



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

Project reference	IWT081
Project title	Enabling and promoting communities to tackle IWT in Southern Myanmar
Country(ies)	Myanmar
Lead organisation	Fauna & Flora International
Partners(s)	Freeland, KFD
Project leader	Nay Myo Shwe
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	2020 HYR1
Project website/blog/social media	n/a

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to the end September).

In accordance with grant contract documents, the original project starting date was 1 April 2020. However, due to COVID 19 restrictions a delay was requested and approved on 8 July, so that we actually started all activities on 1 July 2020.

Major progress during the reporting period is as follows:

1. Project inception meetings were held with the Village Conservation Groups and Village Development Committees from project villages No 3, 5 and 8 on the Mawtaung Road in July. A total of 35 participants (20 male and 15 female) from Village Conservation Group committees joined in the meeting. We introduced the project, discussed and agreed on legal registration for community based organization, agreed hunting control measures to be undertaken by the committees, and alternative livelihood activities that the project would support. Due to Covid-19 restrictions the community consultation meetings were carried out in clusters, in accessible locations with sufficient space to social distance.
2. Project inception meetings were held with different levels of the local Forest Department, also in July 21 to 26, 2020. These included the Tanintharyi Regional Director, the Assistant Directors from Myeik and Kyawthaung Districts, and the township forest officer from Tanintharyi, Bokeyyin and Kawthaung Townships. We introduced the IWT project activities, and undertook detail planning and project discussion on joint activities including support to community monitoring measures, and controlling the sale of wildlife products. Detail plan for each township will link with township level law enforcement taskforce.
3. The FFI IWT project team held several internal planning meetings and discussions through July and early August for work plan formulation based on multi-stakeholders consultations. We finalised the target village selection, detailed work plan with roles and responsibilities for staff, and an M&E framework. An inception report was produced for

staff to refer back to.

4. We joined a meeting with Bokeyyin township level wildlife law enforcement task force. Eleven respective departments were attended and discuss for township level wildlife law enforcement plan and work with local communities to combat IWT. Participants agreed to start on awareness raising of new wildlife law (2018) to local communities. This will be followed by a restaurant campaign, warnings and where restaurant owners will be required to sign commitments to not trading wildlife or wildlife products on their premises. We will also work with the task force to erect noticeboards at main points of entry to focal townships, and notices of wildlife crossing points on main roads to reduce human wildlife conflict.
5. We prepared warning signage with local village conservation groups (VCGs) and township law enforcement team, which are targeted to restaurants selling wildlife meat along the main road between Myeik and Bokeyyin. Total of signage for restaurants is 45, signboard is four in township entry point and additional three in highway bus station.
6. Patrol were undertaken in the Ywahilu area – a known tiger breeding location – by the newly-formed Village Conservation Group, which currently has eight members. Snare removal is major achievement for tiger and prey conservation, and deterrent to poachers; during the reporting period around 300 traps, including steel wire snares, string snares and pangolin nets, were removed.
7. Tiger and prey surveys using remote camera traps were launched with local communities in selected locations inside the jungle. A total of 24 camera traps were placed in eight grid 4 km x 4 km grid cells, as part of our ongoing monitoring of tiger populations in known core movement areas.
8. Currently, three small grants for alternative livelihood support activities were provided to main targeted hunters from target villages. Hunter and beneficiaries selection process is based on previous tiger project socio economic assessment who fully rely on hunting inside the project area. In the Mawtaung Road area we provided 224 kg of chicken and eight pigs. For 14 Mile and Pyigyimandai area we provided two pigs and 140 kg of chicken and duck based on their interest in poultry farming. Additionally food for chickens and pig farming was provided. All necessary contract and zero hunting agreement was signed by the hunters together with village chairman. Counter checking system with village chairman and VCG committee member will closely keep monitoring. Village chairman, informant network and VCG committee member are key for this actions. And township level wildlife law enforcement team announced to villager no more handmade gun is allow to use anymore.
9. We now have a concrete planning for transnational crime control strategy mainly for wildlife trade control together with Freeland Foundation, but this activities will directly related with COVID 19 pandemic and restrictions.

We also helped launch a tiger conservation working group across the Dawna-Tenasserim Tiger Landscape along with IUCN, WWF, WCS, Freeland Foundation and others. This informal groups is intended to improve information sharing and ultimately tiger conservation practice across this range. The first introductory meeting was held on 9 July, and agreement was reached to host follow-up meetings and establish technical working groups; one on tiger and prey monitoring is planned for October, and FFI has agreed to co-host one on law enforcement and IWT in early 2021.

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.

Community engagement with local communities and other important project inception activities were delayed due to Covid-19, as explained above. A change request was submitted in the first few weeks of the project and the start date was subsequently moved to 1 July 2020.

Regarding on wildlife trade survey together with University, currently all Universities in the country are officially closed due to the pandemic. Nonetheless, we have still been able to discuss how to work under COVID-19 restrictions.

The patrol reporting system for Ywahilu village patrol team is somewhat slow, since the village is located in an inaccessible location on the Myanmar-Thai border. Usually, they patrol team has to cross into Thailand to send their patrol records electronically. However, due to Covid the border crossing is temporarily closed, so we have had to make arrangements to collect the patrol data in person.

Registration for village level organizations is delay due to COVID and priority with country's election. And waiting for joint bank account which is need to attach in application documents.

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.

Especially community engagement and public mass meeting is delay due to Covid. Besides, assess restrictions make travel between townships difficult for field staff. During the second wave of the pandemic in Myanmar, several different regulations have been promulgated but some systems are vague. This has caused concern for local communities who have limited access to healthcare, and they are weary of outsiders or strangers entering to their area. For this reason, we are working with villages and township-level authorities by assigning specific individual staff to each area, reducing the need for travel. And we carefully follow on Ministry of Health and Sport instructions on COVID 19 restrictions, including through weekly meetings of the senior country programme management team.

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

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

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

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget, so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to IWT Challenge Fund management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

Limited budget spent in this first quarter due to the delay to the project start. We have revised our plans, and are confident we have taken sufficient measures to ensure all activities can progress in the next quarter.

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also** be raised with LTS International through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: IWT001 Half Year Report.**