

## Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus Half Year Report

**Note: If there is any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website, please ensure you clearly highlight this.**

**Submission Deadline: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023**

<b>Project reference</b>	IWT 081
<b>Project title</b>	Enabling and promoting communities to tackle IWT in Southern Myanmar
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Myanmar
<b>Lead partner</b>	Fauna & Flora International
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Freeland, KFD
<b>Project leader</b>	Saw Soe Aung / Ngwe Lwin
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	October 2023_HYR4
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<a href="http://www.fauna-flora.org">www.fauna-flora.org</a>

**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 end September).**

Although we are not looking for specific reporting against your indicators, please use this opportunity to consider the appropriateness of your M&E systems (are your indicators still relevant, can you report against any Standard Indicators, do your assumptions still hold true?). The guidance can be found on the resources page of the relevant fund website.

**Activity 1.2 Establish, train and support VDC-level Village Conservation Groups (VCG; self-titled rotation of community steward teams, approximately 10/village) to undertake strategic SMART patrolling in village forests to monitor, deter and report IWT and HEC, and remove snares.**

In the year 2023, the political situation in our project area has shown signs of improvement. The project team has gained access to some additional areas to carry out project activities, and an exciting development is the participation of a patrol team from the Maw Taung Area in community patrolling efforts. This is fantastic news for FFI and bodes well for future collaborations in environmental conservation within the project area (the Tiger landscape).

The Maw Taung community patrol team embarked on their activities, including camera trapping and patrolling, in July 2023, guided by FFI and KFD. According to their reports from July to September 2023, a total of 15 individuals (comprising 11 males and 4 females) actively participated in their patrolling team. Based on their patrolling and camera trap findings, they documented 30 different species of mammals and identified 30 pieces of evidence related to wildlife signs, tracks, and threats. Notably, these findings included species of high conservation concern, such as elephants, pangolins, and tiger prey. The table below displays records of wildlife sightings and tracks, along with associated threats.

No	Descriptions	Total
1	Sign (18 Mammal, 1 bird, 2 reptile)	21
3	Track (Guar's feces and footprint, Banteng, Sambar and Bear)	5
3	Threats (Oil Palm Plantation, New settlement, Shifting Cultivation, logging)	4

Among the species identified, one is classified as Critically Endangered (Pangolin), six are categorized as Endangered (Sambar Deer, Elephant, Black Bear, Gaur, Banteng, Malayan Tapir), nine are considered Vulnerable, and three falls under the Near Threatened status, as per the IUCN Red List. These findings highlight the importance of ongoing conservation efforts in the area and underscore the importance of continued collaboration and vigilance in safeguarding these species and their habitats.

In 2023, as part of the efforts to enhance the capacity of the Maw Taung patrolling team, a 6-month project was initiated. This project included various capacity-building activities, conservation training, and organizational support. As a component of this initiative:

- The Maw Taung community patrol team received direct support for capacity development, which encompassed the provision of equipment (GPS, Mammal and Bird Guidebook and track and sign noted book), Ranger Base Data Collection (RBDC) tools, SMART Training, mentoring, and technical assistance.
- Additionally, a minimum of 20 individuals, including teachers, students, and members of local communities supported by FFI, were provided with training in conservation and operational procedures.

**Outcome Level Monitoring: 0.1 Tiger and elephant populations in the project location are recorded as stable throughout the project period.**

To assess the tiger population, ongoing camera trap activities are being conducted in collaboration with our Village Conservation Group from Chaung Nyauk Pyan Village. Despite restrictions in certain areas, permission was granted for camera trap activities, resulting in the deployment of a total of 24 permanent camera traps. These cameras were deployed, and their SD cards changed in the Ywahilu area using a randomized method from June to September within the reporting period. Based on camera-trap results, 26 species (mammals, birds, and reptiles), including all target species (tiger and elephant), were recorded. A total of six prey species of interest, (gaur, sambar, muntjac species, wild pig, Malayan tapir and mouse deer species). Of these, one is listed as one Critically Endangered, six are Endangered, five are Vulnerable, and one is Near Threatened, in the IUCN Red List. Based on stripe pattern, we recorded two new individuals of tiger in Ywahilu area during the report period.

The table below displays the results of a species list obtained through camera traps during the reporting period.

### **Species List for Camera trap data (April -Sept 2023)**

#### **1.Mammals**

No	Common Name	Scientific Name	IUCN Red List
1	NORTHERN PIG-TAILED MACAQUE	<i>Macaca leonina</i>	VU
2	STUMP-TAILED MACAQUE	<i>Macaca arctoides</i>	VU
3	LONG-TAILED MACAQUE	<i>Macaca fascicularis</i>	EN
4	DHOLE	<i>Cuon alpinus</i>	EN

5	SUN BEAR	<i>Helarctos malayanus</i>	VU
6	YELLOW-THROATED MARTEN	<i>Martes flavigula</i>	LC
7	LARGE-INDIAN CIVET	<i>Viverra zibetha</i>	LC
8	COMMON PALM CIVET	<i>Paradoxurus hermaphroditus</i>	LC
9	LARG-SPOTTED CIVET	<i>Viverra megaspila</i>	EN
10	BANDED LINSANG	<i>Prionodon linsang</i>	LC
11	TIGER	<i>Panthera tigris</i>	EN
12	LEOPARD CAT	<i>Prionailurus bengalensis</i>	LC
13	ASIAN GOLDEN CAT	<i>Catopuma temminckii</i>	NT
14	ASIAN ELEPHANT	<i>Elephas maximus</i>	EN
15	ASIAN TAPIR	<i>Tapirus indicus</i>	EN
16	EURASIAN WILD PIG	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	LC
17	LESSER MOUSEDEER	<i>Tragulus kanchil</i>	LC
18	FEA'S MONTJAC	<i>Muntiacus feae</i>	DD
19	SAMBAR	<i>Rusa unicolor</i>	VU
20	GAUR	<i>Bos frontalis</i>	VU
21	CHINESE BAMBOO RAT	<i>Rhizomys sinensis</i>	LC
22	MALAYAN PORCUPINE	<i>Hystrix brachyura</i>	LC

## 2. Birds

No	Common Name	Secitific Name	IUCN Red List
1	EMERALD DOVE	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	LC
2	RED JUNGLEFOWL	<i>Gallus gallus</i>	LC

## 3. Reptiles

No	Common Name	Secitific Name	IUCN Red List
1	Elongated Tortoise	<i>Indotestudo elongata</i>	CR
2	WATER MONITOR LIZARD	<i>Varanus salvator</i>	LC

### Activities 1.4 Support VDC-level oversight and management to implement small grants scheme to enable livelihood diversification.

During the project period from April 2023 to September 2023, total four village groups participated in livelihood activities with a total of 85 households. The direct beneficiaries consisted of 222 men and 236 women, with a combined total of 458 individuals. Furthermore, the project team empowered 22 men and 63 women business leaders within these communities. The total grant allocated for this project amounted to 17,000,000 MMK, which is approximately 6,539 GBP, with an average maximum grant size of 4,250,000 MMK (estimated at 1,635 GBP) per village. All funds were dedicated to the development of businesses in the areas including animal husbandry, home vegetable gardens, and small grocery shops.

In terms of business activities, the beneficiaries engaged in animal husbandry, with a livestock count of 21 pigs, 360 chickens, and 10 ducks. These livestock not only provided sustenance but also economic opportunities for the households. Additionally, technical support and training were provided, including basic livestock training and animal feed ration formulation training, which enhanced the knowledge and skills of the project participants.

As of the reporting period, we are pleased to note that all businesses are currently active and continuing to operate, with a 100% success rate. The project is contributing to the potential benefits of the beneficiaries and their self-sufficiency in a long run. It is important to emphasize that the grant funds were entirely invested in these businesses, resulting in a sustainable and lasting impact.

The monitoring method used for the project activities was participatory monitoring, which allowed for the active involvement of the beneficiaries in assessing the progress and outcomes of their businesses. This approach supports ownership and accountability among the communities involved, ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of the initiatives.

The project period from April to September 2023 has been marked by significant positive changes in the livelihoods of 85 households (458 direct beneficiaries) across four village groups. The success of this initiative underscores the importance of empowering local communities through targeted support, training, and grants, with the goal of promoting sustainable economic growth and self-sufficiency.

Please see detailed information in the following table.

Project period	April 2023 to September 2023
Number of villages/ Village groups	4
Total benefited households	85
Direct beneficiaries (Men)	222
Direct beneficiaries (Women)	236
Direct beneficiaries (Total)	458
Male business leader	22
Female business leader	63
Total grant up to	17,000,000 MMK (Est 6539 GBP)
Maximum grant size per village (Average)	4,250,000 MMK (Est 1635 GBP)
Invested amount for business	17,000,000 MMK (Est 6539 GBP)
Income	-
Business situation	100% active and continue
Business types	Animal husbandry Home Vegetables Garden Small Grocery Shop
Number of livestock raising	- 21 pigs - 360 chickens - 10 ducks
Technical supports and trainings	- Basic Livestock Training - Animal feed ration formulation Training
Monitoring method	Participatory Monitoring

During the reporting period (April 2023 to September 2023), the project team conducted two essential training programs to the community aimed at promoting knowledge and skills in livestock management. In the first training program, titled "Basic Livestock Training (Poultry and pigs)," a total of 39 individuals, comprising 14 men and 25 women attended. This initiative was instrumental in equipping attendees with foundational expertise in poultry and pig husbandry.

The second training program, "Animal feed ration formulation Training," engaged 36 participants, with 15 being male and 21 females. This training was designed to impart expertise in formulating animal feed rations, which is important for optimizing livestock health and productivity.

In total, both training programs accumulated significant interest, with 29 men and 46 women participants, totalling 75 individuals. These training sessions are a testament to our commitment to empowering individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to excel in livestock management, ensuring sustainable and productive practices in the field. We are proud of the diverse group of

participants, as it underscores our dedication to inclusivity and the promotion of gender equality in the livestock industry. These training initiatives are a crucial step towards creating a brighter future for livestock farming and those who engage in it.

No.	Trainings	Participants		
		Male	Female	Total
1	Basic Livestock Training (Poultry and pigs)	14	25	39
2	Animal feed ration formulation Training	15	21	36
Total		29	46	75

Furthermore, the project team has scheduled three additional training sessions from October to December 2023. These sessions will cover the following topics:

- 1) Cost-effective and eco-friendly production of natural and bio-fertilizers for small and medium-scale farmers.
- 2) Commercial wine production using locally available agricultural products.
- 3) Small-scale solar-drying techniques for areca nuts and processing for marketability.

### **Activity 1.5 Train VCGs in Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) mitigation and establish early warning system for HEC avoidance**

our camera trapping efforts aimed at understanding the elephant population and assessing current threats, we strategically placed five camera traps at various points working together with VCG from Chaung Nuak Pyan Village. These cameras were installed, and their SD cards changed regularly in three villages, specifically Pamme Chaung, Yuzana, and Bodar, during the period from May to August. The camera trap results were indeed promising, revealing the presence of a total of 10 to 15 individual elephants, including some adorable calves. Fortunately, and to our relief, no signs of threats or illicit trade related to wild elephants were observed throughout the reporting period.

Regrettably, in June 2023, a tragic incident occurred in War Tin village where one person lost their life due to an encounter with elephants believed to be in a state of "musth," characterized by heightened hormone levels in males associated with the breeding season. In July 2023, in response to this unfortunate event and as part of our ongoing efforts to mitigate Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC), we conducted HEC awareness campaigns in two primary schools (Yuzana and War Chaung) situated in areas prone to HEC conflicts. Similarly, a total of four HEC posters and warning signboards are set up in one village (Chaung Mon) and two primary schools. Furthermore, our dedicated staff members have taken on the responsibility of collecting updated HEC information monthly. To enhance the efficiency of our data collection, we've established a network of volunteers, consisting of 13 individuals, who consistently provide us with the latest information regarding HEC incidents through various communication channels, such as phone and Viber. Below table (1) is described the detail monthly updated HEC information.

Table (1); human elephant conflicts during the reporting period.

No	HEC Village area	Event/Crop damaged						Note
		Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	
1	Yuzana	Oil Palm	Oil Palm	Oil Palm	Oil Palm	Oil Palm	Oil Palm	
2	Chaung Mon				Betel Nut			
3	War Tin	x	X	Human Die and Betel Nut	x		Crossing Main Road	On Person killed by musth elephant
4	War Chaung						Betel Nut	
5	Pan Mone Chaung							

6	Yie Ngan Gyi			Betel Nut				
7	Bo Dar						Betel Nut	
8	Chaung Ka Pet	x	X	X	x	x	X	

To improve the efficiency of our data collection, we can implement the following steps:

- Early Warning and Mitigation Strategies:
- These strategies can be applied to minimize conflicts, bolster the safety of both humans and elephants, and promote a peaceful coexistence between the two species.
- We can ensure the timely sharing of current information with the Forest Department (FD).
- Regularly, on a monthly basis, we can monitor and document the specific types of crops that are damaged by elephants.

**Activity 2.1 Support newly-established KFD ten-person WPU to undertake strategic, intelligence-led patrolling using SMART and CyberTracker software**

Based on the sub-grant contract, we have successfully concluded our collaboration with KFD in February 2023. However, our ongoing relationship with KFD has been highly cooperative, particularly in terms of communication and updating the security of ground conditions.

**Activity 2.2 with all stakeholders, co-establish a mechanism for community members to document and report illegal activity to VCGs, FD and KFD, including building trust, shared identity and ownership, and overcoming barriers to reporting**

On July 29, 2023, we secured permission from the Bokeyyin Education Department to present on the issue of illegal wildlife trade within our project area and to highlight the critical role of tigers in the ecosystem, coinciding with International Tiger Day. Following this approval, we successfully organized an International Tiger Day event at two high schools, Lenya and Bokeyyin, both situated in Bokeyyin Township. A total of 420 students and teachers attended this event.

Based on IWT workshop result, and in our commitment to reducing illegal wildlife trade (IWT) and supporting environmental protection efforts, we successfully installed a prominent signboard featuring a tiger and its prey in Bokeyyin Township, Tanintharyi Township on September 25th with the valuable support of the Bokeyyin Forest Department (BFD). In line with the outcomes of the IWT workshop, we, in collaboration with the Bokeyyin Forest Department (BFD) and Village Conservation Groups (VCGs), have formulated a comprehensive plan to enhance awareness. As part of this plan, we will be strategically place warning signboards, posters, and handouts at key entry points to focal townships, including three townships. This awareness campaign is scheduled to be launched next month, in October.

On June 2, 2023, we, including external consultants, conducted a survey on bush meat sale and consumption with VCG teams in five villages adjacent to our project area. The purpose of this endeavor was to gather evidence to develop an awareness survey aimed at enhancing the residents' comprehension of the regulations governing the consumption of wild meat and fostering an appreciation for the biological and economic significance of wild animals within their communities. During the course of this survey, we collected responses from a total of 60 residents residing in these five villages.

**Activity 2.5 Work with Freeland to build relationships and systematic cooperation and sharing of actionable information between FD, KFD, Tanintharyi Regional WLET, and Thai Authorities.**

Based on the sub-grant contract, we completed our collaboration with Freeland in January 2023. However, up until now, the relationship with Freeland has been very cooperative, especially the update information on cross-border illegal activities, illegal wildlife trade, and sharing information on tigers and tiger's prey.

**2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

The following three points are notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months.

Based on our camera trap records, we have documented the presence of two new individual tigers. This significant finding not only contributes to the tiger population in Myanmar but also strengthens the tiger population in Southeast Asia as a whole. Consequently, the prospects for future tiger conservation projects in Myanmar are looking promising.

Additionally, in comparison to the previous year's elephant population survey, which recorded 60-80 elephants, the current year's survey has revealed an increase, with 80-105 elephants documented during the reporting period. This data was gathered through field surveys relying on camera trap observations conducted in the Maw Taung and Ywahilu areas.

In the year 2023, we have witnessed improvements in the political situation within our project area. As a result, the authorities have granted us permission to not only conduct our project activities but also ensure the safety of our project staff. Additionally, it's worth noting that one of the communities in the Maw Taung area, located in the northern part of our project area, has enthusiastically engaged with our project under the guidance of KFD.

Simultaneously, we have been reviewing the logframe, as suggested by NIAS during the assessment of the Year 3 annual report.

**3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?**

Discussed with NIRAS: Yes/No

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

Change request reference if known:

**4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023)**

Actual spend: £ [REDACTED]

**4b. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this financial year (ending 31 March 2024)?**

Yes  No  Estimated underspend: £0

**4c. 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 re-budget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget 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.**

**NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.**

**5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?**

**If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response, or if your Annual Report Review asked you to provide a response with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.**

**All new projects (excluding Darwin Plus Fellowships and IWT Challenge Fund Evidence projects) should submit their Risk Register with this report if they have not already done so.**

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

**Please send your completed report by email to [BCF-Reports@niras.com](mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com). The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. Please state your project reference number, followed by the specific fund in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 29-001 Darwin Initiative Half Year Report**