Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Final Report

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

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

Submission Deadline: no later than 3 months after agreed project end date.

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IWT Challenge Fund Project Information	

Project reference	IWT081
Project title	Enabling and promoting communities to tackle IWT in Southern Myanmar
Country(ies)	Myanmar
Lead Partner	Fauna & Flora (FFI)
Project Partner (s)	Freeland, KFD, Myeik University
IWTCF grant value	£380,725
Start/end dates of project	01/07/2020 to 31/12/2023
Project Leader's name	Saw Soe Aung, Ngwe Lwin
Project website/blog/social media	www.fauna-flora.org
Report author(s) and date	Saw Soe Aung (FFI), Pyae Sone Aung (FFI), Ngwe Lwin (FFI),
	Tim Redford (Freeland); 30 April 2024

1. Project summary

The project was undertaken within the Southern Tanintharyi region, on the Myanmar-Thailand border, which spans approximately 43,000 square kilometres (see Figure 1). It is bordered by the Andaman Sea to the west, while the eastern boundary is defined by the Tenasserim Hills along the border with Thailand. It is one of Myanmar's last strongholds for globally threatened species, including tiger *Panthera tigris corbetti*, Asian elephant *Elephas maximus* and Sunda pangolin *Manis javanica*. All are threatened by poaching and illegal trade, primarily across the border into Thailand.

In response to ongoing illegal wildlife trade (IWT), FFI supported six local communities along key trade routes to become active in addressing these threats. By promoting inclusive sustainable livelihoods, we aimed to mitigate the impacts of both poverty and human-wildlife conflict while curbing illicit wildlife trade. This was complemented with improved engagement of law enforcement agencies.

The expected outcome was that effective law enforcement and community-led stewardship would deter poaching of target species for IWT in Tanintharyi, supported by stronger transboundary law enforcement. Approximately 360 households in six villages (No 3, No 5 and No 8, Ywahilu, 14 Mile and Pyigyimandai) were expected to benefit from legally recognised rights and responsibilities to manage wildlife resources; reduced impacts of human-elephant conflict (HEC); self-selected community and household-level benefits enabling livelihood diversification; and more trusting relationships with authorities. This would in turn empower them to uphold rights and responsibilities over wildlife resources.

Despite major challenges during the project period we have made significant strides towards our goals. Many of our initiatives have not only been met but have passed our initial expectations, with poverty reduction programs reaching more individuals than anticipated. Additionally, community engagement efforts have supported greater awareness and cooperation in managing human-wildlife conflict, leading to a decrease in confrontation with elephants and a more sustainable coexistence. Moreover, despite facing logistical and resource constraints, we have successfully implemented wildlife conservation measures such as patrols and public outreach, resulting in the protection of several endangered species such as

tiger, elephant and pangolin. While challenges persist, these achievements highlight the resilience and dedication of our team.



Fig (1) Project location: The project site lies within two townships in Myeik and Kawthuang Districts in Tanintharyi Division and is using a community and civil society-driven approach to address local wildlife trade and consumption and reduce hunting pressure

2. Project Partnerships

Village Development Committees (VDCs) act as umbrella bodies for village governance and have been used by FFI, since their establishment in 2017, to institutionalise community conservation and livelihood development activities and link them more directly to the actions of Village Conservation Groups (VCGs), which we hope the VDCs will manage in the medium-term. During the reporting period, we consulted with all of those on the project 'long list' and, based on those discussions and the limitations imposed by Covid-19, we identified six project focal villages: No's 3, 5, and 8, Ywahilu, 14 Mile and Pyigyimandai. During the project, we undertook further institutional development for the VDCs, on improved/sustainable livelihoods, small grants management and empowerment. The two VDCs obtained legal recognition from the government despite the political constraints resulting from the coup. Furthermore, we confirmed that our engagement continues across all six villages, even though their committees lack legal recognition. Despite these legal hurdles, 11 villages participated in the small grants program.

The Forest Department (FD) is very hierarchical, and local FD staff, with whom we interact most often, are often not given much autonomy from the regional and central levels. However, due initially to Covid-19 restrictions and then to security issues created by the military coup, in February 2021, we have had little contact with senior levels of FD, and so have necessarily focused efforts at the local level. We held discussions with local FD representatives during the project inception period in July 2020 and were able

to gain their support for the legal registration of VDCs (see above) as community-based organizations. We were also able to discuss with them the nature of the hunting control measures to be implemented by the committees, and the sustainable livelihood activities that the project would support. Lastly, the FD is also represented in the nascent wildlife enforcement network, which is centrally mandated to bring together all the government agencies that have a role in curbing the illegal wildlife-trade; this includes FD, the general administration department (i.e., local government), customs, and police. We joined one of the Tanintharyi group's first meetings in 2020, and introduced the project, sharing results of previous market monitoring surveys, and began to formulate plans to close wildlife markets, especially those on the main road to Thailand.

The Karen Forest Department (KFD) has run several wildlife protection units throughout its area of jurisdiction, mostly in Karen State, but, working with FFI, was able to establish a new group based out of a village near Pyigyimandaion, on the main Myeik-Kawthaung road in 2019. During the project period, we prepared a sub-grant for this group to operate patrols in the project area, and KFD undertook staff training (on navigation, physical training, standard operating protocols and data collection) and provided them with equipment. They also participated in human rights training in 2019, organised by WWF as part of a wider collaboration to improve safeguards and standards within the KFD. The training was provided by the highly respected Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG), with WWF funding the course preparation and trainers, and the project supporting the participation of the Wildlife Protection Units (WPUs) from the project area. During the reporting period, KFD completed the sub-grant for patrolling operations with FFI. Although the sub-grant support has ended, FFI maintains regular contact with KFD for future collaborations in conservation efforts.

Freeland is a frontline counter-trafficking organisation established in Southeast Asia in 2000. Their team of law enforcement, development and communications specialists work alongside partners in Asia, Africa, and the Americas to protect the environment and vulnerable people from organised crime and corruption. They have three main areas of expertise; training for law enforcement officials, communications aimed to reduce consumer demand for wildlife products, and protected area support projects. Within this project, FFI has been collaborating with Freeland to improve transboundary monitoring, communication and information sharing for law enforcement between Myanmar and Thailand in the project area. In particular, Freeland is the main point of communication with Thai forest protection authorities in Chumphon Province, directly opposite Lenya Reserved Forest, north of this project's landscape. Freeland also completed a sub-grant with FFI for patrolling operations and identification of key wildlife trade smuggling routes in the region during the project. Although the sub-grant support has ended, FFI maintains regular contact with Freeland for future collaborations in conservation efforts including through a transboundary NGO tiger conservation working group.

Myeik University was strongly affected by the pandemic, which led to restrictions on class sizes and our ability to meet with this partner. After the coup, the university was temporarily closed and has remained that way since. Therefore, no wildlife market monitoring was undertaken by Myeik staff and students since 2020. After the two-party agreement with the university ended, the formal process of working with Myeik University stopped as the contract could not being extended. Nevertheless, we remain in-touch with researchers from the University to exchange information and to be able undertake joint monitoring activities in the future, such as market surveys of tiger-prey species and assessments of their consumption.

3. **Project Achievements**

3.1 Outputs

Output 1: Six target communities take actions to address IWT due to the creation and retention of livelihood benefits and human-elephant conflict (HEC) management.

Village development Committees (VDCs) are the principal avenue for implementation of community conservation and livelihood measures. They can operate without formal integration into village governance or legal recognition, but legal registration provides legitimacy, enabling asset ownership and contractual engagements. An inception meeting, in July 2020, engaged stakeholders including Village Conservation Groups and VDCs, with discussions on legal registration and sustainable livelihoods. 35 participants from villages No's. 3, 5, and 8 attended. Attempts to register 18 VDCs, with six in the IWT project, resulted in two official registrations in January 2021 (indicator 1.1).

There are encouraging signs that communities across the project areas are engaged in conservation activities and are taking proactive steps against illegal wildlife trade (IWT). A total of six communities signed commitments and actions to zero hunting for target species (indicator 1.2).

Village conservation groups (VCGs) were established at the VDC level in the villages of Chaung Nauk Pyan and the Mawtaung area. We provided VCGs the systematic SMART and camera trapping training to conduct patrols in their village forests, monitoring IWT, and conducting snare removal operations. During the project period, according to the patrol record, in 2021, 35 days in Ywahilu and Payartan Area were patrolled by Chaung Nauk Pyan VCG team. In 2022, the KFD and Chaung Nauk Pyan team patrolled for 61 days in Ywahilu area and east of Lenya River. Similarly, in 2023, the KFD, Chaung Nauk Pyan team and Mawtaung team patrolled for 145 days in the Mawtaung (Ngawun area), east of the Lenya River, and Ywahilu area (indicator 1.3).

The project focused on the key villages situated along the boundaries of the Nga Wun/Lenya Forest complex, where the residents depend heavily on forest products and wildlife for their livelihoods and income. The main project area includes Maw Taung (specifically areas No. 3, 5, and 8), Chaung La Mu, Chaung Nauk Pyan, Nan Taung, Pyigyimandai, Yadanarpone, Han Ga Pyu, 4 Mile, and Ywahilu. The project aimed to provide self-selected community and household-level benefits to support livelihood diversification.

From April 2020 to December 2023, a comprehensive livelihood intervention programme was implemented across 11 villages, benefiting a total of 405 households organized into 25 village groups. Socioeconomic survey was conducted in November 2023 at 202 households out of 405 beneficiary households. The result showed total of 188 households (93%) reported their income increased as of the project livelihood intervention (indicator 1.4).

The livelihood initiative aimed to empower and uplift the rural community, and a total of 1,871 individuals (908 men (49%) and 963 women (51%)) directly benefited from the project's intervention. Notably, 124 men (31%) and 271 women (69%) emerged as business leaders, contributing to the overall success of the project. During the project period, 13 trainings on livelihood development and community-based tiger conservation were organized for 565 participants. A total of 310 women (55%) participated in the trainings. The average rate of participation by women in the project activities was 58% (indicator 1.5).

The project organized patrol in 2021, with VCG members in Ywarhilu area, during which total of 227 snares were detected and removed, whilst, VCGs patrolling, in the east of Lenya River (4) and Ywahilu area (40), in 2022 detected only 44 snares. Furthermore, there were 8 detections in Ywarhilu area (2), east of Lenya River (3) and Mawtaung area (3) in 2023, indicating a significant decrease of detections over the duration of the project (indicator 1.6).

To address human-elephant conflict (HEC) in the long term, in Year 1, we established three target communities in HEC areas to record and report elephant conflict incidents. These communities, along with volunteer focal points in each village, maintained regular contact with project staff, FFI's village facilitator, or the nearest FD post via telephone, providing timely updates on elephant observations and HEC events throughout the project period (2019-2023).

Additionally, to help mitigate HEC, workshops were conducted in three townships (Bokepyin, Tanintharyi, and Kawthaung) during Years 2 and 3. Similarly, awareness campaigns involving warning signs, leaflets, banners, and educational activities to promote practical measures for HEC reduction were implemented in schools during these years. In Y3, educational awareness was disseminated across 11 villages, encompassing five villages impacted by HEC, with the aim of educating students from these affected areas on how to avoid encounters with elephants. In summary, a review of HEC causes within the three-year period revealed 40 incidents involving damage to oil palm and betel trees and 15 direct sightings of elephants. Unfortunately, 8 elephants were killed, while four humans died, and 2 humans were injured, all because of HEC, during the project's duration (indicator 1.7). One primary factor driving the increase in crop destruction during the project period is the expansion of elephant grazing into plantations, alongside the rise in human population. The following chart provides a graphical representation of the HEC data collected throughout the project.

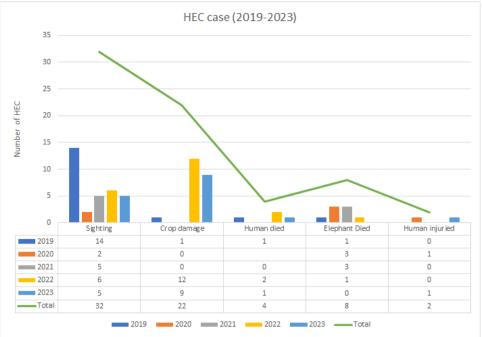


Fig (2) HEC recording

Output 2: Improved law enforcement capacity and effectiveness resulting from improved collaboration and communication between communities and enforcement authorities.

To address illegal wildlife trade (IWT), workshops were conducted with environmental protection groups in three townships within the Tanintharyi region. These workshops led to the initiation of illegal trade prevention activities by various departments, including the Forest Department, forming the Wildlife Law Enforcement Task Force (WLET) during the first year of the project. Notable activities included raising awareness through restaurant commitments, posters, banners, pamphlets and warning signs.

Unfortunately, due to the unfavourable political situation at the beginning of the third year, the Illegal Wildlife Trade workshop could only be conducted online, marking the results of the workshop implementation ineffective.

Likewise, on February 27, 2023, an IWT workshop was held in Kawthaung Township involving seven departments, including VCG. Due to the political situation, the end-of-IWT evaluation workshop was held in two locations. The workshop on the completion of the project was held with all the departments in Bokepyin Township and the project was held with local communities in Myeik. Due to this private event, the strengths and weaknesses of the activities during the project can be discussed freely and openly.

During the second reporting period, the local VCG team diligently reported the outcomes of SMART patrolling monthly. However, the Myanmar Forestry Department faced challenges in effectively responding to this information due to the prevailing political situation. Nevertheless, in collaboration with the Karen Forestry Department (KFD), strong law enforcement capacity and effectiveness were maintained throughout the project duration. Based on the sub-grant contract, we have successfully concluded our collaboration with KFD in February 2023. However, our ongoing relationship with them remains highly cooperative, particularly in terms of communication about security conditions across the project areas. During the project period (2020-2023), KFD's SMART patrolling efforts reduced traps within the project area, with fewer hunters observed and diminished damage to camera traps. In Year 1, there were no incidents of poaching reported in the project area. However, in Year 2, during patrols conducted by the KFD, four hunter camps were observed in the east of the Lenya area. In Year 3, the number of five hunter camps were in the east of the Lenya area and one logging was observed in the Mawtaung area. A total of 279 snare have been removed by CNP VCG, MD VCG and KFD throughout the project (227 in Year 1, 44 in Year 2 and 8 in Year 3) (indicator 2.2).

In 2022, Chaung Nauk Pyan VCGs documented forest clearing in the Ywarhilu area twice and reported it to the Boakpyin township forest department. However, due to security concerns, no action was taken by the forest department. Additionally, in early 2023, CNP VCGs reported another instance of forest clearing to KFD. Fortunately, KFD was able to intervene and halt the illegal activity (indicator 2.3).

As highlighted in the third reporting period, the political situation in the project area deteriorated further, increasing the obstacles outlined in the previous annual report. Consequently, government department staff were constrained by township regulations limiting their movement within the area. This restriction delayed direct collaboration between the local VCG team and the authorities. Despite these difficulties, our team remains resolute in addressing IWT through alternative methods. These include empowering local communities to pursue sustainable livelihoods and supporting information-sharing initiatives aimed at preventing wildlife crimes, all in collaboration with the KFD.

The focal area on the Thai side of the international border remains vitally important for conservation of many critically endangered (CE) and endangered species (EN). All of the protected areas south of the Dan Sing Korn international border crossing contain very rare species such as Indochinese tigers (EN), Indochinese leopards *Panthera pardus delacouri* (CE).

Activities conducted under the project with FFI highlighted the importance of the site and succinctly confirmed how Thai poachers are using the forests not only for domestic poaching but also to access deep into Myanmar's wildlife-rich forests. The border is largely unmarked but has numerous natural routes through the forest which are still being exploited by Thai poachers and traffickers of other illicit items.

The activities supported by FFI represented the first ever capacity development for enforcement rangers and the first community outreach to schools and villages in and around the Sadej Naikrom Krom Luang Wildlife Sanctuary. The wildlife surveys confirmed exactly how important these parks are and how tigers move back and forward across the international border as the forest is contiguous and intact.

This project was highly successful in increasing our understanding about the importance of the site and helped initiate measures to protect it (indicator 2.4).

During the project period, there was no record of illegal activity at the border. Therefore, no action was taken (indicator 2.5). Illegal action was recorded by KFD patrol team and VCGs team during their patrols, however, due to the political situation in the region during the project period, no case was created (indicator 2.6).

Output 3: Approach and learn from community-level responses to IWT documented and shared nationally (and globally) to promote replication in Myanmar.

At the start of the project, the Wildlife Law Enforcement Team (WLET); due to initiatives by Village Conservation Groups (VCGs) and Myeik University, pangolin detections have decreased. In addition, strict border controls between neighboring countries are believed to have significantly reduced the volume of illegal wildlife trade across the border.

Efforts have been made to enhance local awareness through various means, including awareness training sessions conducted by FFI staff on preventing illegal wildlife trade and the installation of wildlife legislation signage, particularly at the local level. Local community members frequently report instances of wildlife protected by law being sold in restaurants and shops, prompting the establishment of a Wildlife Illegal Trade Task Force and the dissemination of relevant information through FFI's Viber group. However, the political situation has led to the inactive status of the Illegal Wildlife Trade Task Force.

Moreover, sharing SMART patrolling data from the VCG team with relevant departments has revealed a decrease in illegal trade incidents detected within the Ywahilu and Yatanarpone areas, compared to previous years.

To combat illegal wildlife trade (IWT), workshops were conducted with environmental protection groups in three townships within the Tanintharyi region. These workshops led to the initiation of illegal trade prevention activities by various departments, including the Forest Department, forming the Wildlife Law Enforcement Task Force (WLET) during the first year of the project. Notable activities included raising awareness through restaurant commitments, posters, banners, pamphlets and warning signs.

Unfortunately, due to the unfavorable political situation at the beginning of the third year, the Illegal Wildlife Trade workshop could only be conducted online, marking the results of the workshop implementation ineffective.

Likewise, on February 27, 2023, an Illegal Wildlife Trade workshop was held in Kawthaung Township involving seven departments, including VCG. Due to the political situation, the end-of-IWT evaluation workshop was held in two locations. The workshop on the completion of the project was held with all the departments in Bokepyin Township and the project was held with local communities in Myeik. Due to this

private event, the strengths and weaknesses of the activities during the project can be discussed freely and openly. Total of 35 people from 11 government departments joined the workshop.

In Myeik, project organized IWT sharing meeting with 55 participants from 10 villages on 21 December 2023. (indicator 3.1).

However, the dissemination of information on illegal trade with government officials at the national level must await an appropriate time for nationwide and global sharing, considering the evolving circumstances and ongoing collaborations.

On December 15, 2023, we presented our efforts in combating Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) to Fauna & Flora's internal IWT working group, highlighting valuable lessons learned from empowering and mobilizing communities to combat IWT in Southern Myanmar. (indicator 3.2)

3.2 Outcome

The project outcome is: "Effective law enforcement and community-led stewardship deters poaching of target species for IWT in Tanintharyi, supported by stronger transboundary law enforcement."

0.1 Tiger and elephant populations in the project location are recorded as stable throughout the project period.

The Y3 annual report indicates that, according to our records, there are 22 tigers in Myanmar, with 8 located within our project area. The government forest department officially reported 8 tigers, based on camera trap records from 2018-2019. However, following the military coup in 2021, authorities and ethnic armed groups established restricted areas, leading to the withdrawal of our camera traps located within these zones. We subsequently have strictly adhered to the advice of authorities, on approved areas, when locating camera traps. Despite this, there have been no records of illegal activity or poaching captured by the camera traps throughout the project duration.

Analysis of camera-trap data, spanning three years, revealed the presence of a diverse range of species, totalling 36, including mammals, birds, and reptiles. Notably, all targeted species, namely tiger, elephant, and pangolin, were captured on camera. Additionally, seven prey species of significance, such as gaur, sambar, Chinese serow, various muntjac species, wild pig, Malayan tapir, and various mouse deer species, were documented. Among these, one species is categorized as Critically Endangered, six as Endangered, nine as Vulnerable, and three as Near Threatened, according to the IUCN Red List.

Based on the data obtained from year 3 camera trap surveys, there is no apparent decline in the tiger population within the project area. Additionally, the identification of two new tigers in 2023 has contributed to setting a new record for the tiger population in the region. In total, 6 tigers, including the two new ones, were documented within the project area over the project period.

Further details regarding tiger and elephant sightings and observations are provided in section 4.2 of the report.

0.2 The number of incidents of poaching (e.g., individuals or equipment seen) per unit patrol effort was reduced by 50% by project end from the Y1 baseline.

In 2019, a net removal campaign was initiated in Ywahilu area in partnership with the Forest Department (FD). Agreements were established with residents, resulting in the removal of 106 traps, with the assistance of local hunters, and a notable decrease in trap numbers in the Ywahilu region. Similarly, the combination of COVID-19 and political turmoil in Myanmar led to a substantial reduction in traps recorded during Year 3, with only 40 traps recorded in Year 2 and 227 traps in Year 1. (see Figure 3 below).

In year 3, the Mawtaung VCG team found 3 snares in their patrol area whilst on patrols (See report in Annex 4). However, between Years 2 and 3, staff from the Myanmar Forestry Department ceased their participation due to safety concerns, prompting a shift towards reducing snares through collaboration with local hunters and strengthening cooperation with the Karen Forest Service. Consequently, future efforts will focus on enhancing cooperation with the Karen Forestry Department. The project emphasizes transforming the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities as a pivotal strategy in combating illegal wildlife trade. The graph below illustrates the annual reduction in snares documented through SMART patrolling, in the Ywahilu region, showcasing the collaborative efforts between VCG and KFD over the project's three-year duration.

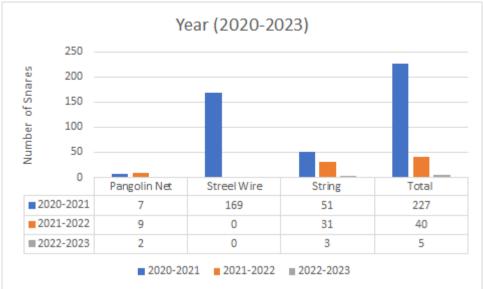


Fig (3) Patrol data showing snare removal efforts in the Ywahilu tiger breeding area for the reporting period (2020-2023)

0.3 At least a 50% increase in the number of both men and women in target communities who are engaged in wildlife stewardship or active support of law enforcement from the Y1 baseline.

In the project's first year, 199 people, including 86 men and 113 women from 28 households, directly benefited from the livelihood diversification activities implemented. By the end of the project, this livelihood support had expanded significantly, reaching an additional 405 households and benefiting a total of 1,871 individuals, with 908 men and 963 women directly and positively impacted. This substantial growth demonstrates the project's effectiveness in engaging with communities and enforcing wildlife laws, despite the major externalities experienced. In addition, there is evidence that this support has, as formally agreed with the participating households, led to an increase in the active participation of villagers in wildlife stewardship behaviour; for example, with the re-release of pangolins formerly held in captivity, or the use of the project's Viber group to report incidents of IWT. It highlights a promising commitment to wildlife stewardship and law enforcement within the targeted areas.

3.3 Monitoring of assumptions

The Outcome-level assumptions were:

- 1. Sufficient people are encouraged to participate in recording IWT events; null records are also recorded.
- 2. SMART data can be sufficiently well recorded and maintained by VDCs.
- Elections, government changes and natural events during the project period do not cause major changes in access to project sites, the ability of civil society to operate, or dramatic fluctuations in currency exchange rates.
- 4. No major changes in national or international policy relating to target species.

The current status of these assumptions is as follows:

- 1. Despite several external disruptions to the project (see below and previous) there has been an ongoing and, in some areas, increased interest in collaboration with the project.
- 2. SMART data has been sufficiently well recorded and maintained by Village Development Committees (VDCs), throughout the project; information collected from SMART data was shared with the Forest Department, fostering long-term cooperation. Similarly, sharing data with the current Karen Forest Department (KFD) presents a promising option for future environmental protection efforts.
- 3. Myanmar's forestry sector has revised wildlife protection laws, permitting the commercial farming of endangered species such as tigers and pangolins. Private zoos received approval in June 2020 to breed 90 species, including 20 that are endangered or critically endangered. Forestry officials in Myanmar promote these regulations to combat poaching and illegal wildlife breeding. However, conservationists caution that this sudden policy change may worsen the demand for rare wildlife products in China. This also poses challenges for enforcement of regulations against the hunting

and trade of wild individuals as it can be difficult to identify if wildlife products have wild or captive origins¹.

4. In the project's initial year, the onset of COVID-19 has delayed the implementation of project activities along with crowding and travel restrictions. During this period, we were unable to hold inperson meetings to implement the project, though we were able to facilitate the implementation via phone and Viber. In the second year, the impact of COVID-19 gradually subsided, and we started to implement the project activities. But, during that year, a military coup that toppled the democratically elected government and saw the start of nation-wide protests and unrest (subsequently to result in prolonged and on-going armed conflict), caused further significant delays in planned activities. As a result, some activities were rescheduled for Year 3, when the diminishing impact of COVID-19 and the relative stabilization of the political situation allowed for their implementation.

3.4 Impact: achievement of positive impact on illegal wildlife trade and poverty reduction

The project aim was to contribute to stable, or increasing populations of tiger, Asian elephant, and Sunda pangolin in Myanmar. Throughout the period (2020-2023), we focused on combating illegal wildlife trade and alleviating poverty, implementing activities to achieve the following objectives:

Illegal Wildlife Trade

- By conducting IWT workshops, the departments in the three townships became aware of the purpose of the FFI project and learned about illegal trade in their area. The reduction of wild animal meat and dishes in restaurants and markets and understanding the endangered tiger, elephant and pangolin is a great achievement of targeted awareness raising in villages and schools.
- Community SMART patrols, including Village Conservation Group members, have encouragingly recorded reduced signs of poachers and snares hunting in areas that could regularly be patrolled. VCG teams are now sharing SMART data on IWT-related activities, reporting, crime prevention and awareness raising, with both FD and KFD.
- By partnering with KFD (Karen Forestry Department), information is available for SMART patrols and success in reduced presence of poachers and snares according to available patrolling data.
- Collaboration with Freeland has enhanced border surveillance. Communication and information sharing between Myanmar and Thailand in the project area have improved through reinforced NGO collaboration, enabling rapid detection of illegal activities and sharing threats and information related to tigers.
- Deployed cameras captured footage of two new individual tigers, contributing not only to Myanmar's tiger count and highlighting the importance of the project landscape for the species survival, but also to information available on tiger populations globally.
- By spreading awareness about HEC (using warning signs, vinyl banners, leaflets, and calendars), we were able to reduce illegal activities involving elephants. This led to fewer conflicts between elephants and humans with, by the end of the project, no recorded elephant deaths. Moreover, over a thousand students, along with their teachers in areas prone to HEC conflict, participated in activities related to elephants, such as learning about avoidance methods and understanding ecosystems.
- Local participation, Camera trapping and patrolling efforts yielded valuable information about tigers, elephants, and pangolins. Two new tigers were recorded, four pangolins were released, and accurately documenting the elephant population (80-100) in the project area marked a significant success towards the project's objectives.
- The field survey conducted in 5 villages focused on wild meat hunting, trade and meat consumption. It identified key data points and sources such as the primary patterns of hunting, selling and consumption in the project area, main trade routes, and motivations of key groups to continue engaging in these practices. This information puts Fauna & Flora in a good position to engage in impactful behaviour change communications in this area in the coming years.

¹ (<u>https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/tiger-pangolin-farming-in-myanmar-risks-boosting-demand</u>)

Poverty reduction

- As the alternative livelihood program was implemented, dependence on wildlife and forest products is reduced (see Annex 4). These initiatives include offering animal husbandry opportunities, promoting home vegetable gardens, establishing small grocery shops, and encouraging the cultivation of cash crops for hunters and local communities dependent on the forest.
- 11 villages, benefiting a total of 405 households in 25 village groups. The initiative aimed to
 empower and uplift the rural community, particularly focusing on direct beneficiaries where 908
 men and 963 women, totalling 1871 individuals, directly benefited. This is a success beyond the
 360 households and six villages we hoped to reach at the time we proposed this project. Notably,
 124 men and 271 women emerged as business leaders, contributing to the overall success of the
 project. Please see detail in 1.4
- The local people in 11 villages in the project area have become more aware of FFI's purpose of environmental protection, and have become more interested in sharing information about environmental protection

Local men and women at the project site now have the knowledge and mechanisms to respond safely to HEC and other HWC.

4. Contribution to IWT Challenge Fund Programme Objectives

4.1 Thematic focus

The project contributed to two of the IWT Challenge Fund Programme objectives:

- developing sustainable livelihoods to benefit people affected by IWT (see output 1 and impact above) which entailed increasing incentives for wildlife stewardship and reducing the cost of living with wildlife such as damage caused by human elephant conflict
- strengthening law enforcement (see output 2; outcome 0.2 and impact above) which included improving the flow of information about wildlife trade issues between relevant bodies.

During the project, the team requested adding an activity to collect information necessary to develop measures aimed at reducing demand for IWT products. This was prompted by persisting concerns from project partners regarding the sale of wild meat from protected species in the project area and the sensitivities related to increasing enforcement in the political climate that prevailed during the project period. The recommendations resulting from this information gathering provides a promising avenue for conservation interventions in the current context.

4.2 Impact on species in focus

Our goal is to achieve stable or growing populations of tiger, Asian elephant, and Sunda pangolin, protected by community-led wildlife guardianship and effective law enforcement.

Regarding tiger conservation in the Tanintharyi region, efforts started in 2015 and extended through 2019. Initially, the known tiger regional population stood at 12 individuals. Subsequently, intensive field studies, particularly under the IWT project, were conducted. However, from 2020 to 2023, these field surveys were heavily restricted to only the Ywahilu area, where the presence of four tigers from the original count, and two new tigers were documented. While this cannot be extrapolated to the region as a whole, the addition of two new tigers does give cause for hope that the population is stabilising.

Throughout this period, there was no evidence of illegal tiger trade within the project area. However, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in Myanmar in 2019 led to delays in fieldwork. Moreover, the military coup in 2020 resulted in road blockades and restricted access to field areas, delaying comprehensive field surveys in tiger habitats. Despite these challenges, the determined efforts of field team resulted in the documentation of two previously unrecorded tigers in 2023, marking a significant milestone in Myanmar's tiger conservation efforts (Indicator 0.1).

Simultaneously, throughout the 2023 reporting period, we significantly prioritized educational outreach efforts. We conducted educational talks in 12 schools, reaching over 700 students and teachers combined. Additionally, our outreach extended to social media platforms, with 11.4K engagements on Instagram and 3.55K on Twitter. These initiatives aimed to foster a deeper understanding of tigers, their ecological importance, and the imperative to safeguard endangered species.

Tiger ID	First Detection area	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Notes
YHL_001	YHL+(FL Thai)								Х	х	
YHL_002	YHL	Х	х	Х		Х	Х	Х	Х	х	
YHL_003	YHL	Х		Х		Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	
YHL_004	YHL	Х	х					Х		Х	
YHL_005	YHL	Х	Х			Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	
YHL_006	YHL		Х		Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	
YHL_007	YHL	Х	х			Х	Х	Х	Х	х	
YHL_008	YHL	Х	х			Х	Х	Х		Х	
YHL_009	YHL	Х	Х	Х		Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	
YHL_010	YHL	Х	х	Х		х	Х	Х	х	х	
YHL_011	YHL	Х	Х	Х			Х	Х	Х	х	
YHL_012	YHL	Х	х		х						
YHL_013	YHL	Х	х	Х	х	Х	Х	Х	Х		
YHL_014	YHL	Х	х	Х	х	Х	х	Х	Х		
Total		2	2	6	10	4	3	2	3	3	

Fig (4) Annual tiger records based on camera trap data (2015-2023)

Education awareness is a highly effective tool in promoting conservation efforts. By raising awareness, local communities in project areas learn how to coexist harmoniously with elephants, mitigating the risks of Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC). Throughout the final year of the project, we conducted extensive outreach programs in schools, and there has been a notable decrease in HEC incidents among local communities compared to the previous year. While unfortunately, one person lost their life due to an elephant attack this year, no elephants were reported deceased during the same period (indicator 0.2).

Similarly, in collaboration with WWF Myanmar, we facilitated a community exchange program in December 2023, sending members of our community grappling with HEC to the Ayeyarwady Region. This region is part of the WWF elephant project area, and valuable knowledge on HEC management was shared. Through this exchange, local communities gained insights into effective strategies for mitigating HEC, empowering them to identify and implement the most suitable methods for their specific circumstances.

Through the implementation of camera trap surveys (30 individuals of elephant), interview surveys (45 individuals) and SMART patrolling by) two village conservation groups (30 individuals, and the support of an external elephant consultant, we observed a significant increase in the elephant population, with more than 100 individuals, including cubs, recorded (indicator 0.1). Furthermore, there have been no reports of elephant trade, killings, or snaring in our project area (indicators 0.2 and 1.6).

However, due to political instability, we faced challenges in conducting comprehensive surveys across the entire project area, particularly in assessing the elephant population. This remains a weak point in the implementation of the project. The following graph provides a detailed overview of elephant population survey records based on interview surveys in the HEC area, carried out by an external elephant consultant;

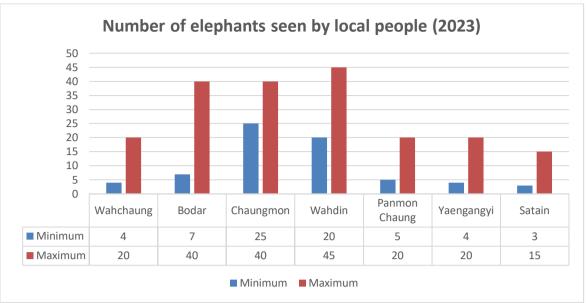


Fig (5) provides an indication of the number of wild elephants seen in a particular area. The data collected from villagers shows that there were up to 45 elephants living in Wahdin village, making it one of the most densely populated areas for these elephants, with Satain Village having 15, the lowest number observed by local people.

While a country-wide online IWT survey, carried out by ZSL, exposed illegal pangolin trade², it's noteworthy that no pangolin trade has been detected within this project area. Furthermore, since the beginning of 2023, neither pangolin traps nor hunters have been identified in the field study area, marking a significant success of the project's objectives³.



Fig (6) the location of 5 pangolin releasing area (2022-2023)

² https://www.zsl.org/news-and-events/news/thailand-illegal-wildlife-trade-agreement

³ https://asiapacific.panda.org/?372899/going-viral-report

As highlighted in Annual Report 2, the release of 5 pangolins is a notable achievement in the Tanintharyi project area (see Figure 8) and can be attributed to the VCG's active engagement in environmental conservation initiatives, complemented by FFI's educational programs and the cooperation of local residents inhabiting the project area (Indicator 2.5). The following figures described the release of 5 pangolins in our primary target areas, including Mawtaung, Nan Taung, 4 Mile, and Ywahilu.

4.3 Project support to poverty reduction

The direct beneficiaries of the project include approximately 405 households residing in 11 villages, which were selected from a short-list consisting of No's 3, 5, 6, 8 & 9, and Tae Phyu, Thein Khun, Ywahilu, and Yatanaporn villages.

These communities will receive legally recognized rights and responsibilities to manage wildlife resources, leading to reduced impacts of Human-Elephant Conflict. Additionally, they will experience self-selected community and household-level benefits that enable livelihood diversification.

The main target groups for poverty alleviation and livelihood development are the wildlife poachers and local communities who depend on them. FFI has provided animal husbandries, home vegetable gardens, small grocery shops and cash crops (please see socio-economic survey report at Annex 4) to the prioritized groups, through its small grants scheme. As usual, this support is aimed at providing sustainable livelihood options to hunters and local people that have agreed with FFI to refrain from poaching wildlife.

4.4 Gender equality and social inclusion

In the initial phase of the project, there was a noticeable trend for women to primarily operate under the guidance of men. However, as the project progressed, there was a marked shift in the involvement of local women, who began recognizing the significance of their role in various professional domains. This evolution prompted FFI to extend technical support training, alongside addressing critical gender-related issues, to 11 villages within the project area.

Previously, FFI meetings predominantly attracted male attendees. However, in the second year of the project, there was a notable increase in female participation in both trainings and meetings. In the first year, only 34 women out of 104 participants attended both IWT workshops and village meetings. However, from the second year to the final year, the participation of 310 women represents a significant strength in our future environmental efforts.

Throughout the project's last phase, 10 training sessions were conducted, covering crucial topics such as gender equality. The inclusion of women in these training sessions and their active involvement in discussions marked a significant stride forward. This trend sets a promising precedent for the upcoming project cycle.

Overall, during the final reporting period, 59% of female participants were actively involved in technical support training (livestock training, agricultural training, gender equality training, financial management and accounting training, organizational procedures and progress monitoring training).

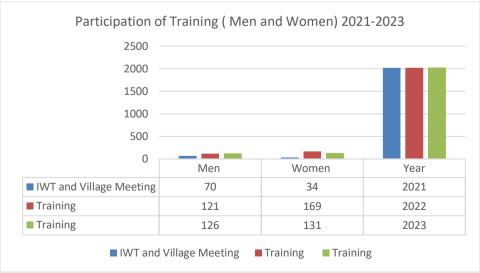


Fig (7) Participation of training (Men and Women) 2021-2023

5. Monitoring and evaluation

The project was internally monitored and evaluated based on the project work plan and agreed measurable indicators. There were no changes in the M&E program during the reporting period, with progress reports and monthly updates being sent to all partners (FD, KFD, Freeland), with invitations to feedback. The internal teams involved in M&E were Laure Joanny – Senior Technical Specialist, Wildlife Trade (FFI) and Gareth Goldthorpe - Senior Technical Adviser (Conservation Impact & Risk) (FFI)) focusing on supporting monthly meetings with FFI project implementation staff to effectively implement protected area monitoring and spatial planning activities.

The main purpose of providing a small grant was to monitor and protect wildlife and reduce wildlife crime by promoting community-based networks through improving livelihood opportunities of local villagers. To recap, monitoring livelihood support in 19 groups of villages with a total of 320 households with 204 women business leaders during the project's three-year period provides an overview of community engagement. With a significant 64% female participation rate, these initiatives demonstrate a commitment to gender inclusion and empowerment. Focusing on diverse focal areas such as animal husbandry, home vegetable gardening, small grocery shops, seasonal crop trading, and cash crops distribution ensures a holistic approach to addressing livelihood needs Through monthly monitoring methods, we can record the progress of these programs with current net income of 55% of the invested amount. with enthusiasm an 84% activity rate demonstrates the ongoing engagement and effectiveness of support programs and highlights their potential for long-term impact and sustainability.

Information about tiger monitoring is sent monthly to core partners such as the Forestry Department, Karen Forestry Department and Freeland from Thailand. The Forestry Department and the Karen Forestry Department have taken measures to address any threats received within the project area. These threats include illegal trade activities, snaring, logging, and land encroachment. An achievement during the project is that there is no snare observed within the project area at all. In addition, since the project area is bordered by Thailand, to know the number of tigers, illegal movement across the border of the two countries has been monitored by exchanging information with Freeland from Thailand. As a result of the information exchange, two tigers in Myanmar crossed over to Thailand, and two new tigers were recorded during the project.

Regarding the HEC conflict, monitoring was carried out through an informant network, educational activities, warning signs, vinyl and leaflets and exchanged visits. Similarly, to record any information and cases related to the elephant received, we have a Viber Group (volunteer villagers, FFI, VCG and FD) and contact phone numbers to get information about elephants. However, the implementation of the policy by FFI and the Forestry Department has been weak because of the political situation, resulting in deaths, injuries and loss of crops due to attacks by elephants on people. Therefore, if there are any upcoming IWT projects, the above-mentioned damages should be considered by the residents facing the HEC conflict.

6. Actions taken in response to Annual Report reviews

Question from Reviewer: "In the main text, the reviewer was very saddened to read of the passing of an elderly villager who was killed by an elephant. The main text also comments that two elephants were killed by an electric fence. However, Table 3 appears to report the death of two people and four elephants."

Response: We apologize for these reporting inconsistencies. The correct numbers are that two people were killed by an elephant. Two elephants were killed by electric fence, not four. Note 13 and 14 are included because of grammatical errors."

Question from Reviewer: "Is it possible to use non-lethal electric fences to deter elephants?"

Response: It's challenging to assert that the use of non-lethal electric fences effectively deters elephants. To better understand this issue, our villagers participated in the WWF organization's elephant project in central Myanmar's Ayeyarwady Region to learn about systematic electric fence implementation. Their assessment highlights both the advantages and disadvantages associated with electric fence deployment:

Advantages:

- 1. Mitigating conflicts between elephants and humans
- 2. Enhancing farm productivity

Disadvantages:

- 1. Encroachment on village territory
- 2. Technical challenges in deploying electric fences over uneven terrain and hills
- 3. Potential displacement of conflict to neighboring villages if only certain areas are fenced
- 4. Financial losses if maintenance of electric fences proves unsustainable
- 5. Lack of communities' participation

Considering, then, the disadvantages of electric fences, local communities recommend focusing solely on supporting alternative crops such as durian, rubber, rambutan, mangosteen, and aubergine; all crops that elephants naturally avoid, eliminating the need for electric fences.

7. Lessons learnt

At the beginning of the project, both the Covid-19 epidemic and a military coup disrupted its implementation. Road closures, communication disruptions, population and area restrictions, and village displacement due to conflict slowed down progress significantly. Due to the circumstances, FFI's head office in Yangon told staff to stop activities and work from home. FFI asked to start implementing the project in July 2020. Meanwhile, the FFI team managed to hold stakeholder meetings online. We used mobile phones, Viber, and Messengers for community meetings, and Zoom for discussions with government stakeholders and partners. Viber was mainly used for stakeholder consultations and inception meetings.

Nevertheless, the IWT project marks a pioneering initiative in Tanintharyi, southern Myanmar, aimed at combating local illegal trade. Specifically, its achievements include uncovering illegal activities in the region, mitigating HECs, documenting biodiversity through camera traps, fostering local cooperation and patrolling efforts, and identifying two previously unknown tigers—an achievement of significance not just for Myanmar but globally. The active involvement of local and departmental stakeholders in anti-illegal trade initiatives sets a promising example for future projects.

Moreover, through educational outreach in schools and initiatives to empower women both economically and mentally, the project has heightened awareness of environmental conservation and fostered a deeper sense of environmental stewardship.

The collaboration between Fauna & Flora and key partners such as the Karen Forest Department (KFD), Freeland, and Village Conservation Groups (VCG) has been instrumental at every stage, from planning to implementation and ongoing technical support, ensuring smooth operations and the attainment of desired outcomes.

Importantly, the enthusiastic engagement of local communities residing in project areas has strengthened community involvement and confidence in the program. The project has also brought about significant change in the livelihoods of hunters and forest-dependent locals, thereby positively impacting the ecosystem.

In summary, the most significant success during the project's three-year period was the significant reduction of illegal trade due to local and departmental cooperation in the three townships, as well as the awareness of legally protected species. In addition, the project's successful campaign, the IUCN Red List, saved five endangered pangolins from the project site, recorded two new tigers, and reduced snares, a promising success for future operations.

8. Risk Management

Due to all staff compliance, no new hazards have occurred in the project area in the last 12 months. Nevertheless, to ensure safety for all staff at the different FFI project sites in Myanmar, FFI's Country Director has developed significant changes in Risk Management in the project design to address changes in risk. A comprehensive SoP risk management is described in Annex 4.

9. Sustainability and legacy

The project aims to protect threatened wildlife species in the southern landscape of Tanintharyi Region near the Thai Myanmar border by promoting sustainable livelihood development, resource management, and law enforcement. The project mobilized key stakeholders (i.e., local communities) to form and

formalize village conservation groups through formal registration. By forming these village-level conservation groups, community patrols, wildlife monitoring, and management of small-scale livelihood development grants and capacity-building activities will be more effective and sustainable.

In the project area, two village-level VDCs received registration certificates in 2021 out of six villages. Due to the political situation and the support of the remaining four villages, they will no longer attempt to obtain registration during the reporting period. FFI is currently conducting community patrols for the two registered villages, wildlife monitoring, participating in school awareness activities, and managing small grants to ensure the sustainability of professional development and capacity-building activities. Currently, two registered village-level VDCs are collaborating with the FFI organization and participating in environmental activities and workshops in collaboration with government departments and other local NGOs.

Similarly, to reduce illegal wildlife trade and human-tiger conflict (HTC) and human-elephant conflict (HEC), we collaborate with INGOs (WWF, WCS) and the MM-Tiger Working Group (WWF, WCS) by sharing news and information. Additionally, to implement a long-term strategy related to elephants, led by WWF, they are planning to develop four points related to elephant conservation for Myanmar (1. Introduction to SEA Strategy, 2. Introduction to Human-Elephant Conflict Management and Action Plan, 3. Collaboration on elephant conservation, and 4. NGOs elephant conservation coalition).

The FFI project area is located in a part of the Dawna Tanintharyi Landscape (DTL), which covers an area of 63,239km² in Thailand and Myanmar. Therefore, FFI, INGOs, and NGOs working on tiger conservation, including WWF, IUCN Smithsonian, Freeland, and Thai authorities, held DTL meetings and shared the latest information on tigers. The DTL meeting was held online four times, and each representative of the organization shared information on tigers and illegal trade between the two countries.

By 2022-2023, we achieved our goal of providing small grants and training (agriculture training, livestock training, basic livestock training (poultry and pigs), animal feed ration formulation training, commercial wine production, cost-effective and eco-friendly production of natural and bio-fertilizers, small-scale solar-drying techniques, and gender equality training) to eleven village groups. Additionally, in 2022 and 2023, HEC awareness training was conducted for the villages of Wardin, Pan Phone Chaung, Yuzana, Warchaung, and Bodar to reduce HEC. At the same time, for the future generation and the sustainable development of environmental conservation, we conducted education awareness training on biodiversity and ecology, including tigers, elephants, and pangolins, for 1143 students from 12 schools in 11 villages.

Similarly, FFI's goal is to combat illegal wildlife trade in three townships in Tanintharyi Region, namely Tanintharyi, Bokepyin, and Kawthaung districts, in cooperation with departments including local communities. To achieve the long-term success of the IWT project, an IWT evaluation workshop was held in December 2023 to review the activities to be undertaken and to assess the strengths and weaknesses during the project completion and project period. To be transparent, we divided the IWT evaluation workshop into two locations, with departments and a separate workshop in Bokepyin City, and were able to hold it in Myeik City with local communities.

10. IWT Challenge Fund Identity

As mentioned in the third annual report, all project activities involving communities, partners, and government stakeholders indicate support from the IWTCF. This support is evident in various materials such as publications, training materials, and workshop resources featuring the IWTCF logo.

However, to date, the project has not initiated international communications to disseminate information about its successes and progress. Consequently, acknowledgment of support from the IWTCF has primarily been limited to training sessions and events like the IWT workshop, Technical Training, Warning Signboard, Vinyl, Calendar, HEC awareness raising training, and Stakeholder meetings. During these engagements, we provide explanations to participants and departments that have signed the MoU with FFI regarding the identity and objectives of the Fund.

Since the first annual report, the support from the IWT Challenge Fund has been recognized on the FFI website at the following link: <u>FFI Ridge Reef Conservation Tanintharyi Project</u>. Currently, there are no active social media channels to direct back to the IWTCF.

11. Safeguarding

Has your Safeguarding Policy been updated ir	No)	
Have any concerns been investigated in the p	No)	
Does your project have a Safeguarding focal point?	Yes Thang Cin, <u>t</u>		
Has the focal point attended any formal training in the last 12 months?	No		
What proportion (and number) of project sta training on Safeguarding?	Iff have received formal	-	6] % [and
Has there been any lessons learnt or challenge ensure no sensitive data is included within res No	• •	e past 12 mont	hs? Please

12. Finance and administration

12.1 Project expenditure

Project spend (indicative) sinc last Annual Report	2022/23	2022/23	Variance	Comments (please explain significant
	Grant (£)	Total actual IWTCF Costs (£)	%	variances)
Staff costs (see below)				Staff cost for this yea was over charge because additional tm for member of staff wer required to implemen the project activite timely under the curren political circumstances However, overall stat cost is overspent below 10% of the agree budget
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				No expense for th partner office cost in thi year because there wa not partner actvities du to political condition.
Travel and subsistence				FFI UK technical support team members provide technical supprot to th project team remotely i this year. Therefore les expense for internationa flight cost than w anicipated.
Operating Costs				No expense for studer wildlife trad assessement becaus this activity was no carried out during thi year due to safet reason of the students
Capital items (see below)				Over wa spent on maintainin project vehicles an motorbikes in the fina quarter. Due to insecurit along the road, off-roa routes were necessary to reach project sites.
Others (see below)				
TOTAL	£74,509.00	£74 500 00		
	£14,009.00	£74,509.00		

Staff employed	Cost
(Name and position)	(£)
Ngwe Lwin, Project Lead	
Saw Soe Aung, Acting Programme Manager	
Pyae Sone Aung, Project Officer	
Aung Si Hein, Project Officer (Biodiversity)	
Thi Thi Toe, Project Officer (Livelihoods)	
Wint War Tun, Finance Manager	
Nant Ei Phyu Sin, Senior Accountant / Bookkeeper	
Htoo Naing Tun, Logistics & Procurement (Yangon)	
Sein Nilar, Admin support (Myeik)	
Win Shein, Driver #2	
TOTAL	£19,620.83

Capital items – description	Capital items – cost (£)
Laptops and supporting hardware	
Sign posts at field sites	
Car, motorbike, other maintenance	
Basic patrol team equipment (x 6 villages)	
Projector, generator, lights, sound system	
Office furniture/equipment	
TOTAL	£4,562.30

Other items – description	Other items – cost (£)
Community ranger patrols	
Prepare village land use/resource maps	
Livelihood subgrants (@ 1,750 GBP)	
WPU operations costs (KFD sub-grant)	
Training and supervision of WPU (KFD)	
Student-led wildlife market research	
Prepare village land use/resource maps	
WPU operations costs (KFD sub-grant)	
Prepare village land use/resource maps	
Training and supervision of WPU (KFD)	
TOTAL	£21,894.12

12.2 Additional funds or in-kind contributions secured

Source of funding for project lifetime	Total	
	(£)	
USFW Tiger Conservation Project		
USFW Elephant Conservation Project		
Bridging Grant for Community-based Tiger Conservation		
TOTAL	120,248	

Source of funding for additional work after project lifetime	Total
	(£)
Bridging Grant for Community-based Tiger Conservation	
TOTAL	

12.3 Value for Money

The funds are utilized effectively according to the proposed spending plan, with allocated grants making a significant impact on local community development in alignment with conservation goals. Incorporating lessons learned from the project, several measures have been implemented to enhance performance:

- 1. To minimize travel expenses, we established a pilot office close to the project site.
- 2. Emphasizing sustainable community economic development, we invest small grants in alternative livelihoods.
- 3. Engaging in awareness activities to combat Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) and enhance local understanding.
- 4. Collaborating with the local authority (KFD) and utilizing sub-grant support for effective patrol work.
- 5. Partnering with the Freeland organization for transboundary survey activities.
- 6. Enhancing the capacity of local communities through training to ensure the long-term sustainability of subsidized grants.

13. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds Secretariat to publish the content of this section (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

Annex 1 Project's original (or most recently approved) logframe, including indicators, means of verification and assumptions.

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: Populations of tiger, Asian ele effective law enforcement.	phant and Sunda pangolin are stable (or growing) in Myanmar, protected by c	ommunity-led wildlife stewardship and
Outcome: Effective law enforcement and community-led stewardship deters poaching of target species for IWT in Tanintharyi, supported by stronger transboundary law enforcement.	 0.1 Tiger and elephant populations in the project location are recorded as stable throughout the project period. 0.2 Number of incidents of poaching (e.g., individuals or equipment seen) per unit patrol effort reduced by 50% by project end from Y1 baseline. 0.3 At least 50% increase in the number of both men and women in target communities who are engaged in wildlife stewardship from Y1 baseline. 	 0.1 Tiger, elephant: Camera trap data in focus areas of the landscapes. 0.2 SMART reports from VDC patrols and/or FD records, including snare, trap, pitfall, and drift net encounter rates. 0.3 Community survey and post-implementation (gender disaggregated); community patrol and wildlife release reports from the community 	Sufficient people are encouraged to participate in recording IWT events; null records are also recorded. SMART data can be sufficiently well recorded and maintained by VDCs. Elections, government changes and natural events during the project period do not cause major changes in access to project sites, the ability of civil society to operate or dramatic fluctuations in currency exchange rates. No major changes in national or international policy relating to target species.
Output 1 Output 1: Six target communities voluntarily taking actions to address IWT due to the creation and retention of livelihoods benefits and human-elephant conflict (HEC) management.	 1.1 Two VDCs have gained legal recognition (baseline = zero) by project end. 1.2 Six communities agree commitments and actions to achieve zero-tolerance of IWT for target species (linked to livelihood support) by end Y1. 1.3 The number of person-days of community-led/ collaborative patrols increase by >50% from Y1 baseline by project end. 1.4 At least 70% (160) households reporting a new and/or higher primary 	 1.1 Internal monitoring reports; VDC registration documents; public dissemination of zero-tolerance commitments, and documentation of personal pledges to combat IWT. 1.2 SMART reports from VDC and/or from FD records. 1.3 SMART reports from VDC and/or from FD records. 1.4 Livelihood monitoring data including ranking income sources and livelihood strategies (extended in project Year 1 but based on surveys from 2016/17 and 2018/19). 	All VDCs will desire to register as Associations. SMART data can be sufficiently well recorded and maintained by the VDCs. The current community preference for avoiding conflict with authorities and attracting development assistance continues through the project period. The small grants (up to 2000 GBP) are sufficient for the selected livelihoods activities.

	 source of income due to the project, by project end. 1.5 Female participation reaches 50% in small grant beneficiary groups by project end (from a current base of ≈ 30%). 1.6 Snare detection rates by community patrol teams reduced by 80% on Y1 baseline 1.7 By project end, there is a recorded decrease in the number of HEC incidents within the project area resulting in death, serious injury or damage. 	 1.5 As above. 1.6 As above 1.7 Aggregated Monthly HEC monitoring data, number of individuals trained in collecting HEC data and mitigating HEC conflict; number of guidance documents on HEC distributed; Feedback from community members trained 	The selected interventions will produce perceptible livelihood returns within the project lifetime.
Output 2 Improved law enforcement capacity and effectiveness resulting from improved collaboration and communication between communities and enforcement authorities	 2.1. Increase in number of warnings to offenders, confiscations and community reports responded by KFD WPU, 2.2. Number of incidents of poaching (e.g., individuals or equipment seen) per unit patrol effort reduced by 50% by project end from Y1 baseline. 2.3. By project end, risk of human wildlife conflict reported by community members is informing 50% of VGC/WPU patrols (baseline zero). 2.4. Transboundary exchange of actionable information increases on Y1 baseline. 	 2.1 SMART reports from VCG and/or from KFD records 2.2 As above. 2.3 A draft TOR is being applied, even if not fully ratified, as evidenced by meeting minutes. 2.4 Formal or informal reports from project stakeholders, media or communities collected by project staff. SMART reports from VGC and/or from KFD records. 	Law enforcement agencies will respond to the information provided by the community guardians and other informants. This however seems reasonable based on experience in other examples of this approach in Myanmar, but the chances can be improved by raising the profile of this community approach and engaging with political leaders and the media. Corruption is managed effectively. Low-level territorial disputes do not dissuade the two national governments from continuing and expanding their cooperation on IWT.
Output 3: Approach and learning from community-level responses to IWT documented and shared nationally and globally to promote replication in Myanmar.	 3.1 Learning shared with 50 key stakeholders from 10 relevant institutions (community, civil society, government) in Myanmar. 3.2 Staff in further Fauna & Flora/partner sites in Southeast Asia are able to begin applying learning generated by this project. 	 3.1 Communications and meeting/event reports, case study brief 3.2 Communications and meeting/events report, case study brief 	Community-led guardianship results in the desired decline in illegal killing and trafficking of wildlife, making it a source of learning for others.

Activit	ies (each activity is numbered accord	ding to the output that it will contribute to	wards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are con	tributing to Output 1)
1.1	Support two community VDCs to ga livelihoods support.	in legal recognition and six community a	gree VDC-level commitments including zero	p-tolerance to poaching and IWT, linked to
1.2 strateg		vel Village Conservation Groups (VCG; s prests to deter and detect IWT, monitor a	elf-titled rotation of community steward tear nd report HEC, and remove snares.	ns, approximately 10/village) to undertake
1.3 husbar	Support VDCs to consult their comm ndry, home vegetable gardens, cash o		ment priority livelihood diversification at con	nmunity and household-levels, e.g. animal
1.4 1.5		ght and management to implement a sma establish an early warning system for HE	all grants scheme to enable livelihood diver C avoidance.	sification.
1.6	-		g together with Village conservation groups	in the project areas,
	constituencies' (such as restaurants,	, local markets) engagement in illegal wil	(indicator 1.2), and as the first of two phas dlife meat trade and consumption in the pr e strategy developed using this eviden	oject area as well as the motivations and
2.1	Support newly established KFD ten-	-person WPU to undertake strategic, inte	lligence-led patrolling supported by SMAR	Γ and CyberTracker software.
2.2 KFD, ir		co-identify and co-establish an appropria y and ownership, and identifying and ove	te structure for community members to re- rcoming barriers to reporting.	gularly report illegal activity to VCGs and
2.3 with po		and pilot a standardised system to record st between communities and the enforce	d, analyse and report IWT occurrences and ment agencies.	I trends, and share actionable information
2.4	•	, ,	ement Task Force (WLET), e.g. on planning	·
2.5 Thai Ai	Work with Freeland to build relation uthorities.	nships and systematic cooperation and s	haring of actionable information between F	D, KFD, Tanintharyi Regional WLET and
3.1 concer	Develop recommendations based o t with authorities.	n field experience, evaluation and learni	ng for community engagement in enforcing	Myanmar's biodiversity and forest laws in
3.2 and int	Share recommendations from practi ernational forums.	ical field experience of community-level r	esponses to IWT with key stakeholders in N	lyanmar and at relevant national, regional

Annex 2 Report of progress and achievements against final project logframe for the life of the project

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements
	bhant and Sunda pangolin are stable (or nunity-led wildlife stewardship and effective	In 2023, two new tiger individuals were recorded in the Ywahilu area, recording the total to six individuals of tiger including two new tigers over three years. Additionally, local communities successfully released five pangolins, raising awareness about environmental conservation. Collaboration with KFD effectively deterred illegal wildlife trade and enhanced ground-level patrolling. A new VCGs team from the Mawtaun area joined patrolling efforts. Increased community awareness led to active participation in conservation, including school and village awareness sessions. An estimated population survey on elephants and wildlife meat consumption was conducted. Eleven village groups received support for livelihood and environmental protection, In the first year, the project benefited 199 people from 28 households. By the end, it reached 405 households and 1,871 individuals,204 women business leader demonstrating effectiveness in engaging communities and enforcing wildlife laws, reflecting a promising commitment to wildlife stewardship and law enforcement. Finally, an IWT evaluation workshop was held with local communities and departmental staff to ensure transparency in the project's implementation over three years.
Outcome: Effective law enforcement and community-led stewardship deters poaching of target species for IWT in Tanintharyi, supported by stronger transboundary law enforcement.	 0.1 Tiger and elephant populations in the project location are recorded as stable throughout the project period. 0.2 Number of incidents of poaching (e.g., individuals or equipment seen) per unit patrol effort reduced by 50% by project end from Y1 baseline. 0.3 At least 50% increase in the number of both men and women in target communities who are engaged in wildlife stewardship from Y1 baseline. 	 0.1 2 new individuals of tiger in the Ywahilu area in 2023. Based on camera trap results, 6 individuals of tiger including 2 new tigers during the three-year period. 0.2 By compared to Y1 baseline, In Y3, 2 snares were observed and reduced dramatically 0.3. In Year 3, the patrolling efforts involved 15 members from the Mawtaung New Village Conservation Groups (VCGs). Additionally, in the Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) informant network, 13 men and 3 women actively participated in the monthly data sharing activities.
Output 1 Output 1: Six target communities voluntarily taking actions to address IWT due to the creation and retention of livelihoods benefits and human- elephant conflict (HEC) management.	 1.1 Two VDCs have gained legal recognition (baseline = zero) by project end. 1.2 Six communities agree commitments and actions to achieve zero-tolerance of 	 1.1 Two VDCs have gained officially registered in Y1 1.2 Six villages have agreed to zero hunting in exchange for livelihood support. 1.3 During the project period, according to the patrol record, in 2021, 35 days in Ywahilu and Payartan Area were patrolled by Chaung Nauk Pyan VCG team. In 2022, the KFD and Chaung Nauk Pyan team patrolled for 61 days in Ywahilu area and east of Lenya River. Similarly, in 2023, the KFD, Chaung Nauk Pyan team

	 IWT for target species (linked to livelihood support) by end Y1. 1.3 The number of person-days of community-led/ collaborative patrols increase by >50% from Y1 baseline by project end. 1.4 At least 70% (160) households reporting a new and/or higher primary source of income due to the project, by project end. 1.5 Female participation reaches 50% in small grant beneficiary groups by project end (from a current base of ≈ 30%). 1.6 Snare detection rates by community patrol teams reduced by 80% on Y1 baseline 1.7 By project end, there is a recorded decrease in the number of HEC incidents within the project area resulting in death, serious injury or damage. 	 and Mawtaung team patrolled for 145 days in the Mawtaung (Ngawun area), east of the Lenya River, and Ywahilu area. 1.4 Between April 2020 and December 2023, a comprehensive livelihood intervention programme was implemented across 11 villages, benefiting a total of 405 households organized into 25 village groups. Socioeconomic survey was conducted in November 2023 at 202 households out of 405 beneficiaries' households. The result showed total of 188 households (93% of assessed households) reported their income increased as of the project livelihood intervention 1.5 Average women participation in the project activities; direct beneficiaries, leaders and training participating is 58% 1.6 In Year 1, 227 snares detected, 44 snares detected in Year 2 and 8 snares detected in Year 3. 1.7 Throughout the year, a total of 69 incidents of Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) occurred within the project area. In efforts to mitigate these conflicts, community members visited the Ayeyarwady Region, specifically the WWF Elephant Project area, to exchange knowledge and strategies. Further details can be found in the report provided in Annex 1.
	/DCs to gain legal recognition and six s including zero-tolerance to poaching and	1.1 One VDC from Chaung Nauk Pyan and one from Mawtaung received official registration at township administration department. Total of six communities agreed commitment to stop poaching and IWT.
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 their village forests to deter and detect IWT, monitor and report HEC, and remove snares.		 1.2 Village conservation groups (VCGs) were established at the VDC level in the villages of Chaung Nauk Pyan and the Mawtaung area. We provided VCGs the systematic SMART and camera trapping training to conduct patrols in their village forests, monitoring illegal wildlife trade (IWT) for 10 members. In 2023, One newly established Village Conservation Group (VCG) engaged in SMART patrolling and removed three snares from their designated area. VCG, in collaboration with FFI, conducted Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) awareness sessions for 1,143 students and schoolteachers across eleven villages. The Chaung Nauk Pyan VCG team actively participated in an Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Workshop, where they presented their conservation activities.

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	• Additionally, they reported and shared SMART data with the Karen Forestry Department (KFD) and the Forestry Department (FD).				
Activity 1.3. Support VDCs to consult their community to democratically identify and implement priority livelihood diversification at community and household-levels, e.g. animal husbandry, home vegetable gardens, cash crops, and/or vocational training.	1.3 By the project's conclusion, there was a significant expansion, extending support to 405 households and benefiting a total of 1,871 individuals. This impact directly affected 908 men and 963 women.				
Activity 1.4. Train and support VDC-level oversight and management to implement a small grants scheme to enable livelihood diversification.	FFI provided the following 9 trainings, covering 333 people for the purpose of smooth implementation of livelihood diversification during the project period. (2020-2023)				
	 Livestock Training Agriculture Training Financial management training Grant Management Training Gender Equality Training Animal feeds formulation based on the locally available agricultural by-products Cost-effective and eco-friendly natural- and bio-fertilizers production for small and medium scaled farmers Commercial wine production based on locally available agricultural products 				
	Small scaled solar-drying techniques for areca nut and processing for marketability				
Activity 1.5. Train VCGs in HEC mitigation and establish an early warning system for HEC avoidance.	In the final year, to mitigate and prevent Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC), the following activities were undertaken:				
	 Installation of eight warning signboards along the main road between Chaung Mon and Bodar. Distribution of 200 calendars and 30 vinyl materials. Conducted HEC awareness sessions at 11 schools, reaching 1143 students, providing 2000 school notebooks. An increase of 13 people in the HEC reporting network Exchange visits and knowledge sharing with the Ayeyarwady Region, the WWF Elephant Project Area (no. of 9 people participated). 				
Activity 1.6. Conduct tiger and elephant population survey with systemic camera trapping together with Village conservation groups in the project areas,	1.6 The project deployed over 26 cameras at 9 Grids for 2159 trap nights. Six individual tigers, including two new tigers, were documented through camera trap data. Additionally, an estimated population of 80-100 elephants, including cubs, was recorded during the survey period.				

towards IWT (indicator 1.2), and as the fin of the drivers of key constituencies'	based implementation of zero-tolerance rst of two phases, carry out an assessment (such as restaurants, local markets) e and consumption in the project area as riers to change.	consultation at five villages (Chaung NaukPyan, Chaung Lamu, Aye Tharyar, Pyigyimandi, and Lenya) selected for their role in the wild meat trade and their accessibility from June 2 nd to June 9 th , 2023.			
		We surveyed 60 respondents from relevant groups, such as hunters, wild meat sellers, consumers and influential individuals in the community, to understand the patterns and motivations behind wild meat hunting and consumption. We identified the most sold and consumed species; we confirmed that wild meat consumption was tied to taste preferences and celebrations rather than food security and found that supply chains in the region were short with direct sales between hunters and retailers.			
		We also noted that although there were high levels of awareness of wildlife laws in surveyed area, this did not result in compliance and there were low levels of understanding of the ecosystem, human and animal health implications of over- hunting. We are now including follow up community engagement actions in upcoming funding proposals. See detail in Annex 4			
Output 2	2.1 Increase in the number of warnings	2.1 Activities were not carried out due to political instability.			
Improved law enforcement capacity and effectiveness resulting from improved collaboration and communication between communities and enforcement authorities	to offenders, confiscations, community reports responded to by KFD WPU, and reduction in re-offending (targets will be set in consultation with the stakeholders once baselines are established in Year 1).	 2.2 In Year 1, there were no incidents of poaching reported in the project area. However, in Year 2, during patrols conducted by the KFD, four hunter camps were observed in the east of the Lenya area. In Year 3, the number of five hunter camps were in the east of the Lenya area and one logging was observed in the Mawtaung area. A total of 279 snare have been removed by CNP VCG, MD VCG and KFD 			
	2.2 Number of incidents of poaching	throughout the project (227 in Year 1, 44 in Year 2 and 8 in Year 3).			
	 2.3 By project end, illegal activity reported by community members is informing 50% of VGC/WPU patrols (baseline zero). 2.4. Transboundary exchange of actionable information increases on the 				
		2.3 Baseline was zero. There are three times (FD and KFD) Illegal activity reported by VCG in Year 2, 3.			
		2.4 Baseline was zero. Information sharing between Thai, Karen, and Myanmar law enforcement authorities couldn't be facilitated in the final year due to political situations. However, INGOs like FFI, WCS, WWF, and Freeland are sharing information as part of the Tiger Working Group.			
		2.5 Not applicable in the final year due to political situations.			
		2.6 No case of prosecution.			
	2.5. Actionable information shared with Thai partners results in at least two				

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	transboundary law enforcement actions by project end.				
	2.6. At least one prosecution by project end.				
Activity 2.1. Support newly established KF intelligence-led patrolling supported by S	FD ten-person WPU to undertake strategic, MART and CyberTracker software.	During the project period (2020-2023), KFD's SMART patrolling efforts reduced traps within the project area, with fewer hunters observed and diminished damage to camera traps. Similarly, FFI will uphold its strong cooperative relationship with KFD. Officially, this collaboration will persist until 2024, encompassing joint patrol activities and ongoing data sharing.			
appropriate structure for community me	groups, co-identify and co-establish an mbers to regularly report illegal activity to	The following points highlight the achievements resulting from the cooperation between FFI, VCGs, and FD over the course of three years:			
	ist, shared identify and ownership, and	 An Illegal Wildlife Trade Workshop was convened with 11 departments, including the Forestry Department, across three townships. Three IWT (Illegal Wildlife Trade) groups were established in three townships to tackle illegal trading activities. Local communities in the project area gained awareness about the main protected species of the project, tigers, elephants, and pangolins. Based on socioeconomic survey report, the community demonstrated a high level of awareness (94%) regarding laws governing the hunting of wild animals. This awareness is fostered through various channels, including government and organizational signboards (41% and 40% respectively), awareness events (50%), community talks (12%), Facebook, newspapers (17% each), meetings, project orientation sessions by Fauna & Flora, and insights from community leaders. These findings emphasize the importance of diverse and community-centered strategies for promoting understanding and adherence to wildlife conservation laws (also see Appendix 4). 45 warning signs were strategically placed at restaurants, towns, villages, township entrances and exits, highway bus stations, and street ends to remove excuses and remind residents of the risks associated with illegal wildlife trade. Despite these challenges, amidst the ongoing political situation, six local individuals and one staff member from the Forestry Department now share IWT information using their personal phones within the project area. Towards the project's end, the three townships collaborated to conduct an Illegal Wildlife Trade Evaluation Workshop. This workshop provided a platform to review the strengths and weaknesses encountered throughout the three-year project, present successful outcomes, and outline future activities. A total of 50 local communities, including VCGs, 			

	participated in Myeik Township, while 30 participants, comprising departmental staff, VCGs, and FFI representatives, attended in Bokepyin Township (see Report in Annex 1).		
Activity 2.3. Work with FD and KFD to develop and pilot a standardised system to record, analyse and report IWT occurrences and trends, and share actionable information with police, and build understanding and trust between communities and the enforcement agencies.	The ongoing military coup and subsequent and intensifying occurrences of armed combat between forces representing Myanmar and Karen governments continued to disrupt operations. This made it difficult for the Forestry Department (FD) and Karen Forestry Department (KFD) to work together effectively on monitoring and analyzing project data. The political instability also raised concerns about the safety of employees on both sides. For example, throughout the three-year project, information about Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) gathered by the project had to be shared separately with FD and KFD. In summary, this collaboration was unsuccessful during the project period.		
Activity 2.4. Establish VDC representation in the Tanintharyi Region Wildlife Law Enforcement Task Force (WLET), e.g. on planning and enforcement actions.	Chaung Nauk Pyan VCG team attended the meetings of the WLET of Tanathinri Division. During the workshops, VCG presented the cooperation process with FFI and the process to be done in the future. Based on these processes and future activities, the mutual trust between the WLET and VCG is now stronger in environmental protection, but due to the country situation, the politics between WLET and VCG did not favor the implementation of joint activities.		
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.	With the support of the project, Freeland was able to collect information in two protected areas in Thailand adjacent of the project area. This project was highly successful in increasing our understanding about the importance of the site and helped initiate measures to protect it. However, due to the political situation, the engagement with Thai Authorities for the IWT was not successfully implemented.		
Output 3: Approach and learning from community-level responses to IWT documented and shared nationally and globally to promote replication in Myanmar.3.1 Learning shared with 50 key stakeholders from 10 relevant institutions (community, civil society, government) in Myanmar.3.2 Staff in further Fauna & Flora/partner sites in Southeast Asia is able to begin applying learning generated by this project.	sperate workshop in Myeik with 55 participants from 10 villages. 3.2 On December 15, 2023, we presented our efforts in combating Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) to Fauna & Flora's internal IWT working group,		
Activity 3.1. Develop recommendations based on field experience, evaluation and learning for community engagement in enforcing Myanmar's biodiversity and forest laws in concert with authorities.	This activity aligns with the one described in Activities 3.2		

Activity 3.2. Share recommendations from practical field experience of community- level responses to IWT with key stakeholders in Myanmar and at relevant national, regional and international forums.	
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Annex 3 Standard Indicators

Table 1Project Standard Indicators

IWTCF Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with IWTCF Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during project
IWTCF-A01	Number of people who received training in sustainable livelihood skills	Number of people who received training in sustainable livelihood skills	People	Men/Women	0	138/192	310/255	310/255	300+
IWTCF-A13	Number of households that have experienced an increase in household income as a result of involvement	Number of households that have experienced an increase in household income as a result of involvement	Percentage	Income			93%	93%	70%
IWTCF-A15	Number reporting a decrease in unsustainable practices as a result of project activities.	Number of households contributed to wildlife conservation stewardship agreement	Number	Household	28	65	405	405	360
IWTCF-B09	Duration or frequency of patrols by law enforcement rangers supported through the project	SMART patrolling	Days	Number of patrol day	35	61	135	241	
IWTCF-C09	Number of markets trading in IWT products closed.	Number of markets trading in IWT products reduced as of project intervention	Number	Local Market			2	2	
IWTCF-D03	Number of local/national organizations with improved capability and capacity as a result of the project.	Number of local organizations with improved capability and capacity as a result of the project.	Number	CBO/VCG		2		2	6

	Check
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If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 10)?	Yes
Have you included means of verification? You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	Yes
Do you have hard copies of material you need to submit with the report? 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.	No
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Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	Yes
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	Yes
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	