of Guatemala and Mexico through improved law enforcement, long-term binational collaboration and a foundation for community engagement”*.

We remain on track to deliver the impact as originally defined. IWT076 has already helped to reduce the incidence of illegal timber trafficking in both countries, with a 62% reduction in IWT events over the first 2-years of project activity. In Mexico, despite the lack of arrests, increased patrolling has led to an -61.3% reduction in IWT events, whereas in Guatemala the -89.2% reduction has been far more robust (Annex 4.2Y2). Happily, we can report a total absence of any poaching of jaguars, parrots, monkeys, and other key species of fauna in the project area, as well as 23 consecutive months without timber poaching in Guatemala’s Mirador-Rio Azul National Park.

Collaboration among Guatemalan and Mexican authorities responsible for day-to-day operations has been strengthened through 2 park guard exchanges (Annex O5.4Y2) and 6 joint patrols (Annex O1.6Y2), three carried out during Year 2. The establishment of our bi-national IWT network continues facilitating transborder coordination among project partners (Annex O5.1 Y2).

Particularly in Guatemala, livelihoods investments supported by DEFRA-IWT and leveraged sources continue providing tangible support to 105 households, including direct benefits for at least 36 women (Annex O4.7Y2). Local beneficiaries in Guatemala have thus far obtained £.23,500 in additional income propelled by IWT076 (Annex O4.10Y2). The livelihoods analysis developed by WCS (Annex O4.3 in 2021 Annual Report) continues guiding investments in poverty reduction programs, helping to impact. In Mexico, PPY’s socioeconomic survey (Annex O4.1Y2) is now being used to promote national, bilateral, and private investments in rural development. We continue with the goal of leveraging increased investment in 500 households in Mexico, and plan to produce a lessons learned White Paper including recommendations for poverty alleviation programs in the future.

## **4. Thematic focus**

IWT076 continues to deliver results within three IWT Challenge Fund themes (sustainable livelihoods, law enforcement, and effective legal frameworks). We have strengthened sustainable livelihoods in >100 Guatemalan households (Annex O4.7Y2), leveraging an additional £.151,273 (Annex O4.5Y2). Increased patrolling and field presence within the Guatemalan section of the Green Corridor has resulted in 23 months with only 11 trees poached in the Paxban management unit (Annex 4.2Y2). During Year 2, we registered a second emblematic sentence against timber traffickers (Annex O1.3.2Y2), once again providing a strong disincentive to timber poaching in Guatemala.

Additional notable achievements during Year 2 include an important disruption of a new Mexican timber poaching camp within Guatemala’s Mirador-Rio Azul National Park by FUNDAECO, CONAP, and CECON, the absence of captures of IWT076 sustainable livelihoods beneficiaries for wildlife trafficking in Guatemala, and the signing of a bi-national, civil society MOU to sustain support for anti-IWT efforts in the Guatemala – Mexico Green Corridor. These advances will be discussed in more detail within section 17.

## **5. Impact on species in focus**

For a second year we report a remarkable reduction in the amount of timber poaching within the Guatemalan focal area. Over the last 23 months we have registered 11 trees and 12 animals poached in Guatemala, yielding a total of 23 poaching “events”. These 23 events constitute a -89.2% reduction from the 212 “events” expected over a 2-year period, when compared with the project baseline (i.e. 106 “events”/year x 2 years). Partners continue confirming the absence of trafficking associated with the pet, medicinal, and ornamental IWT markets, particularly of spotted cats/jaguars, parrots/psittacids, monkeys as the most vulnerable taxa. This latter point is important due to the potential expansion of confirmed poaching events in other sectors of the trinational Selva Maya. These include killings and

trafficking of jaguar body parts (Lacandona Mexico, and Belize), as well as hundreds of parrots/psittacines trafficked annually for pets in Guatemala and across the region (Annex 4.3Y2).

In Mexico, over 23 months CONANP, SEMABICC, and PPY have detected a total of 361 IWT “events”, with 206 detected during Year 1, and 155 during Year 2. Our updated baseline from 2018 indicated an average of 400 “events” annually in the Mexican focal areas, resulting in a -54.9% reduction over Years 1 & 2 of IWT076. Although captures of traffickers have not occurred in Mexico, increased field presence and patrolling seems to be an important factor in reducing poaching and threats in the area, and as in Guatemala, conserving populations of valuable timber species (*granadillo*, ziricote, mahogany, sapodilla, and Spanish cedar), spotted cats (jaguar, ocelot, margay), primates (howler monkey, spider monkey), Baird’s tapir, and psittacines (mealy amazon, red-lored parrot, white-crowned parrot) alike.

Finally, the large transfrontier jaguar camera trap study undertaken by WCS and WWF on both sides of the border (Mirador-Rio Azul/Dos Lagunas in Guatemala; Calakmul Biosphere Reserve in Mexico) has terminated, generating a large volume of data on jaguars, puma, and their prey, and other species including Baird’s tapir. Data are not yet processed, and a formal publication will require at least another year of effort, but we can confidently say that jaguars and their prey retain robust populations in these areas. The following videos illustrate how important the park is to [jaguar](#), [puma](#), and [tapir](#), and many other [threatened](#), [large-bodied vertebrates](#) of Mesoamerica.

## 6. Project support to poverty reduction

During Year 2, IWT076 partners continued interventions to improve the rural livelihoods of at least 600 households, including 500 in Mexico and 107/105 over Years 1 & 2 respectively in Guatemala. Due to Mexico’s ranking as an Upper Middle Income country, IWT076 poverty-related interventions in Mexico are “indirect”, focused on increasing governmental and private foundation investment in rural communities, instead of using DEFRA support directly. IWT076 poverty reduction interventions in Guatemala, however, have been very successful in using DEFRA funds to identify tangible opportunities to provide direct, largely in-kind investments to rural households that generate impact and then attract additional investment by other donors.

It is important to mention that the IWT timber market impacting Guatemala originates within Mexico, with repercussions for at least 3,000 households among both countries. Organized timber syndicates poach timber from both Guatemalan and Mexican protected areas, laundering the timber in Mexico, prior to exporting milled timber to suspected Asian markets. Guatemalan communities, however, have also been implicated in supporting this IWT, leading IWT076 partners to implement alternative livelihood programs with rural communities located near the IWT076 focal area.

In Mexico, PPY terminated their socioeconomic analysis (Annex O4.1Y2) to identify communities exposed to IWT and produce recommendations for viable gender-focused alternative livelihoods investments that will increase the socioeconomic resilience of 8 communities within the IWT trafficking corridors adjacent to Calakmul and Balamku. During Year 2, PPY began sharing the results of this assessment (Annex O4.2Y2) with national authorities to leverage at least [REDACTED] of investment by the project’s end date.

In Guatemala, we developed a detailed livelihoods assessment (Annex O4.3 Year 1 Annual Report) focused on 5 rural communities located along the Road to Carmelita, near the Mexican border. We subsequently undertook consultations with rural households and community-based organizations, and jointly selected and implemented livelihoods interventions to benefit 107 households in Guatemala. During Year 2, we worked with the Association of Forest Communities of Peten (ACOFOP), to terminate the construction of a non-timber forest product processing warehouse (“*bodega*”) in partnership with the *Asociación Forestal Integral de Cruce a la Colorada* (AFICC). This NTFP processing warehouse is now in use (Annex O4.7.2Y2), helping AFICC members obtain income through the sale of xate palm fronds (*Chamaedorea* spp.) for the international floral market, and breadnut (*Brosimum alicastrum*) as a basic food item. We have also continued DEFRA support for projects led by women including poultry ranching and apiculture, as well as support for male beekeepers, and forest restoration

investments providing daily wages to participating households. As of March, 2022, DEFRA-IWT support has leveraged an additional \$ [REDACTED] of livelihoods investments from 8 additional sources, including [REDACTED] during Year 2 (Annex O4.5Y2). Parallel to these investments, WCS collected data on household income to evaluate the economic impacts of our investments, finding that to date, the investments providing the greatest short-term economic benefit have been related to daily wages for forest restoration and non-timber forest product harvesting (xate and especially breadnut).

## **7. Consideration of gender equality issues**

After Years 1 & 2, 36 women in Guatemala have captured direct benefits of IWT076 and leveraged livelihoods investments, yielding a rate of 33.6% female participation in alternative livelihoods investments (Annex O4.7.1Y2), just short of our project goal of 35%. PPY's final socioeconomic evaluation of Mexican households exposed to IWT also provides recommendations for gender-focused livelihoods investments (Annex O4.1Y2). To date we have also trained 18 women in the SMART software, with 12 trained during Year 1, and 6 during Year 2 (Annex O1.1Y2). Indirect benefits include the persistent inclusion of women within IWT076 planning processes, particularly when engaging local communities and their representative organizations. For WCS, this approach to working with rural communities is viable since communities often engage directly with WCS's America Rodriguez, our female coordinator of community-based conservation activities within IWT076. On a more personal note, America has identified two young women from the village of San Miguel, one of our IWT076 target settlements, and assisted them to pass entrance exams and matriculate in the University of San Carlos's branch in Peten (*Centro Universitario de Petén*). These two young women have become the first residents of San Miguel to ever study at the university level. Finally, during Year 3, as part of our lessons learned White Paper, we will document how women are often impacted by IWT and generate recommendations regarding how to best engage women as key actors capable of contributing to the reduction of IWT.

## **8. Monitoring and evaluation**

During Year 2, IWT076 partners continued using the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) to systematize data obtained during field patrols, with detailed coverage of the # of patrols undertaken, # of individuals participating in patrols, # of threats encountered, and spatial tracks of the specific routes covered (Annex O1.3Y2, Annex O1.5.1Y2). Additional data often collected include the exact locations of trees and animals poached, and tracks of access routes (*wines*) opened by timber trafficking syndicates. Since Year 1, partners in Mexico have advanced their capabilities to generate formal SMART "reports" that include site-specific data, such as the tracks of newly detected access routes.

Regarding socioeconomic monitoring, the Basic Necessities Survey (BNS) method employed in Guatemala is excellent for establishing a quantifiable baseline for wellbeing/poverty as we did in 2021 (Annex O4.8 within 2021 Annual Report) and for evaluating changes over time. BNS methods quantify household access to tangible, verifiable, goods and services, but typically these measures of wellbeing change gradually over time. To address the immediate economic impact of IWT076 investments in Guatemalan households, we have already collected data on income at the household level (Annex O4.10Y2). Finally, to get a more nuanced, and qualitative account of the impacts of socioeconomic investments, during Year 3 WCS will employ the "Most Significant Change" method, consisting of in-depth interviews with individual beneficiaries. A final BNS/income stream report will be generated by the end of Year 3, and results referenced within the planned White Paper.

In Guatemala, during Year 1 we evaluated awareness of IWT among national authorities using an online survey, and the support of a local consultant (Annex O2.1 within 2021 Annual Report). We will repeat the same survey during Year 3 to determine if any improvements in awareness have occurred amongst Guatemalan authorities. As detailed previously, such evaluations are partially hampered by the amount of turnover among national authorities in Guatemala and Mexico both, with a second consideration being access to the national authorities during the COVID-19 pandemic, and during electoral periods (Mexico). Finally, we received approval from LTS/DEFRA to modify Output 2.1 within the IWT076 logframe, consisting of a new approach to evaluating changes in awareness about IWT by Mexican authorities. Instead of developing an initial awareness baseline during Year 1, and repeating

the same survey in Year 3, we will now survey Mexican authorities prior to, and after, an IWT outreach event now planned for June, 2022. In Guatemala, we experimented with a similar “pre and post” survey of knowledge with the outreach workshop held April 18, 2022. We will report the results of these pre and post surveys in the next half year report and use them to guide our next outreach event planned for Mexico.

The most insightful indicator for project impact is the number of poaching events detected within the project area. Increased field presence and awareness of IWT, improved law enforcement, and investments in livelihoods are all designed to reduce the amount of IWT in the project area, and thus true project impact is best reflected by the rate of IWT detected. During Year 1, we updated the baseline values for some indicators as collected more precise data, but otherwise, aside from the change to Output 2.1, there have been no additional changes to the M&E plan. M&E tracking continues being led by WCS, however project partners participate regularly in reviews of the reporting framework, including contributing to defining the degree of advance towards meeting indicators established within the project logframe.

## **9. Lessons learnt**

Despite the persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic, implementation of IWT076 during Year 2 was much closer to “normal”, lacking massive forest fires and hurricanes as we had during 2020. Adaptations we made to implement the project helped resolve most limits on in-person, indoor meetings, and international travel, and seemed much closer to “business as usual”. In this regard, one key lesson learned is that these less expensive, perhaps more efficient ways of coordinating/implementing the project worked very well and may, at least in part, persist after the resolution of the pandemic. Administratively, in future proposals we would likely budget more Travel and Subsistence resources into field operations, and perhaps only plan for one in-person project meeting with all our international partners. Otherwise, we are already compiling inputs from partners on the lessons learnt regarding coordinating transfrontier anti-IWT efforts. This final White Paper will be produced by the project’s end and posted on WCS’ and partners’ websites to provide orientation to similar approaches in the future.

## **10. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)**

The first annual evaluation (AR1R) for IWT076 requested that in our 2021 Half Year Report, we respond to the following question: *“For Output 4, there seems to be more engagement and progress with Guatemalan partners and communities than in Mexico. PPY have advanced several activities for Indicators 4.1, 4.2 and 4.6. Could you clarify what has caused the delays and the advance of these activities in Mexico?”*. Within HYR2021, we responded regarding the challenges faced, but since then have also taken administrative and technical steps to maximise the delivery of planned outputs in Mexico, including those related to Output 4. To date, O4.1 has been completed, O4.2 has been initiated, and PPY has now turned their attention towards O4.6 to leverage additional funding for investment in community-based livelihoods in Mexico. Project partners all received the AR1R, and concurred with the findings, including PPY and the specific questions related to advances in Mexico.

## **11. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere**

IWT076 partners remain committed to the design of the project, including the integrated structure of the five main project outputs. We have not made any major changes in the overall approach, including the methods of implementation or the exit strategy. We hope to sustain efforts in the future through our MOU declaring commitment to reducing IWT over the long-term, and a combination of transferring capacity to local partners and continued fund raising. More on that below.

Project design called for expanding collaboration with new governmental actors, and during 2021, we reported the establishment of a new army base at Ixcan Rio, in the remote section of Mirador-Rio Azul National Park as an important improvement in State control of the border with Mexico. In late 2021, however, IWT076 partners received an unexpected setback, when personnel from CONAP and FUNDAECO detected army personnel hunting 2 animals for subsistence within the park. FUNDAECO lodged a formal complaint with the army, and the army subsequently extracted their troops from the area. Since then, army leadership in Peten



has changed, and the army has resumed their support for field patrols along the Mexican border. We remain hopeful that soon, the army will return their personnel, with greater discipline and supervision, to the permanent outpost at Ixcan Rio.

## **12. Sustainability and legacy**

Following 23 months of implementation, IWT076 is now well-recognized in both countries, with major governmental entities, NGOs, and communities alike aware of the project's goals and the investments underway. Two concrete examples providing evidence of national interest include a) MINEX's ongoing support to undertake a formal, bi-national exchange between the Guatemalan and Mexican governments in D.F. Mexico during Year 3 (Annex O2.8Y2), and b) PPY's recent meeting with the Governor of the State of Campeche, in which the governor pledged to increase support for counter-IWT protection measures and to increase national investment in rural communities impacted by IWT (Annex O4.2Y2).

Our exit strategy remains as planned. As evidenced by the signed MOU (Annex O5.5Y2), the project has strong momentum amongst civil society partners that have provided the driving force for advances to date, and this is crucial since we believe that civil society, and not governments, are most effective at identifying threats/opportunities, and demanding change. IWT076's legacy will be sustained through the internalization of the IWT approach by at least 10 civil society organizations committed to the area over the long-term, but also through demand-side insistence that government deliver and sustained civil society fund raising.

Open access to the project data/results remains available on updated WCS and project partner websites, including results through Year 2 (Annex O2.6Y2); we plan to update the information one final time, prior to submission of the project final report. During Year 2, partners have also posted 30 social media pulses on IWT and project activities (Annex O2.5Y2).

## **13. IWT Challenge Fund identity**

UK government support has been recognized through branding of all project products, with the DEFRA-UKAID branding is utilized in IWT076 products (see Annex O1.2.1Y2) and in formal project events, including the most recent visit by UK Ambassador to Guatemala, Mr. Nick Whittingham, to the Maya Biosphere Reserve of Guatemala in March 2022 (Annex 4.1Y2). Following up on the Ambassador's 2021 visit to our project, Ambassador Whittingham met with project partners including government, and subsequently visited the IWT pilot demonstration site of the village of San Miguel to see first-hand the local impact of investments in sustainable livelihoods. This visit provided community, NGO, and governmental partners with the opportunity to publicly acknowledge the generous support provided to Guatemala by the United Kingdom and its Government. In summary, the IWT Challenge Fund is now well known amongst conservation and government circles in Guatemala and in Mexico both, and DEFRA/UK is increasingly recognized as one of the Maya Forest region's most important global partners.

## **14. Impact of COVID-19 on project delivery**

Both the direct and indirect impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on IWT076 waned during Year 2 of implementation. That said, we (all) remained surprised by the tenacity of the virus, and the persistence of impacts throughout the entirety of Year 2. Impacts were reduced by sustaining adaptations made during Year 1, in no small part in thanks to the investment of DEFRA's COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund (CRR) provided to Guatemala. Through the CRR, WCS and partners were able to ensure that sufficient masks and alcohol gel were available at project/community meetings, and that rural partners had knowledge of the complexity of the virus and the need to, at the very least, reduce spread whenever possible.

To date, the pandemic has undeniably hindered some of the activities originally proposed within IWT076. For example, we have not held in-person annual meetings in Mexico, opting instead to continue with the use of Zoom meetings (held much more frequently). We have also faced some hurdles, especially in Mexico, regarding access to governmental authorities during surges in viral infections. Looking forward, we expect COVID-19 to remain with us for the near future, obligating us to fund new ways to meet project goals as originally proposed. A new

adaptation from 2022, consisted of the use of “*DocuSign*” software to complete the signing of the bi-national MOU amongst project partners and new civil society allies. We expect that reliance on Zoom meetings will become a permanent feature of future cross-border initiatives. Reliance on local, civil society delivery partners already “in the focal areas” has also helped ensure that project activities advanced, as opposed to hiring external consultants that would have to travel into the area. In summary, we expect to deliver the vast majority of outputs and impacts as originally proposed by the end of the project, in November 2022, and we expect that implementation of IWT076/CCR has increased local awareness about the risks of pandemics and the importance of mitigation, including masking and vaccines.

**15. Safeguarding**

Please tick this box if any safeguarding or human rights violations have occurred during this financial year.

During Years 1 & 2, no human rights violations have occurred, neither with DEFRA-IWT funding, nor with any leveraged funds associated with the IWT076 project.

As reported after Year 1, WCS’ extensive social safeguarding and Code of Conduct policies remain unaltered. However, in March 2022, with leveraged support from the US Department of Interior, WCS organized and held a social safeguards workshop with IWT076 team members and other governmental and civil society partners operating in Guatemala’s Maya Biosphere Reserve. The workshop addressed social safeguards for protection/law enforcement staff engaged in field patrols; precisely the “protection personnel” most exposed to challenging logistical and social contexts, with the potential to commit human rights violations (Annex 4.4Y2). The WCS Guatemala Program also informed partners that all future (sub)grants managed by WCS that include field-based protection/law enforcement activities will require partner NGOs to institute their own social safeguards policies, including a procedure for reporting (whistle blowing), investigating, and resolving potential human rights violations.

Finally, as reported within the 2021 Annual Report (Annex 4.10), WCS applied for and obtained a project-specific IRB authorization covering our Basic Necessities Survey field work, including the collection of personal information from vulnerable rural populations. WCS currently has two field staff with IRB approval, fully approved to collect the final round of BNS data during Year 3.

## 16. Project expenditure

These are DRAFT figures, and we will be able to confirm them by May 5<sup>th</sup> 2022.

**Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (April 2021-March 2022)**

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2021/22 Grant (£)	2021/22 Total actual IWT Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs (see below)	██████	██████	██████	N/A
Consultancy costs	██████	██████	██████	N/A
Overhead Costs	██████	██████	██████	N/A
Travel and subsistence	██████	██████	██████	N/A
Operating Costs	██████	██████	██████	N/A
Capital items (see below)				N/A
Others (see below)	██████	██████	██████	N/A
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>151,880</b>	<b>151,880</b>		

## 17. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project during the reporting period (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes

I agree for the IWTCF Secretariat to publish the content of this section. **Agreed by WCS.**

Project partners obtained the following outstanding achievements during Year 2 of the DEFRA-IWT076 project focused on *Cross-Border Coordination to Reduce IWT in the Guatemala-Mexico Green Corridor*:

- 1) 23 months with reduced IWT in the Guatemala-Mexico Green Corridor:** After 2 years of implementation, project partners in Guatemala have registered an 89.2X% reduction in the number of events of timber trafficking and species poaching. Partners have detected only 23 events during this 23-month period, as compared to the expected amount of 212 events per the pre-project baseline. In Mexico, events of illegal poaching have been reduced by 61.3% during the same 23-month period, with 361 events detected as compared to the expected amount of 800 events. These remarkable results have been generated by increased patrolling and field presence in both countries, stiff legal penalties for poachers captured in Guatemala, and the recent disruptions of Mexican poachers by FUNDAECO, CONAP, and CECON personnel in Guatemala, and CONANP personnel in Mexico. IWT076 is demonstrating that increased field presence and patrolling in areas subject to targeted poaching for global markets can reduce poaching and extraction, even if, as in Mexico, captures and prosecutions of poachers are infrequent.
- 2) Demonstrable impact of sustainable livelihoods interventions:** WCS's sustainable livelihoods interventions with rural Guatemalan households has propelled £.23,500 in additional income at the household level cultivating strong support among the Maya Biosphere Reserve' inhabitants for DEFRA's anti-IWT message. After 2 years of implementation, IWT076 livelihoods investments have leveraged £.151,273 of additional investment, and established a foundation for additional, larger scale investments to benefit Guatemala's rural population.
- 3) Bi-national MOU to sustain IWT interdiction after IWT076:** During Year 2, IWT076 partners signed a bi-national, civil society Memorandum of Understanding to sustain collaborations to halt IWT in the Guatemala-Mexico Green Corridor among Guatemalan, Mexican, and international organizations. Partners agreed to join efforts and provide support for national governments to ensure that cross-border collaborations to eradicate

IWT continue for the foreseeable future. Ten civil society organizations have signed the agreement, and we expect the number of signatory parties to grow over the next reporting period.

## Checklist for submission

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the <b>correct template</b> (checking fund, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and <b>deleted the blue guidance text</b> before submission?	X
<b>Is the report less than 10MB?</b> If so, please email to <a href="mailto:IWT-Fund@itsi.co.uk">IWT-Fund@itsi.co.uk</a> putting the project number in the subject line.	X
<b>Is your report more than 10MB?</b> If so, please discuss with <a href="mailto:IWT-Fund@itsi.co.uk">IWT-Fund@itsi.co.uk</a> about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the subject line.	
<b>Have you included means of verification?</b> You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	X
<b>Do you have hard copies of material you need to submit with the report?</b> If so, please make this clear in the covering email and ensure all material is marked with the project number. However, we would expect that most material will now be electronic.	
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	X
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	X
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	